

CHAPTER III.

CULMINATION AND DECLINE OF THE ṢAFAWÍ
POWER, FROM SHÁH ṬAHMÁSP (A.D. 1524-1576) TO
SHÁH ḤUSAYN (A.D. 1694-1722).

Ṭahmásp, the eldest of Isma'íl's sons, was only ten years of age when he succeeded his father. He reigned over Persia for fifty-two years and a half, and died on May 14, 1576. In the contemporary chronicles he is usually denoted as *Sháh-i-Dín-pandáh* ("the King who is the Refuge of Religion"). The date of his accession is commemorated in the following verse:

طهماسب شاه عالم كز نصرتِ الهی
جا بعد شاه غازی بر تختِ زر گرفتگی
جای پدر گرفتگی كردی جهان مسخر
تأریخ سلطنت شد جای پدر گرفتگی¹

"O Ṭahmásp, King of the World, who, by the Divine Assistance, didst take thy place on the throne of gold after the Victorious King!

Thou didst take the place of thy father; thou didst subdue the world:
'Thou didst take the place of thy father' (*jd-yi-pidur girifti*)¹ was the date of thine accession."

Of the numerous records of his long reign two, on which in what follows I shall chiefly draw, are worthy of special note; his own autobiography² from his accession on Monday, Rajab 19, 930 (May 23, 1524), to his shameful surrender of the Turkish Prince

¹ $3+1+10+2+4+200+20+200+80+400+10=930$ A.H. = 1523-4 A.D.

² Printed by the late Dr Paul Horn in vol. xlv of the *Z.D.M.G.* (for 1890), pp. 563-649; and lithographed in vol. ii of the *Maṭla'w'sh-Shams* of Muḥammad Ḥasan Khán *I'timádu's-Sulṭana*, pp. 165-213.

Báyazíd, who had sought refuge at his court, in 969/1561-2; and the excellent *Aḥsanu't-Tawárikh* of Ḥasan Beg Rúmlú, concluded in 985/1577-8 only a year after Ṭahmásp's death. The autobiography, possibly suggested by Bábur's incomparable Memoirs, is far inferior to that most instructive and amusing work, and is not greatly superior to the over-estimated Diaries of the late Naṣiru'd-Dín Sháh; but it throws some valuable light on the mentality of Ṭahmásp, and on those inner conditions which it is so difficult to deduce from the arid pages of the official chronicles, containing for the most part a mere record of interminable wars and massacres, and leaving us quite in the dark as to the social and intellectual state of the people. That

Ṭahmásp was a bigot is indicated both by Sir John Malcolm¹ and Erskine², though the former historian takes the more favourable view of his character, describing him as "of a kind and generous disposition," and adding that he "appears to have possessed prudence and spirit, and, if he was not distinguished by great qualities, he was free from any remarkable vices." Anthony Jenkinson, who carried a letter of recommendation from Queen Elizabeth³, had a not very gratifying audience with him at Qazwín in November, 1562⁴. The Venetian Ambassador Vincentio d'Alessandri, who was accredited to his Court in 1571, describes him⁵, "in the sixty-fourth year of his age, and the fifty-first of his reign," as "of middling stature, well formed in

His personal appearance.

¹ *History of Persia*, vol. i, pp. 511-513.

² *A History of India under... Baber and Humáyún* (London, 1854), vol. ii, pp. 285 etc.

³ For the text of this curious letter, see the Hakluyt Society's *Early Voyages and Travels to Russia and Persia* (No. lxxii, London, 1886), pp. 112-114.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 144-147.

⁵ *Travels of Venetians in Persia* (Hakluyt Society, 1873), pp. 215 et seqq.

person and features, although dark, of thick lips and a grizzly beard," and says that he was "more of a melancholy disposition than anything else, which is also known by many signs, but principally by his not having come out of his palace for the space of eleven years, nor having once gone to the chase nor any other kind of amusement, to the great dissatisfaction of his people." He further describes him as boastful, but unwarlike and "a man of very little courage"; as caring little for law and justice, but much for women and money; as mean and avaricious, "buying and selling with the cunning of a small merchant." "Notwithstanding the things mentioned above," he concludes, "which make one think he ought to be hated, the reverence and love of the people for the King are incredible, as they worship him not as a king but as a god, on account of his descent from the line of 'Alí, the great object of their veneration," and he cites the most extraordinary instances of this devotion and even deification, which is not confined to the common people but extends to members of the Royal Family and courtiers, and to the inhabitants of the remotest parts of his realms. One magnanimous act of the king's reign, which led to a great alleviation of the burden of taxation imposed on his people, the Venetian Ambassador ascribes to the influence of a dream, "in which the Angels took him by the throat and asked him whether it was becoming to a king, surnamed the Just and descended from 'Alí, to get such immense profits by the ruin of so many poor people; and then ordered him to free the people from them." This story is likely enough, for Ṭahmásp in his Memoirs records numerous dreams to which he evidently attached great importance. Thus in a dream 'Alí promises him victory over the Uzbeks about A.D. 1528¹, and a year or two later at Herát advises

Ṭahmásp much influenced by dreams.

him as to another campaign¹, whereon he remarks, "the belief of this weak servant Ṭahmásp aṣ-Şafawí al-Músawí al-Ḥusayn² is that whoever sees His Holiness the Commander of the Faithful (*i.e.* 'Alí), on whom be the blessings of God, in a dream, that which he says will come to pass." Again in his twentieth year two consecutive dreams, in the second of which he sought and obtained from the Imám 'Alí Riḍá confirmation of the first, led him to repent of wine-drinking and other excesses, and to close all the taverns and houses of ill-repute in his domains, on which occasion he composed the following quatrain³:

یکچند پی زمردِ سوده شدیم' یکچند بیاقوتِ تر آلوده شدیم'
آلودگئی بود بهر رنگِ که بود' شستیم بآبِ توبه آسوده شدیم'

His conversion or repentance. "For a while we pursued the crushed emerald⁴;
For a while we were defiled by the liquid ruby⁵;
Defilement it was, under whatever colour:
We washed in the Water of Repentance, and were
at peace."

This "repentance" or conversion of Sháh Ṭahmásp is recorded in the *Aḥsanu't-Tawárikh* under the year 939/1532-3.

About the same time the army of the Ottoman Sulṭán Sulaymán, profiting as usual by Persia's preoccupation with one of the constantly recurring Uzbek invasions of her north-eastern province, marched into Ádharbáyján, where it was overtaken by a premature but violent snow-storm (it was in the month of

Premature snow causes disaster to Turkish army.

¹ Horn, *loc. cit.*, p. 592.

² These three epithets refer to his ancestors Shaykh Şafíyyu'd-Dín, the Imám Músá al-Kázim and the Imám Ḥusayn.

³ Horn, *loc. cit.*, p. 600, also cited in the *Átashkada* (Bombay lith., 1277/1860-1, p. 17).

⁴ *I.e.* *Bang* or *Ḥashish* (Cannabis Indica), as explicitly stated in the *Átashkada*.

⁵ *I.e.* wine.

¹ P. 584 of Horn's *Denkwürdigkeiten* cited above p. 84, n. 2.

October), in which numbers of the Turkish troops perished. This disaster to the arms of his hereditary foe Sháh Ṭahmásp¹ ascribes to "the help of God and the aid of the Immaculate Imáms." It has been commemorated in the following forcible quatrain, given in the *Aḥsanu't-Tawárikh* and the *Tá'rikh-i-'Álam-ára-yi-'Abbást*:

رفتم سوی سلطانیّه آن طرفه چمن،

دیدم دو هزار مرده بی گور و کفن،

گفتم که بگشت این همه عثمانی را،

بادِ سحر از میانه بر خاست که من،

"I went to Sulṭániyya, that rare pasture-ground:
I saw two thousand dead without grave or shroud.
'Who,' said I, 'killed all these Ottomans?'
The morning breeze arose from the midst saying 'I!'"

Other dreams are meticulously recorded by Sháh Ṭahmásp in his Memoirs: at Ardabíl he sees and converses with the vision of his ancestor Shaykh Şafíyyu 'd-Dín²; on another occasion he receives encouragement from the spirit of Shaykh Shihábu'd-Dín³; other allegorical dreams are recorded under the years 957/1550 and 961/1554⁴.

In his domestic relations Sháh Ṭahmásp was unhappy, though not perhaps more so than most contemporary Asiatic sovereigns, notably the Ottoman Sulṭáns. He had three younger brothers, Sâm (notable as a poet and biographer of poets)⁵, Bahrám and

Unhappy domestic relations.

¹ Horn, *loc. cit.*, p. 602. See also the Turkish journal of this campaign given by Firídún Bey (vol. i, pp. 588-9), where mention of this severe cold is made. Sulṭániyya was reached by the Turkish army on 5 Rabí' ii, 941 (October 14, 1534).

² *Ibid.*, p. 607.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 623.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 635-6.

⁵ He was the author of a valuable but unpublished Biography of contemporary poets entitled *Tuhfa-i-Sámi*.

Alqás, of whom the first and third rebelled against him. Sâm Mírzá was cast into prison in 969/1561-2 and was ultimately put to death there in 984/1576-7 by Ṭahmásp's successor. The case of Alqás was much worse, for he was a traitor as well as a rebel, and not only took refuge with Sulṭán Sulaymán at Constantinople, but incited him to attack Persia and took an active part in the ensuing war against his own country. At Hamadán, in 955/1548, he plundered the house of his sister-in-law, the wife of Bahrám Mírzá, and later advanced as far as Yazdikhwást, where he made a massacre of the inhabitants, but in the following year he was defeated and fell into the hands of his brother Bahrám, who handed him over to Ṭahmásp. The King imprisoned him in the Castle of Alamút, according to his own Memoirs¹, or, according to the *Aḥsanu't-Tawárikh*, in the Castle of Qahqaha, where he perished a week later. "In short," says Ṭahmásp in recording the event, "after some days I saw that he did not feel safe from me, but was constantly preoccupied, so I despatched him to a fortress with Ibráhm Khán and Ḥasan Beg the centurion, who took him to the Castle of Alamút and there imprisoned him. After six days, those who had custody of him being off their guard, two or three persons there, in order to avenge their father whom Alqás had killed, cast him down from the castle. After his death the land had peace." It can scarcely be doubted that Ṭahmásp approved, if he did not actually arrange, this deed of violence. Bahrám Mírzá died the same year at the age of 33.

Much worse was the case of the unfortunate Prince Báyazíd, son of the Ottoman Sulṭán Sulaymán, who, deprived of his government of Kútáhiya and driven from his native land by the intrigues of his father's Russian wife Khurram² (whose

Betrayal of the Ottoman Prince Báyazíd (A.D. 1560-62).

¹ Horn, *loc. cit.*, p. 631.

