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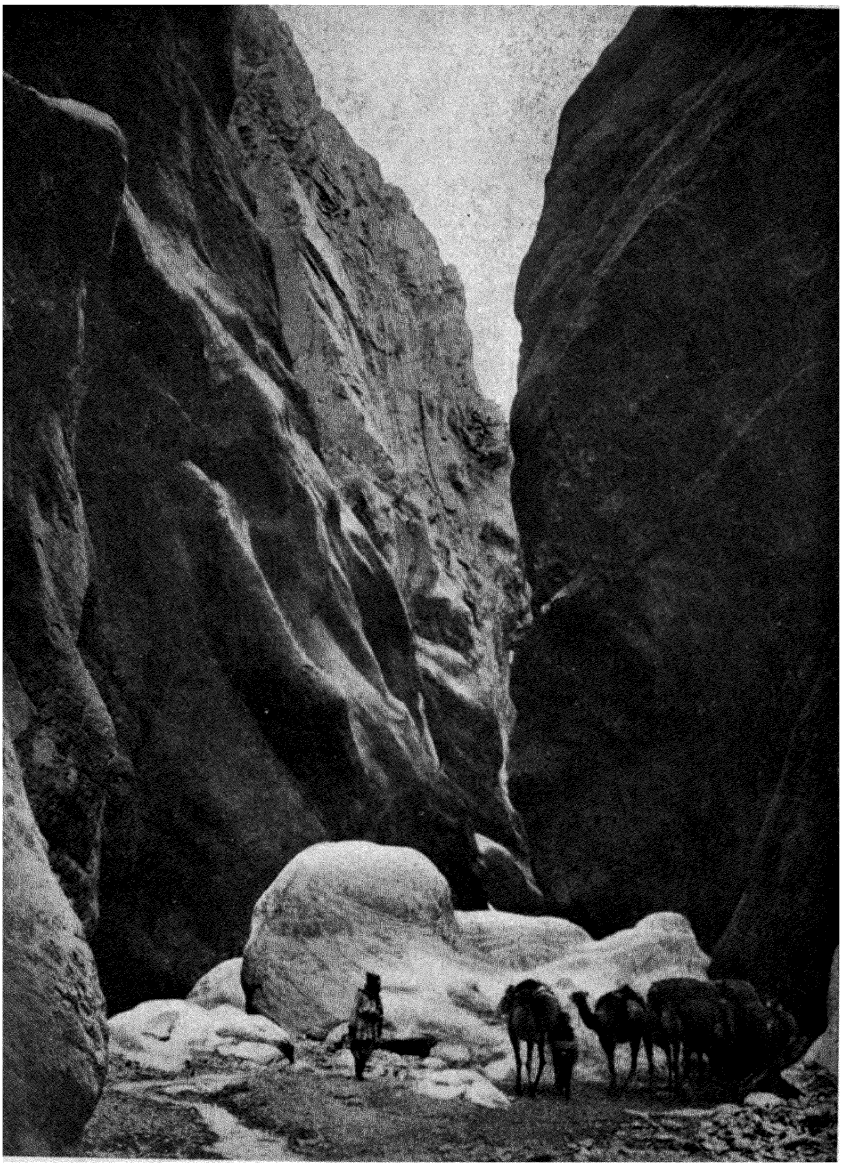
A HISTORY OF AFGHANISTAN



THE ROAD TO TAKHT-I-SULAIMAN

(From Holdich, *The Indian Borderland.* Methuen)

A HISTORY
OF
AFGHANISTAN

By

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This book is dedicated to

BRITISH FRONTIER OFFICERS
IN ASIA
PAST AND PRESENT

Along many a thousand miles of remote border are to be found our twentieth-century Marcher Lords. The breath of the Frontier has entered into their nostrils and infused their being. Courage and conciliation — for unless they have an instinctive gift of sympathy with the native tribes, they will hardly succeed — patience and tact, initiative and self-restraint, these are the complex qualifications of the modern school of pioneers.

CURZON

PREFACE

FEW countries present problems of greater interest to the historian than landlocked Afghanistan, the counterpart in Asia of Switzerland in Europe.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century B.C. the first great migration of the Aryans swept across this rugged country in their long march from their homeland in Central Asia to the plains of India. We next read of Alexander the Great leading his army up the valley of the Helmand and crossing the mighty range of the Hindu Kush into Bactria, to win laurels in Central Asia. Two years later he again crossed these mountains and marched down the passes into the valley of the Indus to gain fresh victories in the Punjab. From this province he led his war-weary veterans across the deserts of Baluchistan to triumphal celebrations at Susa.

Coming down the ages, we see another famous conqueror in Baber who, after capturing Kabul, founded the Moghul empire of India early in the sixteenth century. From this period his successors were faced with the necessity of maintaining Afghanistan as a buffer state against attacks from the Shahs of Persia to the west, and from the Uzbeg rulers of Bukhara to the north. By the Moghul Emperors Kabul and Kandahar were rightly recognized to be the keys of India and the British, who succeeded the Moghuls, are faced with the same problem today, with Russia as the successor of Bukhara.

I first travelled in Central Asia nearly fifty years ago and, since that journey, I have been a keen student of the problems of which Afghanistan constitutes the kernel. The appointments which I have held have, generally speaking, kept me in touch with Afghanistan,

whether serving as Consul in Seistan, as Consul-General in Khurasan (where I was in political charge of the Herat province through a native Agent), or again as Consul-General in Chinese Turkistan, when I travelled on the Pamirs. For many years I took part in the struggle for influence in Persia with Russia and, during the last Great War, I helped to foil Germany in her designs on Afghanistan by the capture of her supporting missions in Persia.

In writing this work, the first complete history of Afghanistan, my aim has been to supply British officials and the British public with accurate information. If the results of my studies and journeys are also appreciated by Moslems in Afghanistan and India, I shall be doubly rewarded.

P. M. SYKES

THE ATHENAEUM
September 1940

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CHAPTER I

AFGHANISTAN — THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE

That empire, bounded on the north and east by immense mountain ranges, and on the south and west by vast tracts of sandy desert, opposed to external hostility natural defences of a formidable character. The general aspect of the country was wild and forbidding; in the imagination of the people haunted with goules and genii; but not unvaried by spots of gentler beauty in the valleys and on the plains, where the fields were smiling with cultivation, and the husbandman might be seen busy at his work.—KAYE, *The War in Afghanistan.*

A Geographical Sketch.—Afghanistan or "the Land of the Afghans", correctly speaking, has not borne that name until the foundation of the Kingdom of Ahmad Shah, Durrani, in the middle of the eighteenth century. I am, however, for the sake of convenience, using the term throughout this work.[1] The country occupies the north-eastern portion of the arid Iranian plateau.[2] Northwards it is bounded by the valley of the Oxus and the Central Asian depression and eastwards by the low-lying plains of Northern India, watered by the Indus and its tributaries. Westwards its neighbour is the kingdom of Persia, while southwards in its most waterless area it unites with the deserts of Baluchistan.

The Dimensions of Afghanistan.—From the Persian frontier at Kariz, on the Meshed-Herat road, to the borders of the Indian Empire at the Khaibar Pass, the distance is approximately six hundred miles. The width of the country decreases as it runs from south-west to a

[1] I would acknowledge my indebtedness to the article on Afghanistan which was written by the late M. Longworth Dames for the *Encyclopaedia of Islams.*

[2] The inhabitants of Persia originally termed themselves Aryans. The modern form of the word is Iran for the country and Iranian for its inhabitants, which form the present Shah has made official. In this work I have generally used Persia, the name originating in the province of Pars, the homeland of the Achaemenian dynasty, which the Greeks termed Persis. It has been employed by Europeans for more than two thousand years and I have retained it, albeit with exceptions, such as in the case of the Iranian plateau, which is, indeed, sometimes employed in an anticipatory sense.

point in the north-east, where an arm consisting of the narrow district of Wakhan, constitutes the eastern end of the Russo-Afghan boundary. At its broadest section, that represented by a line drawn from Kilif on the Oxus to New Chaman, the distance would be some four hundred and fifty miles. The total area aggregates 250,000 square miles, which is slightly larger than that of France, while the population may be estimated at about ten millions.

A Comparison with Switzerland.—Afghanistan may be described as the Switzerland of Southern Asia. Both countries are essentially mountainous and contain main ranges and the sources of important rivers; both are situated inland, lacking contact with ocean or sea. Again, these two countries alike are inhabited by many different races who have heard the tramp of invaders marching towards the sunny south. Finally, in the crossing of the Mount Joux Pass (now the St. Bernard) by medieval English or French pilgrims bound for Rome, we have their counterpart in Afghanistan of Hsuan-tsang the Buddhist pilgrim from distant China, seeking to learn "the wisdom of the west" in India.

The Boundaries.—The limits of Afghanistan, until comparatively recently, were ill-defined and, during the last fifty years have been settled by numerous commissions, which will be dealt with in this work. Here it is merely intended to supply an outline.

Starting from Zulfikar Pass, at the north-west corner, the boundary runs eastwards to Kushk, the terminus of a branch line of the Russian Central Asian Railway from the junction at Merv. Continuing, it follows a north-easterly direction and strikes the Oxus in the district of Khamiab. That great river, or its tributary the Pamir River, then forms the boundary of Afghan Turkistan, of Badakhshan and of Wakhan to Sir-i-Kul (Lake Victoria) on the Pamirs. The boundary continuing through the lake follows the northern boundary of Wakhan to its junction with the Chinese Empire in the inaccessible range of Sarikol.

Turning south-westwards from this point the frontier

follows the crest of the Hindu Kush, bending gradually southwards and marching with the North-West Frontier Province until it reaches Kafiristan. Here the lofty Shawal range running southwards divides the Bashgol Valley of Kafiristan from the parallel Valley of Chitral. Further south Dir and Malakand lie on the British side of the frontier, and the Kabul-Peshawar frontier is reached at Landi Kotal to the east of the historical Khaibar Pass. The boundary is thence carried to the lofty Safid Kuh and, passing below the Peiwar Kotal, it includes Waziristan on the Indian side of the boundary and reaches the borders of British Baluchistan at the famous Gumal Pass.

From Domandi, an uninhabited spot at the junction of the Kundar with the Gumal River,[1] to Kuh-i-Malik-i-Siah or "The Mountain of the Black Chief", where the frontier of Persia is reached, is a distance of over eight hundred miles. Generally speaking, it is a desert land with barren mountain ranges and vast open plains, possessing few inhabitants owing to lack of water and of security. Dry torrent beds with boulders or pebbles cover large areas, to be succeeded by equally large areas of sand dunes. The rare springs of water are usually salt or possess unpleasant medicinal properties. But there are very occasionally green wooded valleys with streams of pure water, fertile tracts which give intense pleasure to the sun-scorched traveller, who, as I can bear witness, senses the delicious humidity with its promise of sweet water, from afar.

To give some details of this section: the boundary follows up the Kundar River to the highlands of Khurasan, rising to an altitude of 7000 feet, where, dividing the drainage flowing into Afghanistan to the north and west from that flowing into India on the south and east, the watershed is reached. Here the frontier trends in a south-westerly direction to the British railhead at New Chaman. Thence it turns to the south until, opposite Nushki, it takes a generally westerly direction to the Kuh-i-Malik-i-Siah.

[1] *Vide* "The Southern Borderlands of Afghanistan," by A. H. McMahon, *Royal Geographical Society Journal*, April 1897.

It is interesting to note that, as far as Nushki, the tribes on both sides of the frontier are Afghans; westwards they are Baluchis and Brahuis. From Chagai, situated on the Lora Hamun, the Registan Desert gives place to rugged black mountain masses, rising to 7000 feet, with practically no population, while water presents a very serious difficulty. Upon approaching the boundary of Persia, the Kuh-i-Taftan,[1] rising to 12,600 feet, is clearly visible.

Before actually reaching the Kuh-i-Malik-i-Siah, the Gaud-i-Zirra, which falls entirely to Afghanistan, is passed. It is a salt water lake some twenty-five miles long by five miles wide and is occasionally fed, in years of exceptional flood, by overflow water from the Helmand. From the boundary mountain of the three states the Perso-Afghan boundary turns north-east to Kuhak, the site of a dam in the Helmand. Owing to the wayward nature of this river, as we shall see in Chapter LV, a British Commission was despatched in 1903 which settled the exact border-line, and part of the *Hamun* was awarded to Afghanistan. Continuing our survey northwards, the boundary has quite recently been fixed throughout and strikes the Hari Rud at a point where that river forms the boundary, at first with Persia and later with Russia. This completes our brief survey of Afghan boundaries, a subject which will form the theme of more than one chapter in this work.

Mountains.—Taking its origin at a point where the Himalayas end in a number of gigantic peaks, this mighty range is termed the Hindu Kush. The origin of the name has been a source of some controversy. Ibn Battuta, the great Moslem traveller, wrote in A.D. 1334: "The mountain is called Hindu Kush, since slave boys and girls who are brought from India die there in large numbers as a result of the extreme cold". The soldiers of Alexander the Great, as we shall see in Chapter V, termed it the Indian Caucasus (it was the Paropanisus of Ptolemy) and Hindu Kush is possibly a corruption of this latter term. To quote Burrard:

[1] For the exploration of this range *vide* Sykes, *Ten Thousand Miles in Persia*, ch. xi.

"This broad range has become divided by rivers into two parallel ranges both of which are long and important features".[1] Farther west there is the lofty Kuh-i-Baba. Beyond it the range, under other names, decreases in height upon reaching the neighbourhood of Herat, where it was incorrectly termed the Paropanisus by European travellers of the nineteenth century, who were amazed to discover rolling downs where a high range had been believed to exist.

The most important range on the eastern frontier is termed Safid Kuh with Sikaram reaching an altitude of 15,620 feet to the south of Jalalabad. Northwards there are still higher peaks in Kafiristan.

On the eastern side there is a sudden descent into the valley of the Indus. Consequently, with the exception of the loess plains of Afghan Turkistan, the whole country belongs to the Iranian plateau, itself a late geological formation of the tertiary period, with its limestone and sandstone ranges. The north-east portion of the plateau previously formed part of a great ocean, in which connexion I picked up sea-shells on the neighbouring Pamirs at the height of 13,000 feet.

Central Afghanistan is, to a very large extent, occupied by numerous subsidiary ranges running parallel to the main range. These spurs extend south-west to Kandahar, while one, exceptionally long, forms the steep Khojak range which has been tunnelled to allow the railway line from India to reach the Afghan frontier at New Chaman.

The Strategical Question.—From one point of view Afghanistan may be considered as a mountainous region separating the civilization of the Euphrates from those of the Indus and the Oxus. Again, we may regard it as a region of caravan routes joining Central Asia to the plains of India, with cities such as Kabul, Herat and Kandahar, which are frequently designated the keys of India. As we shall see, they were rightly so called. Yet again, the virile Afghans have not only repeatedly

[1] *Geography and Geology of the Himalaya Mountains and Tibet*, by Col. S. G. Burrard and H. H. Hayden, Delhi, 1933.

raided the rich plains of India, but have carved out kingdoms alike in the valleys of the Indus and of the Ganges. They have also for a short period held sway in Persia.

Rivers.—Few regions can claim our interest more strongly than the Pamirs. Aptly named *Bamm-ud-Dunia* or "Roof of the World", these valleys, lying at an elevation of some 13,000 feet, and uniformly shelving downwards from mountains covered with perpetual snow, constitute the great watershed of the Heart of Asia. Thence flows the Oxus westwards towards the Caspian Sea; the Yarkand River flows eastwards to the Gobi, while the feeders of the Jaxartes or Sir Daria and of the Indus also take their origin in this mighty massif which was known to Ptolemy, who recognized its importance, as *Mons Imaus.*

Some twenty years ago, when travelling in the Sarikol Valley, the south-western district of Sin-Kiang, or Chinese Turkistan, the Wakhijir Pass was pointed out to me as leading into Afghanistan. On the Afghan side of the pass at an elevation of 14,700 feet, the historical Oxus has its main source in a great glacier, to which smaller glaciers contribute.[1] The Ab-i-Panja, as it is termed in this section, flows in a westerly direction and at Kala Panja receives the Pamir River, flowing down from Sir-i-Kul (Lake Victoria). Seventy miles below Kala Panja, at a point near Ishkashim, the river makes its great northern bend round the states of Shignan and Roshan, which remained Afghan possessions until at the end of the nineteenth century, as we shall see, they were surrendered to Russia.

While flowing in this northerly direction the important Murghab or Aksu River (which I crossed at the Russian headquarters of Pamirski Post), increases the volume of the Oxus that still retains locally the name of Ab-i-Panja.

To continue: the wide river concludes its great bend round the province of Badakhshan, the classical Bactria,

[1] *Vide* "The Pamirs and the Source of the Oxus", by the Honourable George Curzon, *Journal R.G.S.*, 1896.

and thence, flowing westwards, receives the Waksh-ab on the right bank, and the frontier of Afghanistan until, in the neighbourhood of Kilif, where it is known as Amu Daria or Oxus for the first time, it turns to the north-west and finally discharges into the Sea of Aral. At more than one period it has discharged into the Caspian Sea.[1]

The Oxus is indeed the historical river of Central Asia, as the Rhine is of Europe, while the Jaxartes may be compared with the Danube. I can never forget the feelings inspired by the first sight of its yellow waters when, bound for Samarkand, I first crossed it nearly fifty years ago. It ran between low banks and the scenery was certainly not striking, yet I felt that to cross the Oxus was an important event in my life.

After the Oxus, the principal rivers of Afghanistan are the Helmand, the Kabul and the Hari Rud, while minor rivers which fertilize the districts of Andkhui, Balkh and Qunduz belong to the basin of the Oxus, but do not in every case reach that river.

The Helmand, the classical Etymander, which drains an area of 100,000 square miles, rises in an offshoot of the Hindu Kush between Kabul and Bamian at a considerable altitude, and traversing the Hazarajat, is joined at some thirty miles below Girishk by its most important tributary, the Arghandab. In its lower reaches it flows through a cliff-sided trough a mile or two wide with villages at intervals. The presence of many ruins mark what was the ancient highway traversed by Alexander the Great, and it finally discharges into the *hamun* of Seistan, at an elevation of 1600 feet.

The Kabul River, draining an area of 35,000 square miles, rises some forty miles west of Kabul city. Its chief tributaries are the Panjshir, which waters an especially fertile valley, and the Kunar. It flows in a generally easterly direction to Dakka and joins the Indus at Attock. Finally, the Hari Rud rises on the slopes of the Kuh-i-Baba and flows through extremely rugged country due west to the fertile valley of Herat. Near the Iranian frontier village of Kariz it turns due north and I have

[1] Sykes, *History of Persia* (3rd ed.), vol. i, p. 22.

followed it for some marches in this section where, as mentioned above, it forms the Perso-Afghan boundary. Farther north it is termed the Tejen and is lost in the Kara Kum desert.

The Provinces.—To commence our survey of the provinces with that of Kabul: we see the great affluents from the north, which render the valley fertile, breaking here and there into wide spaces of terraced cultivation. With groves of walnut-trees and apricots, its battlemented villages set against the background of the lofty mountains present a picture of great beauty and charm.

The city of Kabul situated at an altitude of 5850 feet with a population of 80,000 is the Sanscrit Kubha and the Kophen of Arrian. The Kubha was one of the Seven Rivers of the Rig-Veda. But Kophene is the general name of the valley and there is no mention of any ancient town that can be identified with Kabul unless it be the Nicaea, mentioned by Arrian.

Coming down the ages to the journey of the Chinese pilgrim Hsuan-tsang, in the middle of the seventh century A.D., Kao-fu is the name given by the Chinese to Kabul at this period. In A.D. 1504 Babur captured Kabul and thereby laid the foundation of the Moghul Empire. He loved the climate, the running streams, the fruits and flowers of the valley where he laid out the celebrated garden in which he was buried.

Under the Durrani Empire Kabul soon superseded Kandahar as the capital, a position which it thenceforth has maintained, albeit the Court moved to Peshawar, so long as it was an Afghan possession, for the winter, and afterwards to Jalalabad, partly because the supplies obtainable in the Kabul area were strictly limited and partly owing to the climate.

Since the Great War Kabul has developed rapidly and a modern quarter with state buildings has sprung up, while palaces surrounded by gardens have been erected both by Abdur Rahman and by his successors.

To continue our survey: the province of Kandahar, the chief centre of the powerful Durrani tribe, was the Haraiwati of the Achaemenians and the classical Ara-

chosia. Writers in the past have considered Kandahar to be named after Alexander the Great, but it is now established that the word is a corruption of the ancient Indian Gandhara. Like Kabul it was relatively unimportant until the middle of the twelfth century. It became part of the Moghul Empire although, as we shall see, the Safavi Shahs of Persia constantly fought for possession of this key city on the route to Sind. Shah Ahmad made it the capital of the Durrani kingdom, and was buried in it. Situated at an altitude of 3340 feet, it possesses a population of 60,000 inhabitants.

The Herat province owes its importance alike to its position and its fertility. Situated on the Hari Rud, both in appearance and population it closely resembles neighbouring Khurasan. In the spring scarlet tulips, poppies, and wild roses decorate the hillsides, and the villages are buried in their fruit orchards. Beds of green lucerne and crops of wheat and barley add to the delightful feeling of fertility in a barren land.

Herat, situated at 3030 feet, was undoubtedly the Haraeva of the *Vendidad* and Achaemenian inscriptions. It was also the classical Areia, where Alexander founded Alexandria Ariana. Destroyed by the Mongols, who exterminated the population, the Timurids under Shah Rukh made Herat their capital after Tamerlane's death. As mentioned in Chapter XVII, it became a centre of art and learning, comparable to that of the Italian cities of the Renaissance in Europe. Herat was, generally speaking, a province of the Persian Empire under the Safavis, but was included in the kingdom of Afghanistan by its founder Ahmad Shah. Today, shrunk to a minor key compared with the days of her greatness, Herat has some 30,000 inhabitants and is an important trade centre, caravans carrying hides, wool, dried fruits, pistachios and walnuts to the railhead at Kushk. There is also a certain amount of trade with neighbouring Khurasan.

Before crossing the Hindu Kush, the almost inaccessible province of Kafiristan invites our attention. The country consists of numerous valleys isolated from

one another by lofty ridges and also from the outer world. As we shall see in Chapter XVI, it was invaded by Tamerlane.

The mountain fastnesses of the Siah-Push or "Wearers of Black Clothes", were first entered by Sir William Lockhart in 1885. Holdich, who penetrated their country in connexion with boundary survey, describes them as "wild-looking sinewy men of Aryan features and doubtful tint, with prominent noses, straight eyes, wide but expressive mouths". He adds: "I have seen mountaineers of many sorts, but never any equal to the Kafirs in the extraordinary freedom and grace of their movements over hills. . . . Their favourite pastime is racing down hill, where there is an occasional drop from terrace to terrace of ten to fifteen feet, on *one* leg." [1]

These Kafirs, as the opprobrious name applied to them proves, were pagans. The beliefs were mingled with animism, but they recognized various gods, the chief of whom was Imra, the Creator. The Kafirs were forcibly converted to Islam by Amir Abdur Rahman, who renamed the country Nuristan or "Abode of Light".

Badakhshan and Afghan Turkistan.—To the north of the Hindu Kush the province with its capital, Mazar-i-Sharif, a town with 20,000 inhabitants, is usually termed Afghan Turkistan with Badakhshan situated to the east. It is considered to derive its name from the balas ruby, which Marco Polo praised. It is also famous for its horses.[2] It was included in Tokharistan, which province, under the Arabs, in its wider sense, comprised all the lands east of Balkh on both banks of the Amu Daria. The population mainly consists of Uzbegs.

Afghanistan, like neighbouring Persia, is, generally speaking, a barren, treeless country containing only some ten per cent of cultivable land. In Persia there is one huge central desert, whereas, in south-western Afghanistan, the Helmand separates the wind-swept Dasht-i-Margo of the right bank from the larger desert on the left bank

[1] *The Indian Borderland*, p. 272.

[2] I always rode Badakhshan horses when serving as Consul-General in Chinese Turkistan.

which, south of the Arghandab, is termed Registan or "Sand Area". Farther west the desert joins that of Kharan in British Baluchistan and stretches from Nushki westwards to the Persian frontier.

Travelling farther south, from the border of Persian Baluchistan to Kalat and Quetta some forty years ago, I noticed that stage after stage, in a country that is practically uninhabited, the valley was carefully terraced for cultivation, while there were frequent mounds littered with pottery that marked the sites of deserted villages. There is thus reason to believe that the life-giving rainfall in this part of Asia has materially diminished within historical times; or is this desolation due to other causes?

Climate.—The climate of Afghanistan, which is somewhat similar to that of neighbouring Persia, is continental and dry with a large range of temperature both daily and annual.[1] Precipitation is scanty in most regions and many districts are desert. As would be expected in this country with its lofty ranges, there is a great variety of climates, depending on the altitude and situation. Except at high altitudes the summer is hot with maximum temperatures exceeding 100° F. Dust storms are an unpleasant feature of this season. Precipitation occurs mainly in the winter and spring and is associated with storms travelling from the west, which are frequently followed by bitter north-west winds.

The Climate of Kabul.—Owing to its altitude of nearly 6000 feet, the winter at the capital is cold with severe frosts at night. In January the mean temperature is below freezing-point, but day temperatures rise to an average of 47° F. The winds are also very cold but are tempered by much sunshine, the skies being rarely cloudy. The summer temperature is delightful in the surrounding country, but rises occasionally to over 100° F. in Kabul itself. At the same time the nights are usually cold.

Vegetation and Food Products.—Generally speaking the trees, plants and flowers are similar to those of the Iranian plateau. In the plains trees depending on irriga-

[1] In this section I would thank Dr. N. K. Johnson for valuable assistance.

tion, such as fruit trees, poplars and planes, are found in the walled gardens. On the higher mountains, more especially near the Indian frontier, there are pine forests and evergreen oaks. On the lower dry ranges the wild pistachio and the wild olive are found. For the most part, camel grazing is to be found in the plains, except in the vicinity of the towns.

Wheat is the staple food, and rice is little grown except in the warm south. The spring crop, sown in the autumn, consists of wheat, barley and beans. The autumn crop, sown in the spring, includes rice, maize and millet, tobacco, beets, etc. Lucerne clover is the chief forage crop.

Apples, pears, peaches, quinces, apricots, plums, cherries, grapes, figs, mulberries, melons and almonds are grown in great abundance and, as in Persia, constitute the staple food of the peasants for many months of the year. Fat-tailed sheep are valued for meat and for their fat, while their wool and skins are used for the manufacture of the well-known *pustin* or skin coat. Persian lamb-skins (Karakulis) form one of the chief exports and are a state monopoly.

Minerals.—Northern Afghanistan is held to be rich in copper, while lead and iron are also found in more than one area. Coal of poor quality is quarried in the vicinity of the capital, but seams of good coal are reported to exist on the northern slopes of the Hindu Kush. Traces of petroleum have also been reported in the Herat province. Apart from the famous lapis lazuli of Badakhshan, which is a state monopoly, Afghanistan has not hitherto successfully exploited her mineral wealth.

The British approach Afghanistan through its Water-Gates.—So far Afghanistan has been studied as forming the Land-Gates of India. The only invaders to march up its defiles from the Indian Ocean as conquerors are the British. Entering its great peninsula by its ports as traders early in the seventeenth century, for long years the English entertained no idea of conquest. But intolerable conditions, owing to lack of security under its native rulers, gradually led our ancestors inland, and by

degrees the traders became conquerors and administrators.

Among them were explorers and surveyors, chief of whom was Major Rennell, "the Father of English Geography". Commencing operations with a survey of the Ganges Valley in 1764, in due course Rennell extended his surveys to the great boundary range which he named the Tartarian Mountains, now known as the Himalayas. His successors gradually surveyed the plains of India, and as they progressed northwards they realized that India was protected by gigantic mountain barriers. That on the north-east, consisting of densely wooded mountain ranges with deep lateral valleys, constituted an impassable barrier against invading armies, while farther north the barren, frozen plateaux of Tibet constituted an equally impregnable defence, as did the lofty mountains of Kashmir. It was only on the extreme north-west that there was any break in this titanic chain of natural defences to India. Here, north of Chitral, commences the famous North-West Frontier of India, and here it is that its Land-Gates are situated.

The People.—The inhabitants of Afghanistan include Afghans, Persians, Turks, including the Uzbegs of the Oxus Valley, Mongolians and Aryans of the Hindu Kush. Considerable intermixture has taken place but yet each race possesses outstanding features. The Afghan nomads organized on a tribal system, whose true national name is Pashtun or Pakhtun, generally termed "Pathan" by Europeans, belong to the Turko-Iranian type, with an admixture of Indian blood among the tribes bordering on the frontiers of India.

A protest must here be made against the erroneous view that the Afghans are members of the lost tribes of Israel, which various writers, including Bellew and Holdich, advocated. Actually this theory is of purely literary origin and is merely an example of the widespread custom among Moslems of claiming descent from some personage mentioned in the Koran or other sacred work. In the case of the Afghans, they claim *Malik* Talut or King Saul as their ancestor. Among the reasons advanced

in support of this claim are the noticeably curved noses of Afghans, but this peculiarity is equally striking in the portraits of the Kushan monarchs of the first century A.D. who had certainly no Hebrew blood in their veins.

In the *Hudud-al-Alam*,[1] compiled in A.D. 982, the Afghans are mentioned as a people, perhaps for the first time. The extract runs: "Saul, a pleasant village on a mountain. In it live Afghans."[2] In this work we also read that the King of Ninhar (Ningrahar) had many wives, "Moslem, Afghan and Hindu". But Minorsky considers that there may be yet an earlier mention of Afghans since Masûdi in his *al-Tanbih*, completed in A.D. 956, states that "the *rubat* or fortified caravanserai of Badakhshan stands over against various kinds of 'Turks'[3] viz. of Vakhan, Tibet and Ayghan". This latter word differs only by a dot from Abghan or Afghan. Should this correction be accepted, the first mention of the name Afghan is about thirty years earlier than that given above from the *Hudud-al-Alam*.

As we shall see in Chapter XIII, Afghans are also mentioned in the *Tarikh-i-Yamini* of al-Otbi, the secretary of Mahmud of Ghazni, as having been enlisted in the army of Sabutigin and also of Mahmud himself. At this period their habitat was in the Sulaiman mountains to the east of Ghazni, which range culminates in the Takht-i-Suliman or "Throne of Solomon".[4] In various parts of this work reference will be made to the grazing areas of various tribes and details will be given of migrations made either by conquering tribes or by orders of their rulers. It remains to add that the Afghans are fanatical Moslems of the Sunni sect.

The Sedentary Tajik *Population*.—If the Afghans are, generally speaking, nomads, the Persian element, the oldest established inhabitants of the country, known as *Tajiks*, are village dwellers, as are their kinsmen in

[1] In this section I have consulted *Hudud-al-Alam*, translated and explained by Professor V. Minorsky (Gibb Memorial Series), 1937, and *On the Distribution of Turk Tribes in Afghanistan*, by Gunnar Jarring, 1939.

[2] Professor Minorsky informs me that the name Saul is sadly mutilated and should be restored as Farmul, situated on the Upper Tochi, to the south-east of Ghazni.

[3] Turk here has a vague meaning of "The peoples outside Islamic lands".

[4] It was first ascended by Sir Thomas Holdich. Vide *The Indian Borderland*, ch. iv.

Persia and Central Asia. They probably occupied all the fertile areas of the country before the Afghans from the eastern mountains surged westwards. Organized, as a rule, in village communities, as in neighbouring Persia, of which, generally speaking, they formed a part until the middle of the eighteenth century, they supplied the traders and artisans of the towns.

The kingdom of Ghur, which overthrew the dynasty of Ghazni, was a *Tajik* dynasty, as was also the Kurt dynasty. Although, not possessing the outstanding martial qualities of the Afghan tribesmen, the *Tajiks* have not lacked courage and have fought well. It remains to add that where the Afghans have seized lands, the *Tajiks* almost invariably remain their tenants. Fortunately for them, they have adopted the Sunni tenets.

The Turks of Afghanistan.—Today the Turks, chief of whom are the Uzbegs, occupy Afghan Turkistan where, in the last century, they formed semi-independent *khanates*. These Uzbegs are closely related to their kinsmen in Central Asia where Bukhara was a powerful Uzbeg state.

The Hazaras.—South of the Hindu Kush, in the mountains between Bamian and the Herat Valley, the inhabitants are of a distinctly Mongol type the ancestors of whom are believed to have occupied this area when it became vacant owing to the devastations of Chenghiz Khan. The Hazaras are hardy and industrious cultivators. They are members of the Shia sect and are consequently despised and oppressed by the fanatical Afghans. Many of them used to enlist in pioneer regiments of the Indian army, but this has now been stopped. They made admirable soldiers.

The Non-Iranian Aryans of the Hindu Kush.—Lastly we come to the Siah-Push Kafirs, already referred to in this chapter, whose country was known as Kafiristan. Tamerlane, as we shall see in Chapter XVII, invaded their valleys without achieving much success. Their social system is entirely tribal and their form of paganism was much mixed with animism.

Languages.—With the exception of the Turki-

speaking Uzbegs, and the Kafirs, who speak a form of Aryan older than the Iranian, the language of the Afghans is Iranian. Persian is spoken by the *Tajiks* all over Afghanistan and by the Hazaras. Pashto is the Eastern Iranian language of the Afghans and is spoken by some two millions in Afghanistan, and by a rather smaller number of Afghans on the borders of British India. Until quite recently the Amir and his Courtiers spoke Persian and King Habibulla, as we shall see in Chapter XLVII, could not speak Pashtu at all fluently. Today a knowledge of the national language has been made obligatory on all government servants.

The existing literature which has come down to us is mainly poetical, although there are a few historical prose works. Side by side with this literature, described by Longworth Dames as " artificial and imitative ", there are spirited ballads which have been rescued from oblivion by Darmesteter in his *Chants populaires des Afghans*, and by Charles Masson in his *Legends of the Afghan Countries*.

By way of conclusion to this brief survey, I will make a reference to the Pathan code of honour, termed Pakhtunwali. By it three obligations are imposed on the tribesmen. Firstly, the right of asylum; secondly, the grant of hospitality, even to an enemy; and thirdly, the answer to an insult by an insult. To this code, which is universally acknowledged and esteemed, I would add that the almost perpetual feuds existing between tribes and families generally originate in money, women or land.

CHAPTER II

PREHISTORY AND EARLY HISTORY IN EGYPT AND THE NEAR EAST

And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so.—GENESIS i, 9.

The dust of the city of Shushan, of the city of Madaktu, and the rest of the cities, I have taken it all away to the country of Assur. During a month and a day I have swept the land of Elam in all its width. I deprived the country of the passage of cattle and of sheep and of the sound of joyous music. I have allowed wild beasts, serpents, the animals of the desert and gazelles to occupy it.—The Inscription of ASSUR BANIPAL.

"The whole Near East, its plains and mountains," to quote Herzfeld, "has been inhabited by man since the stone age and, compared with European sites of the same age, the oriental sites show a high degree of culture. With the aenolithic age, the introduction of copper, a separation begins. The mountain lands, occupied since the palaeolithic period, and hence more advanced, remain behind. The alluvial lands like Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria, afforded easier conditions for settling in villages and towns."

With these pregnant sentences serving as a preface, I propose to give a very brief sketch of prehistory and early history in the areas which directly or indirectly affected Afghanistan.[1]

Prehistoric Egypt.—To deal first with the valley of the Nile: we learn that, for five thousand years we have written history to guide us, while even at the further end

[1] My chief authorities are *Archaeological History of Iran*, by Doctor Ernst E. Herzfeld, 1935; *New Light on the Most Ancient East*, by V. Gordon Childe, 1934; *The Sumerians*, by Sir Leonard Woolley; *The Indo-Iranian Borderlands: their Pre-history in the Light of Geography and of Recent Explorations*, by Sir Aurel Stein, 1934, also his *Archaeological Reconnaissances in North-Western India and South-Eastern Iran*, 1937; *History of Early Iran*, by G. G. Cameron, 1935; *Ancient History of Assyria*, by Sidney Smith, 1922; *Mohenjo-Daro and the Indus Civilization*, by Sir John Marshall, Mackay, etc., 1932.

of this long vista down the ages we see that there was ordered government and writing. In this hoary civilization which was, comparatively speaking, unmolested by foreign invaders, the written records date the archaeological monuments from about 3000 B.C., while the introduction of the Sothic cycle, which regularized the date for the beginning of the annual inundation at the apex of the delta, may be held to have been established in 4236 B.C. — a truly amazing date. Added to this, the recent discovery of the neolithic civilization of the semi-nomadic Tasians, the oldest known agriculturists, strengthens the undoubted claims of Egypt to occupy a leading position among the oldest civilizations of the ancient world.

The Origin of Tillage on the Iranian Plateau.—To quote Herzfeld once again: "In the transition from subsistence to civilization, there are three steps of decisive importance: the introduction of agriculture, the discovery of the use of metals, and, a further advance conditioned by both, the organization of city life".[1]

In dealing with agriculture, it is considered that its origin must no longer be sought, as, until recently, was supposed, in the valleys of the Nile or Euphrates-Tigris, but rather in the high-lying plateau, destined to be known as the Iranian plateau, which included modern Armenia, Persia and Afghanistan. The cogent reason for the acceptance of this view is that the first attempts at tillage must have been made in an area where the plants, from which wheat and barley are descended, grew naturally. There is no direct proof that the knowledge of agriculture spread from the Iranian plateau to the valleys of the Nile, of the Euphrates-Tigris and of the Sir Daria-Oxus, but there is strong circumstantial evidence to support the hypothesis that about 5000 B.C. agriculture had come into existence on the Iranian plateau, where it slowly developed into the advanced culture at the last phase of the Stone Age and the dawn of the Copper Age implied by the earliest remains discovered in the vicinity of Persepolis.

[1] *Vide* "Iran as a Prehistoric Centre", by Ernst Herzfeld and Sir Arthur Keith in the *Survey of Persian Art*, vol. i.

The Prehistoric Village discovered near Persepolis.—The ancient site excavated by Herzfeld is situated in the middle of the fertile plain close to a spring. The village is described as "an agglomeration of rooms and courtyards, not of separate houses. This type, wholly different from anything known in Europe, suggests that the community lived in clans, not in single houses. It presupposes, not a monogamic or polygamic conception of the family, but strange customs of group-marriage of even a polyandric system." It is of especial interest to learn that a great number of marks of ownership, which long antedate the discovery of writing, were found in this village.

The Founders of the State of Elam.—Herzfeld terms these pre-Aryan inhabitants of the Iranian plateau Caspians, and he considers that the Elamites were that branch of this ancient race which overflowed into that country. The first culture of Susa (Susa I), which dates from the beginning of the Copper Age, was thus the work of these invaders from the plateau.

A Geographical Sketch of Elam.—During the period of her greatness, Elam included the modern provinces of Khuzistan, Luristan and the Bakhtiari Mountains, while southwards she stretched down the Persian Gulf possibly as far as the modern Lingah. Elam thus consisted of an extensive elevated mountain area in the north and east, with its chief city Madaktu situated on the upper reaches of the Karkheh, and a very fertile low-lying area with historical Shushan or Susa also situated on the Karkheh, and not far from the Ab-i-Diz, chief tributary of the Eulaeus or Karun. From the important point of communications the plain of Susa was remarkably well situated, affording easy access to the Iranian plateau, to Babylonia and also to the Persian Gulf.

The Prehistoric Period in Mesopotamia.—The valley of the Euphrates-Tigris may be divided into two parts. In its lower reaches, below modern Baghdad, it is dependent for settled life on the rivers, either by natural inundation or by irrigation. Farther north there are other rivers, each constituting an independent unit, while

owing to the heavier rainfall, crops can, to some extent, be grown without irrigation. To continue the comparison: in the southern portion the climate is torrid and the date-palm flourishes, whereas in the north where the winters are cold, fruit trees and vines take its place.

Mesopotamia, compared with Egypt, lay far more open to invasion. To the north were the fertile mountainous provinces of Armenia and Kurdistan, while eastwards lay the Zagros Mountains, the Iranian plateau and Elam. Westwards the warlike nomads of Arabia roamed. They periodically overflowed from the desert to the sown, and probably founded the kingdom of Akkad. Consequently, from one point of view, the history of Mesopotamia has consisted mainly of accounts of invasions or of domination by Elam, by Gutium, by Hittites or by Kassites.

The Advance of the Coast-line to the South.—At the very early period, at which our survey commences, the Euphrates and Tigris discharged by separate mouths into a series of tidal lagoons, leading to the Persian Gulf, which was termed the Bitter Sea. Sumer thus came into existence in an area of marshlands which have in modern times become dry land of far greater extent, since the coast-line has now advanced at least one hundred miles. It is to be noted that, owing partly to the more rapid stream of the Tigris and perhaps also to its proximity to raiding Elamites, the proto-Sumerians settled entirely on the Euphrates.

The Coming of the Sumerians.—For reasons already given, to which may be added their custom of building *ziggurats* or lofty artificial hills on which to worship their gods, the Sumerians are believed to have migrated from Elam and to be of the same stock as its inhabitants. To quote the Book of Genesis: "And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there ".[1]

These proto-Sumerians, who already possessed a distinct culture of their own and who sowed cereals, literally created the land on which they dwelt by draining

[1] Ch. xi, verse 2.

it. Between the floors of their rush huts and the marsh bottom, was formed a platform consisting of layers of rushes, placed criss-cross. Huts, constructed of reed mats, plastered with clay or dung, were hung between arched bundles of reeds and, against the matting frame, walls of rammed clay were erected, soon to be replaced by sun-dried bricks. Date-palms provided a most valuable article of food. Their wood was utilized for doors pivoting on a stone socket, examples of which were discovered by Woolley in the Pre-Flood stratum of Ur. In addition to their grain crops and dates, these early agriculturists probably kept cattle, sheep and swine. Fish, which must have been abundant, were caught in nets and with hooks, while game would be hunted with slings. The boats they made are represented today by the *bellum*, which I used at Basra.

Eannatum, King of Lagash, before 3000 B.C.—The earliest Sumerian ruler whose date is approximately known, was Eannatum, *Patesi*[1] of Lagash "by inheritance from his ancestors". The chief foreign enemy was Elam, "the mountain that strikes terror", and his success in defeating an Elamite invasion is shown in a record which runs: "By Eannatum was Elam broken in the head, Elam was driven back to his own land". Here there was no question of conquest but rather of successful defence against invasion.

The Empire of Akkad.—To the north of the Sumerians lived the Semites of Akkad. Sargon, their first great ruler, founded an empire in *circa* 2650 B.C. and boasted that the Western Land (Syria) and the Eastern Sea (the Persian Gulf) formed his boundaries. His successor, Rimush, had to deal with rebellions, but he too was a conqueror and Susa fell to his warriors.

Manishtusu, the next ruler, was powerful enough to divide his forces. One army operated in the mountains to the north of Elam while the other devastated the coast of the Persian Gulf and opened up a route for the transport of diorite and valuable ores.

[1] The *Patesi* was, in theory, merely the human agent of the god, and his actions depended entirely on the bidding of his divine master.

Perhaps, owing to his celebrated *Stele*, one of the finest trophies of that great archaeologist de Morgan, we take the deepest interest in Naram-Sin. The monument was erected by him in celebration of victories gained over the Lulubi and other tribes of the Central Zagros range.

The Invasion of the Guti.—The dynasty of Akkad was succeeded by the short-lived dynasty of Erech. Then followed an invasion of the Guti mountaineers, the northern neighbours of the Lulubi, who conquered Babylonia, Sumer, Akkad and Elam. The success of the Guti was only temporary, since they were defeated by the King of Erech, who captured their monarch.

Gudea, Patesi *of Lagash*, *circa* 2500 B.C.—As the generations passed, we see Lagash rise to power under the celebrated Gudea, who is chiefly remembered by his buildings, for which he obtained materials from distant Syria and from Arabia, his copper coming from Elam. At the same time he was noted for his love of justice, one of the first rulers to be famous for this virtue.

The Dynasty of Ur, *circa* 2450 B.C.—We now come to the rise of Ur, which meant a revival of Sumerian power. Its dynasty assumed the hegemony of both Sumer and Akkad and under Dungi, the second ruler, Elam and Lulubium were both conquered and carefully administered, as is proved from tablets which have been discovered. However, the strain on the resources of Ur, or the incapacity of its rulers, brought about the overthrow of the dynasty by an Elamite invasion.

The Sack of Erech by Kudur-Nankhundi, *circa* 2280 B.C.—Connected with the downfall of Ur was the sack of Erech by the Elamites. In connexion with this event, one very important date has reached us in a most remarkable manner. When Assurbanipal, King of Assyria, captured Susa in *circa* 645 B.C., as we shall see, he recovered and restored to Erech the image of the goddess Nana, which Kudur-Nankhundi, King of Elam, had carried off to Susa, some 1635 years previously. This amazing historical event, which is also mentioned later in this chapter, is accepted as genuine and its importance can hardly be overestimated.

The Isin Dynasty, circa 2339–1947 B.C.—After the downfall of Ur, a Semite dynasty, termed the Isin, first rallied Sumer against the Elamites and then ruled for some three centuries. Little is known about its sixteen rulers and finally it was overthrown by Rim-Sin, King of Elam, in 1947 B.C.

Rim-Sin, King of Elam.—Connected with the overthrow of the Isin dynasty was a violent outburst from Elam, which apparently had important reactions, the migration of the Patriarch Abraham from Ur to Haran and thence to Palestine being considered by some authorities to be due to this invasion.

Rim-Sin apparently carried all before him until he came into hostile contact with great Hammurabi, who defeated him and brought about his overthrow. As a result, Elam ceased to be a power that counted for the next seventy years.[1]

Hammurabi, King of Babylon.—The first dynasty of Babylon was founded in 2225 B.C. and attained its zenith under Hammurabi the great conqueror and law-giver who reigned from 2123 to 2081 B.C. His victory over and his successful conquests of neighbouring Rim-Sin states, striking though they were, yield in importance to his eminence as the great law-giver. His celebrated code of laws is the oldest in existence, although fragments of the Sumerian code on which it was based have come down to us. Drawn up some five hundred years before that of Moses, it is remarkable for its high moral tone and dealt, among many other subjects, with the status of judges, irrigation, the purchase of slaves, their relation to their masters, marriage laws, the condition of women and inheritance. So long as the empire of Babylon existed, its civilization was based on these remarkable laws.

The Second Dynasty — the Sea-Land, circa 2068–176 B.C.—The first dynasty of Babylon was overthrown by an invasion of Hittites, who were among the tribes from the north that were now attacking the older civilizations. The Hittites, however, were unable to retain their hold

[1] *Vide* Cameron's *History of Early Iran*, pp. 79-80.

on Babylon and made way for the rulers of the Sea-Land, a dynasty which controlled the extreme south of Babylonia, Iluma-ilu, its Sumerian founder, having secured his independence during the reign of Hammurabi's son.

Ea-gamil, the last member of the dynasty of Babylonia, invaded Elam, but was decisively defeated by the son of the Elamite king, who was related to the Kassite chief. After this victory, which ended the power of the Sumerians, the Kassites gradually gained possession of Babylonia.

The Influence of the Sumerians on Civilization.—Before quitting the Sumerians, a tribute is due to their remarkable achievements, from which we, some four thousand years later, continue to benefit. Foremost, and greatest among them, was the invention of cuneiform writing (one of the greatest achievements of the ancient world), which was, at first, used solely for keeping the accounts of the temples. We may also mention the laws on which Hammurabi based his celebrated code. Furthermore, we owe to the Sumerians the beginnings of astronomy and, on the faces of our watches, we have a direct reproduction of the twelve double hours of the Sumerians with its divisions of sixty minutes and sixty seconds. To quote Childe: " Long after the Sumerians had lost their national identity and their language was dead, was the cultural edifice they had reared, imposed upon and accepted by their conquerors and neighbours in Hither Asia ".

Prehistory in India.—Before dealing with what has been termed " the Kassite Interlude ", some reference to the third centre of prehistoric civilization, namely that of the Indus Valley, is desirable.

Childe points out that at this early period in the third millennium B.C. Sind was also " a ' Mesopotamia ', being watered by the Great Mihran (Sarasvati) on the east in addition to the Indus on the west ". The country is represented as covered with jungle, the haunt of the tiger, elephant and rhinoceros, in contrast to the semi-desert animals of Sumeria, while the creation of an ordered civilization was on a much larger scale than on

the Nile or the Euphrates.[1] Two only of the ruined cities, Mohenjo-Daro on the Indus and Harappa four hundred miles distant on the Ravi, have been explored, the civilization of both being practically identical.

Mohenjo-Daro has revealed no great temples, as in Sumer, where they marked the theocratical government of its city-states. Indeed, the most important building so far exposed is a large public bath and there are no signs of a palace. Rather the impression given is of a commercial city well organized on democratic lines and laid out on a deliberate plan with an elaborate drainage system.

Irrigation farming, as in the case of Egypt and Babylonia, was the basis of economy at this city. Wheat, barley and dates were cultivated and elephants, cattle, buffaloes and sheep were domesticated. Fish were caught and dried.

Trade was carried on by boats and also by two-wheeled carts, identical with those in use today. Timber from the Himalayas, metal from Baluchistan, lapis lazuli from Northern Afghanistan and jade from Khotan or Burma, proved a widely spread commerce.

The population was mixed. At the bottom of the social scale we find a primitive type similar to that of surviving aboriginal tribes of Southern India. A higher type, with its shaven upper lip and long hair done up in a bun in Sumerian fashion, gives the "King Penguin" appearance, which clearly proved its resemblance to Sumerian types. We also find an Alpine type and an undoubtedly Mongol type, the earliest dated examples of this latter race.

A question of great importance is that of the connexion between the city of the Indus and those situated on the Euphrates, which were 1400 miles distant. It appears that Indian seals and even pottery reached Babylonia during the first half of the third millennium B.C., while Sumerian cylinder-seals were copied in India. Moreover an axe-adze of bronze similar to one from Hisar III in North-East Persia was found by Dr. Mackay.

[1] Vide *Mohenjo-Daro and the Indus Civilization*, by Sir John Marshall, 1932.

To conclude: the civilization of Mohenjo-Daro was deeply rooted in Indian soil and forms the basis of the Indian culture of today. It was pre-Aryan and non-Aryan. It remains to add that, until the intervening region between the Indus and the Euphrates, and especially Baluchistan, have been explored, full knowledge of these interesting problems cannot be secured.

The Kassite Dynasty of Babylon, circa 1749–1171 B.C.—Thanks to our increased knowledge of their linguistic connexions, it would appear that the Kassites, whose name was derived from the eponymous deity Kaṣhsu, consisted of a ruling caste which led a group of largely Caucasian peoples into the mountains to the east of the Tigris-Euphrates Valley.

We read that, in 1896 B.C., Samsa-iluna of Babylon repulsed an invasion of his kingdom by these hordes. After this they appeared in Babylonia as harvesters, labourers and mercenaries until, gathering strength, they finally descended from the Luristan mountains as conquerors and reigned in Babylonia for some six centuries.

They introduced the horse, which they regarded as a divine symbol, into Babylonia where it was termed "the ass of the mountain". They probably also strengthened the armies of the period by the use of cavalry.

The first of their kings was Gandash who ruled for sixteen years and styled himself "King of the Four World-Regions, King of Sumer and Akkad, King of Babylon", thus assuming his succession to the previous dynasty. Under Kashtiliash II (1532–1512 B.C.) we read of the defeat of Ea-gamil, the last ruler of the Sealand dynasty, by Ulam-Buriash the brother of the Kassite monarch, who succeeded him. With his accession the Kassite rulers who had assimilated the superior culture of their subjects, became a truly Babylonian dynasty.

During the period of Kassite hegemony, Assyria, whose rise to power is dealt with later in this chapter, concluded a treaty with a Kassite monarch in the fifteenth century B.C., and, in 1275 B.C., the northern power conquered Babylon and, again, about 1248 B.C., but in

each case the occupation was ephemeral and brought disaster to the invaders.

Of especial interest, as proving the connexion of the Kassites with other invaders, such as the Hittites, is the fact that among their deities was Shuriash, equated with the Greek Helios, while Buriash, a storm god, may be equated with the Greek Boreas.

Elam overthrows the Kassite Dynasty.—During this long period we hear little about Elam, but during the reign of the Kassite Kurigalzu III (1344–1320 B.C.) we read that Khurbatila, King of Elam, challenged him to battle. During the engagement that ensued, the Elamites fled and Susa was taken, as proved by the discovery of a sceptre dedicated to Enlil by the conqueror. However, owing to Assyrian hostilities against outlying provinces of the Kassites, Elam soon recovered her independence and once again became a powerful state.

Coming down the centuries, during the reign of Shutruk-Nahhunte, that warlike king defeated the Kassite monarch and brought the dynasty to an end in 1171 B.C. Their name, however, lasted into classical times in the mountains to the east and north-east of Babylon, as the Kisseans.

Elam as a Great Power.—Under Shilhak-Inshushinak, nephew of Shutruk-Nahhunte, who reigned from *circa* 1165 to 1151 B.C., Elam reached the zenith of her political and commercial importance. On a *stele* this monarch inscribed in eight groups the fruits of his eight campaigns, which proved how far his armies marched and, to judge by the results, with what remarkable success. His territory stretched far inland, as is proved by bricks inscribed with his name found in the area between Ram Hormuz and Shiraz. Northwards he reached a point only seventy miles east of Assur, while he also ruled Liyan in the Persian Gulf, the modern Bushire. Under this great ruler Susa, the capital, was adorned with magnificent temples and statues, the discovery of which we owe to de Morgan.

The Rise of Assyria — the Old Empire.—The "land of Assur" was originally a city-state, ruled by *Patesis* who,

as in the older states, developed into powerful monarchs ruling empires. The first mention of Assur is in the time of Hammurabi, when it was apparently subject to his sway. At some date between 1800 and 1500 B.C. Assyria became an independent state and, as it expanded, it moved its capital up the Tigris from Assur the original capital (the modern Kala Shergat) to the third and final capital of Nineveh, situated opposite Mosul. So rapid was the rise to power of the young Assyrian state that, as mentioned above, twice she occupied Babylon, but, on each occasion, was finally expelled and reverted to her original position of subordination to the mother-city.

The Conquest of Tiglath-pileser I, circa 1100 B.C.—Under Tiglath-pileser I, the Assyrian armies marched to the source of the Tigris, to the Mediterranean and against the Medes and kindred Aryan tribes. He finally attacked Babylon, which he captured, but, as in the case of the earlier conquest, the Assyrians were expelled and, once again, became a tributary state.

The Aramaean Invasion.—The great event of this period was the invasion of Assyria and Babylonia by Aramaean tribes who, issuing from the deserts of Arabia, overthrew the Old Assyrian Empire, a disaster that is veiled in complete darkness. The Aramaeans, who had learned writing from the Phœnicians, became great traders and, by 1000 B.C., their writing, spreading throughout the Near and Middle East, slowly but surely displaced the cumbrous cuneiform signs.

The Middle Assyrian Kingdom, circa 900–745 B.C.—Assyria in due course subdued the Aramaean tribes and then carried her arms from the source of the Tigris to the Nahr-ul-Kalb in the vicinity of Beirut, where Assyrian sculptures still exist. Under Adad-Nirari II, who ruled from 911 to 890 B.C., accurately dated history began in 893 B.C. by the initiation of a continuous record of events. At this period Assyria, once again, became a most formidable power, but, mainly owing to the rising of the kingdom of Urartu or Ararat, she found herself unable to retain her conquests and the dynasty fell owing to a mutiny.

The New Assyrian Kingdom, 745–606 B.C.—Under Tiglath-pileser IV, the founder of the New Kingdom, Assyria held sway for more than a century from the Iranian plateau to the Mediterranean Sea. The ruler of Babylonia acknowledged him as his suzerain, and finally he "took the hands of Bel" as King of Sumer, Akkad and Babylonia.

