

SHORTER NOTICES

E. G. BROWNE AND THE PERSIAN CONSTITUTIONAL MOVEMENT

By Hasan Javadi

Edward Granville Browne was born on February 7th, 1862, at Uley in Gloucestershire. His father, Sir Benjamin Browne, was the head of a shipbuilding firm in Newcastle-on-Tyne. The young boy went to various private schools, of which he gives a very dismal picture, saying: "The most wretched day of my life, except the day when I left the college, was the day I went to school. During the earlier portion of my school life I believe that I nearly fathomed the possibilities of human misery and despair."¹ His father wanted him to study engineering, but Browne preferred medicine and after leaving Eton went to Pembroke College, Cambridge. Despite his studies in medicine and natural sciences, he was able to devote some of his time to the languages of the Middle East. Turning to the East proved to be a turning point in his life and an important pre-occupation ever after. He began to learn Turkish, which was not taught at Cambridge at that time, and studied Arabic and Persian in order to broaden his knowledge of Turkish. He writes in his *A Year Amongst the Persians*:

It was the Turkish war with Russia in 1877-8 that first attracted my attention to the East, about which, till that time, I had known and cared nothing. To the young, war is always interesting, and I watched the progress of this struggle with eager attention. At first my proclivities were by no means for the Turks; but the losing side, more especially when it continues to struggle gallantly against defeat, always has a claim on our sympathy, and moreover the cant of the anti-Turkish party in England, and the wretched attempts to confound questions of abstract justice with party politics, disgusted me beyond measure. Ere the close of the war, I would have died to save Turkey, and I mourned the fall of Plevna as though it had been a disaster inflicted on my own country. And so gradually pity turned to admiration, and admiration to enthusiasm, until the Turks became in my eyes veritable heroes, and the desire to identify myself with the cause, make my dwelling amongst them, and unite with them in the defence of their land, possessed me heart and soul."²

Browne learned Turkish from an Irish clergyman, who had served in the Crimean War as a private and had later been driven away from his parish because of defending the Turks publicly when they were most unpopular. Browne's Arabic teachers were such eminent scholars as William Wright and E. H. Palmer, who combined the learning and the enthusiasm of good teachers. But he was not so fortunate with his Persian teachers. One of them was "a very learned but very eccentric old Persian, Mīrzā Muḥammad Bāqir, of Bawānat in Fars, surnamed Ibrāhīm Jān Mu'aṭṭar." His pupil writes of him: "Having wandered through half the world, learned (and learned well) half a dozen languages, and been successively a Shī'ite Muḥammadan, a dervish, a Christian, an atheist, and a Jew, he had finished by elaborating a religious system of his own, which he called "Islamic-Christianity", to the celebration (I can hardly say the elucidation) of which in English tracts and Persian poems, composed in the most bizarre style, he devoted the greater part of his time, talents, and money."³ Whenever Browne tried to read the *Divān of Hāfiz* or the *Masnavī* with him, after a while he would push them aside, saying: "I like my own poetry better than this, and if you want me to teach you Persian you must learn it as I please. . . . You can understand Hāfiz by yourself, but you cannot understand my poetry unless I explain it to you."⁴

¹ E. G. Browne, *A Year Amongst the Persians* (London, 1959), p. 7.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

² *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

Thus, along side his medical studies, Browne learned Turkish, Arabic, Persian and Hindustani. In 1884, two years after passing his second M.B. examination, he received a First Class in the Indian Languages Tripos, which at that time was equivalent of a B.A. in Oriental Languages. Then he left Cambridge to work at St. Bartholomew's Hospital in order to pass his third M.B. and to receive his licence to practice as a physician. This end was achieved in 1887, and it was during his stay in London that he would snatch an occasional leisure hour from his medical studies for a chat with his Persian friends (among them were such well-known figures as Jamāl ud-Dīn of Asadābād and Mīrzā Malkum Khān), or would take a quiet communing in the cool, vaulted reading-room of the British Museum with his favourite Sufi writers, whose mystical idealism had long since cast its spell over his mind. It was in May, 1887, that Pembroke College elected Browne as a Fellow to teach Persian and Arabic and encouraged him to spend the first year of his fellowship in Persia "in the way which would best qualify (him) for this post". The adventures and experiences of this long-desired journey are charmingly described in *A Year Amongst the Persians*.