² See Gibb's *History of Ottoman Poetry*, vol. iii, pp. 10-11.

one object was to secure the succession of her son Salím, afterwards known as "the Sot") took refuge at Ṭahmásp's court in 967/1559-60. An Ottoman mission headed by 'Alí Páshá was sent to Qazwín to demand the surrender of Báyzíd and his children. They arrived there, as we learn from Anthony Jenkinson's narrative¹, four days earlier than himself, to wit on October 30, 1562, and Ṭahmásp, moved partly by fear of the Turkish power, partly by bribes, disregarded his solemn promises to the contrary and caused or suffered the unfortunate Prince and his four little sons to be put to death, and, as Anthony Jenkinson says, "sent his head for a present, not a little desired, and acceptable to the unnatural father." Ṭahmásp seems to have overcome any scruples he may have felt in breaking his solemn promises to the guest he thus betrayed by handing him over not directly to his father, but to the emissaries of his brother Salím. The case is bad enough even as stated by the Sháh himself in his Memoirs, which conclude with a pretty full account of this episode², ending thus:

"At this date 'Alí Áqá came from his Majesty the Sultán³, and of [my] Nobles and Court everyone who had sent a present received its equivalent, save in the case of my own gift and offering, which on this occasion also had not proved acceptable; and there was a letter full of hints and complaints. I said, 'Here have I arrested and detained Prince Báyzíd with his four sons for the sake of His Majesty the Sultán and Prince Salím; but since I have given my word not to

Ṭahmásp's own account of this betrayal.

¹ *Early Voyages, etc.* (Hakluyt Society, 1886, vol. i), p. 141 and footnote, in which the substance of Knolles's contemporary account is given. See also Creasy's *History of the Ottoman Turks* (London, 1877), pp. 186-7.

² Horn's text, *loc. cit.*, pp. 642-9.

³ Here, as elsewhere, called *Khwándgár*, apparently a corruption of *Khuddwandgár* ("the Lord"), itself in turn corrupted by the Turks into *Khúnkár* ("the Shedder of Blood").

surrender Báyzíd to the Sultán, I have determined that when the Sultán's commands arrive and likewise the emissaries of Prince Salím, I will surrender [Báyzíd] to the latter, so that I may not break my promise.' So when the Sultán's messengers arrived, I said, 'Your Excellency and Ḥasan Áqá are welcome, and I will act according to the commands of His Majesty and in no wise transgress his orders, but faithfully accomplish whatever service he may indicate. But in return for so material a service I desire from His Majesty the Sultán and Prince Salím such reward and recompense as may be worthy of them; and, moreover, I hope of the Sultán in a friendly way that no hurt may befall Prince Báyzíd and his sons'."

Needless to say this pious wish in no wise influenced the tragic course of events, but the Sháh's compliance with the Sultán's imperious demands led to a temporary amelioration of the relations between Persia and Turkey which is reflected both in Anthony Jenkinson's narrative and in the concluding State Papers contained in the first volume of Firídún Bey's *Munsha'át*, in which for the first time Ṭahmásp is addressed by Sulaymán with decent civility, though there is no explicit reference to this event.

More creditable and better known is the reception of Humáyún, the son of Bábur and Emperor of Dihlí, at the Court of Ṭahmásp in A.D. 1544 when he was driven out of his own dominions. Of the hospitality which he received Sir John Malcolm¹ speaks with enthusiasm; but Erskine², giving less weight to the official accounts than to the "plain unvarnished tale" of Humáyún's servant Jawhar³, takes the view (which he

The Emperor Humáyún in Persia.

¹ *History of Persia* (London, 1815), vol. i, pp. 508-9.

² *History of India under... Baber and Humáyún* (London, 1854), vol. ii, pp. 280 *et seqq.*

³ Translated by Major Charles Stewart and printed in London in 1832 for the Oriental Translation Fund.

supports by numerous illustrations) that in reality "Humáyún had much to suffer and many humiliations to endure"; and that in particular great pressure was brought to bear on him to compel him to adopt the Shí'a faith, which might have gone even further but for the moderating influence of the Sháh's sister Sulţánum Khánum, the Minister Qáđí-i-Jahán and the physician Núru'd-Dín. One of the pictures in the celebrated palace of *Chahil Sutún*¹ at Işfahán represents an entertainment given by ʿTahmásp to Humáyún.

The foreign relations of Persia during the reign of ʿTahmásp were chiefly, as in the reign of his father Isma'íl, with three states—Turkey, the Uzbeks of Transoxiana, and the so-called "Great Moghuls" of Dihlí. During the greater part of his reign (until 974/1566-7) the great Sulţán Sulaymán occupied the Ottoman throne; afterwards Salím II ("the Sot"), and, for the last two years of his life (982-4/1574-6) Murád III. Of the Uzbek rulers 'Ubayd Khán, until his death in 946/1539-40, and afterwards Dín Muḥammad Sulţán were his most formidable foes, who ceased not to trouble his eastern, as did the Ottoman Turks his western borders. Of the "Great Moghuls" Bábur (died 937/1530-1), Humáyún (died 962/1555) and Akbar were his contemporaries. Anthony Jenkinson, as we have seen, came to him with credentials from Queen Elizabeth in A.D. 1561, and some thirteen years later, towards the end of his reign, the arrival of a Portuguese mission from Don Sebastian is recorded in the *Aḥsanú't-Tawárikh* under the year 982/1574-5, but it met with a bad reception.

Between the Ottoman Turks on the one hand and the Uzbeks on the other, Persia enjoyed little peace at this period, and these campaigns on the N.E. and N.W. frontiers

¹ See Lord Curzon's *Persia*, vol. ii, p. 35. A copy of the picture in question by Texier is reproduced in Sir Percy Sykes's *History of Persia* (2nd ed., London, 1921), vol. ii, p. 164.

succeeded one another with varying fortune but with monotonous reiteration. Sulţán Sulaymán's chief campaigns were in 940-942/1534-6, when Baghdad was taken from the Persians and Ádharbáyján invaded¹; 950/1543-4; 953-955/1546-8, when the Sháh's brother Alqáş allied himself with the Turks; 959/1552, when the Persians recovered Arjish; and 961/1554, when Sulaymán burned Nakhjuwán and attacked Ádharbáyján for the fourth time. The Turkish military power was at this time at its zenith, and was formidable not only to the Persians but to the great European Powers, who, indeed, were thankful for such diversion of its activities as the Persians from time to time effected, so that Busbecq, Ferdinand's ambassador at the Court of Sulaymán, declares that "only the Persian stands between us and ruin."² Creasy³ speaks of the "pre-eminence of the Turks of that age in the numerical force and efficiency of their artillery"; and adds that "the same remark applies to their skill in fortification, and in all the branches of military engineering." Inferior as were the Persian to the Ottoman troops alike in discipline and equipment, it was much to their credit that they were able to offer as stout a resistance as they did, especially as the continual object of Turkish diplomacy at this time was to incite the Uzbeks, Turkmáns, and other Sunní peoples, to combine with them in attacking "the rascally Red-heads" (*Qizil-básh-i-Awbásh*). Of this policy the State Papers of Sulaymán's, as of his father Salím's, reign afford ample evidence; for instance the letter addressed to a Turkmán

¹ A complete diary of this campaign against the "arch-heretic Qizil-básh King ʿTahmásp" will be found in vol. i of Firídún Bey's *Munsha'át*, pp. 584-598. The Ottoman army left Constantinople on June 10, 1534, occupied Baghdad in December of the same year, and returned to Constantinople on Jan. 7, 1536.

² See p. 11 *supra*.

³ *History of the Ottoman Turks* (London, 1877), p. 202.

chief about the end of 960/1553 (given on pp. 612-613 of Firídún Bey's *Munsha'át*) and transmitted to him, apparently, by four of his representatives, Muḥammad, Mír Abú Turáb, Mír Tútí and Sunduk, who, after performing the Pilgrimage, had visited the Sultán's Court at Constantinople on their homeward journey, and had delighted him with accounts of their achievements against the Persians.

The wars with the Uzbeks were equally continuous, especially until the death of the redoubtable 'Ubayd Khán, the son of Shaybak Khán, a direct descendant

Wars with the Uzbeks.

of Chingíz, in 946/1539-40, at the age of fifty-three, after a reign of thirty years. He is said by the *Aḥsanu't-Tawárikh* to have suffered defeat in only one of the seven campaigns he fought against the Persians. Tús, Mashhad, and especially Herát suffered terribly during

Religious persecutions.

these wars, which were nearly always accompanied by severe religious persecutions. The poet Hilálí fell a victim to the Sunní fanaticism of the Uzbeks at Herát in 935/1528-9, as the poet Banná'í had fallen a victim to Shí'a intolerance at Qarshí in 918/1512-13; and under the year 942/1535-6 the *Aḥsanu't-Tawárikh* gives the following graphic account of the persecution of the Shí'a which took place on the capture of Herát by 'Ubayd Khán on Rajab 20, 942 (January 14, 1536):

هر روز بحکم آن خان بی ایمان پنج شش کس بواسطه تشیع
باقوال جهال در چهار سوق هراة کشته می شدند و روستائیان بی
دیانت و شهریان با خیانت با هر کس که عداوتی داشتند اورا
گرفته نزد قاضی می بردند که این مرد در زمان قزلباش لعن
ابو بکر و عثمان کرده است، بسخن آن دو گواه جاهل قاضی
بقتل آن مظلوم حکم می کرد و اورا کشان کشان بچهار سوق
هراة می بردند و بقتلش می آوردند و از شومی ایشان امواج محن

و افواج فتن بدرجه اعلی رسید و سلب و نهب در اطراف
خراسان واقع گردید،

"Every day by order of that unbelieving Khán ('Ubayd) five or six individuals were slain for Shí'a proclivities on the information of ignorant persons in the market-place¹ of Herát. Godless villagers and treacherous townsmen would seize anyone against whom they cherished a grudge and drag him before the judge, asserting that in the time of the 'Red-heads' (*i.e.* the Shí'a Persians) he used to curse Abú Bakr and 'Uthmán²; and on the word of these two ignorant witnesses the judge would pronounce sentence of death on the victim, whom they would then drag to the market-place of Herát and put to death. Through their sinister acts the waves of sorrow and the hosts of mischief attained their culmination, while plunder and looting took place throughout the confines of Khurásán."

With the Georgians also the Persians were constantly at war during this period, to wit in 947/1540-1, 950/1543-4,

958/1551, 961/1554, 963/1556, 968/1560-1, and
976/1568-9. These wars were also waged with
great ferocity, and it is worth noting that con-

temporary Persian historians constantly speak of the Christian inhabitants of Georgia as "guebres" (*gabrán*, a term properly applicable only to the Zoroastrians), as in the following verse describing the first of these campaigns:

دران سنگلاخ آن ددان کرده جای، وطنگاه گبران مردم ربای،

"In that stony wilderness those beasts had established themselves, the native land of man-stealing guebres."

In this campaign, as the *Aḥsanu't-Tawárikh* informs us, such of the Georgians as consented to embrace Islám were spared, but those who refused were put to the sword; and similarly, in speaking of the campaign of 958/1551 the same history says:

¹ *Chahár-súq* (from which is derived the modern Turkish *chárshí*) is the point of intersection of two main *bázars*; a sort of Oriental Oxford Circus, affording the greatest publicity.

² The omission of 'Umar, unless due to a scribe's error, is remarkable.