Sargon II, 722–705 B.C.—Under Sargon II Assyria first fought Elam. The latter power had been from the very earliest times a raiding state and the advance southwards of Assyria seriously threatened its existence. Accordingly the Elamites negotiated an alliance with the Babylonians who were equally threatened.

The Battle of Durilu.—Sargon was an experienced general, and hearing that the Elamite Army had crossed the frontier and was awaiting the arrival of the Babylonian troops, decided to attack the Elamites before the junction with their allies had been effected. In the battle that ensued, although the Assyrians were better armed and better equipped than their opponents, they withdrew from the field, albeit they claimed the victory.

The Naval Expedition of Sennacherib against the Elamite Coast.—In 694 B.C. we have a most valuable account of a maritime expedition undertaken by the Assyrian monarch against Chaldeans, who had taken refuge in the sea-coast towns of Elam. The flotilla which had been specially constructed for the expedition was assembled on the Euphrates and was rowed down to the port of Bab Salimeti. Thence it made for the valley of the Kerkha, which river at this period discharged directly into the Persian Gulf. The surprise of the Chaldeans was complete, various towns were sacked and the settlers were massacred. After this successful operation the Assyrians ravaged the country towards the delta of the Tigris and finally returned in triumph to the presence of Sennacherib at Bab Salimeti.

Sennacherib's Campaigns against Elam and Babylonia, 692–689 B.C.—Taking advantage of a change in the rulers of Elam, Sennacherib determined to attack that country from the north. At first he carried all before him,

and Madaktu was in danger, but was saved by an unusually heavy rainfall, which necessitated the retirement of the Assyrian army.

Not long afterwards, under a new sovereign, a powerful Elamite army, which comprised contingents from Anzan, or Anshan, and from Parsumash, joined the Babylonian forces and met the Assyrians in a drawn battle at Halule on the Tigris.

The Capture and Sack of Babylon.—In 689 B.C. Sennacherib again marched on Babylon. On this occasion no help was forthcoming from Elam, owing to its monarch being stricken with paralysis. Babylon was consequently captured, its inhabitants were handed over to the soldiers, and not only were the temples destroyed, but a canal was turned on to its ruins to level the proud city to the ground.

Esarhaddon, 681–669 B.C.—Under Esarhaddon, who conquered Egypt, the power and prestige of Assyria reached its zenith. The Elamite monarch, taking advantage of the absence of his enemy in Egypt, had raided Babylonia, but his brother and successor made terms with Esarhaddon, who sent him food supplies when Elam was suffering from famine.

Assurbanipal invades Elam, circa 659 B.C.—Upon the death of Esarhaddon, Assurbanipal succeeded to the empire with his brother as King of Babylon. While his army was engaged in the suppression of a revolt in Egypt headed by the King of Ethiopia, in 665 B.C. the Elamites, again taking advantage of the situation, invaded Babylonia. The capital was too strong to be attempted, but the raiders returned to Susa laden with booty. The death of the King Urtaku was followed by an attempt of Teuman, his successor, to murder his male relations, who, to the number of sixty, sought the protection of Assurbanipal. These family feuds ultimately brought about the downfall of Elam.

In the first campaign Assurbanipal completely defeated the Elamites who fought with their left flank resting on the Eulaeus (Karun), the scene being vividly represented by bas-reliefs in the British Museum. The victory was complete, but yet Assurbanipal stayed his hand when

Susa was apparently at his mercy. Evidently not feeling himself strong enough to occupy the capital, he placed an Elamite prince on the throne as his tributary and, after flaying alive the captured Elamite leaders, the Assyrian monarch returned in triumph to Nineveh.

The Second Campaign against Elam, 651 B.C.—Assurbanipal had alienated his brother, the ruler of Babylon, by his arrogance and contemptuous attitude towards him. The latter, accordingly, formed a confederacy against the monarch which was joined by the chief feudatories. Elam wished to remain loyal to Assyria, but the demand of Assurbanipal to restore the statue of Nana to Erech would, if complied with, have caused a revolution, and since the Babylonian ruler offered the treasures of the temples, Elam joined the confederacy.

Once again Assurbanipal reaped the benefit of feuds in the royal family, and thanks to a murder and the intervention of one of the chief feudatories of Elam, Indabugash[1] by name, the Elamite army withdrew from the field and left Babylon to its fate. After a long siege the city was taken in 648 B.C. and, as on the previous occasion, the inhabitants were massacred.

The Third Campaign against Elam, *circa* 647 B.C.—Indabugash, who had seized the throne, was murdered, and once again an Assyrian army, acting on behalf of a royal prince of Elam, entered Susa and crowned him king. Hardly had this ceremony been accomplished, before the Assyrian *protégé* attempted to massacre his allies. This plot failed, but the Assyrian army, not feeling strong enough to retain Susa, marched back to Nineveh, devastating Elamite territory as far as possible.

The Fall of the Kingdom of Elam, *circa* 645 B.C.—Assurbanipal, dissatisfied with the lack of results in this campaign, again demanded the surrender of the statue of Nana and also of some Chaldean refugees. The Elamite monarch, realizing that to accede to these demands would ensure his own death, decided to resist to the bitter end.

On this occasion the Assyrians, who were in over-

[1] This name contains the Slav word *bug* or god.

whelming strength, after the destruction of fourteen royal cities, entered Susa in triumph. An Assyrian army had twice entered Susa as allies and had stayed their hands, but now the soldiers were free to gratify their deep hatred and their lust for booty. The rich treasuries of the gods were sacked, the statues of the gods themselves were carried away to grace the triumph at Nineveh, as the bas-reliefs prove, while the buildings themselves were destroyed and the inhabitants massacred or driven away into slavery.

The Triumph of Assurbanipal.—Assurbanipal reached the zenith of his glory when two kings of Elam, together with two other captive kings, were harnessed to the chariot which bore the Great Conqueror to offer up prayers at the temples of Assur and Ishtar.

The Disappearance of Elam.—Elam, as a kingdom, had fallen and her name was forgotten. So much so was this the case, that, according to Strabo, Cyrus placed his capitol at Susa because of its situation and because "it had never of itself undertaken any great enterprise and had always been in subjection to other people".[1]

With an account of this overwhelming tragedy, I bring this sketch to a close. It marks the complete supremacy of the Semites, but in the next chapter we shall see the rise to power of the Aryans, who conquered the Semitic world and remained supreme until overthrown by the Arabs more than a thousand years later.

[1] Strabo, xv, 3 2.

CHAPTER III

THE MEDES AND PERSIANS CONQUER THE IRANIAN PLATEAU

The first of the good lands and countries which I created was the Aryanem-Vaejo.—*Vendidad*, i.

Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, which shall not regard silver; and as for gold, they shall not delight in it. Their bows also shall dash the young men in pieces; and they shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb; their eye shall not spare children.—ISAIAH xiii, 17, 18.

The Backward Condition of the Early Inhabitants of the Iranian Plateau.—In the last chapter we read how the Caspians (as Herzfeld names them) of the early Copper Age had overflowed into the valleys of the Karun and Karkheh rivers, and had founded the kingdom of Elam, and that settlers from that kingdom were the proto-Sumerians.

At the end of the Copper Age, however, the situation was reversed. In Sumer during the fourth millennium B.C., as we have seen, its inhabitants had invented writing and created cities. The dwellers on the Iranian plateau, on the other hand, had neither participated in these remarkable achievements, nor did they adopt them ready-made. Accordingly, as Herzfeld points out, they stood in the same relation to the alluvial lands of Babylonia and Mesopotamia that Northern Europe did to the culture of the Mediterranean during the same period.

The Coming of the Aryans.—A complete revolution in this somewhat curious position was brought about by the arrival on the Iranian plateau of the Aryans, who transformed the situation. Henceforth there is no longer a problem of prehistory, since we have reached history.

Early Indo-European Tribes and Rulers of Tribes.—Thanks to documents found at Boghaz-Koy, the capital

of those Hittites who spoke a language related to the Indo-European family (using this term in an anticipatory sense), and to documents from Mitannu in Northern Mesopotamia, we learn three remarkable facts. Firstly, that Mithra, Varuna, Indra and the Nasatya — the gods of the Vedic Indo-Aryans — were invoked in oaths sworn in treaties between the two kingdoms. Secondly, the names of the Mitannu princes, which can be traced back to about 1450 B.C., were Aryan names, and thirdly, in the famous tablets of " Kikkuli of Mitannu ", which were also discovered at Boghaz-Koy and which deal with horse breeding and horse racing, many of the special words connected with these subjects are Aryan words. It should be noted that the Mitannu princes ruled over an indigenous population, which spoke a language related to the Elamite.

The Homeland of the Aryans.—There has been much discussion as to the original home of the Aryans. Their traditions, however, point clearly to Eranvej, the land of the two rivers Vahri-Datya and Arang, old names for the rivers Oxus and Jaxartes. This identification of Central Asia being their homeland is strengthened by the mention of Khwarizm (Khiva) with Eranvej in ancient religious literature.

The First Migration of the Aryans into India.—At the beginning of the sixteenth century B.C. the first great migration of the Aryans into India took place. Passing through the natural gate at Sarakhs and moving by Haraiva (Herat) across what is now Afghanistan, the tribes reached Sarasvati (later Arachosia) on the Helmand. In this district they remained for an indefinite period but finally marched down the Bolan Pass into the plains of India. It is important to recollect that the Aryans were originally agriculturists. Perforce they adopted nomadic life for a period, but both in India and in Persia they speedily settled down again into villages upon reaching their goals.

The date given above is supported by the foundation of the Aryan dynasty in Mitannu between 1500 and 1450 B.C., while Herzfeld draws attention to the analogy of

the Saka migration of the middle of the third century B.C., which is described in Chapter VI. This migration of the Sakae was the third and last migration; we now deal with the second.

The Migration of the Medes and Persians.—Six centuries pass, and in the annals of the reign of the Assyrian monarch Shalmaneser III for 835 B.C., we read that he invaded Namri (Kurdistan), Parsua and the land of the Madai or Medes. The Parsua or Persians, who at that period inhabited the country to the west of Lake Urmia, were the neighbours of, and closely akin to, the Medes, whose territory lay to the south in a part of what was to become their final home.

During the remainder of the ninth century B.C. Assyria incessantly raided and ultimately conquered the western portion of the Iranian plateau, bringing back from its uplands thousands of prisoners, who were set to work on the palaces and temples of the conquerors, and also on the enormous artificial platforms which supported them.

In 744 B.C. Tiglath-pileser IV constituted the western districts of Media into an Assyrian province, while one of his generals penetrated as far as Bikni or "the Lapis Lazuli Mountain",[1] which at that period was considered to be the boundary of the world by Assyrians. So completely had Media been made a province of Assyria that we read that Sargon II, about 722 B.C., settled the Israelites of Samaria in Halah or Calah (the capital of Assyria at that period) and in the cities of the Medes.[2]

Under Esarhaddon, in about 674 B.C., Assyrian expeditions penetrated as far as Mount Demavend, and beyond it reached the "Salt Deserts". Among the captives were two petty kings, who with their two-humped camels and thoroughbred horses were taken to Assyria.

Deioces the Eponymous Founder of the Empire of the

[1] No lapis lazuli has been discovered on Mount Demavend which is here referred to, but Woolley considers that there was probably a mart for the sale of this valuable stone from Northern Afghanistan in some neighbouring city.

[2] 2 Kings xvii, 6.

Medes, 715 B.C.—The royal dynasty of Media claimed descent from Dayaukku, the Deioces of Herodotus. Herzfeld writes: "that the real Daiaukka, governor of Man [a district of Urartu] in 715 B.C. had been deported to Hamath in Syria and could not be the founder of the empire. But only two years later the Assyrians call the region of Agbatana, *bit-Daiaukka*, the exile had become the eponym of the Median family." [1]

Again, the Assyrian royal texts of that date declare that three Median city chieftains voluntarily offered their submission at Nineveh and begged to be reinstated in their cities. Taking into account these distant raids across Media at this period, together with the submission of Median chiefs to Assyria, the existence of a strong Median state, such as Herodotus describes, is hardly acceptable, but there may well have been a city chief of outstanding personality.

Phraortes, 675–653 B.C.—The successor of the somewhat shadowy eponymous Deioces was his son Phraortes, who is accepted as an historical figure. Herodotus [2] claims that he brought the Persians under his yoke and, as we see later on in this chapter, Phraortes made Teispes his tributary. The "Father of History" also states that, at the end of his reign, the Median monarch attacked the Assyrians but was defeated and killed.

The Scythian Invasion, 653–625 B.C.—At this period the Scythian tribe of horsemen, who had already threatened the eastern boundaries of the Assyrian empire during the reign of Esarhaddon, now crushed the Medes who were of similar stock to themselves. They then swept through Assyria, destroying every living thing as they went, and overran province after province as far as the Mediterranean. To quote the prophet Jeremiah on this human avalanche: "They shall lay hold on bow and spear; they are cruel, and have no mercy; their voice roareth like the sea; and they ride upon horses, set in array as men for war against thee,

[1] *Archaeological History of Iran*, by Ernst E. Herzfeld, 1934.

[2] I have consulted the edition of Herodotus which has been annotated from Professor Rawlinson's work by A. W. Laurence. His notes are most valuable.

O daughter of Zion ".[1] Cameron points out that the period of the Scythians was approximately contemporary with that of the manufacture of the recently discovered Luristan bronzes.[2]

The Reign of Cyaxares, 625–585 B.C.—Uvakhshatra or Cyaxares, the son of Phraortes, was great alike as a ruler and a general. He re-established his authority in Media and subjugated the Scythians by killing their chiefs whom he had made drunk at a banquet, as Herodotus states, and probably also by hard fighting.

Cyaxares realized that, to play a leading rôle, he must possess a trained army. This he accordingly organized, laying special stress on a large body of mounted archers, the forerunners of the Parthian bowmen. Thus equipped for conquest, he, in 615 B.C., considered himself to be in a position to attack the decadent empire of Assyria.

The Parsua migrate Southwards, 815 B.C.—We must now turn our attention to the kindred Persians. Leaving Parsua, the district to the west of Lake Urumiea, they moved southwards and occupied new territory to the north-east of Susa, close to the Elamite district of Anzan or Anshan. To this area they gave the name of Parsumash, in memory of their older homeland.

Achaemenes, the Founder of the Achaemenian Dynasty, 700–675 B.C.—Little is known of Hakhamanish or Achaemenes, who is held to be the eponymous founder of the great dynasty of Persia.[3] He, almost certainly, led his tribe to join the Elamite army which, as mentioned in the previous chapter, fought a drawn battle with Sennacherib at Halule in 692 B.C. But, beyond this recorded event, nothing more is known of this somewhat shadowy figure.

Chishpish or Teispes, 675–640 B.C.—Teispes, the son of Achaemenes, soon after his accession occupied Anshan, where Elamite influence had weakened, and from this date assumed the title of " King of the city of Anshan ". But he was not allowed to add provinces to his kingdom

[1] vi, verse 23. [2] *Op. cit.* p. 183.
[3] I am indebted to Dr. Cameron's *History of Early Iran* in this section.

with impunity, for the Medes under Phraortes, who was supported by Cimmerian and Scythian allies, attacked Parsumash in about 670 B.C., and reduced Teispes to the position of a vassal ruler. Later, Teispes occupied the province of Parsa or Pars (now Fars) and thus became the ruler of two distinct kingdoms.

Ariaramnes and Cyrus I.—Upon the death of Teispes, in accordance with his wishes, his kingdom was divided between his two sons. Ariaramnes (*circa* 640–615 B.C.) was proclaimed "Great King, King of Kings, King of the Land Parsa". Cyrus I, who was actually the elder, but was born before Teispes won his second kingdom, was the subordinate King of Parsumash and Anshan. Thus was started the double line, referred to by Darius in the Bisutun inscription, which, for long, puzzled historians.

Ariaramnes evidently prospered, since on a silver tablet, which has come down to us, he boasted that Ahura Mazda had given him the land of Parsa, which possessed good horses and virile men, and that Teispes, his father, had been king before him. We do not know anything more than this about Ariaramnes.

The position of Cyrus I was very different. Alarmed at the conquest of Elam by Assurbanipal, he offered the Assyrian monarch his eldest son Arukku to serve as a hostage. The heir-apparent was accordingly taken to Nineveh and disappears from the scene. Beyond this fact the course of events is obscure.

Nabopolassar founds the New Kingdom of Babylonia, 626–604 B.C.—At this period another conqueror appeared. Nabopolassar had risen from being King of the Sealands to be ruler of Babylonia and, by 616 B.C., all its provinces obeyed him. He thereupon decided to attack Assyria. However, the arrival of an Egyptian army which came to support the King of Assyria caused him to break off the siege and to retreat homewards. In 615 B.C. he attempted to take the city of Assur, but, on this occasion, was driven off by an Assyrian army.

Cyaxares and Nabopolassar form an Alliance.—In 614 B.C. Cyaxares, after conquering the regions to the

north of Assyria, attempted to take Nineveh. Failing to force its strong fortification, he marched down the Tigris and stormed Assur.

Nabopolassar, determined to assert his position, now appeared on the scene at the head of his army. The two monarchs thereupon decided to negotiate an alliance of peace, and to strengthen it, the infant daughter of Astyages, the son and successor of Cyaxares, was betrothed to Nebuchadnezzar, the son of Nabopolassar.

The Fall of Nineveh, 612 B.C.—The final assault on Nineveh by the two allies was preceded by three victories over Assyrian armies, and in August 612 B.C. great Nineveh fell. So complete was the downfall of this powerful predatory state that the very name of Assyria was soon forgotten. Indeed its history melted into fable in which the names of Sardanapalus and Semiramis, albeit they were purely mythical personages, vaguely recalled the might and the luxurious splendour of a forgotten empire; and when Xenophon led the celebrated "Ten Thousand" past the ruined city, and marvelled at it, the guides explained that "Medians of old inhabited it". *Sic transit gloria mundi.*

The Empire of the Medes.—In 610 B.C. an attempt was made to establish a new kingdom of Assyria at Harran in Northern Mesopotamia. Once again the allies Cyaxares and Nabopolassar attacked and crushed all hopes of such a revival. Harran was captured by the Medes and remained in their possession.

Cyaxares, now at the zenith of his power, ruled from Ecbatana over Atropatene, the modern province of Azerbaijan, in the north-west and over Northern Persia including Parthia. Southwards Parsumash and Parsa under rulers of the Achaemenian dynasty owed him allegiance. Westwards, at this period, he occupied Cappadocia to the River Halys (now the Kizil Irmak). There, in 590 B.C., he met with serious opposition from Alyattes, King of Lydia.

The Battle of the Eclipse, 585 B.C.—For five years war was waged between the two monarchs without any distinct success being gained by either side. In 585 B.C.

a solar eclipse, foretold, it is said, by Thales of Miletus, interrupted a battle, since it was held by both sides to be an evil portent and made the soldiers unwilling to continue hostilities. Accordingly, negotiations for peace, in which Babylon played the part of arbitrator, followed, and the Halys was fixed upon as the boundary between the two empires. To strengthen the bond, Aryenis, the daughter of Alyattes, was married to Astyages, the heir-apparent of Media. One result of this campaign was the absorption by Cyaxares of the mountain kingdom of Urartu or Ararat, which was, in effect, Armenia.

The Death of Cyaxares, 584 B.C.—Within a year of the signature of this important treaty Cyaxares died. His greatest feat was the overthrow of Nineveh. At the commencement of his reign the paramount power of the East was Semitic; when he died, thanks to his capture of Nineveh, the paramountcy passed to the Aryans. Cyaxares was thus the leader in one of the greatest movements in history.

The Reign of Nebuchadnezzar, 604–562 B.C.—Nebuchadnezzar, as heir-apparent to the throne of Babylon, met the invasion of an Egyptian army at Carchemish and, in spite of the bravery of the Greek mercenaries, won a decisive victory which forms the theme of a dramatic description by the Prophet Jeremiah: "Come up, ye horses; and rage, ye chariots; and let the mighty men come forth; the Ethiopians and the Libyans, that handle the shield; and the Lydians, that handle and bend the bow. . . . For the Lord God of hosts hath a sacrifice in the north country by the river Euphrates." [1]

Nebuchadnezzar was pursuing the beaten Egyptians when he received news of the death of his father. He accordingly made peace with King Necho and marching rapidly across the desert to Babylon ascended the throne. During his prosperous reign the relations with Media were friendly.

The Reign of Cambyses I, 600–559 B.C.—To turn to the Persians, once again; Cambyses, although a subordinate monarch, was made ruler of Parsa, in addition

[1] xlvi, verses 9, 10.

to Parsumash, after the death or disappearance of Ariaramnes. His position was much strengthened by his marriage to Mandane, a daughter of Astyages; their son was Cyrus the Great. During the reign of Cambyses the Huzha, another Aryan tribe, occupied Elam, from which conquest originated the name of Khuzistan for the province.

The Effect of the Aryan Immigration into Iran.—At this point it appears to be desirable to refer to the radical change wrought by the Aryan conquerors. As we have seen, until their arrival the indigenous population had not evolved the creation of anything larger than village communities. The Aryans, however, founded Ecbatana, while later we read of Pasargadae and Persepolis, Rhagae (near Tehran) and Tausa, the medieval Tus, in Khurasan. Nor did this progress cease until, under Cyrus the Great, an empire which ultimately included most of the civilized world, was created. It is noteworthy that whereas in India the Aryans still remain distinct from the older inhabitants of the country, in Persia the absorption was complete.

The Architecture and Culture of the Aryans.—It is of interest to note that the culture and art of the Medes and Persians were truly Oriental. They were mainly derived from Urartu or Ararat, which itself owed much to Eastern Anatolia. This circumstance explains the fact that certain points of contact between Persia and Ionia were due to a common descent.

Dayaukku, the founder of the kingdom of the Medes, was, as we learn from the annals of Sargon, governor of Man in Urartu, and the Medes adopted the highly evolved arts and architecture of this country in which there was a profuse use of metal for architectural purposes, bronze, silver and gold being used to cover beams, and even roofs, in the shape of tiles.

Other Aryan Tribes.—Before quitting this somewhat intricate question of the movements of the Aryan tribes, it is necessary to point out that the Scythians, Sarmatians and other tribes did not share in the migrations southwards to India and the Iranian plateau respectively. Some of

these tribes spread into Southern Russia, which became their permanent home, where the remarkable animal art in metalwork may be compared with the distinctive metal work of Luristan.

Astyages, 585–550 B.C.—The reign of Ishtuvegu or Astyages was at first prosperous since, after the death of Nebuchadnezzar, the kingdom of Babylon fell a prey to internal troubles. Owing to its resultant weakness, Elam was added to the empire of the Medes. On the accession of Nabu-naid (556–538 B.C.) Babylon recovered her position, and that monarch made himself secure on the throne.

Astyages was an unworthy son of a great father. He devoted himself to pleasure, while the cessation of constant fighting soon caused the Median army to lose its remarkable efficiency. As in the case of other dynasties, such deterioration led to conquest by a new Power.

CHAPTER IV

CYRUS THE GREAT FOUNDS THE PERSIAN EMPIRE

Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him.—ISAIAH, xlv, 1.

I am Darius, the Great King, the King of Kings, King of lands peopled by all races, for long King of this great earth, the son of Vishtasp, the Achaemenian, a Persian, son of a Persian, an Aryan of Aryan descent.—From the inscription at Bisutun.

The Rise of Cyrus the Great.—Cambyses I of Pars had married the daughter of Astyages, and Herodotus gives an enthralling account of how the infant Cyrus escaped death at the hands of his grandfather, who was frightened by a dream in which " he fancied that a vine grew from the womb of his daughter and overshadowed the whole of Asia ".

Upon reaching manhood, in 550 B.C. Cyrus led a Persian army against Astyages whom he defeated and conquered. By this victory the Medes were united with their kinsmen the Persians as one nation under a monarch who represented both royal dynasties. So little was this change-over of power realized that Herodotus refers to the terror that the mere name of the Medes had inspired before the battle of Marathon.

Cyrus defeats and captures Croesus, King of Lydia.—The first foreign campaign undertaken by Cyrus was the invasion of Lydia. Moving swiftly — his force was entirely composed of cavalry — Cyrus surprised the Lydian monarch, who, not expecting a winter campaign, had deferred the arrival of Spartan troops, which he had enlisted until the spring. The decisive battle was fought in 546 B.C. in the vicinity of Sardes. The Lydian cavalry was famous, but their horses, terrified by the smell of the Persian baggage camels, became unmanage-

able[1] and Cyrus won the battle. Later he surprised Sardes and captured Croesus. The fruits of this successful campaign comprised not only the wealthy kingdom of Lydia but also the important Greek colonies on the coast.

The Eastern Campaigns of Cyrus, 545–539.—Herodotus briefly states: "Cyrus in person subjected the upper regions [of Asia] conquering every nation, and not suffering one to pass". Harpagus, also, according to the same authority, subjugated the lower parts of Asia.

Cyrus, we know, conquered Parthia, and appointed Hystaspes, the father of Darius, to govern the province, as mentioned in Chapter VI. The list of the countries which were chiselled on the rock at Bisutun were cut immediately after the suppression of the rebellions that occupied the first two years of the reign of Darius and accordingly represented the conquests of Cyrus. They included Armenia, Cappadocia, Parthia, Drangiana, Areia, Chorasmia, Bactria, Sogdiana, Gandhara, Saka, Sattagydia, Arachosia and Maka [Makran].

During these campaigns Cyrus founded Cyra on the Jaxartes (Sir Daria), which river constituted the eastern boundary of the Achaemenian Empire. From Pliny[2] we learn that he destroyed the city of Capisa, which was mentioned by Hsuan-tsang many centuries later, while an attempt to invade India across sterile Baluchistan — Makran is the coastal province — resulted in the loss of the greater part of the Persian army.

The Fall of Babylon, 540 B.C.—Cyrus had completed his outlying conquests, some of which were carried out by his generals, before he attacked Babylon. To quote the cylinder of Cyrus: "The Kings of the Westland, dwelling in tents, all these brought heavy tribute to me in Babylon and kissed my feet".

Nabonidus, the last king, had alienated a large section of his subjects by bringing into Babylon the gods of Ur, Uruk and Eridu, while his administration was also unpopular.

[1] I was once riding in the Punjab a young Australian horse that had recently been imported. Upon seeing, and smelling, a camel for the first time, the frightened animal uttered a moan of distress and then collapsed under me.

[2] *N.H.* vi, 23.

In the campaign against Babylon, it seems that Gobryas, the commander-in-chief of Cyrus, entered the city without encountering resistance. Belshazzar, the son of Nabonidus, who had not surrendered, was surprised and slain, but the citadel held out for some months until it was stormed. Cyrus gratified his new subjects by "taking the hands of Bel", while the account given by the Prophet Isaiah, if not historically correct, corroborates the true greatness of the Conqueror.

The Death of Cyrus, 529 B.C.—The last campaign of the great King of Kings was against the Massagetae, or Great Sakae. It would appear that Cyrus desired to punish their raids on his frontier provinces and marching to the Jaxartes he constructed bridges across that river. In the battle which ensued Cyrus was killed. His corpse was taken to Pasargadae, the capital which he had founded, where it was buried in a tomb which I have visited.

The Character of Cyrus the Great.—Cyrus was undoubtedly one of the greatest men of the ancient world. As a general his campaigns against Lydia and Babylon, of which we have definite accounts, excite our admiration. More than this, his bravery and his virility were accompanied by equal humanity and generosity. His treatment of the exiled Jews is a signal example of his enlightened policy, while his reasonableness made his subjects content to be ruled by a monarch whose ideals were so lofty. He also permitted the various races of the empire to retain their own religions, in marked distinction to the Assyrians, who displayed ruthless cruelty in such matters. Apart from the evidence of Holy Writ, did not Xenophon write in his *Cyropaedia*: "He was able to inspire all with so great a desire of pleasing him, that they ever wished to be governed by his opinion"? To conclude; we as Aryans may surely feel proud that Cyrus the Great, an Aryan of Aryan descent, displayed such noble qualities.

Cambyses II, 529–521 B.C.—Cambyses added to what was already the greatest empire of the old world by the conquest of Egypt. Amasis, a capable soldier and adminis-

trator, had died at this juncture and his inexperienced son Psammatichus III was unable to face the war-experienced Persian Army. Cambyses, therefore, by a victory gained at Pelusium, overthrew the third Great Power of the ancient world. Some four years later, he committed suicide. He was the last descendant of Cyrus.

The Reign of Darius the Great, 521–485 B.C.—As we have seen, there was a second line of Achaemenian princes, in the descendants of Teispes through his son Ariaramnes. The grandson of this monarch, Hystaspes, has already been referred to as having been appointed ruler of Parthia. On the death of Cambyses the various countries broke away from the empire, but Darius, the son of Hystaspes, after a desperate struggle with various rebels, lasting for three years, was acknowledged to be the ruler of the empire of the Achaemenians.

The Organization of the Persian Empire.—Under Darius the vast empire was divided up into some twenty provinces. In each of these the principle of *divide et impera* was secured by the power of the Satrap being checked by a General who commanded the troops and by a Secretary of State, all three officials being independent of each other and reporting direct to the monarch.

Afghanistan at the Dawn of History.—To turn to Afghanistan: the provinces which now comprise it were inhabited at this period by tribes of the Aryan race. These were well known to the authors of the Avesta, and many of the names of the provinces and rivers then given are recognizable today. They figured among the satrapies and, in view of their historical importance, I give the following list:[1]

Avesta and Old Persian	*Classical*	*Modern*
Bakhdi (Achaem) Bakhtrish	Bactria	Balkh
Haraewa (Achaem) Haraiwa	Ariana (Areia)	Herat Hari Rud[2]

[1] For this section I have consulted the valuable *Encyclopaedia of Islam.*

[2] *Rud* signifies a river.

Avesta and Old Persian	*Classical*	*Modern*
Mouru (Achaem) Margu	Margiana	Merv Murghab River
Waitigaesa		Badghis
Zraya or Lake (of Kasawa)		Zirra of Seistan (Gaud-i-Zirra)
Zaranka (Achaem)	Drangiana	Zaranj (medieval town in Seistan)
Fradatha	Ophadus	Farah Rud
Phra	Prophthasia	Farah
Hwaspa	Khoaspes	Khuspas Rud
Hwastra	Cosata	Khash-Rud
Haetumant	Etymandros	Helmand
Harahwaiti (Achaem)	Arachotis or Arachosia	Arghandab River
Pisana		Pishin
Paruparanissana (stands for Gandhara in Babylonian version of the Achaem. inscriptions)	Paropanisus	Hindu Kush

From the above list it is clear that these provinces were among those best known to the early Aryans.

The Satrapies in Afghanistan.—Coming down to the period of the Achaemenians, and using the cuneiform inscriptions and the invaluable work of Herodotus, we find that out of the twenty provinces into which the Persian Empire was divided, six practically composed what is the Afghanistan of today as follows:

Zaranka	Herodotus.	Now Seistan
Areia	,,	Now Herat
Bactria	,,	Now Afghan Turkistan (with its ancient capital of Bactra now Balkh)
Gandara	,,	Medieval Gandhara (the Kabul Valley)
Thatagush	Sattagydai.	The Hazara country of today.
Harauwati	Arachosia.	The Kandahar province.

It remains to add that four of these six satrapies were named in the Avesta. It is especially interesting to note that Zaranka was free of tribute, as was Persis, and this proves that Firdausi was correct in making that former province the homeland of the heroic Keianian dynasty. It would appear that the older legends contained in the *Shah Nameh* were taken from the Caspians. In any case there is no account in the national poem of Cyrus the Great.

The Scythian Campaign, 512 B.C.—The expedition which Darius led against the nomadic Scythians of Southern Russia has excited views ranging from "that insane expedition of Grote" to "a demonstration against the northern barbarians with a view to securing his frontier on the Danube by Minns".[1] Personally I am inclined to believe that Darius, who was aware of the terrible raids made by the Scythians in Media and Asia Minor in the preceding century, decided to invade their country and thereby discourage them from any further raids, while the securing of the frontier of the Danube was essential in view of his intention to conquer Thrace.

Herodotus gives a delightful account of the correspondence of Darius with the Scythian king. Actually, in view of his elusive tactics, the expedition became a military promenade but it accomplished its main object, that of securing the Persian frontier on the Danube. As an aftermath, Thrace was annexed and the ruler of Macedonia tendered his submission.

The Indian Campaign, 512 B.C.—It must be borne in mind that a Great King of the Achaemenian dynasty could not acquire renown unless he enlarged the boundaries of his emprie. Probably urged on by this custom, Persian troops marched across Afghanistan and descended into the plains of India, where several districts of the Punjab and of Sind were annexed. An Indian satrapy was created and vast sums of money were secured.

In connexion with these important military operations, Scylax, a Greek, descended the Indus, launched out on to the Indian Ocean and explored the coast of Arabia to

[1] *Vide* his *Scythians and Greeks*, p. 116.

some extent and also that of Makran. He is believed to have written an account of this remarkable voyage.

The Persian Empire at its Zenith.—The Indian campaign enlarged the Persian Empire to its greatest extent. It now stretched from the Indus to Macedonia. It included practically the whole of the known world and many lands hitherto unknown. It was the most powerful of all the ancient empires but yet, in remote Hellas, which lay beyond the kingdom of feudatory Macedonia, some warriors lived who, absurd as it might appear, would, in the not distant future, not only resist successfully an invasion of their mountainous country but would inflict crushing defeats alike on the Persian navy and army.

The Revolt of the Ionian Greeks, 499–494 B.C.—By the conquest of Asia Minor and later of Thrace, and with Macedonia acknowledging him as her suzerain, Darius had control over perhaps one-third of the Greeks. Moreover, those free Greeks who inhabited Hellas proper were constantly at war, city-state against city-state, and deposed rulers were only too ready to appeal to the Satrap of Sardes for reinstatement whenever it suited their plans to do so.

It was the personal ambitions of two Greek tyrants which led the Greeks of Asia Minor to rebel, and later, to the invasion of Hellas by the Persians. The most important figure was Histiaeus of Miletus, who had been placed in charge of the bridge over the Danube during the Scythian expedition and had served Darius well, receiving for his reward the gift of a city in Thrace. There he raised suspicions by fortifying this city and was summoned to Susa where he was interned. His son-in-law Aristagoras was Governor of Miletus, and at the suggestion of Histiaeus, conveyed in a message tattooed on the head of a slave, he decided to raise a revolt.

Aristagoras, in pursuance of this policy, visited Sparta, but failed to gain any support. Athens, however, despatched a squadron of twenty ships, joined by five triremes from Eretria, to help their kinsmen in Asia.

The arrival of this force encouraged Aristagoras to lead the Athenians and his own troops on a raid in which the city of Sardes was captured and burned, but the citadel was not even attacked. The leaders of this weak force, not feeling strong enough to do more than raid, retreated towards the coast and were defeated with heavy losses by Persian troops in the vicinity of Ephesus, the survivors taking refuge in the neighbouring cities. The capture of Sardes aroused the wrath of Darius who ordered a slave daily to call out in his presence, " Sire, remember the Athenians ".

The Defeat of the Ionian Rebels and the Fall of Miletus, 494 B.C.—Off Lade, an island situated opposite to Miletus, the Ionian Greek fleet of three hundred and fifty ships was decisively defeated by six hundred Phoenician and Cypriote vessels. Miletus, the most important city of the Greek world, was captured; its men were massacred, while the women and children were exiled to Ampe, situated at the mouth of the Tigris.

The Punitive Expedition against Athens, 490 B.C.—In 493 B.C. Mardonius, a nephew of Darius, led an expedition which reasserted Persian authority in Thrace and Macedonia. He was, however, unable to penetrate into Greece, as had been intended, owing to the loss of half his fleet in a storm. Darius accordingly decided to launch a naval expedition against offending Athens and Eretria. Crossing to Naxos, where the islanders were enslaved, Delos was visited, but was spared owing to its sanctity, and the fleet then sailed up the channel separating Eubœa and Attica. The allies had made no adequate preparations to meet the danger and Eretria was betrayed to the Persians by some of its leading citizens. The city was burned and its inhabitants were exiled to distant Elam.

The Battle of Marathon, 490 B.C.—From Eretria the Persian fleet sailed to the bay of Marathon, distant some thirty miles from Athens. With heroic courage the armed force of the city, some ten thousand strong, marched out to meet the invaders.

Thanks to the discovery by Professor Soteriadis of

the Heracleum which is situated not much more than a mile from the *soros* or " mound ", the accepted centre of the battle, the description of Herodotus becomes clear. Miltiades formed up his force, which was extended to meet the superior numbers of the Persians, and this necessitated a weak centre which, when the two forces met, was broken by the Persians and the Sakae. The armour-clad hoplites on the two wings, however, defeated the main Persian army and then turned on the force which had broken their centre and cut it to pieces.[1]

No battle in the world has exceeded that of Marathon in moral importance. Until then, Persia had conquered in every battle she fought against Greeks. Let us then pay homage to the Athenians who, unsupported by their ally Sparta, beat a superior force of the Great King's warriors in fair fight. To quote Herodotus: " They were the first of the Greeks who held fast when they saw the Median garb. . . . Until this time the very name of the Medes had been a terror to the Greeks to hear."

The Invasion of Hellas by Xerxes, 480 B.C.—Few pages of history are of greater interest than the account given by Herodotus of the assembling of the army of Xerxes, in which the peoples of Afghanistan were duly mentioned, the marshalling of the great fleet and the advance of the army, which crossed the Hellespont by a bridge of boats, through Thrace and Macedonia into Hellas. Thermopylae appealed to me with special force when I visited the scene of the heroic stand of the Spartan King Leonidas and the immortal " Three Hundred ". Indeed, remains of the fortified wall which he held can still be seen.

After turning the pass and killing its gallant defenders, the Persian army marched onwards, while the navy defeated the Greek allied fleet off neighbouring Artemisium, and its leaders, hearing of the forcing of Thermopylae, hastily retreated.

The Battle of Salamis, 480 B.C.—A decisive naval battle was fought at Salamis between that island and the

[1] In *Great Britain and the East* for January 23, 1936, I have published the important discoveries of Professor Soteriadis under the title of " New Light on the Battle of Marathon ".

mainland. The Persian fleet, protected by the army which had captured Athens, took station at neighbouring Phaleron. I have examined the site of the battle and it is clear that although the Persians had ample sea-room at first, when their left wing had to advance along the channel between the islands of Psyttalea and Salamis, which not only was narrow but involved a partial wheel to the right, much jamming was inevitable, whereas the Greek fleet possessed a considerable advantage in being able to advance or to retire as the situation might demand. Finally, the Persian fleet whose numbers were, if anything, a hindrance in these narrows, was decisively defeated with heavy losses. Thus ended the battle of Salamis, which ranks as one of the decisive battles of the world. In the following year the Persian army was also beaten at the battle of Plataea and the survivors hastily retreated to Asia. It would seem probable that, after such crushing defeats involving a very serious loss of prestige, the Persian Empire was doomed. On the contrary, for another century and a half, Persia continued to play the leading rôle on the world's stage.

The Reign of Artaxerxes I, 465–425 B.C.—Xerxes, the cowardly monarch, who fled back to Asia after the defeat of his fleet at Salamis, spent a year at Sardes and then proceeded to Susa. Given over to debauchery, he ended his disastrous reign at the hands of the captain of his guard. He was succeeded by Artakhohayarsha or Artaxerxes I, who was then a boy. He was known to history by the epithet of *Longimanus* or the "long-handed", his right hand, according to Plutarch, being longer than his left, and as mentioned in Chapter IX, this monarch, under the title of Ardeshir *Dirazdast*, also signifying the "long-handed", was the first historical Great King of Persia to be mentioned in the national epic of Firdausi.

The Rebellion of Hystaspes, 462 B.C.—One of the early troubles the new monarch had to face was the rebellion of his brother Hystaspes, the Viceroy of distant Bactria. Artaxerxes himself led an army against the rebel, who was defeated in two battles and then disappears from the scene.

The Revolt of Egypt, 460–454 B.C.—More serious was the revolt of Egypt, which was supported by a powerful expeditionary force from Athens. The Persian garrison was too weak to quell the rebellion and was cut to pieces.

In due course, however, an overwhelming Persian military expedition, supported by a powerful fleet, not only defeated the Egyptian army but finally forced the soldiers of the Athenian army, who had suffered heavy losses, to surrender. The Phoenicians also had their revenge for former defeats by sinking half of an inadequate reinforcement of fifty Athenian triremes.

The Peace of Callias, 448 B.C.—The blow suffered by the Athenians in Egypt was followed by a Persian attempt to recapture Cyprus. During the course of this campaign the Athenians not only defeated with heavy loss a Phoenician fleet which had been disembarking troops but, landing their own troops, gained a victory over the Persian general.

As a result of these brilliant successes, Callias proceeded to Susa where an agreement was reached, by the terms of which the Great King recognized the independence of all the Greeks, who were members of the League of Delos, of which confederacy Athens was the head. He also agreed that no Persian warships, but only trading vessels, should enter Greek waters. In return, the Athenians renounced all support to Greeks who were Persian subjects, and finally they withdrew from Cyprus. This peace was faithfully kept for some years.

Darius Nothus, 424, 404 B.C.—Artaxerxes reigned for several years after the Peace of Callias, but upon his death in 425 B.C. there was a period of anarchy caused by the fight for the throne among the princes of the blood. Ochus, termed Nothus or "the Bastard", since his mother was a concubine, ascended the throne as Darius II. His wife was Parysatis, who was destined to play a sinister rôle for many years. His reign was a series of insurrections but, thanks to the Persian King's command of the gold hoards of the dynasty, the Greek mercenaries who were engaged by the various rebels deserted them,

and left their masters to the punishment of being thrown "into the ashes".

Cyrus the Younger.—After this period of anarchy we come to the epic of Cyrus the Younger, who was Viceroy of Asia Minor while his elder brother Arsaces was the heir-apparent. Cyrus, aided by Spartan mercenaries, having built up a powerful army, was summoned by his father, Darius II, to Susa, where he arrived just in time to be present at his death.

Artaxerxes II, 404–358 B.C.—Arsaces duly ascended the throne on the demise of Darius II as Artaxerxes II. Cyrus, who was charged with conspiring to assassinate his brother during the coronation ceremony, would have been executed, but for the intercession of his mother, by whose influence he was not only pardoned but was re-appointed to his post in Asia Minor.[1]

Cyrus marches on Babylon.—As was only to be anticipated, upon returning to Sardes, Cyrus enlisted more and more Greek mercenaries and, in 401 B.C., marched off to fight for the lordship of Asia.

His general, Clearchus, was an experienced Spartiate, and the army, crossing the Taurus range, occupied Tarsus without encountering any opposition. There the Spartan troops at first refused to proceed farther eastwards, and indeed stoned Clearchus. But they finally were won over by promised increase of pay. Crossing the Euphrates, a forced march was made down its left bank with the object of attacking the Great King before he had assembled his army in full strength.

The Battle of Cunaxa, 401 B.C.—There were no signs of the Persian army, and upon entering the province of Babylonia unopposed, the opinion was formed that Artaxerxes had retreated to the uplands of Persia. Suddenly, however, almost without warning, the Great King at the head of half a million men was reported to be within a few hours' march. The invading army was thereupon hastily drawn up in readiness for the battle.

Cyrus, who took post in the centre at the head of six

[1] Remarkable accounts of these dramatic events are given by Plutarch in his *Artaxerxes* and by Xenophon in his *Anabasis*.

hundred heavy cavalry, ordered Clearchus to attack the Persian centre, where the Great King would certainly be stationed. The Spartan general, however, who was clearly lacking in tactical ability, clung to the Euphrates in order to protect his right flank. He thereby undoubtedly lost the battle.

Cyrus, on the other hand, fully realized that although the Persian left wing was scattering in front of the Greek hoplites, to win the battle he must break the centre, and if possible kill his brother. Accordingly he charged and, cutting his way through the opposing Cadusian cavalry, reached Artaxerxes. Mad with hatred, he hurled a javelin which struck his brother, piercing his cuirass and unhorsing him. Cyrus thought that he had won the battle, when he was suddenly wounded near the eye by a dart, and in the mêlée which ensued, he was killed.

Artaxerxes, who feared that all was lost, was informed of the death of his brother and, when the news spread, his troops rallied round him, while the adherents of Cyrus fled. Clearchus meanwhile, believing that the victory had been won, instead of ascertaining the facts, returned to his camp in triumph.

The Retreat of the Ten Thousand.—In the morning information was received of the death of Cyrus and of the flight of his Persian troops. The Greeks, who were summoned to surrender, finally decided to march home northwards to the Black Sea. Their officers were captured by treachery at a conference, but under Xenophon, their indomitable leader, the gallant Ten Thousand marched up the Tigris, defeated the Carduchi or Kurds in their mountains, and finally, having crossed Armenia, ascended a pass from which Trapezus, the modern Trebizond, was visible. It is nearly fifty years since I visited Trebizond, but I shall never forget the thrill I experienced when the distant pass from which the heroes shouted *Θαλασσα! Θαλασσα!* "The Sea! the Sea!" was pointed out to me by the British Consul.

The feat was indeed a superb one, and some of these heroes who took part in it would certainly have given vivid accounts of Cunaxa to Philip, who became King

of Macedonia in 359 B.C. Their experience at that stricken field proved that no Persian army would face a resolute charge by Greek hoplites.

The Peace of Antalcidas, 387 B.C.—The defeat of the Great King at Cunaxa led to an attempt by Agesilaus, the skilful Spartan general, to shake off Persian supremacy over the Greek colonies in Asia Minor, but owing to the able use of Persian gold, Athens became the ally of Persia and formed a league against Sparta with Thebes, Argos and Corinth. Agesilaus, driven out of Asia as he said, "by a thousand Persian archers",[1] was summoned home to meet the new situation. Finally, by astute policy, the Peace of Antalcidas, which was in effect an edict of the Great King, was now issued. By its terms all the Greek colonies in Asia Minor, together with Cyprus, were declared to constitute part of the Persian Empire, and every state of Hellas not under Persian domination was, with a few exceptions, declared to be autonomous.

In accordance with this edict, Artaxerxes first attacked Cyprus which, after offering a stubborn resistance of some years, surrendered. The Great King, in 374 B.C., next invaded Egypt, but the Persian army was finally compelled to retreat.

The Death of Artaxerxes II, 358 B.C.—Artaxerxes, who appears to have been entirely dominated by his terrible mother Parysatis, whom he even pardoned after she had poisoned his much-loved wife Statira, enjoyed a long reign. In spite of the awe in which he was held by the Greeks, during his closing years there were frequent rebellions by Satraps, who aimed at the throne or who feared the royal displeasure.

The Accession of Artaxerxes III, 358–338 B.C.—After a struggle for the succession among the three sons of Statira, Ochus, who had successfully plotted for the death of his two brothers, ascended the throne, when his first step was to massacre all the princes of the blood.

Egypt, which had revolted with some success, was finally conquered in 342 B.C. and Ochus outraged

[1] This was a reference to the reverse of the golden daric.

Egyptian feelings by slaying the sacred bull Apis and serving its flesh at a banquet. Elsewhere the outlying provinces, including the Punjab, shook off the yoke of Persia. Ochus was, however, resolute and, thanks to the clever policy of his minister, the eunuch Bagoas, the general situation improved, while the rising power of Macedonia was carefully watched and the efforts of King Philip were frustrated. Finally the Minister murdered not only his master, but most of his sons.

The Accession of Darius Codomannus, 336 B.C.—Bagoas, whose power was supreme, chose a certain Codomannus, who was probably a scion of the Achaemenian family, and placed him on the throne under the title of Darius III. The new ruler had proved his courage by slaying a gigantic Cadusian warrior in single combat and had been appointed Satrap of Armenia as a reward for this feat. Had the situation been normal, he might well have re-established the Persian Empire. *Sed diis aliter visum.*

CHAPTER V

ALEXANDER THE GREAT CONQUERS THE PERSIAN EMPIRE

For my own part, I think that there was at that time no race of men, no city, nor even a single individual to whom Alexander's name and fame had not penetrated. For this reason it seems to me that a hero, totally unlike any other human being, could not have been born without the agency of the deity.—ARRIAN.

The Youth and Accession of Alexander.—Alexander the Great, born in 356 B.C., was the son of Philip, King of Macedonia, and Olympias, daughter of an Epirote prince. Philip was a great general and organizer who, by his exceptional ability, raised his kingdom from the position of a weak state, constantly menaced by her neighbours, to that of being the dominant power in Hellas.[1] At the battle of Chaeronea, in 338 B.C., his veteran national army defeated the allied troops of Thebes and Athens, victory being won by a charge of the heavy Macedonian cavalry led by the youthful Alexander, which broke the right wing of the enemy.

Philip, whose great military invention was that of the phalanx, which could break through any force that was opposed to it, had intended to invade Persia after his election as Captain-General of Hellas. He was duly elected, but, while making his final preparations for the campaign, was assassinated. Alexander, aged twenty, who had been the pupil of Aristotle and was already an experienced general, succeeded his father.

His Recognition by Hellas.—As was to be expected, Alexander had to prove his military capacity before being accepted by the turbulent states surrounding his kingdom. While absent on a campaign in the Danube Valley, a

[1] In this chapter I have consulted, among other works, the *Anabasis* of Arrian translated by E. J. Chinnock, 1884, and *Philip and Alexander of Macedon*, by D. G. Hogarth, 1897.

rumour of his death was credited at Thebes, where the citizens revolted and besieged the Macedonian garrison holding the citadel. Suddenly Alexander reappeared before Thebes, which was captured and destroyed, the population being sold into slavery. This severe lesson was not lost on the other states of Hellas, and Alexander was consequently able to devote himself to the organization of his army for the invasion of the Persian Empire.

The Situation in Persia.—It must not be thought that Persia invited invasion by being in a state of anarchy. Far from it. Darius Codomannus, the reigning monarch of the Achaemenian dynasty, had won a reputation for bravery on the field of battle and his rule was undisputed throughout his vast empire. Moreover, the armed forces at the disposal of the satraps of Western Asia included many thousands of Greek mercenaries who, as also did the garrisons of the Greek cities, fought with desperate bravery against the hated Macedonians. Indeed, the Greek inhabitants of Asia Minor constituted the backbone of the resistance to Alexander. Finally, in sea-power, the Persian Empire was supreme, so much so that Alexander, realizing this fact, disbanded his fleet after the capture of Miletus. It should, however, be borne in mind that, at the battle of Cunaxa, as mentioned in the last chapter, the army of the Great King had fled before a force of Greek hoplites, and that this feat was well known in Hellas.

The Battle of the Granicus, 334 B.C.—The army that was destined to conquer the Persian Empire consisted of 30,000 infantry and 5000 cavalry, only one-half being Macedonians. Thessaly provided a large contingent to the cavalry division, but there was only a small number of Peloponnesians and other Greek allies. For the task to be accomplished the force would seem to have been totally inadequate, but it included many veterans and was led by Alexander.

Marching off from Macedonia in the spring of 334 B.C. the army moved rapidly across Thrace to the Hellespont, where Abydos on the Asiatic side was garrisoned by Macedonian troops. Grave anxiety was felt that the Hellespont might be held by a Phoenician fleet, which

Alexander's 160 triremes and attendant transports could not have faced. Accordingly there was intense relief and much rejoicing when the army was ferried across into Asia without opposition.

Alexander conquers Asia Minor, 334–333 B.C.—The first battle was fought on the Granicus, a river flowing into the Sea of Marmora, where the Persian cavalry 20,000 strong was supported by an equal number of Greek mercenaries who were unwisely kept entirely in reserve. Although fighting with desperate courage, the Persian cavalry were decisively defeated; the Greek mercenaries were subsequently cut to pieces.

After this victory no field army opposed Alexander in Asia Minor; Sardes, with its almost impregnable citadel, was tamely surrendered by its cowardly governor, but both Miletus and Halicarnassus had to be stormed.

The Death of Memnon, 333 B.C.—The most formidable opponent of the invaders was the Greek general Memnon, who, after the loss of Halicarnassus, was organizing a naval descent on Macedonia and Hellas, which might have had serious results, but most fortunately for Alexander he suddenly died.

The Battle of Issus, November 333 B.C.—Alexander at the Granicus had merely crossed swords with the army of a satrap, but passing through the famous Cilician Gates,[1] which were not held against him, at Issus, a small plain situated between the hills and the sea, he met the main Persian army commanded by Darius. It should be explained that Alexander, hearing that Darius was awaiting him on the open country beyond the Syrian Gates, had marched across the plain of Issus and had actually passed the Gates when he heard that the Great King, crossing a pass to the north, had assembled his army at Issus. As a result of these manœuvres each army fought facing its line of communication.

Alexander, thus acquainted with the terrain, could scarcely believe that Darius would have been so foolish as to select such a cramped battlefield for his unwieldy

[1] Until the rocks were blasted in the nineteenth century, camels had to be unloaded and their loads carried by hand, owing to the extreme narrowness of the defile.

force. He declared to his officers that the deity was evidently fighting on their side and he also recalled to their memory the exploits of the famous Ten Thousand.

Darius had drawn up his army, estimated at over half a million men, behind the small river that divided the plain. On the right were posted 30,000 Greek mercenaries, a force which was nearly equal to that of Alexander's army, while Darius himself, in accordance with Persian custom, took post in the centre. Alexander, as in all his battles, led the heavy cavalry on the right wing with Parmenio commanding the phalanx on the left.

As at Cunaxa, seventy years before, the Persians refused to face the Macedonians, and when Alexander charged at Darius, that craven monarch, seized with panic, turned his chariot from the battle and fled, as depicted in the famous mosaic at Naples. Only the Greek mercenaries fought bravely, although deserted by the Persian troops who blocked the passes and were cut to pieces by thousands. The battle of Issus was one of the decisive battles of the world, since it was clearly proved that no Persian army would face the Macedonians in any future battle.

The Siege of Tyre and the Annexation of Egypt, 332–331 B.C.—The wise policy of Alexander was to capture all the Persian naval bases and to annex Egypt before crossing the Euphrates and marching into the heart of the Persian Empire. Tyre offered a gallant defence, but was finally captured. During the course of the siege the Sidonians and other Phoenicians made terms with Alexander, who by his latest feat of arms thus completed the destruction of Persian sea-power.

Marching towards Egypt, Gaza made a heroic resistance, its defenders fighting to the death. Egypt, however, surrendered without a battle to Alexander who treated the people kindly. He also showed especial respect to the Egyptian deities, and impelled by the fantastic strain in his character, visited the remote oasis of Ammon (the modern Siwa oasis) where he was hailed by the priests as the undoubted son of the God.

The Battle of Arbela, 331 B.C.—With his rear based on conquered territories, and the sea-power of Persia a thing of the past, Alexander marched eastwards and crossed the Euphrates by two bridges of boats, which had been constructed by his orders. Meeting with practically no opposition, he marched across northern Mesopotamia past Carrhae, where, some two centuries later, the Roman legions under Crassus were destined to be cut to pieces, and reach the swift-flowing Tigris. Darius with almost incredible negligence made no attempt to prevent the passage by the enemy of this river, a feat which was not accomplished without considerable difficulty.

Marching down the left bank of the Tigris, at Gaugamela, close to the ruins of ancient Nineveh and some seventy miles to the north-west of Arbela, which has given its name to the battle, Alexander found the huge army of Darius once again drawn up in battle array, this time on an extensive level plain, with its left resting on the river. As at Issus, Darius, who turned to flee while the issue of the battle hung in the balance, gave the victory to Alexander, who pursued the defeated Persians to Arbela. Darius, however, escaped across the mountains to Ecbatana.

