

Ṭahmásp Mírzá at Qazwín he caused himself to be proclaimed king, but was driven out of that city on December 20 by the Afghán general Amánu'lláh Khán, who on his way thither received the submission of Qum and Káshán.

Ṭahmásp was now reduced to the miserable expedient of invoking the help of Russia and Turkey, who had already fixed covetous eyes on the apparently moribund Persian kingdom and had occupied Gílán and Tiflís respectively. On September 23, 1723, a treaty was signed whereby, in return for the expulsion of the Afgháns and the restoration of his authority, Ṭahmásp undertook to cede to Russia the Caspian provinces of Gílán, Mázandarán and Gurgán, and the towns of Bákú, Darband and their dependencies. Soon afterwards the Turks took Erivan, Nakhjuwán, Khúy and Hamadán, but were repulsed from Tabríz. On July 8, 1724, an agreement for the partition of Persia was signed between Russia and Turkey at Constantinople¹.

Meanwhile Mír Maḥmúd was continuing his cruelties at Isfahán. In A.D. 1723 he put to death in cold blood some three hundred of the nobles and chief citizens, and followed up this bloody deed with the murder of about two hundred children of their families. He also killed some three thousand of the deposed Sháh's body-guard, together with many other persons whose sentiments he mistrusted or whose influence he feared. In the following year (A.D. 1724) the Afghán general Zabardast Khán succeeded, where his predecessor Naşru'lláh² had failed and fallen, in taking Shíráz; and towards the end of the year Mír Maḥmúd prepared to attack Yazd, which had hitherto remained unsubdued. The Muslim inhabitants of that town, fearing that the numerous Zoroastrians dwelling

¹ For the contents of the six articles, see Hanway's *Revolutions of Persia*, i, pp. 200-1.

² See p. 126 *supra*.

in it might follow the example of their co-religionists of Kirmán and join the Afgháns, killed a great number of them.

About this time Mír Maḥmúd, alarmed at the increasing insubordination of his cousin Ashraf, and, we may hope, tormented by an uneasy conscience on account of his cruelties, betook himself to a severe course of self-discipline and mortification, which did but increase his melancholy and distemper, so that on February 7, 1725, he murdered all the surviving members of the royal family with the exception of the deposed Sháh Ḥusayn and two of his younger children. Thereafter his disorder rapidly increased, until he himself was murdered on April 22 by his cousin Ashraf, who was thereupon proclaimed king. Mír Maḥmúd was at the time of his death only twenty-seven years of age, and is described as "middle-sized and clumsy; his neck was so short that his head seemed to grow to his shoulders; he had a broad face and flat nose, and his beard was thin and of a red colour; his looks were wild and his countenance austere and disagreeable; his eyes, which were blue and a little squinting, were generally downcast, like a man absorbed in deep thought."

The death of Peter the Great about this period made Russia slightly less dangerous as a neighbour, but the Turks continued to press forwards and on August 3, 1725, succeeded at last in capturing Tabríz. They even advanced to within three days' march of Isfahán, but turned back before reaching it. They subsequently (A.D. 1726) took Qazwín and Marágha, but were defeated by Ashraf near Kirmán-sháh. Negotiations for peace were meanwhile in progress at Constantinople, whither Ashraf had sent an ambassador named 'Abdu'l-'Azíz Khán, whose arrogant proposal that his master should be Caliph of the East and the Ottoman

Mír Maḥmúd murders the Şafawí princes (Feb. 7, 1725), and is himself slain by his cousin Ashraf (April 22, 1725).

Death of Peter the Great, and Turkish invasion of Persia.

Sultán Caliph of the West caused great umbrage to the Porte. The war, however, was very unpopular with the Turkish soldiers and people, who failed to see why they should fight fellow-Sunnís in order to restore a heretical Shí'a dynasty, though the *'ulamá* were induced to give a *fatwá* in favour of this course, on the ground that a divided Caliphate was incompatible with the dignity or safety of Islám. Finally, however, a treaty of peace was concluded and signed at Hamadán in September, 1727¹.

This danger had hardly been averted when a far greater one, destined in a short time to prove fatal to the Afgháns, presented itself in the person of Nádir-qull, subsequently known to fame as Nádir Sháh, one of the most remarkable and ruthless military geniuses ever produced by Persia. Hitherto, though he was now about forty years of age, little had been heard of him; but this year, issuing forth from his stronghold, that wonderful natural fastness named after him Kalát-i-Nádirí², he defeated an Afghán force and took possession of Níshápúr in the name of Sháh Tahmásp II, at that time precariously established at Farahábád in Mázandarán, and supported with a certain condescending arrogance by the Qájár chief Fath-'Alí Khán. After this success Nádir paid a visit to the fugitive Sháh, and, after insinuating himself into his favour, contrived the assassination of the Qájár, against whom he had succeeded in arousing the Sháh's suspicions. On May 15 of the following year (1728) the Sháh, accompanied by Nádir (or Tahmásp-qull, "the slave of Tahmásp," to give him the name which

¹ For its provisions, contained in nine articles, see Hanway, *op. cit.*, i, pp. 254-5.

² This fortress, which is jealously guarded, Lord Curzon attempted but failed to penetrate. See his *Persia*, vol. i, pp. 125-140, especially the bird's-eye view on p. 134.

he temporarily assumed about this time), made a solemn entry into Níshápúr, amidst the rejoicings of the inhabitants, and shortly afterwards occupied Mashhad and Herát. He also despatched an ambassador to Constantinople, whence in return a certain Sulaymán Efendi was sent as envoy to Persia.

Meanwhile Ashraf, having taken Yazd and Kirmán, marched into Khurásán with an army of thirty thousand men to give battle to Tahmásp, but he was completely defeated by Nádir on October 2 at Dámghán. Another decisive battle was fought in the following year at Múrchakhúr near Işfahán. The Afgháns were again defeated and evacuated Işfahán to the number of twelve thousand men, but, before quitting the city he had ruined, Ashraf murdered the unfortunate ex-Sháh Husayn, and carried off most of the ladies of the royal family and the King's treasure. When Tahmásp II entered Işfahán on December 9 he found only his old mother, who had escaped deportation by disguising herself as a servant, and was moved to tears at the desolation and desecration which met his eyes at every turn. Nádir, having finally induced Tahmásp to empower him to levy taxes on his own authority, marched southwards in pursuit of the retiring Afgháns, whom he overtook and again defeated near Persepolis. Ashraf fled from Shíráz towards his own country, but cold, hunger and the unrelenting hostility of the inhabitants of the regions which he had to traverse dissipated his forces and compelled him to abandon his captives and his treasure, and he was finally killed by a party of Balúch tribesmen. Thus ended the disastrous period of Afghán dominion in Persia in A.D. 1730, having lasted eight years.

Níshápúr recovered by Persians.

Defeat of Ashraf at Dámghán.

Işfahán evacuated and Sháh Husayn murdered by Afgháns.

Defeat of Afgháns near Persepolis and death of Ashraf (A.D. 1730).

THE CAREER OF NÁDIR

UNTIL HIS ASSASSINATION IN A.D. 1747.

Although it was not until A.D. 1736 that Nádir deemed it expedient to take the title of King, he became from A.D. 1730 onwards the *de facto* ruler of Persia. Of his humble origin and early struggles it is unnecessary to speak here; they will be found narrated as fully as the circumstances permit in the pages of Hanway, Malcolm and other historians of Persia. Sháh Ṭahmásp was from

the first but a *roi fainéant*, and his only serious attempt to achieve anything by himself, when he took the field against the Turks in A.D. 1731, resulted in a disastrous failure, for he lost both Taoríz and Hamadán, and in January, 1732, concluded a most unfavourable peace, whereby he ceded Georgia and Armenia to Turkey on condition that she should aid him to expel the Russians from Gílán, Shírwán and Darband. Nádir, greatly incensed, came to Işfahán in August, 1732, and, having by a stratagem seized and imprisoned Ṭahmásp, proclaimed his infant son (then only six months old) as king under the title of Sháh 'Abbás III, and at once sent a threatening letter to Aḥmad Páshá of Baghdád, which he followed up by a declaration of war in October.

In April of the following year (1733) Nádir appeared before Baghdád, having already retaken Kirmánsháh, with an army of 80,000 men, but suffered a defeat on July 18, and retired to Hamadán to recruit and recuperate his troops. Returning to the attack in the autumn he defeated the Turks on October 26 in a great battle wherein the gallant and noble-minded Topál 'Osmán ('Uthmán) was slain. Having crushed a revolt in favour of the deposed Sháh Ṭahmásp in Fárs, he invaded Georgia in 1734, took Tiflís, Ganja and Shamákhí,

Incapacity of Ṭahmásp.

'Abbás III proclaimed King.

Further successes of Nádir.

and obtained from Russia the retrocession of Gílán, Shírwán, Darband, Bákú and Rasht. In the following year (1735) he again defeated the Turks near Erivan, and captured that city and Erzeroum.