غازیانِ ظفر شعار پست و بلند ديارِ كَقَّارِ فِجَارِ را احاطه فرمودند
و هر كوه و كمر كه گريزگاه آن گمراه بود از لكه كوب دلاوران
با هامون يكسان شد و يك متنفس از آن مشركين از دائره قهر
و كين و الله محيط بالكاشرين جان بسلامت بيرون نبرد و اهل
و عيال و اموال بآرث شرعى از مقتولان بقاتلان انتقال
نمود¹

“The victorious champions encompassed the lands of the sinful unbelievers, lowlands and highlands, and every mountain and ridge whither that misguided one [their ruler] had fled was levelled with the plain by the trampling of the [Persian] warriors. Not one who drew breath of those polytheists saved his soul alive from the circle of wrath and vengeance of ‘and God encompasseth the unbelievers¹,’ and, by lawful heritage, the wives, families and property of the slain passed to their slayers.”

Besides these greater wars, there were minor operations against the more or less independent rulers of Gílán, and the last representatives of the ancient but expiring dynasty of the Shírwánsháhs, who boasted descent from the great Núshírwán. Although the last of this line, Sháhrukh ibn Sulţán Farrukh ibn Shaykh-sháh ibn Farrukh-Yasár, was put to death by Tahmásp in 946/1539-40, nine years later we read of a scion of the house named Burhán in conflict with Isma‘íl Mírzá. In Gílán, Khán Aḥmad, the eleventh ruler of a petty dynasty which had ruled for two hundred and five years, was defeated and interned in the Castle of Qahqaha in 975/1567-8. In 981/1573-4 Tabríz was terrorized by a gang of roughs who were not reduced to order and obedience until a hundred and fifty of them had been put to death. Barbarous punishments were frequent. Muzaffar Sulţán, governor of Rasht, was for an act of treason paraded through the streets of Tabríz, decor-

Minor wars and disturbances.

Barbarous punishments.

¹ Qur‘án, ii, 18.

ated for the occasion, amidst the mockery of the rabble, and burned to death in an iron cage, suspended under which in a particularly cruel and humiliating fashion Amír Sa‘du‘d-Dín ‘Ináyatu’lláh Khúzání simultaneously suffered the same fate. Khwája Kalán Ghúriyání, a fanatical Sunní who had gone out to welcome ‘Ubayd Khán the Uzbek and was accused of speaking slightly of the Sháh, was skinned in the market-place of Herát and the stuffed skin exhibited on a pole. Ruknu‘d-Dín Mas‘úd of Kázárún, a most learned man and skilful physician, incurred the Sháh’s displeasure and was burned to death. Muḥammad Şáliḥ, a liberal patron of poets, in whose honour Ḥayratí composed a panegyric, had his mouth sewn up because he was alleged to have spoken disrespectfully of the King, and was then placed in a large jar which was afterwards thrown to the ground from the top of a minaret.

According to the *Aḥsanu‘t-Tawárikh*, Sháh Tahmásp was in his youth much interested in calligraphy and painting; he also liked riding on Egyptian asses, which consequently became fashionable, and were adorned with golden trappings and gold-embroidered saddle-cloths. Alluding to these idiosyncrasies a ribald poet with the extraordinary *nom de guerre* of *Búqu‘l-‘Ishq* (“the Trumpet of Love”) lampooned him in this verse:

بى تكلف خوش ترقى كرده اند، كاتب و نقاش و قزوینى و خر¹

“The scribe, the painter, the Qazwíní and the ass
Obtained easy promotion without trouble.”

He made a great ostentation of piety, “regarding most things as unclean, and often spitting out his half-eaten food into the water or the fire,” in view of which it is satisfactory to know that “he would not eat in company.” He was also punctilious about such matters as cutting his nails, and would spend the day after this operation in the bath.

Tahmásp died on Tuesday, Şafar 15, 984 (May 14, 1576) at the age of sixty-four after a reign of fifty-three years and a half, the longest reign, according to the *Aḥsanu't-Tawárikh*, of any Muhammadan sovereign except the Fátimid Caliph al-Mustansir bi'lláh¹. Eleven of his sons are enumerated in the history just cited, of whom nine at least survived him. The eldest, Muḥammad Khudá-banda, who was about forty-five years of age, though he succeeded to the throne a year later, renounced it on his father's death on account of his partial blindness, this infirmity, whether natural or deliberately inflicted, being regarded in the East, and especially in Persia, as an absolute disqualification for the exercise of regal functions². His younger brother Haydar, taking advantage of the absence from the capital of his brothers, of whom Isma'íl was imprisoned in the Castle of Qahqaha, while the others were for the most part resident in distant provinces, endeavoured to seize the throne, but was murdered in the women's apartments, where he had taken refuge, by the partisans of his brother Isma'íl, who was proclaimed king in the principal mosque of Qazwín nine days after his father's death.

Isma'íl's reign was short but sanguinary, and in his drastic methods of dealing with possible competitors for the Crown he rivalled the most ruthless of the Ottoman Sultáns. He first put to death his two brothers Sulaymán and Muşţafá; then, after providing an elaborate funeral for his father at Mashhad and a gorgeous coronation for himself at Qazwín, in which his remaining brothers occupied their due positions, he resumed his fratricidal activities. On Sunday the sixth of Dhu'l-Ḥijja, A.H. 984 (Feb. 24, 1577), he put to death the six following princes: Sultán Ibráhm Mírzá, poet, artist, musician and calligrapher;

¹ He reigned sixty lunar years, A.H. 427-487 (A.D. 1035-1094).

² See Chardin's *Voyages* (Paris, 1811), vol. v, pp. 241-244.

his nephew Muḥammad Ḥusayn Mírzá, a lad of eighteen, who had already been deprived of his eyesight; Sultán Maḥmúd Mírzá; his son Muḥammad Báqir Mírzá, a child of two; Imám-qulí Mírzá, and Sultán Aḥmad Mírzá. He next turned his attention to those princes who were resident in outlying provinces, such as Badí'u'z-Zamán Mírzá and his little son Bahrám Mírzá in Khurásán, Sultán 'Alí Mírzá in Ganja, and Sultán Ḥasan Mírzá in Tíhrán, all of whom he destroyed. Only by a most wonderful chance, accounted by his biographer Iskandar Munshí¹ as a miraculous intervention of Providence, did the little Prince 'Abbás Mírzá, destined to become the greatest of Persia's modern rulers, escape his uncle's malevolence. The blood-thirsty Isma'íl had actually sent 'Alí-qulí Khán Shámlú to Herát, of which 'Abbás Mírzá, though only six years of age², was the nominal governor, to put the young prince to death, but the emissary, whether actuated by pity or superstition, delayed the accomplishment of his cruel task till the sacred month of Ramaḍán should be over, and ere this respite had come to an end a courier arrived bringing the joyful news of Isma'íl's death, the manner of which was as discreditable as his life. On the night of Sunday, Ramaḍán 13, A.H. 985 (Nov. 24, 1577), being at the time the worse for drink, he had gone out in search of adventures into the streets and *bázárs* of the city accompanied by one of his favourites, a confectioner's son named Ḥasan Beg, and other disreputable companions, and towards dawn had gone to rest in Ḥasan Beg's house, where he was found dead later in the day. Some suggested that he had been poisoned, or first drugged and afterwards strangled, while others maintained that he had merely taken an overdose of the opium

¹ Author of the well-known monograph on Sháh 'Abbás the Great entitled *Tárikh-i-'Alam-ará-yi-'Abbási*.

² He was born at Herát on Ramaḍán 1, 978 (Jan. 27, 1571).

wherewith he was wont to assuage the pain of a colic to which he was subject. But his death was so welcome to all that no great trouble seems to have been taken to arrive at the manner of it, and it does not even appear that any punishment was inflicted on Hasan Beg, who, indeed, is said to have been also half paralysed when found¹.

Muhammad Khudá-banda, in spite of his blindness, was now placed on the throne which he had refused on the death of his father Sháh Tahmásp. He was at this time about forty-six years of age² and was resident at Shíráz, having been replaced in his former government of Herát by his little son Prince 'Abbás Mírzá, whose narrow escape from death has just been described. The new king at once set out for Qazwín, and amongst those who welcomed him at Qum was Hasan Beg Rúmlú, the author of the *Ahsanu't-Tawárikh*, which important but unpublished history was concluded in this very year and contains the most authoritative account of the events above narrated. That this account is in places confused and must be supplemented by later histories like the *Khuld-i-Bartn* and *Tárikh-i-'Álam-árá-yi-'Abbásí* arises from the fact that the author, for his own personal safety, had to walk with great caution amidst the rapidly-changing circumstances of these perilous times.

At Qazwín, Muhammad Khudá-banda received the homage of Sulaymán Páshá, a great-grandson of Abú Sa'íd the Tímúrid, who greeted him with the following verses :

شاهای در تو قبله شاهان عالم است
گردون ترا مستخر و گیتی مسلم است
یکتا شدست رشته شاهى بعهد تو
الحمد لله ارجه که یکتاست محکم است

¹ Cf. Sir John Malcolm's *History of Persia* (London, 1815), vol. i, pp. 516-517.

² According to the *Ahsanu't-Tawárikh* he was born in 938/1531-2.

"O King, thy gate is the *qibla* of the Kings of the world,
Heaven is subjugated and earth surrendered to thee :
In thy reign the thread of royalty hath become single¹,
But, Praise be to God, though single it is strong."

The able, ambitious and beautiful Princess Parí-Khán Khánúm, Tahmásp Sháh's favourite daughter² by a Circassian wife, who had played a prominent part in the troubles succeeding his death, and aspired to rule in fact if not in name, was put to death at Muhammad Khudá-banda's command by Khalíl Khán Afshár, together with her mother's brother Shamkhál Khán, and Sháh Shujá', the infant son of the late King Isma'íl. In consequence of these pitiless slaughters the representatives of the Şafawí Royal Family were now reduced to Sháh Muhammad Khudá-banda himself and his four sons, Hamza, 'Abbás, Abú Tálíb and Tahmásp. The first, who is sometimes reckoned amongst the Şafawí kings (since he seems for a while to have exercised regal functions during his half-blind father's life-time), was murdered by a young barber named Khudá-verdí³ on the 22nd of Dhu'l-Hijja, 994 (Dec. 4, 1586). Abú Tálíb was thereupon nominated *Walt-'ahd*, or Crown Prince, instead of his elder brother 'Abbás, who was still in Khurásán, but who speedily appeared on the scene with his guardian and tutor Murshid-qulí Khán Ustájlú,

¹ I suppose this alludes to the practical extermination of the rest of the Royal Family by Isma'íl II.

² Sir John Malcolm (*op. cit.*, vol. i, pp. 514 and 517) appears to confuse her with her mother, since he calls her "the favourite *Sultána* of the deceased monarch" (Tahmásp), and "the sister of Shamkhál." In the *'Álam-árá-yi-'Abbásí* she is enumerated as the second of Tahmásp's eight daughters, but according to other Persian historians she was one of the five daughters of Sháh Isma'íl and the sister of Tahmásp. See p. 81 *supra*, n. 2 *ad calc.* By "Don Juan of Persia" she is called the Infanta.