The victor then marched on Babylon, where he was warmly welcomed alike by the priests and people. From that city he proceeded to Susa, the winter capital of the Achaemenians, where he seized incredible sums of gold — the hoards of the dynasty.

The Occupation of Persepolis and Pasargadae.—Halting to celebrate his triumph, with banquets, sacrifices, and gymnastic contests, Alexander marched on Persepolis, the homeland of the dynasty, meeting on the way with serious, but unsuccessful, opposition.[1] At the spring capital of the dynasty further immense sums of gold, estimated at some thirty millions sterling, were captured. At Pasargadae, the capital of Cyrus the Great, some miles to the

[1] For Alexander's initial failure at the Bolsoru Pass and his final triumph, *vide* "An Archaeological Journey in Western Iran", by Sir Aurel Stein, in *Journal R.G.S.* for October 1938.

north, the conqueror visited his tomb, which is still standing, and paid homage to his memory.[1]

The Pursuit and Death of Darius Codomannus, 330 B.C. —After celebrating the capture of Persepolis by a feast, at which the Hall of One Hundred Columns was burned, Alexander decided once again to attack Darius, who, according to report, had raised a fresh army. However, upon approaching Ecbatana, the Macedonian leader was informed that the Great King, who had sent his family ahead, had followed it to the Caspian Gates, intending to take refuge in distant Bactria. Alexander accordingly occupied Ecbatana, which he made his advanced base and garrisoned it with 6000 Macedonians, to whose charge his great treasure was committed.

He then started in pursuit of the hapless Persian monarch. After a long chase, news was received by Alexander that Bessus, Satrap of Bactria, and other officials had treacherously made a prisoner of the Great King. Finally, making a supreme effort, in the vicinity of modern Damghan, Alexander found a waggon in which lay Darius covered with wounds and just dead. This infamous murder was a stroke of good fortune for the conqueror since it left no member of the royal family in the field, while the odium of the crime fell on Bessus.

The Conquest of Hyrcania and Parthia.—From the neighbourhood of Damghan, Alexander crossed the mountain range to the north and conquered fertile Hyrcania. At its capital, Zadracarta, situated in the vicinity of Astrabad, he received the submission of 1500 Greek mercenaries and of various Persian nobles and officials. He then traversed Parthia, and marching up the Gurgan, descended into the valley in which Susia (the medieval Tus) was situated. There Satibarzanes, the Satrap of the Areians, tendered his submission and was reappointed to Areia, the modern province of Herat.

The Treachery of Satibarzanes.—Alexander, hearing that Bessus, upon his arrival in Bactria, had assumed the

[1] *Vide* Sykes' *History of Persia* (2nd ed.), i. p. 154, for illustration of tomb. *Vide* also *op. cit.* i, pp. 179-180.

title of Great King, decided to attack him without delay. Traversing the province of Areia he was already well on his way to Bactra, the capital of Bactria, when he heard that Satibarzanes, acting in collusion with Bessus, had killed the Macedonian representative and his escort at Artacoana. Changing his plans with his usual promptitude, Alexander marched back on the capital, covering seventy miles in two days, and by this forced march he crushed the rebellion.

The March through Seistan and up the Helmand.—In view of the changed situation, Alexander decided to move south and attack Barsaentes, Satrap of Drangiana or Zarangiana [1] (later Seistan), who was one of the murderers of Darius. He was also rightly anxious to prevent his lines of communication being attacked by an enemy. He first occupied Prophthasia, now Farah, on the river of that name, the capital. He then visited the Ariaspae in Zarangiana, the delta of the Helmand, whom Cyrus had named " the Benefactors ". Alexander treated them with honour and added to their territories.

His march now lay up the Helmand through Arachosia (the Kandahar province) in which he founded another Alexandria. He probably crossed the Helmand at the modern Girishk and finally turned north following the caravan route to Kabul, as did a British army some two thousand years later during the First Afghan War.

The Passage of the Hindu Kush and the Annexation of Bactria, 328 B.C.—Close to the Hindu Kush in the vicinity of modern Charikar, where the three routes across the main range meet, Alexander founded an Alexandria *ad Caucasum*,[2] which he garrisoned with Macedonian colonists. It lay only a few miles to the west of Kapisa, the capital of the country when it was visited by Hsuan-tsang. Today Charikar is an important town and the residence of the governor of the district.

During the passage of the lofty range the army suffered alike from cold and scarcity of supplies. The

[1] I have visited the medieval city of Zaranj, which is in ruins.

[2] The Hindu Kush was more usually known as Paropanisus, which term appears in Ptolemy's map of the second century A.D. Under the Greek rulers of Bactria, as we shall see, the province, south of the Hindu Kush, is termed Paropamisadae.

mountains are described as being bare of everything except the wild pistachio and the silphium or asafoetida.

No opposition was attempted by Bessus and when the Macedonians descended into Bactria Alexander led his army to Bactra, the capital, which, owing to its close connexion with the Prophet Zoroaster, was considered to be sacred; it was also the most important city in the eastern part of the Persian Empire and was the last to fall to the Macedonian conqueror.

The Advance to the Jaxartes or Sir Daria.—The army crossed the wide Oxus on skins stuffed with straw, whereupon Spitamenes, the Commander of the Soghdian cavalry, realizing that he would speedily be attacked, handed over Bessus to Alexander, by whose orders he was condemned to be crucified at Ecbatana. Maracanda, now Samarkand, was the next objective. There Alexander rested his army and, advancing to the Jaxartes, founded Alexandria *Eschate* or "the Extreme", the modern Khojent. This city, situated on the eastern boundary of the Persian Empire, was some 3500 miles east of Macedonia, and what this distance meant may be explained by stating that it constituted a march for an army of at least one year, including necessary halts.

A Macedonian Disaster.—While engaged in the foundation of the latest Alexandria, a report was received that Spitamenes had rebelled and that Samarkand was being besieged. A division which Alexander despatched to raise the siege was cut to pieces in the Polytimetus (now the Zerafshan) Valley by Spitamenes, who had been supported by a strong force of Scythians. Faced with this crisis, Alexander, who had already crossed the Jaxartes and defeated the hostile Scythians, marched rapidly to the scene of the disaster where he found the dead bodies of his soldiers. To avenge them he massacred and ravaged throughout the fertile valley. He then returned to Bactria where, in the midwinter of 329–328 B.C. he received important reinforcements from Macedonia.

The Capture of the Soghdian Rock.—In the following spring Alexander again crossed the Oxus and advanced on Maracanda in four columns, which broke down all

resistance. During this campaign he captured the Soghdian Rock, thanks to a body of volunteers who scaled the cliffs overlooking the fort by means of iron pegs driven into the rocks. Among the prisoners was Roxana, the daughter of the Bactrian Chief Oxyartes. Alexander afterwards married Roxana, and appointed Oxyartes Governor of Bactria.

The Descent to the Plains of India, 327 B.C.—Some two years had been spent in the reduction and organization of the Central Asian provinces of the Persian Empire, whose inhabitants alone had bravely resisted the invaders. Alexander had already been in communication with Taxiles, the ruler of the northern Punjab, and upon his arrival at Nicaea, which has been identified by Holdich with Kabul,[1] that monarch tendered his submission in person. The main body of the Macedonian army under Hephaestion was then despatched down the Panjshir Valley to the land of Penkelaotis, in the lower Swat Valley. Alexander himself, in accordance with his custom of protecting his lines of communication, attacked the tribes inhabiting the Kunar Valley. He then crossed into the Swat Valley and stormed Aornos, situated in a bend of the Indus. Thanks to Sir Aurel Stein, we have a vivid description of this, perhaps Alexander's greatest feat of arms.[2]

The Passage of the Indus.—After this successful campaign, Alexander rejoined the main body of the army on the Indus at Attock, where Hephaestion had constructed a bridge of boats. Crossing into the territory of Taxiles, the conqueror was welcomed by his ally at Taxila, the ruins of which city, situated half-way between Attock and Rawal Pindi, have recently been excavated.

The Battle with Porus, 326 B.C.—Leaving a garrison at Taxila, Alexander marched towards the Hydaspes (the Jhelum) where Porus, its monarch, had assembled a powerful force, strengthened by numerous war elephants, to defend his kingdom.

The situation was one of no ordinary difficulty since

[1] *The Gates of India*, p. 98.
[2] Vide *On Alexander's Track to the Indus*, chs. xvii-xx.

the Jhelum was in flood and the horses of the invaders might well be frightened by the elephants. However, the genius of Alexander shone most brightly when faced with difficulties, calculated to daunt any leader of ordinary calibre. After making constant marches and counter-marches in order to deceive the enemy, he succeeded in crossing the river at a point some miles upstream where a thickly wooded island screened his movements, but where he had to ford a dangerously deep channel between it and the left bank in a rainstorm.

Alexander found the army of Porus, who had been warned of his approach, drawn up in battle array, with the war elephants in front. Resting his men for a while, he examined the position in person and, taking advantage of his superior strength in cavalry, made his main attack on the left of the Indian army, while a brigade was sent to work round to the rear of the enemy. The Indian cavalry, while preparing to wheel part of their force to meet the threatened attack in the rear, were charged by Alexander, who drove them to take shelter behind the elephants. The phalanx now advanced, but since the elephants crashed through it the situation was serious. Ultimately the elephants became unmanageable from wounds, and trampled alike on friend and foe, while the Indian cavalry was hemmed in between the elephants and the infantry. The Macedonians could retreat and open out when necessary and were winning the battle. At this juncture Craterus crossed the Jhelum with the remainder of the Macedonian troops who were fresh, and turned the defeat of the enemy into a rout. Alexander was at his greatest in this desperately contested battle and displayed generosity to the captured Porus, whom he reinstated in his kingdom.

The Army refuses to advance into the Valley of the Ganges.—The Macedonians had suffered heavy losses in this hard-won battle and, crossing the Punjab during the height of the monsoon rains, halted on the right bank of the Hyphasis (Beas). Alexander wished to cross into the valley of the Ganges, but the soldiers were opposed to any further advance, declaring that they were weary

of endless marches and battles and were only anxious to return home and enjoy what they had earned with such hardships and risks. Alexander, perforce, finally permitted himself to yield to their wishes, and gave the order to march towards Macedonia.

The March to the Indian Ocean, 326–325 B.C.—The march down the Jhelum and the Indus took nearly a year to accomplish. Alexander everywhere attacked the peoples who failed to offer their submission and, in storming the city of the Malloi, which has been identified with Multan, he was severely wounded. From Patala, at the apex of the Indus delta, his general, Craterus, was ordered to march three brigades and the elephants back to Persia " by the route through the Arachosians and Zarangians ".

The March from India to Susa, 325 B.C.—Alexander instructed Nearchus, who was in command of the flotilla of the ships which had been constructed on the banks of the Jhelum, to sail along the coast of Gedrosia (now Makran) and Southern Persia to the River Eulaeus[1] (Karun). He himself decided to march through barren Makran maintaining touch as far as possible with his fleet and arranging to collect supplies for its use. This arrangement worked fairly well at first, but at Ras Malan the army was obliged to turn inland. Of this section of the march Arrian writes: " The blazing heat and want of water destroyed a great part of the army . . . tortured alike by raging heat and thirst unquenchable ".

Alexander reached the coast once again at Pasni where, as I found by experience, fresh water can be obtained from wells dug on the seashore. He was, however, unable to regain touch with his fleet. At Gwadur the route to the interior follows up a river and at Pura, somewhere in the vicinity of Bampur, he rested the worn-out troops in a fertile area.[2] Here Alexander was welcomed by his officials who hastened to furnish him with supplies of every description, as well as horses.

[1] Actually Nearchus termed it Pasitigris or " Lesser Tigris ".

[2] Stein objects to Fahreh, now Iran-Shahr, which is situated some sixteen miles east of Bampur, being the Pura of Arrian. *Vide* his *Archaeological Reconnaissances in North-Western India and South-Eastern Iran*, 1937, pp. 112-113.

From Pura the army marched down the Bampur River to a lake termed the Jaz Morian, which I discovered nearly fifty years ago when following in the footsteps of the Great Conqueror in this section of his march. The lake is formed by the commingling of the waters of the Bampur River, as it is termed today, with those of the Halil Rud, which flowed into it from the west.

A standing camp was formed in the latter valley, where an Alexandria was founded.[1] It was at this camp, situated some six stages inland, that Nearchus and a few of his companions appeared in rags and unkempt. Alexander, seeing their miserable plight, feared the worst and was transported with delight upon hearing that the fleet was safe in the harbour of Harmozia, the medieval Hormuz. Shortly afterwards Craterus also rejoined the main body, having safely crossed the desert from Zarangia without opposition.

Orders were now given for the fleet to continue the voyage to the Karun River, while the main body of the army marched along the coast, keeping touch with it. Alexander himself, with a picked body of light troops, traversed the districts of Sirjan and Baonat to Pasargadae, where, to his distress, he found that the tomb of Cyrus had been desecrated.

Finally the greatest expedition recorded in history was brought to a triumphal conclusion at Susa. The celebrations, conducted on a scale of surpassing magnificence, included weddings between the noblest Macedonians and Persian women of high degree, Alexander himself marrying Statira, the daughter of Darius.

The Death of Alexander the Great, 323 B.C.—The Great Conqueror was never satisfied and had determined that he would next lead an expedition for the conquest of Arabia. He gave orders for the construction of a fleet to be manned by Phoenicians and sailed down the Euphrates on a reconnaissance. Upon his return he was suddenly laid low, probably with malarial fever. Instead of resting himself, he insisted on continuing his

[1] In this valley a peasant brought me a Greek alabaster unguent vase of the period of Alexander.

usual routine of duty. This proved to be beyond his strength and after greeting his sorrowing soldiers who filed past him as he lay speechless, he died at the early age of thirty-two.

Alexander the Great, whose strategical and tactical genius, allied to his splendid qualities of leadership, mark him out as the greatest of generals, was also a statesman, whose plans were almost invariably successful. His personality, imbued with the spirit embodied in the "proper mean", inculcated by his teacher Aristotle, was both feared and beloved by Macedonians and Persians, and in conjunction with his thirst for exploration and for knowledge of every kind, placed him on a plane above that of a human being, however gifted, and made even his critics believe that he was the offspring of a god.

CHAPTER VI

THE SELEUCID DYNASTY AND THE RISE OF PARTHIA

Of all those who succeeded to the sovereignty after Alexander, Seleucus became the greatest King, was the most kingly in mind, and ruled over the greatest extent of land after Alexander himself.—ARRIAN.

The Position on the Death of Alexander.—The sudden death of the Great Conqueror without leaving a legitimate son to succeed him, unchained conflicting ambitions, which convulsed his empire for two generations.[1]

The first compromise that was come to, not without fighting, was that Philip Arrhidaeus, the half-witted illegitimate brother of Alexander, should be recognized as King, with Perdiccas, the senior officer of the Court, as Regent, until the birth of the hoped-for son and heir of Roxana should be old enough to take over the reins of government. The principal generals were appointed governors of various countries and proceeded to their posts, intending undoubtedly in the majority of cases to carve out kingdoms for themselves. This fact was realized by the title of *Diadochi* or " Successors " which was bestowed upon them.

During this period Roxana had murdered her rival Statira, the daughter of Darius, whom Alexander had married at Susa, and, shortly afterwards, she considerably strengthened her influence by giving birth to an ill-fated son, who was named Alexander.

Another tragedy was the mutiny of the Macedonian soldiers stationed in Bactria. Hearing of the death of Alexander, a large body determined to march back home across Asia. Upon reaching Media, some three thousand

[1] I have consulted *The House of Seleucus*, by Edwyn Robert Bevan; *The Greeks in Bactria and India*, by Dr. W. W. Tarn, 1938; the *Cambridge History of India*, vol. i; *Herodotus*, by A. W. Lawrence; *A Political History of Parthia*, by Neilson Debevoise and *The Oxford History of India*, by Doctor Vincent Smith.

strong,[1] they were attacked by Pithon, the newly appointed Satrap and, by the orders of Perdiccas, were all killed.

The Fight for Power — the First Period, 323–321 B.C. —Perdiccas, who had strengthened his position by betrothal to Alexander's sister Cleopatra, an alliance which brought him the support of Olympias, soon gave proof that he was aiming at supreme power. This caused Antigonus, the ruler of Phrygia, to disobey the summons of Perdiccas and to take refuge with Antipater, the ruler of Macedonia and Hellas, who, throughout his long life, was loyal to Alexander and the royal family. In 322 B.C., aided by Craterus, he had crushed a rising of Athens and her allies.

Considering Ptolemy to be the chief obstacle to his ambitions, Perdiccas, in 321 B.C., invaded Egypt, where he made three unsuccessful attempts to force the passage of the Nile. This failure, which caused numbers of his men to desert to Ptolemy, brought about a mutiny of his officers, who killed him. After this tragedy the army of Perdiccas made peace with Ptolemy and marched off to join the army of Antipater. There it mutinied, but finally Antipater was appointed Regent and guardian of the royal family.

The Rise of Seleucus Nicator.—Among the officers who had taken a leading part in the mutiny against Perdiccas was a young officer, Seleucus. He had served with marked distinction in all the campaigns, and had risen to high command. At Susa he had been awarded the hand of Apama, the daughter of Spitamenes, the doughty Persian who, as mentioned in the previous chapter, had inflicted a disaster on a Macedonian division in Central Asia. For his recent services Seleucus, destined to be known as Nicator or "the Conqueror", was appointed ruler of Babylon, where he set to work to strengthen his position in every possible way.

The Fight for Power — the Second Period, 321-316 B.C.—The period of constant warfare which ensued on the second distribution of posts can only be briefly

[1] Tarn in his *op. cit.*, p. 72, considers that the much larger numbers given were incorrect and I agree with him.

summarized in this work. In 319 B.C. Antipater had died and, since he had not bequeathed his office of regent to his son Cassander, but to a brother-in-arms, Polyperchon, that officer, to secure support against Cassander, warmly espoused the cause of Olympias. As a result Eumenes, the Secretary of Alexander, who, as Satrap of Cappadocia, was opposing Antigonus in Asia Minor, was appointed Commander of the "Silver Shields", the veteran *Corps d'élite* of the Macedonian army. Eumenes, in the spring of 317 B.C., was faced by an armed alliance between Antigonus and Seleucus, but defeated their attempt to cross the Karun River with heavy losses. In a second battle the "Silver Shields" carried all before them but lost their baggage. They, thereupon, by an act of almost unparalleled disloyalty, handed over their victorious General Eumenes to Antigonus, who executed him. The death of Eumenes extinguished the cause of the royal family so far as Asia was concerned.

The Extirpation of the Royal Family.—The savage characters of Olympias and of Eurydice, the wife of Philip Arrhidaeus, who were the prototypes of cruel Fredegonde and equally cruel Brunhild, were undoubtedly the main cause of the destruction of the family of Alexander the Great. Olympias, the Queen Mother, suddenly returned to Macedonia from Epirus after the death of Antipater. She seized Philip Arrhidaeus and his treacherous wife Eurydice and put them to death after torture. She then massacred the adherents of the family of Antipater by hundreds.

Cassander, however, was able to recover Macedonia and captured Olympias, who was stoned to death. Cassander then obtained possession of the youthful Alexander and of Roxana whom he kept close prisoners for some years. He finally murdered them in 311 B.C. Polyperchon also murdered Heracles, the illegitimate son of Alexander, in 309 B.C. and other members of the royal family, which was thus extirpated, so far as the males were concerned.

The Position in 315 B.C.—Eight years after the death

of Alexander, Antigonus ruled from the Mediterranean Sea to Bactria; Ptolemy held Egypt, in which country Seleucus had taken refuge from Antigonus; Cassander ruled in Macedonia and Hellas, and Lysimachus was establishing himself in Thrace.

The Battle of Gaza, 312 B.C.—The balance of power was thus entirely in favour of Antigonus, and the three weaker rulers combined to oppose him. The first blow in this series of campaigns was struck by Ptolemy, who, accompanied by Seleucus, marched into Coele-Syria and, at the threshold of that country, defeated Demetrius, the son of Antigonus. The result of the battle of Gaza included the temporary loss of Syria, while the invasion of Macedonia, which was being planned by Antigonus, was arrested.

Seleucus reoccupies Babylon and Creates an Empire.—Encouraged by this important success, Seleucus, at the head of only one thousand men, set out to recover Babylon. Welcomed everywhere along the route he followed, the gallant soldier re-entered Babylon on October 1, 312 B.C., on which date the Seleucid dynasty was founded.

In the following year Demetrius, the son of Antigonus, destined to win fame under the title of *Poliorcetes* or the "Captor of Cities", raided Babylon. Seleucus, who at that time was attacking Nicanor in Media with the main body of his troops, gave instructions that no opposition should be offered in the field to the invader. Demetrius captured one of the two citadels of Babylon and garrisoned it. He also plundered the city, but, to quote Plutarch: "He retired to the sea, leaving Seleucus more securely master of his dominions than before, as he seemed by this conduct to abandon every claim to a country which he treated as an enemy's".

Seleucus, who returned to Babylon in triumph, having defeated and won over the army of Nicanor, now set to work to annex the eastern provinces of Alexander's empire. By 302 B.C., after nine years of successful campaigns, his authority was acknowledged as far east as Alexandria *Eschate* on the Jaxartes.

In India he met the celebrated Indian conqueror Chandragupta, the classical Sandracottus, the first of the Maurya emperors who had annexed the whole of Northern India, and who had met Alexander the Great. At first Seleucus decided to attack this monarch, but finally he negotiated a treaty by the terms of which he ceded parts of the satrapies of Arachosia and the Parapamisadae which lay along the Indus and were inhabited by Indians.[1] In return he was given 500 war-elephants and much gold.

By the terms of the treaty a daughter of Seleucus was given in marriage to the Indian monarch. This peace led, in 302 B.C., to the despatch of an envoy named Megasthenes to the Court of Chandragupta at Pataliputra (Patna). There he wrote an excellent description of the geography and products of India, of which unfortunately only extracts, preserved in the writings of other authors, have come down to us.

Asoka, 273–233 B.C.—Chandragupta apparently abdicated, from religious motives, in 298 B.C. and was succeeded by his son Bindusura. Little is known about this monarch, who maintained friendly relations with Antiochus Soter. At the same time there is every reason to believe that he extended the Maurya Empire to the Deccan. He died in 273 B.C.

His successor was the celebrated Asoka, whose generally peaceful reign was consecrated to religion and justice. It was due to his influence that Buddhism was transformed from a local Indian sect into one of the world's great religions, while his edicts, carved on the rocks, convey instructions and maxims that are unrivalled.

The empire of Asoka comprised Afghanistan as far north as the Hindu Kush, Kashmir, and India as far south as Mysore. This truly great monarch ruled over his great empire for forty years and his name will never be forgotten. Under his successors the unwieldy empire was broken up and the last prince of this short-lived dynasty was killed about 185 B.C. by his Commander-in-Chief, Pushyamitra.

[1] For this question, *vide* Tarn, *op. cit.* p. 100.

The Campaigns of Antigonus, 312–301 B.C.—After the defeat at Gaza, Antigonus vowed, at all costs, to crush Ptolemy. He had recovered Syria, but his raid on Babylon had been a failure so far as any permanent result was concerned, while his campaign against Egypt, in 306 B.C., was a disastrous failure. His son, Demetrius, had besieged Rhodes during the years 305–304 B.C., but was finally repulsed from that fortress, which had been defended with magnificent courage.

Antigonus, in 304 B.C., decided to attack Cassander in Macedonia, and in 303 B.C. Demetrius, whom he had appointed to the command, defeated the hostile forces.

While these rivals for power were fighting on more or less equal terms, Seleucus, who had organized a fourth independent state in the East, was marching westwards and went into winter quarters in Cappadocia for the winter of 302–301 B.C.

The Battle of Ipsus, 301 B.C.—While engaged in his eastern campaigns, Seleucus had undoubtedly carefully watched the progress of events in the West and, when he returned at the head of a powerful army of veterans with his war-elephants and a full treasury, he was ready, with the aid of Lysimachus, to fight a decisive battle with Antigonus. In its first phase Demetrius defeated the cavalry of Seleucus, commanded by his son Antiochus, but pursued too far and Seleucus, thanks mainly to his war-elephants, was therefore victorious. Antigonus, who was deserted by many of his troops, fell on the field of battle and, with his death, another great figure passed off the stage.

The Situation after the Battle of Ipsus.—Ipsus was a decisive battle. It broke up the Asiatic empire of Antigonus, although Demetrius, thanks to his sea-power, held some ports such as Tyre and Sidon and various islands. Seleucus, who annexed Syria, was the strongest sovereign and, to meet the new situation, transferred his capital to Antioch. Lysimachus, as his share of the spoils, annexed Asia Minor. Realizing that Lysimachus would now probably become hostile to him, Seleucus opened up relations with Demetrius and married his daughter Stratonice. However, by attempting to secure Tyre and

Sidon from his father-in-law, the latter remained his enemy. The relations of Seleucus with Ptolemy were clouded over by the latter's claim to possess Coele-Syria, the Palestine of later days. Ptolemy, to strengthen his position, accordingly opened up relations with Lysimachus and gave him his daughter Arsinoe in marriage.

The Overthrow of Demetrius.—Demetrius was famous for the alternative victories and defeats which marked his chequered career, and was aptly compared to Antony by Plutarch. In 297 B.C. Cassander died, and was followed to the grave a year later by his son Philip. Taking advantage of the divided kingship which ensued, Demetrius, in 293 B.C., seized the throne of Macedonia. He then commenced preparations on a large scale for an expedition into Asia. Thereupon Lysimachus and Ptolemy incited Pyrrhus, Prince of Epirus, to join the former in an invasion of Macedonia. Pyrrhus, who was considered to be the bravest soldier of the age, and the most like Alexander, won over the virile Macedonians who, despising the luxurious Demetrius, deserted him. As a result, in 287 B.C. Macedonia was divided between Lysimachus and Pyrrhus.

Finally the career of the " Captor of Cities " came to an inglorious end. He invaded Asia Minor, and, after capturing Sardes, he was defeated by Agathocles, the son of Lysimachus, and driven into Cilicia. There, falling ill, he appealed to Seleucus, who refused to allow him to establish himself in his territories. As soon as he recovered his health, the daring soldier raided Syria, but when Seleucus rode up alone to his rival's army and declared who he was, the soldiers of Demetrius immediately came over to him.

Demetrius ended his romantic career as a state-prisoner of Seleucus, who surrounded him with every luxury. To him Plutarch applies the words put by Sophocles into the mouth of Menelaus:

> For me, my destiny, alas is found
> Whirling upon the god's swift wheel around.
> And changing still, and as the moon's face frame
> Cannot continue for two nights the same,

But out of shadow first a crescent shows,
Thence into beauty and perfection grows,
And when the form of plenitude it wears,
Dwindles again, and wholly disappears.

The Position of Lysimachus.—In 285 B.C. Lysimachus drove Pyrrhus from Macedonia, which he occupied. He thus became a powerful monarch, ruling from the Cilician Gates to the pass of Thermopylae. Realizing the danger of an attack by Demetrius, he offered Seleucus a large sum of money if he would put his prisoner to death. Seleucus repelled the proposal with virtuous indignation and actually considered the restoration of Demetrius to the throne of Hellas, but this scheme was frustrated by the death of his captive in 283 B.C.

The Defeat and Death of Lysimachus, 281 B.C.—Seleucus was undoubtedly the strongest of the three rivals, but the situation was suddenly changed and became still more favourable to him. Ptolemy, now a very old man, had abdicated, not in favour of his eldest son Ptolemy Keraunus, but of his son by Berenice, who, by his marriage to his sister Arsinoe, was later known as Ptolemy Philadelphus. Keraunus fled to the Court of Lysimachus where he intrigued against Agathocles with such success that the innocent Agathocles was assassinated by his father's orders, as also were his adherents. When the truth came to light, Keraunus fled and sought refuge with Seleucus, who thus had the claimant by right of birth to the throne of Egypt in his power.

The feeling against Lysimachus was so intense that his own officers deserted him and begged Seleucus to avenge the murder of Agathocles. Seleucus accepted this opportune appeal and met the army of Lysimachus on the plain of Corus in Lydia. We know no details about this battle nor indeed its actual site, but Lysimachus was defeated and killed.

The Assassination of Seleucus Nicator, 281 B.C.—Seleucus had now achieved what Perdiccas and Antigonus had failed to do. He ruled from Macedonia to the Jaxartes and he had at his Court Keraunus, whose claims he could use to secure Egypt as a tributary state. The

Nicator was, however, very old and decided to surrender this great empire to Antiochus his son, while reserving for himself the kingdom of Macedonia, in which to end his days. But he counted without Keraunus. That astute criminal realized that the mighty empire depended mainly on the person of Seleucus himself. A past master in intrigue, he plotted with, and won over, important officers in the army of his host. Meanwhile Seleucus, accompanied by Keraunus, crossed the Hellespont, and while the aged king was listening to the legend connected with a rude altar, he was murdered by that arch-criminal. Thus passed off the stage of history, on which he had played the leading rôle with such distinction, Seleucus Nicator, the greatest of the *Diadochi*.

Antiochus Soter, 281–262 B.C.—The assassination of Seleucus was followed by the appearance of Keraunus in the Seleucid camp at Lysimachia wearing the diadem and surrounded by a royal bodyguard. The army whose disloyal leaders had been won over accepted the assassin, who seized the throne of Macedonia. Antiochus was, however, no inexperienced weakling, but a worthy son of his great father. In spite of the far-reaching disaffection that prevailed, he secured his position in Syria and the eastern provinces. He was also supported by Antigonus Gonatas, the son of Demetrius, who attacked the fleet which had gone over to Keraunus, but was defeated and withdrew to Central Greece.

The Invasions of the Gauls and the Death of Keraunus, 280 B.C.—Keraunus soon paid the penalty for his various acts of treachery. Macedonia was suddenly invaded by savage Gauls or Galatians, as the Greeks termed them, who ravaged far and wide and ate the children they captured. They overran Macedonia and killed Keraunus.

Antiochus defeats the Galatians.—Another body of these savages occupied Phrygia. Antiochus met them, and Lucian tells us that when the Galatian cavalry, forty thousand strong, with their war-chariots were preparing to charge, the appearance of sixteen war-elephants of Antiochus terrified their horses and caused a mad stampede. The victory was complete, although other

bodies of Galatians appeared later and settled in the country, and Antiochus, who gained the title of *Soter* or "Saviour", suitably celebrated it by a trophy bearing the figure of an elephant.

The Divisions of Alexander's Empire after the "Celtic Fury".—The irruption of the Galatians ended a period. After it had passed Antiochus was the most powerful sovereign, but the kingdom of Macedonia, ruled by his brother-in-law Antigonus Gonatas, was of great importance, if only as the home of the warlike mercenaries on whom Antiochus mainly relied. Egypt, which also relied on Macedonian troops, remained strong and wealthy. These three empires were closely connected by marriage ties.

The reign of Antiochus Soter, together with that of his contemporary Ptolemy in Egypt, constitute the golden Hellenistic period although, generally speaking, the Seleucid and Antigonid monarchs were hostile to the Ptolemies, whose sea-power gained them the possession of Cyprus and other important islands. Antiochus, the Saviour, who had fought valiantly and with considerable success against almost insuperable difficulties, died in 261 B.C.

Antiochus Theos, 261–246 B.C.—Antiochus, whose title of *Theos* or "the God", was bestowed on him by the city of Miletus, was an unworthy successor to his father, being depraved and also a drunkard. The policy of hostility to Egypt was temporarily ended by a marriage of the Seleucid monarch to Berenice, a daughter of Ptolemy Philadelphus, who was given the epithet of "Dowry-bringer". It was agreed that Antiochus should divorce his wife Laodice, but, before long, he returned to her and suddenly died. It was generally believed that he was poisoned by Laodice, who hoped thereby to secure the throne for her son.

The Third Syrian War, 245 B.C.—The fight for power between Laodice and Berenice was the signal for a bitter civil war. Laodice kidnapped Berenice's infant son and later, luring Berenice into her power, murdered her and her son.

Ptolemy III, Euergetes or the "Benefactor", who had succeeded his father, appeared on the scene in a campaign termed the Third Syrian War. The details of this expedition were only revealed by an inscription in Greek inscribed by a Ptolemaic official at Adulis (Zeila), which was discovered by the Egyptian monk Cosmas Indicopleustes and was copied by him. To quote: "He [Euergetes] marched into Asia with foot-soldiers and horse and with a fleet and with Troglodytic and Ethiopian elephants, which he and his father had first captured in these parts and equipped for war. After having made himself master of all the countries on this side of the Euphrates . . . he crossed the Euphrates, and after the subjugation of Mesopotamia, Susiana, Persia, Media, and all the remaining provinces as far as Bactriana . . . he sent troops through the canals."[1] Here the inscription breaks off, but the campaign, which is described in exaggerated terms, was rather a brilliant raid than a serious attempt at conquest. The naval operations were more successful, the Cilician coast and Ephesus being recovered, as were also the possessions of the Seleucids in Thrace.

Seleucus II Callinicus and the Battle of Ancyra, circa 235 B.C.—The successor of Antiochus had no luck. Not only were his provinces invaded by land and by sea, but he lost his fleet in a storm. Later, in a battle which took place in Coele-Syria, the Egyptian army won and the unfortunate Seleucus withdrew to Antioch with the remnant of his army in a sorry plight.

His empire now suffered from civil war. Antiochus Hierax, his youthful brother of fourteen years, was supported by Mithridates of Pontus, whose ancestor had founded an Iranian dynasty in that province. The leader of a band of Galatian tribesmen joined Antiochus Hierax and attacked Seleucus. In the battle at Ancyra, the Galatians of Mithridates swept the forces of Seleucus off the field. The monarch was reported to have fallen, but had escaped from the field in disguise. Antiochus

[1] Quoted from *The Christian Topography of Cosmas* by J. W. McCrindle (Hakluyt Society). Troglodytic here signifies inhabitants of the Red Sea coasts.

Hierax, the victor, found himself the puppet of the Galatian bands, while Seleucus II, with amazing initiative, turned his arms against the rising power of Parthia, to which country we shall shortly refer.

Attalus of Pergamum and Antiochus Hierax.—The rise of Attalus of Pergamum, who defeated the Galatians and drove them from the coastlands, reacted unfavourably on the position of Hierax. Attalus defeated him and expelled him from Asia Minor. Finally he was killed by a raiding body of Galatians a year before the death of his brother, in 226 B.C.

Seleucus III, whose reign was cut short by assassination in 223 B.C., carried on the contest with Attalus, but there is no record of the results of these interminable campaigns.

The Close of a Great Period.—The historian Polybius selected the year 221 B.C. as the opening year for his history on the grounds that it marked a turning point in world history, as it was then conceived. In the east the rising state of Parthia had already started on a career of conquest, which was soon to embrace the Persian Empire and which ultimately made its warlike monarchs the protagonists of the East as against the West, which was soon to be represented by the armed might of Rome.

The Rise of Parthia.—Parthia is described by Strabo as being a small tract of country and, for this reason, as being united with neighbouring Hyrcania. I have travelled extensively in both provinces and consider that the well-wooded upper reaches of the Gurgan and Atrek rivers on the northern side of the Taurus range, together with a larger extension of territory on the semi-desert area to the south of the above range, may be considered to constitute the approximate boundaries of Parthia. Hyrcania included the lower portions of both the above valleys and, as already mentioned, was proverbial for its exuberant fertility.

The earliest mention of Parthia is perhaps to be found in the report of a raid undertaken by the Assyrian monarch Esarhaddon into the country to the south of

the Caspian Sea. It describes the chiefs who were made captives as Zanasana of Partakka and Uppis of Partakka. This expedition took place about 673 B.C. Less than a century later, during the reign of Cyaxares, Parthia apparently paid tribute to Media.

We come to firmer ground with Cyrus the Great, who, after his conquest of Media, marched eastwards and was acknowledged as overlord by the Parthians, Sakae, Bactrians and Khorasmians.

Under Cyrus, Parthia was ruled by Hystaspes, the father of Darius, as mentioned in Chapter IV, and, about 521 B.C., it revolted in favour of a Median pretender who was finally defeated. The province is also mentioned in the Behistun inscription.

The Foundation of the Arsacid Dynasty, 249 B.C.—The Parthians were undoubtedly of Aryan stock. They were invaded and conquered by a division of the Parni, one of the group of three tribes known as the Dahae, who grazed the steppes to the north of Hyrcania. They also cultivated some oases and were thus semi-nomadic.[1]

Under a chief, Arsaces, with whom was associated his brother Tiridates, the Parthians rose against their Seleucid governor who was killed. Arsaces I, who remains a shadowy figure, was apparently also killed in battle in 247 B.C., but nevertheless was the eponymous founder of the great Arsacid dynasty.

Tiridates (*Arsaces II*), 247–214 B.C.—The accession of Tiridates coincided with the invasion of the Seleucid empire by Ptolemy Euergetes, while the civil war, which culminated with the defeat of Seleucus II at Ancyra, must have inflicted a heavy blow on that monarch. Tiridates accordingly took advantage of the favourable situation to annex neighbouring Hyrcania.

In 228 B.C., however, Seleucus II appeared on the scene at the head of a powerful army. Tiridates, unable to meet it, fled to Transoxiana where he took refuge with the Apa-Sakae, or " Water Sakae ", one of the five tribes of the Massagetae. Later, he apparently defeated the Seleucid monarch, since the anniversary of a victory

[1] The Dahae are mentioned as nomads by Herodotus, *vide* i, 125.

was henceforth annually observed by the Parthians for many generations. Tiridates, after this success, consolidated his power until his death.

The Early Career of Antiochus the Great, 223–213 B.C.—Seleucus III, the son and successor of Callinicus, was murdered after a brief reign of only three years. His younger brother and successor was Antiochus III and few monarchs have experienced such vicissitudes of fortune. A youth of eighteen at his accession, he appointed his cousin Achaeus, Viceroy of Asia Minor, with Molon, Satrap of Media and his own brother Alexander, Satrap of Persia. At first the Seleucid was entirely under the influence of Hermias, a disloyal and corrupt minister, and partly in self-defence the two last-named satraps rebelled and defeated the force sent against them by Antiochus. However, the mere presence of the Seleucid monarch with his army ended this trouble, Molon committing suicide, while Hermias, who was plotting to murder his royal master, was assassinated. Achaeus had also rebelled but Antiochus confined his action on this occasion to remonstrances and threats.

The Battle of Raphia, 217 B.C.—Antiochus, who was anxious to regain possession of Coele-Syria, first captured Seleucia, a city which commanded the communications of Antioch with the sea, and soon afterwards Tyre was handed over to him. Ptolemy was, however, determined to contest the possession of this province. At a battle fought in the vicinity of Raphia, the frontier town bordering on the desert, the Indian elephants drove back the African elephants on to the Egyptian left wing, which was broken and pursued for some miles by Antiochus. On the Egyptian right wing, however, the two phalanxes met, and at the first shock the Seleucid army fled. Ptolemy, content with his victory, then made peace.

Antiochus was now free to deal with Achaeus. After much fighting Achaeus was besieged in Sardes, and finally the rebel, through an act of treachery, carried out with consummate skill and courage, was thrown bound into the tent of Antiochus and was put to death.

The Campaigns of Antiochus in the East, 208–204 B.C.,

Parthia.—The first rebel in the eastern provinces to be attacked by the Seleucid monarch was Arsaces III, the successor of Tiridates, who had annexed the Mardian country, had passed the Caspian Gates and had actually occupied Ecbatana, the capital of Media.

Antiochus marched on this city where he seized immense treasure by despoiling the famous temple of Anahita, the Persian goddess of fecundity. Arsaces had fled but was pursued with great rapidity into Hyrcania, where the Parthian monarch submitted and was accepted as an ally.

The March of Antiochus through Bactria to the Kabul Valley.—When peace had been concluded with Parthia, Antiochus decided to reduce Bactria which, as we shall see, had rebelled under Diodotus. After defeating Euthydemus, the reigning monarch, terms were finally made with him, as given in the following chapter, and Antiochus, marching in Alexander's footsteps, crossed the Hindu Kush into the Kabul Valley. He found the reigning ruler to be Sophagasenos, a member of the Maurya dynasty, who submitted and gave to the Seleucid a number of war-elephants; he also agreed to pay a large sum of money. Antiochus, who had no desire to carve out an Indian Empire, and was anxious to return to Syria, marched down the valley of the Etymander (Helmand) to Seistan. He then crossed the great desert, by the same route that Craterus had followed rather more than a century previously, to Narmashir, and probably wintered, as Alexander had done, in the fertile valley of the Halil Rud. In the spring of 204 B.C. he concluded this great expedition at Seleucia.

The First Macedonian War, 215–205 B.C.—Rome did not concern herself with the affairs of Hellas until after the close of the First Punic War (264–241 B.C.). The first step, taken in 229 B.C., was the despatch of a punitive expedition into Spain against some Illyrian pirates, which resulted in Corcyra, Apollonia and Dyracchium becoming subject allies. Again, in 219 B.C., she sent a second expedition into Epirus. In the following year she

was involved in the life-and-death struggle of the Second Punic War (218–201 B.C.).

Philip V of Macedon, upon hearing of the overwhelming defeat of the Roman legions at Trasimene in 217 B.C., considered the question of leading a force from Hellas to support Hannibal. He, however, finally took no military action, except against the Roman possessions in Epirus.

In spite of her serious commitments in Italy, Rome despatched troops to Epirus and attacked the Macedonian army. Her diplomacy also created a confederacy of minor Greek states, supported by Attalus of Pergamum, against Philip. That monarch was victorious but, with a dangerous lack of vision, he made peace with Rome on the basis of the *status quo*. He thereby sealed his own doom, together with that of Hellas.

The Second Macedonian War, 200–197 B.C.—The Carthaginians had finally been decisively defeated at Zama in 202 B.C. Rome was consequently free to expand eastwards and invaded Macedonia. Philip, at first, held his own, but, in 197, at the battle of Cynoscephalae, he lost 13,000 men and sued for peace. Easy terms were agreed upon, since Antiochus III had now appeared in Hellas and had to be dealt with.

Antiochus defeated at Magnesia, 190 B.C.—The appearance of Roman troops in Hellas and the defeat of Philip V of Macedon at the battle of Cynoscephalae, was apparently welcomed by Antiochus, who, not realizing the significance of the event, hoped thereby to regain Macedonia for the Seleucid dynasty. He was, however, defeated by Roman troops at historical Thermopylae in 191 B.C. when he invaded that country. The Romans then, with truly amazing initiative, decided to follow him into Asia. Gaining command of the sea, they won the decisive battle of Magnesia. By the Peace of Apamea in 188 the Seleucid monarch surrendered his possessions in Europe and evacuated Asia Minor north of the Taurus and west of the Halys. He also agreed to pay a crushing war indemnity.

His Death, 197 B.C.—Three years later Antiochus,

whose power was shattered, undertook an expedition to rob a shrine in the Elymean hills and was killed. To quote the book of Daniel:[1] "Then he shall turn his face toward the fort of his own land: but he shall stumble and fall, and not be found".

The Failure of the Seleucid Settlement in Asia.—The failure of the Macedonians and Greeks to hold Asia was perhaps chiefly due to the fact that they never farmed the land, but remained town-dwellers. Tarn also points out that there was rarely access to the sea and that "a Greek without the sea was a lost creature". Probably, realizing this fact and in spite of its extremely torrid climate, the coast of the upper reaches of the Persian Gulf were colonized with nine cities, among them being Antioch in Persis on the site of modern Bushire.

Again, the Asiatic, more especially in Persia, would not give up Zoroastrianism, although he would adopt Greek culture to some extent. Tarn ends this section by inquiring where all the Greeks came from. Macedonia and Hellas must presumably have been bled dry, as was apparently the case with Spain after the discovery of the New World.

Summary.—In this chapter countries lying far apart have been dealt with. Two rising states, Rome in the west and Parthia in the east, were at this period separated by many degrees of longitude, but upon their expansion at the expense of Hellas and of the small states of Asia Minor and Syria in the case of Rome, and of Persia and Mesopotamia in the case of Parthia, the two states approached one another and were inevitably destined to clash in due course. Rome became the dominant power of the west, while Parthia, although strongly tinged with Hellenic civilization, was equally destined to represent the east.

[1] xi, verse 19.

CHAPTER VII

THE KINGDOM OF BACTRIA

The strange King Emetreus gan hent
This Palomon, as he faught with Arcite,
And deep into his flessh his swerd did byte;
And by the force of twenti he is take
Unyielded, and y-drawn unto the stake.
CHAUCER, *The Knightes Tale.*

Bactria.—The short-lived kingdom of Bactria, which is now known as Afghan Turkistan, presents considerable difficulties to the historian in view of the lack of available material. Some information can be gleaned from coins, but unfortunately very little has yet been ascertained from archaeological research, excavations in Bactra (the medieval Balkh) by French archaeologists having produced practically no results.[1]

Bactria included South Sogdiana, the Samarkand country, which, at this period, was highly cultivated through its network of irrigation canals, and was considered to be the most fertile land in Central Asia, as perhaps it still is today. Its mineral wealth included the lapis lazuli and probably the ruby. Bactria also appears as a source of gold in the inscription of Darius I, but actually this gold came from Siberia. Finally, across this favoured land, where three great civilizations, to wit those of Hellas, of Persia and of India, met, ran the main caravan routes from India to the west and to the north.

Oxyartes, Satrap of the Paropamisus.—Alexander, as we have seen, had appointed Oxyartes, the father of Roxana, Governor of the Paropamisus, which included

[1] I have especially relied on Tarn's recently published *Greeks in Bactria and India.* I have also consulted vol. i of the *Cambridge History of India*, 1922, and an important paper, "Demetrius in Sind", by E. H. Johnston in *Journ. R.A.S.* for April 1939; also *On Ancient Central-Asian Tracks*, by Sir Aurel Stein; and, finally, Sir Richard Burn has made valuable suggestions in this and the following chapter.

the Hindu Kush and territories on both sides of this great range. On his death Oxyartes became practically independent, although he, or one of his successors, finally recognized Seleucus as their suzerain.

Diodotus I, the Satrap of Bactria-Sogdiana, and Diodotus II.—We have seen that Alexander stationed large bodies of troops in Bactria. Some of them mutinied and marched homewards after his death and, as mentioned in the last chapter, were killed by the Satrap of Media. But there must have been an important Greek colony at the period when our story opens with Diodotus ruling the satrapy.

Diodotus was given a sister of Seleucus II in marriage about 246 B.C. At this period, as before noted, the position of the Seleucids was almost desperate and Diodotus, about whom very little is known, gradually assumed independence at some time between 246 B.C. and his death in 230 B.C.

He was succeeded by his son Diodotus II, who was not the offspring of the Seleucid princess, and who allied himself with Tiridates of Parthia, the enemy of the Seleucids. The Seleucid queen-widow married her daughter about 227 B.C. to Euthydemus, one of the high officials of Diodotus I; and, killing Diodotus II, Euthydemus ascended the throne.

The Reign of Euthydemus, 227–189 B.C.—Euthydemus, the real founder of an independent kingdom of Bactria, was a citizen of Magnesia and a remarkably capable ruler. In 208 B.C., when called upon to submit by Antiochus the Great, as mentioned in the previous chapter, he replied that " he was not a rebel. Others no doubt had rebelled. He had put the children of the rebels to death, and that was how he happened to be King."

This reply not having been accepted by the Seleucid monarch, Euthydemus attempted to prevent him from crossing the Arius (Hari Rud), but Antiochus sent a body of troops to ford it in the night and by this manœuvre defeated the army of Euthydemus, which was mainly composed of Bactrian horsemen.

That ruler thereupon retreated to his capital of

Bactra, which was a very strongly fortified city, where he was besieged for two years. He then threatened to call in the Sakae to his assistance, with the result that an alliance was concluded with Antiochus, by the terms of which Euthydemus surrendered his elephants to the Seleucid monarch.

Euthydemus, after the departure of Antiochus III, began to expand his empire by the occupation of Sogdiana and fertile Ferghana ; he also appears to have annexed the province which is now Chinese Turkistan. Westwards, at a period later than 206 B.C., Euthydemus invaded Parthia and annexed Astauene and other neighbouring districts which became Bactrian provinces named Tapuria on the upper Atrek and Traxiane in the valley of the Kashaf Rud with its capital at Susia (Tus). Together with Margiana (Merv), these districts were formed into a sub-kingdom for Antimachus, the second son of Euthydemus, with Merv as his capital. According to general belief, after a most successful reign, Euthydemus died in 189 B.C. "Greek art", writes Tarn, "has bequeathed to us no finer portraits than those on coins of Euthydemus and of his son Demetrius."

The Campaigns of Demetrius Invinctus.—Demetrius, the son and successor of Euthydemus, continued to expand the boundaries of his kingdom. Some time between 187 and 184 B.C., he annexed the Seleucid provinces of Aria, Arachosia and Seistan. He also appointed his son, Demetrius II, to govern the Paropamisus and Gandhara, with Kapisa, situated at the junction of the Panjshir and Ghorband rivers, as his capital.

Demetrius next advanced on Taxila, which he occupied and used as his advanced base. Thence he despatched his general Menander, to occupy Sagala (Sialkot) and finally to capture the Mauryan capital of Pataliputra (Patna) in the Ganges Valley. Menander used his siege-train in this last operation with complete success and Pataliputra was taken. The Yavana or Ionian invaders, as they were termed, were now masters of the country and the Mauryan dynasty was overthrown.

Demetrius, in person, employing water transport, led a second force down the Indus and conquered Sind. He refounded Patala and then, following Alexander's example, he sailed out on to the Indian Ocean. This province of Sind, which included the port of Barygaza (Broach) in Gujerat, was ruled by Apollodotus, who may have been the brother of Demetrius. His coins were in circulation in Barygaza as late as the first century A.D. It was during this campaign that Demetrius assumed the title of "Invincible", which had been bestowed on Alexander the Great by the Pythia when he visited the oracle at Delphi.

The Great Empire of Demetrius.—To sum up: Demetrius at this period ruled from the Jaxartes to the Gulf of Cambay and from the borders of the Herat province to the Ganges. His kingdom thus included the whole of modern Afghanistan and exceeded, so far as India was concerned, the conquests of Alexander the Great. But to win and to hold this widespreading empire was beyond his military strength and resources. He had perforce weakened his hold on Bactria and was soon to suffer the loss alike of his empire and his life.

Seleucus IV Philopator, 188–175 B.C.—To return to the fortunes of the Seleucid dynasty: after the death of Antiochus III its position was far from enviable. His successor, Seleucus IV, realized that peace was essential if his kingdom, which had now shrunk to a minor state, was to recuperate. Perforce he wrung the instalments of the Roman war indemnity from his unfortunate subjects and, since he was unable to restore the prestige of the dynasty by war, he was unpopular and, after reigning for fourteen years, was murdered by his minister Heliodorus. A reference to this worthy, but unfortunate, monarch in the book of Daniel runs: "Then shall stand up in his estate a raiser of taxes in the glory of the Kingdom: but within a few days he shall be destroyed, neither in anger, nor in battle".[1]

The Career of Antiochus Epiphanes.—Upon the death

[1] xi, verse 20.

of his brother, Antiochus Epiphanes, who was a hostage at Rome, aided by Eumenes of Pergamum, and ignoring the claims of Demetrius, the elder son of the late monarch, seized the throne. He continued to pay the war indemnity and not only repelled an attack by Egypt on Coele-Syria, but conducted a successful campaign in that country.

The Battle of Pydna, 168 B.C.—At this period the last fight with the house of Antigonus made Rome the greatest power in the Near East. In 171 B.C. Roman legions again invaded Hellas and a decisive battle was fought at Pydna. It would appear that the advantage at first lay with King Perseus. The Macedonian phalanx carried all before it and a cavalry charge would have ensured victory. But Perseus hesitated to give the order; the legionaries rallied; the Macedonians were defeated, and their monarch was led a captive through the streets of Rome. Polybius, who was a contemporary of these events, aptly dates the foundation of the Roman Empire from the battle of Pydna.

Antiochus Epiphanes retreats from Egypt, 164 B.C.—After this victory, a Roman ambassador was despatched to Antiochus, whose campaign in Egypt was leading to the conquest of that country. The grim Roman handed the Seleucid monarch a tablet, which contained a forma resolution of the Senate that he should evacuate Egypt. He then with his staff drew a circle in the sand around Antiochus and bade him reply before moving across it. Perforce the Seleucid monarch yielded and, with his hopes shattered, marched back to Coele-Syria.

Eucratides conquers Bactria, 167 B.C.—We must now return to the fortunes of Demetrius. According to Tarn, Eucratides, the destined victor of Demetrius, was the son of Laodice, a daughter of Seleucus II. He was consequently a first cousin of Antiochus Epiphanes. His father, Heliocles, had been governor of the eastern satrapies and this was the post held by Eucratides himself, when he make his dramatic appearance on the stage of Central Asia.

Ordered to recover the provinces annexed by the Bactrian rulers from the house of Seleucus, Eucratides

left Babylon late in 169 B.C. at the head of a force which was probably not very strong, since we know that the main Seleucid army was with Antiochus.

Owing to the Parthian occupation of the Caspian Gates and surrounding territory, the Seleucid general marched across Southern Persia to Seistan. He then turned north and advanced on Bactria by Herat. In Seistan he must have defeated Agathocles, a son of Demetrius, while Antimachus, his second son, was Governor of Herat. Demetrius was probably in the Punjab when Eucratides so unexpectedly appeared in Seistan. He sent orders to Menander to evacuate Pataliputra and to support him with his army, while he himself marched back to Bactria.

The strength of Eucratides lay in the fact that he represented the reigning monarch of the house of Seleucus and, as we have seen more than once, this fact served to rally the Macedonian and Greek soldiers to his banners. It is also probable that his agents had already been working to win over the army of Demetrius.

Details of the campaign are lacking, but the Bactrian monarch was defeated and killed. Thus perished Demetrius, whose sudden fall from the rule of a great empire would form a fitting subject for a tragedy. Indeed, so far as I know, it is only owing to the reference to "The gret Emetreus, the Kyng of Inde", in *The Knightes Tale* of Chaucer, that his name has been preserved in English literature.

Antiochus, in 166 B.C., celebrated the recovery of these eastern provinces by a review of his army at Daphne, accompanied by magnificent fêtes. Subsequently, at Babylon, he celebrated Charisteria or "a Sacrifice of Thanks-giving" for the saving of Asia.

The Last Years of Antiochus Epiphanes and his Death in 163 B.C.—Antiochus, once again, determined to take the field in person, probably intending to attack Parthia from the west as well as from the east. Successful in Armenia, he proceeded to refound Alexandria at the head of the Persian Gulf and renamed it Antioch. He then visited Susa, where he was falsely accused of having robbed

the temple of Anahita. Finally he marched through Persepolis to Gabae, situated on the route to Ecbatana, and at this city he died prematurely of consumption.[1] Tarn considers that, had he lived, there would have been no Parthian Empire.

Eucratides invades India.—The victor over Demetrius I celebrated his success by striking a coinage in which he is styled " Great King ". He then, not content with creating a kingdom in Bactria and Sogdiana, unwisely decided to invade India. Crossing the Hindu Kush in 165 B.C., he took Kapisa, as is proved by the issue of square bronze coins with the legend, " The god of the city of Kapisa ".

The death of Antiochus meant independence for Eucratides and we learn from coins that he conquered Gandhara; and he probably killed Apollodotus. He also penetrated into India but did not actually establish himself in the Punjab.

The Position of Menander after the Death of Demetrius I. —We must now turn to Menander who, probably unable to come to the assistance of Demetrius, had strengthened his own position in the Punjab. Details are lacking, but it is clear that Eucratides was defeated by him. Later, the two rivals negotiated a treaty, which resulted in Gandhara being surrendered to Menander, while the Paropamisus together with Bactria and Sogdiana remained under the rule of Eucratides.

