

PERSIA BY A PERSIAN

BEING

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

OF

Manners, Customs, Habits, Religious and Social
Life in Persia.

BY

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BAB AND BABISM.

The Mohammedan religion is to-day divided into many different sects, and this division greatly weakens it. Within sixty years past a new religion has been developed in Persia, known by the name of Babism, which already numbers its disciples by millions, and is steadily making inroads upon the Mohammedan religion of which it is in fact an offshoot. It is thought by some to have a large future before it. Christian missionaries come in contact with it, and from the friendliness of the so-called Babis to the Christian religion, hopes have been cherished that it may prove a stepping stone for the Gospel into Moslem hearts. For this reason, if no other, it deserves the attention of all thoughtful Christians. Mirza Ali Mohammed, the founder of the new religion, was the son of a cloth merchant of the city of Shiraz, and first came to public notice in the year 1843. He began to plan the new religion at the age of 18, but did not reveal it until he was 25 years old. The foundation of his faith was this: Mohammed, like Christ, taught that the latter days will be a millennium. They have a tradition that when all prophets have died or have been killed by their enemies, a son, six years of age will, by the direction of Allah, be hid in an unknown well. He is to remain there until the millennium. It was believed that he would be the ruler of the Mohammedans in these last days. He was to lead both his victorious armies and conquer all the world, and Islam would become the universal religion. His early education was limited even for the advantages Persia affords, but with a strong spiritual bent in his nature he seems to have given himself much to religious meditation and study. Paying a visit to Kerbela, the center of theological thought among the Shiah of Persia, he sat for a few months under the teaching of a noted and rather mystical teacher of the Mohammedan theology and became his enthusiastic disciple. He entered with special zest into the study of the doctrine which figures so conspicuously in Persian theology, of the coming "Unseen Imam" whose return as the "Imam Mahdi" is to introduce the Mohammedan millennium, in regard to whom some advanced and heretical views were taught by the school to which his teacher belonged. The impression made on his mind by his devout contemplations on this doctrine are exhibited in the following passages which we find translated from his earlier writings: Addressing the absent Imam, he says:

"When are the days of your empire, that I may struggle for you? And when are the days of your glory, that I may obtain the blessings of your visage? And when are the days of your kingdom, when I may

take revenge on your enemies? And when are the days of your manifestation, that I may be independent of all except you? And when are the days of the appearance of your lordship, that by your permission I may say 'Be,' and it shall become existent before you? And when are the days which God has promised unto his servants for your coming?"

From his long and earnest meditations on this subject, he seems to have become convinced that he enjoyed the favor of special communication with the Imam. It was but one step farther to imagine that his exalted thoughts were veritable inspirations from the supreme fountain all the truth, and that he, himself, was an inspired prophet. Upon his return from Karbela, the young enthusiast drew about him his particular friends, and revealed to them his inward consciousness of a prophetic call, announcing himself as the "Bab," i. e., the door, or gate, meaning the channel of grace from the unseen Imam. He began preaching in the mosques against the prevailing irreligion of the times, especially berating the Moslem clergy for their scandalous vices and unfitness to be spiritual guides to the people, emphasizing the need of morality of deeds, rather than one of words and formal rules. He advocated temperance, opposed the growing use of opium—while he, himself, neither smoked tobacco nor drank liquor or coffee. He discounted polygamy, forbade concubinage, asceticism and mendicancy, prohibited divorce and taught the equality of the sexes; encouraged the practice of hospitality, and demanded justice for all citizens alike. Though attacking none of the dogmas of Islam, the tendency of his opinions were undeniably heterodox. The new teachings, however, became popular at once. Numbers of his fellow citizens assented to the pretensions and creed of the new claimant to prophethood with alacrity and fervor. Missionaries were sent out to other towns to announce the tidings, and explain the new doctrines. Adherents sprang up everywhere they went—men of all ranks, educated and unlearned alike welcoming the good news, and in turn becoming their earnest heralds. This great popularity was due not merely to the attractive program of reform presented, but largely to the personal sanctity conceded to the Bab, a quality to which the Oriental mind is ever particularly susceptible, to the sweetness of his manners, to the eloquence of his voice and to the apparent depth of meaning in his utterances, all of which exercised a spell over his hearers even his enemies admitted and feared. In stature, he was tall and slender, eyes black, eye-brows heavy and long, beard patriarchal. His countenance was very pleasant and attractive. In conversation with high and low classes of people alike, he showed himself

a servant of all. He was poetical, a great orator and a deep thinker. He wrote many beautiful poems. His epistles to his disciples were philosophical. His words in sermons touched the hearts of men. Later on, Mirza Ali Mohammed, like a good Moslem, made a pilgrimage to Mecca. His return was signalized by the renewal of debates and dissensions between himself and his followers on the one side and the orthodox party on the other, which finally led to the arrest of the Bab by the governor of his native province and his detention at Shiraz for a time. Subsequently he was removed to Ispahan, where a friendly governor showed him much favor. Meanwhile, his apostles continued more active in their proselyting work than ever. Notable among these were two of the regular Mohammedan clergy of great learning and ability, who rank in the history of this movement as the foremost champions of the new doctrines—Mullah Hussein and Haji Mohammed Ali. With these was associated a woman, who obtained a celebrity throughout Persia almost unparalleled in the annals of that land. She is admitted by friend and enemy to have been a woman of marvelous beauty and rare intellectual gifts. As a scholar, she excelled in her knowledge of the Arabic language and of Islamic traditions and philosophy. She was a poetess, and her eloquence of speech was fascinating. Her name was Zerryn Taj, but she is commonly known as Kurratul-Ayn, or "the Consolation of the eyes," with reference to her surpassing loveliness of countenance. She never met the Bab during her lifetime, but learned of him as a spiritual guide and channel of the new revelation through Mullah Hussein. From her correspondence with the Bab, he became impressed with her rare qualities and attainments, and included her as one of the eighteen dignitaries of the first Babi Hierarchy. In the campaign that was pushed by the devotees of the Bab, the persuasive eloquence of this peerless young Persian woman is credited as second to that of no other.

By degrees the new sectarians became more and more bold, more and more sanguine of revolutionizing the ancient faith of the land. In all the principal cities of central and southern Persia, some in every class in society, publicly or privately, hailed the reform movement as a welcome change in the old order of things. The orthodox clergy became alarmed as they saw their religious supremacy in danger of dissolution, while the turmoils and insurrections which followed from the Babi preachers, opened the eyes of the government to serious danger to state as well as church. In the provinces of Khorasan and Mazandaran and in the city of Zanzan, the Babis assumed a fierce and defiant front, coming into violent collision with the local authorities. The king's ministers,

as the first step towards checking the rising tide of revolution, ordered the Bab to be removed from Ispahan to Tabriz and there secluded in some safe place. This was in the year 1847, only four years since the youthful Ali Mohammed first announced his prophetic mission. On arriving at Tabriz he was dispatched by order of the governer to the fortress of Maku, held by a semi-independent chieftain, situated at the base of Mount Ararat, three or four days to the northwest of Tabriz; but his confinement there was not so close as to prevent the access of his friends and an active correspondence with distant and industrious lieutenants. To interrupt this freedom of communication, he was removed to the fortress of Cherick near Salmas, two days from Oroomiah. The quiet of his retirement here, lasting two years and a half, was favorable to meditation and study and he busied himself in practices of devotion and in the development of his theological opinions and his code of civil and social regulations. Gradually he assumed higher and higher position and authority, until he announced himself to be the "Imam Mahdi," himself. During this interval the religious war kindled by the Bab's energetic followers in Mazandaran and Zanzan grew into a blaze, which taxed all the energies of the local government to extinguish. Meanwhile, Mohammed Shah died (September 5, 1848) and was succeeded by his son, Nasreddin, the late sovereign of Persia, who selected as his prime minister the very able statesman Mirza Taki Khan. Immediately upon coming into power, this minister addressed himself vigorously to quelling the Babi disturbances in different districts and towns. That in the town of Zanzan, where the Bab's friends were very numerous and resolute, was only put down after a prolonged siege, lasting from May to September, 1850. While the contest dragged on, the government determined on the death of the Bab, as absolutely necessary to the pacification of the kingdom. On his way from the castle of his imprisonment to Tabriz for trial and execution, he passed through Oroomiah. We are told that vast numbers flocked to see him, and even the governor did not conceal his sympathy with the prisoner of such engaging manners: the crowd shed tears as they looked upon the interesting young man, and more than half believed that he might be the very "Imam Mahdi," the great desire of Moslem nations. Traditions, about the town relate that when he went to the bath the people carried away the water in vessels, in which he had bathed as if it were holy. But at Tabriz, Persian officialdom and the sternly orthodox populace of that city, did not so lose their heads. The man was examined before the Moslem high priests and was condemned, as a heretic, to be shot, along with two of

his companions in arrest. One of these, however, recanted and saved his life. The Bab was conducted from one priest's house to another in succession, each in turn ratifying the sentence of death, while in the crowded streets through which he passed, throngs of zealous fanatics grossly insulted him and his companion. Arriving at the place of execution, a public square in the city, the prisoners were suspended by their arms against a wall, in conspicuous public view and a company of soldiers was drawn up to shoot them.

At the first discharge the Bab's companion fell dead, but strange to say, the bullets only cut the cords which bound the Bab himself, leaving him fall to the ground, free, and he took to flight. It is thoroughly conceivable, indeed it is altogether probable, from a Persian point of view, that had the man risen and thrown himself upon the confidence of the superstitious populace, declaring his delivery a miracle of divine power in his favor, and a confirmation of his claims, the whole town would have acclaimed his pretensions and sooner or later the country itself would have acknowledged his authority to overthrow the Kajar dynasty. As it was, in his bewilderment, he fled to a neighboring guard house where he was cut down and beaten to death by Musselman soldiery. This occurred July 15, 1850. The execution of the Bab in no wise discouraged the faith and zeal of his disciples; on the other hand, it exasperated them against the government and inflamed them to desperate efforts for its overturn. By the vigorous efforts of the military power the several insurrections in the country were brought to an end. But the spirit of vengeance for the death of their prophet was everywhere rife among the sect and soon came to a head in the conspiracy against the life of the Shah. He was attacked while riding out with his suite one day by three Babis. The attempt was a failure, the king escaping with only a slight wound, but the recoil of the blow on the Babis was terrible. One of the assailants was killed on the spot, the other two were tortured with fiendish cruelty to induce them to reveal their fellow conspirators, but without avail. Some thirty residents of the capitol were suspected of being Babis, were seized, and after a month's deliberation on the part of the Shah and his court, they were put to death in a variety of methods the most cruel and barbarous, large numbers of the nobility the ecclesiastics and other citizens of Teheran being forced to aid in their execution, in evidence of their loyalty to the Shah. Among the victims was the gifted woman Kurra'l-Ayn. who for some months had been under arrest and surveillance in the city. All the victims met their death with stoical, almost superhuman fortitude, refusing the pardon

offered them if they would but recant. Some even in the midst of their prolonged suffering sang or shouted songs of triumph. The French writer Renau speaks of this massacre, as a day "without a parallel" perhaps in the history of the world. It should be borne in mind that some of these unfortunates had never seen the man whom they called master, yet thus rapturously did they offer up their lives as a testimony of their faith in him. This ferocity of vengeance checked, though it did not by any means extirpate, Babism. While it put an end to the revolutionary tendencies of its more restless spirits, secret partisanship continued to keep alive the heresy.

After a time, however, there came a lull. The Babi leaders adopted a new policy—the policy of concealment and secret propagandism, avoiding all open conflicts with the government. It was under the direction of a new leader, Mirza Huseyn Ali, called Beha u'llah, a half brother of Subh-i-Ezel (the successor of the Bab) that this took place. Subh-i-Ezel, to save his life, disguised himself and fled, and for a long time remained hidden. When, at length, he ventured to reappear, it was across the frontier, in Turkish territory. As he was more of a scholar and a devotee than a man of affairs, the interests of the Babi church were plainly beginning to suffer. Too many new claimants of the headship, new incarnations of Godhead, were allowed to manifest themselves and distract the church. The Babis were allowed to take up a too irreconcilable attitude toward the Persian authorities.

Beha'u'llah, thirteen years older than his brother, and a man of more resolute spirit and executive ability, to whom much of the administrative work of the church had been already intrusted, became convinced that Subh-i-Ezel was not equal to the situation. A community of religious enthusiasts, revolutionaries, visionaries and speculative mystics (for of such material the Babi church was in a great measure composed) needed a firmer hand than his gentle and contemplative half-brother could supply.