On the following *Nawrúz*, or Persian New Year's day (March 21, 1736), Nádir announced to the assembled army and deputies of the nation the death of the infant Sháh 'Abbás III and invited them to decide within three days whether they would restore his father, the deposed Sháh Ṭahmásp, or elect a new king. His own desire, which coincided with that of most of his officers and soldiers, was evident, and, the unwilling minority being overawed, the crown of Persia was unanimously offered to him. He agreed to accept it on three conditions, namely: (1) that it should be made hereditary in his family; (2) that there should be no talk of a restoration of the Şafawís, and that no one should aid, comfort, or harbour any member of that family who might aspire to the throne; and (3) that the cursing of the first three Caliphs, the mourning for the death of the Imám Ḥusayn, and other distinctive practices of the Shí'a should be abandoned. This last condition was the most distasteful to the Persians, and the chief ecclesiastical authority, being asked his opinion, had the courage to denounce it as "derogatory to the welfare of the true believers"—a courage which cost him his life, for he was immediately strangled by Nádir's orders. Not content with this, Nádir, on his arrival at Qazwín, confiscated the religious endowments (*awqáf*) for the expenses of his army, to whom, he said, Persia owed more than to her hierarchy. Towards the end of the year he concluded a favourable treaty with Turkey, by which Persia recovered all her lost provinces; and in December he set out at the head of 100,000 men against Afghánistán and India, leaving his son Riḍá-qulí as regent.

The next two years (A.D. 1737-9) witnessed Nádir Sháh's

Nádir proclaimed King.

greatest military achievement, the invasion of India, capture of Lahore and Delhi, and return home with the enormous spoils in money and kind which he exacted from the unfortunate Indians, and which Hanway¹ estimates at £87,500,000. Having taken Qandahár, Kábul and Peshawur in 1738, he crossed the Indus early in the following year, captured Lahore, and in February, 1739, utterly defeated the Indian army of Muḥammad Sháh, two hundred thousand strong, on the plains of Karnál. Delhi was peaceably occupied, but a few days later a riot occurred in which some of Nádir's soldiers were killed, and he avenged their blood by a general massacre of the inhabitants which lasted from 8 a.m. until 3 p.m., and in which 110,000 persons perished. He never dreamed of holding India, and, having extorted the enormous indemnity mentioned above and left the unhappy Muḥammad Sháh in possession of his throne, with a threat that he would return again if necessary, he began his homeward march in May, turning aside to chastise the predatory Uzbeks of Khiva and Bukhárá, which latter town he captured on November 28, 1739.

During the absence of Nádir Sháh his son Riḍá-qulí had put to death the unfortunate Tahmásp and most of his family at Sabzawár, and began to show signs of desiring to retain the powers with which he had been temporarily invested by his father. Being suspected of instigating an unsuccessful attempt on Nádir's life, he was deprived of his eyesight, but with this cruel act the wonderful good fortune which had hitherto accompanied Nádir began to desert him. His increasing cruelty, tyranny, avarice and extortion, but most of all, perhaps, his attempt to impose on

Nádir's Indian
campaign
(A.D. 1737-1739).

Nádir's son
Riḍá-qulí rebels
and is blinded.

Nádir's views
on religion.

¹ *Revolutions of Persia*, ii, p. 188. The loss to India he puts at one hundred and twenty million pounds and the number of those slain at 200,000 (*Ibid.*, p. 197).

his Persian subjects the Sunní doctrine, made him daily more detested. His innovations included the production of Persian translations of the *Qur'an* and the Gospels. The latter, on which several Christians were employed, he caused to be read aloud to him at Tīhrán, while he commented on it with derision, and hinted that when he found leisure he might (perhaps after the model of Akbar) produce a new religion of his own which should supplant alike Judaism, Christianity and Islám¹. His military projects, moreover, began to miscarry; his campaign against the Lazgís in A.D. 1741-2 did not prosper, and in the war with Turkey in which he became involved in 1743 he was unsuccessful in his attempt to take Mosul (Mawṣil). Revolts which broke out in Fárs and Shírwán were only suppressed with difficulty after much bloodshed. However he put down a rebellion of the Qájárs at Astarábád in A.D. 1744, defeated the Turks in a great battle near Erivan in August, 1745, and concluded a satisfactory peace with them in 1746. In the following year Nádir Sháh visited Kirmán, which suffered much from his cruelties and exactions, and thence proceeded to Mashhad, where he arrived at the end of May, 1747. Here he conceived the abominable plan of killing all his Persian officers and soldiers (the bulk of his army being Turkmáns and Uzbeks and consequently Sunnís), but this project was made known by a Georgian slave to some of the Persian officers, who thereupon decided, in the picturesque Persian phrase, "to breakfast off him ere he should sup off them." A certain Šáliḥ Beg, aided by four trusty men, undertook the task², and, entering his tent

¹ See Sir John Malcolm's *History of Persia* (ed. 1815), vol. ii, p. 104.

² According to the *Ta'rikh-i-ba'd Nádiriyya* (ed. Oskar Mann, Leyden, 1891, pp. 15 *et seqq.*), which gives a very full account of the matter, the four chief conspirators, Muḥammad Khán Qájár, Músá Beg Afshár, Qoja Beg Günduzlú and Muḥammad Šáliḥ Khán, were accompanied by seventy young volunteers, but only four had the courage to enter

by night, rid their country of one who, though he first appeared as its deliverer from the Afghán yoke, now bade fair to crush it beneath a yoke yet more intolerable. At the time of his death Nádír Sháh was sixty-one years of age and had reigned eleven years and three months (A.D. 1736-47). He was succeeded by his nephew 'Alí-qulí Khán, who assumed the crown under the title of 'Ádil Sháh, but was defeated and slain by his brother Ibráhím in the following year. He in turn was killed a year later (A.D. 1749) by the partisans of Nádír's grandson Sháhrukh, the son of the unfortunate Riḍá-qulí and a Şafawí princess, the daughter of Sháh Husayn, who now succeeded to the throne. Youth, beauty and a character at once amiable and humane¹ did not, however, secure him against misfortune, and he was shortly after his accession deposed and blinded by a certain Sayyid Muḥammad, a grandson on the mother's side of the Şafawí Sháh Sulaymán II. He in turn soon fell a victim to the universal violence and lawlessness which now prevailed in Persia, and Sháhrukh was restored to the throne, but again deposed and again restored to exercise a nominal rule at Mashhad over the province of Khurásán, which Aḥmad Khán Abdálí (afterwards famous as Aḥmad Sháh Durrání, the founder of the modern kingdom of Afghánistán) desired, before leaving Persia, to erect into a buffer state between that country and his own. The remainder of the blind Sháhrukh's long reign was uneventful, and he survived until A.D. 1796, having reigned nearly fifty years.

Nádír's tent. The assassination took place on Sunday, 11 Jumáda ii, 1160 (June 20, 1747).

¹ Malcolm's *History*, vol. ii, p. 111

THE ZAND DYNASTY (A.D. 1750-1794).

"The history of Persia," says Sir John Malcolm¹, "from the death of Nádír Sháh till the elevation of Áqá Muḥammad Khán, the founder of the reigning family, presents to our attention no one striking feature except the life of Karím Khán-i-Zand. The happy reign of this excellent prince, as contrasted with those who preceded and followed him, affords to the historian of Persia that description of mixed pleasure and repose which a traveller enjoys who arrives at a beautiful and fertile valley in the midst of an arduous journey over barren and rugged wastes. It is pleasing to recount the actions of a chief who, though born in an inferior rank, obtained power without crime, and who exercised it with a moderation that was, in the times in which he lived, as singular as his humanity and justice."

Karím Khán, however, who fixed his capital at Shíráz, which he did so much to beautify and where he is still gratefully remembered, never ruled over the whole of Persia and never assumed the title of Sháh, but remained content with that of *Wakíl*, or Regent. Originally he and a Bakhtiyárl chief named 'Alí Mardán Khán were the joint regents of "a real or pretended grandson of Sháh Husayn²" in whose name they seized Işfahán, where they placed him on the throne. Before long they fell out; 'Alí Mardán Khán was killed; and Karím Khán became the *de facto* ruler of Southern Persia. His rivals were the Afghán chief Ázád in Ádharbáyján and the North-west, and in the Caspian provinces Muḥammad Ḥasan the Qájár, son of that Fath-'Alí Khán who was murdered by Nádír at the outset of his career, and father

Virtues of Karím
Khán-i-Zand.

Karím Khán's
two rivals.

¹ *Op. cit.*, vol. ii, p. 115.

² R. G. Watson's *History of Persia*, p. 44.

of Aqá Muḥammad Khán, the actual founder of the Qájár dynasty.