The Death of Eucratides, 159 B.C.—Tarn dismisses the accepted story that Eucratides was killed by his son and considers that he was actually put to death " by a son of one of the dead Euthydemid princes, with Parthian help ". The Parthian in this case, as we shall see, was probably Mithradates I, while the " son " was, with equal probability, Demetrius II of Bactria.

The Seleucid King, Demetrius the Saviour, 162–150 B.C.—After the death of Epiphanes, his son, a boy of nine, succeeded to the throne. Rome took advantage of

[1] Antiochus Epiphanes is, of course, best known for his attempt to hellenize the Jews and for his desecration of the Temple, but these matters lie outside the scope of this work.

the position to destroy the Seleucid navy, but the populace at Laodicea rose in revolt at this outrage and killed one of the Roman commissioners.

Demetrius, the son of Seleucus IV, had grown up at Rome while a hostage. Advised by Polybius, he fled by ship and landing at Tripolis, killed the sons of Antiochus Epiphanes and ascended the throne. Although Timarchus, the Satrap of Media, received a document from the Senate to the effect that " so far as Rome is concerned, Timarchus was King ", his army went over to the Seleucid, and Timarchus himself suffered the same fate as Melon and other pretenders. Demetrius was hailed as *Soter*, or " Saviour ", at Seleucia, but was finally defeated and killed in battle by a pretended son of Antiochus Epiphanes, who was supported alike by Rome and by Egypt.

The Conquests of Mithradates I of Parthia, 170–138 B.C.—The rise of Parthia to be a great power was accomplished by Mithradates I, who, between 161 and 155 B.C., undertook repeated campaigns into Media, which he finally annexed. He next, in about 150 B.C., invaded Bactria, annexed some of its frontier districts and probably, as already suggested, Eucratides was killed as he returned from India to meet him. Finally he ruled from the borders of Bactria to the Euphrates.

Demetrius II, the Seleucid.—At this period the house of Seleucus was represented by Demetrius II, *Nikator*, a son of *Soter*, who, in 140 B.C., determined to regain his eastern provinces. He was, however, no match for Mithradates, who apparently seized the unfortunate monarch by treachery. He was paraded round the Parthian Empire and was then granted a residence in Hyrcania. An unsuccessful attempt at escape was forgiven and Chaucer tells the story in *The Pardoneres Tale*:

> Look eek that to the King Demetrius
> The King of Parthes, as the book saith us
> Sent him a paire dice of gold in scorn,
> For he had used hasard ther to forn;
> For which he held his glory and his renoun
> At no value or reputaciown.

The Downfall of the House of Seleucus, 129 B.C.—Demetrius II was succeeded by his brother Antiochus VII, *Sidetes*. In 130 B.C., having established his authority in Syria, he determined to try conclusions with Phraates II, the son and successor of Mithradates. At first he was successful and won three battles, driving the Parthians from Mesopotamia and Media. But, during the winter, the cities in those provinces having risen against the Seleucid troops quartered on them, Phraates marched to their support. Near Ecbatana he met Antiochus, whom he defeated. Determined to avoid capture, the last of the fighting Seleucids threw himself from a cliff and was killed.

With the death of Antiochus Sidetes the house of Seleucus ceased to exist as a great power. His degenerate successors wasted their strength in internal strife and when Rome appeared on the scene determined to annex the Near East, her opponents were no longer the Seleucids, but the kings of Pontus and Armenia.

Before dismissing the house of Seleucus, to its credit must be placed the fact that it was the torch-bearer of Greek civilization over vast areas of Asia, a civilization which affected the Parthians to no small extent. This civilization held the field until the Roman Empire, which was also deeply penetrated by Greek culture, had taken its place.

Heliocles regains Bactria.—To pick up the thread of Bactria once again, Mithradates I having appointed a governor in Bactria, had left the country to pursue his conquests farther west. Heliocles, the son of Eucratides, thereupon apparently rallied his father's adherents and ruled Bactria with some success.

The Indian Empire of Menander.—We now come to the Yavana Empire founded by Menander. When he was recalled by Demetrius, he abandoned Pataliputra and formed a new frontier to the south of Mathura (Muttra). As we have seen, he later defeated Eucratides and, by the treaty that was subsequently negotiated, he retained Gandhara. Consequently his empire stretched from Mathura to the Paropamisus, while to the south-west his

sway may even have extended over Sind with the port of Barygaza.

Menander is thought to have legitimized his position by his marriage to Agathocleia, the daughter of Demetrius *Invictus*, and his assumption of the royal title was apparently never challenged. He made his capital at Sagala (Sialkot) and formed numerous provinces, many of which were recorded by Ptolemy. "His empire", to quote Tarn, "was a collection of vassal states and 'free' peoples rather similar to that of Asoka, with some attempt, at any rate in the north, to form settlements." [1] Menander was probably the King Milinda of Buddhist tradition.

It appears to have been an empire in which trade flourished, the large quantity of the coinage of Menander found between Kabul and Mathura attesting its widespread commercial activities. It is of interest to note that the prowess of the Yavanas is celebrated in the Mahabharata and other Indian literature. The date of the death of this truly great monarch falls between 150 and 145 B.C.

Heliocles invades Gandhara.—Upon the death of Menander, who left his widow to govern for his son Strato during his minority, Heliocles conquered Gandhara and Taxila and occupied the Punjab up to the Jhelum. These campaigns lasted for some three or four years and resulted in the weakening of Heliocles, as also of Menander's empire, which began to break up. While the Hellenic rulers were engaged in fighting one another, Greek rule in Bactria was suddenly overthrown by an invasion of nomads.

The Hiung-Nu defeat the Yueh-chi, who conquer Bactria.—In the middle of the third century B.C. Chin-Shih Huang-Ti of the Chin dynasty broke up the feudal system and made China a unified state. He successfully fought the nomad tribes to the north and constructed the celebrated Great Wall, which was undoubtedly of immense value as a protection against raids by their horsemen. So much so was this the case that it probably forced the nomads to seek fresh grazing ground towards the west.

The second century B.C. constituted a period of most

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 258.

important movements of the tribes bordering on cultivated China, which had important reactions, not only in Central Asia but far beyond its limits.[1] The protagonists were the Hiung-Nu or Huns, an Iranian race, and the Yueh-chi, which latter tribe, believed to be of Turkish origin with Iranian blood and culture, lived in Western Kansu of modern times. In the desperate contest which ensued the Yueh-chi were finally defeated and driven from their grazing grounds in about 175 B.C. They, in turn, invaded the territories of the Wu-sun, the Issedones of Herodotus, who inhabited the Ili Valley, and of their neighbours to the south, the Sakae. Not feeling sufficiently distant from the Hiung-Nu in the Ili Valley, the Yueh-chi pushed farther westwards. They were, however, attacked anew in 160 B.C. by the Hiung-Nu, who were now allied to the Wu-sun. Their king was slain, and his skull served as a goblet to the victorious Hiung-Nu chief. The twice defeated Yueh-chi again fled westwards, and about 140 B.C. conquered both Sogdiana and Bactria.

The Mission of Chang Kien, 138–126 B.C.—Such was the position when the Emperor Wu-ti, the greatest monarch of the Han dynasty, despatched Chang Kien, the earliest known Chinese explorer, on a diplomatic mission to the West. The emperor had heard of the first defeat of the Yueh-chi, but he was unaware of their second overthrow. Accordingly he hoped to induce this tribe to co-operate with him in a combined attack on the Hiung-Nu, whose strength was a serious threat to China.

Chang Kien had hardly crossed the frontier than he was seized and imprisoned for a period of ten years by the redoutable Hiung-Nu. He then managed to escape and travelled to Ferghana where he was well treated by the Ta-yuan who, he reported, respected China and wished to open up relations with the Emperor. Chang Kien finally, in 128 B.C., reached the Yueh-chi in Sogdiana. He laid Wu-ti's proposals before them, but, as was only to be expected, they refused to entertain them, since they were in possession of the fertile lands of Sogdiana and Bactria.

[1] In this section I have consulted *The Early Empires of Central Asia*, by Dr. W. M. McGovern, 1939.

Chang Kien finally regained China after an absence of thirteen years and, although he had failed, so far as his diplomatic mission was concerned, he brought back information of priceless value, not only about the countries he had passed through, but also relating to still more distant Parthia and India.

The Despatch of Chinese Missions to the West.—The great importance of opening up relations with these countries was fully realized by the emperor who, after a series of campaigns, in 121 B.C. drove the Hiung-Nu across that great waste, the *Gobi*. Political Missions were then despatched not only to various border states but also to Parthia, where it was received by Mithradates II. These envoys, the bearers of gifts of silk tissues, were accompanied by merchants who, with their backing, inaugurated the celebrated Silk Route.

The Migration of the Sakae.—In Chapter III an account has been given of two migrations of Aryan tribes into India and on to the Iranian plateau respectively. We now, some thirteen hundred years later, read of the Sakae who had remained in their Central Asian homeland, being driven from their habitat in the Ili Valley and around Lake Issik Kub, by the Yueh-chi.

The dispossessed tribesmen were enrolled by Phraates II of Parthia (138 to *circa* 128 B.C.) to serve him as auxiliaries in his war with Antiochus VII. But, once they had gained admittance into Persia, they overflowed the whole land and established a dynasty as far west as Adiabene in Northern Mesopotamia. Of greater importance was their occupation of fertile Sakastene (Seistan), which province still retains the name they gave it. Phraates II fought desperately against the overwhelming hordes of tribesmen but, owing to the defection of his corps of Greek prisoners, he was finally defeated and killed, as was his successor Artabanus (*circa* 128–124 B.C.).

Mithradates II of Parthia, 124–88 B.C.—It might well have happened that, after the decisive defeat of Parthia by the Sakae, that kingdom would have succumbed and disappeared. But warlike Mithradates II transformed

the unfavourable situation, defeated the Sakae more than once, and drove them out of his territories into neighbouring Afghanistan and towards the valley of the Indus. So successful was he that Parthia became the suzerain power of Central Asia, while coins prove that a prince bearing the Parthian name of Vonones was suzerain of the Parsii rulers of Kabul.

The Conquest of Bactria by the Yueh-chi, 140 B.C.—To return to Bactria: that country was overrun and conquered by the Yueh-chi, who are termed Asii and Tochari by Greek writers. Their ruling element was known as Kushan. A fourth people termed the Pasiani by Apollodorus, were the Parsii of the Greek geographers.

Historical details as to the conquest of Bactria are lacking, but we may perhaps assume that the Bactrians were overwhelmed by the numbers and fighting qualities of the Yueh-chi, and that the flower of the Bactrian aristocracy perished on the field of battle, although we know from coins that some Greek and Bactrian leaders survived and reigned over small communities in the remote and inaccessible valleys of the Hindu Kush.

We learn also that the Sakae speech of the Kushans was reduced to writing in Greek letters and that, in due course, the conquerors issued a Greek coinage. Greek script, as distinct from the language, indeed lasted on in Bactria, termed Tocharistan by the Yueh-chi, for centuries. These meagre facts and surmises constitute all that we can record about the overthrow by the Yueh-chi of the short-lived kingdom of Bactria.

The Successors of Menander in India.—Thanks mainly to the labours of numismatists, we know that, until the arrival on the scene of the conquering Sakae from the west, the descendants of Eucratides ruled most of the country between the Hindu Kush and the Jhelum, while the houses of Euthydemus and Menander reigned from the Jhelum to Mathura. The Sakae, who had already established a kingdom in Sind, advanced up the Indus and about 80 B.C. occupied Taxila and Gandhara, thus driving a wedge between the two groups of Greek rulers.

In the western group Heliocles was succeeded by Antalcidas, who reigned from about 130 to 90 B.C. and was the last king to rule the three kingdoms of Taxila, Gandhara and Paropamisus. Upon his death his realm was broken up.

To turn to the eastern group: Agathocleia, as already mentioned, ruled for her son Strato I. When the latter attained his majority, he enjoyed a very long reign and, at the end, was associated with his grandson Strato II; the latest ruler Hermaeus was reigning from about 50 to 30 B.C. Tarn points out that, through Chinese influence, Kabul was added to his state of the Paropamisus.

The Conquests of the Sakae.—The triumph of Mithradates II of Parthia over the Sakae, referred to above, took place between 124 and 115 B.C., and their invasion of India is held to have commenced about 119 B.C. Striking the Indus, they first, according to Indian tradition, conquered Kathiawar and the Greek sea-provinces of Cutch and Surastrene. They also, moving up the Indus, under a leader, Moa, termed Maues in Greek, attacked and annexed Taxila. About 70 B.C., Maues conquered Gandhara, and later he both ruled and issued coins at Kapisa.

Finally, it would seem, the Parsii who, after the invasion of Parthia, had left the main body of Sakae and had occupied Kabul about 87 B.C., later annexed the Paropamisus. There was, however, the Greek revival under Hermaeus in that province which lasted until well after 40 B.C. and was probably due to the temporary break-up of the kingdom of Maues after his death in 58 B.C. His successors, Azes I and Azileses, like Maues himself, all issued coinages copied from those of their Yavana predecessors.

The End of Greek Rule in Afghanistan and Northern India.—The fall of the dominion exercised by the Greeks in provinces east of the Hindu Kush coincided with the establishment of the Roman Empire by Augustus. It also coincided with the overthrow of the Hellenistic kingdom of Egypt. The information given by the Greeks ruling in Northern India is now replaced by that obtained

by merchants of the Roman Empire who visited the harbours of Southern and Farther India. To conclude, these Greek dynasties indeed disappeared from the scene but not before playing an important rôle, alike in Bactria and in Northern and Western India.

CHAPTER VIII

ROME, PARTHIA AND THE KUSHAN DYNASTY

Man is a genus; it has itself species: Greeks, Romans, Parthians.—SENECA.

For five centuries a people, or rather a camp, without past or future, without a religion, an art, or a policy of its own, assumed the protectorate of the East, and saved Asia from the arms of Rome.—PROFESSOR PERCY GARDNER, on the Parthians.

The Parthian empire exhibited, under other names, a lively image of the feudal system which has since prevailed in Europe.—GIBBON.

King Kanishka made his neighbours dread his power. By force of arms he extended his territory as far as the east of Pamir. The dependent princes who dwelt on the west of the Yellow River [in Chinese Turkestan] sent him hostages. He treated them with the utmost respect. The palace [at Kapisa] had been built for their summer residence.—HSUAN-TSANG.

The Eastward Expansion of Rome, 190–129 B.C.—In previous chapters we have seen Roman armies inflicting a crushing defeat on Antiochus the Great at the battle of Magnesia in 190 B.C. and on Perseus, King of Macedonia, at Pydna in 168 B.C. Carthage also had been captured in 146 B.C. Another event now occurred which led to the permanent occupation by Rome of territory in the Near East.

In 133 B.C. the ruler of Pergamum, her staunch ally, who had no heir, bequeathed his state to the Roman people. This legacy was accepted and the kingdom was annexed. Its Thracian provinces were united to Macedonia, which had previously been created a Roman province, while the eastern districts were ceded to Mithridates[1] of Pontus, who, at that period, was an ally of Rome. The result of this important forward movement, urged on by the irresistible force of circumstances rather than by careful planning, led to further advances of still greater importance.

[1] I am using the classical spelling for Mithridates of Pontus to distinguish him from the Parthian monarchs of the same name.

Mithridates VI of Pontus, 120–90 B.C.—The career of Mithridates of Pontus was exceptionally dramatic. Descended from the Achaemenian dynasty on his father's side and from the Seleucids through his mother, he ruled his petty kingdom, which included the southern coast of the Black Sea from Sinope to the neighbourhood of modern Batum. From this base he created an empire which included the provinces of Mingrelia and Imeritia to the east of the Black Sea, and the kingdom of the Bosphorus on its northern coast. This latter conquest furnished Mithridates with abundance of wheat, and with large sums of money; of equal importance, it also provided him with splendid soldiers. In Asia Minor he annexed Lesser Armenia and made a treaty with its monarch Tigranes, whose daughter he married.

Rome watched the rapid creation of this formidable empire without making any open attempt to hinder it. But when Paphlagonia and Cappadocia were also annexed, Sulla, upon the termination of his prætorship, was ordered to re-establish its king Ariobarzanes. From his base in Cilicia, which had been occupied in 102 B.C., the Roman general swept unopposed through Cappadocia to the banks of the Euphrates, but with no permanent results, since the territories were reoccupied upon his departure. Accordingly, in 90 B.C. Rome despatched an ambassador and, for the second time, Mithridates yielded to the Western Power.

The First Meeting between Rome and Parthia, 92 B.C.—Mithradates II of Parthia, who had invaded Armenia about 100 B.C., had held Tigranes, the eldest son of the King, as a hostage for some time and had helped him to ascend the throne. However, upon securing his position, Tigranes had annexed provinces belonging to Parthia.

When Sulla reached the Euphrates, Orobazus, a Parthian ambassador met him with proposals for an offensive and defensive alliance with Rome. To quote Plutarch: "The story is told, that, having ordered three chairs of state to be set, one for Ariobarzanes [King of Cappadocia], one for Orobazus, and a third for himself,

he placed himself in the middle, and so gave audience. For this the King of Parthia afterwards put Orobazus to death."

Sulla was not empowered to conclude a treaty, but in view of the many campaigns between the two Powers, who were destined to champion the East and the West respectively, this first meeting was full of portent.[1] It is also of deep interest to note that, during the reign of Mithradates II, a Mission despatched by the Han dynasty of China reached Parthia, known in China as An-Sih, from the Chinese form of the name of the royal house of Arsaces.

The Aggressions of Armenia against Parthia, 88–66 B.C. —The Parthian proposal to Rome for a treaty was obviously due to her weakness, and although the period is an obscure one, we learn that Tigranes, taking advantage of the Roman campaigns against Mithridates of Pontus, annexed Upper Mesopotamia and Media Atropatene between 85 and 74 B.C.

The Mithridatic Wars, 89–66 B.C.—The struggle between Rome and the King of Pontus was desperate. Mithridates at first carried all before him, overrunning Pergamum and massacring the Italian colonists, who had settled in that country, to the number of 80,000. His fleet subsequently seized the Piraeus, whereupon Athens declared for him, as did many other Greek cities. Sulla, however, with but 15,000 men, met the army of Mithridates on the field of Chaeronea and won a victory. Terms were made, by which an indemnity of 2000 talents was paid and seventy ships of war were surrendered.

In the year 74 B.C. Mithridates marched into Bithynia, whose monarch had also bequeathed his kingdom to the Roman people. Once again he carried all before him at the outset, but, during 73 and 72 B.C. Lucullus, who commanded the Roman army, was so successful and pressed him so hard that he took refuge in Armenia. Tigranes decided to champion his cause and to oppose Rome but was beaten in 69 B.C. and again in the following

[1] In this section I have again consulted *A Political History of Parthia*, by Neilson C. Debevoise.

year. There was, however, no decisive result, since at this juncture the Roman troops mutinied.

Pompey takes Command of the Roman Armies.—In 66 B.C. Pompey was appointed to take over the supreme command in the Near East. He promptly invested the camp of Mithridates, whom he defeated. On this occasion Tigranes refused to grant his son-in-law sanctuary and finally the refugee monarch fled and reached the Bosphorus in safety. There he set about organising a fresh army, with the design of invading Italy, but being faced by a rebellion headed by his son, this most formidable enemy of Rome in the East committed suicide in 63 B.C. Racine puts the following lines into his mouth:

> J'ai vengé l'univers autant que je l'ai pu:
> La mort dans ce projet m'a seule interrompu.
> Ennemi des Romains et de la tyrannie,
> Je n'ai point de leur joug, subi l'ignominie.

Pompey and Phraates III of Parthia.—Pompey, upon assuming the command, had opened up relations with Phraates III of Parthia and had offered to return Corduene and Adiabene to Parthia, in return for Parthian assistance against Armenia. Phraates accepted these proposals and, as it happened that the eldest son of Tigranes and his followers were then living at the Arsacid Court, he invaded Armenia with their help and expelled Tigranes from his capital. Phraates, thinking that he had been successful, left the siege of Artaxata to the Armenian prince, but after the departure of the Parthian army Tigranes drove the investing force headlong out of Armenia.

Phraates, during this campaign, had recovered Adiabene and Corduene, but Pompey's legate insisted on these provinces being handed back to Armenia. This breach of faith, together with Pompey's refusal to address the Parthian monarch by his accepted title of "King of Kings", excited intense hatred for Rome among the Parthians.

Pompey dictates Terms to Tigranes.—Upon giving up the pursuit of Mithridates, Pompey marched on the Armenian capital of Artaxata. There he insisted on

Tigranes surrendering all his conquests which included Syria, Cilicia and Phoenicia. A huge indemnity was also demanded. His youthful son, who foolishly refused the governorship of a province—according to Plutarch it was an invitation to supper with Pompey—was thrown into chains and, together with his wife, the daughter of Phraates, was taken to Rome to grace the triumph of the victor.

From Artaxata, Pompey marched into the valley of the Kur and, attacking the Albanians, descended into the valley of the Phasis and marched down it to the Black Sea. Plutarch states that the Roman general had intended to advance to the shores of the Caspian Sea, " but was forced to retreat when only three marches distant by the number of venomous serpents ". I can hardly accept this statement of Plutarch.

The Results of the Campaigns of Pompey.—These remarkably successful campaigns resulted in the submission and annexation of Pontus; Armenia was made into a vassal state; Syria, where the claims of Antiochus XIII, the puppet-princeling of the house of Seleucus, were scornfully disregarded, was also annexed. The Roman Empire had now reached the Euphrates, but to the demand of Phraates that that river should constitute the recognized boundary between the two empires. Pompey, according to Plutarch, replied that " he would take care that the boundaries should be according to right and justice ". It is quite possible that the Roman general intended, at a later date, to conquer Parthia.

Parthia, 57–55 B.C.—We must now return to Parthia. Phraates was murdered by his two sons, not long after the departure of Pompey from the Near East. Orodes, the younger son, succeeded to the throne upon the deposition of his elder brother Mithradates for cruelty and injustice. During the reign of Orodes the first trial of strength with Rome was destined to occur.

Crassus, Proconsul of Syria, decides to invade Parthia.—Marcus Licinius Crassus, who had risen, mainly through the power of his purse, to be Proconsul in Syria, in 55 B.C. decided to try conclusions with Parthia. He crossed the

Euphrates and defeated a small Parthian force, after which he garrisoned some towns which he captured. Instead, however, of following up this success and taking advantage of the fact that Babylon was held by the ex-King Mithradates, he returned to Syria where he engaged in the congenial task of adding to his colossal fortune by levying special imposts and by plundering temples.

Crassus invades Parthia, 53 B.C.—During the winter of this year Artavasdes of Armenia had visited Crassus, and had promised him the co-operation of an army some 50,000 strong. He advised the Proconsul to march through friendly Armenia where the mountainous terrain was unsuitable for the Parthian cavalry, which constituted the principal arm of Orodes.

Crassus had originally intended to march down the left bank of the Euphrates to a point where that river was close to the Tigris, on which the Parthian capital Seleucia was situated. He was, however, informed by Abgarus, the semi-independent Chief of Osroene, that the Parthians were fleeing. He consequently decided to march east across the rolling plains of Mesopotamia where there were villages at intervals, but only a scanty water-supply. In accordance with this decision, the powerful Roman army, consisting of seven legions, supported by 4000 cavalry and a similar force of slingers and archers, making up a total of 42,000 men, crossed the Euphrates.

The Parthian Plan of Campaign.—Orodes, who was a better soldier than Crassus, marched in person into Armenia at the head of the Parthian infantry. By taking this step he not only prevented Artavasdes from reinforcing Crassus with his powerful cavalry force, in which arm the Proconsul was very weak, but also succeeded in negotiating a treaty with the Armenian monarch, which was sealed by a marriage.

The Parthian cavalry consisted mainly of light troops who might be termed mounted archers. There was also a body of heavy cavalry equipped like the knights in medieval Europe. The function of the light armed cavalry was to pour in flights of arrows but to avoid hand to hand combat, while the heavy cavalry outmatched the

Roman mounted troops in close fighting.

The Roman legions in action were accustomed to hurl a javelin and then to charge in line sword in hand, but against a mounted foe which, while keeping out of range, poured in ceaseless flights of arrows, these tactics in the open plain were ineffective. As Horace aptly put it:

> Miles sagittas et celerem fugam
> Parthi (timet),[1]

The Battle of Carrhae, 53 B.C.—Crassus had marched three or four stages eastwards and was some miles to the south of Carrhae, the Haran of the Patriarch Abraham, when the Parthian army suddenly appeared. Its light cavalry opened out and began to surround the Roman army which was drawn up in a square, shooting their deadly arrows at the massed legionaries. Charges by the light-armed troops were attempted but failed, since the Parthians retired and shot their arrows just as rapidly as they did so.

Crassus, realizing the seriousness of the situation, ordered his son Publius to charge before the force was entirely surrounded. At the head of 1300 cavalry, supported by 500 archers and 4000 infantry, the gallant Roman broke through the Parthian light horsemen, who gave way but still fired upon them. He then met the heavy Parthian cavalry, who practically annihilated his force. Thinking that Publius had been successful, Crassus had decided on a general advance when he learned of the disaster that had happened by recognizing the head of his son on a spear. The Parthians continued to press their advantage until sunset. They then rode off to their camp, situated at some distance from the site of the battle, calling out that they would return in the morning to complete their task.

A man of over sixty, Crassus was, as Plutarch puts it, "altogether past helping", but the Roman staff officers gave orders for a night march to Carrhae. This movement the Parthians allowed to be carried out without making any attempt at harassing the defeated

[1] The soldier fears the arrows and the rapid flight of the Parthian.

Romans, who, leaving their numerous wounded men behind, duly reached this town. There they would have been safe, but so shaken was Crassus that instead of halting to allow the troops to recover their *moral*, he ordered a second night march to be made under the guidance of a native, who purposely mislead the Romans. At dawn the Parthians overtook the army which had not reached the hill country, and had become an armed rabble. Crassus was induced to agree to a truce and was treacherously killed. In this disaster one-half of the army perished, but ten thousand prisoners were settled at Margiana, the modern Merv, where they intermarried with the women of the country.

Plutarch describes the scene at the Armenian Court where the wedding between Pacorus, son of Orodes, with the sister of Artavasdes was being celebrated. The guests were listening to the *Bacchae* of Euripides when the head of the unfortunate Crassus was thrown down among them. To quote Plutarch: "The Parthians receiving it with joy . . . Jason, a Greek actor, taking up the head of Crassus, and acting the part of a bacchante in her frenzy, in a rapturous impassioned manner, sang the lyric passage:

> We've hunted down a mighty chase today,
> And from the mountains bring the noble prey.

The result of the battle of Carrhae was to raise the prestige of Parthia to an equal plane with that of Rome and to secure her hold on territories up to the Euphrates. At the same time Parthia never possessed a regular army nor the strong organizing capacity of Rome, and her hold on tributary states was very weak.

The Fight for Power between Caesar and Pompey.— Before the second trial of strength with Parthia took place Caesar had attacked Pompey. The latter had asked Orodes II to support him with an armed force, but as the price to be paid was the province of Syria, the Roman nobly declined it. Pompey was utterly defeated by Caesar at Pharsalia in 48 B.C. and, taking refuge in Egypt, was assassinated.

The Assassination of Caesar, 44 B.C.—After winning this important victory the great Roman general attacked Pharnaces, the son of Mithridates, who was attempting to recover Pontus and other provinces. Caesar defeated him at Zela in 47 B.C. and his report to the Senate ran *Veni, Vidi, Vici.*[1]

Three years later, having gained possession of the entire Roman Empire, Caesar decided to attack Orodes. The obedient Senate had passed the necessary decree and the legions destined for the campaign had started for the East when, in 44 B.C., Caesar was assassinated. Parthia was saved by the daggers of the " Liberators ", since Caesar with his genius for war, with his great resources and with the experience of previous Roman expeditions to guide him, would surely have overthrown Orodes and would have conquered his kingdom.

Brutus and Cassius, the leaders of the assassins of Caesar, were defeated at Philippi in 42 B.C. by Antony and Octavian; the latter being destined to rule the Roman Empire as Augustus. At this battle a body of Parthian cavalry fought on the side of Brutus and Cassius.

The Parthian Invasion of Syria, 40–39 B.C.—Orodes, realizing that the Roman Empire was weakened by these civil wars, instructed his son Pacorus and a Roman general Labienus, who had entered his service, to invade Syria. Antony would, in ordinary circumstances, have commanded the Roman army, but was summoned to the west to oppose Octavian. In his absence the Parthians compelled the surrender of Apamea and Antioch. The two generals then separated, Pacorus marching southwards into Palestine where Hyrcanus and Antigonus, uncle and nephew, were fighting for power. In this campaign Antigonus, who offered a large sum of money and five hundred Jewish women as a bribe, was at once placed on the throne. Labienus, who had marched across the Taurus, was equally successful, defeating and killing the Roman general Decidus Saxa and raiding the southern provinces of Asia Minor.

The Defeat and Death of Pacorus, 38 B.C.—In the

[1] I came! I saw! I conquered!

autumn of 39 B.C. the tide turned. Antony, who had made peace with Octavian in the previous year, sent Publius Ventidius with reinforcements into Asia Minor. In the following year the general won a decisive battle on the western bank of the Euphrates, in which Pacorus was killed. To quote Shakespeare, Ventidius speaks:

> Now, darting Parthia, art thou struck; and now
> Pleased fortune does of Marcus Crassus' death
> Make me revenger. Bear the king's son's body
> Before our army. Thy Pacorus, Orodes,
> Pays this for Marcus Crassus.[1]

After this victory, which was followed by the abdication and murder of Orodes, Parthia resigned the initiative to the Roman Empire.

The Expedition of Antony against Parthia, 36 B.C.—Antony in person collected one of the largest armies ever assembled by Rome, consisting of sixteen legions, 10,000 cavalry and auxiliary troops reaching a total of 100,000 men. He also had powerful siege-engines which were transported in three hundred waggons. Upon the advice of King Artavasdes of Armenia, who supplied a contingent of cavalry and infantry, Antony decided to cross Armenia and attack Praaspa, the capital of Media Atropatene, a very strong natural fortress situated about one hundred miles to the south of Lake Urumia. Leaving his siege-train to follow, without providing a sufficiently strong escort, Antony pressed forward by forced marches, only to find that Praaspa could not be captured without the siege-engines.

Meanwhile the mobile Parthians under Phraates IV, as might have been anticipated, attacked and captured the siege-train, cutting the escort to pieces. This blow was followed by the defection of Artavasdes, and Antony was finally driven out of the country with heavy losses in men and with diminished prestige.

Antony's Campaigns in Armenia, 34–33 B.C.—The political situation was suddenly changed by the rebellion of the King of Media Atropatene, who had quarrelled with Phraates over the division of the spoils and who

[1] *Antony and Cleopatra.*

opened up negotiations with Antony. In the campaign of 34 B.C. Artavasdes was seized by a stratagem and Armenia was garrisoned by Roman troops. Ultimately, however, Phraates IV drove the Romans out, and Armenia regained her independence.

The Restoration of the Roman Standards to Augustus.—In 20 B.C. the Emperor Augustus made peace with Parthia, and to the intense joy of the Roman people, which is voiced by Horace, the standards lost by Crassus were handed back. As a sign of the importance with which this event was regarded may be mentioned the fact that it was recorded on practically all the coins of the Roman Empire of that date.

The Armenian Question.—Throughout this period, so far as the Roman Empire and Parthia were concerned, the struggle for Armenia was perpetual. The details lie outside the scope of this work, but during the reign of the Emperor Nero, Vologases I, the Parthian monarch, insisted that Armenia should be recognized as a feudatory state of Parthia. In consequence, Corbulo led a Roman army across the Euphrates, in A.D. 57, while under Paetus a second army marched into Armenia. This latter force was surprised, whereupon Paetus tamely agreed to evacuate Armenia although a relief army under Corbulo was in the vicinity.

Rome, however, rose to the occasion and Corbulo was granted full powers for the conduct of war with Parthia. He was most successful, storming cities and spreading terror throughout Armenia. Finally, in A.D. 63, it was agreed that Tiridates, brother of Vologases, King of Parthia, should receive the crown of Armenia at the hands of Nero. The ceremony was performed with much pomp and circumstance at Rome in A.D. 66, but the acceptance by Rome of an Arsacid ruler far outweighed the importance of the bestowal of the crown by the Roman Emperor. However, the policy was successful and peace between the belligerents was unbroken for over half a century.

The Policy of Trajan.—Rome was at the zenith of her power when Trajan ascended the throne and, once again,

Armenia constituted the *casus belli* between herself and Parthia. Upon the death of Tiridates of Armenia about A.D. 100, Pacorus II, the ruling Parthian monarch, had placed one of his sons, Exedares, on the throne without seeking the recognition of Rome.

Trajan, who had trained his army while conquering Dacia in A.D. 114, was now ready to attempt the conquest of Parthia. An embassy from that country met the Emperor at Athens in A.D. 113, and stated that Exedares had been deposed and that their royal master was ready to appoint his brother Parthamasiris to the throne. This proposal was not accepted and the gifts offered by the Parthian ambassadors were refused.

Trajan's First Campaign against Parthia, A.D. 114–115. —Trajan proceeded to Antioch and then, at the head of a very powerful veteran army, marched into Armenia. Near modern Erzerum, Parthamasiris was received by the Emperor in the presence of his army. The Armenian monarch took off his diadem, and laid it at the feet of Trajan, fully expecting that it would be replaced on his head by the Emperor. Trajan, however, declared that henceforth Armenia was to be a Roman province, and sullied his reputation by killing the unfortunate Parthamasiris as he was leaving the camp.

After organizing the new province of Armenia, Trajan marched to Edessa, receiving the submission of Abgarus VII of Osrhoene, its ruler, and of other neighbouring chiefs. Owing to the civil war that was raging between Vologases II and Osroes — we learn from coins that first one and then the other was in possession of the mint — there was no opposition by Parthian armies. From Edessa Trajan returned to Antioch for the winter.

The Second Campaign against Parthia, A.D. 116.—In the following spring Trajan crossed the Tigris by means of boats which had been constructed in sections on the Euphrates and were transported to the Tigris. He occupied Adiabene, which was constituted a Roman province, and then returning to the Euphrates he moved down the left bank of that river with his fleet carrying supplies, and keeping in close touch with the army. At

Ctesiphon, which was captured, the famous golden throne of the Parthian monarchs was taken, but Osroes himself had fled. No field army offered resistance, and so secure did the Roman emperor feel that he continued his march down the Tigris to the Persian Gulf, on whose waters the Roman standards had never before been reflected. He then made for Babylon where he offered sacrifices in the room in which Alexander the Great was believed to have died.

The Retreat of Trajan, A.D. 117.—Suddenly, while at Babylon, Trajan received news that revolts had occurred in most of the conquered territory and that the garrisons had been massacred or driven out. Accordingly, in the late spring, after a repulse at Hatra, which desert city he besieged, Trajan retreated up the Tigris, while his garrisons on the Euphrates were also withdrawn. Thus the conquest of Parthia ended in failure, although Armenia, Mesopotamia and Adiabene were, for the time being, retained. Fortunately for Parthia, Trajan, who had returned to Italy, died in the summer of A.D. 117.

The Evacuation of Armenia and Mesopotamia by Hadrian, A.D. 117.—Hadrian, the successor of Trajan, realizing the strain of holding these outlying territories, wisely decided to evacuate the three new provinces and to reconstitute the Euphrates as the boundary between the two empires. The relations of their rulers accordingly once again became cordial.

The Campaigns of Avidius Cassius, A.D. 163–165.—In A.D. 161, the year of the accession of Marcus Aurelius, Vologases III decided to challenge Rome. The first blow, as in previous cases, was struck by the invasion of Armenia. The Roman troops in this province, consisting of a single legion, were overwhelmed by the deadly Parthian arrows, and the victors then invaded Syria. Not until A.D. 163 was a powerful army ready to take the offensive. In that year Artaxata was captured and, after a hard-fought battle near Dura-Europus, Seleucia was stormed in December A.D. 165. Ctesiphon was also taken. An epidemic, probably of smallpox, then forced the Roman army to retreat and incidentally to

carry the scourge into Europe. As a result of this campaign, Rome reoccupied western Mesopotamia with Nisibis as its capital.

The Last Invasion of Parthia by Rome, A.D. 194–197.—During the civil war which rent the Roman Empire after the death of Pertinax, Vologases IV of Parthia, in A.D. 196, drove the Roman garrisons from Adiabene, strongly fortified Nisibis alone holding out. The Emperor Severus, however, after the re-establishment of his authority in Europe, following the example of Trajan, constructed a fleet to carry his supplies and marched down the left bank of the Euphrates. He then, by dredging out an old canal, moved his fleet into the Tigris and, surprising the Parthians, captured Seleucia and, later, Ctesiphon. Like Trajan, Severus failed to take Hatra, but Parthia made no attempt to harass the Roman army in its retirement.

The Last Battle between Rome and Parthia, A.D. 217.—In A.D. 215 Caracalla opened up negotiations with Artabanus who had divided up the Parthian Empire with his brother Vologases V. The Roman Emperor requested of Artabanus the hand of a Parthian princess in marriage. This request was agreed to, but during the marriage festivities Caracalla, with detestable treachery, attacked his host, massacring his troops, Artabanus himself escaping with difficulty. Caracalla was murdered shortly afterwards.

Artabanus then demanded of his successor, Macrinus, the restoration of Mesopotamia together with an indemnity. Failing to secure these terms, a battle was fought near Nisibis.

The Romans, as before, suffered from the deadly arrows of the Parthians and from the charges of the armour-clad lancers mounted on camels. They saved themselves on the first day to some extent by strewing the ground with caltrops; on the second day there was no marked advantage on either side, but on the third day the Romans were defeated and fled back to their camp. Finally, by the terms of a peace treaty, a huge sum of money was paid to the Parthians. To the Senate

this battle was misrepresented as a success, but the long roll of campaigns between the two powers undoubtedly closed with a signal victory for Parthia, whose overthrow at the hands of Ardeshir, the vassal king of Fars, did not take place until some nine years later.

Summary.—It is a remarkable fact that, after their downfall, the Parthians totally disappear from the pages of history. Firdausi in his great epic, which summarizes all that the Persians knew about their ancient history, refers to them briefly as *Muluk-i-Tawaif*, or "Chiefs of the Tribes", and brands them as illiterate barbarians unworthy of commemoration. Moreover, by an "ecclesiastical and political secret", as the Arab historian Masudi puts it, the period of five hundred and forty-nine years which elapsed between the death of Alexander the Great and the rise of the Sasanian dynasty is reduced to two hundred and sixty-six years by the Persian historian.

On the other hand, the word *Pahlavi*, which properly means Parthian, was the term used for the language of the Sasanian dynasty, and the reigning Shah of Persia terms himself Shah Riza Pahlavi.

The Parthians possessed little more than ancestor-worship when they first rose to power, but they subsequently adopted the Zoroastrian creed and recognized the eternal conflict between the Principle of Good and the Lie. The Sun was saluted at its rising by weird music, and still was when I first visited Persia. The Magi were also held in great reverence and taught the sanctity of fire.

To turn to literature: the Parthians, who possessed nothing of their own, adopted that of Hellas, and Greek became the written means of communication throughout the empire, where its influence must have been considerable.

Parthia fell, mainly perhaps owing to the inability of its rulers to create a solid organization. Yet, for close on five centuries, the Parthian kings had ruled an empire which, stretching from the Oxus to the Euphrates, included many provinces of Afghanistan. Perhaps the

outstanding virtue of the dynasty was its remarkable virility.

Kadphises I, the Founder of the Kushan Dynasty.—We must now pick up the thread of the Yueh-chi, the conquerors of Afghanistan. In the third decade of the first century A.D. the Kwei-shang or Kushan, the leading tribe of the Yueh-chi, who had abandoned their nomadic ways and had become cultivators of the land, created an empire which, spreading southwards from Bactria, replaced in north-west India the rule of Gondophares and his successor Pacores, who were the *Suren* of the Parthian monarchs. Gondophares, we learn, had brought the Sakae kingdom under his direct rule in A.D. 19.[1]

Exact information about this new dynasty, which is also termed Indo-Scythian, is scanty. We know, however, that its founder was Kujula[2] Kadphises I, who conquered the Paropamisus, Gandhara and the kingdom of Taxila. His coins were mostly struck at Kapisa, the summer capital in the Panjshir Valley, and reproduced mechanically the bust of Hermaeus and the legends which were used in the coinage of that monarch. Kadphises I ascended the throne at a date somewhat after A.D. 25 and ended a successful reign in A.D. 50.

Wima Kadphises II, circa A.D. 50–90.—The second ruler was the son of Kadphises I, who continued the conquests of his father. He appears to have annexed North-West India, and as far down the Ganges Valley as Benares. That these conquests occurred before A.D. 64 is proved by an inscription discovered in the Peshawar district which was set up in the reign of a Kushan who is styled Great King. Since the personal name is not given, he cannot be identified, but it was probably either Wima Kadphises or one of his satraps.[3]

During this period the silk caravans passed through the territories of the Kushan, and Kadphises II, seeing

[1] In this difficult section I have mainly relied on Tarn. I have also consulted *L'Histoire du Monde*, by La Vallée Poussin, vol. vi (1), *The Oxford History of India*, by Vincent Smith and *The Commerce between the Roman Empire and India*, by E. H. Warmington.

[2] *Kujula* signifies Chief.

[3] *Cambridge History of India*, vol. i, p. 584.

the advantage of a gold standard, struck gold coins of similar weight and purity to the Roman *aurei*, large quantities of which were used for the purchase of silk, spices and jewels.

Pan Chao re-establishes Chinese Authority in Central Asia.—The Han dynasty fell at the beginning of the Christian era, but, in A.D. 73, the Emperor Ming occupied Hami, the strategical key of the trade-route which passed to the north of the Takla Makan desert, whereas the route *via* Khotan and Yarkand kept to the south of it. The re-establishment of the effective authority of the Chinese Government in the Tarim basin was the work of Pan Chao. This famous general conquered Khotan in A.D. 70 and had occupied the entire province of Chinese Turkistan by A.D. 76.[1]

Pan Chao establishes the Authority of China to the Caspian Sea.—In A.D. 88 the Kushan ruler, who had assisted Pan Chao in a campaign against Turfan, sent tribute to China and asked for a princess of the Han dynasty to be his consort. Pan Chao disapproved of the request and arrested the ambassador. The Kushan Chief, to avenge this insult, marched an army seventy thousand strong across the Pamirs. Broken down by physical hardships and lack of supplies, this force, on reaching Chinese Turkistan, was defeated with ease by Pan Chao, who obliged the Kushan monarch to continue to pay tribute to China. In A.D. 91, according to the Chinese annals, Pan Chao established Celestial suzerainty as far west as the Caspian Sea.

Pan Chao despatches an Ambassador to Parthia.—In A.D. 97, he despatched a certain Kan Ying on an embassy to Parthia. This worthy travelled to Mesopotamia by way of Hecatompylus (Damghan) and Hamadan. He wished to undertake a voyage to Syria by the Persian Gulf, the Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Akaba, intending thereby to establish direct relations with the Roman Empire. But to quote from the *Hou-han-shu*: "The sailors told him that the sea was vast, that it could be

[1] The Chinese history, termed the *Hou-han-shu*, commences its narrative of events from A.D. 25.

traversed within three months, but with unfavourable winds might take two years . . . that there was something in the sea which made a man long for home, and that many men lost their lives on it. When he heard this, Ying did not go any farther." I have visited the tomb of Pan Chao at Kashgar, where his memory is still cherished.

Kanishka, the Great Kushan Monarch, A.D. 100–162.—The date of the accession of Kanishka is still disputed. It is, however, possible that the defeat of the Yueh-chi by Pan Chao in A.D. 88 may have occurred during the reign of Kadphises II. Kanishka is described as King of Gandhara. His capital was Parushapur (Peshawar) where he erected magnificent Buddhist buildings, as also at Mathura and other cities. In the early years of his reign this great monarch annexed Kashmir and consolidated his position in vast territories conquered by his predecessors.

Unwilling to accept the position of being a ruler tributary to China, he sent a powerful army across the Pamirs, which added Khotan, Yarkand and Kashgar to his wide-spreading empire, as Hsuan-tsang, the famous master of the Law, mentions in the motto to this chapter. It is also of interest to note that Chinese writers admit the loss of Khotan to the empire in A.D. 152, thereby dating the establishment of the suzerainty of Kanishka in these distant regions.

The Transformation of Buddhism.—In the later years of his reign Kanishka, who was, it would seem, primarily a Zoroastrian by religion, showed much favour to the Buddhists and, to this change of policy we owe the many statues of the Buddha, with strong Greek influence, known as the Gandhara school, which have been discovered.

In the previous chapter a very brief reference to the development of Buddhism under Asoka has been made. To continue this theme: in 2 B.C. a Yueh-chi Chief presented a copy of the Buddhist scriptures to a Chinese ambassador and in this manner the religion is believed to have reached distant China. It had already reached the

Roman Empire. Gradually it became a new religion and, instead of an order of mendicants preaching that "after this present life there would be no beyond", we have a divinity ever present in the hearts of the faithful and listening to their prayers. "In a word," as Vincent Smith aptly puts it, "the veneration for a dead Teacher passed into the worship of a living Saviour."

Huvishka, A.D. 162–185.—Huvishka, who had governed the Indian provinces as his father's deputy, succeeded to the throne on Kanishka's death. We know practically nothing about the events of his reign, but there is reason to believe that he ruled over the wide-spreading empire of his father, which remained intact.

The Break-up of the Kushan Empire.—Under Vasudeva I the great Kushan Empire began to break up. Petty Kushan dynasties, however, continued to reign in the Panjshir Valley and neighbouring provinces until the terrible invasions of the Ephalites or White Huns in the fifth century; some Kushan principalities even survived until the Arab conquest of Afghanistan in the seventh century. As we shall see, Ardeshir, the founder of the great Sasanian dynasty in the third century A.D., invaded India and, for a century, the rulers of the Kabul Valley paid tribute to Persia. His invasion may possibly have contributed to the break-up of the Kushan dynasty. We owe to it the peach and the pear, which the Yueh-chi brought from China to Persia. The former still retains its name as the "Persian" fruit.

Caravan Routes across Asia in the Second Century A.D.—By way of conclusion to this section, it may be of interest to discuss the commercial situation. As we have seen, the principal article of export from China was silk and we possess a fairly accurate knowledge of the route followed by the camel caravans on this long journey to India and to Europe. Crossing the great desert of *Gobi*, and entering Chinese Turkistan at Lopnor, the caravans passed through Khotan, Yarkand and Kashgar to Irkeshtam, whence, keeping to the north of the main massif of the Pamirs, the natural thoroughfare of the Alai trough, was continued by the valley of the Kizil to the

Oxus at Termez. From neighbouring Balkh, the rugged passes of the Hindu Kush were crossed to Peshawar, where silk destined for the Roman Empire was carried down the Indus to the port of Barygaza.

A second main route to the west, from Irkeshtam, crossed the Tian Shan pass to fertile Ferghana. It then passed through Samarkand, Merv, Hamadan and Seleucia to the Roman frontier at Zeugma on the Euphrates, and so to Antioch.

Ptolemy gives us confirmatory information of the route followed in the opposite direction by the agents of "Maes the Macedonian, also called Titianus", from Bactra [Balkh] to "the country of Seres". From Irkeshtam[1] which is "the station at Mount Imaos, whence travellers start on their journey to Sera", we are able to identify the names as far east as the Nan-shan range, while "the great nation of the Issedones", referred to in the previous chapter, is shown to be living in the Lopnor district.

Sea Routes from Egypt to India.—One of the earliest accounts of navigation in the Indian Ocean is given in the Book of Kings, and describes the trade carried on by the royal partners King Solomon and King Hiram in the tenth century B.C., which united the seaport of Akaba situated on the Gulf of that name, with Tharshish, a port in India.[2] This sea trade is also referred to by the Prophet Ezekiel who, later, in the sixth century B.C., wrote, "The ships of Tharshish did sing of thee [Tyre] in thy market".[3]

The discovery of the use of the monsoons in the middle of the first century A.D., substituted for a course which painfully followed the desert coast of Arabia to Cape Musandam and thence crossed over to the equally desert coast of Makran, an open sea route from the Gulf of Aden to the port of Muziris on the Malabar coast. The chief exports from the East, apart from the silk

[1] I have twice visited Irkeshtam, which was "the half-way house" between the Roman Empire and China. Mount Imaos was the "Roof of the World" as the Pamirs are called, and Ptolemy fully realized the importance of this great elevated mountain-massif as a boundary.

[2] 1 Kings x, 22.

[3] Ezekiel xxvii, 25.

which mainly reached the Roman Empire by land, were pepper (which was first esteemed as a drug), nutmegs, cloves and other spices, perfumes, gums (including the precious incense), pearls, rubies, diamonds and drugs of every kind. Roman exports included base metals, woollen and linen textiles, coral and amber. Glass, which was not manufactured in China until the fifth century A.D., concludes this relatively insignificant list. This trade, as the above list would indicate, constituted a serious financial drain on Rome, and Pliny (with justice) wrote: " The sea of Arabia . . . sends us pearls, and, at the lowest computation, India and the Seres . . . put together drain our empire of one hundred million sesterces [over £1,000,000] every year. That is the price that our luxuries and our womenkind cost us." This statement has been fully confirmed by the discovery of great hoards of Roman money in India. It is of interest to note that a similar problem faced the English merchant-adventurers in Elizabethan times.

CHAPTER IX

THE SASANIAN DYNASTY, ROME AND THE WHITE HUNS

There can be no power without an army, no army without money, no money without agriculture, and no agriculture without justice.—From the Maxims of ARDESHIR.

The fortune of the East sounded the terrible trumpet of danger. For the King of Persia, being strengthened by the aid of the fierce nations whom he had lately subdued, and being above all men ambitious of extending his territories, began to prepare men and arms and supplies, mingling hellish wisdom with his human counsels, and consulting all kinds of soothsayers about futurity. —AMMIANUS MARCELLINUS.

Shapur, King of Kings, brother of the Sun and Moon, sends salutation to his brother Constantius Caesar. . . . As moderation delights me, I shall be content to receive Mesopotamia and Armenia which was fraudulently extorted from my grandfather. . . . I warn you that, if my ambassador returns in vain, I shall take the field against you, as soon as the winter is past, with all my forces.—The Letter of SHAPUR THE GREAT to Constantius.

The Rise of the Sasanian Dynasty, A.D. 226.—In the *Shahnama* of Firdausi, the death of Rustam, the great Champion of Persia, who was killed by treachery in Seistan, brings us nearly to the end of the heroic age. In his last great fight Rustam slew Isfandiar, the heir-apparent to the throne of the Achaemenians. His son Bahman, who became King after the death of his grandfather Gushtasp, is known in European history as Artaxerxes Longimanus, which represents Ardeshir *Dirazdast* of the Persians. This late Achaemenian monarch is the first historical Great King to be mentioned by Firdausi in his *Shahnama* or " History of the Kings ", and from him the illustrious Sasanian dynasty claimed descent.

Alexander in the " Shahnama ".—At this period, however, as Browne points out, the Alexander-romance, an entirely foreign element, is introduced. Firdausi writes that Dara, the First of the Achaemenian dynasty, married a daughter of Philip of Macedon but afterwards divorced

her and sent her back to Macedonia. There she gave birth to Alexander the Great, who appears in the *Shahnama* as the son of Dara. Alexander's conquest of the Persian Empire is thus considered to have been a fight for the throne between Alexander, the elder son of Dara the First, and Dara the Second. On this note the illustrious dynasty of the Kayani monarchs is brought to its close.

Ardeshir, the Founder of the Sasanian Dynasty.—The coming of Ardeshir, son of Papak, is veiled by delightful wonder-tales. So far as can be ascertained, he was a vassal-king of Pars (now Fars). In A.D. 225 he overthrew the Parthian monarch Ardawan, the classical Artabanus, in single combat at the battle of Hormuz, situated to the east of Ahwaz.[1] He thereby founded the best-loved of all Persian dynasties, which ruled over a great and contented empire for four centuries until it was overthrown by the followers of the Prophet Muhammad.

Ardeshir was a mighty warrior and we learn from Tabari that, after conquering the countries bordering on Khurasan, Merv, Balkh and Khiva, he received messengers from the kings of the Kushan states, from Turan and from Makran. Thanks to Vincent Smith, we learn that Ardeshir actually invaded the Punjab and reached the neighbourhood of Sirhind. The reigning monarch "Junah", we read, "was very much alarmed and hastened to do homage to him. He presented pearls and gold and jewels and elephants as tribute, and so induced Ardeshir to return."[2]

Ardeshir defeats Severus Alexander and occupies Armenia.—The Sasanian monarch, after these successful operations, decided to throw down the gauntlet to Rome. He may well have been influenced by the reasoning that

[1] The chief authorities for the Sasanian period include the two Arab historians: Tabari, who wrote *The Annals*; and Masudi, whose work was translated into French under the title of *Les Prairies d'Or*. Both works are valuable. The translation of *Ammianus Marcellinus* by C. D. Yonge has also been consulted. Of European works, the most important is *Geschichte der Perser und Araber zur Zeit des Sasaniden*, by Professor Th. Nöldeke.

[2] Quoted from Dowson's *History of India as told by its own Historians* in Vincent Smith's article on "Invasion of the Punjab by Ardeshir Papakan". Vide *Journal R.A.S.*, April 1920.

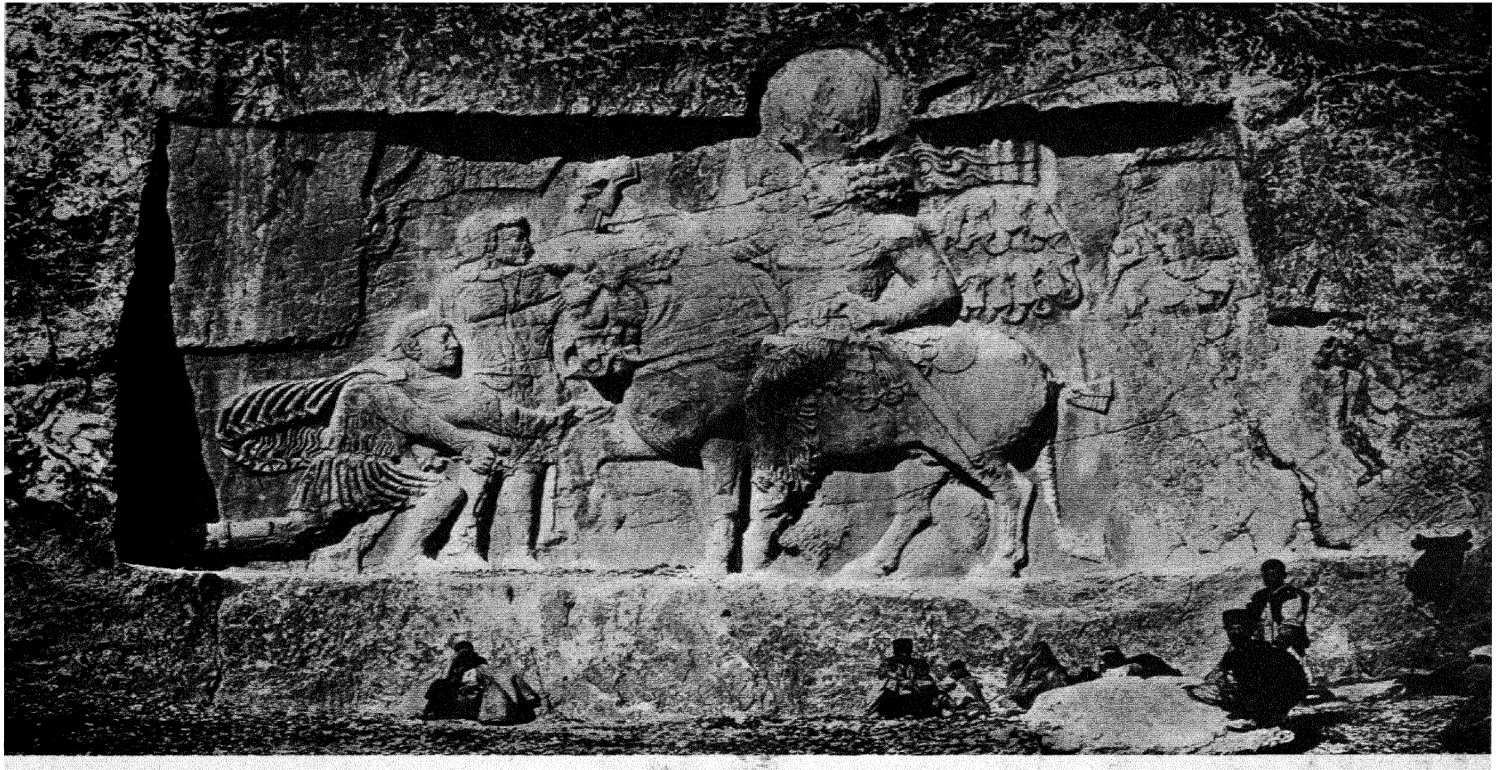
Ardawan, the last Parthian monarch, whom he had defeated, had decisively beaten a Roman army. He first despatched to Antioch a mission consisting of four hundred magnificently equipped Persians of fine physique, who delivered a provocative message summoning the Emperor to evacuate Syria and the rest of Asia and to be content with the undisturbed possession of Europe.