For a while the practical and determined Beha'u'llah managed things in his brother's name. But at length he concluded that he might as well have the official position as be the unrevered power behind the throne. It was not a difficult thing to do. He had but to proclaim himself as the real Point of Revelation, the long expected One who was to appear, of whose great glory and full divinity in the time to come the Babi had at first prophesied. As all the Babis agreed, the sign of "Him whom God shall manifest," who was to perfect and complete the Babi religion, was the revelation of verses. This was a very easy miracle,

and so in the year 1866 or 1867, at Adrianople, whither the Babi exiles had been removed because of the strife and disorders they had created while at Baghdad, Beha'u'llah "revealed" sundry signs in eloquent Arabic and Persian wherein he summoned all the Babis to acknowledge him as their supreme and sole chief and spiritual guide. Beha'u'llah was to be revered as the final Point or Goal of Revelation, to whom all the verses and prophecies of the Bab pointed, and the Bab was no longer to be looked upon as a veritable manifestation of the Divine but as a mere precursor of the more perfect, the ophany of Beha'u'llah. Subh-i-Ezel, who had been the appointed successor and for so many years had been revered as their authoritative teacher and incarnation of heavenly wisdom and virtue, was to be branded as the "First Letter of Denial" of the New Dispensation.

This proclamation shook the Babi church to its center and the communities were rent asunder by the most bitter of schisms; the majority of the Babis, especially the younger, accepted Beha'u'llah as their master. The other leaders who had been personal friends of the Bab and had exposed their lives in his behalf, stood stanchly by his nominee, the gentle visionary Subh-i-Ezel. But, one by one, they dropped away, victims of the unscrupulous violence of their rivals. Two of the Letters of the Living, the original apostles, were assassinated, one at Tabeiz, the other at Kerbela. At Adrianople and Acca half a dozen more of the older leaders, who stood by Ezel, were stabbed or poisoned by the followers of Beha. From sixteen to twenty of the older leaders were thus removed, and it is charged in the *Hasht-Bisht* that Beha'u'llah even made an attempt (which miscarried only by accident) to poison his half-brother. It was not proved that he ordered the assassinations; but he was evidently gratified by their occurrence, and said not a word to prevent them.

At any rate, if the end justifies the means, the means were approved by the victory achieved. The assassinations were a success. The weak Subh-i-Ezel was deserted. The great majority joined Beha's party. The Turkish government, to put a stop to the wrangling and disorders, exiled Subh-i-Ezel to Famagustain Cyprus, where he still lives in obscurity. Beha was sent to Acca, where he peacefully passed away in 1892. His son Abbas Effendi succeeded him, who is now looked upon as a spiritual head by all the Babis. Before his death he had worked a momentous revolution in Babism. As soon as he was established in his authority, he began to exercise the privilege which all the Babis recognized as belonging to the final Point of Revelation, to abrogate, change, develop and supercede the earlier revelations. He discouraged the vis-

ionary speculations of his followers, made the religion more moral and less metaphysical, and abolished many useless and impractical regulations; especially he did everything he could to conciliate the temporal authorities, even the Shah of Persia, whom the older Babis were accustomed to revere as the Nero of their faith. Believing that the new faith could grow better by assimilating the elements already estranged from the orthodox Musselman church, he strove steadily to diminish the ratio of Mohammedan thought in it and to seek a better understanding with the Christians, Jews, and Zoroastrians. In short, he tried to make Babism henceforth more of a universal system suitable to all mankind. The older Babi scriptures and epistles, with their magniloquent rhapsodies, foggymysticism and wild visions of the return of the Imam-Mahdi and the marvels of the new age, he allowed to fall into innocuous desuetude. The earlier history of the origin and rise of the Bab and his church was written over in an entirely new vein; the Bab was represented as a mere forerunner of Beha; Subh-i-Ezel was described as a coward and fugitive; his earlier friends, Hazrat-i-Kuddus and "Consolation of Eyes" were craftily depreciated, and Beha'u'llah and his Neo-Babi doctrines were profusely glorified, and every expression of detestation of the Shah which might interfere with the Beha's new policy of conciliating the government was eliminated. The effort to metamorphose thus radically the whole record of Babism fortunately failed through the fact that many of the early documents had previously passed into European hands; but the effort to establish pacific relations with the Persian government proved successful, and for thirty years the Babis have been free from public persecution, by a secret propaganda they have so diffused their doctrines that their numbers are now estimated about three millions.

We will now briefly consider the Babis literature. The writings of the Bab are extremely voluminous; one of his followers claimed that he wrote not less than a million verses. In general they are called the Beyan, or Exposition, although in a more special sense this term is applied only to such compositions as have the form of Arabic verse, a form considered pre-eminently inspired. Besides the Arabic verses, there are the commentaries on the Sura of Joseph, the Bismillah and the Wa'l-ase, and a larger commentary on the Koran; the Book of Recompense, the Book of Names, the Book of Figures, and a large number of prayers, supplications and miscellaneous writings. Subh-i-Ezel wrote "The Book of Light," and many other works. Mr. E. G. Brown, who has made a more thorough study of these books than any other European, says they contain "noble ideals," subtle metaphysical conceptions,

and splendid, though ill-defined aspirations. But they are so lost in trackless mazes of rhapsody and mysticism, so weighed down by trivial injunctions and impracticable ordinances that no casual reader can hope to find them."

The leading doctrine is that of Manifestations. Outside of God there is no other God. From Him all existences emanate; but they suffer diminution and imperfection in so doing. The world emanates from divinity by the action of seven attributes or letters; force, power, will, action, condescension, glory, and revelation. In the sympathetic stream that passes between the Infinite and the finite, God shows his living nature by his continued revelations with his creatures. All the great prophets and sages are the works of God; they come from him more really and return to him more directly than other men. As men cannot know the eternal essence of God but only the manifestation of the Divine Will, there occur from time to time incarnations of the primal will. Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Mohammed, were all such intermediaries between God and man. Each was successively more full of truth and grace than his predecessor, and revealed sufficient for the time. All these theophanies are identical in their essence, and differ only in circumstances, just as the sun which shines to-day is the same as the sun which shone yesterday. The periods when these great prophets or Imams flourish are the theophanic days, and the periods between are the periods of occultation. But even in this night, the last revealer still lives in concealment and communicates with his followers by certain gates. When the revealer is about to reincarnate himself again this great event is preceded by a number of prophetic gates or channels of communication.

After these new gates or seers appear, and schisms and certain other signs are observed, then the heaven of will, the proof of God, manifests himself. Coupled with this doctrine is a curious belief called that of "The Return." In the first Vahid or section of nineteen chapters in the Beyan it is asserted that Mohammed, the great prophet, Fatima, his daughter, the twelve Imams and the four gates (who followed the twelfth Imam), have returned to the life of the world with such as believed in them. In the second Vahid, it is taught that by the resurrection is meant the new manifestation; by the questioning of the tomb, the tidings of it brought by its messengers to those who slumber in ignorance; by the raising of the dead, the wakening of those who lie thus dead in ignorance, and so on; the ideas which prevail of a corporeal resurrection; a material heaven and hell, and the like, are mere figments of the imagination. Haji Mirza Yahya, the Babi historian, who had been a personal

friend and follower of the Bab, declares that this doctrine of the return means neither incarnation, absorption, nor transmigration. But he admits that "none knoweth it save those who have returned," and, if it is not substantially a doctrine of soul-transmigration it is difficult to say what it is. Not only in the Apostles of the Unity, but also in the bosoms of all the faithful, according to their respective careers and missions, does this communication of the divine and reincarnation of the great of the past occur. When one of them was found fulfilling a certain role which recalled that of some holy saint preceding him, it was said among the Babis, "That is the Imam-Riza, or Ali, or Jesus Christ, returned." Although the Babis constantly affirm their fidelity to the doctrine of divine unity, it is plain that we have here very potent germs of a luxuriant polytheism, and if the religion goes on we shall one day have personal cults, symbols and temples. Is it, after all, the long smothered spirit of ancient paganism that is reasserting itself so strangely against the too bare and hard monotheism of Islam which had been imposed upon it by force of arms?

A second peculiar doctrine of Babism is the sacred character of the number 19. As the word *almu*, "he who gives life," has 19 for its numerical equivalent, this, it was argued, is the divine number. As the world is only a divine emanation and rests on these same principles of life, this number 19 is found at the basis of all things rightly organized. Over the whole world this number should reign. Accordingly the Bab ordered his followers to reconstitute all divisions of time and space according to the sacred number. In the Babi year there were to be 19 months; and every month to have 19 days, every day 19 hours, and every hour 19 minutes. All measures of length and weight were also revolutionized by a division into 19. In the courts, the temples, and the ecclesiastical organizations, everything was to be regulated by the same numerical cycle. Naturally, therefore, the Apostles, or "Letters of the Living," as the Bab practically called them, were eighteen, who, with the Bab, constitute again the sacred number. It is worthy of notice that, although the Bab is the Point, the Divine Manifestation, yet it is not in him by himself that his virtue is held to be seated, but in that divine unity formed by this inspired college of 19. Hence when the Bab was put to death, the divine wisdom and authority which resided in him, constituting him the Point of Revelation, did not cease to be, but joined itself to the activity residing with the rest of the sacred college, and the signs of the Godhead appeared in the next in dignity among the sacred Letters. At the last judgment, the Point of Revelation is to preside.

All the pure, in recompense for their virtue, will have given to them the full revelation of truth; thus prepared, they will be united with God, to live eternally with Him, participating in all His perfections and happiness. The wicked will be annihilated. On the earth, when the Babi faith comes to its own, there will be established a faith at once monarchical, theocratic, and democratic. On the places where the Babi leaders died as martyrs, the holiest sanctuaries will be built. In the temples, there will be employed the most precious materials and richest stuffs and every kind of costly decorations, with lofty thrones for the priests. The faithful will have talismans—star-shaped amulets, in which they can put entire confidence. In the Babi state, when it can be set up, the unbelievers who reject the Bab, will have no legal rights. All their property may rightly be taken from them, and five provinces, at the very heart of the Persian empire, are named in which they are not even to be allowed to reside. When a town or province of the unbelievers is conquered, one-fifth of the spoils belong to the head of the church, then the warriors are to take what they need and the rest is given to the poor, but the lives of the unbelievers are not to be taken simply because of unbelief.

The Babi may not engage in public prayer, except upon specially solemn occasion, and the ablutions and the doctrines of ceremonial impurity of which the Moslems make so much are entirely abrogated, since they give God neither pain nor pleasure. These two reforms would remove very great sources of national and religious friction, and be a genuine service (say those who know the East) to oriental society. To the government, a certain tax, or per cent, on every miskal of gold or silver is due. If one pays, he fulfills his duty. If he does not he should not be constrained, but the punishment should be left to God. The penalties and chastisements allowed by Babism are very mild. The death penalty is never mentioned. Torture and blows are formally prohibited. The legal penalties are of two kinds. The first is a fine nineteen times the injury, or some higher multiple of nineteen, according to the gravity of the case. The second kind of penalty consists in interdiction of conjugal indulgences for a number of days or months, according to the gravity of the transgression. For example, if a man strikes a child he is prohibited from approaching his wife for ninety days. Begging, so common in the East, and regarded as rather meritorious than involving any disgrace, is strictly forbidden. Everything belongs to God, and the rich hold their wealth only in trust for Him and must give liberally to the cause of religion and to those who have not enough.

The Bab encouraged commerce and recommended tranquillity of mind, affectionate relations and an extreme politeness. Discussion should be avoided. The books of the faith are to be diligently studied, but writings alien to the Babi doctrine should be avoided and even destroyed. Asceticism is reprov'd. The Babis should not fear that which gives pleasure. Rich clothes, silken goods, embroideries and jewels not only may, but ought to be procured by the faithful, according to the measure of their resources. Especially at weddings should those who are able adorn themselves richly; but, if they are not able, they should not mourn, for their Lord, at the last judgment, will bestow on his faithful servants these rewards.

The Bab attached extreme importance to marriage and to the establishment and upholding of the family—that great desideratum in Asiatic civilizations. To continue the family line is a religious duty, and after eleven years of age marriage is recommended. A second wife is permitted but not recommended. Concubinage, a common vice of the East, is severely indicted. There were important measures in the interest of woman. But the Bab did not content himself with these. He also prohibited divorce and abrogated the use of the veil. The great plague of Persian and most Moslem societies is not so much the license they give to have more than one wife, but the freedom which the laws of divorce allow to the husband to change his wife at any moment and on the most frivolous pretext. The transitory nature of the usual marriage has done much more than polygamy or concubinage to deprave the relations of the sexes and render real marriage unions impossible. Most women from twenty-two to twenty-four years old, says Gobineau, have had two or three husbands. The Bab struck at these disorders by prohibiting divorce except in cases of extreme necessity, and then only after waiting a year, and by interdicting the covering of woman's face with the veil—a custom, Eastern observers say, which gives especial opportunity and encouragement to the most unprincipled intrigues. Those who became Babis were to associate together freely, though discreetly, without regard to sex. At the hospitable table which the well-to-do Babi was to spread women as well as men were to be admitted. Women might also go on pilgrimages, but they were to be encouraged rather to attend to their homes and children; if they go on pilgrimages they are to be very careful about over-fatigue or danger to their health. No child is to receive a blow before five years of age; after that time it must not receive more than five blows at a time and these must not be on the bare skin. Parents

should desire the young to laugh, play games and to do everything which will make them happy.