Browne travelled on the old caravan route from Trabzon to Iran and stayed in Tabriz, Tehran, Isfahan, Shiraz, Yazd, Kerman and many other places. Unlike most of the Europeans who often do not go out of their own circles, he preferred to mix and make friends with Persians and did not shun the company of the strangest and wildest of men whom he came across. We see him conversing with Dervishes, Sufis, religious leaders, free thinkers, the Babis, Ezelis, and many people of many different beliefs and creeds. Browne set out in his journey to explore the mind and spirit of the Persians, and his book is an interesting guide to their literature and thought. The narrative of the traveller provides many opportunities for discussions of poetry, metaphysics and philosophy of the Persians. The record of his conversations with various classes of people is interspersed with poems given in admirable translations. "Notwithstanding all her faults" he loved Persia "very dearly". Leaving the country on board a Russian steamer, he wrote: "For the first time for many months, [I] felt myself, with a sudden sense of loneliness, a stranger in the midst of strangers."⁵

After returning from his travels in 1888, Browne became the Persian lecturer at Cambridge, where he stayed until his death in 1926. But it was not until 1902, after the death of Charles Rieu, the eminent scholar of oriental bibliography, that he was elected to the Sir Thomas Adams Chair in Arabic.

Shortly before going to Iran, Browne, by reading the Comte de Gobineau's *Les religions et les philosophies dans l'Asie centrale* (1865), had become interested in the history and doctrine of the newly established sect of the Bābīs. During his stay in Iran he had met with a number of its members and their devotion, steadfastness and bravery, while being persecuted by other religious groups, had aroused his sense of admiration and he had decided to devote some of his time to this sect and the matters related to it. In 1889 he contributed two monographs on the Bābīs to the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, and in 1891 he published *A Traveller's Narrative written to illustrate the Episode of the Bāb*. Browne displayed his life-long interest in Bābism and other Persian heresies in a number of works such as *The Translation of the New History of Mīrzā 'Alī Muhammad the Bāb*, by Mīrzā Husain-i Hamadānī, the edition of the *Kitāb-i Nuqtatu'l-Kāf* by Hājji Mīrzā Jānī, and *Materials for the Study of the Bābī Religion* in 1893, 1910 and 1918, respectively.

Bahā'ism—an outgrowth of Bābism—disappointed most of the Persians who looked for a strong opposition to their autocratic government and some kind of social reform in every heretical movement. Some Bahā'īs sided with Muhammad 'Alī Shāh and opponents of the Constitution, and moreover, the attitude recommended by 'Abdu'l-Bahā himself, was one of complete abstention from politics.⁶ In fact, the very universalism of Bahā'ism did not tend to encourage a passionate patriotism of any kind. As a result, because of its lack of involvement and sympathy with the national cause in the most critical period of Persian history, Bahā'ism has evoked many criticisms, and Browne has not been spared from such charges because of his writings on the subject. On the other hand, some Bahā'īs believe that Browne was not objective enough and did not express their point of view sufficiently. But one has to bear in mind that he was neither a Muslim nor a Bahā'ī, and his aim was purely academic and non-partisan. In a letter to a Bahā'ī friend, Browne explained his own point of view: Let us suppose that

⁵ Ibid., p. 620.

⁶ *The Persian Revolution* (Cambridge, 1910), p. 423.

someone could give us more information about the childhood and early life of Jesus. How happy one would be to know this! Although this is not possible for us now, it is still possible in the case of the Bāb to collect first-hand materials.⁷

It was for this purpose that Browne gathered a valuable collection of Bābī and Shaykhī manuscripts, which forms more than one-fifth of his collection of oriental manuscripts at the University Library of Cambridge.