Ázád was the first to be eliminated from this triangular contest. He defeated Karím Khán and compelled him to evacuate not only Işfahán but Shíráz, but, rashly pursuing him through the narrow defile of Kamárij, fell into an ambush, lost most of his followers, and finally, having sought refuge first with the Páshá of Baghdád and then with Heraclius, Prince of Georgia, "threw himself upon the generosity of Karím Khán, who received him with kindness, promoted him to the first rank among his nobles, and treated him with so generous a confidence that he soon converted this dangerous rival into an attached friend¹."

In A.D. 1757, about four years after the battle of Kamárij, Karím Khán had to face a fierce onslaught by his other rival, Muḥammad Ḥasan Khán the Qájár, who, after a striking initial success, was finally driven back into Mázandarán, where he was eventually

defeated and killed in A.D. 1760 by Karím Khán's general Shaykh 'Alí Khán. From this time until his death in the spring of 1779 Karím Khán practically ruled over the whole of Persia except Khurásán, where the blind and harmless Sháhrukh exercised a nominal sovereignty. The chief

military exploit of his reign was the capture of Başra from the Turks in 1776, effected by his brother Şádiq, who continued to administer it until Karím's death, when he relinquished it to the Turks in order to take part in the fratricidal struggle for the Persian crown².

¹ Sir John Malcolm's *History of Persia*, vol. ii, p. 125. The two preceding pages contain a graphic account of the battle of Kamárij, as narrated to the author on the spot by persons who had themselves taken part in it.

² See 'Alí Riḍá's *Ta'rikkh-i-Zandiyya* (ed. Ernst Beer, Leyden, 1888), p. 8.

Elimination
of Ázád the
Afghán.

Karím Khán
defeats his
Qájár rival.

Başra taken by
Persians.

IV



Mírza 'Aqíl

Ibráhím Khán

Karím Khán-i-Zand

Isma'íl Khán

of Aqá Muḥammad Khán, the actual founder of the Qájár dynasty.

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Basra from the Turks in 1776, effected by his brother Šádiq, who continued to administer it until Karím's death, when he relinquished it to the Turks in order to take part in the fratricidal struggle for the Persian crown².

¹ Sir John Malcolm's *History of Persia*, vol. ii, p. 125. The two preceding pages contain a graphic account of the battle of Kamárij, as narrated to the author on the spot by persons who had themselves taken part in it.

² See 'Alí Riḍá's *Ta'rikh-i-Zandiyya* (ed. Ernst Beer, Leyden, 1888), p. 8.

Elimination of Ázád the Afghán.

Karím Khán defeats his Qájár rival.

Basra taken by Persians.

IV



Mirza 'Aqil
Ibráhim Khán
Mirzá Mahdí
Karím Khán-i-Zand
Isma'íl Khán
Ázád Khán Afghán
Add. 24904 (Brit. Mus.), inside cover

“The most important, if we consider its ultimate consequences, of all the events which occurred at the death of Karím Khán, was the flight of Áqá Muḥammad Khán Qájár, who had been for many years a prisoner at large in the city of Shíráz¹.” As a child he had suffered castration by the cruel command of Nádir’s nephew ‘Ádil Sháh², on account of which the title of Ághá or Áqá, generally given to eunuchs, was added to his name. After the defeat and death of his father Muḥammad Hasan Khán the Qájár in A.D. 1757, he fell into the hands of Karím Khán, who interned him in Shíráz, but otherwise treated him kindly and even generously, so far as was compatible with his safe custody. He was even allowed to gratify his passion for the chase in the country round Shíráz on condition of re-entering the city before the gates were closed at night-fall. Returning to the city on the evening of Şafar 12, 1193 (March 1, 1779), and learning through his sister, who was an inmate of the Palace, that Karím Khán lay at the point of death, he suffered a favourite hawk to escape, and made its pursuit an excuse for spending the night in the plain. Next morning, two hours after dawn³, having learned that Karím Khán had breathed his last, he took advantage of the prevailing confusion to make his escape northwards, and travelled so swiftly that he reached Işfahán on the third day⁴, and thence made his way into Mázandarán, which thenceforth became the base of those operations by which, fifteen years later, he accomplished the final overthrow of the Zand dynasty and won for his own house that supremacy over Persia which they hold to this day.

It is unnecessary to describe here the fratricidal wars

Death of Karím
Khán and flight
of Áqá Muḥam-
mad Khán
(March 2, 1779).

¹ Sir John Malcolm, *op. cit.*, ii, p. 157.

² *Ibid.*, p. 263.

³ *Ta'rikh-i-Zandiyya*, p. 6, l. 1.

⁴ Sir John Malcolm's *History*, ii, p. 158 *ad calc.*

which during the next ten years (A.D. 1779-89) sapped the power of the Zand dynasty while Āqá Muḥammad Khán, with incredible self-control and political sagacity, was uniting and consolidating the Qájár power. Within the year which witnessed Karím Khán's death four of his house had successively mounted his throne, to wit, his son Abu'l-Fath, his nephew 'Alí Murád, his son Muḥammad 'Alí, and his brother Šádiq. The last-named, together with all his sons except Ja'far, was put to death in March, 1782, by 'Alí Murád, who thus regained the throne, but died at Múrchakhúr near Isfahán in January, 1785, and was succeeded by Ja'far, the date of whose accession is commemorated in the following ingenious chronogram by Hájji Sulaymán of Káshán called Šabáḥí¹:

بِضْبِطِ سَالِ جَلُوسِ مَبَارِكِ مِیْمُونِ
 كِه هَسْت مَبْدَاءِ تَارِیْخِ عَشْرَتِ دُورَانِ
 نُوشت كَلِكِ صَبَاحِی زَقْصِرِ سُلْطَانِی
 عَلِی مَرَاد بَرُونِ شَد نَشَسْت جَعْفَرِ خَانِ

"To record the year of the blessed and auspicious accession
 Which is the initial date of the mirth of the age,
 The pen of Šabáḥí wrote: 'From the Royal Palace
 'Alí Murád went forth, and Ja'far Khán sat' [in his place]."

The letters composing the words *Qasr-i-Sultání* yield the number 550; from this we subtract (355) equivalent to 'Alí Murád, which gives us 195; to this we add the number equivalent to *Ja'far Khán* (1004), which finally gives us the correct date A.H. 1199 (A.D. 1785).

Ja'far Khán was murdered on 25 Rabí ii, 1203 (January 23, 1789), and was succeeded by his son, the gallant and unfortunate Luṭf-'Alí Khán, of whose personality Sir Harford Jones Brydges has given so attractive an account. "The reader, I hope," he

Luṭf-'Alí Khán,
 the last of the
 Zand dynasty.

¹ *Ta'rikh-i-Zandiyya*, pp. 24-25.



KARÍM KHÁN-I-ZAND

says¹, "will pardon me if I treat the reign and misfortunes of the noble Luṭf-'Alí more in detail than usual. I received great kindness and attention from him when he filled the throne; and under a miserable tent I had the honour of sitting on the same horse-cloth with him when a fugitive! His virtues endeared him to his subjects; and the bravery, constancy, courage and ability which he manifested under his misfortunes are the theme of poems and ballads which it is not improbable will last as long as the Persian language itself. He was manly, amiable, affable under prosperity and, under calamities as great and as severe as human nature can suffer, he was dignified and cool and determined. That so noble a being, that a prince the hope and pride of his country, should have been betrayed by a wretch² in whom he placed, or rather misplaced, his confidence—that his end should have been marked by indignities exercised on his person at which human nature shudders—that his little son should have suffered loss of virility—that his daughters should have been forced into marriage with the scum of the earth—that the princess his wife should have been dishonoured—are dispensations of Providence, which, though we must not arraign, we may permit ourselves to wonder at."

It is fortunate that we possess such disinterested appreciations of poor Luṭf-'Alí Khán, the last chivalrous figure amongst the kings of Persia, for such of his compatriots as described his career necessarily wrote after the triumph of his implacable rival and deadly foe Áqá Muḥammad Khán, and therefore, whatever their true sentiments may have been,

Courage, chivalry
and misfortunes
of Luṭf-'Alí
Khán.

¹ *The Dynasty of the Kajars, etc.* (London, 1833), pp. cxx-cxxi. Sir H. J. Brydges "visited Shíráz for the first time in 1786."

² To wit, the notorious Ḥájji Ibráhím—"the scoundrel," as Sir H. J. Brydges calls him (*Account of...H.M.'s Mission, etc.* vol. i, pp. 95-96), "whose mad ambition and black heart brought ruin on his confiding King, and misery the most severe on his fellow-citizens."

dared not venture to praise the fallen prince, lest they should incur the displeasure of the cruel Qájár. Short-lived as the Zand dynasty was, it began and ended nobly, for its first representative was one of the best and its last one of the bravest of all the long line of Persian monarchs.

THE REIGNING QÁJÁR DYNASTY (A.D. 1796 ONWARDS).