According to the Bab no divine revelation is final. His was the latest, but not the last manifestation of the deity in human form. There are numerous passages in his writings which intimate that he is but the forerunner of One to come. The expression frequently occurs, "He whom God shall manifest." His followers have never been agreed as to the exact meaning of this phrase. The prisoner at Acca came to interpret it as referring primarily to himself, and boldly claimed that he was the one predicted, setting aside the Bab's nomination of his brother to the headship. The larger portion of the Babis have come to acknowledge his claims, yielding to him divine homage. He assumed the name of Beha, i. e., Light. Often he is designated as "Beha 'Ullah," or "Light of God," and his followers are known as Behais as well as Babis. The younger brother is commonly known as Subhi-Ezel, i. e., "Light of Eternity," and his disciples are called Sub-i-Ezelis. Though the Beha proclaimed himself to be the divine being incarnate, he made no pretense of working miracles, but like the Arabian prophet and like the Bab, he offered as proof of his claims simply and alone the superlative excellence of his compositions. Up to the time of his recent death he resided in no small degree of comfort at Acca in a mansion encompassed by orange groves furnished him by the Turkish government, numerous Persian attendants surrounding the place carefully guarding all approach of strangers to their revered master, keeping up an air of impressive awe as was supposed to befit the abode of so exalted a personage. In his writings more is made of himself and his own teachings than of the Bab and his prescriptions. Among other products of his pen are noticeable several letters addressed to sovereigns of Europe and Asia and to the President of the United States, in which he appeals, as by divine authority, for the cessation of wars, for international comity and good feeling, for the prevalence of justice and righteousness, and for the recognition of his claims as the present representative of God on earth. Since his death it is not known what position is taken by his followers with respect to a successor, but up to the present time the Behais have been gaining converts widely throughout Persia. He taught that every age must have its own prophet inspired from God. He claimed that he was inspired and that he had frequent communications from God telling him how to direct the people. He openly claimed to be the Imam, and he taught that the priesthood and the religion were corrupt and that he was appointed to renew them. He did not oppose the Koran, but at the same

time said that every age needs a new Bible. He claimed to have received a Bible from God.

He taught the equality of both sexes and paid homage to woman. He showed that it was against the law of God to marry more than one woman or to keep concubines. Further, it is against the law of society and the happiness of women for man to have more than one wife. The law of divorce, which is common among Mohammedans, was not practiced by the new sect. The place of women among them is the same as among Christians. The prophet taught that the spirit of charity ought to be as a flame of fire in the hearts of his followers. He said we cannot please God if we see our brother in need and do not help him; if we pray He will not hear us, if we worship Him He will turn his face away from us. Believing this, the spirit of charity is very strong among them and they support the needy. The use of wine and all intoxicants is strictly forbidden. They are very kind to people of other faiths who are not Mohammedans, them, they hate. The Babis charge the Christians with Jewish blindness in not recognizing their prophet as the returning Christ, with a new gospel. But no true Christian can study the principles of Babism without a painful conviction of its entire unworthiness to be called a gospel in any sense. It is a system of crude, mystical ideas, barren of all spiritual value to humanity. Religion is made by it to consist chiefly in the worship of God as manifested in the assumed incarnations. Nothing, scarcely, is taught of the Divine Holiness, nor of sin, nor of repentance; nothing of Divine love, nor of a Savior, nor of holy living. The principles of morality inculcated are indeed somewhat higher than those current among the Moslems and emphasis is laid on sincerity, as all essential in religion, a quality conspicuously absent with the Shiah, but in fact the followers of the Beha pay slight heed to these nobler teachings while they seize eagerly upon the freedom granted them from the exactions of Mohammedan law. They are addicted to drinking wine even to excess. As to the doctrine of the equality of men and women which the Bab enjoined, it is but partially maintained in practice, and the same may be said in respect to other of his teachings intended to elevate the position of woman. Indeed, what valuable fruit could we expect from a religious system which argues against creation and the resurrection, which has no adequate conception of the nature of sin, presents no higher motive to goodness than the extinction and final absorption of the human soul into the Divine Being, and holds up no fear of punishment nor serious loss to transgressors of the moral law. It is indeed amazing, that men are so ready to devote themselves to

death, at the hands of their enemies, for a system of religious beliefs so empty of all practical benefit. The enmity between them and the orthodox Mohammedans has been very severe. From the killing of Bab until the present time, they have been trying to kill the Shah. In their first attempt they failed, but May 1, 1896, while the Shah was worshipping in the most holy place in the mosque, he became the victim of a fanatic Babi who had disguised himself as a woman. This Babi, while under disguise, shot the king, who died two minutes afterwards. Some thought the government would again persecute them, but there were some hindrances which would not permit this. In the first place their religion is kept a secret; it is impossible to know who belongs to the new sect. Secondly, many of the high classes and royal officers belong to this sect, and for this reason it would be impossible to persecute them. Thirdly, their number to-day would reach 3,000,000, or about that, and to kill this enormous company would certainly damage the government.

Their antagonism against the government, and against orthodox Mohammedism, is caused entirely by the lack of freedom of religious worship. We cannot regard it other than wild fanaticism; and the worst of it is, that it is fanatism which has instigated some of its followers to the assassination of its adversaries, giving color to the prediction of many that, if the Babi should ever attain to a position of political power, they would prove the most intolerant and vengeful of all sects. Our sympathies can but go out to them, for the terrible sufferings which they have undergone in behalf of what they hold to be the truth, and above all their pitiful blindness and folly. The chief virtue to be laid to their credit is their mutual devotion and fraternal affection. This, and the religious liberty they practice, are the chief ties that bind them together as a sect, and in these, doubtless, lies the secret of their constant growth. They are very warm friends of the Christians, placing in them the greatest confidence; sometimes they will even lodge in the houses of Christians, and eat with them without questioning. This a strict Mohammedan would never do. They readily allow the Christian to preach to them and to discuss religion with them. Yet it is not an easy matter to convert them, for one must know their manner of life and religious doctrines to successfully meet their arguments. A few, however, have been truly converted. This filled the Mohammedans with hatred, both against the Christians and the converts. When the Christian shows the superiority of Christ, and of His doctrine, over that of their Prophet Bab, they are forced into silence. They are now securing many converts from Mohammedism, and it is believed that the time will



ABBAS EFFENDI.

The Babis assert that the Bab was merely a forerunner of Behaullah, who was God incarnate. Abbas Effendi, son of Behaullah, is recognized and claimed as the Son of God. The Babis also claim 50,000,000 followers, ten thousand of whom are in the United States.

come when religious toleration will be obtained by them. This will also give the Christians a good opportunity of preaching the gospel. It is a matter of some hopefulness to the Christian that these people listen to the gospel with the greatest readiness, and consequently by reading with them it seems possible to lead them to see the errors into which they have fallen. There is greater encouragement to missionary effort in the fact that these people are everywhere undermining or relaxing the orthodox Moslem belief, and so are opening the doors of conscience and faith among the Mohammedans to the saving truths of the gospel of the Crucified Son of God.

There are about ten thousand Babis in the United States. The Babis started in the United States since the Columbian Exposition (1893). Now they have 800 believers in Chicago, 1,200 in New York City, and the rest are scattered throughout the United States.

The following are a few extracts from the report of the Behaists:

The following is the report of the meeting of Behaists in New York, as stenographically taken by two stenographers, Mr. Harris and Miss Stout, at the Genealogical Hall, on Thursday evening, May 10th, 1900, this being the adjourned meeting of Tuesday, May 8th. The meeting was presided over by Howard MacNutt, and on the platform were Abdel Kerim Effendi and two interpreters, Mr. Haddad for the Arabic, and Mirza Raffle for the Persian.

The following proceedings were had:

Mr. Haddad—Abdel Kerim Effendi wants me to say to you that every one of us must praise and thank God for His grace and bounty in maintaining peace and perfect harmony among us, and that all of us have to turn our faces towards our Lord, Abbas Effendi, and that any one who violates this is just as if he had turned against God and violated the Covenant of God; and he also wants to announce to you that he has laid down some rules and laws for the government and protection of the truth in New York, and that these laws are to be kept with Mr. MacNutt, and are to be translated into Arabic and sent to our lord, Abbas Effendi, to be approved of, and then every one of us has to follow these laws as recorded by Abdel Kerim Effendi and approved by our Lord, Abbas Effendi.

Mr. MacNutt—I stand tonight in a very difficult position. I have just come down in the car from my home sitting beside our beloved friend, Abdel Kerim Effendi, unable to speak a word with him, and yet he is a treasury loaded with riches which are mine if I could reach them, if I had the key of language. In the course of conversation at my house, Abdel Kerim Effendi has conveyed to me his wishes, his commands, concerning the Truth and its administration in this city. I believe him to be, as you must believe him to be, the emissary, the messenger of Abbas Effendi, our Lord and Master; and when he speaks to me the authority of Abbas Effendi is conveyed. I shall endeavor to convey to you as well as I can, in language, by my force of mentality, what he has said. If there is a single point which you would question, and I urge you particularly to question if you do not understand, if you will signify that by simply raising your hand, I will submit the question through Mr. Haddad in Arabic, and through Mirza Raffle in Persian, that we may know what he says. I do not ask you to take what I say at all for fear that I may make a mistake.

And just here let me say, as it fits in this place, let me tell a story he told me. He said that in Bagdad when the Manifestation was there a believer came to him and said that he had a very troublesome neighbor, that this man was wicked and hated him and lost no opportunity for abusing him, and after the Manifestation had heard his story he said to this believer, "Go and kill him."

And the man went off and bought a knife and dagger and put it in the folds of his garment. That the Manifestation immediately after stating this to the believer had sent a messenger in another way to the troublesome neighbor and upon some pretext had gotten him away from the place, so that when the believer upon murder bent reached the spot the neighbor was absent. Then the Manifestation sent after the believer again, and he said to him, "Did you follow my instructions, did you kill the man?" He said, "No; I could not find him, but I am ready to kill him." The Manifestation said, "Did I tell you to kill him with a knife?" The believer answered "No." Then the Manifestation said, "I meant that you should kill him with love." This was a story told by Abdel Kerim Effendi last night to emphasize the point that we should love our enemies.

He said wisely that the greatest wisdom among ourselves was to consult freely with each other, and not to treasure things in secret, but to talk it out and have it out and be good about it. That when the House of Judges meets they should have a copy of the Kitab El-Akdas with them, and as it were, an oath and covenant of God, and that the blessing of God and His Spirit shall be invoked upon their actions.

(Report signed by)

W. HOOPER HARRIS,
LAVINIA C. SHORT.

A MESSAGE FROM ACCA.

Keep its contents ever before you, as a guide to the path of righteousness. This is not intended as a tract, and should be known only to those who have received and respect the message. Consider yourself the guardian of it.

INTRODUCTION TO THE MESSAGE.

My presence before you tonight is in the meek and humble capacity of the messenger and servant of the Master—Abdul-Beha, and as His messenger I am sent to you to deliver His words as pronounced from His very lips, and as written by His hand. The present conditions of the believers in America made Him very sad and He said that it caused Him more sorrow than all the persecutions and oppressions combined. But before I begin to read His words, it is necessary to define as to whom the message is sent and by whom it is sent, then we will better realize the importance of the words, to comprehend the truth as it is, and accordingly act and do in the future as will indicate your obedience.

This message is sent by the Master, Abbas Effendi, The Lord of the Kingdom, the Agent of God. It is sent by the one into whose hands the Kingdom has been delivered and the reins of government have been placed, and for this reason, he who disobeys His commands disobeys the commands of God. In His hands the management of the Kingdom has been entrusted, in accordance with the provisions in the Book of the Covenant, the last will and testament of the Manifestation. These words are sent to you by the Greatest Branch, Abbas Effendi, the one whom God has chosen and desired, the one who is branched from the Ancient of Days, by the Branch who is building the Holy House as referred to in the prophecies, and who has already begun the structure. It is sent by Abdul-Beha, the servant of God, who has clad Himself with the mantle of servitude and devotion for the Beloved of God, and who is the Eldest Son, who promised to come in the Kingdom with His Father. By the One who was to renew the Cup with His disciples in the Kingdom with His Father. By the One who taught the world to pray—"Thy Kingdom come on Earth as it is in Heaven." By the One who was and now is the living Example of the spiritual and the righteous. By the One whose blessed Tablets have been spread everywhere, numbering in the thousands, and no one who has been honored with one of these finds it difficult to distinguish the texts of these Holy Utterances from those of other human beings, for they are incomparable. By the One whose Supreme and Exalted position is acknowledged by every one, and even by His most bitter enemies. By the One to whom the Manifestation referred to in the Tablet to the Czar of Russia, saying: "The Father has come, and also the Son

in the Holy Valley, who cries out, 'Labeick, O God, Labeick.' " Meaning, I am ready, O God, I am ready. By the One whose Love is incomparable, whose character is unquestionable. By the One who sends to you His great Love, salutations and blessings.