³ Called by "Don Juan of Persia" (f. 104^a) "Cudy de Lac" (*i.e.* *Dallák*), "que es como si dixeramos en Español, Cudi el barbero del Rey."

inflicted condign punishment on those who had prompted the murder of his elder brother Ḥamza, and rendered his two younger brothers harmless by depriving them of their eyesight and imprisoning them in the Castle of Alamút¹. His father abdicated in his favour after a reign of ten years in Dhu'l-Qa'da, 995 (October, 1587), and Sháh 'Abbás ascended the throne to which he was destined to add so great a glory. He and his three brothers were all the sons of one mother, a lady of the Mar'ashí Sayyids of Mázandarán, who seems to have resembled her sister-in-law Parí-Khán Khánum in her masterful character as well as in her tragic fate, for she, together with her aged mother and many of her kinsfolk and countrymen, was murdered by some of the Qizil-básh nobles who objected to her autocratic methods and dominating influence over her irresolute and peace-loving husband, being of opinion that—

فروغی نماید در آن خاندان ' که بانگِ خروس آید از ماکیان

"No luck remains in that household where the hen crows like a cock²."

Muḥammad Khudá-banda was born in 938/1531-2, was forty-six years of age when his father Sháh Ṭahmásp died in 984/1576-7, reigned ten years after the death of his brother Isma'íl, survived his abdication eight or nine years, and died in 1004/1595-6. His character is thus described by Riḍá-qulí Khán in his Supplement to the *Rawḍatu's-Şafá*: "He had some knowledge of all the current sciences, and was incomparable in understanding and judgement, virtue and discernment, bounty and generosity, and expression and eloquence. Being a 'servant of God' (*Khudá-banda*) he showed an excessive

¹ "Don Juan of Persia," f. 107^b.

² Supplement to the *Rawḍatu's-Şafá*.

clemency in matters of administration, war, anger and punishment, and, so far as possible, would not consent to the death of any one. Though he struck the first blow at Khudá-verdí the barber¹, this was only according to the enactment of the Holy Law. In consequence of his weak eyesight he seldom gave public audience, and, while he tarried in the women's apartments, the Sayyida [his wife] gave effect to his commands, and, in order more effectively to control affairs, herself sealed the documents... In short, he was a king with the qualities of a religious mendicant, or a religious mendicant endowed with regal pomp (*Pádisháht darwísh-khişál, yá darwísh pádisháh-jaldál*)."

His reign, though short, was troubled not only by the domestic tragedies indicated above, but by the Turks, Uzbeks, Crimean Tartars, Georgians and other external foes, who, encouraged by the spectacle of those internecine struggles which succeeded the death of Ṭahmásp, sought to profit by the distractions of Persia.

Sháh 'Abbás I, commonly and justly called "the Great," was only sixteen or seventeen years of age when he ascended the throne in 996/1588², and died in Jumádá I, 1038/Jan. 1629 at the age of 60 after a reign of 43 lunar years, in which, by general agreement, Persia reached the highest degree of power, prosperity and splendour ever attained by her in modern times. His position at first was, however, fraught with dangers and difficulties. Not only was his kingdom threatened, as usual, by the Ottoman Turks on the west and the Uzbeks on the east, but many of the provinces were in revolt and the country was distracted by the rivalries and ambitions of the great Qizil-básh

Sháh 'Abbás the Great (A.D. 1588 to 1629).

Dangers threatening Persia on his accession.

¹ The murderer of his son Ḥamza. See p. 101 *supra* and n. 3 *ad calc.*

² He was born, according to the *'Alam-árá-yi-'Abbásí*, on Rama-dán I, 978 (Jan. 27, 1571), or 979 (Jan. 17, 1572). The words ظلّ الله form the chronogram of his coronation.

nobles of different tribes, in the hands of two of whom, Murshid-qulí Khán and 'Alí-qulí Khán, the young King seemed at first to be a mere puppet. When the former accompanied him to Qazwín to place him on the throne, the latter was left in Khurásán to bear the brunt of the Uzbek attack, to which, after a defence of nine months, he fell a victim. 'Abbás, suspecting Murshid-qulí Khán of deliberately withholding help from his rival, caused him to be murdered one night in camp at Sháhrúd, thus freeing himself from an irksome tutelage, and becoming a sovereign ruler in fact as well as in name. Realizing that he could not possibly wage successful war simultaneously with the Turks and the Uzbeks, he determined, with far-sighted prudence, to make peace, even on unfavourable terms, with the former in order to check the encroachments of the latter and to devise some mechanism to control the disorderly rivalries of the Qizil-básh nobles, whereby his authority and the efficiency of his military force were paralysed. The terms of the treaty with Turkey included the surrender of the towns and districts in Ádharbáyján and Georgia conquered by the Ottoman troops during a war which had lasted more than twelve years (985-998/1577-1590), such as Tabríz, Ganja, Qárs, Nakhjuwán, Shakí, Shamákhí and Tifis, as well as part of Luristán; the abandonment of the cursing of the first three Caliphs, Abú Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmán; and the sending as a hostage to Constantinople of Sháh 'Abbás's nephew Haydar Mírzá, who departed with the Turkish general Farhád Páshá for the Ottoman capital, where he died two years later.

Sháh 'Abbás next proceeded to subdue Shíráz, Kirmán, Gílán and Khurram-ábád in Luristán, and to inflict condign punishment on Ya'qúb Khán Dhu'l-Qadar and other rebels. Meanwhile 'Abdu'l-Mú'min Khán and his Uzbeks were again ravaging Khurásán, and the

Conclusion of
Peace with
Turkey.

Uzbek invasion.

Sháh, advancing to attack them, was stricken down by fever at Tíhrán. While he lay sick and unable to move, the holy city of Mashhad was taken and sacked by the savage Uzbeks and many of its inhabitants slain. Sabzawár¹ suffered a similar fate in 1002/1593-4; but three or four years later² 'Abdu'lláh Khán, the Uzbek sovereign, died, and his son, the above-mentioned 'Abdu'l-Mú'min Khán, was killed by his own people. It was at this juncture (April, 1598) that Sháh 'Abbás was at length able to attack the Uzbeks in force and drive them out of Khurásán, which now at length enjoyed a period of peace and tranquillity. On his return from this victorious campaign to Qazwín in the autumn of the same year, he found awaiting him there those celebrated English soldiers of fortune Sir Anthony and Sir Robert Sherley, whose romantic adventures are fully described in several excellent monographs³. These, who were accompanied by some dozen English attendants, including at least one cannon-founder, aided him greatly in the reconstruction of his army and especially in providing it with artillery, the lack of which had hitherto so severely handicapped the Persians in their wars with the Turks, so that, as it is quaintly phrased in *Purchas's Pilgrims*, "the mighty Ottoman, terror of the Christian world, quaketh of a Sherley fever, and gives hopes of approaching fates. The prevailing Persian hath learned Sherleian arts of war; and he which before knew not the

The Sherley
brothers.

Improvement of
Persian artillery.

¹ The author of the '*Álam-árá-yi-'Abbásí* says that he himself saw amongst those slain at Sabzawár women with children at the breast.

² In 1006/1597-8, according to the '*Álam-árá-yi-'Abbásí*.

³ e.g. "The Sherley Brothers, an historical Memoir of the Lives of Sir Thomas Sherley, Sir Anthony Sherley, and Sir Robert Sherley, Knights, by one of the same House" (Evelyn Philip Shirley; Roxburgh Club: Chiswick, 1848); "The Three Brothers, or the Travels and Adventures of Sir A., Sir R. and Sir T. Sherley in Persia, Russia, Turkey, Spain, etc., with Portraits" (Anon., London, 1825).

use of ordnance, hath now five hundred pieces of brass and sixty thousand musqueteers; so that they, which at hand with the sword were before dreadful to the Turks, now also, in remoter blows and sulphurean arts, are grown terrible." The discipline of the Persian army had also been improved by the elimination of the more ambitious and disobedient Qizil-básh nobles; the creation of a composite tribal force known as *Sháh-seven* ("King-lovers"), united not by tribal allegiance but by personal devotion to the King; and the formation of a regular infantry comparable in some degree to the Turkish Janissaries.

Formation of the *Sháh-seven* tribe.

A year or two later circumstances were favourable for the long-projected attempt to recover the provinces wrested from Persia by the Turks during the inter-regnum which succeeded the death of Ṭahmásp. The reign of the feeble Muḥammad III was approaching its end, and Turkey was weakened by a prolonged war with Austria and by the so-called Jalál¹ revolt in Asia Minor when Sháh 'Abbás opened his campaign in 1010/1601-2. Tabríz was retaken "with cannon, an engine of long-time by the Persians scorned as not beseeming valiant men," in 1012/1603-4, and two years later the celebrated Turkish general Chighála-záda Sinán Páshá ("Cicala") was defeated near Salmás and compelled to retreat to Ván and Diyár Bakr, where he died of chagrin. Baghdád and Shírwán were recaptured by the Persians about the same time, but the former changed hands more than once during the reign of Sháh 'Abbás, and the occasion of its recapture from the Turks in A.D. 1625 gave rise to an

Successful war against the Ottoman Turks.

¹ An account of the heretic Jalál is given by Munajjim-báshí (*Şahíd 'ifw'l-Akhhár*, Turkish version, ed. Constantinople, A.H. 1285, vol. iii, p. 471). He and many of his followers were killed near Síwás in 925/1519, but evidently the sect which he founded retained its vitality for the better part of a century afterwards.

interchange of verses between Háfiz Páshá and Sultán Murád IV which has attained a certain celebrity in Turkish literary history¹.

No coherent and critical account of these wars between the Persians on the one hand and the Turks, Uzbeks and Georgians on the other has yet, so far as I know, been written, but the materials are ample, should any historian acquainted with Persian and Turkish desire to undertake the task. The enormous preponderance of the military element in such contemporary chronicles as the *Ta'rikh-i-'Álam-árá-yi-'Abbásí* makes them very dull and arduous reading to anyone not specially interested in military matters; even from the point of view of military history they are vitiated by overwhelming masses of trivial details and the absence of any breadth of view or clearness of outline. Many matters on which we should most desire information are completely ignored, and it is only here and there incidentally that we find passages throwing light on the religious and social conditions of the time. Of the recapture of the Island of Hurmuz in the Persian Gulf from the Portuguese in March, 1622, by a combined Anglo-Persian force we have naturally very detailed contemporary English accounts.

Allusion has already been made in the introductory chapter² to the splendour and prosperity of Işfahán under Sháh 'Abbás, and to the number of foreigners, diplomatists, merchants and missionaries, which his tolerant attitude towards non-Muslims brought thither. These and other similar matters are very fully discussed in the first volume of the great monograph on his reign entitled *Ta'rikh-i-'Álam-árá-yi-'Abbásí*, half of which consists of an Introduction (*Muqaddama*) comprising

Character and institutions of Sháh 'Abbás.

¹ See E. J. W. Gibb's *History of Ottoman Poetry*, vol. iii, pp. 248-251, and, for the originals, vol. vi, pp. 190-191.