This challenge was taken up, and in the autumn of A.D. 231 a powerful army was assembled at Antioch. The Roman plan of campaign was to attack the Persian Empire with three armies: that of the north, in alliance with Chosroes of Armenia, was to follow Antony's plan of invading Media Atropatene; the objective of the southern army was Susiana; while the third, commanded by the Emperor in person, was somewhat vaguely destined to operate against the heart of the country.

The northern army was at first successful in what was little more than a raid, but, on the return march, its losses were heavy. The southern army was attacked by the united forces of the Sasanian monarch and was cut to pieces. Severus, alarmed at this disaster, ordered a general retreat and peace was concluded in A.D. 232, leaving Ardeshir the undoubted victor.

Armenia was now invaded by a Persian force. A desperate resistance was offered, but her monarch was killed by a hired assassin. His infant son was carried away to safety, and the Mountain Kingdom was annexed. This successful campaign ended the career of Ardeshir, who died in A.D. 240 leaving behind him a splendid reputation, alike as a conqueror and as a just ruler.

Shapur I invades Syria and is repulsed, A.D. 241–244.—Upon the accession of Shapur I, who succeeded his illustrious father, Armenia revolted but was easily subdued. The young monarch then determined to take advantage of the internal troubles of the Roman Empire to invade Syria. His first objective was Nisibis, which was apparently taken owing to the destruction of its walls by an earthquake. The Great King then invaded Syria and captured Antioch. In due course a Roman army under the nominal command of the Emperor, known as



SHAPUR THE FIRST AND THE EMPEROR VALERIAN

(Bas-relief at Nakhsh-i-Rustam)

(From Sarre and Herzfeld's *Iranische Felsreliefs*)

the third Gordian, appeared in Syria and drove the Persians across the Euphrates. The Romans pursued in force, Nisibis was retaken and Ctesiphon was threatened. The murder of the young Emperor caused the withdrawal of the Roman army and Philip "the Usurper" made peace with Shapur in A.D. 244.

The Second Campaign against Rome, A.D. 258–260.— After this campaign, Shapur seems to have engaged in wars on his eastern frontiers. There is no definite information but it appears that Balkh was able to resist his attacks and its ruler opened up negotiations with Rome.

In A.D. 258 Shapur again invaded Syria and captured Antioch while its unsuspecting citizens were enjoying a play. As in the case of the previous invasion, a Roman army came to the rescue under the aged Emperor Valerian, who, at first, was successful and drove the Persian army out of Syria.

The Capture of the Emperor Valerian, A.D. 260.— Later, however, owing to the treachery of Macrianus, the Praetorian prefect, who aimed at the throne, the Roman army was surrounded near Edessa. A desperate attempt at breaking through was defeated with heavy loss and Valerian perforce surrendered and was made a prisoner.

The impression that this disaster created throughout the civilized world was overwhelming and was, if anything, heightened by the ill-treatment that the unfortunate Emperor suffered. I have visited the famous bas-relief near Persepolis showing Valerian, on whose hands the shackles are still faintly visible, kneeling with his arms outstretched in supplication to the proud Sasanian monarch, who is mounted. The third figure in the bas-relief is that of a certain Cyriadis of Antioch who was invested with the royal purple and the title of Caesar by Shapur — probably to heighten the impression of his overwhelming power.

Shapur followed up his great victory by the seizure of Antioch. He then captured Caesarea Mazaca, the most important city in Cappadocia, and, after massacring and plundering with barbarous cruelty, recrossed the

Euphrates, leaving the country desolate and strewn with corpses. He evidently entertained no idea of permanent conquest.

The Later Years of Shapur I.—To turn to Shapur as a ruler; his greatest surviving work is a magnificent dam at Shuster which I visited many years ago. Its name, the *Band-i-Kaisar* or "Emperor's Dam", recalls the captivity of Valerian, and the local belief is that it was constructed by Roman prisoners.

The Sasanian dynasty was indeed fortunate in having two remarkable monarchs to found and to strengthen the foundations of the new empire, and Shapur I, who died in A.D. 271, was held to have been a truly great monarch.

The State of Palmyra and Aurelian.—The desert state of Palmyra with its capital situated half-way between Damascus and the Euphrates, had become a flourishing commercial centre under Odenathus, whose horsemen had successfully attacked the troops of Shapur on their retirement from Syria. Indeed, he followed them into Mesopotamia and raided up to Ctesiphon. Upon his death by assassination, his widow, the celebrated Zenobia, who had added Egypt to her kingdom, refused to acknowledge the Emperor Aurelian as her suzerain. In consequence, defeated in two great battles, her capital was taken, and finally the beautiful and proud Zenobia, chained in fetters of gold, graced a Roman triumph.

In A.D. 275 Aurelian decided on a Persian expedition to avenge the disaster of Valerian, but, through the intrigues of a treacherous secretary who had forged a document on which many leading officials were set down as being doomed to death, he was assassinated in the neighbourhood of Byzantium by a general whom he had always trusted.

The Early Campaigns of Bahram II, A.D. 275–282.—Hormisdas, and then Bahram I, succeeded Shapur I, but both died without impressing themselves in any way on their subjects. Bahram II, during the first eight years of his reign, subdued the Sakae of Seistan and had penetrated farther east when he was suddenly recalled to the west by a fresh Roman invasion.

The Campaign of Carus and his Death, A.D. 283.—The invasion of Persia, which had been planned by Aurelian, was carried out by Carus, the Praetorian prefect, who became Emperor after his murder. Favoured by the absence of the main Persian armies on the distant frontiers of India, the aged Emperor met with little opposition and captured Seleucia and Ctesiphon. His career was suddenly cut short in a storm in which he was apparently struck by lightning and was therefore, following Roman belief, proved to have been the object of the wrath of Heaven. The army becoming demoralized, insisted on retiring and, for the second time, Persia was saved by an amazing stroke of good fortune.

The Campaigns of Diocletian, A.D. 286–297.—Once again a cause for war between the two great powers was furnished by Armenia, which country for a generation had remained tributary to Persia. Upon his election as Emperor in 286, Diocletian, however, produced as a candidate for the throne of that mountainous kingdom, Tiridates, the son of the Chosroes who had been assassinated by the orders of Ardeshir. The infant previously referred to had grown up into a man of superb physique and exceptional courage and was now an officer of the Roman army. Consequently, when he appeared on the Armenian frontier supported by a Roman force, he was welcomed and ascended the throne without opposition, driving out the Persian garrisons.

The Campaigns of Narses, A.D. 296–297.—In A.D. 296 Narses, who had successfully fought for the throne of Persia with a brother, invaded Armenia and expelled Tiridates. In the campaign which ensued, the Roman army was decisively defeated in the neighbourhood of Carrhae and only a handful of fugitives, among whom were Tiridates and Galerius, the Commander-in-Chief, escaped by swimming the Euphrates.

Diocletian, in the following year, sent back Galerius at the head of a new army to regain his damaged reputation. Warned by his previous defeat, he kept to hilly Armenia and succeeded in surprising the Persian camp by night. The enemy was almost annihilated and Narses,

who had been wounded, was compelled to sue for peace. The terms were harsh, and included the cession of trans-Tigris provinces, thus moving the boundary from the Euphrates eastwards beyond that river for a section in its upper reaches. By this treaty Armenia, for the time being, passed outside the orbit of Persia.

The First Campaigns of Shapur the Great against Rome, A.D. 337–350.—Once again, in the person of Shapur II, a warlike Persian monarch arose and decided to attack the Roman Empire. He awaited the death of Constantine, who had unwisely divided his dominions among his three sons, with the result that the Great King was facing a monarch with infinitely less resources at his disposal than his own.

Crossing the frontier, Shapur besieged Nisibis in A.D. 338 but was unable to take that fortress. Indeed, in this campaign he attacked, but could not capture, the Roman strongholds. In A.D. 341 he made a treaty with Armenia by which his nominee, Arsaces, son of Tiranus, whom he had made prisoner, was placed on the throne. In A.D. 346 Shapur again besieged Nisibis, but again without success.

In A.D. 348 the Great King met the army of Constantius in the neighbourhood of Singara, the modern Sinjar. In the battle which ensued the Romans were victorious, but, careless after their victory, they were surprised and massacred by the Persian light troops.

In A.D. 350 Shapur made his last desperate attempt on Nisibis, of which a vivid account is given by the historian Ammianus Marcellinus. He had created an artificial lake round the city on which ships had been placed, and when a breach had been made by the pressure of the water, ordered an immediate assault which, as was only to be anticipated, failed owing to the deep mud. After this repulse, for a period of eight years, hostilities ceased between the two great empires, neither of which had gained a decisive victory.

Shapur's Eastern Campaigns, A.D. 350–357.—The Persian monarch now turned his attention to his eastern frontiers which were threatened by a branch of the Huns

termed Chionites, who may have been an advance guard of the Ephthalites. No details about these campaigns are available, but the Great King was clearly successful since, when hostilities with Rome were resumed, he was supported by a strong body of Huns under the command of their King Grumbates.

The Second Campaign against Rome, A.D. 359–361.—Taking advantage of Shapur's Eastern campaigns, Arsaces of Armenia sent a request to Constantius that a bride from the Imperial family might be bestowed upon him. This request was acceded to and was followed by a treaty whereby Armenia, once again, re-entered the sphere of Roman influence.

Somewhat naturally, Shapur resented this unfriendly act of Rome. In accordance with the threat contained in his letter, which serves as a motto to this chapter, he commenced hostilities once again by the capture of Amida, the modern Diarbekr, where, exasperated by the heavy losses he had suffered, he massacred the garrison, crucifying the officers whom he made prisoners. Later he captured Bezabde.

Constantius, owing to fear of his cousin Julian, had not hitherto been able to devote his full attention to the Persian campaign. In A.D. 360, however, he attempted to recapture Bezabde but failed entirely to do so. At the end of A.D. 361, during which year Shapur remained inactive, Constantius died after a reign lasting forty years.

The Expedition of Julian, A.D. 363.—Constantius was succeeded by his cousin Julian, known as "the Apostate", who decided to follow the example of Trajan and prepared a powerful army, one hundred thousand strong, for the purpose of invading Mesopotamia. Imperious and tactless, he refused to award the Saracen chiefs the usual allowances and presents, while his haughty attitude towards Arsaces of Armenia, who was a Christian, was equally unfortunate. Although a contingent of troops from that country joined him, they suddenly quitted the Roman camp and marched back to their own country.

Crossing the Euphrates in the spring of A.D. 363, Julian moved down the great river, supported by a fleet

of eleven hundred ships, to the boundary of the Roman Empire at Circesium, which had been converted into a strong fortress by Diocletian. No attempt was made by a Persian field army to resist the march of the invaders, but their light cavalry cut off foraging parties. Julian captured Firuz-Shapur, a strongly fortified city situated on an artificial island of the Euphrates, and reached the Tigris at a point opposite Ctesiphon. Crossing that river, he defeated a strong Persian army which lined the eastern bank, and pursued it to the city gates.

The Retreat and Death of Julian, A.D. 363.—Knowing Julian's reputation for courage and in view of the strength of his army, it would appear that he should have besieged Ctesiphon, more especially as he possessed a siege-train on his ships. It seems, however, that he came to the conclusion that Ctesiphon was impregnable. That being the case, he should surely have sought out and attacked the Persian army. On the contrary, Julian burned his fleet and retreated.

Starting northwards in mid-June, the Roman Emperor, who had been deserted by his Saracen allies, suffered sorely from lack of supplies, which were destroyed by the enemy in front of his slow-moving legionaries. On June 26 his rear guard was attacked and Julian, while proceeding to support it, was hastily summoned to the front where the main attack of the Persian army was being delivered. There he was mortally wounded by a javelin. Thus, in the thirty-first year of his age, passed off the stage a Roman Emperor who is represented in Persian paintings as a furious lion emitting fire from its jaws.

The Restoration of the Five Provinces and of Nisibis to Shapur, A.D. 363.—Under Jovian, who was elected to succeed Julian, a treaty was made with Shapur. By its terms, the five provinces beyond the Tigris, which had been surrendered by Narses, were handed back to Persia; Nisibis was also ceded, while Armenia was declared to lie outside the Roman sphere of influence. The loss of the five provinces constituted a serious blow to the prestige of Rome, but nothing in comparison with the handing

over of Nisibis, her great military and commercial centre, with its large European population which had to be evacuated.

For Persia the long series of wars waged by Shapur had ended gloriously. They had raised her to the zenith of her power and prestige. Shapur died in A.D. 379.

The Partition of Armenia, A.D. 384.—Ardeshir II only ruled for four years. He was deposed in A.D. 383 and his successor was Shapur III. Internal troubles in Armenia led to a Persian garrison being sent to rule conjointly with the nominee of Shapur. This force was massacred and, since both Rome and Persia were invoked by the rival factions, the situation was tense. But Rome had not recovered from her defeat by the Goths at Adrianople in A.D. 378, and finally a treaty was concluded, by the terms of which Armenia was partitioned between the two great Powers. Both provinces were ruled by members of the Arsacid dynasty, but the independence of Armenia finally disappeared.

Bahram IV, A.D. 388–399; *and Yezdigird I, the Wicked*, A.D. 399–420.—The reign of Bahram, who was killed by his soldiers in a mutiny, calls for no special mention. His successor, Yezdigird, remained on friendly terms with Arcadius, the Emperor of the East, who committed his son to the protection of the Persian monarch.

The Christian community under Shapur the Great had been nearly extirpated by his ferocious persecutions. The charge against them ran: "They destroy our holy religion and teach men to serve one God and not to honour the sun or fire . . . and to refuse to go out to war with the King of Kings".

Yezdigird, in A.D. 409, favoured the Christians and granted a *firman* permitting them to rebuild their churches and to worship openly. This decree, issued to the Eastern Church, may be compared with the better known Edict of Milan which gave similar privileges to the Western Church.

Yezdigird, at one time, actually contemplated baptism and began to show disfavour to the Magians, who gave

him the opprobrious title of The Wicked, by which he is known. Realizing the danger of this policy, he later authorised the destruction of the Christians. There is a curious legend connected with his death.[1]

The Reign of Bahram Gur, A.D. 420–440.—Bahram continued the persecution of the Christians with the result that large numbers of refugees crossed the Roman border. Bahram demanded their surrender and, upon receiving a refusal by Rome, declared war. He besieged Theodosiopolis (the modern Erzerum), but failed to take it. In the field a single combat between two champions was agreed upon. The Roman Champion, Areobindus, the Goth, entangled his adversary in a net and killed him, and the Persian army thereupon withdrew. Bahram finally made peace on the terms that Christians should not be persecuted in Persia nor Zoroastrians in the Roman Empire. Shortly afterwards he was called upon to repel an invasion of the White Huns.

The Origin of the Ephthalites or White Huns.—We learn from the Chinese annals that a section of the Great Yueh-Chi, known as Hoa or Hoa-tun, originally lived to the north of the great wall of China and were in subjection to the Juan-Juan, who were later known in Europe as the Avars. Gradually the Hoa became a powerful tribe who, after the name of their ruling family styled themselves Ye-tha, whence the term Ephthalites was subsequently applied to them by the Greeks. The Persians termed them Haythal, while the Byzantine name was "White Huns".[2] In this connexion Procopius[3] states that they alone among the Huns had white skins. Their language was an Indo-European language.

The Ephthalites, moving westwards through Khotan about A.D. 425, founded an empire which extended from Chinese Turkistan of today to the confines of Persia, and consisted of more than thirty kingdoms including the provinces of Afghanistan. This empire lasted for

[1] *Vide* Sykes' *History of Persia* (3rd ed. vol. i), pp. 430-431.

[2] I have especially consulted McGovern's *op. cit.* pp. 404 *et seq.*; also "White Huns and Kindred Tribes in the History of the Indian North-West Frontier", by Sir Aurel Stein, *Indian Antiquary*, vol. xxiv, pp. 73-87, 1905.

[3] *De Bello Persico*, i, 3.

about one century. The capital was situated in Tukharistan on the Oxus and reference is made to the Ta-hia or Tokhari.

The Chinese annalists describe the Ephthalites as doughty warriors whose customs bore a close resemblance to those of the Tu-kiue or Turks. It was especially noticed that they practised polyandry, and we learn the interesting fact that their women wore a headdress which showed the exact number of husbands each woman possessed.

The Campaigns of Bahram Gur against the White Huns.—To return to Bahram Gur: upon receiving news of the invasion of his kingdom, Bahram, much to the alarm of his councillors, ordered a hunting expedition and rode off westwards. However, upon disappearing from the Court, concealing his movements with complete success, he moved rapidly eastwards and, collecting troops in every district through which he passed, decided upon a night attack on the formidable enemy. Adopting novel tactics, he attached skins filled with pebbles to his horses' necks. His horsemen, owing to the alarming noise with which they were accompanied, stampeded the horses of the Huns, whose Khan he slew, together with thousands of his tribesmen. He then crossed the Oxus in pursuit, defeated the enemy once again and compelled the demoralized Huns to sue for peace. The White Huns troubled Persia no more during the reign of Bahram, but, as we shall see, they constituted a serious threat to his successors.

The Expedition of Bahram Gur into India.—According to Persian writers, Bahram Gur also attacked the White Huns on the frontiers of India and was rewarded by the Indian King with the gift of the provinces of Sind and Makran. Firdausi tells us that he brought back from this expedition twelve thousand Luris or Gypsies, to provide music and dancing for his people. I would not reject either the campaign in India or the appearance of the Luris, whose vocabularies, which I collected, include many Indian words.[1]

[1] Vide *Journal Anthropological Institute*, vol. xxxii, 1902, and vol. xxxvi, 1906.

Persians admire a great hunter, and Bahram, whose name is still remembered with deep affection, was especially fond of the chase of the *gur* or " wild ass ". So much was this the case that he is invariably referred to as Bahram Gur. Did not Omar Khayyám write?

> Bahram who all his life was capturing the wild ass (Gur):
> See how the grave (Gur) has captured Bahram.

FitzGerald's lines run:

> And Bahram that great Hunter — the Wild Ass
> Stamps o'er his Head, but cannot break his sleep.

To conclude: Bahram Gur, apart from his great qualities as a leader in the field, administered justice without partiality. He also encouraged agriculture, science and literature. When he died Persia was both powerful and respected.

Yezdigird II, A.D. 440–457. *His Relations with Rome and the White Huns.*—The son of Bahram Gur, upon his succession, declared war on Rome but, by the terms of a treaty, it was decided that no fortifications were to be erected on either side of the frontier, while Rome agreed to pay Yezdigird an annual sum of gold for garrisoning the key position of Darband (now Derbent), situated on the western side of the Caspian, where the spurs of the Caucasus main range come down to the sea. Yezdigird later, from A.D. 443 to 451, engaged in campaigns against the White Huns in which he suffered more than one defeat.

Firuz and the White Huns.—Upon the death of Yezdigird II, his younger son Hormisdas seized the throne in the absence of his elder brother Firuz, who was Governor of Seistan. Firuz thereupon took refuge with the White Huns, by whose aid he captured Hormisdas and ascended the throne.

Later, with distinct ingratitude, he attacked these formidable nomads, but without success, and made peace with them, one of the terms being that he should give his daughter to their King, whose Persian title was *Khush-Newaz* or " The High-Minded ". Firuz, most unwisely,

insulted the White Hun monarch by sending a female slave to impersonate a royal princess and when this imposture was discovered the insult was bitterly resented.

In the campaign that followed, Firuz made his headquarters at the city of Gurgan, to the north of which I examined ruins of a wall which ran eastwards from the Caspian and is known as the Barrier of Alexander. Sir Henry Rawlinson believes that it was constructed by the Sasanian monarch as a defence against the Huns. From this base Firuz attacked the White Huns in the wooded hills, but was led into a trap and was obliged to sue for terms. Those granted by his generous foe were lenient and he thereupon negotiated a treaty of perpetual peace. However, the perjured Persian broke his oath and, marching eastwards, was met in the vicinity of Balkh by the White Huns. Their King appealed to the Persian soldiers not to fight for their dishonoured monarch and, according to Tabari, one-half of the force deserted.

Firuz, leading the remainder, was enticed to march over a deep trench masked by boughs of trees where he and most of his men were entrapped and killed. His successor was his brother Vologases, known to the Byzantines as Balas, who paid tribute to the White Huns for two years. This monarch apparently died in A.D. 487.

Kobad's First Reign, A.D. 487–498.—The successor of Vologases was the son of Firuz, who certainly had a chequered career. Shortly after his accession, Mazdak, who preached that property and women should be held in common, won over the Great King to his communistic doctrines. This conversion excited intense feeling and led to a general conspiracy, headed by the *Mobeds* and the nobles, who placed Zamasp, the brother of Kobad, on the throne. Of kindly disposition, the new monarch refused to order the execution of the deposed monarch who was imprisoned in the Castle of Oblivion. However, some three years later, Kobad escaped and since Zamasp declined to oppose him, he received the submission of his rebellious subjects.

The Second Reign of Kobad, A.D. 501–531. *The First War with Rome.*—In A.D. 503 the eighty years of peace

with Rome came to an end and an almost continuous series of campaigns was commenced which exhausted both empires and ultimately facilitated the Arab conquest.

The objective in this first campaign was Roman Armenia, where Theodosiopolis (Erzerum) surrendered. The great fortress of Amida was also taken at the heavy cost of 50,000 Persians. In 505 a treaty of peace was concluded with Rome for a period of seven years.

Kobad took advantage of it, and waged a series of successful campaigns against the Ephthalites during the years A.D. 503 to 513.

The Ephthalite Invasion of India, A.D. 465–502.—We learn from Chinese sources that the Ephthalites commenced their conquests in Southern Afghanistan and India by the occupation of Gandhara in about A.D. 465. It would appear that the Supreme Chief of the tribe appointed a *Tigin* or Viceroy who may be identified with the Toramana of the Indian inscriptions. This remarkable warrior created an extensive, independent empire in North and Central India. In the first place, without much difficulty, he annexed the petty Kushan states in the Indus Valley. Later, about A.D. 470, he attacked Skandagupta, the ruler of the powerful Gupta Empire. In the early engagements the Indian monarch was able to boast of victories over the "Hunas", but, later, he suffered defeat after defeat and, at his death in 480, the Gupta Empire broke up; Toramana, nevertheless, had to conquer each province separately but, by A.D. 500, he was the acknowledged paramount ruler of Northern and Central India with his capital at Malwa. He died shortly afterwards in A.D. 502.

The Reign of Mihirakula, A.D. 502–542.—Toramana was succeeded by his son Mihirakaula ("Sun-flower") and in A.D. 520 we have a deeply interesting account by the Chinese pilgrim Sung-Yun, who visited the Ephthalite King, whom he does not name, in Gandhara. He created a bad impression on his visitor, not only for his "barbarian haughtiness", but "for taking a delight in atrocities". At the time of Sung-Yun's visit, according to his report, the King had been waging war for some years to obtain

possession of the Kabul Valley. To sum up the impressions of the pilgrim: "Of all the barbarians the Ephthalites are the most powerful. They do not believe in the Buddhist Law, but serve a number of divinities. They kill living creatures and eat raw meat."

The Report of Cosmas Indicopleustes.—On the part played by this powerful tribe in Northern India we have a most interesting statement by the Egyptian traveller Cosmas Indicopleustes, who visited the western ports of India about A.D. 530.[1] He mentions that the White Huns were in possession of the North of India and "under their King . . . marched to war with two thousand elephants and cavalry without number". This Hun King can be definitely identified from Indian inscriptions with Mihirakula, whose massacres of Buddhists and whose destruction of their monasteries are referred to a century later by Hsuan-tsang; he was also without much doubt the King visited by Sung-Yun.

Mihirakula's cruelty and oppression in time became intolerable, so much so that, in A.D. 532, there was a general rising against the bloodthirsty tyrant, which was led by a man of the people termed Yasodarman. Mihirakula was driven from the plains and took refuge in Kashmir where he continued to reign until his death in about A.D. 542. Thus ended the short-lived Empire of the Ephthalites in India. A few years later the main tribe in Central Asia was also to be overthrown and to disappear.

The Second War with Rome, A.D. 524–531.—During the years of warfare against the White Huns, Rome had taken advantage of the position and, against the terms agreed upon, had built a great fortress at Dara, a few miles to the west of Nisibis. In the war which broke out, the Romans were generally worsted at first, but, in A.D. 528, the Emperor Justinian placed a powerful army under the command of Belisarius, and a decisive battle was fought under the walls of Dara where the Romans occupied a prepared position, protected in front by a deep ditch. The Persians, whose numbers were double

[1] *The Christian Topography of Cosmas*, by J. W. McCrindle (Hakluyt Society).

those of the Romans, opened the battle with a storm of arrows, which was followed by a hand-to-hand struggle, in which the Roman left was only saved by a charge of Massagetae horsemen. The " Immortals " immediately afterwards broke the ranks of the legionaries on the right, but again a charge of the Massagetae turned defeat into a Roman success. There was no pursuit, Belisarius being well content with having repulsed the Persians. In A.D. 531, the Roman general, deserted by his allies, fought another defensive battle with his back to the Euphrates. Towards evening the Persians drew off and he was able to transport his army across the river.

The Intercourse between China and Persia, A.D. 455–513.—Missions from China to Persia had ceased for more than two centuries when they were renewed in A.D. 455, some ten embassies being exchanged between the two countries. The rise of the Sasanian dynasty was not known in China, but for the first time we find mention in the Chinese records of Po-sz or Persia. In addition to notes on the population, the land and its products, its minerals and its precious stones, a good account is given of the King sitting on a throne, guarded by golden lions, wearing his splendid crown and surrounded by his chief officials, whose titles are given.

Again, during the reign of Shen-Kwei (Kobad), we read in the Chinese annals that Persia sent envoys to bring a letter, accompanying articles of tribute, which runs: " The Great Country's Son of Heaven is born of Heaven. We hope that the place where the Sun appears will always be of the Son of Heaven in Han (land) ". These chronicles are not only interesting but are remarkably accurate.

CHAPTER X

THE REIGN OF NOSHIRWAN FOLLOWED BY THE DECLINE OF THE PERSIAN EMPIRE

Khusru, greatest of gods and master of the whole earth, to Heraclius his vile and insensate slave. You say that you trust in your god. Why then, has he not delivered Jerusalem out of my hands?—A Letter of KHUSRU PARVIZ to the Emperor Heraclius.

We may imagine Hsuan-tsang seeing for the last time the ancestors of Seljuk gathered together with those of Mahmud of Ghazni, of Muhammad of Khwarizm, of the Turks, of the great army of Chenghiz Khan, of Timur and of Muhammad II.—RENÉ GROUSSET.

Noshirwan the Just ascends the Throne, A.D. 531.—Khusru I, known in Europe as Chosroes and universally held to be the greatest of the Sasanian monarchs, was chosen by his father in his will to be his successor, but only secured the throne by putting to death all his brothers and their male offspring. He was known as Noshirwan, which signifies " Of Immortal Soul ", with the additional title of " The Just ".

The Treaty of Perpetual Peace.—One of the first acts of his reign was the negotiation of a treaty of perpetual peace with the Emperor Justinian. By its terms Rome paid eleven thousand pounds of gold per annum to defray the cost of the Persian garrisons at Darband and of other fortresses in the Caucasus.

The Campaigns of Belisarius, A.D. 533–539.—Justinian was only too ready to agree to a pact which left him free to reconquer Italy and North Africa. Thanks to the genius of his general Belisarius, this task was being accomplished with such success that, warned, alike by the Ostrogoths and the Armenians of the greatly increased power of Rome, Noshirwan suddenly denounced the treaty and invaded Syria.

The Sack of Antioch, A.D. 540.—The Great King

crossed the Euphrates unopposed and behaving with pitiless cruelty, which inspired widespread terror, he captured Antioch without difficulty. After this successful raid, Noshirwan made peace with Rome on terms which he flagrantly broke on his return march, extorting large sums of money from Apamea, Edessa, and other cities along his line of march. Justinian, whose position had been much strengthened by the decisive victory of Belisarius in Italy, thereupon denounced the treaty.

The Sasanian monarch, we read in the pages of Tabari, spent the following winter in building a city on the model of Antioch, close to Ctesiphon. So exact was the copy to the original that the captives are stated to have found their way to their new houses without the slightest difficulty!

The Lazica Campaigns, A.D. 540–562.—For many years Noshirwan attempted to hold Lazica, the ancient Colchis, which he had seized by surprise. He dreamed of building a fleet which would enable him to attack Byzantium. Finding, however, that he was unpopular among his new subjects, who were Christians, he decided to remove the entire population and replace it with his own Persians. In pursuance of this policy he attempted to assassinate the Lazic King Gubazes. The plot, however, failed and the protection of Rome was sought by his intended victim.

Battles were won and lost over a long period, but a final serious disaster to a Persian army convinced Noshirwan that his dream was fantastic. Consequently a truce with Rome was negotiated which led to a peace treaty, signed in A.D. 562. By its terms, in return for his withdrawal from Lazica, the Great King was guaranteed an annual payment of 30,000 gold pieces, which, as Tabari informs us, he represented as tribute.

The Rise to Power of the Turks.—The nomadic tribe of the Turks, the Tu-chueh of the Chinese, was a branch of the Hiung-Nu or Huns.[1] About A.D. 433, owing to an attack by the third Emperor of the Wei dynasty, they migrated to the borders of the Juan-Juan, whom they

[1] Vide *A Thousand Years of the Tartars*, Bk. IV, by E. H. Parker.

served as iron-workers. Under their Chief, Tumen, and his brother Istami they crushed the Juan-Juan and founded an empire which stretched from Mongolia to the Black Sea. The two brothers, who remained independent of one another, ruled the empire between them and were known respectively as Chiefs of the Northern Turks, which included Mongolia, and of the Western Turks, whose dominions, stretching from the Altai Mountains to the Oxus, also ultimately included Northern Afghanistan and the province of Gandhara.

Noshirwan and the Khakan *of the Turks.*—In A.D. 554 Noshirwan entered into relations with the brother of Tumen, who had died two years previously. In a joint campaign against the White Huns their Chief was slain and his dominions were divided between the two allies. As a result of this victory the Oxus, once again, became the eastern boundary of Persia and historical Balkh was recovered, but only temporarily. To seal the alliance, Noshirwan married a daughter of the *Khakan*, and the son she bore him was declared to be the heir-apparent to the throne of Persia.

Dizabul sends an Embassy to Constantinople, A.D. 568.—Some twelve years later, Noshirwan came to the conclusion that the Turks, by their increased power, constituted a potential menace to Persia. Accordingly, when the *Khakan*, Dizabul, in A.D. 567, sent an embassy to the Persian Court for the negotiation of a new treaty, he deliberately poisoned the ambassadors. Dizabul, outraged by this crime, decided to despatch an embassy to Constantinople, hoping to arrange for the Silk Route to be diverted to the north of the Persian Empire. Justin II welcomed the ambassadors and a return mission under Zemarchus, the Cicilian, visited the *Khakan*. The envoys were warmly welcomed and accompanied Dizabul to Talas, situated not far from the Sir Daria. There the *Khakan* received an ambassador from Persia, and at the banquet which followed the Roman envoys were granted the more honourable seats, while Dizabul loaded the Persian envoy with abuse, to which he replied in a spirited manner. Finally, the Persian ambassador was dismissed

with the threat of an immediate Turkish invasion.[1] Dizabul, who had in the meanwhile made an unsuccessful attack on Persia, in A.D. 571, sent a second embassy to the Court of Byzantium and urged Justin, in his own interests, to denounce the peace with Noshirwan.

The Third War with Rome, A.D. 572–579, *and the Death of Noshirwan.*—Justin, who agreed that the increased power of Noshirwan was dangerous, decided to break the peace and attack him, more especially as his enemy was now seventy years of age and reported to be failing. However, he had underestimated the vitality of the Great King, who not only beat off the Roman army which was besieging Nisibis, but, in A.D. 573, captured the great Roman fortress of Dara.

Justin abdicated, after suffering this overwhelming disaster, in favour of Count Tiberius, who purchased a truce by the payment of large sums of gold. With the death of Noshirwan in A.D. 579 Persia, which had reached the zenith of her power and prestige during his reign, before long began to decline.

The Continuation of the War with Rome under Hormisdas IV.—Hormisdas IV, as he was known to western writers, was the son of Noshirwan by the daughter of the *Khakan* and succeeded his father on the throne. The war with Rome continued and, in A.D. 581, Maurice, who was subsequently appointed his successor by the dying Emperor Tiberius, gained a signal victory in the vicinity of Constantia. Later, Heraclius, father of the Emperor of the same name, won yet another victory in A.D. 588. There was much raiding by both sides but the battles that were fought were, in no sense, decisive.

The Invasion of the Turks, A.D. 588.—The Turks took advantage of the commitments of Hormisdas with Rome to attempt an invasion. They were, however, utterly defeated by the ability of Bahram Chubin, the Persian General, who killed the *Khakan* and captured his son, together with booty of great value.

The Revolt of Bahram Chubin and the Assassination of

[1] For the above account, based on *The Fragments of Menander Protector*, *vide* Yule's *Cathay and the Way Thither*, vol. i, pp. 205-212.

Hormisdas IV, A.D. 590.—The victorious general was almost immediately ordered to invade Lazica, where he was defeated by a Roman army. Hormisdas, who was madly jealous of Bahram Chubin, not only superseded but grossly insulted him by the gifts of a distaff and a woman's dress. The army, bitterly resenting these insults to its leader, mutinied, and Hormisdas was assassinated.

The Early Career of Khusru Parviz, A.D. 590–591.—Khusru or Chosroes II, later known as Parviz or "Victorious", was hastily placed on the throne of his father. Upon his accession he wrote a letter to Bahram Chubin, inviting him to accept the second place in the empire. In reply, the insolent general ordered his Soveriegn to offer his submission to him in person. Thereupon Khusru, unable to fight, fled for his life, pursued closely by the rebel horsemen. Thanks, however, to the guidance of Iyas, Chief of the Tayy tribe, he reached Circesium in safety.

Upon hearing of the arrival of the royal refugee, the Emperor Maurice, after due consideration, decided, in return for the cession of Persian Armenia and of the fortress of Dara, to reinstate Khusru by a Roman Army. In the first battle that was fought the centre of Bahram Chubin's army was broken by the Roman legionaries, thus forcing him to retire to the mountains. In the second action, fought near the stronghold of Shiz,[1] the rebel leader was decisively beaten. One of the best-known stories in Persia runs that, while resting during his flight, Bahram Chubin discussed the situation with an old peasant woman, who was unaware of his identity. She exclaimed, "A silly fool is he who claims the kingdom, not being a member of the Royal House". Bahram Chubin finally took refuge with the Turks, in whose camp he was assassinated by a Persian emissary.

Khusru Parviz invades Syria and Asia Minor, A.D. 603.—During the years that elapsed between his restoration to the throne and the murder of Maurice in A.D. 603, the relations of Khusru with the Roman Empire had been most cordial. Accordingly, hearing of the assassination

[1] The Praaspa, which Antony failed to capture.

of his benefactor, he decided to avenge him. The disunited Roman Empire offered but little resistance and Persian armies not only captured Dara and other fortresses in Eastern Mesopotamia, but penetrated so far west that the inhabitants of Constantinople were, for the first time, alarmed by the sight of burning villages on the opposite shore of the Bosphorus. Everywhere the armies of the Great King were victorious.

The Battle of Zu-Kar, circa A.D. 608.—We must now turn our attention to a campaign which, although it excited little notice at the time, had momentous consequences. The Arab state of Hira, situated on the right bank of the Euphrates, was ruled by a Chief termed Noman. Owing to an intrigue woven by an enemy, who knew that the Arabs particularly disliked giving their daughters in marriage to Persians, Khusru heard of the beauty of Noman's daughter and desired to add her to his harem. The chief declined the honour and the Sasanian monarch, incensed at the refusal, despatched a powerful force against him under Iyas. Noman, unable to resist, took refuge with the Shaybani tribe, to whose Chief he entrusted his family and property. He then, with signal courage, presented himself before Khusru to plead his case, but was put to death.

The Chief of the Shaybani tribe was now summoned to hand over the family of Noman together with his property. On his refusal to betray his trust, a second expedition composed of forty thousand Persians and Arabs attacked the tribe. After a series of encounters, the Arab contingent deserted during the decisive battle of Zu-Kar, and the Persians were massacred.

It is of considerable importance to note that Muhammad, the founder of Islam, who was now approaching his fortieth year, upon hearing of the battle, is said to have exclaimed, "This is the first day whereon the Arabs have obtained satisfaction from the Persians; through me have they obtained help".

The Conquests of Khusru Parviz, A.D. 611–617.—To return to the amazing career of the Sasanian monarch, the capture of Antioch was followed by that of Jerusalem,

from which the "True Cross", regarded throughout Christendom as its most sacred treasure, was carried off. Fortunately it was carefully guarded by Shirin, Khusru's favourite wife, who was a Christian. To continue: in A.D. 616, Alexandria was taken and the tide of victory rolled up to the Bosphorus where Chalcedon, situated opposite Constantinople, was captured after a siege. It seemed as if the Roman Empire was breaking up.

The Accession of the Emperor Heraclius.—In A.D. 610 Heraclius, son of the Governor of the province of Africa, seized the throne. The outlook was desperate since the wide-spread empire was reduced to the capital, some ports in Asia Minor and fragments of Italy, Greece and Africa. Constantinople was also threatened by the Avars. So desperate was the position that Heraclius had decided to flee to Carthage. His treasure had already been embarked when the project of his flight leaked out. Immediately the citizens rose and, headed by the Patriarch, Heraclius was obliged to swear an oath in Santa Sophia that he would not desert Constantinople.

The Campaigns of Heraclius, A.D. 622–626.—Though all was apparently lost, Heraclius still retained the priceless asset of sea-power and his campaigns supply one of the most striking examples of its use. In A.D. 622, having organized an expeditionary force, he left Constantinople safely guarded by a few war-vessels, although a powerful army was in occupation of the Asiatic shore of the Bosphorus. He landed in the vicinity of Issus and, marching towards Armenia, was attacked by a Persian army under Shahr-Baraz which he defeated, thereby gaining the first victory that had been won by a Roman army since the death of Maurice. Satisfied with the results of this campaign, which had restored the *moral* of his army, Heraclius returned in triumph to Constantinople for the winter.

The Siege of Constantinople and the Defeat of Shahin, A.D. 626.—Khusru now negotiated an alliance with the Avars. He organized two powerful armies, one of which was to oppose Heraclius while the other was to co-operate with the Avars against Constantinople. Heraclius himself had landed in Lazica, but, in spite of his absence,

his brother Theodore, aided by a violent hailstorm which drove into the faces of the Persians, defeated Shahin, the Captor of Chalcedon. Meanwhile, thanks once again to sea power, no Persian force joined the Avars, who failed signally in their attack on Constantinople.

The Sack of Dastagird, A.D. 627.—In the campaign of the following year Heraclius, marching from the vicinity of Tiflis, which he had failed to capture, made a rapid advance towards Dastagird, the residence of Khusru, situated seventy miles to the north of Ctesiphon. In December he won a great battle on or near the field of Alexander's victory of Arbela, and marching on Dastagird, prepared to fight Khusru. But that monarch, upon the approach of Heraclius, fled, whereupon the great Roman general, wisely deciding not to attempt the siege of Ctesiphon late in the year, marched north into winter quarters.

The Deposition and Death of Khusru Parviz, A.D. 628.—The victories of Heraclius, added to the contemptible cowardice of the Sasanian monarch, led to his deposition and imprisonment. Many of his children were killed before his eyes and finally he himself suffered a lingering death.

Peace made with Rome, A.D. 628.—Siroes succeeded to his father and ascended the throne as Kobad II. The twenty-six years' war, which had exhausted both powers alike, was now brought to an end by a peace treaty, which stipulated for the surrender of all conquests and prisoners by both belligerents. Among the conditions was the handing back of the " True Cross ", which Heraclius in person restored to its shrine at Jerusalem amid scenes of universal rejoicing.

A Period of Anarchy, A.D. 629–634.—Kobad II, shortly after his accession, fell a victim to an epidemic of plague, and his general, Shahr-Baraz, seized the throne, only to be killed by his own soldiers, who, dragging the corpse through the streets of the capital, cried out, " Whoever, not being of the blood-royal, seats himself upon the throne of Persia, will share the fate of Shahr-Baraz ".

The Accession of Yezdigird III, A.D. 634.—After a

period, during which numerous puppets were enthroned, and assassinated, Yezdigird III, a grandson of Khusru Parviz, was finally seated on the throne of Persia, which, convulsed by internal troubles, was now about to be overthrown by a new power. To the historian his fate resembles that of the unfortunate Darius Codomannus, each monarch alike being the last unworthy ruler of a mighty dynasty.

The Founding of the T'ang Dynasty, A.D. 626.—Earlier in this chapter the rise to power of the Turks in the fifth century A.D. has been described. The Wei dynasty, which had oppressed them, after reigning over Northern China for nearly a century and a half, had been succeeded by the brilliant but short-lived national dynasty of the Sui, which only ruled from A.D. 589 to A.D. 617.[1] Owing to the follies of its second Emperor, there was a sudden collapse, followed by the reappearance of the nomadic tribes on the passes of the Great Wall.

Taking advantage of the favourable situation, Hsieh-li, the Khan of the Northern Turks, in A.D. 624 invaded Northern China, penetrating into the heart of Shensi. There he was confronted by Li Shih-Min, son of the Governor, who, although commanding a totally inadequate force, by his bold front, coupled with a challenge to fight their *Khan*, won over the Turks, who retired. Some hours later a heavy rainstorm broke and flooded the plain. Li Shih-Min, thereupon realizing that the Turks depended almost entirely on their bows and arrows, surprised their camp and inflicted serious losses. Acknowledging defeat, the *Khan* sued for peace and retired into Mongolia.

The rise to supreme power of Li Shih-Min was hindered by his two brothers, who attempted his life both by poison and by hired assassins, but finally, after extirpating all his relations, with the exception of his old father, who had tactfully abdicated in his favour, the successful warrior ascended the imperial throne, and,

[1] In this section I have consulted *In the Footsteps of the Buddha*, by René Grousset, 1932, and *Guide de Bamiyan*, by J. Hackin, 1924.

assuming the title of the Emperor Tai-tsung, founded the celebrated T'ang dynasty.

The Conquest of the Northern Turks, A.D. 630.—Hsieh-li was treacherous by nature and, hearing of the disturbances which accompanied the Palace dramas, decided to break his oath and, once again, raided into Shensi. With supreme courage the Emperor, whose force was weak, after reproaching the Chief for breaking his oath, proposed a single combat, in accordance with the Turkish custom; whereupon, for the second time, overawed by the Emperor's courage, peace was made. Hsieh-li, however, remained incorrigibly treacherous. He now, upon reaching his homeland, challenged the Emperor to attack him, whereupon Tai-tsung's cavalry, crossing the *Gobi*,[1] surprised the Northern Turks, who were cut in pieces, the *Khan* and his chief followers being made prisoners. As a result of this decisive campaign, the independence of the Northern Turks was brought to an end and Mongolia was annexed to the Chinese Empire.

Hsuan-tsang, the Master of the Law.—Hsuan-tsang, a Buddhist monk and the greatest of Chinese explorers, decided in A.D. 629 to undertake the long and dangerous journey to India in order to question the wise men of the West on the points of doctrine which were troubling his mind. Accordingly he, with several other monks, petitioned the Emperor for permission to leave China, but was met with a definite refusal.

Hsuan-tsang commences his Great Journey in A.D. 629.—Fortified by a dream which caused him to wake in an ecstasy of joy, Hsuan-tsang, although deserted by his brother monks, decided to disobey the imperial order and, started off on his epoch-making journey, attended only by a treacherous guide, who abandoned him on entering the dreaded *Gobi*. To add to the risks he ran, there were five watch-towers to be passed. At the first he attempted to fill his water-skins at the spring but was

[1] *Gobi* signifies desert and is especially used for the great desert which separates China from Central Asia.

immediately shot at. Perforce, calling out that he was a monk from the capital he walked to the tower. There his eloquence won over the commander to forward him to the next tower with supplies and an introduction. He, however, warned him against approaching the fifth tower as its commander was hostile to Buddhism. Losing his way and after escaping death from thirst by a miracle, the pilgrim reached the oasis of Hami, where he was welcomed by three old Chinese monks.

The Master of the Law reaches Turfan.—Chu Wentai, the Governor of Turfan, who ruled over an Indo-European population, not only welcomed Hsuan-tsang and declared himself his disciple, but wished to retain him permanently as an ornament to his court. Unable to overcome his host's deep-rooted desire to prevent his onward journey, "the 'Master of the Law' sat upright and motionless, and for three days not a drop of water passed his lips". Terrified lest his beloved guest should die, the Governor finally consented to his departure and sent him with a strong escort across the Tien-Shan range to the camp of the *Khakan* of the Western Turks. Apart from rich presents of gold, together with masks, gloves and boots needed for protection against the severe cold, tents, provisions and forage were supplied with lavish bounty. Moreover, to ensure the favour of his suzerain for the illustrious traveller, Chu Wentai wrote a letter of recommendation and "loaded two chariots with five hundred pieces of satin as a gift".

Passing through the districts of Karashahr and Kucha, the Master of the Law crossed the mighty Tien-Shan. To quote: "This mountain of ice . . . is most dangerous and its summit rises to the skies. From the beginning of the world the snow has accumulated on it, and has turned into blocks of ice which melt neither in springtime nor in summer. . . . Add to this hurricanes of wind and whirlwinds of snow which attack one constantly." The crossing of the Tien-Shan cost the lives of thirteen men who died of hunger and cold, not to mention many oxen and horses.

Hsuan-tsang meets the Khakan *of the Western Turks,*

A.D. 630.—On the shore of the Issik-Kul, Hsuan-tsang met Tung, the *Khakan* or *Yabghu* of the Western Turks. At this period, profiting no doubt from the exhausting series of campaigns which Khusru Parviz had waged with the Emperor Heraclius, the *Khakan's* hegemony extended southwards to the province of Gandhara, while, as we shall see, one of his sons ruled in Balkh and Badakhshan.

The Approaching Downfall of the Western Turks.—The *Khakan* maintained diplomatic relations with the T'ang Court, presents of value being exchanged. His troops, to quote Hsuan-tsang, "consisted of cavalry mounted on camels or horses, clothed in fur and fine woollen material and carrying long lances, banners and straight bows. Their ranks extended so far that the eye could not follow them." Yet the day of the Western Turks was approaching sunset, since the Emperor Tai-tsung, who had overthrown their kinsman of the north, would also in a few years' time crush the Turks of the West.

Hsuan-tsang preached so eloquently to his host that, like the ruler of Turfan, he wished to retain him permanently at his Court. He particularly warned him against India, saying: "It is such a hot country that I fear your face might melt when you arrive there". However, informed, no doubt, of what had occurred at Turfan, the *Yabghu* finally ordered an interpreter to draw up letters of introduction for the petty princes of Gandhara. He furthermore instructed him to accompany the Master of the Law as far as the frontier of Kapisa. It remains to add that shortly after the departure of his illustrious guest, Tung was assassinated and the ten tribes of the Western Turks broke up into two Khanates, a step which led to their final overthrow by the Emperor Tai-tsung.

Hsuan-tsang crosses Central Asia.—From Issik-Kul, Hsuan travelled south-west towards Shash, the modern Tashkent. Thence, crossing the Kizil Kum or "Red Sand" desert, he reached Samarkand. As the terminus of the great caravan trade route with China, that city "possessed an immense quantity of rare and precious merchandise". Its ruler, who bore the Turkish title of

Tarkhan, was the vassal of the *Khakan* of the Western Turks, to whom he was also connected by marriage. The population, language and culture were East Iranian.

From Samarkand the Master of the Law followed the caravan route to the Oxus. He accurately describes the Gates of Iron as " the gorges of two parallel mountains whose height is prodigious. They are only separated by a path which is very narrow and moreover bristles with precipices."

Crossing the Oxus by a ferry-boat opposite Termiz, Hsuan-tsang quitted the main route to India for the purpose of paying his respects to Tardu Shad, a son of the *Khakan*, who was also the brother-in-law of the King of Turfan. The kingdom over which he ruled was Tukhara, later termed Tukharistan. Warmly welcomed by his host, who was prepared to escort him into India, a drama of the harem suddenly developed into a tragedy. The *Khatun* from Turfan had recently died and Tardu Shad had immediately married again. The new queen, who was the mistress of a son of the deceased *Khatun*, promptly poisoned Tardu Shad and placed her lover on the throne.

Fortunately the new ruler was friendly and advised Hsuan-tsang to visit Balkh, which was under his rule, before resuming his journey to India. At this city, in spite of the ravages of the Ephthalite Huns, there were still one hundred monasteries rich in relics of Buddha and inhabited by three thousand monks.

After a visit, during the course of which the Master of the Law declared that he had derived much benefit from conversations with one of the leaders, he faced the " Snow Mountains ", the crossing of which he describes as " twice as difficult and dangerous as in the regions of the deserts and glaciers. What with the frozen clouds and the whirling snow, there is never a moment when one can see clearly."

Surmounting the two passes, he reached Bamian, a town situated in the valley, which separates the Hindu Kush from the Kuh-i-Baba. " Bamian ", he writes, " clings to the mountain-side and crosses the valley. . . .

On the north it leans against the steep rock." The pilgrim visited the monastic cells hollowed out of the northern cliff. He also mentions the two gigantic statues of Buddha, which, in spite of mutilation, are still outstanding memorials of a faith, that has entirely disappeared from Afghanistan. Of the inhabitants he writes: " They are hard and fierce by nature and their manners are rough, but they are superior to their neighbours in the candour of their faith ".

Hsuan-tsang arrives at Kapisi.—Resuming his journey, the Master of the Law, crossing the Shibar Pass, reached Kapisi — the Chi-pin of the Chinese — situated on the middle reach of the Panjshir and, at that time, the capital of the country. Its importance was due to its command of the great trade-route between India and Central Asia.

The Rajah of the kingdom of Kapisa is described as being " of a brave and impetuous disposition. . . . He rules over a dozen kingdoms." Among them were Lampaka, Nagarahara and Gandhara. A devout Buddist, he was delighted to entertain Hsuan-tsang as his guest during the summer months and the Master of the Law took up his abode in a monastery built, according to local belief, to serve as a residence for hostages during the reign of Kanishka. During his stay in these pleasant uplands, Hsuan-tsang took part in a great meeting of the different sects of Buddhism and, to quote Grousset, " thanks to his knowledge of the various theories and to his skill in metaphysics . . . he tended to rise above their verbal disputations to find in his mystic idealism, a higher synthesis of the different doctrines ".

The Master of the Law reaches Parushapur (Peshawar). —In the autumn Hsuan-tsang continued his journey. Travelling down the left bank of the Panjshir River to its junction with the Kabul River, and passing through the province of Lampaka (now Lamghan) he reached the ancient city of Nagarahara, the modern Jalalabad. In this area numerous stupas and monasteries encircled the city to such an extent that, as Grousset writes: " All this district, in consequence of the piety of Asoka, the religious opportunism of the Indo-Greeks, and the

HSUAN-TSANG RETURNING TO CHINA WITH A LOAD OF MANUSCRIPTS

(After a Chinese painting of the Tsung dynasty)

devotion of Kanishka, had, in fact, become a kind of new Holy Land for Buddhism ".

The Ephthalite Huns had, however, invaded the country, as mentioned in the last chapter, and Hsuan-tsang writes with bitterness that: " Although there are a great number of monasteries, one meets with few monks. The stupas are in ruins and covered with wild vegetation." At Parushapur (Peshawar), the capital of Kanishka, the situation was still worse: " There are a million Buddhist monasteries ", he writes, " which are in ruins and deserted. They are overgrown with weeds and constitute a mournful solitude."

From Peshawar Hsuan-tsang visited the province of Uddiyana in the Upper Swat Valley. He also traversed the famous gorges in the mountainous district of Buner. To quote once again: " Now there were gangways hanging in mid-air, now flying bridges flung across precipices; elsewhere were paths hewn out with the chisel or ladders for climbing ". Only those who have crossed a swift-flowing river on a swinging rope-bridge can really appreciate the difficulties surmounted by the illustrious pilgrim in this section of his journey. Sir Aurel Stein has identified many of the sites visited by the Master of the Law in this area,[1] where the destruction wrought by the White Huns exceeded that done in Gandhara.

The Return Journey of Hsuan-tsang.—The remarkable experiences and adventures of Hsuan-tsang during the years he spent in India lie outside the scope of this work. He had won the friendship, almost amounting to adoration, of King Harsha, the ruler of Northern India, who longed to keep the Master of the Law permanently with him. The latter indeed had " to address him in terms which betrayed the bitterness of his heart " before he was permitted to depart.

Harsha loaded his guest with gifts and arranged for an escort to conduct him to his frontier, while he despatched couriers with letters to the rulers of the countries through which the illustrious pilgrim would pass, to ensure him a good reception.

[1] Vide *On Alexander's Track to the Indus, passim.*

At the beginning of A.D. 644 Hsuan-tsang recrossed the Indus at Und where he was met by the King of Kapisa, as also by another of his hosts, the King of Kashmir. Everywhere he was welcomed by the inhabitants with banners and standards, his reception at Kapisi being especially affectionate.

Bidding farewell to the King of Kapisa, the Hindu Kush was again crossed with great difficulty and, travelling by way of Anderab and Kunduz, the Master of the Law spent a month in the camp of the *Yabghu* of the province previously mentioned by him. Upon his departure his host furnished his guest with an escort to cross the Pamirs; and traversing the upper reaches of the Oxus, we read: "The valley of Pamir is situated between two snowy mountains. The cold there is glacial, and the wind furious. . . . In the middle is a large lake situated in the middle of the world on the plateau of a prodigious height." It is particularly interesting to find this expression, almost equivalent to the Persian *Bamm-ud-Dunia* or "Roof of the World", in the description of the Chinese traveller.

While marching down the defiles to Kashgar, a band of robbers attacked the caravan and several of the elephants, belonging to Hsuan-tsang, pursued by the robbers, fell into the deep gorge and were killed.