The Message is sent to the American Believers, to the Beloved of God, to the honest, sincere and faithful servants of God. To you who are pioneers, and whose actions and life will linger in the memories of those who will come after you. To those upon whose character, uprightness and energy the success of the Cause depends. To those who are requested to lay a solid and valid foundation for the Kingdom of God on Earth; a foundation which will not be affected by storm or wind. To those who will be called upon to oppose, with the sword of wisdom and truth, the armies of error with whom you are surrounded, and not to oppose each other. To you whose duty it is to ignore everything for the sake of union and agreement. To you who are now laboring under trying circumstances—tested as to your firmness and faith—and who must pass through the fire of purification. To you who are not to allow any seditious rumors to prevent you from coming into the Kingdom. To the Beloved Children whose hearts have been kindled with the love of God. To those who are commanded to live as one soul dwelling in different bodies, to live as brethren of one family, and who are expected to make this vivifying truth the basis of their practical life. To those who are commanded to spare no means within their power to promote the cause of God and exalt His word. To those on whom rests the responsibility of creating and maintaining peace and harmony. To those whom God has chosen to become the vivifiers of the world; and this was written in a Tablet and decreed by the Supreme Pen.

Therefore, do not let the waves of oblivion roll over this message, which is most important, and is for our own edification and for our own good.

ANTON HADDAD.

Dear Believers—

It was a great thing for me to have that blessed opportunity to go to Syria and see the blessed face of our Lord.

Of course my visit to Syria was on private business, but at the same time I was graciously granted the permission to go and pay a visit to the headquarters, which visit, I hope, will tend to bring everything into perfect peace and tranquility, especially under such circumstances which are known to you, and it is hoped also, that now is the time to unite with each other, and live in perfect agreement in order to boldly defend our position, and stand firmly before anything that may come against us.

You know that some time ago, the American believers were not allowed to go to Acca, owing to the disturbances raised up by the contradictors who violated the commandments of the Manifestation, [the brothers of our Lord, and their followers].

On my arrival there, I found that this prevention applied also to all the believers wherever they are, in order to refute the statement of these contradictors and to show the Turkish Government plainly and clearly that the intentions of our Lord and His followers are only religious and have not the least connection with politics, as stated by the enemies, but on the contrary, are for peace and tranquility. Some of the believers who came from Persia, after a long journey of about sixty days by land and sea, suffering a great deal of trouble and hardship, were not allowed to remain there more than two days and some of them were telegraphed, while on their way, to go back home, fearing the Government might do them harm through the intrigues of those bitter enemies.

These circumstances made me share with them the difficulty in going to Acca, and spending there a certain time. But on my arrival at Beyreut, through the grace of Our Lord, I found a telegram, sent to one of the believers known as Moh'Eff. Martaba Bagdadi, telling him, "Let Haddad come without waiting for permission." This made me thank God for His mercy to this unworthy servant, and I proceeded to Acca at once, in compliance with the command.

I need not give you now any description of the headquarters of Our Lord, His dignity and wisdom, and how He receives guests, etc You have been

acquainted with all this for some time, but I wish only to relate to you the very words pronounced from the blessed mouth of Our Lord regarding the present condition of the believers in America. He said: "The field in America is now likened unto a field of land in which are planted small trees having not the powers within themselves to stand any assault or attacks from outside, or to repel the powers of storm and wind. Therefore, it is very necessary at first to treat such trees very mildly and take much care of them until they become very strong, solid and firm.

Consequently the guides and teachers who are in charge of this field must first deny themselves and practice chastity, purity and love all sincerely, cut their hearts from the world and not care for the comforts of their bodies or for any other worldly thing. And they must also abolish from their minds the word "Ego" or "I," and be servants unto all, faithful and honest shepherds, watching very strictly day and night, putting all their efforts to the care of their sheep and secure them inside the fold. If any of the sheep go astray, they must do their best and not rest until they find it. They have to serve the worshipers of God, for He (praise to Him) is not in need of our service, our submissiveness or prayers, our kindness or assistance, etc., but those who are in need of such things are the worshipers of God, and by this they will please God the Almighty. Jesus said, And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water, only in the name of a disciple, it is as though he had given it to me, Verily, I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

"Every one of us, and especially the guides or the deliverers of the truth must know that what He does or acts, He does only to Himself and none will profit but Himself, and in giving the truth none will enjoy but himself."

"The singer who has a sweet, soft and gentle voice, will, when he sings, please himself far better than he pleases his audience, and therefore his pleasure and delight is confined to himself. It is so in the case of the artist, the photographer and the inventor. Each one of them has a special delight in himself—in the thing he does—more than others have in their works. The same is true with the deliverer of the Truth. There is nothing in these days more important than the delivery of the Truth. It is the best thing and the greatest, because the future happiness of man and his comfort, the highness of his position and exaltation, depends on his delivering the Truth to the worshipers of God."

"The guide will not be confirmed by God unless he is a sincere and faithful servant to God. It might be that sometimes it happens that the guide will be successful, but it is only for a short time, but at last he will fall down if he is not thoroughly sincere, even if he is the greatest philosopher and the most learned man. It happens sometimes that the simple surpass and excel the intelligent and bright."

He said also: "Besides my real knowledge, I have realized by experience that the sincere servants of God have in many cases excelled the learned, and although ignorant and simple, they were confirmed by God owing to their sincerity, and to such an extent that it made the others astonished and perplexed. There was a certain riddler once in Persia of low breed, simple and ignorant of anything, but owing to his pure sincerity of God he was confirmed by God and became one of the greatest; so that he was envied by even the most learned men in Persia, through the wonderful knowledge given to him by God. Take as an example: the disciples of Christ were fishermen of the lowest and meanest, simple, ignorant and despised by every one of their time, but owing to their sincerity they became the greatest and are even now worshiped by Kings and Emperors; their names are highly honored and respected by the great men of this age. As it was in the past, so it will be in the future."

We are requested by Our Lord "to live in peace, love, union and agreement, and overlook the faults and defects of others and to see only their good actions and not their bad ones. These are things that will lead to perfect success and thorough happiness."

To illustrate this more fully, Our Lord, Abdel Beha, told the following story: "Once on a certain time when Christ and his disciples were traveling from one place to another, they came near a dead dog. One of the disciples said:

'How ugly this dog is;' another said, 'How offensive and putrid he is,' another, 'How bad;' and another, 'Fie on him, how abominable.' On this Christ was anxious to show to them something that was good in that dog, thus to teach them that first they should look for the good things without caring in the least for the bad, and in some manner, he made the dog's teeth appear, saying to his disciples, 'How white and beautiful are his teeth.' This made the disciples ashamed, realizing at the same time that they were mistaken and that what they said was wrong. This lesson teaches us how to behave toward each other and how to view and treat each other, i. e., to look for the good things in each other, caring not for the bad."

He said also: "Tell the believers, if they hear some day that something has happened to their Chief, Abdel Beha, whether killed or crucified, they must not fear or feel broken-hearted, sad, or afflicted, but on the contrary should strengthen and comfort each other, stand firm and continue working in the field of God, teaching and delivering the truth to all the people." "Tell El-Ahbab in America, that it is very necessary in these days that they should not notice the bad things of others, nor mind the small, trifling worldly things, but seek the spiritual, which tends to their strengthening and confirmation, for these days are the days of persecutions, dangers and perils, and accordingly they ought to unite with each other, for union is power, and let them take as their example in everything, Abdel-Beha, The Master."

You know very well that our Lord is suffering from several things besides what he suffered in the past, but yet he is very patient, and his special desire and pleasure is to die in the cause of God, although greatly persecuted by his enemies, he is powerful enough to have them dispersed, yet he is very loving, compassionate and merciful for the sake of the cause of God, and requests every one of the believers to follow his steps, and by this, they will have the desire of his heart fulfilled.

The Master also said: "Perhaps you have heard some things about Ibn-Abhar. He is a Persian teacher and one of the greatest in knowledge and spirituality and holds a very high position among the believers; still, when asked by any one about any other certain believer he generally says, 'I am not worthy to unloose the latchet of his shoes.' This teaches us humility and that we ought to speak very well of others, even to prefer them to ourselves, that we should not boast by saying, 'I am the man and nobody else.' The believers should be thankful to the guide or teacher, and faithful to him for what he has done for them, in giving them that treasured thing which could not be estimated or re-compensated."

"What use will it be to you if you are an extinguished lamp and the other lamps are bright and brilliant, or what harm will it do if you are bright and the others dark? What profit will you get if you are poor and the others rich, or what harm will it do you if you are rich and the others are in need of you? And so on in all cases. Under these circumstances, every one should at first reform himself and better his condition; when this is settled with him he will do a great deal of good to others and be competent to fulfill many very important duties, then his words will have a great effect on the hearts of others. I love every one of you and therefore I wish you to love each other sincerely."

He also said: "Tell the believers that I want the strong ones among them to strengthen the weak, just as Mary Magdalen did after the death of Christ. On that famous event the disciples of Christ became very weak and disappointed, and some of them were full of doubts, and were likely to disbelieve in him. At last they went to Mary and said to her, 'Do you not know He is dead?' She replied, 'Well it does not matter; was the soul killed or the body?' They answered, 'The body.' Then she said to them, 'Do not fear, He is still alive and will be with us always, and is ready at all times to help us. Go, be firm and strong, and do not let small things trouble you or fill you with doubts. Go and preach the word of God to every one with sincere faith and you will be confirmed by the Holy Spirit.' So they were encouraged by her and went on preaching and teaching, thus she was the cause of strengthening them and promoting the truth among all the people."

Abdel Beha wants you to follow the steps of that great woman, especially if you come under similar circumstances. He wants you to take no thought for any other thing but the cause of God, and to be as St. Paul when he said, 'I once had knowledge, wisdom and philosophy, but after I knew Christ I forgot everything, and now I do not know but Christ.'" If believers or guides fall into temptations, or commit any wrong, the others ought reform such infirmities with the spirit of sincere love for his edification, that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify God. Whosoever of you, if he had a certain beautiful tree in his garden for a long time, during which long time it was giving good fruits, would cut it down if, for one year he seeks fruit on this tree and find none; will he not be sad and have pity? Will he not wait another year and take much care of it, until he removes all cause which stood against that tree and injured it: this must be the case with the Believers, especially with the teachers and guides. Whosoever of you, if he had all his clothes saturated with water, would care in the least if some small drops of water were thrown on him by another? Of course he would not care, for such drops will not affect him at all. Thus we should not notice the small faults committed against us by others. To speak evil against believers, the guides or the teachers, will hurt but yourselves. Everyone is liable to mistakes and to fall into temptations; therefore we ought not to expect perfection in anybody. Jesus said, "There is none good but One, and He is God." "No one can claim the Behaist religion unless very sincere and honest 'and born of water and the Spirit,' as Jesus said. Therefore, he who comes to this religion with perfect and pure sincerity will prosper and succeed thoroughly; otherwise, success will be only for a short time and then will fail."

"Fear not any trouble, persecution or calamity which may befall you, for it is said that when the flag of the truth appears it will be cursed by the people of the east and west; just as it was in the past, so it will be now without the least difference."

"Seek ye first the Kingdom of God." One of the believers in Acca spoke to me (the master), that the only desire he was begging to attain was to get bread and water only without taking any thought for good clothes, and to devote himself for the service of his Lord; but owing to his sincerity, God the Almighty, has given him, without knowing how, instead of bread and water on his table, more than ten kinds of good food. I have received news from Persia that someone there has imitated the picture of the Manifestation and sold it to one of the believers there for a sum of about \$200, thus be careful not to be deceived by any one, for the real picture is not in the possession of any one but Abdel Beha."

[These are the words of Our Lord translated to you, word by word. May God the Almighty help us keep them and take them as a lamp for our feet. Amen.]

(Signed) ANTON HADDAD.

January 9, 1900.

THE WORDS OF OUR LORD RELATING TO DISAGREEMENT AMONG THE BELIEVERS.

"Disagreement among the believers is likened unto the clouds which prevent the rays of the sun from reaching into the space covered by the clouds. Although it may be for a short time only, the power of the rays will undoubtedly demolish the clouds, yet the clouds will stop the rays for a while and consequently deprive the creatures of God from that privilege of enjoying the beauty of the sun during the existence of the clouds."

"Accordingly, disagreement among the believers has the same effect and result. It prevents the confirmation of God for a while. No confirmation to any one as long as disagreement is in existence."

"But know that the cause of God can never be demolished or destroyed and no one whatever is able to prevent or even stop its appearance and spreading. It may become latent or delayed for one, two or three years, but at last it will appear in spite of all the hindrances, difficulties, and impediments that come in its way."