² Pp. 24-5 *supra*.

twelve Discourses (*Maqála*). The first of these, dealing with his ancestors and predecessors, is much the longest, and in my manuscript occupies about two hundred pages; the others, though much shorter, often occupying only a page or two, are more original, and deal with such matters as the religious devotion of Sháh 'Abbás; his wise judgement and wide knowledge; his worthiness to be regarded as a *Şáhib-Qirán*, or "Lord of a fortunate Conjunction"; his miraculous preservation on several occasions from imminent peril; his wise administration and care for public security; his inflexible severity; his pious foundations and charitable bequests; his wars and victories; his birth and childhood; and an account of the most eminent nobles, divines, ministers, physicians, calligraphers, painters, illuminators, poets and minstrels of his reign. Speaking of his

severity (*Maqála* vi) the author, Iskandar Munshí, says that no one dared to delay one moment in the execution of any order given him by the King: "for instance, should he command a father to kill his son, the sentence would be carried out immediately, even as the decree of destiny; or should the father, moved by parental tenderness, make any delay, the command would be reversed; and should the son then temporize, another would slay both. By such awful severity the execution of his commands attained the supreme degree of efficiency, and none dared hesitate for an instant in the fulfilment of the sentence inevitable as fate." He also

compelled his officers, on pain of death, to be present at all executions; held each provincial governor and local magistrate responsible for the security of the roads in his district; and punished falsehood with such severity that it was generally believed that if anyone ventured to lie to him, he was informed of it from the Spirit World. Yet at other times he would be very friendly and unassuming in his intercourse with his

His inflexible severity.

Attendance at executions made compulsory.

courtiers and attendants, careful of their rights and just claims, and ready to overlook accidental and involuntary shortcomings. Though not averse from the banquet and the wine-bout, he was greatly concerned to be correctly informed as to the circumstances of the neighbouring kings and countries, and devoted much attention to the development of his Intelligence Department. He was also something of a linguist, and not only appreciated but occasionally composed poetry.

Amongst the towns and districts which benefited most from his munificence were, besides his capital Işfahán, Mashhad and its holy shrine of the eighth Imám 'Alí Ridá, which, as we have seen, he rescued from the savage and fanatical Uzbeks and raised to a position of the greatest glory and honour; Ardabíl, the original home of his family; Qazwín, the earlier capital of the Şafawís; Káshán, near which he constructed the celebrated dam known as the Band-i-Quhrúd¹; Astarábád; Tabríz; Hamadán; and the province of Mázandarán, one of his favourite resorts, which he adorned with several splendid palaces and the great causeway extending from Astarábád to Ashraf, of which full particulars are given in Lord Curzon's great work on Persia². As regards his conquests, his armies reached Merv, Nisá, Abíward, Andakhúd and even Balkh in the north-east, and Nakhjuwán, Erivan, Ganja, Tifís, Darband and Bákú in the north-west.

No useful purpose would be served by enumerating here all the notable persons in each class mentioned by Iskandar Munshí, who wrote, as he repeatedly mentions in the course of his work, in 1025/1616, but the most important are, amongst the divines and

Sháh 'Abbás mingles affability with severity.

Towns specially favoured by him.

His conquests.

Notable personages of his reign.

¹ See my *Year amongst the Persians*, pp. 185-6.

² Vol. i, pp. 376-8, etc.

men of learning, Mír Muḥammad Dámád and Shaykh Bahá'u'd-Dín 'Ámilí; amongst the calligraphists, Mawláná Isháq Siyáwushání, Muḥammad Ḥusayn-i-Tabrízí, Mír Mu'izz-i-Káshí, Mír Şadru'd-Dín Muḥammad, and others; amongst the artists and miniature painters, Muẓaffar 'Alí, Zaynu'l-'Ábidín, Şádiq Beg, 'Abdu'l-Jabbár, and others; amongst the poets, Ḍamírí, Muḥtasham, Walí, Waḥshí, Khwája Ḥusayn, Mír Ḥaydar Mu'amma'í, the brothers Ṭayfúr and Dá'í, Wálíh and Malik of Qum, Ḥátim of Káshán, Şabrí Rúzbihání, Ḥisábí, the Qáđí Núr-i-Işfahání, Ḥálatí, Halákí, Mazharí of Cashmere, and the Qazwíns Furúghí, Tabkhí, Sulţánu'l-Fuqará, Ká'ká and Sharmí; and amongst the singers and minstrels', Ḥáfiz Aḥmad-i-Qazwíní, Ḥáfiz Jalájl-i-Bákharzí, Ḥáfiz Muẓaffar-i-Qumí, Ḥáfiz Háshim-i-Qazwíní, Mírzá Muḥammad Kamáncha'í, Ustád Muḥammad Mú'min, Ustád Shahsuwár-i-Chahár-tárl, Ustád Shams-i-Shaypúrghú'í-i-Warámíní, Ustád Ma'şum Kamáncha'í, Ustád Sulţán Muḥammad Ṭanbúra'í, Mírzá Ḥusayn Ṭanbúra'í, Ustád Sulţán Muḥammad-i-Changí, and the *Qişsa-khwáns* (story-tellers) and *Sháhnáma-khwáns* (reciters of the 'Epic of Kings'), Ḥaydar, Muḥammad Khursand and Fathí, of whom the two last were brothers and natives of Işfahán. It is because the fame of the singers, minstrels and musicians who constitute this last class is in its nature so ephemeral that I have enumerated them in full, as indicating what forms of musical talent were popular at the court of Sháh 'Abbás.

That Sháh 'Abbás deserved the title of "the Great" there can be no question, and many of his severities have been palliated, if not excused, even by European historians like

¹ Of these titles, *Ḥáfiz* denotes a *Qur'án*-reciter or rhapsodist; *Kamáncha'í* a violinist; *Chahár-tárl* a player on the four-stringed lute; *Shaypúrghú'í* a trumpeter; *Ṭanbúra'í* a drummer; and *Changí* a harper.

Sir John Malcolm¹; but his cruel murder of his eldest son Şaff Mírzá and his blinding of another, Khudá-banda Mírzá, and the tragical circumstances connected therewith², form a dark page in the records of his otherwise glorious reign, which ended with his death in the early part of A.D. 1629. He was succeeded by his grandson Sám Mírzá, who, on his accession, took the name of his unfortunate father, and mounted the throne of Persia under the title of Sháh Şaff I.

There is a well-known tradition of the Muhammadans³ that Solomon died standing, supported by the staff on which he leaned, and that his death remained unknown to the *Jinn*, who laboured at his command in the construction of the Temple, for a year, until the wood-worm ate through the staff and the body fell to the ground. This legend may well serve as a parable of the century of Şafawí rule which followed the death of Sháh 'Abbás the Great, who, by his strength and wisdom, gave to Persia a period of peace and outward prosperity which for nearly a hundred years protected his successors from the results of their incompetence.

Four of his house succeeded him ere the catastrophe of the Afghán invasion in A.D. 1722 effected its downfall, to wit, his grandson Sháh Şaff above mentioned (A.D. 1629-1642); his great-grandson Sháh 'Abbás II (A.D. 1642-1666); his great-great-grandson Şaff, subsequently recrowned under the name of Sulaymán (A.D. 1666-1694); and his great-great-great-grandson Sháh Ḥusayn (A.D. 1694-1722). Of Sháh Şaff, Krusinski⁴ says that "'tis certain there has not been in Persia a more cruel and bloody reign than his" and describes it as "one continued series

The successors of Sháh 'Abbás the Great.

Sháh Şaff (A.D. 1629-1642), a blood-thirsty tyrant.

¹ *History of Persia* (ed. 1815), vol. i, pp. 555-6.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 560-5.

³ See the commentaries on *Qur'án* xxxiv, 13.

⁴ P. 44 of the English translation (London, 1728).

of cruelties"; while Hanway¹ observes that "he interfered so little in the affairs of the government that the Persians would have scarcely perceived they had a king, had it not been for the frequent instances of barbarity which stained his reign with blood"; and that "by his own folly he lost Kandahar and Babylon [Baghdád], two of the most important places on his frontiers." Than Sháh 'Abbás II, on

'Abbás II (A.D. 1642-1666), a good king, save in his cups.

the other hand, according to Krusinski², "next to Ismael I and Schah-Abas the Great, Persia never had a better king of the family of the Sophies." Although, like his father and pre-

decessor, he was "too much subject to wine, and committed some acts of cruelty, yet, abateing a few excursions, of which he might justly be reproached, he shewed himself, during the whole course of his reign, truly worthy of the crown he wore." "The farther he advanced into his reign," continues the Jesuit, "the more he was beloved by his subjects and the more feared by his neighbours. He loved justice, and had no mercy of the governors and other public officers who, abusing their authority, oppressed the people, of which several instances may be seen in Tavernier. He had a great and noble soul, was very kind to strangers, and openly protected the Christians, whom he would not have in the least molested for their religion, saying, 'That none but God was master of their consciences; that, for his own part, he was only governor of externals; and that all his subjects being equally members of the State, of what religion soever they were, he owed justice to them all alike.'" This reign, however, was the last flicker of greatness in the Şafawí dynasty,

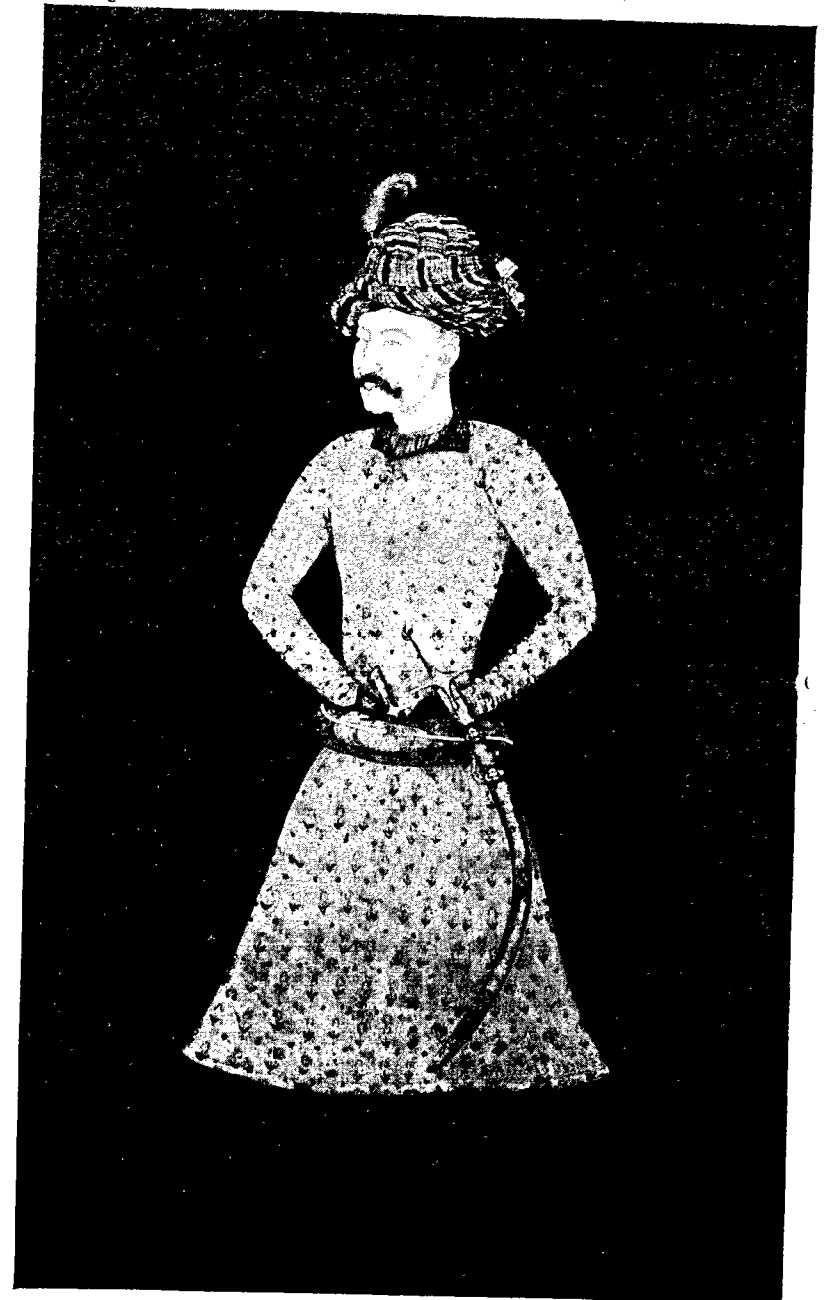
Sulaymán (A.D. 1666-1694), a cruel and debauched king.