The full and detailed accounts of the reigning Qájár dynasty already available to the English reader render any attempt to summarize their history in this place quite unnecessary¹. Áqá Muḥammad Khán was not actually crowned until A.D. 1796, and was assassinated in the following year, so that he wore the crown of Persia for not more than fifteen months², but his reign practically began on the death of Karím Khán in A.D. 1779, though "he used to observe that he had no title even to the name of king till he was obeyed through the whole of the ancient limits of the Empire of Persia³," so that it was only after he had finally subdued Georgia that he consented to assume the title of Sháh. His appearance and character are admirably summarized by Sir John Malcolm in the following words⁴:

¹ Sir Harford Jones Brydges' *Dynasty of the Kajars translated from the Original Persian Manuscript* (London, 1833) opens with a valuable Introduction (*Preliminary matter*) filling pp. xiii—cxci. The text of the original, entitled *Má'áthir-i-Sultániyya*, was printed at Tabriz in Rajab, 1241 (March, 1826) and comes down to that year, but Brydges' translation ends with the year 1226/1811-12, and, in the latter part especially, differs very greatly from the printed text. Sir John Malcolm's *History* ends with the year 1230/1814; R. G. Watson's excellent monograph with A.D. 1857-8. The latest *History of Persia*, by Sir Percy Molesworth Sykes (2nd edition, London, 1921), is continued down to the actual year of publication.

² Like Nádir, he was crowned by acclamation in the Plain of Múqán in the spring of 1796, and met his death on June 17, 1797.

³ Malcolm's *History*, ii, p. 287.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 300-302.



ÁQÁ MUḤAMMAD KHÁN QÁJÁR seated, with his minister ḤÁJJÍ IBRÁHÍM standing before him

"Áqá Muḥammad Khán was murdered in the sixty-third year of his age. He had been ruler of a great part of Persia for upwards of twenty years, but had only for a short period enjoyed the undisputed sovereignty of that country. The person of that monarch was so slender that at a distance he appeared like a youth of fourteen or fifteen. His beardless and shrivelled face resembled that of an aged and wrinkled woman; and the expression of his countenance, at no times pleasant, was horrible when clouded, as it very often was, with indignation. He was sensible of this, and could not bear that anyone should look at him. This prince had suffered, in the early part of his life, the most cruel adversity; and his future conduct seems to have taken its strongest bias from the keen recollection of his misery and his wrongs. The first passion of his mind was the love of power; the second, avarice; and the third, revenge. In all these he indulged to excess, and they administered to each other: but the two latter, strong as they were, gave way to the first whenever they came in collision. His knowledge of the character and feelings of others was wonderful; and it is to this knowledge, and his talent of concealing from all the secret purposes of his soul, that we must refer his extraordinary success in subduing his enemies. Against these he never employed force till art had failed; and, even in war, his policy effected more than his sword. His ablest and most confidential minister¹, when asked if Áqá Muḥammad Khán was personally brave, replied, 'No doubt; but still I can hardly recollect an occasion when he had an opportunity of displaying courage. The monarch's head,' he emphatically added, 'never left work for his hand.'"

Áqá Muḥammad Khán was succeeded by his nephew the uxorious and philoprogenitive² Fath-'Alí Sháh. He was

¹ The infamous traitor Hájji Ibráhm, who personally communicated to Sir John Malcolm the opinion here recorded.

² According to the *Násikhu't-Tawárikh*, the issue of Fath-'Alí Sháh during the 47 years of his mature lifetime amounted to two thousand children and grandchildren, and would, adds the historian, during the twenty-one years intervening between his death and the date of writing, probably amount to about ten thousand souls. He enumerates 57 sons and 46 daughters who survived him, 296 grandsons and 292 granddaughters, and 158 wives who had borne children to him. R. G. Watson (*History of Persia*, p. 269) puts the number of his children at 159. In any case the number was so large as to justify the well-known Persian

avaricious and vain, being inordinately proud of his handsome face and long beard, but not by nature cruel (at any rate compared to his late uncle), and it is related that, though obliged by custom to witness the execution of malefactors, he would always avert his face so as not to behold the unhappy wretch's death-agony. He was something of a poet, and composed numerous odes under the pen-name of Kháqán. Politically the chief features of his reign were the Anglo-French rivalry typified by the missions of Malcolm and Harford Jones Brydges on the one hand, and Jaubert and General Gardanne on the other (A.D. 1800-1808); the growing menace of Russia, resulting in the successive disastrous treaties of Gulistán (A.D. 1813) and Turkmán-cháy (A.D. 1826); and the war with Turkey in A.D. 1821, concluded in 1823 by the Treaty of Erzeroum. Other notable events of this reign were the disgrace and death of the traitor Hájji Ibráhm and the almost complete extirpation of his family about A.D. 1800¹; the massacre of Grebaiodoff and the Russian Mission at Tíhrán on February 11, 1829²; and the premature death, at the age of forty-six, of the Sháh's favourite son 'Abbás Mírzá, the Crown Prince, "the noblest of the Kajar race," as Watson calls him³, in A.D. 1833. His heart-broken father only survived him about a year, and died at the age of sixty-eight on October 23, 1834, leaving fifty-seven sons and forty-six daughters to mourn his loss.

Fath-'Alí Sháh was succeeded by his grandson Muḥammad, the son of 'Abbás Mírzá, who, ere he was crowned on January 31, 1835, was confronted with two rival claimants to the throne, his uncle the Zillu's-Sultán and his brother the Farmán-farmá. These,

Muḥammad
Sháh (A. D.
1835-1848).

saying *Shutur u shupush u shahzáda hama já paydá'st* ("Camels, lice and princes are to be found everywhere").

¹ See R. G. Watson's *History of Persia*, pp. 128-129.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 247-256.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 269.

however, were overcome without much difficulty by Persian troops commanded by Sir Henry Lindsay Bethune, and though the new Sháh had every reason to be grateful to England and Russia for assuring his succession, the fact that these two powerful neighbours had for the first time intervened in this fashion was an ominous portent and a dangerous precedent in the history of Persia. The same year witnessed the fall and execution (on June 26, 1835) of the celebrated *Qá'im-maqám* Mírzá Abu'l-Qásim¹, hitherto the all-powerful minister of the King, still regarded by his countrymen as one of the finest prose stylists of modern times. He was succeeded as Prime Minister by the notorious Hájji Mírzá Ághásí, concerning whom many ridiculous anecdotes are still current in Persia². Of the protracted but fruitless siege of Herát by the Persians in 1838 and the manifestations of Anglo-Russian rivalry for which it afforded occasion it is unnecessary to speak; nor of the withdrawal of Sir J. McNeill, the British Minister (A.D. 1838-1841), from the Persian Court; nor of the Turco-Persian boundary disputes of 1842 and the Turkish massacre of Persians at Karbalá in the early part of 1843. From our point of view none of these events, fully discussed by R. G. Watson and other historians of Persia, are equal in interest to the Isma'ílí revolt of 1840 or thereabouts, and the rise of the Bábí religion in 1844.

Of the origin and doctrines of the Isma'ílí heresy or "Sect of the Seven" (*Sab'íyya*), some account will be found in the

¹ His father, Mírzá 'Ísá of Faráhn, bore the same title. Notices of both occur in vol. ii of the *Majma'u'l-Fuṣahá*, pp. 87 and 425. Some account of his literary achievements will be given when we come to consider the prose-writers of the Qájár period in the penultimate chapter of Part iii of this volume.

² See Gobineau's *Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale* (2nd ed., Paris, 1866), pp. 160-166; and my *Year amongst the Persians*, pp. 116-117. A sketch of his character is also given by R. G. Watson, *History of Persia*, pp. 288-289.

first volume¹ of this work, while their destruction by Húlágú Khán the Mongol in the middle of the thirteenth century of our era is briefly described in the second². But, though their power in Persia was shattered, they still continued to exist, and, from time to time, to reappear on the pages of Persian history. In the volume of the *Násikhū't-Tawárikh* dealing with the reigning Qájár dynasty several references to them occur. The first,

The Isma'ílís in modern times.

under the year 1232/1817, refers to the death of the then head of the sect Sháh Khalílu'lláh, the son of Sayyid Abu'l-Ḥasan Khán, at Yazd.

Under the Zand dynasty Abu'l-Ḥasan had been governor of Kirmán, whence on his dismissal he retired to the Maḥallát of Qum. There he received tribute from his numerous followers in India and Central Asia, who, it is recorded, if unable to bring their offerings in person, used to throw them into the sea, believing that they would thus be conveyed into the hands of their Imám; but, when possible, used to visit him in his abode and deem it an honour to render him personal service, even of the most menial kind. His son, Sháh Khalílu'lláh, transferred his abode to Yazd, but after residing there two years he was killed in the course of a quarrel which had arisen between some of his followers and the Muslim citizens of Yazd, instigated by a certain Mullá Ḥusayn. The Sháh punished the perpetrators of this outrage, gave one of his daughters in marriage to Áqá Khán, the son and successor of the late Imám of the Isma'ílís, and made him governor of Qum and the surrounding districts (*Maḥallát*).