"Every one of you is aware that the tree has a special time for its leaves to come out, another for its flowers, and another for its fruits; but it may happen some year that icy weather and intenseness of cold may prevail for a while and thus stop the tree from coming out in time. Do you think that if all the world should unite, can they stop the coming of Spring? O no, it must come by force, although the circumstances are not suitable, still the trees bring out leaves, flowers, and fruits. This is the case of the cause of God and is after the same method. If delayed for a while nothing can prevent its appearance and promotion, for God is able to raise up some other people who will give their fruits in time: but the great calamity will be on the souls who were in existence during that time of disagreement, because these souls will be deprived of all the benefits that were offered to them. Thus they will be losing and the souls coming after them gaining. Disagreement is likened unto the destroyer of homes. It is an old saying that 1,000 builders are not equal to one destroyer—how much more if there are 1,000 destroyers after one builder? Do your best and use every effort to unite. Have accord and harmony among you, so that you may be able to defend yourselves and oppose all the collusions and attacks that may come against you."

You are a small army and very few in number in comparison with those around you. If dissension is existing among you and your opinions are different, everyone of you wishing to fight with a special sort of arms, i. e., some with swords, some with rifles, some with spears and some with guns, what will be the result? Defeat! and you will never see victory. But if you will unite together with one heart, one mind, one opinion, and one word, you will be able to fight all the armies of the world, and stand firmly before them. Truly, you have before you all the different armies of the world, and you have to fight them. You will overcome them if you unite and receive the confirmation of God. When in Persia we were very few in number, but owing to our unity and harmony, and our fighting with one kind of arms, we stood before our numerous enemies, fought and at last defeated them and gained the victory."

"There are before you so many temptations, trials, afflictions, calamities and difficulties because you have to be purified through fire and sifted through the sieve in order to separate the wheat from the tares. Verily I say unto you none will be saved but the believers, and from the believers only the sincere, and even those are in great danger, especially in such a time."

"Let no seditious rumors prevent you from coming into the Kingdom of God and receiving the Spirit of Confirmation. Take for an example Jesus Christ, when He was here on earth 1900 years ago, how He was despised by the people to an extent unimaginable. How the Jews and even the Romans refused to have Him buried in their cemeteries, and at last He was interred in a dung-hill which they call now Golgotha. How in the second century after Christ some of the so-called learned people sprang up and wrote many books in which they denied Christ and His appearance among the people—that there was no person such as Christ, and, in fact, there was no one by this name, that it was only the invention of Peter and Paul, and so many other things besides. But look at the result now, and see! Consider how powerful is the cause of God! Be firm in the faith and let no doubts come to your mind, for this century is the most important of all. He who pronounces one word of truth now, that word will continue to wave and vibrate without end and will never be annihilated; but not so the contrary. The same result follows those who commit good deeds and bad deeds. Think of the actions and deeds done in the time of the prophets and apostles, and consider—what were they? They were nothing but trifling things in comparison with those done after their times; but we know very well that these small things became known to everybody and will be forever and ever; while the great things done after the times of the apostles were known for a short time only and then were forgotten. What was done by some of the women and men mentioned in the Scriptures, in the time of the apostles? They did

nothing of great importance. Some of them received the apostles in their houses, others rendered them service, while others gave them protection and assistance. But after the time of the apostles many built churches, others spent all their money in a charitable way, but nothing is now known about them. What a great difference there is between their works."

"Look at the time of Christ! What of the two thieves crucified with him? Each pronounced but one word, and these two words became known for many generations up to the present time, and will still linger in the memories of those who will come after us, although a great many people did greater things after the time of Christ, they were not to be compared with the words of the thieves. Why is this? Is it because what took place in the time of Christ and apostles was done in the time of their appearance, the time of distress and persecution. This is the case at present. He who does a very small thing now, that thing will be remembered forever by every one, but the things done after this time, however great they may be, will never have the same effect, but will be remembered by some and last only for a short time. To do now is of greater preference and importance than hereafter, owing to the paucity of the number of the believers and the circumstances they are surrounded with; for after this time the believers will number millions and millions and they will be the majority everywhere. You are the pioneers and have to work very hard."

"You have to be firm and solid. If success in the worldly things (which are nothing in comparison with spiritual) depends on firmness, how much more is the spiritual? He who stands firm will succeed, but the cowards who draw back will never see success. Disagreement is just like poison—whenever the poison enters the body it will kill it at once, notwithstanding its vitality and strength. So beware not to let this kind of poison enter your heart."

"The Kingdom of God is also likened unto the temple of man. We know very well that such temple is composed of many members which differ greatly in shape, form, action and office, and when these different members act in harmony with each other and have the real perfect affinity and attraction among them, they form together that temple which will be thoroughly ready to receive the Spirit—although so various and different. We cannot say that one member is preferred to another, or is of greater importance in the formation of the temple. No, we cannot say that, for each member has its own office and by the action of all in harmony and unison, a perfect result is produced. So is the case with the Kingdom of God, which Kingdom is composed of different members, and if these members, although differing in quality, form, shapes and characters, act in harmony with each other and in perfect agreement, they will form the Kingdom of God and will be ready to receive the confirmation of His Spirit. But if disagreement falls among them and each one wants to make himself greater than the other, thinking of his high office and importance, the Kingdom of God will not be formed of such members and they will never be ready or worthy to receive the confirmation of His Spirit."

"The Kingdom of God is also likened unto a garden of trees. We all know that a garden in order to be beautiful must contain a good number of trees, various in size and different in colors, flowers and fruits. Some of the trees are tall and some short, some bear good and sweet fruits, some sour and some bitter, but all these trees are necessary to form a garden. No tree can say to the other, 'I am the most important organ of the lot,' or 'I am more profitable than you.' Not so whatever. Because all the trees in that garden are watered by the same Hand, having the same sun and the same breeze passing on them. If any distinction is to be made among them, such distinction must belong to the owner of the garden and not to the trees themselves."

"So is the Kingdom of God. He is the owner and Lord of the Kingdom, and everything relating to the members of the Kingdom is in His hands and belongs to Him only, although the members are not equal in everything, but different in size, disposition, quality, character, conduct, color, and fruit. Yet, all of them are necessary to form the Kingdom, but they cannot make any distinction among themselves. High distinction belongs only to the Lord of the Kingdom. No one can prefer himself to others, because all are watered by the

same Hand, having the same sun, the same breeze of air passing over them; therefore, they should be as one, loving and respecting each other and considering themselves as brothers and sisters and even more, for in spirituality, kinship is not to be considered whatever. Jesus Christ said, "He who hears my word is my brother, sister and mother."

"Agreement, union, affinity and attraction have a great effect on the universe. Take our globe, for instance. It became so large through the great and perfect union, cohesion, affinity and attraction among the different ingredients and particles of which it is composed, but the small things which we see could not be any larger, owing to the lack of affinity between their and other substance. Thus affinity has a great effect in the enlargement of anything. So also among the believers. It should be the most important factor and the basis of their growth, otherwise they will go asunder if they ever meet with collision or difficulty."

"Tell my beloved that great persecutions and troubles are awaiting them. They have not seen anything yet. They will be attacked by all the people around them, ridiculed and despised for His sake. A great many books will be written against them and the papers will attack them very severely." He said also that "a woman of great ability will write an article against the believers full of lies and false things, but they ought not to let these things trouble or give them the least doubt or fear. They will gain the victory and receive His confirmation and strength if they only listen to His words and unite together as one soul and spirit."

[These are the translated words of Our Lord spoken to me in response to the information I gave Him regarding the difficulties among the American believers. These notes were afterward corrected by His own hand, and may God help you to accept and practice them.]

(Signed) ANTON HADDAD.

TO THE AMERICANS—A DECLARATION—HE IS GOD.

O ye, the beloved of God and the children of God, the new heaven is already come, the new earth is already established, and the new Holy Jerusalem is already descended from heaven, from the presence of the Almighty, in the form of a glorious virgin, excellent in her beauty, an unequalled gem among the other virgins, secluded in the tent, ready to receive. The angels of the Highest of the Kingdom have called in the ears of the inhabitants of the earth and heaven with a loud and melodious voice, saying: "This is the city of God and His residence with the holy and sanctified souls of His servants. He shall live with them, for they are His people and He is their God." He has wiped their tears, lighted their candles, given peace to their hearts and widened their breasts; therefore, the roots of death were rooted out, sorrow, wailing and crying have ceased, and the lesser King of Majesty (Abbas) occupies the Throne of the Kingdom, and renews the performance of untold actions. This is the absolute truth, and of a higher certainty than what was said in the Revelation by St. John: "He is the Alpha and the Omega." This is He who quenches the thirst from the spring of life. This is He who heals the sick with the antidote of safety and confirms with a flood of grace from this Kingdom. He is of the greatest heirs to the apostles and saints, the Lord is His God and He is His dearest Son. (Abdul-Beha.)

Good tidings to you, O beloved of God, His people, His children and His party! Raise your voices in praising and glorifying the glorious Lord, for the lights have shone, the traces appeared, the seas moved, and gave out every precious gem.

SELECTED PRECEPTS OF EL-HAK.

(The Manifestation.)

This manuscript contains fifteen clauses called "Good Tidings," each of which indicates some reform, or law conducive to the general well being of man-

kind. As indicating the ideals held up by El-Hak for the guidance of His followers, it is interesting and important. The inscription at the top is as follows:

"The Divine ordinances and commands, formerly revealed in sundry epistles, have, agreeably to the Supreme and Most Holy Command, been collected, that all may become cognizant of the grace, mercy and favor of God in this Most Mighty Manifestation and this Great Announcement, and may engage in praise and thanksgiving to the Desired Object of all the inhabitants of the world. Verily, He helpeth His servants unto that which He willeth, for He is the Wise Ordainer."

In substance the reforms enacted in the fifteen clauses are as follows:

1. Abolition of religious warfare.
2. Permission of all sects and peoples to unite in friendly intercourse.
3. Permission to study foreign languages, coupled with a recommendation that one language and writing (either of those already existing or especially devised for the purpose) should be selected by general consent as a medium of international communication.
4. All El-Hak's followers are bound loyally to serve and support any king who extends his protection to their faith.
5. The followers of El-Hak, in whatever land they dwell, must cheerfully and ungrudgingly submit to the laws and conform to the customs of that country.
6. Promise of the "Most Great Peace."
7. All are permitted, subject to the dictates of decency and good taste, to follow their own inclination as to dress and the wearing of the hair.
8. The good works and devotions of Christian priests (and ministers) are recognized and will be accepted, but they must henceforth abandon their seclusion and "engage in that which shall advantage them and whereby mankind shall be benefited." (See text 12.) They are also permitted to marry.
9. Confession of sins to one's fellowmen and seeking absolution from them is not permitted. To God only should confession be made, and from Him only should pardon be sought. A form of prayer suitable for such confession is given.
10. The Bab's command to destroy certain classes of books (e. g., books of logic, philosophy and other sciences, conducing, in his opinion, only to self-conceit and disputation) and to "renew" all books after a certain period is abrogated.
11. The study of sciences and arts is commended and encouraged, but they should be such as conduce to the welfare of mankind.
12. All men must learn and practice some craft, trade or profession. The diligent and conscientious practice of some craft, trade or profession is in itself an act of worship. Mendicity and idleness are hateful to God.
13. The settlement of differences, the apportionment of alms and the ordering of the affairs of the commonwealth generally are intrusted to the "House of Justice."
14. Visitation of the tombs of martyrs and pilgrimages to the shrines of saints are no longer to be regarded as obligatory. Nevertheless it is a pious work for rich men to leave money to the "House of Justice" to enable their poorer brethren to perform these pilgrimages.
15. Though a republic conduces most to the general welfare, it is not desired that kings, who are the "Signs of God's Power," should cease to exist. If statesmen can combine these two things in this cycle their reward with God shall be great.

AMERICAN PILGRIMS.

Cairo, Egypt, April 4th, 1899.

As I have written an account of my first visit to the Holy Household, and sent to Mr. James, which undoubtedly you have read ere this, I thought perhaps you might be interested in hearing the description of my last visit there, though to me it was heart-breaking in the extreme.

On the afternoon of March 20 I said "Good-bye" to Dr. and Mrs. Kheiralla, Nabiha and Labiba in Haifa (for they were to leave the next day for Port Said)

and set out by myself for Acca, the gardener, Abdul Hasim, who happened to be in Halfa, being my sole companion in the carriage, and he made the drive over very pleasant by telling me, in simple Persian, some of the tablets and words of the Manifestation.

When we reached the city, our Lord and Seyyed Yahya were standing near the gate, but we passed them without speaking or noticing them apparently, for there were many of the Turkish soldiers standing about,—and went directly to the house, where I was most cordially welcomed by the "Greatest Leaf" and the daughters of our master.