for Sulaymán (to quote Krusinski³ once more), "degenerated very much from the virtues of his father Schah-Abas II, and made his reign remarkable only by a thousand instances of cruelty,

¹ *Revolutions of Persia* (London, 1753), vol. i, p. 20.

² *Op. cit.*, p. 49.

³ *Op. cit.*, pp. 57-8.



SHÁH 'ÁBBAS THE SECOND

the bare mention of which is shocking. When he was in wine or in wrath nobody about him was sure of life or estate. He caused hands, feet, nose and ears to be cut off, eyes to be plucked out, and lives to be sacrificed upon the least whim that took him; and the man that was most in his favour at the beginning of a debauch was generally made a sacrifice at the end of it. This is the character given us of him by Sir John Chardin, who was in part a witness of what he relates as to this matter. Persons thought their lives in such danger whenever they approached him that a great lord of his Court said, when he came from his presence, that he always felt if his head was left standing upon his shoulders. It was under this prince that Persia began to decay. He thought so little like a king that when it was represented to him what danger he was in from the Turks, who, when they had made peace with the Christians, would come and attack his finest provinces if he did not put himself in a position to repel them, he answered very indifferently that he did not care, provided they left him Işfahán."

Sháh Husayn, the last Şafawí king (for his nominal successors Tahmásp II and 'Abbás III were mere puppets in the hands of Nádir Sháh), was very unlike his predecessors, for his clemency was so excessive as "rendered him incapable of any severity, though never so moderate and necessary¹," while having one day accidentally wounded a duck with his pistol "he himself was as much terrified as if he had really committed murder, and made the same exclamation as is customary in Persia upon the shedding of human blood, by saying *Kanlu oldum*², i.e. 'I am polluted with blood'; and that very instant he caused two hundred *tomons* to be given to the poor as an atonement for what he thought a

Sháh Husayn
(A.D. 1694; de-
posed 1722;
killed 1729), a
"meek zealot."

¹ Krusinski, *op. cit.*, pp. 105-108.

² Turkish: قانلو اولدم

great sin." He was something of a scholar and theologian, much under the influence of the *Mullás*, and so careful of his religious duties and so much attached to the reading of the *Qur'an* as to earn for himself the nick-name of *Mullá* or "Parson Husayn¹." Though at first a vehement prohibitionist, he was later induced by his grandmother, instigated by wine-loving courtiers and power-seeking eunuchs, to taste the forbidden liquor, which gradually obtained such a hold on him that "he would not by any means hear the mention of business, but left it all to the discretions of his ministers and eunuchs, who governed the kingdom just as they pleased, and took the greater license because they were very sensible they had nothing to fear from a prince who was so weak as to refer the very petitions he received to them without so much as reading them²."

In such a work as this, which is concerned primarily with Persian literature and only secondarily with Persian history, and that only in broad outlines, save in the case of periods which witnessed some definite change in the national outlook, it is unnecessary to enter into a more detailed account of the later Şafawí period; the more so because several excellent accounts of the decline and fall of this remarkable dynasty, and of the state of Persia at that time, are readily accessible to the English reader. Of these the following may be especially commended.

Adam Olearius, Secretary to the Embassy sent by Frederick Duke of Holstein to Russia and Persia, was in the latter country from November, 1636 until February, 1638. His *Voyages and Travels*, originally written in Latin, were translated into French and thence, by John Davies, into English. I have used the English version published in 1669.

(1) Olearius
(A.D. 1636-1638).

¹ Krusinski, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

² *Ibid.*, p. 76.

name, was a careful observer, and seems to have had a very fair knowledge both of Persian and Turkish, and his work is one of the best accounts of Persia in the seventeenth century.

Le Père Raphaël du Mans, Superior of the Capuchin Mission at Işfahán, was born in A.D. 1613, went to Persia in 1644, and died there in 1696. His *Estat de la Perse en 1660* in the learned edition of M. Schefer (Paris, 1890) gives a valuable if not very lively account of Persian institutions at a somewhat later date than Olearius.

(2) Raphaël du
Mans (A.D.
1644-1696).

The Chevalier Chardin was born in A.D. 1643, was twice in Persia for about six years each time (A.D. 1664-70 and 1671-77), and settled in London in 1681, where he died in 1713. Of the numerous editions of his *Voyages en Perse* I have used that of the learned Langlès (Paris, 1811) in ten volumes, of which the last contains (pp. 151-244) an admirable *Notice chronologique de la Perse, depuis les temps les plus reculés jusqu'à ce jour* by the editor, carried down to the time of Fath-'Alí Sháh Qájár.

(3) Chardin
(A.D. 1664-1677).

Shaykh 'Alí Hazín, who traced his descent from the celebrated Shaykh Záhíd-i-Gílání, the spiritual director of Shaykh Şafiyu'd-Dín, the ancestor of the Şafawí kings, was born in A.D. 1692 at Işfahán, where he spent the greater part of his time until he left Persia for India, never to return, in A.D. 1734. He wrote his *Memoirs* (published in the original Persian with an English translation by F. C. Belfour in 1830-1) in 1741, and died at Benares at a ripe old age in 1779. Though he was himself involved in the disaster which overtook Işfahán in 1722, he gives a much less vivid and moving picture of the sufferings of its inhabitants during the siege by the Afgháns than that drawn by Krusinski and other European observers. His portraits of contemporary statesmen, theo-

(4) Shaykh 'Alí
Hazín (A.D.
1692-1779).

logians and poets, on the other hand, lend a special value to his book

Father Krusinski, Procurator of the Jesuits at Işfahán for some eighteen or twenty years previous to A.D. 1722, compiled an admirable *History of the Revolution of Persia* from the beginning of the Şafawí dynasty down to A.D. 1727 in which the circumstances of the Afghán invasion and its consequences are narrated in the utmost detail.

(5) Krusinski
(A.D. 1700-1727).

Jonas Hanway, who was in Persia in A.D. 1743-4, wrote and published in 1753 in two volumes *An historical account of the British Trade over the Caspian Sea, with a Journal of Travels*, which he supplemented by two further volumes on the *Revolution of Persia*, the first containing *The Reign of Shah Sultan Hussein, with the Invasion of the Afghans, and the reigns of Sultan Mir Maghmud and his successor Ashreff*, and the second *The History of the celebrated usurper Nadir Kouli, from his birth in 1687 till his death in 1747, to which are added some particulars of the unfortunate reign of his successor Adil Shah*. For the earlier part of his history Hanway is much indebted to Krusinski, but for the later period (A.D. 1727-1750), including the whole account of Nádir Sháh, he is an independent and most valuable authority, while his narrative is throughout lively and agreeable to read.

(6) Hanway
(A.D. 1743-1750).

These are only a few of the many writers and travellers whose works throw light on this period. I have mentioned them because they are the ones I have chiefly used, but a long and serviceable account of a much larger number will be found in Schefer's Introduction to his edition of le Père Raphaél du Mans mentioned above. The European writers are here, for reasons well set forth by Sir John Malcolm¹, more instructive and illuminating than the Persian historians, for

The later Şafawí period not calculated to inspire Persian historians.

¹ *History of Persia* (London, 1815), vol. i, pp. 568-570.

whom, as he says, "we can hardly imagine an era more unfavourable. A period of nearly a century elapsed without the occurrence of any one political event of magnitude; and yet the extraordinary calm was productive of no advantage to Persia. The princes, nobles, and high officers of that kingdom were, it is true, exempt from the dangers of foreign or internal war; but their property and their lives were the sport of a succession of weak, cruel and debauched monarchs. The lower orders were exposed to fewer evils than the higher, but they became every day more unwarlike; and what they gained by that tranquillity which the State enjoyed lost almost all its value when they ceased to be able to defend it. This period was distinguished by no glorious achievements. No characters arose on which the historian could dwell with delight. The nation may be said to have existed on the reputation which it had before acquired till all it possessed was gone, and till it became, from the slow but certain progress of a gradual and vicious decay, incapable of one effort to avert that dreadful misery and ruin in which it was involved by the invasion of a few Afghan tribes, whose conquest of Persia affixed so indelible a disgrace upon that country that we cannot be surprised that its historians have shrunk from the painful and degrading narration."

Shaykh 'Alí Hazín¹ takes precisely the same view. "Many ages having now elapsed," says he, "since civilization, tranquillity, and the accomplishment of all worldly blessings had attained a state of perfection in the beautiful provinces of Írân, these were become a fit object for the affliction of the malignant eye². The indolent King and princes, and the army that sought nothing but repose and for near a

¹ P. 106 of Belfour's text=p. 116 of his translation.

² The Evil Eye is called by the Arabs '*Aynul-Kamál*, "the Eye of Perfection," because anything perfect of its kind is especially exposed to its attacks.

hundred years had not drawn the sword from the scabbard, would not even think of quelling this disturbance¹, until Maĥmúd² with a large army marched into the provinces of Kirmán and Yazd, and, having committed much plunder and devastation, proceeded on his route to Işfahán. This happened in the early part of the year 1134/1721."

Jonas Hanway³ speaks in a similar strain. "Persia never enjoyed," says he, "a more perfect tranquillity than in the beginning of the present [*i.e.* the eighteenth] century. The treaties she had concluded with her neighbours were perfectly observed and secured her against any foreign invasions; whilst the effeminacy and luxury of her inhabitants, the ordinary consequences of a long peace, left no room to apprehend any danger from the ambition of her own subjects. This monarchy, which had suffered so many revolutions in past ages, seemed to be settled on a solid foundation when the news of its subversion surprised the whole world. The authors of this amazing catastrophe were a people hardly known even to their own sovereigns, and have now acquired a reputation only by the fame of those nations which they brought under their subjection. These people...are comprised under the general denomination of Afghans⁴."