We next hear of this Áqá Khán in 1255/1839 or 1256/1840³, when, apparently in consequence of the arrogant

¹ *Lit. Hist. of Persia*, i, pp. 391-415, etc.

² *Ibid.*, ii, pp. 190-211; 453-460.

³ R. G. Watson in his *History of Persia* gives a fairly full account of the insurrection (pp. 331-334).

behaviour of Hájji 'Abdu'l-Muḥammad-i-Maḥallátí, instigated by the minister Hájji Mírzá Áqásí, he rebelled against Muḥammad Sháh and occupied the citadel of Bam, but was obliged to surrender to Fírúz Mírzá, then governor of Kirmán, who pardoned him and sent him to Ṭihrán. Here he was well received by Hájji Mírzá Áqásí and was presently allowed to return to his former government in the district of Qum. Having sent his family and possessions to Karbalá by way of Baghdád, so as to leave himself free and unencumbered, he began to buy swift and strong horses and to recruit brave and devoted soldiers, and when his preparations were completed he set out across the deserts and open country towards Kirmán, pretending that he was proceeding to Mecca by way of Bandar-i-'Abbás, and that the government of Kirmán had been conferred upon him. Prince Bahman Mírzá *Baha'u'd-Dawla*, being apprised of his intentions, pursued and overtook him as he was making for Shahr-i-Bábak and Sírfán, and a skirmish took place between the two parties in which eight of the Prince's soldiers and sixteen of the Áqá Khán's men were killed. After a second and fiercer battle the Áqá Khán was defeated and fled to Lár, whence he ultimately escaped to India, where his descendant, the present Áqá Khán¹, lives a wealthy and spacious life at Bombay when not engaged in his frequent and extensive travels.

Revolt of the Áqá Khán in A.D. 1839 or 1840.

He is defeated by Bahman Mírzá, and flees by way of Lár to India.

The rise of the Bábí sect or religion, which began in the later years of Muḥammad Sháh's reign, was an event of the most far-reaching significance and importance, and forms

¹ Sulṭán Muḥammad Sháh, G.C.I.E., etc., born in 1875. See *Who's Who*, s.v. "Aga Khan," and the conclusion of Stanislas Guyard's entertaining article *Un Grand Maître des Assassins au temps de Saladin* in the *Journal Asiatique* for 1877.

the subject of an extensive literature¹, not only in Persian and Arabic, but in English, French, German, Russian and other European languages. Since it would be impossible to give an adequate account of its eventful history and extensive developments in this volume, and since ample materials for its study are already available even in English (indeed, thanks to the success attained by its missionaries in America, especially in English), no attempt at recapitulation will be made here. Sayyid 'Alí Muḥammad the Báb has himself (in the Persian *Bayán*) fixed the date of his "Manifestation" (*Zuhúr*) as May 23, 1844 (5 Jumáda i, 1260), just a thousand years after the disappearance or "Occultation" (*Ghaybat*) of the Twelfth Imám, or Imám Mahdí, to whom he claimed to be the "Gate" (*Báb*). Neither the idea nor the expression was new: the Imám Mahdí had four successive "Gates" (*Ab-wáb*) by means of whom, during the "Lesser Occultation" (*Ghaybat-i-Ṣughra*), he maintained communication with his followers; and the "Perfect Shí'a" (*Shí'a-i-Kámil*) of the Shaykhí School, in which the Báb pursued his theological studies, connoted much the same idea of an Intermediary (*Wásita*), or Channel of Grace, between the Concealed Imám and his faithful people. Later the Báb "went higher" (*bálatar raft*), to use the expression of his followers, and claimed to be first the "Supreme Point" (*Nuqta-i-A'lá*), or "Point of Explanation" (*Nuqta-i-Bayán*), then the *Qá'im* ("He who is to arise" of the House of the Prophet), then the Inaugurator of a new Dispensation, and lastly an actual Divine Manifestation or Incarnation. Some of his followers went even further, calling themselves Gods and him a

¹ For a bibliography of the literature to 1889 see my *Traveller's Narrative written to illustrate the Episode of the Báb* (Cambridge, 1891), vol. ii, pp. 173-211; and for the subsequent literature, my *Materials for the Study of the Bábí Religion* (Cambridge, 1918), pp. 175-243.

"Creator of Gods" (*Khuddá-áfarín*) while one of them went so far as to write of Bahá'u'lláh¹:

خلق گویند خدائی و من اندر غضب آیم
پرده بر داشته میسند بخود ننگِ خدائی²

"Men say Thou art God, and I am moved to anger:
Raise the veil, and submit no longer to the shame of Godhead!"

Although the Bábí movement led to much bloodshed, this took place almost entirely after the death of Muḥammad Sháh, which happened on September 5, 1848, though already the Báb was a prisoner in the fortress of Mákú in the extreme N.W. of Persia, while in Khurásán, Mázandarán and elsewhere armed bands of his followers roamed the country proclaiming the Advent of the expected Mahdí and the inauguration of the Reign of the Saints, and threatening those sanguinary encounters between themselves and their opponents which were at once precipitated by the King's death and the ensuing dislocation and confusion.

Dark indeed were the horizons at the beginning of the new reign. The *Walt'-ahd*, or Crown Prince, Náşiru'd-Dín, was absent at Tabríz, the seat of his government, at the time of his father's death, and until he could reach Tíhrán his mother, the *Mahd-i-Ulyá*, assumed control of affairs. Hájji Mírzá Áqásí, whose unpopularity was extreme, not only ceased to act as Prime Minister, but had to flee for his life, and took refuge in the Shrine of Sháh 'Abdu'l-'Azím². Disturbances broke out in the capital itself, and more serious revolts in Burújird, Kirmánsháh, Kurdistán, Shíráz, Kirmán, Yazd and Khurásán. The young Sháh, then only seventeen years of age³, finally

Náşiru'd-Dín
Sháh (A.D.
1848-1896).

¹ Cited in the *Hasht Bihišt*, f. 244^a of my MS. The verse is ascribed to Nabíl of Zarand, who killed himself at 'Akká on Bahá'u'lláh's death on May 28, 1892.

² See R. G. Watson's *History of Persia*, pp. 357-8.

³ He was born on July 17, 1831.

reached the capital on October 20, 1848, was crowned the same night, and immediately appointed as his Prime Minister

Mírzá Taqí Khán, better known as the *Amír-i-Nizám*, who, notwithstanding his lowly origin

(his father was originally cook to the *Qá'im-maqám*)¹, was one of the greatest men and most honest, capable and intelligent ministers produced by Persia in modern times. "The race of modern Persians," exclaims Watson² enthusiastically, "cannot be said to be altogether effete, since so recently it has been able to produce a man such as was the *Amír-i-Nizám*"; and the Hon. Robert Curzon, in his *Armenia and Erzeroum*, has described him as "beyond all comparison the most interesting personage amongst the commissioners of Turkey, Persia, Russia and Great Britain who were then assembled at Erzeroum." In the brief period of three years during which he held the high office of Prime Minister he did much for Persia, but the bright promise of his career was too soon darkened by the envy and malice of his rivals. The tragic circumstances

Tragic death of
Mírzá Taqí
Khán, Jan. 9,
1852.

of his violent and cruel death in his exile at the beautiful palace of Fín near Káshán are too well known to need repetition³, but the admirable fidelity of his wife, the Sháh's only sister, cannot be passed over in silence. "No princess educated in a Christian court," says Watson⁴, "and accustomed to the contemplation of the brightest example of conjugal virtues that the history of the world has recorded could have shown more tenderness and devotion than did the sister of the Sháh of Persia towards her unfortunate husband." Her untiring vigilance was, however, finally tricked and out-

¹ Some account of the two celebrated men, father and son, who bore this title will be found in the account of modern prose-writers of note in Part iii of this volume. See p. 147 *supra*, *ad calc.*

² See Watson's *History*, p. 264.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 398-406.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 403.

witted by the infamous Hájji 'Alí Khán *Hájibu'd-Dawla*, who owed so much to the minister whose life he succeeded in bringing to an end on January 9, 1852.

The Bábís, however, had no cause to love Mírzá Taqí Khán, whose death they had already striven to compass,

and whose ultimate fate was regarded by them as a signal instance of Divine retribution, since, apart from other measures which he had taken

Bábí risings
of 1849-1850.

against them, he was responsible for the execution of the Báb himself at Tabríz on July 9, 1850. The Báb indeed, helpless prisoner that he was, had kindled a flame which proved inextinguishable, and which especially illumines with a lurid glow the first four years of Náṣiru'd-Dín Sháh's reign. The story of the almost incredible martial achievements of the Bábís at Shaykh Ṭabarsí in Mázandarán, at Zanján, Yazd, Nayríz and elsewhere during the years 1849-

1850 will never be more graphically told than by the Comte de Gobineau, who in his incom-

parable book *Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale* combines wit, sympathy and insight in an extraordinary degree. I personally owe more to this book than to any other book about Persia, since to it, not less than to an equally fortunate and fortuitous meeting in Iṣfahán, I am indebted for that unravelling of Bábí doctrine and history which first won for me a reputation in Oriental scholarship. Gobineau was for some time a "prophet without honour in his own country," but, while France long neglected him, Germany produced a "Gobineau-Vereinigung"¹ and several important works² on his life and writings. The militant

¹ Founded in 1894.