It was nearly dark,—so we went to the apartment of the Holy Leaf, where we had tea and then sat talking, waiting for the "King" to come. At last a servant announced that He was coming, so the two youngest daughters and myself ran out in the court to meet Him. I reached Him first and knelt down before Him, kissing the hem of His robe. He thereupon took my hand, and, saying in Persian, "Daughter, welcome," helped me to my feet, and, keeping my hand, walked with me into the house, where I sat down beside Him while He drank some tea,—and asked me if I was "well, happy and content." To which I could only reply that to be in His presence was health, happiness and contentment itself. Then He said: "I am sending you back to America that you may work to gain a place beside me in the Eternal Kingdom."

Soon after this dinner was announced and our Master seated me beside Him,—then His wife, the "Greatest Holy Leaf," and His daughters made up the rest of the party, while His sons-in-law waited upon us. This meal was served according to the Arabic fashion,—on a very low table, around which we sat on the floor upon cushions. Once during the meal our Lord took a piece of bread, and putting on it some honey, handed it to me to eat, saying as He did so: "Let all of your words be as sweetly flavored with kindness to all people—as this bread is flavored by honey." When I swallowed this mouthful from His blessed hand I truly felt a great spiritual blessing,—my heart was fairly melted by the power of love, and the tears fell like rain over my cheeks. The "Greatest Leaf" took her handkerchief, and, wiping my eyes, said: "You are blessed—be happy." Indeed I was happy—my tears were tears of joy! After the meal was over I poured the water on His hands while He washed His face (a custom in the Orient after eating); then He handed me the towel and I did likewise,—He saying, after I had finished: "Now you must go and wash from the faces of the people the clouds of ignorance, and from their hearts the love of this world—that they may receive the Spirit of Truth and shine as lamps in the Kingdom!"

He then went out to see some of the officials and I spent the evening with the "Greatest Leaf" and the daughters. We were chanting tablets and I was trying hard to tell them in Persian something about the Believers in America, and succeeded quiet well for the little time I have studied the language, though sometimes we had a good laugh over my queer accent, especially on words containing the guttural sounds. They never tire of hearing about the work in America, and the four daughters are studying English very diligently so they can speak to the pilgrims as they come to Acca in the future. We retired about 11 o'clock, and I was very happy indeed.

Next morning very early the Babis in Acca began to assemble at the house of our Lord, the ladies going to the room of the "Holy Leaf" and the men remaining down stairs. The occasion of this gathering was on account of March 21st being New Year's Day, according to the Babis, so it was a feast day. Our Lord came into the room and gave to everybody some sweets from His hand, after which Rooha Khanum, one of his daughters, chanted a beautiful tablet. Then He arose, and, saying a few words of welcome, went to the room occupied by the men. There He gathered all of the children together and gave each of them a few coins, about ten or fifteen cents, which made them all delighted and very happy, of course, because He gave it to them. After drinking tea and visiting a little while, they all went away. Then we had lunch, and directly after prepared to make my last visit to the tomb of the Manifestation. I went in a closed carriage with Rooha Khanum, and upon our arrival we went into a small room where we remained hidden until all of the others had made the visit with

our Master and departed. Then He came and told us to come out, which we did,—the three of us then being in that sacred place alone! Immediately He led the way to the room where lies the precious casket which contained the most brilliant jewel that ever shone upon this earth,—Beha u' llah,—and there He lifted up his voice in supplication for me,—(worm of the dust that I am! Oh God, my heart burns like fire and my tears flow like rain when I think of it!)—asking that I should receive the confirmation of the Holy Spirit, and go forth to work in the cause of God, guiding souls to the Kingdom! What this day was to me no one can ever know! My work, my words, my deeds must tell in the future whether or not He prayed for me in vain! I can only say I wanted to fall at His feet then and there, and give my heart, my soul and my life for the dear and sacred mouth that had spoken in my behalf! I then prayed for our teacher who was the means of giving us the Truth in America, for I felt that if I should live a thousand years I could never ask God enough to repay him for what he has done for me and for those I love in my own dear native land. I can never do it; God only can pay my deep debt of gratitude by answering my supplications for his welfare! As we turned away, my eyes lingered lovingly upon the sacred place,—and in my heart I could only feebly thank God for His great mercy and many blessings which I can never deserve, though I give my life for His sake by shedding my blood in His cause,—which I pray may be my happy lot,—when His will in me is done!

It was dark when we reached the house of the Master in Acca, so we had dinner soon after. The Master was not present as He was obliged to go away on business directly after our return, to the house of one of the government officials. We had a pleasant evening in the apartment of the "Greatest Leaf," reading tablets, singing, visiting, etc.,—after which we retired.

Next morning, March 22d, Mr. Getsinger came and was welcomed by our Lord, who kissed him tenderly on both cheeks and bade him sit beside Him while he wrote many tablets, occasionally smiling and speaking a few words to him, asking after his health, if he were happy, etc.—though writing all the time. The great power of the Spirit is very apparent when He is thus occupied, and it is a blessing to be in His presence. All the day long He was very busy as many people came to Him, but in the evening He came into the room where His son-in-law, Mousin Effendi, Mr. Getsinger and myself were sitting (we bowing before Him as He entered) and sat down upon the sofa, telling my husband to sit by His side, while He motioned me to my accustomed place at His feet. Then, putting one arm around him and laying Mr. Getsinger's head on His shoulder, at the same time gently stroking my head with His other hand, He began talking to us, His son-in-law interpreting what He said. "My children," He began, "tomorrow you leave us, and while we would love to see you always, would always love to have you with us, it is better that you should go and work in the cause of God, for thereby He will open upon your faces the door of His gifts and shower upon you His blessings. Have no fears, God is with you, and with all those who are striving to advance His Truth throughout your country. You must say to all the Believers in America that I love them and pray for them, and in turn I desire that they love and pray for each other, ever seeking to be united together, living in harmony and concord, for where division is God is not. The law of His whole universe is unity, and discord must in no wise enter in among you. You must be kind to each other and act toward each other like true children of the Kingdom—thus you will all please me and please our Father Who art in heaven." Oh, if you could have seen the expression of love and tenderness on His face as He uttered these words—it seemed that His whole great, noble soul was pleading for the complete union in every respect of the Believers in America. Oh, I beg of all of you to love each other as He, our Lord, loves all of us. If you see faults in each other, overlook them quickly and forgive them—for His dear sake! He then sent His son-in-law for some bread and syrup, made from the juice of pomegranates, which he brought and placed before Him on a low table. Our Master took the bread and breaking it dipped it into the syrup and gave a piece to Mr. Getsinger, another to me, and took one Himself; then told us to eat it,—which we did,—it tasting most delicious, after which

He, smiling sweetly, said: "Now I send you out into the world to give to the hungry souls who are seeking to know their God—the "Bread of Life," which is the Word of God, and to show them how sweet is the "Water of Life," which is faith in God."

Then He talked about our journey, inquiring most carefully how long it would take, and telling us, when we reached Cairo, that we should see Mirza Abdul Fazl and Abdul Karim, who would tell us some things we wished to know. (Mirza Abdul Fazl is, we find, a most learned man. He knows the Bible by heart and is a great historian.) He then told us that He wished us to be in America in six weeks after we left Acca, so our stay in Cairo must be short. Arising and bidding us "good night," He went to sleep.

Thursday, March 23d, our last day at the Holy Household, was a beautiful day. Early in the morning Rooha Khanum called me and arising hastily I went with her to the room of the "Greatest Leaf," where the Master was sitting. He bade me welcome as I entered, and I knelt before Him, kissing His hand, and then sat down at His feet beside the "Holy Leaf," and we drank tea together. As I looked at Him and thought "I must leave Him today," the tears came to my eyes and my heart was very heavy, though I tried hard to conceal my feelings. He noticed it and said: "Do not cry—be happy. I will go with you in spirit—the separation of the body is nothing. I will go with you." I dried my eyes and went with Him to the room where He writes, and with Rooha Khanum sat down while He began His work for the day. He took up Mr. Chase's picture which was on the divan beside Him—also one of Mr. Clark and one of Mr. Struven (pupils of mine in Ithaca)—and, looking at them, kissed first one and then another, then turned and said: "You must tell them that I kissed their pictures and am glad to have them; that they are my sons and my heart longs to see them so that I may kiss them."

Soon after He called Mr. Getsinger into the room and gave him a bottle containing juice of pomegranate; also to each of us a small bottle of oil of roses. Shortly before noon He went out and we watched Him as He walked through the court, for we wanted to see Him as much as possible. After a little time He returned and sat down to luncheon with us, one on each side of Him. We could scarcely swallow for we well knew it was our last meal with Him, and the thought of parting was breaking our hearts! As we left the table, a servant said: "The carriage is ready"—so then began the "Good-byes" which were painful in the extreme, though everybody was trying to be brave, but it was impossible—we all cried—and when we went to our Lord I was faint and sick. He came quickly from the room and, taking me by the hand, led me down one flight of stairs, and I pressed His hand to my lips, while He turned away and silently kissed Mr. Getsinger—then left us hastily. When I reached the court below it seemed that the sun grew dark for I realized I would not see Him again, and the pain of it was awful!

We rode in silence back to Haifa and very soon went on board the steamer. From the deck we watched Acca fade out of sight, and then I knew that only my body was going away for I had left my heart there—at His feet.

Please give my love to all the Believers, and tell them to all be firm in the faith for this is the Glorious Truth and we will live forever and ever.

I am yours faithfully in the cause of God,

(Signed) LUA M. GETSINGER.

LETTER FROM MRS. GETSINGER TO THE ASSEMBLY IN CHICAGO.

To the Assembly in Chicago, Greetings:

We reached Haifa Thursday, December 8th, about 10:30 p. m., and were met by Dr. Kheiralla and two or three Babis; they all welcomed us heartily and conducted us to a coffee house where we were served with refreshments. An old man was there waiting for us and he, as I was afterwards informed, is the uncle of the Greatest Branch, and was sent by the latter to welcome us. Never have I seen a face more full of love and kindness. He saluted us and his countenance beamed with pleasure while he expressed himself as being so

thankful upon our safe arrival. After drinking some tea, we went from this place to our hotel, several of the Believers walking. The streets are very narrow and dark, so a man, the hotel-keeper, walked ahead of us with a lantern to light the way. Our friends remained conversing with us at the hotel until after midnight, excepting the old gentleman; he did not accompany us, as it was late and he desired to leave early the next morning for Acca to report our arrival to the Greatest Branch—our Master.

We slept but little that night, our minds being occupied with the thoughts that perhaps tomorrow we shall see Him, and kiss the hem of the blessed garment of our Lord. We arose early the next morning, our hearts eagerly expectant, but all day no word came.

In the evening we were invited to the house of Housyn Effendi (one of the Believers living in Acca), and upon our arrival he met us at the door, welcomed us, saying that he was the bearer of good news to us. He had received a letter from Abbas Effendi that day stating "He would be pleased to welcome us on the morrow, and that His heart longed to see the first American pilgrims." We went back to our hotel after spending a most delightful evening, our host and hostess taking great pains to make us happy, showing us every kindness and hospitality; often remarking that we must not consider ourselves guests, for their house was ours, and everything they had at our disposal.

As you may imagine, sleep was out of the question that night, my husband and I were talking all the time, and congratulating ourselves upon our great blessings and good fortune, and counting the hours which passed too slowly, until the dawn of the morrow should come! We arose early, dressing ourselves with great care, feeling the best we had was not half good enough to wear upon this our first visit to the Holy City, and shortly after 8 o'clock the carriage drove up and Dr. Kheiralla, his daughter, my husband and myself started for the place of all places, the New Jerusalem, the Holy Abode of the Most High and the Dwelling Place of our Gracious Lord.

It is about five miles from Haifa to Acca—the road close to the sea—indeed in the sea, for the horses were walking in the water, and at times the waves dashed nearly to the top of the wheels. After riding about a quarter of an hour we could see the city in the distance; it was a beautiful morning and as we looked we could but think of the description in the Bible, "a city all of gold beside a crystal sea." It was bathed in a flood of golden sunshine and the sea splashing up against its walls sparkled with splendor. We gradually approached nearer and nearer until at last we passed "the shed which serves as a coffee house outside the wall," and entered the city by its "solitary gate," and drove straight to the house of Abbas Effendi. We entered the garden, ascended one flight of stairs, and were shown into a hall, or reception room, where we removed our wraps, and we were welcomed by the uncle, who told us to pass into the next room. Dr. Kheiralla went ahead, and by the violent beating of my heart I knew we were soon to behold the blessed face of the Prince of the House of David, the King of the whole world. We reached the door and stopped—before us in the center of the room stood a man clad in a long raiment with a white turban upon His head, stretching one hand out toward us, while His face (which I cannot describe) was lighted by a rare sweet smile of joy and welcome! We stood thus for a moment unable to move—then my heart gave a great throb and, scarcely knowing what I was doing, I held out my arms, crying, "My Lord, my Lord!" and rushed to Him, kneeling at His blessed feet, sobbing like a child! He put His dear hands upon our bowed heads and said, in a voice that seemed to our ears like a strain of sweet music, "Welcome, welcome, my dear children, you are welcome; arise and be of good cheer." Then He sat down upon a low divan and we sat on one side almost facing Him, Dr. Kheiralla and his daughter on the other side, and He began to talk to us. To my husband He said that "He should prosper in his scientific work, and God would bless him and enable him to do good in many directions. And as the vibrations of light emanating from the sun magnetize the earth, so should the Word of God magnetize the hearts and draw them from the West to mingle in love with the hearts in the East." He remained with us but a few moments

(as His time was so fully occupied) when He arose and again bidding us "welcome" went into another room where He writes and meets those who come to Him for help and counsel.