Hsuan-tsang is granted an Official Reception.—To conclude: Hsuan-tsang returned to China travelling via Yarkand and Khotan, and upon entering the capital Chang-an, in A.D. 645, he was granted a magnificent public reception which he describes in most eloquent and even poetical language.

To conclude this chapter: only a few years after the completion of this great journey of the Master of the Law, a new and powerful element, in the shape of the warlike Arabs, appeared on the scene, who, after the seizure of Seistan in A.D. 652, directed attack after attack on Afghanistan and finally conquered it. Verily the old order had ended, yielding place to new.

CHAPTER XI

ARAB CONQUESTS IN CENTRAL ASIA AND AFGHANISTAN

The Caliph Othman promised the government of Chorasan to the first general who should enter that large and populous country, the Kingdom of the ancient Bactrians. The condition was accepted; the prize was deserved; the standard of Mohammed was planted on the walls of Herat, Merou, and Balch, and the successful leader neither halted nor reposed till his foaming cavalry had tasted the waters of the Oxus.—GIBBON, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ch. li.

In his own opinion the Arab was born to rule, and everyone else to serve; whence, at the commencement of Islam, the Arabs occupied themselves only with governing and politics; all other occupations, especially arts and crafts, were relinquished by them to non-Arabs.—JURJI ZAYDAN, *History of Islamic Civilization*.

The Prophet Muhammad founds a Mighty Empire.—The rise of Islam is one of the outstanding events in history. In A.D. 622 Muhammad, a prophet without honour in his native city of Mecca, fled to Yathrib, which was renamed *Medinat-al-Nabi*, or "the City of the Prophet", and is now termed Medina. There he established the monotheistic religion of Islam and laid the foundations of an empire which rapidly extended eastwards across Persia and Central Asia to the borders of the Chinese Empire; westwards it swept across Egypt and Northern Africa to the Atlantic Ocean, where Morocco and the Iberian Peninsula alike obeyed Moslem rulers. It was the greatest empire that the world had seen.[1]

The First Invasion of the Persian Empire in A.D. 633.—Under the leadership of Khalid the Arabs attacked the Persian Empire, the first battle being fought at Al-Hafar, situated some miles at the back of Kuwait. The Persians held the water-supply and Khalid, exclaiming, "The

[1] I have consulted *The Arab Conquests in Central Asia*, by H. A. R. Gibb; also *The Heart of Asia*, by F. H. Skrine and Sir Denison Ross; *Lands of the Eastern Caliphate*, by Guy Le Strange; *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* and *The Caliphate*, by Sir William Muir.

springs shall be for the braver of the two", prepared to advance. After slaying the Persian general in single combat, he led his Arabs in a charge and won the "Battle of the Chains", as it was called, from the victors finding a number of Persian soldiers chained together — presumably to prevent flight.

After a second success, Khalid thus addressed his followers: "Ye see the riches of the land. Its paths drop fatness, so that corn and oil abound even as do the stones in our Arabian wastes. If but as a provision for this present life — let alone the merit of fighting in the ways of the Lord — it were well worth our while to do battle for these fair fields, and banish care and penury for ever."

At the battle of Allis, situated some distance to the east of Zu-Kar, which was fiercely contested, Khalid vowed to the Lord that, in the event of victory, the blood of the enemy should flow in a crimson stream and grind the flour for the army. Upon winning the battle he carried out this dreadful vow. He then besieged and captured the port of Hira.

The Campaign in Syria, A.D. 635.—The faulty strategical policy of the Caliph, who attacked two powerful empires simultaneously, placed a terrible strain on the Arabs. The Moslems were unable to make any progress in Palestine against the forces of Heraclius, so Khalid was summoned to march to the aid of that army. Obeying this order he led 9000 picked men across the desert and won a great victory over a vastly superior Byzantine army at Yermuk, situated on an eastern tributary of the Jordan. He then marched on Damascus, which strong city, lacking artillery, he captured by escalading its battlements — truly an amazing feat.

The Battle of Khadesiya, A.D. 636.—To return to the Persian front, which was weakly held: in the absence of Khalid the Arabs were unable to do more than maintain their position until strongly reinforced from Syria.

The battle of Khadisiya, which ranks as one of the decisive battles of the world, was fought on the right bank of the Euphrates. Aided by a sandstorm blowing into the faces of the Persians, the Arabs, on the fourth

day of the contest, strengthened by reinforcements from Syria, carried all before them. This was followed by the capture of Madain, the famous capital of the Sasanian monarchs. The *coup de grâce*, so far as Persia was concerned, was delivered at the battle of Nehavend in A.D. 639.

The Arab Conquest of Persia.—After the victory of Nehavend, the Arabs seized Isfahan, Azerbaijan and the province of Kerman. Later they occupied all the provinces of Persia with the exception of the Caspian province of Tabaristan which, protected by its dense forests and malarious climate, maintained its independence for over one hundred years.

The Invasion of Afghanistan by the Moslems.—In A.D. 652 Abdulla ibn Amir, the Governor of Basra, despatched an expedition under Abd-al-Rahman to invade Seistan. He besieged and finally captured Zaranj — the medieval Zahidan — and then advanced into Zamindawar and the mountains of Ghur, where he destroyed an idol of gold. He continued his advance to Kabul and made its Kushan Sahi king a prisoner.

Farther north Ibn Amir's general captured Nishapur, whereupon the Governors of Herat and Merv tendered their submission. Later, however, after suffering a defeat which forced the Arab leader to retreat to Merv, he again advanced and occupied Balkh. These conquests, at first, led to no permanent occupation, but fertile Seistan was garrisoned and formed an advanced base for future campaigns. Kabul, on the other hand, continued to be ruled by Kushan Sahi kings for a considerable period.

Further Campaigns in Central Asia.—The recognition of Muavia, the founder of the Umayyad dynasty, as Caliph in A.D. 656, restored peace among the Arabs, who had engaged in inter-tribal warfare, and Ibn Amir was reappointed to Khurasan. We next read of a revolt in Herat and Balkh and of the recapture of the latter city, where, in retaliation, the famous Zoroastrian shrine of Nobahar was destroyed.

There was, however, no ordered campaign for conquest and permanent occupation until A.D. 667, when,

under the governorship of Ziyad bin Abihi, the Oxus was crossed and Lower Tukharistan was invaded. During the course of this campaign Peroz, the son of Yezdigird III, the last unworthy Sasanian monarch (who had been murdered at Merv in A.D. 652), was defeated and driven back to China.

In A.D. 674 Ubaydulla, the son of Ziyad, who had succeeded his father, crossed the Oxus and marched on Paykand, where he won a victory, and advancing on Bukhara, defeated the Turkish ruler, who agreed to pay tribute. Another Arab leader, Said bin Othman, defeated the Sughdians and captured Samarkand.

The Civil War between the Arabs of the North and South.—After these and other conquests it seemed as though the Arabs were destined to be the permanent rulers of Transoxiana. Civil war, however, broke out among the victors, who temporarily withdrew from Transoxiana. Fighting raged without intermission for a year, when it culminated in a victory gained by the Arabs of the south near Herat, in which they inflicted a loss of 8000 killed on their hated fellow-tribesmen. Other battles were fought, involving much bloodshed, and the progress of Islam was temporarily brought to a standstill.

The Western Turks defeated by the Chinese.—Gibb points out that between A.D. 645 and 658 the power of the Western Turks was broken by the Chinese, who annexed the provinces formerly under their rule. Later, from A.D. 670 to 692, he continues to explain that the new power of Tibet which held the Chinese armies in what is now Chinese Turkistan, cut off the possibility of Chinese domination in the west.

The First Campaign of Kutayba ibn Muslim.—Hitherto, although the Arabs were firmly established at Merv, their hold on Transoxiana, based mainly on raids, had been transitory. In A.D. 706, however, the great Moslem conqueror Kutayba entered Merv and called upon its inhabitants to unite in a *Jihad* or " Holy War ".

In his first expedition the main objective was the recovery of Balkh and Tukharistan. He marched to

Talikan, where he was received by the Chief men of Balkh, which city had submitted. Under their escort he crossed the Oxus and received the submission of the King of the Saghaniyan, who was allowed to retain his position. Later he made terms with Nizak, Prince of Badghis and Minister of Yabghu,[1] the ruler of Tokharistan. Throughout, he showed a reasonable and conciliatory spirit in his dealings with the people and their rulers.

Kutayba's Campaign against Bukhara, A.D. 706–709.—In A.D. 706, having gained much useful information, Kutayba again crossed the Oxus and besieged Paykand, known as "the City of Merchants". It was strongly fortified and possessed only one gate. Upon hearing of the approach of the Arab army, its citizens appealed for help to the Sughdians, who sent an army, which surrounded Kutayba's force, cutting his communications. However, by the valour of his Arabs, the Sughdians were defeated and the siege of Paykand was pressed, but without immediate success. Finally a breach was made and Paykand was captured. The victor gave the population reasonable terms, but owing to a revolt which occurred shortly after the departure of his army he returned, stormed the city, put to death the fighting men and enslaved the women and children. He then marched back to Merv laden with booty. It is interesting to note that, during this period, the leading Paykand merchants were absent on their annual caravan journey to China. Upon their return they ransomed the captives, agreed to pay tribute to the Arabs and eventually rebuilt Paykand.

The campaigns against Bukhara and Samarkand which followed involved much hard fighting. Kutayba was vigorously opposed by a confederacy composed of the *Tarkhun Malik* of Sughd and the rulers of the neighbouring states. Apparently in his first campaign against their powerful forces Kutayba made no attempt to fight a pitched battle and finally retreated through the Iron Gate and recrossed the Oxus near Termiz.

[1] This term was also applied to the Kushan rulers.

He now received an order from his Chief, the famous Hajjaj bin Yusuf, to march against Vardan-Khudat, the King of Bukhara, but was repulsed by him and again retreated to Merv. The exacting Hajjaj thereupon sent fresh and very stern orders to Kutayba who in A.D. 708 again invaded Bukhara. Tabari's description of the battle that ensued merits quotation: "When the Turks sallied out of the town [Vardan], the men of the tribe of Azd asked Kutayba to allow them to fight separately. They straightway charged the Turks, and their endurance was great. At length they were driven back to Kutayba's camp by the Turks, but here their women tore their faces and forced the Musulman to turn against the enemy." [1] Finally the Turks were completely routed by the Beni Temim, a famous Yemen tribe, the *Khakan* and his son being both wounded. After this victory the *Tarkhun Malik* gave hostages for the due payment of tribute and Kutayba marched back to Merv.

The Rebellion of Nizak, Prince of Badghis.—In the autumn of A.D. 709 Nizak, who has been referred to above, raised the standard of revolt. He sent his treasure for safe keeping to the King of Kabul and attempted to unite all the local rulers against the Arab conquerors. In this he was successful, and to avoid difficulties being made by Yabghu, the ruler of Tukharistan, he placed him in chains made of gold. The revolt was easily crushed and Nizak, who surrendered on terms, was executed, while Arab rule was riveted on the Yabghu's possessions in the Oxus Valley.

After this important success, a military colony was established in Bukhara, while each province, as it was conquered, was obliged to provide a military force for service with the Arabs.

Arab Attacks on Kabul.—In A.D. 698 an unsuccessful expedition was despatched from Seistan to subdue Kabul. So complete was its failure that its leader was forced to pay a large sum of money as a ransom for himself and his army. Two years later, another expedition was despatched from the same centre by Hajjaj bin Yusuf, but its leader,

[1] *Annales*, Series II, p. 1201.

having been disgraced by Hajjaj, promptly rebelled and joined Rutbil, the King of Kabul. Later the Arab general was betrayed to Hajjaj. We read in Yakubi of yet another expedition despatched against Kabul by Harun al-Rashid. The city was taken but was not held. In no case do we hear at this period of any attempt being made by the Arabs on Kabul from the north.

The Occupation of Khwarizm, A.D. 711.—Preparations were ostensibly being made for an expedition against Samarkand, which had revolted. But Kutayba, who had been secretly approached by the Khwarizm Shah with an offer to pay tribute, if the Arabs would help him against his rebellious brother, suddenly appeared before Hazarasp, the southern fortress of the Khivan oasis. No opposition was offered on this occasion but, upon Kutayba's withdrawal, the Khivans revolted and put to death the King who had brought in the Arabs. Finally, after another expedition, the Arab troops treated the Khivans with merciless severity, and annexed the oasis.

The Capture of Samarkand, A.D. 711.—From the conquest of Khwarizm, Kutayba marched on Samarkand. There, the *Tarkhun Malik*, the ally of the Arabs, had been deposed from office and had committed suicide. Prince Ghurak had been elected his successor and defended Samarkand stubbornly. The story runs that the Sughdians shouted from the walls "O ye Arabs, why do ye exert yourselves thus vainly? Know that we have found it written in a book that our town cannot be captured except by a man whose name is Camel-Saddle." Upon this Kutayba called out "Allah is Great! for verily that is my name".

A reinforcement sent to aid Samarkand from Shash (the modern Tashkent) was ambushed and nearly annihilated; a breach was made in the city walls, and the place almost carried by the Arabs when Ghurak, the ruler, submitted and promised to pay tribute and also to provide a contingent. Kutayba, however, once within the city gates, permanently occupied the citadel with a strong garrison. He also destroyed the fire-altars of the Zoroastrian inhabitants, and built a mosque.

Kutayba Raids across the Sir Daria, A.D. 713–715.—In the course of his last campaigns the great Moslem general led an army across the Sir Daria, which penetrated to distant Ferghana, and, according to one account, to Kashgar. A curious legend of this far-flung expedition has been preserved. According to it, the Arab leader swore to take possession of the soil of China and, willing to help the invader to keep his oath without further bloodshed, the local governor sent him a load of earth to trample on, a bag of Chinese money to symbolize tribute, and four youths of princely birth on whom he imprinted his seal.

The Arab Embassy to China, A.D. 713.—The possibility of this legend possessing a substratum of truth is increased by the undoubted fact that Kutayba despatched an embassy to the Court of China. In the records of that country the date is fixed at A.D. 713. The Arab ambassador refused to perform the *kowtow*, declaring that he bowed only to Allah and never to his Prince. The Emperor, who had first decided to punish this presumptuous attitude with death, finally pardoned the bold Arab and the Mission was favourably received.

The Death of Kutayba, A.D. 714.—Hajjaj bin Yusuf had died in A.D. 712, and upon the death of the Caliph Welid in A.D. 714, his brother and successor Sulayman was known to be the bitter enemy of Kutayba. Realizing that his dismissal, if not his death, was certain, in desperation Kutayba assembled his soldiers and harangued them, reminding them of his many victories and of his fairness in dividing the spoil among them. His speech was received in silence and, angry at what he held to be their ingratitude, he abused them as cowards and hypocrites. In their fury the Arabs killed their leader, who remains an outstanding figure in the conquest of Central Asia.

The Campaign of Yezid, A.D. 716.—The new Governor of Khurasan invaded the provinces of Gurgan and Tabaristan. He first attacked Dihistan, which bought off the invaders. He then penetrated into the pathless forests of Tabaristan but, when his lines of

communication were cut by the Turks of Gurgan, he made peace with the ruler of Tabaristan, and capturing the stronghold of Gurgan, massacred its garrison.

The Moslem Position in Central Asia.—The death of Kutayba ended a period, and here it seems desirable to summarize the position of the Arabs. They occupied Lower Tukharistan and Chaghanian; in Sughdiana, Bukhara was strongly held and colonized ; Samarkand was also garrisoned, but the surrounding country was unsubdued. To continue our survey: Khwarizm was permanently colonized, but the kingdoms beyond the Sir Daria were unconquered and hostile, their rulers being supported by the Turks and also, to some extent, by China. In almost every case the existing reigning families were retained in states under Moslem supremacy for local administration and occupied a subordinate position under the *Wali* or Agent of the Arab governor of Khurasan.

The Arab Advance to the Indus, A.D. 707–714.—We now turn to a campaign which indirectly concerned Afghanistan. The Arabs, at the beginning of the eighth century, had conquered and occupied Makran, which today has, to some considerable extent, reverted to desert.[1] After two failures Muhammad, son of Kasim, was despatched with a powerful force of cavalry and a camel corps of equal strength which, thanks mainly to a great *balista*, worked by 500 men, stormed the port of Debul. He then marched inland, capturing various towns, their inhabitants being granted their lives on condition of paying the *jizya* or poll-tax leviable on non-Moslems. This was entirely a new departure since, by Moslem law, Jews and Christians and even Zoroastrians, as possessors of revealed scriptures, might continue to profess their faith, whereas idolaters were to be rooted out.

The culmination of this remarkable campaign was the capture in A.D. 713 of Multan, " The Gateway of India ",

[1] The Governorship of Makran was never a popular post as is shown by the lament of Sinan ibn Selama: " Thou showest me the road to Makran, but what a difference there is between an order and its execution! I will never enter this country, since its name alone terrifies me."

which held out until its water-supply was cut off. The Arabs did not penetrate much beyond the Indus, and although the religion taught by Muhammad was accepted by many of the leading families who founded dynasties, "India, in general, remained untouched by Islam, until the beginning of the eleventh century, by which time the faith had lost its political unity and the control of its destinies had passed from the hands of the Arabian successors of Muhammad into those of independent dynasties, acknowledging the Caliph at Baghdad, merely as a spiritual head".[1]

The Turkish Counterstroke, A.D. 713–736.—To return to Central Asia: in A.D. 713 the Chinese started on a new era of expansion to the west. In A.D. 714 they obtained the submission of the Ten Tribes and, in the following year, they restored the deposed King of Ferghana. In A.D. 716, on the death of Me-Chu'o, Khan of the Northern Turks, the Turgesh tribe, with Chinese support, established a new kingdom in the Ili basin.

In A.D. 718 a joint embassy was sent to China by Ghurak and other local princes, to beg for aid against the Arabs, but no Chinese troops were despatched to their assistance. In A.D. 721 Said bin Amr al-Harashi had to deal with a rebellion in Samarkand. So embittered were the rebels that, in spite of Ghurak's remonstrances, a large body of nobles and merchants with their retainers emigrated to Khojand, while some of them crossed into Ferghana. The King of this latter province, however, betrayed them to al-Harashi, who massacred the nobles and fighting men, while he only spared the merchants in order to secure their wealth. He then, partly by acts of perfidy, regained possession of the strongholds of Sughd. He had, moreover, outraged the feelings of the province by his atrocious acts of cruelty and perfidy and had excited deep hostility against the Arabs.

The Battle of the "Day of Thirst".—In A.D. 724 Su-Lu, the *Khakan* of the Turgesh, inflicted a notable defeat on the Arabs under Muslim bin Said al-Kilabi,

[1] *Cambridge History of India*, vol. iii, p. 11.

who had crossed the Sir Daria and besieged the capital of Ferghana. Forced to retreat by news of the advance of the *Khakan* at the head of a powerful army, Muslim was closely pursued by the Turgesh. On reaching the Sir Daria he was attacked by the forces of Shash and by Sughdians. Cutting his way through with very heavy losses, he and some suvivors reached Khojand. This disaster, termed the "Day of Thirst", was practically the last Arab expedition into Transoxiana for a period of some years and represented a heavy blow to their prestige.

Other disasters followed, but, in A.D. 730 or 731, a new Governor, Junayd ibn Abdur Rahman, crossed the Oxus and defeated the *Khakan*. In the following spring he was marching on Tukharistan and, hearing that the garrison of Samarkand was hard pressed, he went to its relief, ordering its garrison to evacuate the city and to march towards him. It was, however, cut to pieces, while Junayd himself only just managed to force his way through the Turkish hordes and reoccupied Samarkand. After the receipt of strong reinforcements, he drove out the Turgesh invaders.

The Rebellion of Harith ibn Suraj.—Junayd died in A.D. 734 and his successor, who was most unpopular, was faced with a rebellion by Harith, who raised the standard of revolt with the Kharijite[1] cry: "To the law and to the testimony and the will of the people".

Harith occupied Balkh and the surrounding country, but advancing on Merv with a force composed of 60,000 Arabs of the Azd and Temim tribes, he was defeated. In spite of this he was able to keep some thousands of Arabs under his banner in Transoxiana and, much to the disgust of Arabs generally, joined the forces of the *Khakan*. Later he was captured and imprisoned but, in A.D. 744, he was permitted to return to Khurasan, where he raised the standard of revolt against Nasr at Merv. He died in A.D. 746.

The Recovery of Transoxiana by the Arabs.—In A.D. 736

[1] The Kharijites or "Separatists" were fanatical sectaries and visionaries, who continually raised rebellions and committed horrible excesses of every kind.

the tide of Arab retreat turned and, under Asad, Balkh was rebuilt and temporarily made the capital of Khurasan. In the following year at Kharistan he surprised and completely routed the *Khakan*, whose available force on the spot was only four thousand strong.

This defeat of the *Khakan* led to the downfall of the Turgesh power, Su-Lu being assassinated shortly afterwards by Kursul, the Baga Tarkhan. More than this, it restored the prestige of the Arabs and enabled them to recover their lost authority in Transoxiana.

To quote Gibb: "The princes [of Transoxiana] had found the Turgesh yoke no less galling in the end than that of the Arabs. . . . All classes of the people therefore were weary of war and sought only a peace consonant with their self-respect." [1]

The Campaigns of Nasr ibn Sayyar.—Asad died in A.D. 737 and his experienced successor Nasr set to work on the task of restoring Arab power and prestige, which he effected by more than one expedition. He was the first Arab ruler to realize the value of the support of the merchant class and of the land-owners, and shortly after his recapture of Samarkand he despatched commercial embassies to China in A.D. 744 and again in A.D. 745 and 747. But we have now reached the period of another civil war among the Arabs which resulted in the destruction of the Umayyad dynasty.

The Korean Monk Hue-Chao visits Bamiyan in A.D. 727. —Thanks to M. Pelliot we have an account of Bamiyan at this period, which is of considerable political importance. In it the Korean pilgrim states that the King is an Iranian; that he is independent, thanks to a powerful army; that the country produces cotton and grapes and that horses and sheep are found in it. He concludes by stating that the customs are, generally speaking, similar to those of Kapisa, but that the language is different.[2]

The Spread of Islam.—By way of conclusion to this chapter, it seems desirable to outline the steps by which Islam was accepted by the conquered nations. Hellenism,

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 88.
[2] Quoted from J. Hackin's *Guide de Bamiyan*, p. 60.

as we have seen, never touched more than the surface of life in the East, but Afghanistan, Persia and Central Asia were finally penetrated to the core by the Arab religion and customs. To take the case of Persia: its Zoroastrian believers were permitted to retain their religion on payment of the poll-tax. Large numbers accepted Islam but conversion at this period brought no true equality and forced the proud Persians to become clients of the Arab chiefs. The contempt shown by the Arabs to the conquered is exemplified by the following quotation: " Three things only stop prayer: the passing of a client, an ass, or a dog ". [1] But since the Prophet laid down that " the clients of a family belong to that family ", they came into the Arabian clan system and frequently rose to high positions.

Under the Umayyad dynasty, the propagation of Islam was not specially encouraged, although the inhabitants of the conquered countries were ready to embrace it. In Persia the population was the first to be converted, but we learn that, in the tenth century, the Zoroastrians still formed the majority of the population in Fars. Indeed, apart from the considerable colonies still existing in the cities of Yezd and Kerman, I heard of villages situated to the north-west of Yezd whose inhabitants had not been converted to Islam until early in the nineteenth century.[2]

In Transoxiana the pious Omar II of the Umayyad dynasty, who, as Jurji Zaydan writes, " was born out of season ", and only reigned from A.D. 717 to 720, wrote to the princes of Sind and Central Asia inviting them to embrace Islam on the condition that they should have the same rights as other Moslems. Later, in A.D. 737, we read that Barmak, the title of the Zoroastrian priest of the celebrated fire-temple of Balkh, followed by many of the leading land-owners, became a convert to Islam. It is of interest to note that, during Kutayba's first campaign against Balkh, the wife of the Barmak had been captured and taken into the harem of the Governor's brother, and

[1] *Vide* Jurji Zaydan's *History of Islamic Civilisation*, p. 70 (Gibb Memorial).
[2] Sykes, *Ten Thousand Miles in Persia*, p. 156.

bore him Khalid, the founder of the famous family of the Barmecide viziers.

To turn to Herat: Ibn Hawkal, writing in the tenth century, mentions an ancient fire-temple, called Sirishk, situated on a hill to the north of the city, which was much frequented by the Magians. Farther east the province of Ghur is described as "infidel land", although many Moslems lived there. Seistan, which had been conquered shortly after the battle of Nehavend, had presumably become an important Moslem centre, but Yakut, who wrote early in the thirteenth century, refers to the city of Karkuyah as being chiefly "remarkable for its great fire-temple, so much venerated by all the Magians of Persia". It is fully described by Kazvini, who travelled a generation later than Yakut. To prove how rapidly Islam penetrated to distant Kabul, we learn that as early as the tenth century the Moslems, the Jews and the idolaters had each a separate quarter in this city.

It is difficult to dogmatize, but it seems clear that by the end of the Umayyad period, the religion of Muhammad had penetrated deeply in the chief centres of Afghanistan and Central Asia, but that the inhabitants of the less accessible ranges of the Hindu Kush and the Kuh-i-Baba were not converted until a later date.

CHAPTER XII

THE GOLDEN AGE OF THE ABBASID DYNASTY AND ITS DECAY

It was a dynasty abounding in good qualities, richly endowed with generous attributes, wherein the wares of Science found a ready sale, the merchandise of Culture was in great demand, the observances of Religion were respected, charitable bequests flowed freely, the world was prosperous, the Holy Shrines were well cared for, and the frontiers were bravely kept.—AL-FAKRI on the Abbasid Dynasty.

If I live, the sword shall decide between us: if I conquer, I shall do as I please; if thou art victorious, bread and onions are my fare; and neither thou nor fortune can triumph over a man accustomed to such a diet.—The Message of YAKUB BINLAIS to the Caliph Motamid.

The Overthrow of the Umayyad Dynasty.—The Umayyad dynasty had gradually degenerated as the years passed, and campaigns originally undertaken for the propagation of Islam became mere raids for booty, which was acquired in vast quantities. But the extravagance of the ruling class was not content with booty alone, and constantly increased the burden of taxation to be borne by the subject-races, the weight of which became intolerable. Under this misgovernment the splendid empire of the Caliphate, seething with discontent, was reduced to a state of anarchy. In vain Nasr, the Governor of Khurasan, warned the profligate Caliph of the growing dangers of the situation and concluded his appeal for reinforcements with the following verses:

I see amidst the embers the glow of fire, and it wants but little to burst into a blaze,
And if the wise ones of the people quench it not, its fuel will be corpses and skulls.
Verily fire is kindled by two sticks, and verily words are the beginning of warfare.
And I cry in amazement, " would that I knew whether the House of Umayya were awake or asleep! " [1]

[1] Quoted from *Literary History of Persia*, by E. G. Browne, vol. i, p. 241.

The Abbasid Princes.—Muhammad Ali, the head of the family of Abbas, had died in A.D. 743. He had nominated as his successor his eldest son Ibrahim, who wrote to Abu Muslim, his celebrated propagandist and general in Khurasan: "If you can manage to leave no one in Khurasan who speaks Arabic, do so. Kill any lad five spans long of whom you have suspicions."

Muhammad, who was certainly "thorough" in his hatred of the Arabs, was put to death by the Caliph Merwan II in A.D. 747 or the following year, and was succeeded, as the head of the Abbasid family, by his brother Abul Abbas.

The Overthrow of the Umayyad Dynasty.—The Abbasid Princes remained in hiding, but Abu Muslim, who was a native of Khurasan, worked with such success in this province that, in A.D. 747, he was able to raise the black standard of the house of Abbas which bore the following inscription from the Koran: "Permission to fight is accorded to those who take up arms, because they have been unjustly treated". Bodies of warriors, more especially Persians, but also Arabs, poured in from every quarter and, under Kahtaba, the Abbasid general, this army defeated Nasr at Nishapur and again at Gurgan.

Merwan II, the last Caliph of the doomed dynasty, finally took the field at the head of a numerically strong army, but, in the middle of the action, he foolishly called out that he had treasure in the camp to reward the brave. Hearing this, some of the greedy soldiers broke off from the battle and made for the camp, hoping to secure the money. Thereupon Merwan's troops, panic-stricken at this retrograde movement, and shouting "*Defeat! Defeat!*", fled from the field. Merwan was relentlessly pursued to distant Egypt. Captured in a church where he had taken refuge, he was killed. His head was sent to Salih, the uncle of Abul Abbas, who had the tongue cut out and thrown to a cat. Thus perished the last Umayyad Caliph of the united empire.

The Foundation of the Abbasid Dynasty.—Abul Abbas was proclaimed Caliph of the new dynasty at Kufa. There he ascended the pulpit and ended his attack on the

Umayyad dynasty, exclaiming: " I am the Great Avenger and my name is *Saffah*, ' the Shedder of Blood ' ".

The first care of the new Caliph was to exterminate, under circumstances of almost incredible cruelty, the numerous members of the Umayyad dynasty. One prince of the family, born under a lucky star, escaped and, after wandering in North Africa, was invited to reign in Spain, where he founded a dynasty of considerable importance.

Risings in Central Asia.—The slaughter of the Umayyad party in Khurasan led to serious troubles at Bukhara, where, in A.D. 750, the Arab garrison mutinied and was joined by the people of Sughdiana and Samarkand. Ziyad bin Salih, the Governor, however, aided by the local Chief, termed the Bukhar-Khudah, put down this rebellion, inflicting heavy losses on the rebels.

The Persians oust the Arabs.—Under the new dynasty the more civilized Persians seized the power and ousted the Arabs. Apart from the marked mistrust felt for them by the Abbasid Caliphs, the Arabs looked down on education as being unworthy of men who could boast a noble ancestry. We read that a Kuraish tribesman observing an Arab child studying a grammar, could not refrain from exclaiming, " Fie upon thee! That is the learning of schoolmasters and the pride of beggars! " It is obvious that in a well-educated, cultured society the Arabs could not hold their own. Moreover, owing to generations who had acquired wealth and with it luxurious habits, their martial vigour had left them. Consequently, fallen out of favour, many of them returned to the nomadic life — probably in some cases to their ultimate contentment.

The Last Appearance of a Chinese Army in Central Asia.—In A.D. 751 a Chinese army reached Ferghana to assist its King against the King of Shash. The latter persuaded Abu Muslim to intervene and to send a strong force to his assistance under Ziyad. The Chinese with the Ferghana army and a contingent of Karluks (who had succeeded the Turgesh in the leadership of the Western Turks) gave battle near Taraz. The Karluks deserted

during the action and Ziyad won a decisive victory. This battle marks the end of Chinese armed intervention in Central Asia. In the future, when the princes of Sughdiana and Tukharistan sent embassies to China, the Emperor, "preoccupied with maintaining peace, praised them all and gave them consolation, then having warned them sent them back to assure tranquillity in the western lands". [1]

The Murder of Abu Muslim, A.D. 754.—Abu Muslim, as Governor of Khurasan, finally won over to the Abbasid dynasty the entire Turkish population of Transoxiana, among whom his name is still honoured. At this period the Caliph's brother, Abu Jafar (the future Mansur) visited Merv and, alarmed at the influence and independence of Abu Muslim, recommended that he should be put to death at a convenient time. Upon the accession of Mansur to the Caliphate, Abu Muslim defeated the army of an uncle of Abul Abbas, who was a pretender to the throne, and won the throne for Mansur who, with base ingratitude, had him assassinated by five hired ruffians.

Rebellions during the Reign of Mansur.—In A.D. 756 a rebellion was caused by Sindbad, a Zoroastrian, who declared that Abu Muslim, when threatened by the Caliph, had pronounced the "Great Name of Allah" and had escaped in the form of a dove. Thousands flocked to his standard and, for three months, he held the country from Rei to Nishapur. He was supported by the *Sipahbud* of Tabaristan, with whom he took refuge after his defeat, and in the campaign which ensued, that province was finally subdued and added to the possessions of the Caliphate.

The Foundation of Baghdad, A.D. 762.—Mansur, who fully realized the wisdom of removing his army from Kufa and Basra, which were centres of Arab intrigue and disloyalty, chose a site some twenty miles up-stream from the Sasanian capital of Madain and founded Baghdad on the right bank of the Tigris. On the opposite side of the river he built separate cantonments for the Khurasan

[1] Gibb, *op. cit.* p. 97.

troops and for the Yemen and Modhar Arabs.

The Reign of Mehdi, A.D. 775–785.—The short reign of Mehdi was not lacking in importance. He inaugurated it by deeds of mercy, by the improvement of communications and by the fortification of important centres. He also encouraged literature and music.

Peace was broken by the serious rebellion of Mokanna, the "Veiled Prophet of Khurasan", who gave out that the Deity which had been incarnate in the person of Abu Muslim, had now passed into his own. The story of his rebellion and dramatic death form the theme of Moore's *Veiled Prophet of Khurasan*.

Mehdi had proclaimed Musa, his elder son by his Persian slave-wife Khaizuran, his heir-apparent, but, later, attempted to substitute Harun, who was Musa's full brother, and called upon Musa to waive his claims. This he refused to do, and Mehdi was leading an army against his rebellious son when he ate a poisoned pear, which was intended by one of his slave-girls for a successful rival, and died from its effects.

The Caliph Hadi reigns from A.D. 785–809.—Harun perforce recognized the succession of his brother, who ascended the throne under the surname of Hadi or "the Guide". During his short reign there were risings in Iraq and also at Mecca and Medina. At the Holy Cities the trouble was caused by the drunkenness of some of the members of the saintly house of Ali, for which sin they were paraded in the streets with halters round their necks. The family thereupon rebelled and the rising was crushed with some difficulty. Idris, a great-grandson of Ali, escaped to Tangier, where he was welcomed by the Berber population and founded the Idrisi dynasty.

Hadi attempted to proclaim his son heir-apparent, and treating Harun with harshness, forced him to retire into private life. However, he died before carrying through his purpose. According to general belief, his mother induced his slave-girls to smother him.

Harun-al-Rashid, the Great Caliph, A.D. 786–809.—Few Caliphs had the experience of "Aaron the Upright" before he ascended the throne. When twenty years of

age he had carried through a victorious campaign against Byzantium to the Bosphorus, where Queen Irene was obliged to pay large sums of money in return for a treaty of peace. He also was certainly in fear of his life during the reign of Hadi. He was twenty-five when he succeeded his brother, and his reign, as enshrined in the *Arabian Nights*, sums up the splendour and power associated with the golden age of the Caliphate.

Closely connected with Harun were the Barmecides, his celebrated Viziers. Their grandfather Khalid, referred to in the previous chapter, had given valuable help to the Abbasids and had been appointed Vizier by Abul Abbas. He was also a successful general under Mansur. That Caliph and Yahya, the son of Khalid, had sons born to them at the same date, and brought them up together. As the verse ran:

> Al-Fazl and Harun the Caliph became
> Both nurslings of Khaizuran, most noble dame.

Elsewhere we read: " When Harun became a lad, Mehdi made Yahya his tutor, and he grew up in Yahya's family, and used to call him father ".[1] Naturally, upon succeeding to the throne, Harun appointed Yahya his Vizier, and the latter with his two sons Fazl and Jafar were the real rulers of the Caliphate for seventeen years, and the Caliph's intimate friends.

Rebellions and Civil War.—One of the first rebellions during the reign of Harun was that of Yahya bin Abdulla, a prince of the house of Ali, who, in A.D. 793, raised a revolt in Daylam. Fazl was sent in command of an army against the rebel and negotiated terms under which Harun promised to pardon him. Yahya thereupon surrendered, but in spite of his plighted word, was thrown into prison by Harun.

About this period the feud between the northern and the Yemen Arabs in Syria became a civil war, but Jafar finally restored peace in A.D. 797. Another rebellion which had more permanent results was that in Kairawan.

[1] " Umayyads and Abbasids " from Jurji Zaydan's *History of Islamic Civilisation*, p. 191.

In this case, the Governor Ibrahim finally became independent and, in A.D. 800, Harun, realizing the fact, granted him the country as an hereditary fief on payment of annual tribute.

The Campaigns against the Byzantine Empire.—Harun watched his Syrian frontier carefully. Asia Minor was perpetually attacked by the Greeks while Armenia was threatened by hordes of Khizr, who had inflicted signal defeats on the Arabs in A.D. 653 and again in A.D. 723.[1] Almost every year a campaign was undertaken against the Greeks in which Harun took an active part. In A.D. 797 he penetrated as far as Ephesus and Ancyra with the result that the Empress Irene again acknowledged defeat and agreed to pay tribute in return for a four years' truce. Later the Caliph won victories against the Emperor Nicephorus, but the Greeks, when Harun was occupied elsewhere, also won victories. These wars naturally inflamed religious and national hatred, but left the relative position of the two empires unchanged.

The Fall of the Barmecides, A.D. 803.—The tragedy of the all-powerful Barmecides was caused by the action of the Caliph, who liked to have his sister Abbasa with him when Jafar, his close friend, was also present. To permit this, Harun had married Abbasa to Jafar on the condition that the ceremony was purely nominal. But Abbasa loved Jafar and bore him a child.

When the news of this event reached the ears of Harun, who probably had also decided that the power and influence of the Barmecide family constituted a danger to his security, he at once put Jafar to death, setting up his head on one bridge and empaling the two halves of his body on other bridges of the capital. He also imprisoned other members of the family. Their downfall was mourned alike by historians and poets, who held them to be the noblest of mankind.

The Death of Harun-al-Rashid, A.D. 809.—The people of Khurasan had complained bitterly of the extortion of the Governor Ali Bin Isa. Harun accordingly proceeded to Rei, but accepted the excuses given by Ali and con-

[1] The Caspian Sea was termed Daria-i-Khizr or "Sea of Khizr" after this tribe.

firmed him in his appointment. About this period Rafi bin Lais rebelled at Samarkand and, the rebellion having become serious, Harun again resolved to take the field in person. He sent Mamun in advance to Merv, but on reaching Tus, fell ill and died. His tomb is still in existence in the Shrine of the *Imam* Riza at Meshed. Thus passed away Harun-al-Rashid whose reign, in general belief, marks the golden prime of Islam.

Amin and Mamun, A.D. 808–813.—Harun made the fatal mistake of dividing the empire between his two sons. Amin, the son of Zubayda, a princess of the royal line, had been nominated heir-apparent during his father's life; Mamun, son of a Persian slave-girl, was declared to be the next successor and was appointed Governor of the countries east of Hamadan.

Amin, in anticipation of his father's death, had despatched an agent with the army to Khurasan. On the demise of the Caliph, he produced an order for the army, which had actually been bequeathed to Mamun, to return immediately to Baghdad, and, since the families of the soldiers were in the power of Amin, this order was perforce obeyed. Mamun, however, supported by the saying, " Son of our sister and an Abbasid to boot ", as also by his Persian Vizier Fazl and his capable general Harthama, was strong enough to proclaim himself Caliph of the East in A.D. 811.

Amin, a weak voluptuary, despatched an army against his brother. It reached Rei without encountering opposition, but near that city Tahir " the Ambidextrous ", the Chief of an Arab tribe, slew Amin's general with his left hand. He was then reinforced by Harthama and advanced on Baghdad which, after a year's siege, he stormed. Amin, who had taken refuge in the citadel, surrendered and was put to death in A.D. 813.

The Reign of Mamun as Caliph, A.D. 813–833.—Mamun had determined to make Merv his capital, and this act and his folly in removing Tahir from his command and in executing Harthama, who had warned him of the dangerous position in Iraq, caused rebellions in Syria and Arabia. These risings, in many cases, were in

favour of the house of Ali, the leaders of the Shia doctrine, whose claims, although set aside by the founders of the Abbasid dynasty, had always retained a strong following.

Ali Riza appointed Heir-Apparent, A.D. 817.—To meet the crisis, at the instigation of his Vizier, who was a Shiite, Mamun decided to appoint Ali Riza, the head of the house of Ali, to be his heir-apparent. He accordingly not only promulgated an edict to this effect, but ordered the green of the Shias to be substituted for the black of the Abbasids. This step caused a revolution at Baghdad, where his uncle was proclaimed Caliph. Mamun, realizing the true facts, which had been concealed from him, reversed his policy, put to death his minister and marched on Baghdad. At this juncture Ali Riza's death occurred most opportunely.[1] Mamun, upon his arrival at the capital, speedily restoring order by his moderation and good sense, regained both power and prestige.

The Golden Age of Moslem Science and Art.—During the later years of Mamun's reign, and under his patronage, the arts, literature, science, geography and the practice of medicine were studied deeply, so much so that it was through the vehicle of Arabic that benighted Europe, after a lapse of some five centuries, regained the glorious heritage of Greek science and philosophy, which had totally disappeared during the Dark Ages. Moreover, in distant Central Asia, Mamun laid the foundations of a remarkable civilization, which the peoples of Iranian stock were destined to enjoy under a brilliant native dynasty. Small wonder that the reign of Mamun was hailed as the golden age of Moslem culture!

The Foundation of the Tahirid Dynasty.—In spite of the prestige of Mamun, there was some decline in the power of the Caliphate. Tahir, who had fallen out of favour, was later appointed Governor of Khurasan, where, in A.D. 822, he suddenly omitted to read the

[1] Shias still firmly believe that the grapes eaten to excess which apparently caused the death of Ali Riza, known as the Eighth *Imam*, were poisoned by Mamun. Harun and Ali Riza both lie buried beneath the same dome at Meshed and pilgrims, when passing in procession round the tomb of the Saint, exclaim: "Curses on Harun and on Mamun". According to the Shia doctrine, the *Imams*, who are descendants of the Caliph Ali and of Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet, are invested with supreme spiritual and temporal leadership. *Vide* Sykes' *The Glory of the Shia World.*

khutba[1] in the Caliph's name. With equal suddenness he died on the following day, poisoned by a confidential eunuch of Mamun, who was attached to his staff with orders to act, whenever the Governor showed symptoms of disloyalty. Mamun, however, felt obliged to confirm Tahir's two sons, Talha and Ibrahim, in the governorship, and they ruled Khurasan in the Caliph's name, but actually as a semi-independent kingdom. In A.D. 828 Talha died, but his brother Ibrahim ruled until A.D. 844. The dynasty continued to rule Khurasan until A.D. 972, when it was overthrown by Yakub bin Lais of the Saffar dynasty.

The Reigns of Motasim and Wathik, A.D. 833–847.—During the reign of Harun we read of a Turkish general who was appointed to supreme command in the west. Thousands of Mamelukes or "owned" slaves had been imported from Central Asia since that reign; they gradually became all powerful; and, ultimately, they founded the Mameluke dynasty of Egypt. Motasim, to withdraw from the intrigues of Baghdad, built Samarra, some sixty miles upstream from the capital, where he was surrounded by his Turkish troops. He was, however, an active, energetic soldier and defeated the Greek Emperor Theophilus, capturing the strong fortress of Armorium.

His successor, Wathik, is perhaps best known through Beckford's classic, *Vathek*. He was interested in exploration, we read, but to cure his incessant thirst, brought on by intemperance, he ordered an oven to be heated and, entering it, died from overheating.

To conclude: like the previous dynasty the Abbasids became effete, and as the years passed were made and unmade by their Turkish slaves. Partly owing to the decline of the Caliphate in power, independent dynasties arose, which, in course of time, mainly regarded the Caliph as their spiritual rather than their temporal head. The Golden Age of Islam ended with Wathik.

The Rise of the Saffar Dynasty.—During the Caliphate of Mutawakkil, the successor to Wathik, there was a disturbance in Seistan caused by a certain Salih ibn Nasr, the ruler of Bust who, under the pretext of suppressing a

[1] The *khutba* is the prayer for the ruler at the chief mosque of each city.

Kharijite outbreak, had seized the province. Tahir II, thereupon, led a force to Seistan in order to put down this trouble. In this he apparently succeeded, but after his return to Nishapur, Salih reappeared on the scene, and re-established his rule.

Among the followers of this disturber of the peace was Yakub bin Lais, who, from his father's trade of a copper-smith, was termed "Saffar". He was a highway robber, resembling the English Robin Hood in his generosity to the poor and the kindness with which he treated his prisoners. In A.D. 861 he rose to the command of the Seistan army, and starting on a career of conquest took possession of Herat, Kerman and Shiraz in A.D. 867 and the following years. In A.D. 871 he sent a message to Muaffak, the brother of the Caliph Motamid, declaring himself the Caliph's slave and proposing to pay his respects in person at the capital. The Caliph, desiring at all costs to keep such a formidable warrior at a distance, appointed him ruler of Balkh and Tukharistan, and also of the Kabul area.

Yakub speedily took possession of these provinces and crossing the Hindu Kush attacked Kabul, seizing its Turkish king and, to some extent, establishing Islam in a district that had hitherto been Buddhist. In A.D. 872 he crushed the Tahirids and founded a short-lived dynasty.

He next undertook an expedition into Tabaristan where he defeated Hasan, the independent prince of the house of Ali. Having lost most of his men in the swamps of this malarious province, he returned to Seistan to recruit a new force.

In A.D. 875 he determined to try conclusions with the Caliph. He began with a formal demand for the cession of Fars and, upon Motamid's refusal, he advanced on Baghdad. Near the capital he met Muaffak, who defeated him with heavy losses, which included his camp and baggage. Nothing daunted, Yakub retired to Fars to raise a new army. Three years later the Caliph despatched an embassy of friendly remonstrance to Yakub, who lay dying, with his sword by his side and a crust of bread and onions ready to be served for his meal.

The answer he gave forms a motto to this chapter. The valour displayed by the dying founder of a kingdom, independent of the decadent Caliphate, demands our admiration.

The Samanid Dynasty.—We now come to the rise of a dynasty in Central Asia which, unlike the Tahirid or Saffarid, which only lasted some fifty years, endured for a century and a quarter. Its founder Saman, a Persian noble of Balkh, having been expelled from his native country, appealed to the Caliph Mehdi's Governor of Khurasan, who effectually supported his cause. In return Saman, who was a Zoroastrian, became a convert to Islam and his four sons, who served Harun, helped to crush the rebellion of Rafi bin Lais. Mamun, as a reward for these services, gave to the four brothers the governorships of Samarkand, Ferghana, Shash and Herat, and they retained these posts under the Tahirid dynasty.

After the overthrow of the Tahirid ruler by Yakub, we learn that two brothers, Nasr and Ismail, were governors of Transoxiana in A.D. 874, and this year is held to mark the foundation of the dynasty. They soon quarrelled and engaged in a fight for supremacy, in which Ismail finally emerged the victor, but, with almost unexampled generosity, he allowed his brother to retain the government until his death in A.D. 892.

The Downfall of the Saffar Dynasty, A.D. 903.—Yakub was succeeded by his brother Amr who made his peace with Motamid and ruled Khurasan as his deputy for some years. But, in A.D. 884, the Caliph, who, thanks to his capable brother Muaffak, had regained much power and influence, dismissed Amr and assigned Khurasan to Rafi ibn Harthama. The new governor defeated the Saffarid and drove him back to Seistan, where he wrote of beloved Nishapur:

> Its stones are turquoises, its bushes rhubarb,
> And its dust edible clay.[1] How could I leave such a land?

Amr was reappointed Governor of Khurasan by Mutadid, who had succeeded Motamid in A.D. 892. He

[1] Edible clay is especially recommended for pregnant women in Khurasan.

now defeated and killed Rafi in A.D. 896, thereby regaining possession of part of Khurasan.

Amr now demanded of the Caliph that Ismail should be dismissed from the governorship of Transoxiana. In reply he was advised to secure the province for himself, while Ismail was also encouraged to defend himself by the treacherous Mutadid, who evidently wished to weaken both men. In the campaign which followed, Ismail, in 900, captured Balkh and also Amr. A celebrated anecdote runs that a servant was cooking a piece of meat for his captive master and left the pot for a moment to procure some salt. A dog tried to snatch the meat, but the handle of the pot fell on its neck and as it bolted, pot and all, Amr exclaimed: "I am he whose kitchen it needed four hundred camels to carry this morning, and tonight it has been carried off by a dog".

Ismail wished to show mercy to his prisoner, but by the Caliph's orders he was sent to Baghdad, where he was executed. Thus ended the Saffar dynasty, although numbers of the family ruled Seistan at times and, in Persian Baluchistan, I visited tombs of Chiefs who belonged to this family.[1] It is still held in affectionate remembrance in Khurasan as being the first native dynasty to arise after the Arab conquest.

The Samanid Dynasty at its Zenith.—After his victory over Amr, Ismail defeated Muhammad bin Zaid, the Alid ruler of Tabaristan, and extended his sway to the Persian Gulf southwards and eastwards from the borders of India to the neighbourhood of Baghdad. He selected Bukhara to be his capital, and beautified it with the grand old fort and other buildings which I have admired. He also gathered around him a brilliant body of historians, poets and doctors of law, thereby earning for the city the title of *Sharif* or "Noble" which it still retains. He definitely created the Golden Age of Bukhara.

The Reign of Nasr, A.D. 913–943.—Ismail was succeeded in A.D. 907 by Ahmad, who was murdered in A.D. 913. Nasr, his son, a boy of eight, reigned for thirty years and increased the glories of Bukhara. After his

[1] Sykes, *Ten Thousand Miles in Persia*, p. 229.

death the dynasty began to decay, its kings falling under the influence of Turkish slaves, who rose to power and in some cases rebelled. The best known of these Turkish slaves was Alptigin, Governor of Nishapur, who rebelled and established himself as an independent ruler at Ghazni.

The Ilak Khans.—At this period when the Samanid monarchs were suffering from disloyalty among their nobles and from the independence of their Turkish slave Alptigin, a formidable state had been founded by a section of the Uighur tribe, whose dominions stretched from the modern province of Chinese Turkistan to the Sea of Aral. This tribe was known also as the Karluk and its chiefs were termed Ilak Khans. Towards the end of the tenth century, when, under Satok Boghra Khan,[1] the tribe adopted Islam, his capital was Kashgar and his kingdom included Khotan, Karakoram, Taras and Farab (Otrar).

The Ilak Khan overthrows the Samanid Dynasty.—Boghra Khan was a contemporary of Nuh II, who reigned from A.D. 976 to 997. Two of Nuh's treacherous Governors, of Khurasan and Herat respectively, invited him to attack their monarch. This invitation he gladly accepted, Samarkand was handed over to him by one of these traitors and Boghra Khan entered it in triumph. He died in A.D. 993, whereupon Nuh temporarily regained possession of Transoxiana, but, mistrusting his treacherous nobles, in A.D. 994 he invited Sabuktigin to come to his assistance. Sabuktigin sent an army under his son Mahmud, who defeated the rebels at Herat, Nishapur and, finally, at Tus. Later, when Transoxiana was threatened with a fresh invasion by Hasan, the son of Boghra Khan, Sabuktigin, who in the meanwhile had quarrelled with Nuh, made terms with him.

In A.D. 997 both Sabuktigin and Nuh died and were succeeded respectively by Mahmud (after a fight for the throne) and by Mansur II. Mansur, after a reign of little over one year, was blinded and was succeeded by

[1] Boghra signifies a male camel, the Turks employing names of animals for their tribes, an interesting form of totemism. When residing at Kashgar I heard about Boghra, who is the hero of a fantastic hagiology, known as the *Tazkirat*.

Abdul Malik II, a mere child. Hasan, realizing the favourable situation, seized Bukhara and drove the unfortunate monarch from his kingdom, thus ending the once powerful Samanid dynasty.

The Ilak Khans now established themselves firmly, with their capital at Bukhara. They attempted to occupy provinces to the south of the Oxus, but, as we shall see, were signally defeated and driven back by Mahmud. After this their territory was restricted to Transoxiana, Kashgar and Eastern Tartary. Finally, although not without some desperate fighting, Chinese Turkistan was definitely occupied by the Turks, and Turki became the universal language as it is today.

To conclude: in this chapter, the Abbasid dynasty has been dealt with alike in its Golden Period and its degeneracy. A brief sketch of the first semi-independent Tahirid dynasty, which was succeeded by the stronger Saffar family of Seistan, has also been given. It was overthrown by the still more powerful Samanid family which ruled until it, in turn, like the other dynasties, became decadent and gave place to the first Afghan kingdom of Ghazni.

CHAPTER XIII

THE DYNASTY OF GHAZNI

One of the greatest of the Turkish princes was Mahmud, the Ghaznavide, who reigned in the eastern provinces of Persia one thousand years after the birth of Christ. . . . Never was the Musulman hero dismayed by the inclemency of the seasons, the height of the mountains, the breadth of the rivers, the barrenness of the deserts, the multitudes of the enemy, or the formidable array of their elephants of war. The Sultan of Ghazna surpassed the limits of the conquests of Alexander.—GIBBON, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.*

The Rise of the Dynasty of Ghazni.—In the last chapter reference has been made to Alptigin, a Turkish slave of the Samanid rulers who, when Governor of Nishapur, rebelled against Mansur I and, after a battle fought at Balkh, which was apparently indecisive, established himself at Ghazni, where his father had been Governor. There he later defeated a Samanid army and became a virtually independent sovereign.[1] Alptigin died in A.D. 963 and was succeeded by his son Ishak, whose demise took place three years later. Thereupon, Mansur I of Bukhara acknowledged Balkatigin, a former slave of Alptigin, as ruler of Ghazni. In A.D. 972 he was succeeded by Pirai, whose reign of five years was marked by the first conflict between Hindus and Moslems in Afghanistan. The dominions of the Raja of the Punjab, at that period, extended to the Hindu Kush and included Kabul. He was naturally alarmed at the establishment of a Moslem kingdom in the neighbourhood of that city, and invaded Ghazni, but was defeated.

The Accession of Sabuktigin.—In A.D. 976 Pirai was expelled from the kingdom and Sabuktigin, a son-in-law of Alptigin, ascended the throne with the acquiescence

[1] I have especially consulted vol. iii of the *Cambridge History of India*; *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*; also *The History of the Rise of the Mahomedan Power in India*, translated from the Persian of Mahomed Kasim Ferishta by John Briggs.

of Nuh II of Bukhara. The new monarch was a general of a high order and, in the twelve years following his accession, he extended his frontiers far and wide.

In A.D. 979, Jaipal, Raja of the Punjab, again invaded Ghazni, without decisive results, and terms of peace were negotiated between the two rulers. But in A.D. 988, Sabuktigin, after a successful raid in A.D. 986, again fought Jaipal and annexed Kabul and surrounding districts to his little kingdom.

Sabuktigin is appointed Governor of Khurasan.—In A.D. 994, Nuh II appealed to Sabuktigin to expel Abu Ali Simjur (who was both a rebel and a heretic), from Khurasan. The ruler of Ghazni accordingly despatched an army under his son Mahmud, destined to be famous as the " Idol-Breaker ". Mahmud was successful in this task and Sabuktigin consequently obtained the governorship of the province, which Mahmud ruled as his deputy. Sabuktigin died in A.D. 997, having extended the frontiers of his kingdom as far as the Oxus to the north, to Peshawar on the east and to Khurasan on the west.

The Fight for the Throne, A.D. 997–998.—Sabuktigin had bequeathed the kingdom to his younger son Ismail. Mahmud, however, decided to fight for it, and in a battle which took place outside Ghazni, Ismail was defeated. He was surrendered by the nobles to the victor, who imprisoned him for his life.

Mahmud ascends the Throne in A.D. 998 *and secures the Recognition of the Caliph.*—Mahmud was twenty-seven years of age when he secured the throne in A.D. 998 and, in the following year, he added the province of Seistan to his kingdom. He now ignored the suzerainty of the Samanid dynasty, which was tottering to its fall, and sought recognition of his sovereignty from the Caliph, Al-Kadir Billah, the dispenser of powers which he himself no longer enjoyed. The Caliph bestowed on Mahmud a robe of investment and, later, the title of *Yamin-ad-Daulah*, or " The Right Arm of the State " ; in consequence, the dynasty is known to historians as the Yamini.