² I possess two by Ludwig Schemann, *Eine Biographie und Quellen und Untersuchungen* (Strassburg, 1913 and 1914). The monthly review *Numéro consacré au Comte de Gobineau*, which contains (pp. 116-126) an excellent article by M. Vladimir Minorsky entitled *Gobineau et la Perse*, followed (pp. 127-141) by a list of his published and unpublished

phase of Bábism culminated in the attempted assassination of Násiru'd-Dín Sháh by three members of the sect on August 15, 1852, and the frightful persecution which followed, wherein twenty-eight more or less prominent Bábís, including the beautiful and talented poetess Qurratu'l-'Ayn, suffered death with horrible tortures¹. Most of the leading Bábís who survived emigrated or were exiled to Baghdád, and thenceforth, though the sect continued to increase in Persia, the centre of its activity, whether at Baghdád, Adrianople, Cyprus or Acre, lay beyond the frontiers of Persia.

It is unnecessary here to discuss the causes and course of the short Anglo-Persian War of 1856-7, brought about by the seizure of Herát by the Persians. It began with the occupation by the British of the island of Khárák in the Persian Gulf on December 4, 1856, and was officially terminated by the Treaty of Peace signed at Paris on March 4, 1857, by Lord Cowley and Farrukh Khán, though, owing to the slowness of communications at that time, hostilities actually continued for another month. They did not end a moment too soon for Great Britain, for almost before the ratifications were exchanged the Indian Mutiny broke out. The need then experienced for better communications between

The Anglo-Persian War of 1856-7.

England and India led in 1864 to the introduction into Persia of the telegraph, to which further extension was given in 1870 and 1872, and this, as pointed out by Sir Percy Molesworth Sykes (whose *History*

which (on p. 526 of vol. II) March of that year is mentioned as the current date at the time of writing.

and coherent narrative of events from 1857 to 1921), had far-reaching reactions¹, and was one of the factors in the modernization of Persia. Others were the extension of the Press (first introduced into Tabríz by 'Abbás Mírzá about A.D. 1816) and consequent wider diffusion of literature; the slow growth of journalism since 1851² down to its enormous expansion during the Revolution of 1906-1911 and again after the Russian collapse; the foundation of the *Dáru'l-Funún*, or Polytechnic College, at Tíhrán in 1851, and the introduction of European science and instruction; and, in a lesser degree, the Sháh's three journeys to Europe in 1873, 1878 and 1889, though it is doubtful whether he or his attendants derived more advantage from what they saw in the course of their peregrinations than Persian literature did from his accounts of his experiences.

Násiru'd-Dín Sháh was only a little over seventeen years of age when he was crowned on the 24th of Dhu'l-Qa'da, 1264 (20 October, 1848), and would have entered upon the fiftieth year of his reign on the same date of the Muhammadan year A.H. 1313, corresponding to May 5, 1896. Four days earlier, however, when all the preparations for the celebration of his Jubilee were completed, he was shot dead by Mírzá Ridá of Kirmán, a disciple of that turbulent spirit Sayyid Jamálu 'd-Dín al-Afghán, in the Shrine of Sháh 'Abdu'l-'Azím a few miles south of Tíhrán. Of the events which led up to this catastrophe and their significance I

Other modernizing influences.

Assassination of Násiru'd-Dín Sháh on the eve of his Jubilee, May 5, 1896.

whole subject is fully discussed.

recapitulate. The seeds of the Revolution were sown, and even began to germinate, about the time of the Sháh's third and last visit to Europe, fruitful in ill-advised concessions, which (especially the

Germens of the Revolution.

Tobacco concession of 1890) were a potent factor in stimulating the political discontents which found their first open expression in the Tobacco-riots of 1891 and culminated in the Revolution of 1905. If we ignore the external relations of Persia with foreign Powers, especially England and Russia, which form the principal topic of such political histories as that of Sir Percy Molesworth Sykes, we may say, broadly speaking, that of the long reign of Násiru'd-

Momentous years at the beginning and end of Násiru'd-Dín Sháh's reign.

Dín Sháh the first four years (A.D. 1848-52) were notable for the religious fermentation caused by the Bábís, and the last six years (A.D. 1890-6) for the political fermentation which brought about the Revolution in the following reign; while the intervening period was, outwardly at any rate, one of comparative peace and tranquillity. It was my good fortune

Persia in 1887-8.

to visit Persia in 1887-8 towards the end of this period, and, while enjoying the remarkable security which then prevailed in the country, to see almost the last of what may fairly be called mediaeval Persia. To this security I hardly did justice in the narrative of my travels¹ which I wrote soon after my return, for I hardly realized then how few and short were the periods, either before or after my visit, when a young foreigner, without any official position or protection, could traverse the country from North-West to South-East and from North to South, attended only by his Persian servant and his muleteers, not only without danger, but practically without the occurrence of a single disagreeable incident. And if this

¹ *A Year amongst the Persians* (London: A. & C. Black, 1893). This book has long been out of print and is now very scarce.

remarkable security, which compared favourably with that of many European countries, had originally been brought about by frightful exemplary punishments of robbers and ill-doers, these were no longer in evidence, and during the whole of my time in Persia I not only never witnessed an execution or a bastinado, but never heard of a specific case of either in any place where I stayed, though the ghastly pillars of mortar with protruding human bones outside the gates of Shíráz still bore witness to the stern rule of the Sháh's uncle Farhád Mírzá, *Mu'tamadü'd-Dawla*, whom I met only in the capacity of a courtly and learned bibliophile. Yet withal the atmosphere was, as I have said, mediaeval: politics and progress were hardly mentioned, and the talk turned mostly on mysticism, metaphysics and religion; the most burning political questions were those connected with the successors of the Prophet Muḥammad in the seventh century of our era; only a languid interest in external affairs was aroused by the occasional appearance of the official journals *Írán* and *Ittilá'*, or the more exciting *Akhtar* published in Constantinople; while at Kirmán one post a week maintained communication with the outer world. How

Stormy later years (1891 onwards).

remote does all this seem from the turmoil of 1891, the raging storms of 1905-11, the deadly paralysis of the Russian terror which began on Christmas Day in the year last mentioned, and then the Great War, when Persia became the cockpit of three foreign armies and the field of endless intrigues. The downfall of Russian Imperialism freed her from the nightmare of a century, and seemed to her to avenge the desecration of the holy shrine of Mashhad in April, 1912, while the collapse of the Anglo-Persian Agreement and consequent withdrawal of British troops and advisers has left her for the time being to her own devices, to make or mar her future as she can and will.

Since Náşiru'd-Dín fell a victim to the assassin's pistol the throne of Persia has been occupied by his son Muzaffaru'd-Dín (1896-1907), who granted the Constitution; his grandson Muḥammad 'Alí, who endeavoured to destroy it, who was deposed by the victorious Nationalists on July 16, 1909, and who is still living in retirement in the neighbourhood of Constantinople; and his great-grandson Sulṭán Aḥmad Sháh the reigning monarch. It would be premature to discuss the reign and character of the last, while the very dissimilar characters of his father and grandfather I have endeavoured to depict in my *History of the Persian Revolution*. But since the death of Náşiru'd-Dín Sháh twenty-seven years ago it may truly be said that the centre of interest has shifted from the king to the people of Persia, nor, so far as we can foresee the future, is it likely that we shall see another Isma'íl, another Nádir, or (which God forbid!) another Áqá Muḥammad Khán.

Náşiru'd-Dín
Sháh's suc-
cessors.

PART II.

PERSIAN VERSE
DURING THE LAST
FOUR CENTURIES

CHAPTER V.

SOME GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS ON THE LATER AND ESPECIALLY THE RELIGIOUS POETRY OF THE PERSIANS.

Four hundred years ago the Persian language (or at any rate the written language, for no doubt fresh colloquialisms and slang may have arisen during this period) was to all intents and purposes the same as it is to-day, while such new literary forms as exist go no further back, as a rule, than the middle of the nineteenth century, that is to say than the accession of Náşiru'd-Dín Sháh, whose reign (A.D. 1848-1896) might not inappropriately be called the Persian Victorian¹ Era. In the three previous volumes of this book each historical chapter has been immediately followed by a chapter dealing with the literature of that period; but in this volume, for the reason just given, it appeared unnecessary to break the sequence of events in this way, and to be preferable to devote the first part of the volume to a brief historical sketch of the whole period, and the second and third parts to a consideration of the literature in verse and prose, arranged according to categories.