We were then taken into another room, where we met the Greatest Holy Leaf and many other ladies. They welcomed us very graciously, the Holy Leaf taking Dr. Kheiralla's daughter and myself in her arms and kissing us very tenderly on both cheeks; then they made tea for us and showed us great kindness! We remained conversing with them until noon, then she took us by the hand and led us to the table, seating one on each side of her and serving us most beautifully with many varieties of food, which were very good indeed. After dinner we were served with coffee, the fragrance and flavor of which was most delicious. Then a servant brought us some meats from the Greatest Branch, and such a generous supply that I am going to bring them home that you all may taste.

In the afternoon they read tablets aloud and told us many interesting things connected with the early history of the Babís; so swiftly did the time pass that we were quite astonished when dinner was announced; they served a special menu for us, as they eat much later than we do, but so anxious was I to see my Lord again that I begged He would at least come into the room with us; this request was more than granted, for He came and sat at the table, seating me on His right and my husband at His left. I felt too happy to eat and sat with my eyes riveted upon His glorious face. He turned toward me and, sweetly smiling, said: "The love of God burning in your heart is manifest upon your face and it gives us joy to look upon you." I then called his attention to St. Luke 14:15, "Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God." He thereupon took up the loaf and broke it and gave each one of us a piece of the same. I have kept mine and am also going to bring it that you may see it. After the meal was over He left us and went out, as He had something to attend to, and did not return until 11 o'clock; then He came into the room where we were sitting (all of us rising as He entered and bowing low before Him) and sat down and began talking to us in a low, soft, musical voice. My husband asked permission to sit nearer to Him, which He granted, and sat him down at His right; I longed intensely to go nearer, but said nothing. After a moment He turned toward me, smiled, and waived His hand that I also might come. I sat down at His blessed feet, while He took my hand and, looking down upon me tenderly as a loving father, He sat and conversed with us nearly half an hour; then He arose, bade us good night, blessing us, and we all retired. I couldn't sleep! My heart was too full! I was too infinitely happy. I could only live over and over again the precious moments I had spent in His presence and long to see Him once more.

I fell into a sweet sleep just as morn was breaking, after which I awoke feeling greatly refreshed, and arose, dressing myself, impatient to be among my friends and the holy people, for I felt each moment with them to be a great blessing indeed, and every word from their lips to be a precious gem. Miss Kheiralla and I went to the apartment of the Greatest Leaf, who kissed us and inquired if we had rested well. Then a servant brought us some nice fruit and each a beautiful bouquet of flowers from the Greatest Branch, who had sent her to ask if we were well and comfortable.

During the day we were conducted to the special garden of the Manifestation, the one (according to Dr. Kheiralla) described in the prophecies thus: "The place of my throne is part on the water and part on the land, under a green tent that has neither ropes nor a center pole to sustain it." And it is literally so, for this garden is on a small island, a river on each side of it, and there are two places built, upon which the Manifestation used to sit, one in the east and one in the west of the garden, and these places are built in such a way that they are "part on the water and part on the land," then two large trees, one in each end of the garden, their branches meeting in the center, form the green tent most perfectly. In this most beautiful spot we sat down upon the seats before "His throne," and were served with tea by those who accompanied us thither, also the gardener brought us fruits and flowers from the "garden of

our Glorious God," and they were delicious, both to taste and see. In one part of this place is a small cottage where the Manifestation used sometimes to stay, and we were permitted to enter this also, to go into the room which He always occupied, kneel before the chair upon which He sat, and to kiss the place upon which the soles of His feet rested. The spiritual atmosphere of this place was overwhelming; our tears fell like rain over our faces, and some of the Believers with us cried aloud. Indeed, to enter this room is a great blessing. I have felt nearer to God since that day! On the chair was a wreath of flowers, and some beautiful cut roses placed there by the Greatest Branch, who commanded that they should be given to us (my husband, Dr. Kheiralla, his daughter and myself); also four large oranges, which were on the table opposite, as we left that most sacred place.

From here we were taken to the tomb of the Manifestation, and you must excuse me if I do not enter into detail about this, I cannot find words to express myself, suffice it to say, that the Greatest Branch let me walk in His footsteps and led me by the hand into this sacred place, where I knelt down and begged of God to cleanse my heart from all impurity and kindle within it the fire of His love. I also remembered there the Assembly in Chicago and begged God's blessing to be showered upon you. After this visit we walked in the garden and our Lord, with His own blessed hands, picked flowers and leaves, which He gave us to take to the faithful Believers in America.

That night He sat us all at the table, and dismissed the servants, saying He would serve us Himself, and He did so. He did not sit at the table with us, but waited upon us! At the conclusion of the meal He said: "I have served you tonight that you may learn the lesson of ever serving your fellow creatures with love and kindness." He bade us good-night and advised us all to rest early, so we went to bed and this night I had a long delicious sleep and rest.

The next morning He brought me a most beautiful bunch of white narcissus and allowed me to kiss His blessed hand as He gave them to me. He sat down and drank tea with us, then rose and bade us "adieu," as we were going back to Haifa that day and He had been called away. As we were quitting the city we saw Him standing by the gate, and He smiled at us as we passed. Then we returned "by the road in the sea" to Haifa, our hearts both happy and sorrowful, happy because we had seen Him and sorrowful because we were leaving Him.

Oh, dear people, make firm your faith and belief, for truly He is our Lord. It seems to me that no one could doubt should He smile upon them, and no one could turn from Him should He seek to confirm them! But this He will not do, as God had declared that each must seek to confirm himself and gave to each of us the power or will for that purpose. I feel these words are very weak and inadequate, but I assure you no one could describe this place and 'tis foolish to try—to know each must see for himself, therefore pray God earnestly that the blessing of coming here may soon be bestowed. There is no other place in the world worth seeing, and surely no other King worthy of homage.

And now I send you all my love and pray God to bless you all now and forever! May your hearts all be united, and your souls become as one soul living in separate bodies. Thus you will resemble our Lord, and draw nearer unto God, the loving Father of us all!

Your loving sister and co-worker in the cause,

LUA MOORE GETSINGER.

LETTER FROM MRS. KHEIRALLA TO THE ASSEMBLY IN CHICAGO.

Haifa, Syria, February, 1899.

To the Akbab in Chicago:

Dear Brothers and Sisters—Though you have already received news of our visit to the Holy City, both from my husband and from Mrs. Getsinger, yet I feel sure you are as thirsty as I am to hear and know everything you can learn about the great Point of Revelation who is now the clear Channel of the Light

and Truth of God upon this earth; and so you will be glad to have another description of our visit here from me.

As you will understand, the great difficulty of writing such an account lies in the fact that any statement at all about conditions here seems dull and bare and colorless besides the reality and also that though the outer expression and garment of this Radiance is beautiful, yet after all its great glory and perfection is spiritual, to be discerned by the soul that is spiritually awakened, and also according to the degree of the enlightenment of each individual soul, and as only to those who have sacrificed everything is the true greatness revealed and understood, therefore I can only tell you little; it is impossible for me to speak about the chiefest realities here, but only of those which are cognizant to the mere outer sense (so to speak) of the soul. But I feel that God will aid my endeavor to show you something of this greatness and supply to your souls that which is lacking in my words; and I am entirely sure that it will be with you as it is with us, that the more you know the more you will love. Do not be afraid of loving and trusting our Lord entirely and unreservedly, and of sacrificing yourselves and everything you possess with a great gladness for His love and the love of El-Beha, for the only thing worth living for is to do the will of our God and serve our Lord, who is the great Ideal, to whom we can give all our heart's love without fear of betrayal or disappointment, and after whose example we must all pattern, if we indeed desire to attain the likeness of the Sons of God.

There is just one thing I wish to say before I begin the account of our visit here—and it is this—that indeed we cannot thank God enough for sending us the knowledge of this, His Most Great Revelation, and that also we ought indeed to honor and respect with a great honor the one through whose instrumentality we have been brought from darkness to light, from misery and confusion to peace, and to a great and endless happiness in the Kingdom of El-Beha; personally, I feel I cannot thank my dear husband enough for bringing me this which is more than all our earthly, for of what use or benefit is all our life without this great knowledge.

In order to picture our footsteps here clearly before you, I will begin with our journey from Haifa, for it is there, as you know, that the traveler lands, because the steamboats do not stop at Acca.

The way from Haifa to Acca is, for the most part, on the sandy seashore, which is in the form of a half hoop—Haifa being at one end of this, with Mount Carmel rising up behind the town, and Acca at the other, and lying almost at the end of the promontory that ends the half circle of the bay. On a bright sunny day, such as it was when I paid my first visit to the Holy City, Acca stands out white and glistening as a dove's wing at the foot of some distant blue hills, and on the border of the "tideless sea" excellent in situation, the joy of the whole earth! How the heart of the pilgrim throbs with expectation, love and awe as he comes gradually nearer and nearer the long hoped for goal, and white and gray and brown house-sides stand out clearer and ever nearer, until at last he enters the city gate, drives through its narrow, crooked streets and archways, and at last, alighting in front of a large, strongly built stone house (formerly the Governor's residence), enters the courtyard with its little tiled garden, passes up a flight of steps that leads to the living part of the house which is on the first floor, finds himself in an open stone passage with many doors opening out on to it, and entering the first one opposite him, finds himself at last in the presence of our dear Lord Himself!

What does he see? A small room containing two broad divans, on both of which are writing materials, a large window with cushions on the floor beneath, a square Persian rug in the middle, and sitting on one of the divans with writing materials in hand, writing and answering any questions that may be put to Him by those around, is the blessed Center of Revelation. He is dressed in a large loose dark blue cloak an under robe of dull pink lined with fur, white linen showing at the neck, and on His head a white fez with many folds of fine white muslin wrapped around its base. But as for His face, who can describe it? for it is not His features with the long finely chiselled nose, the

soft gray-brown eyes, with their long and firm eyelashes, nor the black penciled gray hair, that alone draws and attracts the heart of the beholder, as with a drop of living fire; it is the living soul that looks out of those loving eyes, so full of sympathy and so full of spiritual power; it is the glorious personality behind the veil that draws towards Him, as with an unseen magnet, the hearts of all those who are seeking their God!!

I must apologize for now being obliged to intrude myself in the coming pages, for that which I can chiefly relate are experiences and conversations in which I took part, and it is by narrating these that I can best mirror the great light here, however faintly, and my experience will also show each one what he too can expect, for our Lord's love is not confined to one or two.

Immediately I found myself in the blessed presences, I threw myself on my knees before Him and sobbed aloud from the stress of the various emotions that filled my soul. He gave me His dear hands to kiss (such fine, delicate hands they are!) and patted me tenderly on my cheeks and shoulders, saying in His gentle voice, "La la la marhabba," "You are welcome, be at ease—be happy," and congratulated me on having accomplished the journey, inquired if it had been an easy one, how I was feeling, and so on. Then He sent to call my husband, who was not expecting my arrival so soon. He came running in, and he and his two dear daughters welcomed me, and we all felt most thankful to meet at last at the Holy House. But all our personal feelings were submerged in the great fact of being in the presence of "Mowlana," as He is chiefly called by the Akbab—that being the Arabic word for "our Lord"—so I turned and knelt again in front of the divan on which He was sitting, and then He looked so lovingly and kindly upon me and said to my husband that the light of the children of the Kingdom shone in my face, and that I had a very good pure heart, and other kind things.

But soon I was taken to see the ladies of the Holy Household, and into the open stone passage again, which, after turning sharply at a right angle, opened into a much wider hall paved with mosaics. In the center of the wall that bounds the hall on the right side, hangs a large red curtain. This was lifted, and I found myself in a long room lighted by three windows facing the entrance, and which were shielded by wooden lattice-worked screens. Along the wall beneath the windows is a long divan, while on the two other sides of the room were cushions spread on the floor. The rest of the furniture consists chiefly of a beautiful brass charcoal brazier, and beside it on the floor is a big brass tray, holding a large kettle and receptacle for heating water with charcoal embers (a samovar).

Here I was introduced to the wife of our Master, who has a face beaming with motherly love and kindness, and also to His sister, the Most Holy Leaf, whose thin, worn saintly face smiles lovingly at all, and to His four daughters, blessed girls! and to many women and attendants of the Holy Household. They kissed me on either cheek, and folded me in their arms, and then the Most Holy Leaf, Behya-Khanum, sat down on the divan and motioned me to sit beside her. They began asking many questions in Arabic, which my husband's daughter kindly translated for me, asking about my journey, health, and so on, and gave me tea and biscuits, an invariable accompaniment in a Persian visit.