The most important work of Browne is his well-known *A Literary History of Persia*, which embodies the major part of his life-long researches about Persian history and literature. When the first volume of the work was published by T. Fisher Unwin in 1902, the aim was "to set forth in a comprehensive yet comparatively concise and summary form the history of that ancient and interesting kingdom."⁸ Browne further explains his purpose in the introduction: "It was the intellectual history of the Persians which I desired to write, and not merely the history of the poets and authors who expressed their thoughts through the medium of the Persian language; the manifestations of the national genius in the fields of Religion, Philosophy, and Science interested me at least as much as those belonging to the domain of Literature in the narrower sense."⁹ A second volume sub-titled "From Firdawsī to Sa'dī" was published by the same firm in 1906, but as the project was still half-finished, Browne had to turn to the Cambridge University Press for the publication of the two remaining volumes. The two sequels on *The Tartar Dominion (1265-1502)* and *Modern Times (1500-1924)* came out in 1920 and 1924 respectively.

The publication of this huge work of over two thousand pages is truly a landmark in Persian studies, and, in spite of the many works which have appeared since then, it is one of the most comprehensive and standard works on Persian literature. It is true that Persian studies have greatly advanced in the last fifty years or so, and there are some errors and omissions in the work of Browne. Yet the breadth of his scholarship and his understanding and his appreciation of Persian taste and mind have not been surpassed by any other Western scholar in a work of similar scope. *A Literary History of Persia* is replete with illustrative extracts from the prose and poetry of Persian authors in remarkable translations, which are extremely helpful to the uninitiated reader. Browne made a selection of his verse translations and it was published as *A Persian Anthology* in 1927.

During the twenty-four years that Browne was engaged in writing his literary history, he brought out a number of other works, of which one could mention the following: three volumes of the catalogue of the oriental manuscripts in the University Library of Cambridge; the translations of the *Chahār Maqāla* by Nizāmī 'Arūḍī and *The History of Tabaristān* by Ibn Isfandiyār; and the critical editions of *Lubāb al-Albāb* by 'Awfī, the *Tārīkh-i Guzīdeh* by Hamdullāh Mustawfī, and the *Tazkirat ush-Shu'arā* by Dawlat Shāh. Meanwhile, Browne made use of his medical training and gave a series of lectures at the Royal College of Physicians in 1919-20, of which he had been elected as a Fellow in 1911. These lectures were published as *Arabian Medicine* in 1921.

Another significant contribution of Browne to oriental scholarship was the completion of *A History of Ottoman Poetry* by his friend, E. J. W. Gibb, who had died in 1901, when only the first volume had been printed out of the total of six. Second and third volumes were almost complete, but the three others were put in order and completed by Browne after the notes and outlines left by Gibb. The Gibb Memorial Series was founded by Gibb's mother under the direction of Browne, and by the help of Muhammad Qazwīnī and other scholars, numerous Persian, Arabic and Turkish works were published.

Another phase of Browne's activities, which is directly related to the subject of the present work, is his involvement with the cause of the Persian Constitutional movement. As it was mentioned earlier, it was the Turco-Russian war of 1877-8 which made him interested in the East, and until the end of his life, academic activities did not keep him away from politics. During his travels Browne witnessed the growing spirit of democracy and longing for freedom among the Persians and hoped that one day it might bear fruit. In his numerous works on the subject, he tried to publicise the imperial policies of Russia and Great Britain towards Iran, and to voice the rights of the Persians for independence. The dedication of his *Persian Revolution of 1905-1909* (Cambridge, 1910) displays his sentiments:

⁷ H. M. Balyuzi, *E. G. Browne and the Baha'i Faith* (London, 1970), p. 50.

⁸ *A Literary History of Persia*, I (reprint, Cambridge, 1964), p. vii.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. viii.

To all who by their thought, or word, or deed
 Have aided Persia in her hour of need,
 Whether by tongue, or pen, or sword they wrought,
 Whether they strove or suffered, spoke or fought,
 Whether their services were small or great,
 This book of mine I humbly dedicate.
 May these approve my poor attempt to trace
 This final effort of an ancient race
 To burst its bondage, cast aside its chain,
 And rise to life, a Nation once again.