How to arrange these categories is a problem which has cost me a good deal of thought. Nearly all those who have written on Persian literature have paid an amount of attention which I regard as excessive and disproportionate to poetry and *belles-lettres*, and have almost entirely ignored the plainer but more positive fields of history, biography, theology, philosophy and the ancient sciences. If we understand literature in the

¹ Náşiru'd-Dín, indeed, approximately means "Victor" or "Defender of the Faith"

narrower sense as denoting those writings only, whether poetry or prose, which have artistic form, there is, no doubt, some justification for this view; but not if we take it in the wider sense of the manifestation in writing of a nation's mind and intellectual activities. Still, in deference to the prevalent view, we may begin this general survey of the recent literature of Persia with some consideration of its poetry.

Here we have to distinguish some half-dozen categories of verse, namely (1) the classical poetry; (2) occasional or topical verse; (3) religious and devotional verse, from the formal *marthiyas*, or threnodies, of great poets like Muhtasham of Káshán to the simple popular poems on the sufferings of the Imáms recited at the *Ta'ziyas*, or mournings, of the month of Muḥarram; (4) the scanty but sometimes very spirited verses composed by the Bábís since about 1850, which should be regarded as a special subdivision of the class last mentioned; (5) the ballads or *tasnifs* sung by professional minstrels, of which it is hard to trace the origin or antiquity; (6) the quite modern political verse which has arisen since the Revolution of 1906, and which I have already discussed in some detail in another work¹. In this chapter I shall deal chiefly with the religious verse, leaving the consideration of the secular poetry to the two succeeding chapters.

(1) *The Classical Poetry.*

Alike in form and matter the classical poetry of Persia has been stereotyped for at least five or six centuries, so that, except for such references to events or persons as may indicate the date of composition, it is hardly possible, after reading a *qaṣída* (elegy), *ghazal* (ode), or *rubá'í* (quatrain), to guess whether it was composed by a contemporary of Jámí (d. A.H. 1492)

¹ *The Press and Poetry of Modern Persia* (Cambridge, 1914).

Categories of Persian verse.

Later poetry of the classical type.

or by some quite recent poet, such as Qá'ání. Of the extremely conventional character of this poetry I have spoken in a previous volume¹, and of Ibn Khaldún's doctrine "that the Art of composing in verse or prose is concerned only with words, not with ideas." Hence, even in the most recent poetry of this type, we very seldom find any allusion to such modern inventions as tea-drinking, tobacco-smoking, railways, telegraphs or newspapers²; indeed several of the greatest modern poets, such as Qá'ání, Dáwarí and the like, have chiefly shown their originality by reviving certain forms of verse like the *musammaṭ*³ which had fallen into disuse since the eleventh or twelfth century.

Perhaps the statement with which the above paragraph opens is too sweeping and requires some qualification, for in some of the later Persian poets Indian and Turkish critics do profess to discover a certain originality (*táza-gu'í*) marking an epoch in the development of the art, and the rise of a new school. The Persians themselves are not addicted to literary criticism; perhaps because, just as people only discuss their health when they are beginning to lose it, so those only indulge in meticulous literary criticism who are no longer able, or have never been able, to produce good literature. According to Gibb⁴, Jámí and Mír 'Alí Shír Nawá'í, 'Urff of Shíráz (d. 999/1590-1) and the Indian Faydí (Feyzí, d. 1004/1595-6), and lastly Šá'ib of Işfahán (d. 1080/1669-70) were successively the chief foreign influences on the development of Ottoman Turkish poetry, and a great deal has been written about them by the Turkish critics. The best and fullest

Literary criticism neglected by the Persians.

¹ *Lit. Hist. of Persia*, ii, pp. 83-9.

² Cf. Gibb's *History of Ottoman Poetry*, vol. iv, p. 4. Such allusions will, however, be found in the poem by Na'ím quoted in the latter part of this chapter, though in general it follows the orthodox *qaṣída* form.

³ *Lit. Hist. of Persia*, ii, pp. 41-2.

⁴ *History of Ottoman Poetry*, vol. iii, pp. 247-48.

critical estimate of the leading Persian poets from the earliest times down to the latter part of the seventeenth century is, however, so far as I can judge, a work written (most unfortunately) in the Urdú or Hindustání language, the *Shi'ru'l-'Ajam* ("Poetry of the Persians") of that eminent scholar Shibli Nu'mání. The third volume of this work, composed in 1324-5/1906-7, deals with seven Persian poets of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries of our era, namely Fighání (d. 925/1519), Faydí (d. 1004/1595-6), 'Urff (d. 999/1590-1), Nazírí (d. 1021/1612-3), Tálíb-i-Ámulí (d. 1036/1626-7), Şá'ib (d. 1080/1669-1670), and Abú Tálíb Kalím (d. 1061/1651). All these were Persians, attracted to India by the liberal patronage of the Moghul Court, except Faydí, whom Shibli regards as the only Indian poet except Amír Khusraw who could produce Persian verse which might pass for that of a born Persian. 'Urff and Şá'ib were the most notable of these seven, but even they enjoy a greater repute in India and Turkey than in their own country¹. The explanation of this fact offered by some Persians of my acquaintance is that they are easily understood and therefore popular with foreigners, who often find the more subtle poetry admired in Persia beyond their powers of comprehension. I must confess with shame that in this case my taste agrees with the foreigners, and that I find Şá'ib especially attractive, both on account of his simplicity of style and his skill in the figures entitled *husn-i-ta'líl* or "poetical aetiology," and *irsálu'l-mathal* or "proverbial commission²." Nearly forty years ago (in 1885) I read through the Persian portion of that volume of the great trilingual anthology entitled *Kharábat*³ which deals with the lyrical

¹ Ridá-qulí Khán explicitly says of both of them that their style is not approved by modern Persians.

² See Gibb's *History of Ottoman Poetry*, vol. i, pp. 113-14.

³ Compiled by Ziyá (Diyá) Pasha, and published in three volumes at Constantinople in 1291-2/1874-5.

verse of the Arabs, Turks and Persians, both odes and isolated verses, and copied into a note-book which now lies before me those which pleased me most, irrespective of authorship; and, though many of the 443 fragments and isolated verses which I selected are anonymous, more than one-tenth of the total (45) are by Şá'ib.

India, at all events, thanks to the generous patronage of Humáyún, Akbar, and their successors down to that gloomy zealot Awrangzáb, and of their great nobles, such as Bayram Khán-Khánán and his son 'Abdu'r-Rahím, who succeeded to the title after his father's assassination about A.D. 1561, continued during the greater part of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to attract a great number of the most talented Persian poets, who found there an appreciation which was withheld from them in their own country. Badá'uní¹ enumerates about one hundred and seventy, most of whom were of Persian descent though some of them were born in India. Shibli² gives a list of fifty-one who came to India from Persia in Akbar's time and were received at court, and a long list is also given by Sprenger³. Shibli quotes numerous verses showing how widely diffused amongst Persian poets was the desire to try their fortune in India⁴.

Thus Şá'ib says :

همچو عزمِ سفرِ هند که در هر دل هست
رقصِ سودای تو در هیچ سری نیست که نیست

"There is no head wherein desire for thee danceth not,
Even as the determination to visit India is in every heart."

¹ *Muntakhabu't-Tawárikh* (Calcutta, 1869), vol. iii, pp. 170-390.

² *Shi'ru'l-'Ajam*, vol. iii, p. 5.

³ *Catalogue of the Library of the King of Oude*, vol. i, pp. 55-65.

⁴ *Shi'ru'l-'Ajam*, vol. iii, p. 10.

And Abú Tálíb Kalím says:

اسیرِ هندم و زین رفتنِ بیجا پشیمانم
 کجا خواهد رساندن پُرفشانی مُرغِ بسمل را
 بایران میروند نالان کلیم از شوقِ همراهان
 پپای دیگران همچون جرس طی کرده منزل را
 ز شوقِ هند زان سان چشمِ حسرت بر قفا دارم
 که رو هم گمراه آورم نمی بینم مقابل را

"I am the captive of India, and I regret this misplaced journey:
 Whither can the feather-flutterings of the dying bird¹ convey it?
 Kalím goes lamenting to Persia [dragged thither] by the eagerness
 of his fellow-travellers,
 Like the camel-bell which traverses the stage on the feet of others.
 Through longing for India I turn my regretful eyes backwards in
 such fashion
 That, even if I set my face to the road, I do not see what confronts
 me."

So also 'Alí-qulí Salm says:

نیست در ایران زمین سامانِ تحصیلِ کمال
 تا نیامد سوی هندستان حنا رنگین نشد
 "There exist not in Persia the means of acquiring perfection:
 Henna does not develop its colour until it comes to India."

The Persian dervish-poet Rasmí, commemorating the Khán-Khánán's liberal patronage of poets, says²:

ز یمنِ مدج تو آن نکته سنج شیرازی
 رسید صیتِ کمالش بروم ز خاور
 بطرزِ تازه ز مدج تو آشنا گردید
 چو روی خوب که یابد ز ماشطه زیور

¹ When a Muslim kills a bird for food by cutting its throat, he must pronounce the formula *Bismi'lláh* ("In the Name of God") over it. Such a bird, in its dying struggles on the ground, is called *Murgh-i-Bismil*, or *Ním-bismil*.