The policy of Sháh 'Abbás the Great has been described above as wise and far-sighted, but this statement needs some qualification; for, while it greatly strengthened the power of the Crown, it undoubtedly conduced in the end to the weakening of the nation

Defects of the
policy of Sháh
'Abbás.

¹ The seizure of Qandahár by the revolted Afgháns led by Mír Ways.

² The son and successor of Mír Ways.

³ *Revolutions of Persia*, vol. i, p. 22.

⁴ The Afgháns are, however, mentioned by the Arabian historian Ibnu'l-Athír in several places, the earliest mention being under the year 366/976-7. They were very troublesome in S.E. Persia in the middle of the fourteenth century. See my Abridged Translation of the *Tá'rikh-i-Guzída* (E. J. W. Gibb Series, xiv, 2), pp. 161 *et seqq.*

and the degeneration of its rulers. Previous kings had been embarrassed chiefly by ambitious relatives, powerful tribal chiefs, and turbulent townsmen; and for all these things Sháh 'Abbás set himself to provide remedies. Instead of allowing his sons to hold high administrative posts and take a prominent part in wars, he either blinded them or put them to death, or immured them in the *haram*, where, as Krusinski well explains¹, they lead a life of hardship and privation rather than of luxury and pleasure, while receiving a very imperfect education, and falling under the influence of the palace eunuchs, who ended by becoming the dominant power in the State. To his destruction of the great nobles and tribal chiefs, and his creation of the *Sháh-sevens* as a counterpoise to the seven tribes to whom his predecessors owed their power, allusion has already been made². A more extraordinary example of his application of the maxim *Divide et impera* was his deliberate creation in all the large towns of two artificially antagonized parties, named, according to Krusinski³, *Pelenk* and *Felenk*, who indulged at intervals in the most sanguinary faction-fights, they being, as Krusinski puts it, "so opposite, and so much enemies one to the other, that people in different States, in arms against one another, do not push their aversion and enmity farther." He adds (p. 92) that "though they fought without arms, because they were not supposed to make use of anything else but stones and sticks, it was with so much fury and bloodshed that the King was obliged to employ his guards to separate them with drawn swords; and hard it was to accomplish it, even with a method so effectual, insomuch that at Ispahan in 1714 they were under a necessity, before

¹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 65-70.

² See p. 106 *supra*.

³ *Op. cit.*, p. 91. Hanway (vol. iii, p. 32 *ad calc.*, and p. 33) calls them *Peleuk* and *Feleuk*. At a later period they were known as *Ĥaydarí* and *Ní'matt*.

they could separate the combatants, to put about three hundred to the sword on the spot."

Besides the eunuchs, there grew up and attained its full development under "Mullá Ĥusayn," the last unhappy though well-meaning occupant of the Şafawí throne at Işfahán, another dominant class whose influence hardly made for either spiritual unity or national efficiency, namely the great ecclesiastics who culminated in the redoubtable Mullá Muĥammad Báqir-i-Majlisí, the persecutor of Şúfís and heretics, of whom we shall have to speak at some length in a future chapter. His admirers¹ call attention to the fact that his death, which took place in 1111/1699-1700², was followed in a short time by the troubles which culminated in the supreme disaster of 1722, and suggest that the disappearance of so saintly a personage left Persia exposed to perils which more critical minds may be inclined to ascribe in part to the narrow intolerance so largely fostered by him and his congeners.

¹ e.g. the *Qişaşu'l-'Ulamá*, p. 216 of the lithographed edition of 1306/1888-9.

² The chronogram is غم وحزن.

CHAPTER IV.

AN OUTLINE OF THE HISTORY OF PERSIA DURING THE LAST TWO CENTURIES (A.D. 1722-1922).

Only after much hesitation and several tentative experiments have I decided to endeavour to compress into one chapter two centuries of Persian history. Were this book primarily intended as a political history of Persia, such an attempt would be out of the question; for this long period witnessed the Afghán invasion and its devastations; the rise, meteoric career, and sudden eclipse of that amazing conqueror Nádir Sháh; the emergence in a world of chaos and misery of Karím Khán-i-Zand, generally accounted the best ruler whom Persia ever possessed, and of his gallant but unfortunate successor Luţf-'Alí Khán; the establishment of the still reigning Qájár dynasty, and within that period the occurrence, amidst many other important events, of two remarkable phenomena (the rise and growth of the Bábí religious movement since 1844, and the political Revolution of 1906) which profoundly affected the intellectual life and literary development of Persia, each one of which might well form the subject of a lengthy monograph rather than a chapter. This book, however, is written not from the political but from the literary point of view, and the historical part of it is only ancillary, and might have been omitted entirely if a knowledge of even the general outlines of Oriental history formed part of the mental equipment of most educated Europeans. From this point of view much fuller treatment is required for periods of transition, or of great intellectual activity, than for periods of unproductive strife not so much of rival ideas and beliefs as of conflicting ambitions. To the latter category belongs the greater part

of the two centuries which must now engage our attention. During this period the literary language (which, indeed, had become fixed at any rate in the fourteenth century, so that the odes of Ḥáfiz, save for their incomparable beauty, might have been written but yesterday) underwent no noticeable change; few fresh forms of literary expression were developed until the middle of the nineteenth century; and few fresh ideas arose to modify the Shí'a frenzy of Şafawí times until the rise of the Bábí doctrine in A.D. 1844, of which, however, the literary effects were less considerable than those of the Revolution of 1906. Moreover excellent and detailed accounts of the Afghán invasion, of Nádir Sháh, and of the earlier Qájár period already exist in English, several of which have been mentioned at the end of the preceding chapter¹; these could hardly be bettered, and would only be marred by such abridgment as would be necessary to fit them into the framework of this book. Hence I have deemed it best to limit myself in this chapter to a brief outline of the more salient events of these last two centuries.

THE AFGHÁN INVASION (A.D. 1722-1730).

Unlike the Arabs, Mongols, Tartars and Turks, who were instrumental in effecting previous subjections of Persia by foreign arms, the Afgháns are, apparently, an Íránian and therefore a kindred race, though differing materially in character from the Persians. The Persian language is widely spoken in their wild and mountainous country, while in their own peculiar idiom, the Pushtô, James Darmesteter saw the principal survivor of the language of the Avesta, the scripture of the Zoroastrians. They are a much fiercer, hardier, and more warlike people than the Persians, less refined and ingenious, and

¹ See pp. 114-118 *supra*.

fanatical Sunnís, a fact sufficient in itself to explain the intense antagonism which existed between the two nations, and enabled the Afgháns to give to their invasion of Persia the colour of a religious war.

In A.D. 1707 Qandahár, a constant bone of contention between the Şafawí kings of Persia and the "Great Moghuls" of India, was in the possession of the former, and was governed in a very autocratic manner by a Georgian noble named Gurgín Khán. Mír Ways, an Afghán chief whose influence with his fellow-countrymen made him an object of suspicion, was by his orders banished to Işfahán as a state prisoner. There, however, he seems to have enjoyed a considerable amount of liberty and to have been freely admitted to the court of Sháh Ḥusayn. Endowed with considerable perspicacity and a great talent for intrigue, he soon formed a pretty clear idea of the factions whose rivalries were preparing the ruin of the country, and with equal caution and cunning set himself to fan the suspicions to which every great Persian general or provincial governor was exposed. This was the easier in the case of one who, being by birth a Christian and a Georgian of noble family, might, without gross improbability, be suspected of thinking more of the restoration of his own and his country's fortunes than of the maintenance of the Persian Empire, though there seems in fact no reason to suspect him of any disloyalty.

Having sown this seed of suspicion and completely ingratiated himself with the Persian Court, Mír Ways sought and obtained permission to perform the pilgrimage to Mecca. While there he took another important step for the furtherance of his designs. He sought from the leading ecclesiastical authorities a *fatwá*, or legal opinion, as to whether the orthodox Sunní subjects of a heretical (*i.e.* Shí'a) Muslim ruler were bound to obey him, or were justified, if occasion

Beginning of
the trouble at
Qandahár.

Mír Ways at
Mecca.

arose, in resisting him, if necessary by force of arms. The decision, which supported the latter alternative and so accorded with his designs, he carried back with him to Işfahán and subsequently to Qandahár, whither he was permitted to return, with strong recommendations to Gurgín Khán, in 1709. There he soon organized a conspiracy against the latter, and, taking advantage of the temporary absence of a large part of the Persian garrison on some expedition in the neighbourhood, he and his followers fell on the remainder when they were off their guard, killed the greater number of them, including Gurgín Khán, and took possession of the city. It was at this juncture that the *fatwá* obtained at Mecca proved so useful to Mír Ways, for by it he was able to overcome the scruples of the more faint-hearted of his followers, who were at first inclined to shrink from a definite repudiation of Persian suzerainty, but who now united with the more hot-headed of their countrymen in electing Mír Ways "Prince of Qandahár and General of the national troops!"

Several half-hearted attempts to subdue the rebellious city having failed, the Persian Government despatched Khusraw Khán, nephew of the late Gurgín Khán, with an army of 30,000 men to effect its subjugation, but in spite of an initial success, which led the Afgháns to offer to surrender on terms, his uncompromising attitude impelled them to make a fresh desperate effort, resulting in the complete defeat of the Persian army (of whom only some 700 escaped) and the death of their general. Two years later, in A.D. 1713, another Persian army commanded by Rustam Khán was also defeated by the rebels, who thus secured possession of the whole province of Qandahár.

Mír Ways, having thus in five or six years laid the foundations of the Afghán power, died in A.D. 1715, and was

¹ Krusinski, p. 187.

succeeded by his brother Mír 'Abdu'lláh, whose disposition to accept, under certain conditions, Persian suzerainty led to his murder by his nephew Mír Maḥmúd, son of Mír Ways, who was forthwith proclaimed king. The weakness of the Persian government thus becoming apparent, others were led to follow the example of the Afgháns of Qandahár. Amongst these were the Abdálí Afgháns of Herát, the Uzbeks of Transoxiana, the Kurds, the Lazgís and the Arabs of Baḥrayn, and though the Persian General Şaff-qulí Khán with 30,000 troops succeeded in defeating an Uzbek army of 12,000, he was immediately afterwards defeated by the Abdálí Afgháns.

In A.D. 1720 Mír Maḥmúd assumed the aggressive, crossed the deserts of Sístán, and attacked and occupied Kirmán, whence, however, he was expelled four months later by the Persian General Luţf-'Alí Khán, who, after this victory, proceeded to Shíráz and began to organize "the best-appointed army that had been seen in Persia for many years" with a view to crushing the Afgháns and retaking Qandahár. Unfortunately before he had accomplished this his position was undermined by one of those Court intrigues which were so rapidly destroying the Persian Empire, and he was deprived of his command and brought as a prisoner to Işfahán, while the army which he had collected and disciplined with such care rapidly melted away, and the spirits of the Afgháns were proportionately revived. The capture and sack of Shamákhí by the Lazgís and the appearance of strange portents in the sky combined still further to discourage the Persians, while the ordering of public mourning and repentance by Sháh Ḥusayn tended only to accentuate the general depression.