Browne believed in the genuineness of the cause of Persian Constitutional movement and opposed some superficial observers in Europe "who were apt to treat the idea of a Persian Parliament as a mere whim of Muẓaffar ud-Dīn Shāh, a novelty imported from Europe along with motor-cars, gramophones, and other Western innovations". He says, "To take this view is entirely to misjudge the importance and misunderstand the nature of a movement which, whether it be approved or deplored, had behind it the whole-hearted support of all the best elements of the Persian nation, including even so essentially conservative a class as the *mullās*, or so-called 'clergy'".¹⁰ According to him, the support of some of the religious leaders was an interesting feature of this movement. Regarding the reasons for the Persian revolution, Browne says, "My own conviction is that the mere tyranny of an autocrat would hardly have driven the patient and tractable people of Persia into revolt had tyranny at home been combined with any maintenance of prestige abroad or any moderately efficient guardianship of Persian independence. It was the combination of inefficiency, extravagance, and lack of patriotic feeling with tyranny which proved insupportable; and a constitutional form of Government was sought not so much for its own sake as for the urgent necessity of creating a more honest, efficient, and patriotic Government than the existing one."¹¹ Browne believed that the policies of Russia and Great Britain had never given the Persian Constitution a fair chance of success, and in a lecture given to the British Academy in 1918 he made a passionate plea not only for Persia, but other non-European nations, saying, "And if the reign of Peace and Righteousness for which a tortured world prays is to come, it must be based on a recognition of the rights of all nations, and not merely of the nations of Europe." In the same lecture he reminds his audience of the lack of Western support displayed in the lonely and hard struggle of the Persian people. He draws an analogy between Iran and Greece and Italy: "Politically both Greece and Italy profited much from a sympathy largely based on a recognition of what human civilization owed them for their contributions to art and literature. It is my contention that Persia stands in the same category, and that her disappearance from the society of independent states would be a misfortune not only to herself, but to the whole human race. Unhappily there are a hundred scholars to plead the claims of Greece and Italy for one who can plead the not less cogent cause of Persia."¹²

The Persian Revolution is an important and contemporary record of the constitutional movement from 1905-09. It not only gives a detailed analysis of the events of these years, but also discusses the circumstances from which they resulted. The book is mainly based on the reports sent by W. A. Smart, a former student of Browne working at the British Legation in Tehran, and the accounts given by Hasan Taqī-zādeh and other Persian Constitutionalists who had escaped to England after the bombardment of the Parliament by Muhammad 'Alī Shāh. There was going to be a sequel to the book to continue the history of the events up to the outbreak of the First World War and to concentrate on the sufferings and despair of the Persians, but this project was never fulfilled. The publication of *The Persian Revolution* was meant to produce some sounder effects on British foreign policy in Persia. C. B. Stokes, a sympathetic friend from the British Legation in Tehran wrote to Browne on October 8th 1910, "I think it most important that your book should be in the hands of the public by November 1,

¹⁰ E. G. Browne, "The Persian Constitutional Movement", in *Proceedings of the British Academy* (1917-18), p. 342.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 324.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 320.

and if you could make sure of any M.P.s interested in Persia having it by that date, they might find material for questioning Grey and, if possible, demanding a debate on our present policy in Persia. All this is, of course, strictly private."¹³

It is an unfortunate fact that oriental scholarship has at times been associated, whether rightly or wrongly, with the imperial policies of the great powers. As a result, a feeling of distrust has tended to overshadow the works of sincere and dedicated scholars in the minds of the people of the East. Though some unfounded allegations of such kind have been brought against Browne,¹⁴ there is not a shred of evidence to support them. In fact it is ironic that the man who taught so many of the "proconsuls" and servants of British imperialism should become, in his own way, an anti-imperialist. Browne was not the only British radical to oppose the injustices of his government abroad. Another example was Wilfrid Scawen Blunt whose *Atrocities of Justice under British Rule in Egypt* (1906), with special reference to the Denshawi incident, created quite a sensation in Britain. Browne was an active supporter of the Irish cause and stood strongly for the Irish Home Rule, and apparently it was for his involvement in this matter that the British government refused him permission to wear his Persian order.¹⁵ He also had an important place as a leading anti-Tsarist propagandist in the period 1907-14.¹⁶ George Raffalovich, the head of the Balkan Committee, which was formed in 1914 to free the Poles and the Ukrainians from Russian oppression and of which Browne was member, referred to him as one whose "name has never been associated with any unfair or 'silencing' treatment of any subject race."¹⁷

