

radic renewals of persécution, sometimes with the direct connivance of the authorities, sometimes merely through mobs excited by priests. In the present case the governing powers appear to have resisted the mob at first and then played the craven. Yezd is one of those towns in Fars which gains picturesqueness by its tumbledown condition. It owes its existence to an oasis in a desert part of ancient Persia and a trade route which had to use that oasis. Its remnant population is largely made up of merchants and traders, and it is the only town where linger the old fire-worshippers who have suffered from Jew, Christian, and Moslem, yet still survive.

Unless the Shah makes an example of the mob at Yezd we may expect outbreaks of the same kind in other cities of Persia, furnishing more martyrs to the believers in the Biyan or Babi Bible and increasing the number of reformers who reject the Shilte, or Persian form of Mohammedanism. As Russia and England and Germany close in on Persia, events will have to follow in quicker tempo and a reformation like Bâbysm, founded on modern progress, raising the status of woman and appealing to the sense of fairness, will be certain to triumph in the end.

#### DEATH TO THE BABS!

The microbe of persecution is always with us, but at times it dies off and we begin to think of it as we do of the Black Pest; when, lo and behold, it starts up again with its old virulence! Believers in sunspots and periodicity generally may explain why the microbe has suddenly begun its ravages again this year in Europe, Asia, and America—in Russia against the Jews and Finlanders, in Persia against the Bâbs, and in the United States against the negro.

The rise of this mental disease has little to do with the religious acts of its victims. As we see, lynching develops in atrocity within our own borders and wins defenders among decent men, so we find the Russians rather pleased than otherwise with their exploits, looking for reasons to excuse their barbarities, and meditating more. Religion is merely the excuse for these murders, which can always be traced to some jealousy of the victims on the part of the oppressors, or of those who, from a safe seat in the rear of the mob, direct the oppressors. In the case of the Bâbs we have a close parallel of the sufferings of early Christians in the first centuries of our era, whose greater sobriety, thrift, and intelligence disposed the shiftless populace against them, whose reforming spirit the priesthood feared and denounced.

As at Kishineff we saw the priests that call themselves Christians egging the mob on the Jews, so in Southern Persia we see the mollahs urging the ruin of the Bâbs—those quiet reformers, Quakerlike in their reserve, who form almost the only hard-working, self-respecting element in the Persian Nation. And again, the reason is economic rather than religious. The noble tenets and elevated conduct of the vast majority of the Bâbs make them remarkable for superior character; hence they increase in number, and as they slowly gain in the respect of decent men the priesthood loses income steadily, while the apparent wealth of the Bâbs excites the mob to plunder.

These followers of a higher life get their name from bâb, the gate, because their first prophet, nearly a hundred years ago, announced himself as "the Gate." He was hated by the mollahs as only priests can hate. His tragic death at the hand of the Persian ruler has made him the founder of a new religion. Neither the last nor the present Bâb has fallen into the hands of the Persians; he lives generally in Syria; but quietly the sublime tenets of successive holders of the name have made their way through the length and breadth of the land. When Prof. BROWNE of Oxford visited Central Persia in search of Bâbysm he found that many persons who judged it prudent to be Moslems in public were generally known to be Bâbs in secret. Indeed, it was enough for a man to live a better life to be accused of belonging to the proscribed sect.

Possibly by this time the Bâbs would have won toleration from the Government, if not permission to practice their religion openly, had it not been for the fanaticism of two, and probably only two, men, who in 1852 attempted the life of the Shah. This was soon after the judicial murder of the first Bâb, when there was naturally much bitterness over the death of a talented and irreproachable man. The answer was what might be expected. Persecutions like those the Bâbs have been suffering recently were started in various parts of Persia, and the sect was apparently stamped out in blood. Ever since there have been spo-