As already mentioned, Abdul Malik II had been defeated and driven out of his kingdom in A.D. 999 by

the Ilak Khan of Kashgar. However, Abu Ibrahim, the brother of the last Samanid monarch, who had taken refuge in Gurgan, thrice attempted to regain Khurasan, but on each occasion was defeated. He finally took refuge with the Ghuzz Turkoman, and upon his disappearance from the scene the Samanid kingdom was finally divided up between Mahmud and Ilak Khan.

The First Indian Expeditions of Mahmud, A.D. 1001–1008.—Upon receiving the investiture of his kingdom from the Caliph, Mahmud registered a vow to invade India annually and to chastise the infidels. Actually, during the remaining thirty years of his life he made seventeen expeditions into India's fertile plains, winning treasure of all kinds beyond computation, and annexing the Punjab to his wide-spreading kingdom.

To give a brief account of his more notable campaigns: in his first expedition of 1001, he defeated Jaipal I at Peshawar, capturing the Raja, whom he permitted to ransom himself. Later, Jaipal, unable to bear the shame of defeat and capture, voluntarily mounted a funeral pyre and perished in the flames.

In 1002, Mahmud crushed a rebellion in Seistan. The rebel leader, Khalid, a grandson of Amr-ul-Lais, was captured and sentenced to death, but mollified Mahmud by addressing him as "Sultan" and was appointed his Master of Horse.[1]

In 1005 Mahmud marched across the Punjab and prepared to besiege Multan, which was ruled by Abul Fath Daud. In alarm, this Chief hastily abjured the heretical doctrines of the Carmathian sect,[2] which were abominable in Mahmud's eyes, and offered to pay an annual tribute of 20,000 golden *dirhams*, which offer was accepted.

Mahmud defeats the Ilak Khan, A.D. 1007.—Mahmud next marched at the head of an army consisting of Indians, Khalaj, Afghans and Ghaznavids, to the Oxus where Ilak Khan, who had invaded Balkh, was defeated in 1007 in a desperately contested battle, and driven

[1] This was the account given in a manuscript history of Bam, of which I made a précis.

[2] For this sect *vide* Chapter XV, p. 230.

across the Oxus. Henceforward the Ilak Khans made no further attack on Mahmud.

The Defeat of an Indian Confederacy.—In 1008 Mahmud again marched to Peshawar, where he was faced by a very powerful coalition of Indian princes under Anandpal, the son of Jaipal. Realizing the unequal odds, he entrenched his camp, hoping to induce the Indians to attack. In this he was successful, but a charge of 30,000 Kokars inflicted such losses among his troops that he was about to order a retreat, when Anandpal's elephant most opportunely took fright and the Indians fled, suffering heavy losses.[1] Mahmud took advantage of this victory to attack the fortress of Kangra which he found to be practically unguarded and full of incredibly rich spoils.

The Annexation of Ghur, A.D. 1009.—Ghur, a small district situated in the mountains between Ghazni and Herat, had hitherto constituted an independent state under its rulers of East Persian descent, who claimed as their ancestor Shansab, a supposed descendant of the legendary monarch Zuhak. The state was first heard of when Yakub bin Lais invaded Zamindawar and Bust, as being ruled by a *Malik* named Suri, at which time the population had not been converted to Islam. Mahmud decided to annex this little state to his kingdom and, after punishing the mountain Afghans for raiding, he defeated its Prince, Muhammad bin Suri, whom he imprisoned. In his place he appointed his son Abu Ali.

The Overthrow of the Sahi Dynasties of Kabul, A.D. 1013.—We learn from Albiruni that Laga-Turman was the last King of the Turkish Sahi dynasty of Kabul. His Vizier, a Brahmin, named Kallar, seized the throne and the dynasty of Hindu Sahis, which he founded, maintained the struggle against the Moslem invaders for six generations. Its last monarch Trilochapula was finally overthrown by Mahmud of Ghazni, who seized his dominions.

[1] Ferishta writes: "These Gukkurs [Khokars] were a race of wild barbarians, without either religion or morality. It was a custom among them as soon as a female child was born to carry her to the door of the house, and there proclaim aloud, holding the child in one hand, and a knife in the other, that any person who wanted a wife might now take her; otherwise she was immediately put to death." *Op. cit.* vol. i, p. 183.

The Expedition against Khwarizm, A.D. 1017.—We read in the annals of Khiva that Mamun II, who was married to the sister of Mahmud, was killed by his soldiers for obeying Mahmud's orders to have the *khutba* read in his name. Mahmud accordingly marched to avenge the death of his brother-in-law and, conquering the country, bestowed it on a Turkish Chief, Altuntash, in whose family it remained for a generation.

The Expedition against Muttra and Kanauj, A.D. 1018. —In 1018 Mahmud undertook what is held to be his twelfth expedition into India. He occupied Muttra, held sacred as the birthplace of Krishna, plundering and destroying the buildings, as was his custom. Continuing his march, the Conqueror arrived before Kanauj, which was strongly fortified. The Rajput Raja, in alarm, retired from the city, but preserved it from destruction by submitting to Mahmud and giving him treasure and jewels. The booty taken on this campaign included 53,000 prisoners who were sold as slaves all over Central Asia.

Upon his return to his capital, Mahmud founded the great Mosque at Ghazni, termed the "Celestial Bride," while his nobles also constructed mosques, colleges, caravanserais, aqueducts and fountains.

The Expedition against Somnath, A.D. 1024–1026.— Mahmud had for many years heard that the wealth of the temple of Shiva, the Moon-Lord, situated on the coast of Kathiawar, far exceeded in wealth that of any shrine he had hitherto plundered; consequently he determined to capture it. He first marched to Multan and then, crossing the desert to Sambhar (the modern city of Ajmer had not been founded at this period), he finally appeared before the walls of Somnath. With misplaced confidence in Shiva, the Hindus greeted the Moslems with contemptuous laughter, but on the following day, Mahmud stormed the city, scaling its walls, and massacred the Hindus by tens of thousands.

The temple, constructed of wood, enshrined a huge stone *lingam*, which the Conqueror, with true Moslem zeal, struck with his mace. The idol was broken up, two

large fragments being despatched to Ghazni to serve as steps at the entrance of the great mosque. It is stated that, to save the idol from being broken into pieces, the Brahmins offered a very large sum of money for its redemption. Mahmud, however, refused, declaring that he was a breaker, not a seller, of idols. In the event, jewels worth infinitely more than the value of the Brahmins' offer were discovered in a secret cavity within the idol. The piety of the "Idol-Breaker" was thus amply rewarded.

On the return march to Ghazni the army suffered much from the lack of water in the Sind desert, while attacks by the Jats of the Sind-Sagar Doab delayed it. So much so was this the case, that Mahmud did not reach Ghazni until the spring of 1026. Thus ended his last important expedition into the plains of India. The puppet Caliph, al-Kadir Billah, conferred fresh titles upon Mahmud and formally recognized him as the ruler of Khurasan, Hindustan, Seistan and Khwarizm.

The Buwayid or Daylamite Dynasty, A.D. 932–1055.—A dynasty which rose in Daylam, a mountainous area situated behind the south-west corner of the Caspian Sea, had become powerful at this period. It was founded by Ali bin Buwayhi, who, appointed Governor of Karaj, a district situated to the south-east of Hamadan, with the aid of his two brothers, occupied the province of Fars. Ahmad, the most capable brother, conquered Kerman in A.D. 936, and gradually advancing westwards, entered Baghdad in A.D. 945. There the Caliph al-Mustakfi created him *Amir-ul-Umara* or "Chief Ruler" with the title of *Muizz-ud-Daula*.

The Blinding of the Caliph.—A few weeks later the Buwayhid Chief blinded the unfortunate Caliph and finally put him to death. From this date the Caliphs lost all temporal power and merely held a Court and gave titles, until their extinction by Hulaku Khan in A.D. 1258.

Bendemeer.—Among the notable members of the Buwayhid dynasty was *Azud-ad-Daula*, who, upon the death of his brother, held the post of Vizier to the Caliph. His memory is preserved by a dam which I visited on

the River Kur to the south of Persepolis. It is still termed *Band-i-Amir* or "the Dam of the Amir" and is enshrined in the lines of Moore:

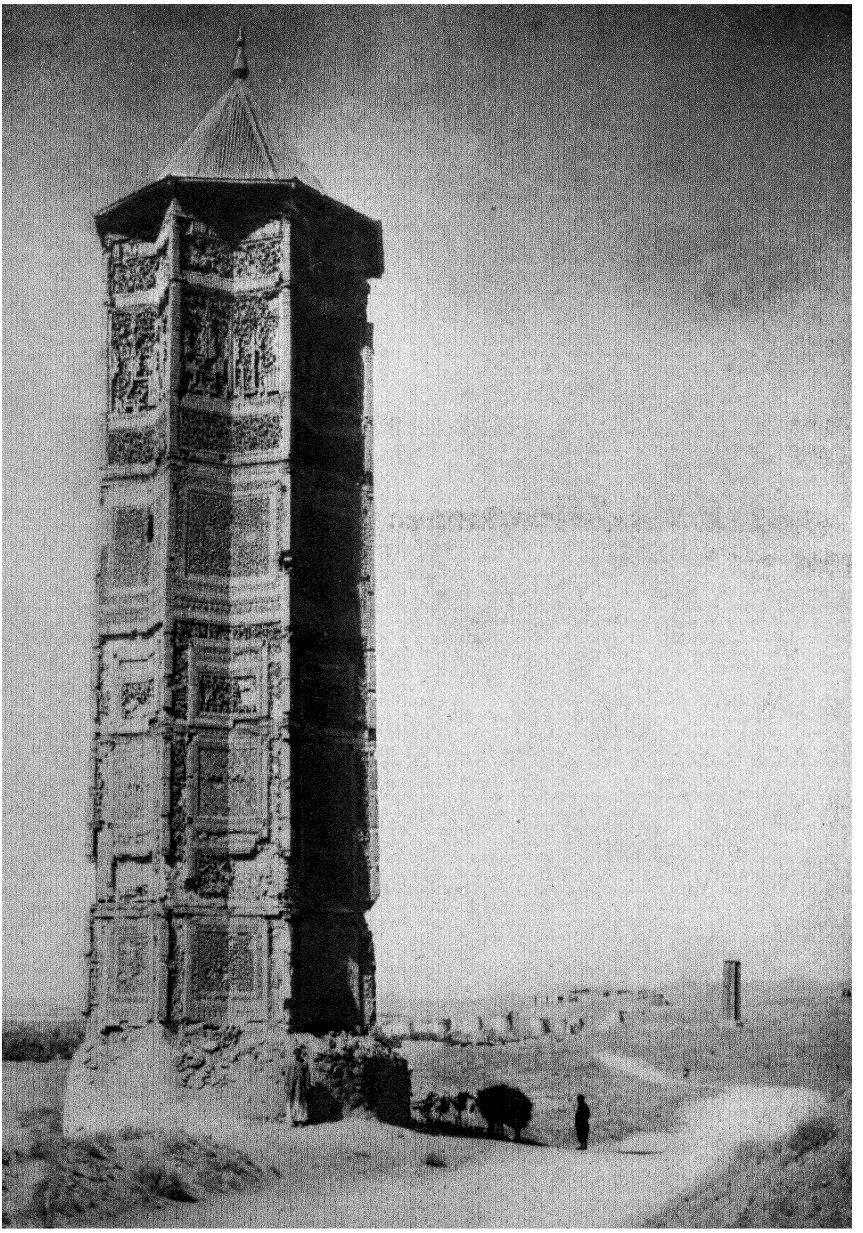
> There's a bower of roses by Bendemeer's stream,
> And the nightingale sings round it all the day long.[1]

Mahmud annexes Buwayhid Provinces.—This dynasty decayed after the death of *Azud-ad-Daula*. Mahmud demanded tribute from Rei, which city, during the minority of *Majd-ad-Daula*, was ruled by his mother. Failing her compliance, he threatened "to send 2000 war-elephants to carry the dust of Rei to Ghazni". The fearless Princess, however, in reply to this ultimatum, answered: "I know Sultan Mahmud and am aware that he will never underake a campaign without weighing all the risks. If he attacks and conquers a weak woman, where is the glory of such an achievement? If he be repulsed, the latest ages will hear of his shame." Mahmud, whatever his reasons may have been, did not attack Rei until 1029, by which date *Majd-ad-Daula* had taken over the reins of government. He then captured Rei, Isfahan and some provinces in Iraq. The *coup de grâce* to the dynasty was given later by the Seljuks.

The Death of Mahmud of Ghazni, A.D. 1030.—Mahmud, who died in 1030, ranks high among the most famous of Moslem champions. He was undoubtedly a great general who carefully thought out the plan of each campaign that he engaged in, and his remarkable success, whenever he took the field, proved time and again that the hardy men of the Afghan highlands, who mainly composed his armies, overmatched the inhabitants of the torrid plains of India. He was not a fanatical Moslem and, though evidently zealous for Islam, his main incentive was undoubtedly plunder. Moreover, it must be remembered that upland Afghanistan is too poor a country to maintain an army from its own resources.

Mahmud's encouragement of literature, science and art was as remarkable as his genius for war and for government. He founded and richly endowed a uni-

[1] It is figured in Sykes, *op. cit.* (2nd ed.) vol. ii, p. 24.



GHAZNI: THE TOWERS OF VICTORY

(Nearer, *c.* 1100; further, before 1030)

(By kind permission of Mr. Robert Byron)

versity at his capital, whose mosques, palaces and public buildings surpassed those of any other city of the period. He also gathered at his court the most brilliant poets and writers of the period. Afghans can certainly claim that Mahmud the "Idol-Breaker", their first Moslem monarch, was a great conqueror and a ruler of outstanding merit.

The Succession of Masud I.—Upon the death of Mahmud, in accordance with his will, some of the nobles of Ghazni acknowledged his son Muhammad as Amir. Masud, the eldest son, who was at Hamadan, when he heard of the event, like his father before him, decided to fight for the throne, and was joined during his advance by Ayaz, Mahmud's favourite slave, and by many influential nobles. The party which had supported Muhammad, realizing that his cause was lost, hastened to imprison him and offered their submission to Masud. Muhammad was blinded by his brother and was confined at Balkh which, at first, was made the capital.

Various Campaigns, A.D. 1031–1034.—The year after his accession Masud despatched an army to punish Isa, the Chief of Makran, who had rebelled. Isa was defeated and put to death, and his brother Abul Muaskar was appointed to be his successor. In 1032 Masud made a successful expedition to Kashmir, capturing the fortress of Sarasti. He then invaded Tabaristan, where Abu Kalinjar had rebelled and took Asterabad. Abu Kalinjar thereupon submitted and agreed to pay tribute.

Masud and the Punjab.—The Governor of the Punjab under Mahmud was a Turkish officer named Ariyaruk, who, after Masud's accession, was accused of collecting large sums of money with the intention of declaring himself an independent ruler. Summoned to Balkh, he appeared at the head of a powerful force of Indian troops, but was arrested and put to death.

His successor was Mahmud's treasurer Ahmad, and his fidelity was believed to be secured by the retention of his son at Ghazni. Instructions issued to the officials in the Punjab were that they should not undertake expeditions outside that province, unless specially authorized

to do so. They were also forbidden to drink, play polo or mix with the Hindu officers at Lahore, but were to avoid any display of religious bigotry. Ahmad, in spite of these injunctions, in A.D. 1033, led an expedition against Benares, which he plundered, and returned to Lahore loaded with money and jewels. It then became clear that he intended to rebel.

Masud asked which of his Moslem nobles would lead an expedition against Ahmad, but they were all unwilling to do so. Finally, Tilak, a Hindu, who was the Commander of the Hindu troops, was entrusted with the task. Upon reaching Lahore he found that the officers and men who had remained loyal were being besieged by Ahmad in a neighbouring fortress. He thereupon occupied Lahore, arrested the partisans of Ahmad and, by cutting off their right hands, inspired such terror that Ahmad was defeated, deserted and killed. In 1037 Masud, against the advice of his Ministers, led an expedition against the Indian fortress of Hansi which was stormed and sacked.

The Final Defeat of Sultan Masud I by the Seljuks in A.D. 1040.—Throughout the reign of Masud, the Seljuks had constituted a standing, and an increasing menace. In 1031 they had raided Herat, but had been driven off. Two years later the Sultan had sent a force against them which inflicted a crushing defeat on the Turkish tribesmen, but while the victors were busy plundering their camp, a fresh body of Seljuks charged and cut up the force. In 1036, under Chakir Beg Daud, they captured Balkh, but retreated to Merv on the approach of Masud. A peace treaty was now negotiated, but on the return march of Masud to Ghazni the treacherous Seljuks attacked his army, only, however, to be repulsed with loss.

In October 1037, Masud engaged in his foolish expedition to India. Upon his return to Ghazni in February 1038 he neglected to support his generals and, by the time he had taken the field, Chakir Beg Daud had captured Nishapur.

In 1040 the Seljuks under Toghril completely routed Masud, who, although deserted by his generals, continued

fighting bravely and finally managed to reach Ghazni in safety.

The battle is described by Ferishta: "At Dundanaken [near Talikan] the Seljuks, collecting their forces, surrounded the King's army and secured the passes on all sides. Masud drew up his army in order of battle . . . the enemy advancing on all sides with barbarous shouts, and with great impetuosity. This uncommon method of charging discouraged the Ghaznavid troops; and, whether through fear or perfidy, several generals in the commencement of the battle rode off with their entire squadrons and joined the enemy.

"The King, undismayed even by the defection of his officers, gallantly rode his horse to the spot where he perceived the conflict most bloody, performing prodigies of valour, unequalled perhaps by any sovereign; but his efforts were vain; for when he looked round he beheld nearly the whole of his army, excepting the body which he commanded in person, in full flight. The King thus deserted . . . turned his steed and trampling down the enemy, opened a road for himself with his own sword." [1]

The Deposition and Death of Masud I.—Unable to hold the Seljuks at bay in Afghanistan, the defeated King decided to retreat to India, intending to raise a fresh army and to attack the enemy once more. In pursuance of this plan he left Ghazni with his family and treasure, but in the vicinity of Abdul Hasan in the Indus Valley his guards mutinied, plundered the treasure and arrested their ruler. Masud was deposed in favour of his blind brother Ibrahim; he was thrown into prison where he was put to death by Ahmad, the son of Ibrahim, in A.D. 1041.

Thus fell Masud I, known as Rustam the Second on account of his amazing strength. He was not only a brave general but, like his great father, gathered round him many scholars and poets, and certainly deserved a better fate.

Maudud wins the Throne.—Masud had left his son

[1] *Ferishta*, by John Briggs, vol. i, p. 110.

Maudud in command at Balkh. Upon hearing of the tragedy that had befallen his father, he marched on Ghazni. At Nangrahar, half-way between Ghazni and the Indus, he defeated Ibrahim and, in revenge for his father's execution, he put to death the blind Ibrahim and most of his sons with torture.

Maudud then marched on Lahore, where his full brother Majdud opposed him. It seemed probable that Maudud's troops would desert to his more popular brother, but both Majdud and his Vizier were suddenly poisoned, presumably by agents of Maudud. After this fresh tragedy, the two forces united under Maudud, who temporarily re-established the Ghaznavid authority over the Indian provinces.

A Campaign against the Seljuks, A.D. 1042.—Maudud, who was not lacking in energy, despatched an army that defeated a Seljuk force nor far from Balkh, which city, however, his general was unable to capture, and since no reinforcements were sent to him, he retired. About the same period a Seljuk force raided Afghanistan by the Bust route but was defeated with loss.

The Rebellion of the Rajas, A.D. 1043.—The prestige of the Ghaznavid dynasty was much lowered in India by the victory of the Seljuks over Masud, with the result that the Raja of Delhi and other states formed an alliance and captured Nagrakot. They then decided to attack Lahore but were repulsed.

The Rebellion of Toghril Beg, "the Ingrate", A.D. 1044–1046.—The Seljuks, having again invaded Afghanistan, plundered Bust. Toghril Beg (who must not be confused with the famous Seljuk Chief of that name) defeated the raiders. He then attacked the Turks of Herat and on this occasion also was successful. Two years later, for the second time, he was sent at the head of an army to Bust, where he rebelled but was obliged to flee, since his Chiefs remained loyal to Maudud.

A Rebellion in Ghur, A.D. 1046.—The Ghurid Chiefs had taken advantage of the Seljuk invasions to rebel. Fortunately for Maudud he was able to set one Chief against another. His general was met by a Ghuri prince,

Yahya, at the head of his followers and the united force marched against Abu Ali, the Prince of Ghur, who took refuge in a fort where he was besieged and captured. The Ghaznavid general thereupon treacherously seized the son of Yahya Ghuri, whom he had come to support, and carried both princes to Ghazni where Maudud ordered them to be beheaded.

The Death of Maudud, A.D. 1049.—In 1048 Maudud appointed his two eldest sons, Mahmud and Mansur, to the governments of Lahore and Peshawar respectively, and died in the following year. The dynasty had now sunk to be a minor power and, although its course was not entirely run, its widespread empire was falling into pieces. Its rulers having lost the northern and western provinces, perforce looked to the east.

The Growth of the Persian Language.—The Persian language—*farsi*, the language of the Fars—as spoken today in Afghanistan and Persia, is the lineal offspring of that spoken by Darius, the great Achaemenian monarch, whose proclamations I have seen engraved on the buildings of Persepolis, the capital which he occupied during the spring months and whose tomb I have visited. The overthrow of this mighty dynasty by Alexander the Great and the subsequent rise to power of the Parthian dynasty broke the continuity of the language for five and a half centuries (330 B.C.–A.D. 226). The Parthian dynasty was then succeeded by the national dynasty of the Sasanian monarchy, whose literature is mainly theological. This great dynasty finally became effete and was overthrown by the Arabs at the battle of Khadesiya in A.D. 637, as described in Chapter XI. Conquered Persia was then undoubtedly permeated alike by the Arab religion and its culture, and although this period was not finally ended until the extinction of the Caliphate by Hulaku Khan in 1258, the Persians gradually ousted the Arabs from power under the Abbasid dynasty and we read in the last chapter that Mamun laid the foundations of a brilliant culture among the inhabitants of Iranian stock in Central Asia. Modern Persian may thus he held to signify the

Persian language as it reappears after the Arab Conquest. Since then its changes have been so few that the earliest recorded poems are as easily understood by an educated Persian or Afghan today as are the works of Shakespeare by the modern Englishman.[1]

The Birth of Persian Literature.—The birth of Persian literature, as we know it, is generally believed to date from the era of the Saffarid dynasty. Actually the earliest known poet, Rudagi, flourished during the reign of Nasr II, the Samanid monarch who reigned in Central Asia from A.D. 913 to 943. Rudagi's most famous poem is one which he improvised at the request of the courtiers to induce Nasr to return to Bukhara from Herat. It runs:

> The Ju-yi-Muliyan we call to mind,
> We long for those dear friends long left behind.
> The sands of Oxus, toilsome though they be,
> Beneath my feet were soft as silk to me.
> Glad at the friend's return, the Oxus deep
> Up to our girths in laughing waves shall leap.
> Long live Bukhara! Be thou of good cheer!
> Joyous towards thee hasteth our Amir!
> The Moon's the Prince, Bukhara is the sky;
> O sky, the Moon shall light thee by and by!
> Bukhara is the mead, the cypress he;
> Receive at last, O Mead, the cypress tree!

It is said that Nasr was so much moved by this delightful poem that he descended from his throne, mounted the horse of the sentinel on duty and set off for Bukhara in such haste that he did not stop to put on his riding boots.

Abu Ali bin Sina, Avicenna.—The "Prince of all learning" was born near Bukhara in A.D. 980, and won the favour of the Samanid, Prince Nuh II, at the early age of seventeen, by curing him of a disease. He thereby gained access to the prince's library which, according to Abu Ali's own account, contained "many books the very titles of which were unknown to most persons, and others which I never met with before nor since".

[1] For this section I am deeply indebted to the late Professor Browne's *Literary History of Persia.*

Thanks to his genius, Avicenna, who was himself the disciple of Aristotle, rapidly gained an encyclopaedic knowledge which enabled him to systematize all the learning of his generation. He is famous alike as a great philosopher and a great physician, whose *Kanun* retained its influence in distant Europe until the seventeenth century. The Venerable Bede, the English monk who certainly knew Greek and possibly some Hebrew and whose works, scientific, historical and theological, sum up all the learning of the seventh and early eighth centuries, may perhaps be considered to occupy a position in Europe similar to that held by Avicenna in Asia.

Avicenna was also a poet and I will quote one of his quatrains which have mistakenly been attributed to Omar Khayyám. It runs:

> Up from Earth's Centre, through the Seventh Gate
> I rose, and on the Throne of Saturn sate,
> And many a knot unravelled by the Road,
> But not the master-knot of Human Fate.[1]

Firdausi.—The greatest of the poets who thronged the Court of Mahmud of Ghazni was Abul Kasim, celebrated down the ages as Firdausi. He was a yeoman of Bazh, a village which, under its modern name of Faz, I was fortunate to identify some twelve miles to the north of Meshed, the present capital of Khurasan. Firdausi, after establishing his position as a poet at the Court of Mahmud of Ghazni, was entrusted by that monarch with the important task of writing the *Shahnama* or "History of the Kings", from entirely pre-Islamic materials, and was promised a fee of a gold *dinar* for each couplet. In A.D. 999, having completed his immortal epic after twenty-five years of work, Firdausi took it from his home at Tus and presented it to Mahmud. Unfortunately the poet was accused of heresy and, owing to the intrigues of his enemies, instead of the promised gold, worth some £25,000, he was only given silver valued at £400.

[1] For his celebrated Arabic poem on the human soul, *vide* Browne *op. cit.* vol. ii, pp. 110-111.

Firdausi, who was now an old man of eighty, was bitterly disappointed and, going to the bath, gave vent to his feelings by dividing the silver between a bath-man and a seller of sherbet. He then wrote a scathing satire on Mahmud, which has come down to us — and fled from the vengeance of the irate Sultan.

Mahmud, some years later, was returning to Ghazni from one of his expeditions into India and was encamped near the fortress of a rebel Chief to whom he had sent a summons to appear before him. To his Minister he said: " I wonder what reply the Chief will give ". The Minister answered:

> And should the reply with my wish not accord,
> Then Afrasiyab's field, and the mace, and the sword.

" Whose verse was that," inquired Mahmud, " for he must have the heart of a man." Hearing that it was Firdausi's, Mahmud deeply regretted his scurvy treatment of the poet and sent him sixty thousand *dinars'* worth of indigo, but, as the camels entered Tus by the Rudbar Gate, Firdausi's corpse was being carried out of the Rizwan Gate for burial.

Firdausi is known to English readers through the medium of Matthew Arnold's *Sohrab and Rustum*. But the great poem, for me the greatest of all Persian poems, loses its sonorous majesty in a translation. As Professor Cowell wrote: " It perhaps stands as alone in Asia, as Homer's epics in Europe ".

Omar Khayyám.—We now come to the bard of Nishapur, whose tomb I have visited. The famous quatrains, in some cases, owe much — sometimes too much — to FitzGerald, but these which I quote were Omar's own:

> Why, if the soul can fling the Dust aside,
> And naked on the Air of Heaven ride,
> Were't not a Shame, were't not a Shame for him,
> In this clay carcase crippled to abide?
>
> 'Tis but a Tent where takes his one day's rest
> A Sultan to the realm of Death addrest;

The Sultan rises — and the dark Ferrash
Strikes and prepares it for another Guest.[1]

Persians consider Omar Khayyám a philosopher and a scientist rather than a poet. However that may be, his quatrains, as interpreted by the genius of FitzGerald, have certainly struck a chord in our prosaic nature and have thereby helped to bridge the gulf between the material West and the dreaming East.

The Kabus Nama.—Were I asked to name the work by a Persian most likely to interest an English reader, I should recommend the book of morals and rules of life composed in A.D. 1082 by Kei Kaus the Ziyarid Prince. It deals with duty towards parents, hunting, polo, marriage, education and medicine. His advice on polo merits quotation: "If you play occasionally, so as to show off, there is no harm, but do not join in the game too often, and thus avoid danger and risk. Whenever the ball comes to you, hit it back into the game and pretend to ride hard, but do not go into the *mêlée* and avoid danger and risk by keeping your distance and looking after yourself to preserve your safety."

Kabus, the grandfather of the earliest writer on *The Etiquette and Rules of Polo*, was a poet of no mean order as the following exquisite quatrain proves:

Mirth's King the Rose is, Wine Joy's Herald eke;
Hence from these two do I my pleasure seek;
Would'st thou, O Moon, inquire the cause of this?
Wine's taste thy lips recall, the Rose thy cheek!

Kabus, although famed far and wide for many high qualities, was put to death by the nobles, who were exasperated by his cruelty. He was buried in a tomb in the Turkoman country, east of Astrabad. The building, which I visited many years ago, is a lofty decagon with a curious conical roof, and ranks high among the buildings of North-East Persia. It has a band of Kufic inscription bearing the date A.D. 997.[2]

To conclude this very brief reference to a subject of

[1] In *Omar Khayyám*, by General Rodwell, we have the Persian text with paraphrase and the first and fourth editions of FitzGerald's translation.

[2] This tower is figured in Sykes, *op. cit.* 2nd ed., vol. ii, p. 22.

great importance: it is worth noting that, in the pre-Mongol period, the poets and other writers of distinction were almost all inhabitants of Central Asia and Khurasan. The generations pass and we shall see the Renaissance of Persian art and poetry under the Mongol Princes of Herat, which challenges our deep admiration.

CHAPTER XIV

THE SELJUK AND THE GHURID DYNASTIES

It would be superfluous to praise the valour of a Turk; and the ambition of Togrul was equal to his valour. By his arms the Gaznevides were expelled from the eastern kingdoms of Persia, and gradually driven to the banks of the Indus, in search of a softer and more wealthy conquest. In the West he annihilated the dynasty of the Bowides; and the sceptre of Irak passed from the Persian to the Turkish nation. The princes who had felt, or who feared, the Seljukian arrows, bowed their heads in the dust; by the conquest of Aderbijan, or Media, he approached the Roman confines; and the shepherd presumed to despatch an ambassador, or herald, to demand the tribute and obedience of the emperor of Constantinople.—GIBBON, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ch. lvii.

The Importance of the Seljuks.—This history during a period of four centuries has recorded the amazing wave of Arab conquest inspired by the doctrine of Islam, which had swept eastwards across Persia and Afghanistan and beyond the Oxus, to distant Kashgar, thereby outstepping the limits of Alexander the Great. The Arabs brought with them not only the religion taught by Muhammad to the countries which were occupied, but also, in due course, learning and science, Bukhara and Balkh becoming noted centres of Moslem learning and culture.

We now see a second wave of conquest flowing in the opposite direction. It consisted of Turkish tribes who, although mainly recent converts to Islam, at first destroyed as they advanced. The Seljuks, the greatest of the Turkish tribes, advancing from the western frontiers of Afghanistan, penetrated as far as Asia Minor, which became their permanent home. Moreover, to quote Browne, " they were the progenitors of the Ottoman Turks, the foundation of whose empire . . . was laid by the Seljuk Kingdoms of Rum — the so-called Decarchy — and actually determined by the Mongol invasion

which drove westwards the Turkish band of Ertoghrul and Osman ".[1] The descendants of these chiefs became the Sultans of Turkey.

To take another point of view: the Seljuks swept away the scattered and decadent dynasties, which bore rule in this vast area, and once again founded an Islamic state, stretching from Turkistan, as it came to be called, to the Mediterranean Sea. More than this, these rude tribesmen revitalised Islam, just as the Norsemen during the same period revitalized Christendom, and when European crusaders invaded Asia Minor and Syria under Norman leaders, their most redoubtable opponents were the Seljúks.

The Origin of the Seljuks.—The Seljuks were a Turkish tribe and the earliest of their known Chiefs was Dukak who was called Timuryaligh, or the " possessor of the iron bow ". Dukak was a member of the Ghuzz tribe and his son Seljuk, the eponymous founder of the tribe, took up his grazing quarters in the vicinity of Jand, situated some thirty miles from the mouth of the Sir Daria.[2] There the tribe embraced Islam with deep fervour. Political conditions at this period were favourable for the rise to power of the newcomers, who generally supported the Samanid princes, but, at the same time, never neglected to forward their own interests. Seljuk died at Jand aged one hundred and seven years.

Mahmud of Ghazni and the Seljuks.—Under his sons, chief of whom was Arslan, we next hear of the tribe as having moved to the vicinity of Bukhara. There Arslan is mentioned as the ally of a certain Ali Tigin, who had taken Bukhara. In A.D. 1025 Mahmud of Ghazni marched into Transoxiana and drove out Ali Tigin. During this campaign he met Arslan (who is also termed Israil) and, upon his inquiry as to the strength of his tribe, the Chief incautiously declared that if he sent to the tents of his tribe an arrow from his quiver 100,000 men would join him, and that if his bow were sent double that number would rally round him. Mahmud, to whom

[1] *Op. cit.* vol. ii, p. 166.

[2] Vide *The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate*, by Guy Le Strange, p. 486.

this information caused considerable uneasiness, took Arslan back to Ghazni and imprisoned him at Multan. He then considered that the tribe would be more under control if settled in Khurasan, and accordingly he allotted it grazing grounds in that province.

The Foundation of the Seljuk Dynasty, A.D. 1037.—After the death of Mahmud, Masud, his successor, called on the Seljuks under Toghril and Chakir, nephews of Arslan, to aid him against the raiding Ghuzz. This they did, but after Masud's departure from Khurasan, Chakir attacked and defeated the Ghaznavid General near Merv, capturing that city, while in 1037 Togril seized Nishapur. By these conquests Khurasan was occupied by the Seljuks and Lane-Poole appropriately dates the foundation of their empire from this conquest.[1] Later, as mentioned in the last chapter, in 1040, Masud reappeared on the scene to regain the possession of Khurasan, but suffered a crushing and final defeat so far as the Seljuks were concerned.

The Victorious Career of Toghril Beg, A.D. 1037–1063.—Kaim, the Caliph at this period, who saw Baghdad rent between factions embittered by religious hate, watched the progress of the irresistible Seljuks, as they conquered the provinces of Persia and divided them among various branches of the ruling family, and subsequently approached Baghdad. In response to Toghril's request, he ordered the *khutba* to be read in the name of the Seljuk Chief in all the mosques, and agreed to the appearance of his name on the coinage before that of the decadent Buwayhids.

In 1055 Toghril entered Baghdad as a victor and put an end to the Buwayhid dynasty, re-establishing Kaim on his throne. He paid a state visit to the Caliph, who, in an impressive ceremony, bestowed upon Toghril seven robes of honour and seven slaves to symbolize the seven regions of the Caliphate. To complete the investiture, he was girded with two swords to signify his appointment as ruler of the East and of the West. It would appear that the nomad Chief was deeply impressed

[1] *The Mohammadan Dynasties*, p. 149.

by the ceremony and felt that his conquests had been legally recognized and hallowed by the religious head of Islam.

Toghril Beg next pushed his conquests westwards, occupying Mosul, Diarbekir and other districts. He then returned to Baghdad, where he demanded the hand of the Caliph's daughter in marriage. The wedding was arranged to take place at Rei, but on the journey to that city the great nomad conqueror died.

The Campaigns of Alp Arslan, A.D. 1063–1072.—The successor to the throne was the son of Chakir Beg and, during his brief reign the Seljuk Empire was extended far and wide. In Arabia he secured possession of Mecca and Medina from the Fatimid dynasty, and thereby considerably increased his prestige, which stood very high. His most famous victory was that gained over a greatly superior Byzantine army in 1071, in which he captured the Emperor Diogenes Romanus. His last campaign was against Khwarizm, during the course of which he was killed by a prisoner. Alp Arslan, "The Conquering Lion", whose fame as a soldier was widespread, was buried at Merv. His epitaph ran:

> Thou hast seen Alp Arslan's head in pride exalted to the sky;
> Come to Merv, and see how lowly in the dust that head doth lie!

The Reign of Malik Shah, A.D. 1072–1092.—The Seljuk dynasty reached its zenith under its new ruler, whose Vizier, *Nizam-ul-Mulk*, ranks among the greatest and most celebrated men of the East. Among the stories related of the famous Vizier was that he paid the boatmen on the Oxus for ferrying the army across that river by bills on Antioch, which were accepted and easily cashed.

After a fight for power with his uncle, *Malik* Kaward of Kerman, the Seljuk Empire extended "from the frontiers of China to the confines of Syria, and from the uttermost parts of the lands of Islam to the north unto the limits of Arabia Felix; while the Emperors of Rum brought him tribute".[1]

At this period Egypt and much of North Africa and

[1] *Ibn Athir*, vol. x, p. 73.

Syria were held by the Fatimid anti-Caliphs. Eastwards, however, tribute was paid by the Prince of Kashgar, who was obliged to recognize Seljuk suzerainty in his coinage.

Alp Arslan and Malik Shah, who have aptly been compared with the Roman Emperors Trajan and Hadrian, are undoubtedly associated with one of the most brilliant epochs in the history of Islam. It is noteworthy that these Seljuk monarchs retained their virility by their love of hunting and when Malik Shah, who, aided by the illustrious Nizam-ul-Mulk, had governed a vast empire better than any other ruler, died in 1092, with him there passed the golden prime of the Seljuk Empire.

A Troubled Period for the Ghaznavid Dynasty, A.D. 1049–1052.—To return to the Ghaznavids for a survey of their waning fortunes: a palace intrigue placed Masud II, an infant son of Maudad, on the throne under the regency of his mother, the daughter of Chakir Beg, Seljuk. He was, however, quickly replaced by Ali, a son of Masud I, who married the daughter of Chakir Beg. During this period the mountain Afghans of the Ghur province, who had been quiet since their punishment by Mahmud, began to raid once again and to take part in the internal rebellions.

In 1052 Abdur Rashid, the sixth son of Mahmud, was released from prison and, capturing Ghazni, deposed his nephew and ascended the throne. He was a scholar, learned in theology, but incapable of dealing with the difficult situation. Nushtigin, appointed Governor of the Punjab, restored order in that province, but Toghril " the Ingrate ", who had reduced Seistan to obedience, rebelled. He then marched on Ghazni where he defeated and put to death Abdur Rashid, together with nine other members of the ruling family. He ascended the throne but, after a reign of only six weeks, he was assassinated by the royal bodyguard with the entire approval of the people.

The Reign of Farrukhzad, A.D. 1052–1059.—Nushtigin, who had marched on Ghazni, took two surviving sons of Masud I out of a fortress and placed one of them, Farrukhzad on the throne. The kingdom was almost

immediately invaded by Chakir Beg, who being defeated by Nushtigin, sent for reinforcements under Alp Arslan. The Seljuks gained an indecisive victory and finally peace was re-established by a treaty.

The Revival of the Ghaznavid Dynasty under Ibrahim, A.D. 1059–1099.—On the death of Farrukhzad in 1059, Ibrahim, his brother, ascended the throne and arranged a marriage between his son Masud and the daughter of Malik Shah. The treaty, thus strengthened by marriage, was faithfully kept by the Seljuks. Safe from attack on his northern and western frontiers, Ibrahim was consequently able to improve his position in the Punjab and to make some additions to his kingdom. He also restored a certain measure of prosperity to his dominions and reigned peacefully for forty years until his death in 1099.

The Reign of Masud III, A.D. 1099–1114.—His successor is considered to have been one of the most capable rulers of the dynasty. He was just; he reformed the laws and he remitted taxation. He despatched a successful expedition into India, and the princes of the Shansabani house of Ghur remained his tributaries. Among his claims to fame was that, although he had thirty-five brothers and forty sisters, there were apparently no cases of rebellion in this enormous family!

A Disturbed Period, A.D. 1114–1118.—Shirzad succeeded his father, but in the following year was ousted by his brother Arslan. His half-brother Bahram, the son of the Seljuk princess, thereupon sought refuge with his uncle Sultan Sanjar. In 1117 the Sultan, hearing that his sister had been insulted by Arslan, advanced at the head of an army on Ghazni. Arslan met it outside the city, was defeated and fled to India. Sanjar placed Bahram on the throne, but, before long, he was driven out by Arslan. In 1118 Sanjar provided Bahram with a force with which he defeated and captured his brother, whom he put to death. He then reascended the throne.

The Reign of Bahram, A.D. 1118–1153.—Bahram owed his throne to Sultan Sanjar, whose name appeared on the coinage as suzerain, thus ending the independence of the Ghaznavid monarchy. The new ruler's first act

was to reduce to obedience Muhammad Bahlim, the Governor of the Punjab, who refused to acknowledge him. This he succeeded in doing, defeating and capturing the rebel Governor in 1119. He, however, foolishly not only pardoned but reinstated Bahlim who, after occupying Nagor to the south of the Punjab, rebelled a second time. Bahram once again marched against the rebel, who met him close to Multan. In the battle which ensued Bahlim was again defeated and, while escaping, was swallowed up in a quicksand. Bahram then established his authority over Nagor which lay outside the Indian dominions of the great Mahmud.

The Destruction of Ghazni by Ala-ud-Din of Ghur, A.D. 1149.—The bitter feud between Ghazni and Ghur which had such tragic results, started with Kutb-ud-Din Muhammad, one of the princes of Ghur, who, having quarrelled with his brother, took refuge at Ghazni, where he married a sister of Bahram. That monarch, however, having reason to believe that his brother-in-law was forming a plot against him, arranged for him to be poisoned. Upon news of this reaching Ghur, its ruling prince, Saif-ud-Din, attacked and defeated Bahram, who fled to India. Saif-ud-Din thereupon annexed Ghazni, where he established himself as ruler, appointing his brother, Baha-ud-Din Sam, Governor of Ghur.

In A.D. 1148 Bahram reappeared on the scene, surprised and defeated Saif-ud-Din, who surrendered on the condition that his life should be spared. But, to quote Ferishta, "the unhappy captive had his forehead blackened, and was seated astride on a bullock, with his face towards the tail. In this manner he was led round the whole city, amid the shouts and insults of the mob; after which, being put to torture, his head was cut off and sent to Sultan Sanjar, Seljuk, while his Vizier Majd-ud-Din was impaled."[1]

Baha-ud-Din and, after his sudden death, another brother, Ala-ud-Din, determined to avenge this monstrous outrage. Leading his army against Ghazni, he defeated Bahram in three fiercely fought actions and entered

[1] For this and the following quotation *vide* Briggs' *Ferishta*, vol. i, pp. 152 and 155.

beautiful Ghazni, which he gave up to massacre and destruction. Nothing was spared except the tombs of Mahmud, of Masud I and of Ibrahim, and fire destroyed most of the splendid buildings which adorned the proud city.

To quote Ferishta once again: "As if insatiate of revenge, Ala-ud-Din when he left carried a number of the most venerable and learned men in chains to Firuzkuh to adorn his triumph. There he ordered their throats to be cut, tempering earth with their blood, with which he plastered the walls of his native city." Small wonder is it that Ala-ud-Din received the dreadful title of *Jahan Suz*, the "World-burner"; his destruction of Ghazni will never be forgotten in Asia.

Bahram escaped the punishment that he so richly merited by flight to India. Hearing while there that Ala-ud-Din had been attacked and imprisoned by Sultan Sanjar, he returned to Ghazni where he died a few months later.

The End of the Ghaznavid Dynasty, A.D. 1186.—The successor of Bahram was Khusru Shah, a weakling who, when the Ghuzz tribe which had defeated Sultan Sanjar attacked Ghazni, fled to Lahore where he died in 1160. His son Khusru Malik entirely lacked personality, and during his reign, the Ghur dynasty under Muizz-ud-Din Muhammad annexed his Indian provinces one by one. In 1181 Muizz-ud-Din marched on Lahore and compelled Khusru, who was a mere voluptuary, to surrender his son to serve as a hostage. In 1186 Muizz-ud-Din reappeared at Lahore, which he occupied. Khusru Malik was sent as a prisoner to Firuzkuh where, in 1192, both he and his son were put to death and the empire passed from the house of Ghazni to the house of Ghur.

The Rise of the Ghurid Dynasty under Ala-ud-Din, A.D. 1148–1163.—The fall of the Ghaznavid dynasty was, as we have seen, caused by the rise to power of the princedom of Ghur. To pick up the thread of our narrative: Ala-ud-Din, after the destruction of Ghazni, dealt in similar fashion with Bust, which, once prosperous city, has been a ruin ever since. Ala-ud-Din later was

defeated at Nab in the valley of the Hari Rud and taken prisoner by Sultan Sanjar, who, after a time, took him into favour and restored him to the throne of Ghur. There he re-established his authority and occupied the valley of the Murghab, as also Herat, but in 1163 he was defeated and killed by the Ghuzz.

The Invasions of the Ghuzz and their Final Defeat, A.D. 1162–1173.—Saif-ud-Din Muhammad succeeded his father, but was killed in 1162 by the savage Ghuzz in a battle fought near Merv. This disaster is said to have been due to the treachery of his general. His successor, Ghiyas-ud-Din Muhammad, after defeating rival claimants for the throne, expelled the Ghuzz in 1173. He appointed his younger brother, Muizz-ud-Din Muhammad, to the government of Ghazni, while retaining the rule over Ghur himself. Ghiyas-ud-Din also finally secured possession of Herat in 1192, and received the allegiance of Taj-ud-Din Harb, *Malik* of Seistan.

The Indian Campaigns of Muizz-ud-Din, A.D. 1175–1206.—After consolidating his position at Ghazni, Muizz-ud-Din began to lead expeditions into the plains of India. In 1175 he captured the city of Multan from an heretical ruler of the Ismaili sect. He then marched on the fortress of Uch.[1] To secure this city the Ghurid general sent a message to the wife of the Raja promising to make her his chief wife in return for the surrender of the stronghold. Declining the honour for herself, but accepting it for her daughter, the traitress arranged alike for the murder of her husband and for the surrender of the fortress.

In 1178 Muizz-ud-Din, in another campaign, crossed the desert and attacked Patan, the capital of Gujarat. His exhausted troops were, however, decisively defeated by Raja Bhim and only a miserable remnant reached Ghazni. In spite of this disaster, in the following year Muizz-ud-Din took Peshawar from the decadent Ghaznavids, and in 1186, as we have seen, occupied Lahore and the Punjab.

[1] Uch is traditionally believed to have been the fortress which Alexander the Great scaled and where he was badly wounded.

In the winter of 1190 the indefatigable conqueror crossed the Sutlej, which was probably the boundary of his dominions at this period, and captured Bhatinda. Before long he was attacked by Prithvi Raja, the Chauhan Raja of Delhi, in the neighbourhood of Karnal. The Rajputs fought bravely and by sheer weight of numbers overpowered the two wings of the Moslems. Muizz-ud-Din, in the centre, charged and encountered the Raja's brother in single combat, breaking his teeth with his lance, but was severely wounded by that prince's javelin. Fearing that, if he fell from his horse, the army would be panic-stricken, Muizz-ud-Din retired and, thanks to a young Khalj Turk who, realizing the situation, mounted behind him and kept him in the saddle, the army was able to retreat without incurring a serious disaster.

In 1192 the undaunted Ghurid returned to India to avenge his defeat with a force especially strong in cavalry. The two armies met at Taraori and in the battle that ensued Muizz-ud-Din gave orders to adopt the elusive tactics made famous by the Parthians which not only wearied but perplexed the enemy. Finally he charged their centre with 12,000 picked horsemen and won a victory which was rendered decisive by the death of the Raja and his brother. This victory gave Muizz-ud-Din Northern India.

Kutb-ud-Din Aibak appointed Viceroy and captures Delhi.—To rule these new conquests Muizz-ud-Din appointed his most trustworthy Turkish officer whom he had purchased as a slave and who gave such proofs of leadership, reliability and courage that he had risen to the highest position. When left in charge in India, Aibak, realizing that Delhi, which was still held by the Chauhan Rajputs, constituted a threat to his position, marched on that city and captured it in A.D. 1193, thus inaugurating the policy which made it the capital of the Moslem rulers in India. The further conquests of Aibak in India lie outside the scope of this work.

The Defeat of Muizz-ud-Din by Ala-ud-Din of Khwarizm, A.D. 1205.—To return to Afghanistan: Muizz-ud-Din in 1202 had succeeded to the throne

on the death of Ghiyas-ud-Din. In 1205 he invaded Khwarizm, where he besieged the capital, but failed to capture it by escalade. During this operation reinforcements from the Gur Khan and from Samarkand appeared on the scene. Muizz-ud-Din delayed his retreat too long. As a result he was obliged to burn his baggage and to cut his way through the powerful forces which had surrounded him. He succeeded in reaching Andkhui, where he was besieged, but, by the payment of a large ransom to Othman Khan of Samarkand, he was able to return to Ghazni.

The Last Campaign of Muizz-ud-Din in India, A.D. 1205–1206.—The defeat in Central Asia damaged the prestige of the Ghur dynasty in India and caused rebellions to break out in every area of their conquests. Finally, in 1205, Muizz-ud-Din descended once again to the plains of India with a powerful army. From Peshawar, by means of a forced march, he surprised the Khokars who fought desperately and were not defeated until the arrival on the field of Aibak at the head of the army of Hindustan. The victor then proceeded to Lahore but, in March 1206, he was assassinated on the bank of the Indus, probably by an Ismaili fanatic. Thus passed off the stage a great conqueror and a great ruler, who founded the Moslem Empire in India. He served his brother loyally and was, in turn, served loyally by Aibak and his other commanders.

The Break-up of the Ghurid Dynasty.—After the death of Muizz-ud-Din, his nominal successor was Ala-ud-Din of the Bamian branch, who was soon ousted by Mahmud, the son of Ghiyas-ud-Din. But these princes possessed little or no power and the real successor to the empire was Kutb-ud-Din Aibak, who assumed the title of Sultan on the death of Muizz-ud-Din and founded the Slave dynasty of Delhi. His rival was Taj-ud-Din Yildiz, Governor of Kerman, who was attacked by Aibak and defeated. Aibak, in A.D. 1208, entered Ghazni as a conqueror and celebrated his victory with feasting, ill-treating the citizens as if they were his slaves. They, consequently, sent a messenger to Yildiz, informing him

of the situation. He thereupon completely surprised Aibak who, unable to oppose him, fled back to India.

The short-lived empire of the Ghurid dynasty, which from its capitals of Ghazni and Firuzkuh had ruled from Khurasan to distant Bengal, had now fallen to pieces and disappears from the stage.

The Early Career of Sultan Sanjar, A.D. 1117–1157.—The last of the great Seljuk rulers was the fourth son of Malik Shah. After his father's death, during the fight for power which broke up the unity of the Seljuk Empire, Sanjar was appointed Governor of Khurasan by his brother Barkiyaruk in 1096. Later, when the third brother, Muhammad, rebelled, Sanjar, who was his full brother, supported him. During this troublous period there was an attempt made by Badr Khan, lord of Samarkand, to seize Khurasan, but he was captured and put to death by Sanjar in 1101.

In 1117 Sanjar ascended the throne and during the forty years of his reign he kept the Ghaznavid and Ghurid dynasties obedient to his rule; he also checked the rising power of Khwarizm. Indeed he seemed to be supreme in Central Asia, but another power was rising to the east which was destined to inflict irreparable disaster upon him.

The Rise of the Kara Khitai Dynasty.—This new power was founded in Central Asia by Yelui Tashi, a relation of the Emperor of China. He had fought to save his suzerain from the Nuchens (who eventually founded the Kin dynasty), and realizing that all was lost so far as China was concerned, in A.D. 1123, he marched off westward to seek his fortunes in the province of Shensi. There he organized an army and leading the "Black Cathay" tribesmen,[1] founded a kingdom in the basin of the Tarim. He then invaded Khwarizm, imposing an annual tribute of 30,000 pieces of gold on its ruler. Two years later, after extending his dominions northwards to Siberia, he assumed the title of Gur Khan or "Universal Lord".

The Defeat of Sanjar by the Kara Khitai, A.D. 1141.—

[1] Khitai is the Moslem and also the Russian term for China — whence our Cathay.

Yelui Tashi died in 1136, but five years later the Kara Khitai, incited by Atsiz, the ruling Khwarizm Shah, attacked Sultan Sanjar and won a decisive battle fought in the valley of the Dirgam.[1] It was the first serious defeat experienced by Sanjar, whose losses were estimated at 100,000 men, and was considered to be the most crushing disaster ever experienced by Moslems in Central Asia. The Kara Khitai temporarily occupied Merv and Nishapur but soon retired across the Oxus. Sanjar then recovered sufficient strength to attack Khiva, where he made peace with the Khwarizm Shah.

The Defeat and Capture of Sultan Sanjar by the Ghuzz, A.D. 1153.—The Kara Khitai, when they established themselves in the Tarim basin, left the sedentary population unmolested; but expelled the Ghuzz tribes from their pastures. Their Chiefs, accordingly, petitioned Sanjar who granted them grazing grounds in the vicinity of Balkh, on the condition that they paid an annual tax of 25,000 sheep for their 40,000 families. A dispute as to the quality of the sheep caused a rising, which the Governor of Balkh was not strong enough to quell. Sanjar, thereupon, appeared on the scene with an army one hundred thousand strong. The Ghuzz offered to pay a heavy fine but Sanjar was implacable and in the ensuing battle the Ghuzz, fighting for their lives, defeated the Seljuk army and took Sanjar prisoner.

The Escape and Death of Sultan Sanjar.—Sanjar remained a closely guarded prisoner of the Ghuzz, although there is a tradition that he sat on a throne during the daytime. He finally escaped during a hunting expedition but when he saw the utter desolation of Merv, which had meanwhile been destroyed by the Ghuzz, he died broken-hearted in A.D. 1157. Thus passed off the scene Sultan Sanjar, the last great Seljuk monarch. So beloved was he that, for a year after his death, the *khutba* was read in his name.

The Khwarizm Shahs.—To complete this chapter, some account of the dynasty of Khiva is called for. The

[1] This river flows through Badakhshan into the Oxus. Its modern name is the Gokchah.

family was founded by a favourite cup-bearer of Malik Shah named Anushtigin. His successor was Kutb-ud-Din Muhammad, who was reigning when, as mentioned above, the Kara Khitai invaded his state and, after his defeat, imposed a heavy tribute on him. Upon his death in A.D. 1097 he was succeeded by his son Atsiz, who held the post of Chief Cup-bearer at the Court of Sanjar for some years. In 1138 he obtained permission to proceed to Khwarizm, where he rebelled. He was driven from his kingdom by the Sultan, without offering much resistance, but shortly afterwards recovered it and henceforth enjoyed sovereign power, inciting, as we have seen, the Kara Khitai to attack his old enemy in 1141.

The Khwarizm Dynasty at its Zenith.—Il-Arslan succeeded his father Atsiz and, like him, incurred the hostility of the Kara Khitai and suffered a defeat in A.D. 1172. Upon his death in the following year there was a fight for power which was won by Tekish, his brother Sultan Shah Mahmud taking refuge with the Ghurids.

In 1192 Tekish put to death the Kara Khitai representative, who had been appointed to receive the tribute, whereupon their army marched on Khwarizm, but being stopped by the floods in the Oxus Valley, were obliged to retire without gaining any advantage.

In 1194 Tekish defeated Toghril III, the last Seljuk Chief at Rei. In this action Toghril is reported as riding at the head of his army, declaiming verses from Firdausi and brandishing a heavy iron mace. By mistake he struck his horse with this weapon on the foreleg and fell to the ground where he was killed.

The Early Career of Ala-ud-Din Muhammad, A.D. 1200. —Ala-ud-Din Muhammad succeeded his father. His fortunes closely resembled those of Sultan Sanjar, and at first he extended his kingdom far and wide, inflicting, as we have seen, a crushing defeat on Muizz-ud-Din in 1205. Later, he felt strong enough to challenge his overlords, but in his first campaign in 1208 he failed completely. In the following year, however, aided by the treachery of the Kerait Chief, Guchluk, who, as we shall see in the next chapter, joined in a plot against his host the

Gurkhan, he succeeded in annexing the western provinces of the Kara Khitai Empire. In 1201 he captured Samarkand and constituted it his capital.