² *Shi'ru'l-'Ajam*, vol. iii, p. 13.

ز فیضِ نامِ تو فیضی گرفت چون خسرو
 بتیغِ هندی اقلیمِ سبعا را یکسر
 ز ریزه چینِ خوانت نظیری شاعر
 رسیده است بجائی که شاعران دگر
 کنند بهر مدیحه قصیده انشا
 که خونِ رشک چکد از دل سخن پرور
 سوادِ شعرِ شکیبی چو کحلِ صفاهان
 بتحفه سوی خراسان برند اهلِ نظر
 ز مدحتِ تو حیاتی حیاتِ دیگر یافت
 بلی مقوی طبعِ عرض بود جوهر
 حدیثِ نوعی و کفوی بیان چه سازم من
 چو زنده اند بمدح تو تا دمِ محشر
 ز نعمتِ تو به نوعی رسید آن مایه
 که یافت میر معزی ز نعمتِ سنج

"Through auspicious praise of thee the fame of the perfection of that subtle singer of Shíráz¹ reached from the East to Rúm².

In praising thee he became conversant with a new style, like the fair face which gains adornment from the tire-woman.

By the grace (*fayḍ*) of thy name Fayḍí, like [his predecessor] Khusraw³, annexed the Seven Climes from end to end with the Indian sword.

By gathering crumbs from thy table Naẓríf the poet hath attained a rank such that other poets

Compose such elegies in his praise that blood drips in envy from the heart of the singer.

Men of discernment carry as a gift to Khurásán, like the collyrium of Işfahán, copies of Shakíbf's verses.

By praising thee Ḥayátí found fresh life (*ḥayát*): yea, the substance must needs strengthen the nature of the accident.

¹ *I.e.* 'Urfí, as Shibli notes. ² *I.e.* Turkey. See above, p. 80, n. 5.

³ Cf. p. 164 *supra*.

How can I tell the tale of Naw'í and Kufwí, since by their praise of thee they will live until the Resurrection Dawn?

Such measure of thy favour accrued to Naw'í as Amír Mu'izzí received from the favour of Sanjar."

These poets of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries produced what the late Professor Ethé has happily termed the "Indian summer" of Persian poetry, and they had of course a host of Indian imitators and successors so long as Persian continued to be the polite language of India. These last, who were at best skilful manipulators of a foreign idiom, I do not propose to notice; and even of the genuine Persian poets, whether sojourners in India or residents in their own country, only a limited number of the most eminent can

The eighteenth century a barren period.

be discussed in these pages. The eighteenth century of our era, especially the troubled period intervening between the fall of the Şafawí and the rise of the Qájár dynasties (A.D. 1722-1795), was the poorest in literary achievement; after that there is a notable revival, and several poets of the nineteenth century, Qá'ání, Yaghmá, Furúghí and Wişál and his family, can challenge comparison with any save the very greatest of their predecessors.

(2) Occasional or Topical Verse.

Some of the most interesting pieces of poetry are those composed, not necessarily by professional poets, for some special purpose or some particular occasion.

Examples of occasional or topical verse.

These are not so often to be found in the regular *diwáns* of verse as in the pages of contemporary histories. The following from the unpublished *Aḥsanu't-Tawárikh* may serve as specimens.

In the year 961/1553-4 died three Indian kings, Maḥmúd III of Gujerát, Islám Sháh son of Shír Sháh the Afghán of Dihlí, and Niẓámu'l-Mulk of the Deccan. This coincidence, with the date, is commemorated in the following verses:

سه خسرو را قران آمد بیک سال
که هند از عدلشان دار آلمان بود'

یکی محمود شاهنشاه گجرات'
که همچون دولت خود نو جوان بود'

دوم اسلام شه سلطان دهلی'
که در هندوستان صاحب قران بود'

سیمر آمد نظام الملك بحری'
که در ملک دکن خسرو نشان بود'

ز من تاریخ فوت آن سه خسرو'
چه میپرسی زوال خسروان بود'

"In one year the [fatal] conjunction came to three princes by whose justice India was the Abode of Security.

One was Maḥmúd¹, the monarch of Gujerát, who was youthful as his own fortune.

The second was Islám Sháh², King of Dihlí, who was in India the lord of a fortunate conjunction.

The third was the Niẓámu'l-Mulk³-i-Baḥrí, who ruled in royal state in the kingdom of the Deccan.

Why dost thou ask of me the date of the death of these three Kings? It was 'the decline of the kings' (زوال خسروان = 961)."'

The following verses by Mawláná Qásim commemorate the death of Humáyún in the succeeding year (962/1554-5):

همایون پادشاه ملک معنی ' ندارد کس چو او شاهنشهی یاد'
ز بام قصر خود افتاد ناگاه ' وزو عمر گرامی رفت بر باد'
پی تاریخ او قاسم رقم زد ' همایون پادشاه از بام افتاد'

"Humáyún, king of the realm of the Ideal, none can recall a monarch like him:

¹ See S. Lane-Poole's *Mohammadan Dynasties*, p. 313.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 300 and 303.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 320. I doubt if *Baḥrí* is a correct reading: it should perhaps be *Burhán*, the proper name of the second of the Niẓám Sháhs of Aḥmadnagar, who reigned from 914 to 961 A.H. (1508-1553 A.D.).

Suddenly he fell from the roof of his palace; precious life departed from him on the winds.

Qásim¹ thus ciphered the date of his death: 'King Humáyún fell from the roof.'

The next piece, denouncing the people of Qazwín, is by the poet Ḥayratí, who died from a fall at Káshán in 961/1553-4:

وقتِ آن آمد که آساید سپهرِ بی مدار،
 چون زمین در سایهات ای سایه پروردگار،
 پادشاهان مدّت نه ماه شد کین نا توان،
 مانده در قزوین خراب و خسته و مجروح و زار،
 یافتم رسمِ تسنّن در وضیع و در شریف،
 دیدم آثارِ تخرّج در صغار و در کبار،
 در مقابر پای شسته از فقیر و از غنی،
 در مساجد دست بسته از یمین و از یسار،
 در زمانِ چون تو شاهی دست بستن در نماز،
 هست کاری دست بسته ای شه عالی تبار،
 قاضی این ملک نسلِ خالد بن الولید،
 مفتی این شهر فرزندی سعید نابکار،
 کشته گردیده ز تیغ شاه غازی هر دورا،
 هم برادر هم پدر هم یار هم خویش و تبار،
 خود بفرما ای شه دانا که اکنون این گروه،
 داعی خصمند یا مولای شاه کامکار،
 قتل عامی گر نباشد قتل خاصی میتوان،
 خاصه از بهر رضای حضرت پروردگار،

¹ My text has *gdht*, which I have ventured to emend to *Qásim*. For the particulars of Humáyún's death, see Erskine's *History of India under the first two sovereigns of the House of Taimúr, Baber and Humáyún* (London, 1854), vol. ii, pp. 527-8. The chronogram is unusually natural, simple and appropriate.

نیستند اینها رعایائی که باشد قتلشان،

موجب تخفیف مال و مانع خرج دیار،

بلکه هریک مبلغی از مال دیوان میخورند،

سر بسر صاحب سیورغانند هم ادرار دار،

"The time has come when the pivotless sphere, like the earth, should rest under thy shadow, O Shadow of God!

O King! It is a period of nine months that this helpless one hath remained in Qazwín ruined, weary, wounded and wretched.

I found the practices of the Sunnís in humble and noble alike: I saw the signs of schism in small and great:

Poor and rich with washed feet at the Tombs: hands clasped in the mosques to right and to left.

In the time of a King like thee to clasp the hands in prayer is an underhand action, O King of lofty lineage!

The Judge of this Kingdom is of the race of Khálid ibnu'l-Walíd; the Muftí of this city is the son of the worthless Sa'íd.

By the sword of the victorious King the brother, father, friend, kinsman and family of both have been slain together.

Say thyself, O wise King, whether now this group are the propagandists of the enemy, or the clients of the victorious King.

If there cannot be a public massacre one might [at least contrive] a private massacre for the special satisfaction of the Divine Majesty.

These are not subjects whose slaughter would cause a reduction of the revenue or would check the spending power of the country;

Nay, rather each one of them consumes a quantity of the wealth of the exchequer, for they are all fief-holders and pensioners."

The worst of these "occasional verses" is that we seldom know enough of the circumstances under which they were composed to enable us fully to understand all the allusions contained in them. What, for example, had the people of Qazwín done to the author of the above verses to arouse in him such bitter anger? Who were the Qáđí and the Muftí whom he particularly denounces? How did their relatives come to be slain by the King, and of what enemy were they the propagandists? The fact that we do not know at