Browne's extensive correspondence with his friends clearly reveals that he was a fearless supporter of the weak against the strong. In December 1908, he wrote to Denison Ross, who was at the time in India:

"You are wasted in India, and I doubt if even you, the least officially minded of men by nature, can permanently withstand the demoralizing influence of Anglo-Indian environment. Your lack of sympathy with the Persian Constitution distresses me a great deal, and I ascribe it to this cause; but of course you do not know Taqī-zādeh and the other leaders of the popular party, and cannot therefore realize what fine and capable and honest men they are. I saw a horrible and most misguiding and misleading article on Persia in the *Englishman* (Calcutta) . . . and I suppose that represents the view amongst Anglo-Indians. However, the Turks have given the lie to the old myth about Asiatics being incapable of representative government, and, please God, the Persians will emphasize what the Turks have declared, let the *Englishman* eat dirt as it will. Anyhow Lynch and I are doing all we can to secure the Persian Constitutionalists fair play and to enlist sympathy on their side in this country. This has been an arduous business, and things are going ahead now, but I won't enter into details, as I do not know whether I should find in you a sympathetic listener on this subject, which, however lies very close to my heart. I cannot understand how any one who feels that the Persians are a great and talented people, capable of doing much in the future as they have in the past for the intellectual health of the world, can fail to be wholly with them in this great crisis . . ."¹⁸

In another letter (September 23rd, 1908) he writes to Mrs. Ross:

"I am very miserable about Persia, and utterly disappointed with Sir E. Grey and the present government. You will see another article by me in the *Fortnightly Review* for October, an answer to one by Angus Hamilton . . . If Russia were prevented, she would withdraw Colonel Liakhoff and the other Russian officers, and prevent their massacring the poor Persians. But I think Sir E. Grey, like Mr. Gladstone, is infatuated about Russia. I have the most miserable letters from my friends in the British Legation in Tehran, who tell acutely the humiliating position in which they have been placed, unable to do anything for those who looked to them for help."¹⁹

In another letter to her, Browne further voiced his disappointment over British foreign policy, and said that he thought that the Muslims had never had greater need to be prepared to defend their liberties against the "insatiable greed and mischievous oppression of the so-called 'civilized Christian powers' ". And if the British did not stop Sir E. Grey and his evil counsellors, it would be impossible

¹³ Cambridge University Library, MS. Add. 7605.

¹⁴ Cf. Ismā'il Rā'in, *Ḥuqūq ba-ḡīrān-i Ingilīz dar Īrān* (Tehran, 1969), p. 434.

¹⁵ Information from Browne's granddaughter, Mrs. J. Crawford, of Little Tripplow, Trenton.

¹⁶ In an unpublished thesis by Ronald Grant of Glasgow Univer-

sity entitled *British Radicals and Socialists and their Attitudes to Russia, 1890-1918*, Browne is treated as a leading radical at the turn of the century.

¹⁷ Cambridge University Library, MS Add. 4251 (1158).

¹⁸ Sir Denison Ross, *Both Ends of the Candle* (London, n.d.), p. 62.

¹⁹ C.U.L., MS. Add. 5605 (118).

for any nation—Muslim or non-Muslim—“to contrive to regard England as in any sense friendly to Islam.”²⁰

In middle life, Browne inherited considerable wealth and was able to help generously both the Persian refugees abroad and those who were fighting for the cause of Persian freedom. It was because of his valuable help and sincere feelings that, when Tabriz was occupied by the Russians in 1911, the Constitutionalists sent telegrams to him and asked for help. It is interesting to note that the people of Tabriz made a ditty, which equated the efforts of Browne to the services of Sattār Khān, their great national hero:

What the sword of Sattār did to us,
Browne accomplished with his precious pen.²¹

Browne's friends were of great help in providing him with necessary materials. H. G. Rabino, the British Consul in Rasht, had collected a valuable collection of various newspapers and periodicals published during the Constitutional period, and Mirzā Muhammad 'Alī Tarbiyat had made a study of the Persian press. Browne began his *Press and Poetry of Modern Persia* (1914) as a translation of Tarbiyat's work, but added a second section to it which included translations from various contemporary poets. In the Persian introduction of the book, Browne calls it “a versified history of the revolution”, and in fact it is the first important study of modern Persian poetry and its connection with the political and social life of the country. Browne also says in the introduction that his “aim was to show to the Western scholars that the poetic genius of the Persians has not died out, and it has gained extra brilliance by the revolution and will have a significant effect in the future of this nation.”²²

The collection of Browne's private correspondence at the Cambridge University Library, which is mainly related to the years 1909–11, and numerous letters kept by his family, are of special interest for the historian of the British policy in the Middle East. Besides W. A. Smart, he had other friends in the British Legation in Tehran. These were C. B. Stokes, G. P. Churchill, and W. A. Moore. Though they often disagreed with him, their help was valuable in procuring necessary information. Morgan Shuster, the author of *The Strangling of Persia* (1912) and the American adviser who had been invited to solve the financial problems of Iran, was another helpful friend. The three early chapters of *The Letters from Tabriz*, as well as Browne's other works on the Persian Constitution, were based on the materials provided by friends. As a publicist for the cause of Persian freedom, Browne had enlisted the help of several members of the British Parliament, through whom he would make his political activities more effective.

There is an interesting letter from Major Stokes to Browne, dated January 7th 1911, which further illustrates the methods adopted by Browne and his friends:

Under a separate cover I am sending you a typewritten account of some recent incidents here and of their bearing on the situation. I have written it rather in the way which—were I today an M.P.—I would wish to attack Grey and his policy. The main thing about it is that it has been written with the assistance of Hussein Kuli Khān and indeed that is evident from the account itself—for who else can say what Poklevski said about various matters mentioned? H.K.K. knows that it is going to you. My own idea in sending it is that—if possible—you should get some M.P.s to insist on a debate on Persia when the house meets and one of them should use the information contained in the account for the purpose for attacking Grey's policy.

The less the actual words of the account are used—the less will be the chance of my share in the matter becoming known—and this is of importance to me.²³

Moore and Stokes were apprehensive of the possible reprisals by the Legation and the Foreign Office on account of the information they were sending out. According to Stokes, the Foreign Office had made an “effort to find out who it was in the Legation who held views hostile to the policy of the

²⁰ C.U.L., MS. Add. 7605 (128), 12 March, 1912.

²¹ 'Abdu 'l-Husain Navā'i, “Fa'aliyyat-i Mashrūṭa-Khāhān dar Inḡilīz”, *Ittilā'āt-i mahāneh*, No. 9 (1948), p. 18.

²² E. G. Browne, *The Press and Poetry of Modern Persia* (Cambridge, 1914), Persian introduction.

²³ Add. 7604.

F.O.”.²⁴ Naturally the fear of reprisal was more justified for the Persians who were sending letters from Tabrīz during the Russian occupation. For this reason, Browne has omitted the names of his correspondents in his book.

Browne’s relationship with the Persian revolution began in 1906 when the revolt against Muzaffar al-Dīn Shāh led to the granting of the constitution and the opening of the first National Assembly. When the *Majlis* was in 1908 bombarded and forcibly dissolved by Colonel Liakhoff, the Russian commander of Muhammad ‘Alī Shāh’s Cossack Brigade, Browne became more actively involved in the cause of Persian freedom. His activities extended well beyond the period known as the “Lesser Autocracy” which ended with the victory of the Nationalist forces and the deposition of Muhammad ‘Alī in 1909, the opening of the Second Parliament on November 15th 1909, and its forcible dissolution as a result of the Russian ultimatums and invasion in December 1911. Browne and H. F. B Lynch formed “The Persia Committee”, which included several members of the House of Lords and House of Commons, and rendered valuable services for Iran during the critical years of 1908–12.