Before long I heard a little stir in the hall, the sound of approaching footsteps, then a murmur of "Mowlana, Mowlana," and the blessed figure appeared in the doorway and came towards me. Everyone sprang up hastily from cushions and divan and stood with folded hands. He asked me how I was feeling, hoped I was better and happy, told me that I was to feel that this was my home, and asked if I needed anything; to all of which I told my dear Lord that I was very happy, that I thanked God with all my heart for this greatest blessing bestowed upon me of being permitted to come to the Holy House, and that I was crying because my heart had longed and hungered for such a long time to be there, and that now at last I had attained! He smiled, patted me again, let me kiss His hands, and then went out, whereupon a sort of general sigh went round, and then all sat down again on cushions and divan. Then ensued more struggles to express our feelings and answer questions put in an

unknown tongue, until lunch was announced, of which Dr. and Mrs. Getsinger, my husband and daughters and I partook together.

After lunch and a rest, I was called to have an interview with our Lord in another room, and Mrs. Getsinger, who had been the first to see me arrive and welcome me, went with me. I asked Him some questions, and He told me that I must live and work for the Cause—that He wished me to be as He is—to be absolutely indifferent to praise or blame, whether I eat or do not eat, sleep or not, am in comfortable or uncomfortable surroundings, with friends or enemies; all these things must be as nothing to me, for I must cut my heart from myself and from the world, and must look to my God only, and follow the example of my Lord in all things (who is loving to all in look, word and action, even to those who wish to harm and oppose Him), and that then I would receive great spiritual gifts and blessings. Many other things He said, but of course I cannot attempt to write everything, or this account would never go off; and besides, some things were too purely personal. After the interview was over, and we had returned to the women's apartment, one came in, bringing both Mrs. Getsinger and myself a bunch of violets from our Lord; these treasured flowers are carefully pressed.

That evening we all had dinner with His Holiness, who seated me on His right hand, as I was the newest guest, and Mrs. Getsinger on His left. Blessed indeed is he who eats bread in the Kingdom of God! He helped us all to the various courses of food as they were placed on the table, and most lovingly and carefully looked after our needs. He talked much of America, and said that if the Believers there will live in real love and harmony with one another, as one soul living in different bodies, that the greatest blessings are in store for that country, but that if they do not, the blessings will be deferred. His heart is very full of love to all the Believers there and He rejoices greatly, and all the Holy people with Him, when new applications arrive and new names are received into the Kingdom. He said also that England shall be blessed, and should receive light from America, and that when her people learned the Truth they would be very solid in it.

He emphasized the condition of mutual love as being of the utmost importance if we wish to gain anything spiritually and has spoken of its absolute necessity many times. In one conversation He said that as everything around us in the material world, of greatness, beauty and use, is the result of the combination of atoms united by the law of affinity or attraction, and that whenever that law ceases to operate at any point, dissolution and death ensues, so also precisely the same law holds in the spiritual world; unless each separate soul is united by love to the other souls, he or she is in a condition of death, out of harmony with and against the spiritual laws, and nothing they do will succeed. Without love we can attain nothing!

Another point stands out most clearly in all of our Lord's conversations and actions. It is this—that man is left absolutely free to do as he wills, the door is open to everyone to attain the greatest blessings and gifts—each can enter if he chooses. But as each has absolute independence in this, no one will force him to do or not to do. Our Master never even reproves or rebukes any one. He simply says: "If you do thus and so, such and such a result will follow; if you do not, it will not," and every one is left perfectly free to do as he himself chooses. Or, if He sees any one making mistakes in their thoughts or actions, He talks lovingly to them, and will tell them some story or parable bearing on their case, without saying anything directly to them, or showing that it refers to them; if they are in earnest, they will observe His words and take it to themselves, and correct their mistakes; if not, they must suffer from their consequences, for as man sows so shall the reaping be, and no effort or struggle of the heart, however secret, is unseen or unknown, but will surely bear fruit in God's time. So let us all labor to be accepted of our God, with hearts full of joyful confidence, knowing that He is the sure Rewarder.

We have had the honor of meeting with many of the holy people who have suffered for the Cause in a way we know little of in America, and the

stories of whose triumphant steadfastness and patience through the most fiery trials and sufferings, ought surely to make us ashamed of our feeble efforts and lukewarm faith, for it was the greatness of their faith and love that alone enabled them to endure. I have no room in this letter to give any detailed histories of these saints, but on our return to America we hope to bring with us many such, the reading of which will surely stir us up to greater efforts and enkindle our zeal. There are women here who have seen their children slowly starve to death before their eyes, and have nearly been killed themselves; men and women who were very rich, some of them in princely positions, and who have given up all their wealth and comforts for the sake of the Cause; others whose husbands have been put to death before them; men who have been shut up for years in damp underground cells with heavy chains around their necks, eating into their flesh, and all this and more they have endured with great gladness for the sake of the love of their God.

Acca itself and its immediate surroundings is a shrine full of the most sacred memories the heart of man can hallow. There is the great prison, in which the Blessed Perfection and the Holy Household were confined, and from which none of those who sent them there ever expected to see them emerge alive. There is the high prison wall from which the Cut Branch fell, and for the sake of whose accepted sacrifice the City Gate of Acca was first opened to the pilgrims who had traveled for months to get there, and endured all sorts of hardships from the hope of beholding the Face of their God. There is the Rizwan, the garden mentioned in prophecy, with the two rivers running on either side of it, and in which Manifestation used to sit; there is the hill, now clad in red and white, by its scarlet memories and small white lilies, on the top of which He loved to sit and gaze at the beautiful view spread out like a glorious panorama on every side; there is the Tomb of the Mother of our Lord and of the Cut Branch with its inscription, "O calm soul, return to thy God with joy and gladness," and lastly and chiefest the Behja itself, and the Tomb of the Blessed Perfection rising up close beside it—fullest of all Divine memories, and containing the Sacred Garment worn by the Lord of the Existence, when, for the sake of His eternal love of His creatures, He turned His footsteps from the invisible to the visible world, and veiled His eternal splendor in the body of the dust. The tomb itself is a building containing a central court in which is planted flowers and shrubs; around this there is a carpeted passage with a large carpeted space on the west facing the entrance; at one side of this is the room with the locked door, hanging in front of which is a beautiful curtain, and within is the Sacred Garment itself.

As you have heard, this most sacred room was not opened to pilgrims until my dear husband came from the "wide lands" of America, and then from the great love and mercy and favors showered upon him, the guarding door was thrown open and he was allowed to enter, and afterwards a few of our favored pilgrims have been allowed to enter also. There is no need to speak of the great favors that have been shown by our dear Lord to our beloved teacher, who has labored so zealously and untiringly to give the knowledge of their God to all those seeking Him. This fact speaks louder than words, so I will only say that time will reveal this, as all other things, and that he is the chief head in America, to whom we can look for spiritual direction and guidance, and that the greatest gifts and blessings are promised him.

I must really close this long account, which I send with the hope that the time is not very far distant before we shall all be able to meet once again, and then you will learn of many things that are not possible to write, owing to lack of time and strength.

In the meantime, may our faith and love be increased daily with a most great increase—may El-Beha look upon us in the greatness of His mercy and love, and accept our unworthy service, and put within our hearts such a fire of love to Him that all other desires and wishes may be entirely consumed, and may the fragrance of His Garment be speedily spread through all lands.

Inshallah!!

Believe me to be ever your affectionate friend and sister,

MARION KHEIRALLA.

LETTERS FROM MRS. HEARST.

Washington, Nov. 19th, 1899.

Mr. Isaiah H. Bradford, Hubbard, Minn.

My Dear Sir—Your letter of October 24th was duly received and I regret my inability to reply to it sooner, but I had left my California home when it arrived there, so it was forwarded to me here; however, I take pleasure in answering your questions, as it gives me great happiness to enlighten any Truth-seeker, regarding the "Holy City," and the Blessed Master, who dwells therein.

Although my stay in Acca was very short, as I was there only three days, yet I assure you those three days were the most memorable days of my life, still I feel incapable of describing them in the slightest degree.

From a material standpoint everything was very simple and plain, but the spiritual atmosphere which pervaded the place, and was manifested in the lives and actions among the Believers, was truly wonderful, and something I had never before experienced. One needs but to see them to know that they are a Holy people.

The Master I will not attempt to describe; I will only state that 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 and look upon His sanctified face. His life is truly the Christ life and His whole being radiates purity and holiness!

Without a doubt Abbas Effendi is the Messiah of this day and generation, and we need not look for another.

Hoping you will find the joy that has come into my life, from accepting the Truth as revealed in these great days, I am very sincerely yours,

MRS. PHOEBE A. HEARST.

Washington, Dec. 5th, 1899.

O. M. Babcock, Chicago, Ills.

Dear Sir—Your letter at hand, and in reply will say, if a statement from me regarding my visit to Acca, also my privilege of being in the Master's presence, and my impressions of the Holy Household, will in the slightest degree confirm any one in the faith, then I am most happy to render it.

I was not a pupil of Doctor Kheiralla's. Mr. and Mrs. Getsinger taught me and I accepted the Truth before I left my California home to go to Europe. I never saw Doctor Kheiralla until we were on board the steamer.

My stay in Acca was very short; if I remember correctly I was there but three days, though Mr. and Mrs. Getsinger were there three months. Acca is not a ruined fortification, its streets are narrow and dark and the houses are very primitive and rudely constructed, but when we were admitted to the Master's presence we lost sight of our surroundings entirely.

It seems to me a real Truthseeker would know at a glance that He is the Master! Withal, I must say He is the Most Wonderful Being I have ever met or ever expect to meet in this world. Though He does not seek to impress one at all, strength, power, purity, love and holiness are radiated from His majestic, yet humble, personality, and the spiritual atmosphere which surrounds Him, and most powerfully affects all those who are blessed by being near Him, is indescribable. His ideas and sentiments are of the loftiest and most chaste character, while His great love and devotion for humanity surpasses anything I have ever before encountered. I believe in Him with all my heart and soul, and I hope all who call themselves Believers will concede to Him all the greatness, all the glory, and all the praise, for surely He is the Son of God—and "the Spirit of the Father abideth in Him."

Regarding the Household, I found them all quiet, holy people, living only for the purpose of serving in the Cause of God. They dress very plainly, but with a grace that gives a sort of grandeur to their most humble abode. The purity of their morals is evident from the calm, benign and guileless faces, which characterize them as a people. To become spiritually more and more like them, and like the Blessed Master, is my daily supplication unto God.

I am not going to be in the East this winter. Yours very sincerely,

P. A. HEARST.

Is it not amazing that in this country where the Gospel is proclaimed from thousands of pulpits, where the light is shining with unparalleled brightness, so many should be found who will give homage to a Christ, who is so evidently an imposter? But it is a common observation that persons, willfully blinding themselves toward the truth as it is in Christ, will embrace errors which even human reason recognizes as absurdities.

THE KURDS.

Kurdistan is a geographical name applied to the Kurdistan Mountains, and sometimes to the whole country inhabited by the Kurds. The area is estimated at 50,000 square miles, extending to Mt. Ararat, in Armenia, on the north, to the plains of the Tigris on the south, to the city of Harput, Sivan, on the west, and to the plains of Oroomiah and the city of Sakis on the east. Thus, this territory is partly subject to the Shah of Persia and partly to the Sultan of Turkey. The boundary line is a point of dispute, although in A. D. 1639 a treaty between the Shah Sefavi and one of the Sultans of Turkey established the frontier line, which since has served as a nominal line between the two empires. On the territory here described not only Kurds reside, but also Turks, Armenians, Chaldeans, Assyrians and Persians. The Kurds are descendants of the ancient Carduchi, with whom Xenophon and the 10,000 had so long a struggle. The region they occupy is as rugged as their character. They are by far the most turbulent of the subjects of the Shah, and were it not for the beautiful rugs they manufacture in their rude dwellings, one would be at a loss to imagine the reason for their existence. Their origin is wrapped in obscurity; they seem to have no relationship with any other race, and as with Cain, their hand is against everyone and everyone's hand against them. The etymologist who places little value on his life, might find a few months among the mountains of Kurdistan of some profit to science. They, themselves claim that they are descendants of Esau. They speak a mixed language, collected from Persian, Syrian and Arabic languages. Their language is called Kurmanji, and has never been reduced to writing, so they are without books or schools. If any writing is done, it is done in the Persian or Arabic characters. They number about 5,000,000; 700,000 are subjects of the Shah, and a few to the Sultan of Turkey, but practically all are lawless and beyond the control of either of these two governments. A Kurd is very decided and independent in spirit. He would rather live in a cave, under a projecting rock, and be unmolested, than to dwell in a palace and be