The fatal year 1722 began with the second siege and

Mír Ways
succeeded by
his son
Mír Maḥmúd.

Other revolts
against Persia.

Kirmán taken
by Afgháns.

Success of the
rebels.

capture of Kirmán by Mír Maḥmúd. The most remarkable incident connected with this was that he was joined by a number of "guebres" (*gabr*)¹, the small remnant of the Persians who still profess the ancient religion of Zoroaster, and who exist in any number only in the cities of Kirmán and Yazd and the intervening region of Rafsínján with its chief town Bahrá-ábád. Why these people should have attached themselves to foreign Muslims to make war on their Muslim compatriots it is hard to understand, unless the fanaticism of the Shí'a divines was responsible for driving them into this extraordinary course. Still more remarkable, if true, is Hanway's statement that they provided Mír Maḥmúd with one of his best generals, who, though he bore the Muhammadan name of Naṣru'lláh, was, according to the same authority², "a worshipper of fire, since there were two priests hired by the Sultan who kept the sacred flame near his tomb."

From Kirmán Mír Maḥmúd marched by way of Yazd, which he attempted but failed to take by storm, to Isfahán, having scornfully refused an offer of 15,000 Afgháns advance *túmán*s³ to induce him to turn back, and finally pitched his camp at Gulnábád, distant some three leagues from the Şafawí capital. After much dispute and diversity of opinions, the Persian army marched out of Isfahán to engage the Afgháns on March 7th and on the following day, largely through the treachery of the Wálí of 'Arabistán, suffered a disastrous defeat.

The battle of Gulnábád, fought between the Persians and the Afgháns on Sunday, March 8, 1722, decided the fate of the Şafawí dynasty as surely as did the battle of Qádisiyya in A.D. 635 that of the Sásánians, or the conflict between the Caliph's troops and

Battle of Gulnábád, March 8, 1722.

¹ Hanway's *Revolution of Persia*, vol. i, p. 99. ² *Ibid.*, p. 186.

³ At that time, according to Hanway (*loc. cit.*, p. 100), equivalent to £37,500.

the Mongols outside Baghdád in A.D. 1258 that of the 'Abbásids. Between these three battles, moreover, there was a remarkable point of similarity in the splendour and apparent strength of the defenders and the squalor and seeming weakness of their assailants. The similarity in this respect between the battles of Qádisiyya and Baghdád has been noticed in a well-known passage of the *Kitábu'l-Fakhr*¹, to which the following account of the battle of Gulnábád by Hanway² forms a remarkable parallel :

A curious parallel.

"The sun had just appeared on the horizon when the armies began to observe each other with that curiosity so natural on these dreadful occasions. The Persian army just come out of the capital, being composed of whatever was most brilliant at court, seemed as if it had been formed rather to make a show than to fight. The riches and variety of their arms and vestments, the beauty of their horses, the gold and precious stones with which some of their harnesses were covered, and the richness of their tents contributed to render the Persian camp very pompous and magnificent.

"On the other side there was a much smaller body of soldiers, disfigured with fatigue and the scorching heat of the sun. Their clothes were so ragged and torn in so long a march that they were scarce sufficient to cover them from the weather, and, their horses being adorned with only leather and brass, there was nothing glittering about them but their spears and sabres."

These three great and decisive battles resembled one another in several respects. In each case a great historic dynasty, the extent of whose inward decay was masked by its external splendour, and apparent, because hitherto unchallenged, strength and supremacy, collapsed before the fierce onslaught of a hardy and warlike folk, hitherto hardly known, or accounted as little better than barbarians; and in each case the more or less prolonged process of degene-

The Arab, Mongol and Afghán invasion of Persia compared and contrasted.

¹ See vol. ii of my *Lit. Hist.*, p. 462, for the translation, and pp. 97-8 of Ahlwardt's edition for the text of this passage.

² *Revolutions of Persia* (London, 1753), vol. i, pp. 104-5.

ration which rendered the final catastrophe not only possible but inevitable is fairly obvious to subsequent historians, even if its extent and significance were not realized until the fatal touchstone was applied. The results, however, differed widely according to the character and abilities of the assailants. The Arab invaders of the seventh century established an Empire which endured for six centuries and effected a profound and permanent change in the lands and peoples whom they brought under their sway. The Mongol conquests were even more extensive, reaching as they did from China and Thibet to Germany and Russia, but the cohesion and duration of the vast Empire which they created were far inferior. The Afghán conquest, with which we are now concerned, was little more than an extensive and destructive raid, resulting in some seventy-five years of anarchy (A.D. 1722-1795), illuminated by the meteoric career of that Napoleon of Persia, Nádír Sháh, and ending in the establishment of the actually reigning dynasty of the Qájárs. The actual domination of the Afgháns over Persia only endured for eight or nine years¹.

Seven months elapsed after the battle of Gulnábád before the final pitiful surrender, with every circumstance of humiliation, of the unhappy Sháh Husayn. In that battle the Persians are said to have lost all their artillery, baggage and treasure, as well as some 15,000 out of a total of 50,000 men.

On March 19 Mír Maḥmúd occupied the Sháh's beloved palace and pleasure-grounds of Faraḥábád, situated only three miles from Iṣfahán, which henceforth served as his headquarters. Two days later the Afgháns, having occupied the Armenian suburb of Julfá, where they levied a tribute of money and young girls, attempted to take Iṣfahán by

Prince Tahmásp escapes from Iṣfahán to Qazwín.

¹ Maḥmúd the Afghán laid siege to Kirmán in January, 1722, and captured Iṣfahán in October of the same year. His cousin Ashraf, who succeeded him, was killed by Balúchís in 1730.

storm, but, having twice failed (on March 19 and 21), sat down to blockade the city. Three months later Prince Tahmásp Mírzá, who had been nominated to succeed his father, effected his escape from the beleaguered city to Qazwín, where he attempted, with but small success, to raise an army for the relief of the capital.

Soon after this, famine began to press heavily on the people, who clamoured to be led against the besiegers, but their desperate sortie failed owing to the renewed treachery of Wálí of 'Arabistán, who was throughout these dark days the evil genius of the unhappy king. The Persian court, indeed, seemed to have been stricken with a kind of folly which was equally ready to repose confidence in traitors and to mistrust and degrade or dismiss brave and patriotic officers like Luṭf-'Alí Khán. For three or four months before the end the sufferings of the people from famine were terrible: they were finally reduced to eating dogs, cats, and even the corpses of their dead, and perished in great numbers. The pitiful details may be found in the pages of Krusinski, Hanway, and the contemporary accounts written by certain agents of the Dutch East India Company then resident at Iṣfahán, of which the original texts have been included by H. Dunlop in his fine work on Persia (*Persie*, Haarlem, 1912, pp. 242-257).

At the end of September, 1722, Sháh Husayn offered to surrender himself and his capital to the Afghán invader, but Mír Maḥmúd, in order still further to reduce by famine the numbers and spirit of the besieged, dragged out the negotiations for another three or four weeks, so that it was not until October 21 that Sháh Husayn repaired on foot to Faraḥábád, once his favourite residence, now the headquarters of his ruthless foe, to surrender the crown which Mír Maḥmúd assumed six days later. When news of his father's abdication reached

Famine in Iṣfahán.

Surrender of Iṣfahán to Afgháns, Oct. 21, 1722.

his high character and intellectual attainments, as well as by his prolonged sojourn of fifty years (A.D. 1644-1696) in Işfahán, to speak with authority. The works enumerated by M. Schefer¹ are variously written in Dutch, English, French, German, Italian, Latin, Portuguese and Spanish, but many of the more important have appeared in two or three different languages. Of their authors (excluding the earlier Venetian envoys to the Court of Úzún Hasan, such as Caterino Zeno, Josepho Barbaro and Ambrosio Contarini, most of whom visited Persia during the latter half of the fifteenth century, and consequently before the rise of the Şafawí dynasty) the best known are Anthony Jenkinson, the Sherley brothers, Cartwright, Parry and Sir Thomas Herbert of the English, and of the others Antonio di Govea, Don Garcias de Silva Figuerosa, Olearius, Teixeira, Pietro della Valle, Tavernier, Thevenot, and last but not least Chardin and Pétis de la Croix. M. Schefer does not carry his survey beyond the seventeenth century, but the final downfall of the Şafawís before the Afghán onslaught in A.D. 1722 found an able historian in the Jesuit Père Krusinski, while letters from some of the Dutch merchants in Işfahán, a few of which have been published by H. Dunlop in his *Perszië* (Haarlem, 1912; pp. 242-7), serve to illuminate the tragic details of that disaster. From this time until the rise of the present Qájár dynasty towards the end of the eighteenth century comparatively few Europeans visited or resided in Persia, a fact due partly to the unsettled state of the country, and the consequent difficulties in the way of missionary or commercial enterprises, and partly to the

¹ To these we must not omit to add the *Mirátu'l-Mamdlík* ("Mirror of Kingdoms") of the gallant Turkish admiral Sídí 'Alí Ra'ís, who travelled overland from India to Turkey in A.D. 1554-6, and was received by Sháh Tahmásp at Qazwín. Vambéry's English translation of this book (Luzac, London, 1899) leaves a good deal to be desired.

changed political conditions. The object of the numerous diplomatic missions from various European countries which visited Persia during and immediately before the Şafawí period was, in nearly all cases, to seek her cooperation in combating the formidable power of the Ottoman Turks, which was at its height during the period which began with their conquest of Constantinople in A.D. 1453 and culminated in the reigns of Sulţáns Salím "the Grim" and Sulaymán "the Magnificent" (A.D. 1512-1566), of whom the former conquered Egypt and the Holy Cities and assumed the title of Caliph, while the latter only failed by the narrowest margin to capture Vienna. So formidable did the Turkish menace appear to European statesmen that Busbecq, Ferdinand's ambassador at the Court of Sulaymán, expressed himself in the following remarkable words: "'Tis only the Persian stands between us and ruin. The Turk would fain be upon us, but he keeps him back. This war with him affords us only a respite, not a deliverance!'" In A.D. 1722 when the Şafawí dynasty, long degenerate, finally collapsed, Persia was left for the moment a negligible quantity, the Turks had ceased to be a menace to Europe, and the bitter sectarian quarrel which lay at the root of two centuries of Turco-Persian warfare gradually lost much of its virulence, especially after the development of the more conciliatory policy of the great Nádír Sháh. Under these changed conditions the earlier European policy became at once unnecessary and impossible.

From this brief survey of the sources whence our knowledge of the Şafawí dynasty is derived, we must now pass to the consideration of its chief characteristics. These, though clear enough in general outline, present a series of very interesting problems

Chief characteristics of the Şafawí dynasty.

¹ Creasy's *History of the Ottoman Turks* (London, 1877), pp. 171-2 *ad calc.* Cf. Forster and Daniell's *Life and Letters of...Busbecq* (London, 1881), vol. i, pp. 221-2.