After the bombardment of the *Majlis*, a number of the Constitutionalists, such as Mu‘āzid us-Saltana, Taqī-zādeh and Dehkhodā came to Paris. Dehkhodā, whose biting satire in the journal *Sūr-i Isrāfil* had annoyed Muhammad ‘Alī Shāh beyond measure, began to publish the journal again in Yverdon. Browne was anxious to bring these prominent Persians to England, and eventually Taqī-zādeh, Muhammad ‘Alī Tarbiyat and two other friends accepted his invitation. The Persians gave speeches and Browne translated them. They managed to get the support of forty-five M.P.s for their cause and to enlist the help of several papers. *The Times*, which unlike *The Manchester Guardian* and *The Daily News* was not co-operative at all, at last changed its policy. Browne spent a considerable amount of time in these activities and felt that his literary endeavours had been disrupted by the Persia Committee, but expecting a brighter future for Iran, he had no regrets.²⁵ After a few months, Taqī-zādeh was urgently asked by the Revolutionary Committee in Baku to join its members. He travelled to the Caucasus and co-operated with the Constitutionalists of Tabrīz. He was then elected as a member of the Second *Majlis* for that city and stayed in Tehran until December 1909. Because of some political disagreements and accusations made by his opponents, Taqī-zādeh was forced to leave Iran, and he stayed for about two years in Istanbul. The Russians occupied Tabrīz in December 1911, and the persecuted liberals in that city, and their friends in Istanbul and other places, more especially Taqī-zādeh, sent letters to Browne, which have been collected by the present author.

The Letters from Tabrīz can be divided into two parts: the introduction by Browne and the translation of the letters sent to him. The second and third sections of the introduction were both privately printed for The Persia Committee in 1912 as *The Persian Crisis of December 1911: how it arose and whither it may lead us* and *The Reign of Terror at Tabrīz: England’s Responsibility* respectively. Letters Nos. 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 14, 17 and 21 are from Taqī-zādeh, who is mentioned as “a well-known citizen of Tabrīz”. In the third letter Browne wanted to give the actual initials of Taqī-zādeh (H. T.), but later on changed them to S. M. T. in order to conceal the identity of his friend. No. 11 was originally written by Taqī-zādeh to Muhammad Qazwīnī in Paris, who, after omitting all references to the writer, sent a copy to Browne and also published it in the Calcutta journal the *Hablu’l-Matīn* (No. 39, Vol. 19).²⁶ No. 15 is a letter by Husain Kāzimzādeh Īrānshahr, who was another member of the Persia Committee in Paris. The originals of these letters are in possession of Browne’s granddaughter, Mrs. Crawford, who has been kind enough to allow me to publish them in the Persian version of the present work.²⁷

In a note left on the manuscript, Browne says that *The Letters from Tabrīz* were prepared for the press, and accepted, in 1914, “[But] the outbreak of the war in the August of that year rendered their publication inexpedient for the time being.”²⁸ During the war, Browne devoted his time mainly to Bābī materials, and in the last years of his life the completion of the fourth volume of *A Literary History of Persia* claimed his attention. After his death, *The Letters from Tabrīz*, along with some of his private papers, went to the Cambridge University Library; thus the manuscript was never published.

²⁴ Add. 7604, letter of 20/6/1910 and in the same collection, Moore’s letter dated December 3rd 1910.

²⁵ Browne to Denison Ross, November 15th 1908, Add. 7605 (120).

²⁶ See the review of the *Nāma-hāyi az Tabrīz* by Iraj Afshār in

Rāhnemāyi-Kitāb, Vol. 15 (1973), pp. 856–9.

²⁷ See my edition of *Nāma-hāyi az Tabrīz* (Tehran, 1973, reprinted in Berkeley in the same year).

²⁸ C.U.L., MS. DE3.

The letters contained in the present volume cover but a short period in the history of Persian constitutional movement, and being reports sent out under the most difficult conditions by various nationalists, they sometimes repeat the same incidents ; however, they are extremely revealing records of one of the most critical periods of Persian history.