Ala-ud-Din and the Caliph Nasir, A.D. 1216.—Not content with these conquests, Muhammad absorbed the provinces of Ghazni and Ghur. In the archives of the former city letters from the Caliph Nasir were found which incited the Ghurid Princes to unite with the Kara Khitai against Khwarizm. Ala-ud-Din, determined on revenge, convoked an assembly which deposed Nasir as an assassin and an enemy of the faith and nominated a descendant of Ali to be his successor in the Caliphate. Fortified with this authority the Khwarizm Shah determined to capture Baghdad. He invaded Fars, seizing Sad, the *Atabeg* of Fars, and from Hamadan prepared to march on Baghdad. The Caliph appeared to be at his mercy but was saved by an especially heavy fall of snow which blocked the passes and compelled Ala-ud-Din to abandon the enterprise.

It is seldom easy to discover the true dividing lines in history, but the Mongol invasion which swept across Asia, substituting heathen rulers for Moslems and culminating in the sack of Baghdad, the centre of Moslem civilization, certainly constituted a new period in the history of Asia. Looking back, it is interesting to note how completely Arab political influence had disappeared from Afghanistan and Central Asia, albeit Islam had been almost universally adopted in these lands. In Persia I have only met with powerful Arab tribes in the province of Fars, where the Turkish Kashgais overshadowed them. Generally speaking the Turks have held their ground better than the Arabs, whose language is spoken only by the learned, whereas today Turkish is spoken in Chinese Turkistan, by the Turkoman in Central Asia and in North-east Persia, while in the province of Tabriz and in Asia Minor Turkish is the prevailing language.

CHAPTER XV

THE MONGOL CATACLYSM

To recount the invasions of the Tartars involves the description of the greatest catastrophe and the most dire calamity which befell all men generally, and the Moslems in particular, so that should one say that the world, since God Almighty created Adam until now, hath now been afflicted with the like thereof, he would but speak the truth. For indeed history doth not contain aught which approaches or comes nigh unto it.—IBN ATHIR, *Account of the Outbreak of the Tartars into the Lands of Islam.*

In this year (1240) a detestable nation of Satan, to wit, the countless army of the Tartars, broke loose from its mountain-environed home, and piercing the solid rocks [of the Caucasus] poured forth like devils. They are thirsting for and drinking blood, tearing and devouring the flesh of dogs and men, dressed in ox-hides, armed with plates of iron, thickset, strong, invincible.—MATTHEW PARIS, *Chronica Majora.*

The Policy of the Mongols.—In dealing with the Seljuk invasion it has been pointed out that those tribesmen were recent converts to Islam and that this fact undoubtedly, to some extent, mitigated the sufferings of the peoples they conquered. The Mongols, on the contrary, were and remained pagans for many generations. Their policy was to destroy the population of each country they invaded so that there should be no fear of their lines of communication being cut or of fortresses being held against them in their rear. They also desired to nomadize the entire country in order to make it serve as pastures for the countless flocks and herds which accompanied them.[1]

The Origin of the Mongols.—The Mongols, termed Ta-ta by the Arabs and Tartars by Europeans, owing

[1] I have consulted many works in this chapter. Among them are D'Ohsson's *Histoire des Mongols*, which is based on Ibn-ul-Athir, whom Browne terms "that sober and careful historian". It is also based on the *Tarikh-i-Jahan-Gusha*, or "History of the World Conqueror", by Ala-ud-din, better known as Juwayni, the Secretary of Hulaku Khan; also *The History of the Mongols*, by Sir Henry Howorth, *Carpini and Rubruquis*, edited by Dr. Raymond Beazley, and *The Journey of Friar William of Rubruck*, edited by W. W. Rockhill.

to the similarity of the word to Tartarus,[1] were one of the nomad tribes which grazed the pasture lands between the Gobi Desert and Lake Baikal. They were regarded with contempt by the Chinese, as being uncivilized barbarians. "As for their religion," writes Ibn Athir, "they worship the sun when it rises and regard nothing as unlawful, for they eat all beasts, even dogs, pigs and the like."

Yissugay, the Father of Chenghiz Khan.—Yissugay was a noted leader of a confederacy of 40,000 families, who rebelled against the Kin dynasty and defeated a force that was sent against him. The Chinese authorities thereupon, in accordance with their traditional policy, incited a neighbouring tribe, the Buyr-Nur Tartars, against the rebel chief, who was killed in A.D. 1175, probably by a surprise attack.

The Rise of Chenghiz Khan.—In A.D. 1162 a son was born to Yissugay and named Temuchin, in memory of a chief whom his father had killed. This was Chenghiz Khan, who holds a foremost place among men who, as great conquerors, have influenced the history of the world. Held like Attila and Tamerlane to be the "Scourge of God", not only was he a great conqueror but he organized the empire which he had created, so that it endured and flourished long after his death.

Temuchin was a youth of thirteen when he succeeded to the headship of the confederacy of tribes. Its members refused to obey an immature leader and one of the chiefs, in reply to the reproaches of the orphan, exclaimed: "The deepest wells are sometimes dry and the hardest stones sometimes split; why should I cling to thee?"

Temuchin suffered many privations and hardships, including imprisonment, but, thanks to his genius, his valour and his strong personality, which was enhanced by his striking appearance and fine physique, he won victory after victory, defeating, among other enemies, the Keraits, a powerful Christian tribe, whose *Wang* or "King" was the original of the fabulous monarch known in Europe

[1] The Emperor Frederic II ended his letter to Henry III of England with *ad sua Tartara Tartari detrudentur.*

as Prester John.[1] He also defeated the Naimans, another Christian tribe, killing their king, but Guchluk, the king's son, who is mentioned in the previous chapter, escaped and took service with the Gur Khan. In 1206 Temuchin had become so powerful that he assembled a *Kuriltay* or "Diet of the Chiefs", at which a *Shaman* or "Necromancer" solemnly proclaimed him Chenghiz Khan or "the Very Mighty Khan". At the time of this ceremony he was forty-two years of age and had become an experienced warrior and the ruler of a very powerful confederacy of tribes.

The Overthrow of the Kara Khitai Dynasty, A.D. 1218.—Before describing the great Mongol campaign in Central Asia, a brief reference to Guchluk, the son of the Naiman Chief, is called for. He was kindly received by the Gur Khan, who gave him one of his daughters in marriage. No sooner had he established his position in the basin of the Tarim, than he entered into a plot with Muhammad of Khwarizm and Othman of Samarkand, which resulted in the Gur Khan becoming a prisoner in his hands, while he, handing over the western provinces to Muhammad, ruled independently in Kashgar, Yarkand and Khotan.

The First Mongol Campaigns in Central Asia, A.D. 1215–1218.—The three successful campaigns waged by Chenghiz against the Kin dynasty, from which he seized many fertile provinces of Northern China, lie outside the scope of this work. According to Mongol belief, as told me by a high-born descendant of Chenghiz, that monarch climbed a peak in the Altai range and considered whether he should continue his campaigns in China or march westwards. He asked his councillors for advice and, upon their reply that the grazing to the west was good, he decided to follow it. However this may be, Chenghiz, who had organized a powerful siege-train during his campaigns in China, marched into Central Asia in 1216. He first defeated and reduced to submission the Merkits. Shortly after this victory, a

[1] The coat of arms of Prester John may be seen in the cloisters of Canterbury Cathedral.

division of his army met a force which had been sent by Muhammad of Khwarizm against the Kipchaks. The Mongols had no wish to fight with these strangers, but they were attacked by the force of Muhammad, which was superior in numbers. An indecisive action followed and the Mongols withdrew during the night.

In 1218 Chenghiz resumed his campaigns in Central Asia and despatched a division 20,000 strong against Guchluk. The Naiman usurper was defeated and fled to distant Badakhshan, but was overtaken and killed. His dominions were thereupon added to the expanding kingdom of the Mongol conqueror.

The Relations of Chenghiz Khan with the Khwarizm Shah.—The dominions of Chenghiz were now conterminous with those of Muhammad of Khwarizm. The former despatched an embassy to convey his good wishes to his neighbour, whom he, with intentional condescension, declared he would consider as his "most cherished son". The Khwarizm Shah, although he must have resented this veiled demand to accept Mongol suzerainty, dismissed the envoys with a friendly reply.

The Invasion of Transoxiana by Chenghiz, A.D. 1219.—The impolitic action of Muhammad, who on the report of the Governor of Otrar that some Mongol merchants were spies, ordered their execution and the confiscation of their property, gave the wished-for pretext to Chenghiz, who had also possibly received letters from the Caliph Nasir, inciting him to attack the Khwarizm Shah. The Mongol army under Juji, the eldest son of Chenghiz, utterly routed the enormous field army of Muhammad, reckoned to be 400,000 strong, in the vicinity of Osh. After this defeat, the Khwarizm Shah resigned the initiative to the invaders and contented himself with garrisoning his chief cities, fatuously hoping that the Mongols, after collecting a rich booty, would return to their homeland.

In this policy he received a rude awakening. Bukhara and Samarkand were taken; the able-bodied men were reserved to serve as screens to storming parties, for the

erection of the siege-train and, if necessary, for filling up the ditches with fascines, supplemented by their own corpses. The women were enslaved and the rest of the inhabitants were generally massacred, although artificers in some cases were spared.

The Pursuit and Death of Muhammad, the Khwarizm Shah, A.D. 1220.—Muhammad, utterly unnerved by defeat, at first watched the Mongol invasion from Samarkand, but fearing for his own safety, fled to Balkh, intending in the first instance to cross the Hindu Kush to distant Ghazni. He, however, changed his mind and proceeded to Nishapur. Panic-stricken at the approach of a Mongol division to this city, he fled to Kazvin. He finally took refuge in an island of the Caspian Sea off the coast of Mazanderan where he died, leaving behind him a reputation for cowardice that has never been surpassed.

The Capture of Urganj, A.D. 1220.—The major operation of the Mongols of 1220 was the siege of Urganj, the capital of Khwarizm. Its male inhabitants, who had kept the enemy at bay for over six months, were, with the exception of the artisans, massacred. The victors then turned the waters of the Oxus on to the site of the city and thereby diverted the river which flowed into its ancient channel, and, once again, discharged its waters into the Caspian Sea.

The Devastation of Khurasan, A.D. 1220.—In the same year Chenghiz, in person, opened a fresh campaign by the capture of Balkh, which offered no resistance. Hearing, however, that Jalal-ud-Din, the gallant son of Muhammad, was organizing an army at Ghazni, in pursuance of his set policy, the Mongol chief deliberately massacred the population and destroyed the city.

The Mongols invade Khurasan.—In the same year Tuli captured and destroyed Merv. To quote from a letter written by Yakut, the famous geographer: "The people of infidelity and impiety [the Mongols] roamed through these abodes; the erring and contumacious race dominated over the inhabitants, so that these palaces were effaced from off the earth as lines of writing are effaced from paper, and those abodes became a dwelling for the

owl and the raven; in those places the screech owls answer each other's cries, and in those halls the winds moan responsive to the simoom".

Nishapur was next attacked and stormed by the Mongol commander. Every living thing, including the cats and dogs, was massacred. The city was then demolished and the site sown with barley. It was never again inhabited, a new site being subsequently chosen, and when I visited its broken-down walls some years ago, I saw that the ground was once again covered with growing barley.

Jalal-ud-Din's ride to Ghazni.—In marked contrast to the despicable cowardice of Muhammad of Khwarizm was the valour of his son Jalal-ud-Din. He had, in vain, implored his father to permit him to defend the line of the Oxus; and later he had crossed the desert from Urganj at the head of 300 men and had defeated a superior Mongol force at Nisa. He had then reached Nishapur, before it was besieged. Remaining in that city for three days and realizing that he was being watched by the Mongols, he rode for his life to Zuzan, to the south of Khaf, where the gates were shut on him. Without stopping, and riding one hundred and twenty miles in the day, he finally threw off his pursuers and reached Ghazni in safety.

Jalal-ud-Din defeats a Mongol Army, A.D. 1221.—The Prince was welcomed at this city by his father-in-law, the ex-Governor of Merv, at the head of his troops, while chiefs from Kabul and Ghur also brought important reinforcements, so that Jalal-ud-Din soon found himself at the head of an army of 70,000 men.

Upon hearing of this new army that had been organized at Ghazni, Chenghiz, who had captured Talikan and had spent the summer in the Kunduz mountains, marched on Bamian, which he found to be more difficult to capture than he had anticipated. Accordingly he sent a force of some 30,000 Mongols to attack Jalal-ud-Din, who was encamped one day's march north of Ghazni. In the battle which ensued, the right wing of Jalal-ud-Din, fighting on foot, was broken, but

upon the arrival of reinforcements it rallied and, at nightfall, the issue of the battle was undecided. In the morning the Mongol general made use of a cunning artifice and ordered a felt dummy to be fastened on to each spare horse to make the enemy believe that reinforcements had been received during the night. The Afghans were discouraged, but Jalal-ud-Din displayed such valour that, when he ordered the trumpets to sound a general advance, the Mongols were defeated and suffered heavy losses. Unhappily the results of this hard-won victory were entirely thrown away owing to a quarrel over the division of the spoils which caused the desertion of various chiefs with their contingents.

Chenghiz defeats Jalal-ud-Din on the Indus, A.D. 1221. —Bamian had been captured in the meanwhile, and to avenge the death of one of his grandsons, Chenghiz destroyed every living creature, including animals and plants, and the site remained desolate for a century.

Chenghiz then marched his main force on Ghazni, which Jalal-ud-Din had evacuated some days previously. Leaving a garrison in that city, he marched rapidly in pursuit to the Indus Valley, where he surprised the Prince who was encamped on the right bank of the river, and hemmed in his force, the Mongols having their right and left wings resting on the river, which thus constituted a chord.

Jalal-ud-Din fought with the courage of despair, but seeing that all his efforts were unavailing, he mounted a fresh horse, threw away his cuirass, and jumped his charger into the river, flowing some twenty feet below. Then with his shield guarding his back and his standard in his hand, he swam his gallant steed across the Indus. Even grim Chenghiz showed himself magnanimous on this occasion. He not only forbade arrows to be shot at the heroic horseman, but held him up to his sons as a model of valour.

Chenghiz attacks Multan, but fails to capture it.— Chenghiz sent troops in pursuit of Jalal-ud-Din and invested Multan, which was successfully defended. Suffering from the heat, the Mongol ruler, after ravaging

far and wide, marched back to Afghanistan where, to prevent Ghazni being utilized as a base by Jalal-ud-Din, he ordered the inhabitants to be massacred.

The Destruction of Herat.—In A.D. 1226, Herat had submitted to Tuli, who had then killed the partisans of Jalal-ud-Din, some 12,000 in number. The city had, however, rebelled upon hearing of the defeat of the Mongol force by the Khwarizm prince. It was again invested in the following year and captured after a siege lasting six months when the entire population, estimated at one million and a half,[1] was massacred. A few weeks later a party of Mongols was sent to hunt down and kill any who had escaped, while all surplus grain was burned. After the Mongols had finally disappeared, forty persons, representing the survivors of Herat, met in the great mosque. Small wonder that Juwayni writes that not one in a thousand of the inhabitants escaped, and that the population could never henceforth attain the tenth part of what it was before the Mongol invasion. Moreover, it must be remembered that in a country where the desert is constantly encroaching on the cultivated area, the wholesale massacre of the peasants would be followed not only by the sand covering the ploughed lands but by the falling in of the *kanats* or underground irrigation channels, on which the crops depended for their existence. At Nishapur I saw numerous *kanats* which had never been repaired since the Mongol cataclysm, and the population of that once famous city today perhaps only amounts to 20,000 or 30,000 citizens.

The Return of Chenghiz Khan to Mongolia.—The Mongol conqueror wintered in the vicinity of Kabul. He then decided to move towards his homeland. To disencumber his army of prisoners he gave instructions for them to clean a large quantity of rice and then ordered them all to be killed. Crossing the Hindu Kush, he spent the summer in Badakhshan and, resuming his march in the autumn, he sent a body of troops to massacre any survivors in the ruins of Balkh. He then marched to

[1] This total would include the inhabitants of the surrounding districts and is consequently a fairly accurate estimate.

Bukhara and Samarkand, and at the latter city gave instructions for the *khutba* to be read in his name.

Before crossing the Sir Daria he ordered the unfortunate female survivors of the Khwarizm family, including the mother of Muhammad, to wail a long farewell to their homeland while the Mongol army defiled past them. This tragedy of the Queen-Mother of the dead Khwarizm Shah and of her family invites comparison with that of Hecuba, the aged wife of King Priam of Troy, who was doomed to be taken as a captive from her home to Hellas. She laments:[1]

> An old, old slave-woman, I pass below
> Mine enemies' gates; and whatso task they know
> For this age basest, shall be mine; the door,
> Bowing, to shut and open. . . . I that bore
> Hector! . . . and meal to grind and this racked head
> Bend to the stones after a royal bed;
> Torn rags about me, aye, and under them
> Torn flesh; 'twill make a woman sick for shame!
>
> *The Chorus*
>
> " Beat, beat thine head:
> Beat with the wailing chime
> Of hands lifted in time:
> Beat and bleed for the dead;
> Woe is me for the dead! "

The Death of Chenghiz Khan, A.D. 1227.—Chenghiz, feeling that his end was approaching, appointed his third son Ogotay to be his successor, and warned his sons against the dangers of civil war. Dying in his sixty-sixth year, he was interred in the mountain of Burkhan-Khaldun, the source of the Onon, the actual place, according to Mongol custom, being kept secret. To ensure this, every living soul that the funeral escort met on the road, was killed.

Thus, in a river of blood, passed off the stage of history Chenghiz Khan, who destroyed more human beings than any other known conqueror. He undoubtedly possessed a genius for war, and his Mongols, skilled archers from boyhood, trained to feign retreats, to lay

[1] Euripides, *The Trojan Women*, translated by Dr. Gilbert Murray.

ambushes and to effect surprises and, also, possessing amazing mobility, constituted a most powerful and highly trained force. Moreover, supported by every known military machine, which enabled walled cities to be captured, this army was, as Matthew Paris stated, invincible. The personal character of Chenghiz is perhaps best shown by his remark: " The greatest joy is to conquer one's enemies, to pursue them, to seize their property, to see their families in tears, to ride their horses and to possess their daughters and wives ".[1]

The Dazzling Career of Jalal-ud-Din.—Ogotay, who was elected *Khakan* in A.D. 1229, despatched fresh expeditions to the west. One force under Chormaghun was especially organized to deal with *Jalal-ud-Din* whose adventures, bordering on the marvellous, cannot be passed by without notice. After his escape from Chenghiz Khan, he maintained himself for some time in India. He then traversed Baluchistan to Kerman, where Burak *Hajib*[2] plotted against him; accordingly he proceeded to Shiraz, where he married a daughter of Sad the Atabeg.

Upon the retirement of the Mongols from Northern Persia, Jalal-ud-Din's younger brother Ghiyas-ud-Din had obtained possession of Khurasan, Mazanderan and Iraq. Jalal-ud-Din, however, upon his arrival on the scene, was hailed as their monarch by the troops, and took over the reins of government from his incompetent and disloyal brother. Having thus established his position, in 1225, he must needs attack the Caliph Nasir, the enemy of his father. He drew the Caliph's army into an ambush but was not strong enough to invest Baghdad. Skirting that city, he occupied Tabriz and reduced Tiflis. In 1228 he cut up a Mongol detachment, but was attacked by the main Mongol army at Isfahan, which he had made his capital. In this action his right wing broke the Mongol left wing, but upon advancing his left wing it was defeated. The Prince

[1] Jami-ut-Tavarikh.

[2] For the remarkable career of Burak *Hajib* or the " Chief Guardian ", *vide* Sykes, *Ten Thousand Miles in Persia*, pp. 60-61.

himself cut his way through the Mongols and reappeared at Isfahan after the departure of the enemy, whose losses were severe, as were those of his own army.

Not long afterwards he attacked the Georgians who had formed a confederacy against him and, in quick succession, killed four of their champions in single combat — an amazing feat of arms. But his splendid career was approaching its end. In 1229 he was surprised by the main body of Mongols and, although he escaped on this occasion, they never ceased to track him. Finally, in 1231, when flying from these relentless pursuers, he was murdered by a Kurdish brigand. Had Jalal-ud-Din possessed the qualities of a statesman, he would probably have been able to organize a force strong enough to defeat the Mongols. As it was, his career invites comparison with that of Charles XII of Sweden.

The Invasion of Europe by the Mongols, A.D. 1236–1241. —Ogotay in person led a powerful army which conquered Northern China and Korea, but of greater importance to us was the invasion of Europe by the Mongols. Batu, the founder of the Golden Horde, marching to the north of the Caspian Sea, led 150,000 Mongols westwards. Conquering Russia without much difficulty, he divided his army into two parts. The northern force defeated the Poles and occupied Cracow, which was deserted by its inhabitants. At Liegnitz the army of Silesia, 20,000 strong, under its Duke, Henry the Second, supported by the Teutonic Knights of Prussia, gave battle to the invaders, whose force was 100,000 strong. The Christians apparently held their ground and the Mongols were retiring when a horseman rode about, crying out, "*Byegace! byegace!*" or fly! fly! This caused a panic and the Mongols, turning round, won a decisive victory, both Duke Henry and the Grand Master of the Teutonic Knights being killed. Batu himself, following a more southern route, annihilated the Hungarian army, took Pesth and reached the Adriatic Sea.

The death of Ogotay in 1241, followed by an interregnum of several years, preceding the election of a new *Khakan*, probably saved Central Europe from invasion,

since the chiefs returned to the homeland to prepare for the event. It must, however, be remembered that rich, fertile China was always the chief objective of the Mongols, whereas Central Europe was relatively poor, mountainous and thickly wooded.

The Reign of Kuyuk, A.D. 1246–1248.—The election of Kuyuk was made in 1246. At the ceremony were present ambassadors from the Caliph, from the Grand Master of the Assassins and also John de Plano Carpini, who presented letters from the Pope. This heroic monk, whose journey was carried out under circumstances of intense suffering from hunger and cold, mentions that there were more than four thousand envoys present, this fact alone giving some idea of the immense power of the Mongols.

Mangu appoints Khubilay and Hulaku to be Rulers of China and Persia.—Upon the death of Kuyuk, Mangu, the son of Tuli, was elected *Khakan*, the succession thus passing over the sons of Kuyuk. Mangu appointed his brother Khubilay to rule the conquered provinces of China, where he founded the Yuen dynasty, while another brother, Hulaku, was appointed ruler in Persia and he too founded a dynasty known as that of the Il-Khans.

Mangu ruled for five years and received William of Rubruquis, the emissary of King Louis IX, whose report, like that of Carpini, was most valuable to the rulers of Europe. This monk accompanied the court to the capital, Karakoram, of which he writes: "You must know that, exclusive of the palace of the Chan, it is not as big as the village of St. Denis". It is interesting to note that Roger Bacon met Rubruquis and embodied most of the monk's report in his famous *Opus Majus*.

Hulaku and the Assassins.—The first task for Hulaku to carry out was the destruction of the Assassins, of whom some account is therefore desirable.

The Shia or "Separatist" sect, followed by the Persians, was based on the fundamental doctrine of the Imamate, by which one of the descendants of Ali, the son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad, was invested with

supreme spiritual and temporal leadership. The first six *Imams*, as far as Jafar-al-Sadik, who died in A.D. 765, during the reign of Mansur, were accepted by the Shias. Jafar had originally nominated his son Ismail to succeed him but disherited him in favour of a younger son Musa, owing to Ismail having drunk wine which was strictly forbidden. Ismail died during his father's lifetime, but after Jafar's death, this act of disinheritance divided the Shias, the large majority followed Musa, but a strong minority followed Ismail's son Muhammad, whom they believed to be the seventh and last *Imam*.

The Ismailis, as they were called, under Carmat and other leaders, created anarchy, which had culminated, in A.D. 929, in the sack of Mecca. The widespread influence of these heretical tenets is proved by the fact that, as mentioned in Chapter XIII, Multan in distant India was ruled during the reign of Mahmud of Ghazni by a Carmathian sectary.

The Old Man of the Mountain.—The actual founder of this sect of *Mulahida* or " Heretics " was a certain Hasan Sabbah who was an enemy of Nizam-ul-Mulk, the great Vizier of Malik Shah. At first, a Shia believing in the Imamate, and a propagandist for that sect, he transferred his allegiance to the Fatimid dynasty of Egypt, and proceeded to capture fortresses and to establish himself as a ruling Priest and Chief. His first successful attack was on the fortress of Alamut in the Elburz range to the north of Kazvin, which he captured in A.D. 1090 and made his headquarters. He also captured Tabas, Kain and other strongholds in the Kuhistan district of Khurasan.

He now created a hierarchy with himself as Grand Master but the backbone of the new sect was the body of *Fidais* or " Devotees," recruited from among the villagers of the district, whose fanatical disregard of life made the Grand Master feared even by the most powerful monarchs.

Marco Polo describes how these devotees were given an opiate and awoke to find themselves in a garden with runnels flowing with wine, and with " numbers of ladies and of the most beautiful damsels in the world ". The

simple youths, after enjoying these delights for a few days, were again given an opiate and taken back to the fortress where, upon being questioned by the Grand Master, they declared that they had been in Paradise. Accordingly, they were ready to kill any prince whom he indicated, relying on his promise: "When thou returnest, my Angels shall bear thee into Paradise".

A branch of the order was established in Syria, where Raymond, Count of Tripoli, and other Crusaders fell victims to the devotees. In A.D. 1272 Prince Edward, afterwards Edward I of England, was wounded by one of the sect, but according to tradition the poison was sucked from the wound by his devoted consort. It remains to add that the word Assassin is derived from the sleeping potion composed of *hashish*.

The Grand Master's Fear of the Mongols.—The Grand Master had been able to stop the onset of the Seljuk army under Sultan Sanjar, who, when marching to attack Alamut, awoke to find a dagger planted in the ground near where he lay with a paper bearing the written menace: "Sultan Sanjar, beware! Had not thy character been respected, the hand which planted the dagger into the hard ground could with greater ease have planted it into thy soft bosom." The Great Seljuk, alarmed by this threat, abandoned the enterprise. Later, terrified at the power of the Mongols, the ruling Grand Master despatched an embassy to Karakoram, which was received by Kuyuk and was dismissed with menaces and threats.

In A.D. 1238 we learn from Matthew Paris that an envoy of the Grand Master visited the Court of Henry III of England to plead for help. As might be supposed, it was received coldly and the Bishop of Winchester exclaimed: "Let those dogs devour each other and be utterly wiped out, and then we shall see, founded on their ruins, the universal Catholic Church".

The Extirpation of the Assassins in Khurasan and Northern Persia.—In A.D. 1256 Hulaku, who, starting from Karakoram in 1252, had moved most leisurely, attacked the Ismaili fortresses in detail. Protected from

the attacks of *Fidais* by his guards, who allowed no one to approach him, he easily captured these strongholds one by one and massacred their inhabitants. The Grand Master, who was an immature youth and entirely lacking in resolution, after much hesitation surrendered Alamut and his own person, with the result that both he and his followers were massacred. Ata Malik-i-Juwayni, the historian, who accompanied Hulaku on this campaign, obtained permission to select books from the celebrated library and gave a description of the immense strength of Alamut.

Thus were destroyed the chief fortresses of the *Mulahida*, but in Persia and in the Sarikol Valley close to the Pamirs I was welcomed by tribes who pay tithes to H.H. the Aga Khan, the present enlightened head of the sect. His followers are also found in India, in Zanzibar and elsewhere. Today they are most peaceful, law-abiding communities.

The Capture of Baghdad and the Execution of the Caliph, A.D. 1258.—Hulaku hesitated for long periods and repeatedly consulted his astrologers before he actually marched on Baghdad. The last Caliph, Mustasim Billah, was a miser, full of false pride, who refused to unlock the doors of his treasure-house. Consequently the task of Hulaku was easy. The Mongol army aggregated perhaps 100,000 war-trained warriors, whereas the Caliph could only muster one-fifth of that number of unpaid, discouraged men. The Mongols took part of the city walls by assault, and the Caliph, like the Grand Master of the Assassins, was induced to surrender. According to the most reliable account, he was sewn up in felt and trampled to death by horses galloping over him, it being against the Mongol usage to shed royal blood. The story that he was starved to death in his treasure-house, as given by Longfellow in his stirring poem " Kambalu ", is less probable.

The Sack of Baghdad.—For one week massacres and looting took place. Baghdad was the centre of the Moslem world, and apart from the capture and death of the Caliph, which was deplored by all Moslems, the

destruction of priceless literary and artistic treasures, accumulated during the many years that Baghdad was the capital of the Abbasid Caliphs, and the murder of numerous learned men constituted a terrible blow to Moslem civilization. To quote Browne: " Never, probably, was so great and splendid a civilization so swiftly consumed with fire and quenched with blood ".

CHAPTER XVI

THE IL-KHANS

The formidable Holagou threatened to march to Constantinople at the head of four hundred thousand men; and the groundless panic of the citizens of Nice [Nicaea] will present an image of the terror which he had inspired. . . . But the ambition of Holagou and his successors was fortunately diverted by the conquest of Baghdad and a long vicissitude of Syrian war.—GIBBON, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.*

That which was most admirable was that in such a small body more fine qualities existed than could be imagined. Among his soldiers scarcely one could be found as small and as ugly in face as he was, but yet he surpassed them all in virtue and integrity.—KING HAYTON OF ARMENIA on Ghazan Khan.

Hulaku Khan the Founder of the Il-Khan Dynasty.—After the destruction of the Assassins and the capture of Baghdad, followed by the execution of the Caliph, Hulaku's rule was undisputed over the provinces of Persia and in Asia Minor, his dominions stretching from the frontiers of India to the Mediterranean Sea. To the north his frontiers marched with those of Chagatay and Juji, while to the south lay the kingdom of the Mamelukes.[1] Within these wide bounds the dynasty he founded reigned for nearly a century. Termed Il-Khans or "Provincial Chiefs," the rulers, who preceded Ghazan Khan, rendered feudal homage to the *Khakan.*

The Defeat of Hulaku by the Mamelukes, A.D. 1260.—Hulaku lived for seven years after the capture of Baghdad, during which period he invaded Syria and captured Aleppo. He was, however, decisively defeated at the battle of Ayn Jalut by the Mameluke army under their great leader Baybars Bandukdar.[2] This victory repre-

[1] Mameluke signifies "owned" and was almost invariably applied to a white slave. The Mameluke Sultans of Egypt were Turkish and Circassian slaves, who founded a dynasty which reigned from A.D. 1252 to 1517.

[2] This title, signifying "the Arbalaster", was given to Baybars after a certain Amir, whose slave he had been.

sented the first success gained by Moslems over the Mongols since these pagan hordes first started on their victorious invasion of Central Asia and Persia. Its military importance was enhanced by the fact that it saved Cairo, that precious and almost last remaining centre of Moslem culture, from destruction. It is worth nothing that, of the great cities of Persia, Shiraz alone had escaped, owing to timely submission, as recorded by the poet Sadi in his panegyric of Sad bin Zangi, his Patron: "Alexander, by means of a wall of brass and stone, narrowed the road of Gog from the world. The barrier to the Gog of Paganism is of gold, not of brass, like the Wall of Alexander." [1]

Hulaku defeats Barka, Chief of the Golden Horde.—In A.D. 1262 war broke out between Hulaku and his cousin Barka Khan of the Golden Horde, for the possession of a province which marched with both kingdoms. In the battle which took place in the province of Shirwan there were great losses on both sides, but finally Hulaku won the day. Later, however, Barka rallied his men, and, surprising the force under Abaka, the son of the Il-Khan, defeated it with even greater slaughter. It is of exceptional interest to note that this campaign is not only referred to by the elder Polos, but since it prevented their return to the Black Sea coast, was the direct cause of their boldly travelling eastwards to Central Asia and so to China.[2]

Dokuz Khatun, *the wife of Hulaku.*—Hulaku's chief wife, Dokuz *Khatun*, belonged to the Kerait tribe and being a Christian had used her powerful influence to protect her co-religionists during the sack of Baghdad. News of this and other rumours reached Rome, and the Pope wrote to the Il-Khan expressing his joy at hearing that he was disposed to adopt the Christian faith.

The Death of Hulaku, A.D. 1265.—Hulaku made Maragha his capital. A fervent believer in astrology, he built the famous observatory presided over by the

[1] Sadi took his title from the *Atabeg* Sad bin Zangi.

[2] For this battle vide *The Travels of Marco Polo*, by Sir Henry Yule, vol. i, p. 4; and vol. ii, pp. 494-496.

astronomer and philosopher Nasir-ud-Din of Tus, the ruins of which still attract travellers. He died in 1265 and was buried in the island of Tala, in Lake Urumia, where he had stored the hoarded wealth of the Assassins and of the Caliphs.

The Reign of Abaka Khan, A.D. 1265–1281.—Abaka, the eldest son of Hulaku, succeeded to the throne without opposition, but did not assume the full state of royalty until the confirmation of Khubilay had been received. One of his first acts was to marry a natural daughter of the Emperor Michael Palaeologus, Mary by name, who, despatched as a bride to Hulaku, was handed over to his successor.

The Invasion of Armenia by the Golden Horde.—Hardly had the new Il-Khan gathered up the reins of government than the Mongols of the Golden Horde invaded Armenia. A desperately contested battle was fought in the valley of the Kur, but the Golden Horde finally retreated and Abaka constructed a fortified line beyond the Kur which he garrisoned.

The Invasion of Khurasan by Borak, A.D. 1270.—The feuds between the various branches of the Mongols led to yet another campaign. In 1265 Khubilay had granted Transoxiana to Borak, the son of Chagatay, on condition that he attacked Kaydu, the grandson of Ogotay, who refused to acknowledge him as *Khakan*. These two princes, in due course, made peace with one another and decided on a joint invasion of Khurasan.

Abaka marched to meet their army and, upon reaching the district of Badghis to the north of Herat, he proposed to Borak, who had meanwhile plundered the country as far as Nishapur, that a treaty of peace should be made with him on the terms of his appointment as Governor of Ghazni and Kerman. These proposals were rejected by Borak, upon which Abaka executed a feigned flight in order to draw on his opponent and secure a decisive result. Halting near Herat, in the ensuing action, Abaka's left wing was broken, but his right and centre under Subutay won the day. To quote a contemporary poet:

Gainst the army of thy love not one could stand save only I,
As against Borak of all Abaka's captains Subutay.

Borak, who fell from his horse during the battle, was badly hurt and was nearly captured. He, however, reached Bukhara, but died a few months later. Abaka followed up this victory by the devastation of Khwarizm and Transoxiana with a view to protecting Khurasan from further invasion. These provinces which had begun to recover from the destructive invasion of Chenghiz were accordingly once again laid waste and depopulated.

The Victories of the Mamelukes over the Mongols, in A.D. 1277 *and* 1281.—Fortunately for the Moslems, Egypt possessed a great general in Baybars. Before he was elected Sultan, as we have seen, he had defeated the Mongols in 1260. He had also driven back the Crusaders in Syria and had broken the power of the Assassins of the Syrian branch. In 1277 Baybars again met a Mongol force eleven thousand strong, supported by contingents of Turks and Georgians at Abulistin to the north of Aleppo. In spite of the deadly arrows of the Mongols, the heavily armed and highly disciplined Mamelukes swept them off the field with the loss of more than one half of their force.

In A.D. 1281 Abaka, taking advantage of a revolution in Egypt, invaded Syria and a decisive battle was fought near Hims. The Mongol right wing broke the Egyptian left wing, pursuing it to the gates of Hims and then, believing that the victory was won, started looting. Meanwhile the Mongol centre was broken and fled leaving the Mamelukes masters of the field. In the pursuit which followed, the Mongol losses were again very heavy.

Abaka corresponds with Europe.—Hayton, the Christian King of Armenia, realizing the irresistible power of the Mongols, had not only prudently acknowledged himself the vassal of the *Khakan* but had also presented himself at Karakoram to Mangu, by whom he was graciously received. On his return journey he had visited Hulaku, who was then marching westwards to his victorious campaigns in Persia and Irak.

The situation was now roughly stabilised in Western Asia, with the Moslems enemies alike of the Mongols and of the Christians, whose protagonists were the Crusaders. It was therefore intended that the Moslems should be attacked by the two hostile nations. In pursuance of this policy Abaka wrote to King Edward I of England, whose answer, dated January 26, 1274 (1275?), stated that he could not give "any certain news about the time of our arrival in the Holy Land . . . since at this moment nothing has been settled by the Sovereign Pontiff".

The Reigns of Ahmad, A.D. 1281–1284, and *Arghun*, A.D. 1284–1291.—Upon the death of Abaka, his eldest son Arghun was passed over in favour of a brother of the deceased monarch Tagudar Oghlu. Tagudar, who had been baptized a Christian, now declared himself a Moslem and ascended the throne as Ahmad. Arghun rebelled, and being defeated took refuge in the natural fortress, later known as Kalat-i-Nadiri, where the fortified western entrance, which I have visited, is still known as Darband-i-Arghun. The rebel prince finally submitted to his uncle who kept him in close confinement, but the army leaders, incensed at Ahmad's conversion to Islam, rebelled and rescued the young prince. Ahmad fled, but was captured and put to death in the Mongol fashion by having his back broken. During Arghun's reign a serious rebellion, which was finally crushed by his son Ghazan Khan, broke out in Khurasan.

The Mission of Bar-Soma to Europe, A.D. 1287–1288.—Perhaps the most interesting embassy to reach Europe during the Middle Ages was that despatched by Arghun in 1287 under the leadership of Bar-Soma. This remarkable monk first visited Constantinople, where he was welcomed by the Emperor and gazed with rapture on the cathedral of Santa Sophia. He then proceeded to Rome, learned that Pope Honorius IV was dead, and was received by twelve great lords *Kardinale*, who were assembled to elect his successor. Visiting the King of France at Paris, and much admiring its University, he travelled

south to the court of "King Alangitar in Karsonia," meaning by these words the King of England in Gascony.[1]

Edward I was most gracious to the envoy and, upon hearing the proposals of Arghun for a simultaneous attack on the Holy Land from the east and from the west, declared: "We, the Kings of these regions, have placed the emblem of the Cross on our bodies, and are deeply interested in this question". Edward was genuinely anxious to take part in this joint campaign, but the Scottish wars made it impossible at the time.

Arghun despatched two more envoys to Europe to urge prompt action against the common foe, but, in 1291, the capture of Acre sealed the fate of the Latin kingdoms. In that year Edward despatched a return embassy to the Mongol Court under Galfridus de Langele. It travelled *via* Genoa and Trebizond to Tabriz, the capital. We know little more about it, except that falcons and some jewels were among the gifts and that the envoy brought back a leopard in a cage. Curiously enough, the original roll of the itinerary, together with an account of the expenditure of the embassy, has been preserved.[2]

Gaykhatu, A.D. 1291–1295; *Baydu*, A.D. 1295.—Arghun was succeeded by his brother Gaykhatu, who was faced with internal risings, which were gradually put down. The extravagance of the new monarch soon emptied his treasury. He thereupon decided to introduce the *chao* or paper money which was current in China. However, no one would accept the *chao*; gold and silver disappeared from circulation and at Tabriz, Shiraz and other important cities the bazaars were closed. Finally, the Il-Khan perforce recalled the obnoxious *chao*.

After this untoward experiment, Gaykhatu when drunk insulted his cousin Baydu and ordered him to be beaten. To avenge himself Baydu conspired against the Il-Khan and put him to death. He then ascended the throne, but was soon defeated by Ghazan Khan and,

[1] I have consulted in this section "'Histoire de Mar Jabalaha III . . . et du Moine Rabban Cauma . . . traduit du Syriaque par J. B. Chabot", in *La Revue de l'Orient Latin*, 1897.

[2] Vide *Archaeological Journal*, vol. viii, pp. 49-50.

to quote Khwandamir, "Quaffed a full cup of that draught that he had caused Gaykhatu to taste".

Ghazan, the Great Il-Khan, A.D. 1295–1304.—Upon his accession Ghazan declared himself a Moslem, and, repudiating the suzerainty of the heathen *Khakans*, he substituted the Moslem confession of faith for the name and titles of the *Khakan* on his coinage.

The earlier part of his short but important reign was occupied in crushing rebellions, mainly caused by the hostility to Islam of the Mongol nobles. Among them his general, Noruz, who had persuaded Ghazan to accept Islam and had been his chief supporter, began to be suspected of secret intrigues with the Sultan of Egypt. He rebelled and fled to Herat and took refuge with the Kurt *Malik* Fakhr-ud-Din, who, however, surrendered him to Ghazan, by whose orders he was put to death.

Ghazan's Syrian Campaigns, A.D. 1299 and 1303.—Ghazan in 1299, realizing the weakness of the Mamelukes owing to internal troubles, marched on Aleppo at the head of 90,000 men and met the Mamelukes at the old battle-field of Hims. On this occasion, although the Mongol centre was nearly broken by the charge of the heavily armed cavalry of the enemy, Ghazan dismounted his men, who, using their horses as cover, repulsed the Mamelukes, mainly owing to their heavy loss in horses occasioned by Mongol arrows. A general advance of the Mongol archers on foot completed the victory. Damascus fell to the victors, but after receiving a contribution from that city Ghazan withdrew, whereupon it was reoccupied by its Mameluke masters.

In a second campaign undertaken in 1303 the right wing of the Egyptian was broken, but the centre and left wing stood firm and forced the Mongols back into the waterless hills. In the morning they were cut to pieces. This decisive victory was celebrated by a triumphal march through Cairo preceded by 1600 Mongol prisoners each bearing the head of one of his dead comrades; the Great Mongol war-drums with their parchment rent were also exhibited.

The Reforms of Ghazan Khan.—The greatness of

Ghazan is mainly shown by his reforms. He instituted a survey of all properties and assessed each village at a fixed sum, payable in two instalments, thus ending illegal and semi-illegal taxes, since all assignations on revenue and all other irregular taxes and tolls were forbidden on pain of death. He also reorganized and purified the administration of justice, set up a standard of weights and measures and worked incessantly to secure the carrying out of his reforms.

At Tabriz, his capital, he built a magnificent mosque, a mausoleum, two colleges, a hospital, a library and an observatory. Celebrated men of learning were appointed to these institutions, with generous salaries, while lands were assigned to supply the salaries and the upkeep of the buildings. Finally, provision was made for the maintenance of students. Unfortunately, owing to his premature death, his reforms and educational endowments alike disappeared and, under his successors, his kingdom gradually relapsed into anarchy.

Muhammad Khudabanda, Uljaitu, A.D. 1304–1316.—Ghazan's successor was his brother, who was generally known by his title of Uljaitu.[1] The third son of Arghun Khan, he had been brought up as a Christian and had been baptized Nicolas, but, after belonging to the Hanafi section, he finally followed Ghazan's example and adopted the Shia creed. Before his coronation he considered it expedient to put to death his cousin Alafrank, who might have given trouble as a claimant to the throne. Perhaps Uljaitu is best known as the founder of the royal city of Sultaniya, which was famous for the beauty of its buildings. Even today, although the city is deserted, its splendid mosque remains.

Uljaitu's Intercourse with Europe.—During his reign the Il-Khan sent envoys to Edward II of England, to Philip le Bel of France and to Pope Clement, with fresh proposals for an attack on the Mamelukes. The envoys evidently concealed the fact that their master had

[1] Uljaitu was born in the desert between Merv and Sarakhs. Compelled to halt in a waterless area, the party was suffering intensely from thirst, but a heavy shower greeted the infant upon his birth, and won him the auspicious title of Uljaitu or "Fortunate".

embraced the Moslem faith, for both Edward II and the Pope assumed that Uljaitu would join them in extirpating " the abominable sect of Mahomet ".

The Campaigns of Uljaitu.—In A.D. 1307 the Il-Khan at the cost of thousands of Mongol lives conquered Gilan, which densely wooded province had hitherto remained independent. In the same year he captured Herat. This city was gallantly defended by Muhammad Sam who served Fakhr-ud-Din, Kurt, but it was finally taken by treachery.

Abu Said, A.D. 1316–1335.—The successor of Uljaitu was his son Abu Said, a boy of twelve. His reign, which was marked by disputes between the great nobles, brought about the rapid decay of the dynasty. In 1319 a conspiracy was formed against the Regent Amir Chupan, but it was defeated. The rebel leaders were put to death with tortures at Sultaniya, among them being a granddaughter of Abaka, who was trampled to death by horses at the express order of Abu Said.

Abu Said and Sultan Nasir of Egypt.—Relations with Egypt had been, generally speaking, unfriendly, but in A.D. 1323 a treaty was negotiated between the two states. It is to be noted that a granddaughter of Batu, Chief of the Golden Horde, had been given in marriage to Sultan Nasir some three years previously.

The Rebellion and Death of Amir Chupan.—As was inevitable, Abu Said, when twenty-one years of age, began to feel alarmed at the power of Amir Chupan. An open breach was caused by the Il-Khan falling in love with the Regent's daughter, Baghdad *Khatun*, who was already married to a Mongol noble. Realizing the insecurity of his position, Amir Chupan rebelled, collected an army and then marched against Abu Said. He was, however, deserted by his most important followers, and taking refuge at Herat with Ghiyas-ud-Din, Kurt, was strangled by him.

In August A.D. 1335 news reached Abu Said that Uzbeg, the Khan of the Golden Horde, was preparing to invade his dominions. He thereupon took the field but died at Karabagh in the same year that dread Tamer-

lane was born. He left no successor, and the remaining Il-Khans were puppets, undeserving of mention.

The Foundation of the Dynasty of the Kurt Maliks *which lasted from* A.D. 1245 *to* 1389.—The third dynasty to rise to power in Afghanistan was that of the Kurts, who were descendants of the Shansabani house of Ghur. Their ancestor was Taj-ud-Din, brother of Izz-ud-Din, the powerful Vizier of Sultan Ghiyas-ud-Din, Ghuri, who obtained possession of Herat in 1192. Taj-ud-Din was warden of the fortress of Khaysar, and upon his death, his son Rukn-ud-Din married the daughter of Ghiyas-ud-Din. Their son Shams-ud-Din, Muhammad I, was the founder of the dynasty of *Maliks*.[1]

Muhammad I joined Sali Noyan in a raid on India in 1247, and in the following year presented himself at the court of Mangu the *Khakan*, who appointed him Governor of Herat, Ghur, Merv and other provinces up to the Oxus; and of Farah, Seistan, Kabul and other provinces up to the Indus. In 1263–1264 he visited Hulaku and, three years later, he led a contingent under Abaka against Darband and Baku. Later he fell into disfavour with this monarch and, in 1278, he was put to death by means of a poisoned water-melon. To emphasize his resentment towards the founder of the Kurt dynasty, Abaka ordered his body to be buried in chains!

Rukn-ud-Din, A.D. 1278–1305.—Rukn-ud-Din, the son of Shams-ud-Din, succeeded to the throne and assumed his father's title with the adjective *Kihin* or "the Younger". During much of his reign, he was superseded by his energetic son Fakhr-ud-Din, who became the practical ruler of the state. Fakhr-ud-Din had been imprisoned for seven years by his father and owed his release to the intercession of the Mongol General Noruz. But, as we have seen, when that general revolted against Ghazan Khan and took refuge with the Kurt *Malik*, he was surrendered to the Il-Khan.

The Revolt of Fakhr-ud-Din against Uljaitu, A.D. 1300.—Fakhr-ud-Din rebelled against Uljaitu, who sent a

[1] This section is mainly based on Browne's *op. cit.* vol. iii, pp. 173-180. The dynasty is termed the Kart dynasty in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, which I have also consulted.

force 10,000 strong against Herat. The city surrendered to the Il-Khan's general who occupied it, but, through an act of treachery, the general and many of his men were killed and Fakhr-ud-Din reoccupied Herat, dying shortly afterwards in 1307.

Ghiyas-ud-Din, A.D. 1307–1329.—The successor to Fakhr-ud-Din was his brother Ghiyas-ud-Din, who constantly quarrelled with a younger brother Ala-ud-Din. Uljaitu, whom he visited, took his side, and on his return to Herat he extended his power over Khaysar and Isfizar. After a second visit to Uljaitu, who at first treated him with suspicion, Ghiyas-ud-Din regained that monarch's confidence. Upon his return to Herat he was called on to deal with an invasion of Khurasan by Prince Yasur, the Nikudari,[1] who was, however, killed in 1320. In 1320 Ghiyas-ud-Din performed the pilgrimage to Mecca. Seven years later, as mentioned above, when Amir Chupan sought refuge with him, he put him to death.

Muizz-ud-Din, A.D. 1331–1370.—Ghiyas-ud-Din, who succeeded his father, died a few weeks later. His successor and brother Hafiz, after a reign of two years, was succeeded by the third brother Muizz-ud-Din. This ruler engaged in two unsuccessful campaigns in the Kerman province, in the second of which his army was shut up in Kerman and forced to capitulate. However, as Browne puts it, he reigned "not ingloriously" and celebrated the conquest of Badghis by the erection of two towers, which were adorned with the heads of his enemies.

Ghiyas-ud-Din Pir Ali, A.D. 1370–1389.—The conquests of Tamerlane were overshadowing the land during the reign of the last member of the Kurt dynasty. Tamerlane, at first, treated him as a friend and gave his niece in marriage to the Malik's son Pir Muhammad in 1376. Five years later Tamerlane occupied Herat and imprisoned Ghiyas-ud-Din and his son at Samarkand. In 1389, using the excuse of an abortive rising at Herat, Tamerlane killed his prisoners, thus extinguishing the Kurt dynasty, which for close on a century and a half

[1] Nikudar was one of the sons of Chaghatay, and his descendants retained the family name.

had played a secondary, but not unimportant, rôle on the stage of Afghanistan.

The Journey of Marco Polo across Asia to China.—From the point of view of Europe the chief if not the only gain resulting from Mongol supremacy in Asia was the fact that for the first time, albeit with interruptions owing to wars waged between various Mongol princes, it was possible for travellers to reach China by land.[1]

Greatest of these travellers was the Venetian Marco Polo, but a tribute is also due to his father and his uncle who had already travelled to China *via* Bukhara and Samarkand from Barka's capital of Sarai on the Volga, and had been warmly welcomed by the *Khakan* Khubilay.

The Polos cross Asia Minor and Persia to Hormuz.—Marco, accompanying his elders, reached Acre in A.D. 1271. The Papal Legate Tebaldo was, shortly afterwards, elected Pope and assumed the title of Gregory X. He furnished the Polos with letters and gifts for the *Khakan*, and leaving Acre they sailed to Layas or Ayaz in the Gulf of Alexandretta. To quote: " Now about the time that they reached Layas, Bendoequedar [Bandukdar], the Soldan of Babylon, invaded Hermenia with a great host of Saracens, and ravaged the country ".

This incursion of the famous Mameluke Sultan frightened the two preaching friars, who had been appointed by the Pope to accompany the Venetians, so that they refused to proceed any farther.

The Polos traversed Asia Minor to Tabriz and then continued their journey across Persia *via* Yezd and Kerman to the port of Hormuz on the Persian Gulf, intending to sail to China. However, probably owing to their expressed opinion that " Their ships are wretched affairs and many of them get lost ", they decided to complete the long journey by land.

The Journey across the Lut to Badakhshan.—Returning to Kerman, the Venetians crossed the great desert (termed Lut, after the Patriarch Lot) to Tabbas and Tun,[2] where,

[1] My chief authorities in this section are *The Travels of Marco Polo*, by Sir Henry Yule and the Broadway Travellers edition under the same title.

[2] " Go to Tun and Tabbas " is an impolite remark in Persia. The present Shah has accordingly changed the name of Tun to Ferdaus, signifying " Paradise ".

as I read in a local chronicle many years ago, Alp Arslan nearly lost his army from thirst.

At Tun, Marco pauses to tell the story of the Assassins. Probably he did so in connexion with this town, since we have seen that Hulaku had captured it and massacred the population some fifteen years previously. It is of interest to note that it was in this very year (A.D. 1272) that Prince Edward was wounded by a *Fidai* at Acre.

From Tun, Marco, marching eastwards, entered Afghanistan, with Shibarghan as his immediate goal. He must have passed through Herat. Marco does not mention the city, which had been destroyed by the Mongols and probably lay desolate. At Shibarghan he was loud in his praise of the melons which, " when dried in the sun become sweeter than honey ". He next mentions Balkh and, referring to its destruction by the Mongols, describes its beautiful palaces and marble houses, the ruins of which were still to be seen.

Continuing their journey eastwards, the Venetians entered the great province of Badakhshan — the classical Bactria — whose chiefs still claim descent from Alexander the Great.

Marco as a jeweller fully appreciated its beautiful *balas* [1] or spinel rubies. Did not Chaucer in the " Court of Love " write:

> No sapphire in Inde, no Rubies rich of price,
> There lacked then, nor Emeraud so green,
> *Balès*, Turkès, ne thing to my device.

Marco also refers to " the finest azure in the world ". The mines of Lajward in Badakhshan are still worked, and to them we owe both the words *l'Azur* and *lazuli*.

Marco Polo crosses the Pamirs to China.—Upon resuming the journey, following up the valley of the Oxus the narrow district of Wakhan, the most easterly province of Afghanistan was reached. " And when you leave this little country [Wakhan] ", writes Marco Polo, " and ride three days north-east, always among mountains, you

[1] The origin of the term *balas* is due to Marco writing Balashan instead of Badakhshan. Turkès is the Turquoise.

get to such a height that 'tis said to be the highest place in the world. . . . The plain is called PAMIER and you ride across it for twelve days together."

Leaving these upland valleys, Marco descended to Kashgar, now the capital of Chinese Turkistan, where he admired the splendid gardens, vineyards and farms. He next travelled to Yarkand and then to Khotan, along a route in which I followed in his footsteps. Farther on, he crossed the desolate waste of the *Gobi* or "desert" to Sachiu (Tun-huang) with its celebrated caves of the Thousand Buddhas. The Polos had now entered China proper and in due course reached Chandu (Shang-tu) where they were welcomed by the *Khakan* Khubilay, after the successful completion of a journey, which had lasted no less than three and a half years.

The Return to Venice.—Marco Polo travelled far and wide in China and carried out missions for Khubilay in far-distant countries. After seventeen years, during which the Polos had amassed considerable wealth, they yearned to return to Venice. The *Khakan*, however, was most unwilling to grant them the permission they sought, when suddenly, in a most remarkable manner, their wishes were fulfilled.

Arghun, the *Il-Khan*, who was the great-nephew of Khubilay, had lost his wife, a member of the imperial family, in A.D. 1286. Bulughan, as she was termed, had laid down in her will that no woman should replace her as Arghun's wife unless she were of her own kin. Khubilay accordingly decided to send "a lady called Cocachin who was seventeen years old" to the *Il-Khan* as his bride. The mission started off by land for Persia, but owing to hostilities between the Mongol princes, the route was closed. Upon their return to China, the nobles in charge of the mission met Marco, who had just accomplished an official voyage to India, and, realizing his importance to them, they begged the *Khakan* to send the bride back to Persia by sea, together with the experienced Venetians. Unwillingly Khubilay agreed, but, having done so, generously prepared a fleet of fourteen ships to escort the Princess to Persia. Under these favourable

conditions, in 1292, Princess Cocachin started on her ill-starred voyage, lasting for over two years, to the Persian Gulf. Finally the Princess and the Polos reached Hormuz in safety, but at what a cost? They had started a party 600 strong, without counting the sailors, but only the Princess and one lady-in-waiting, with the Venetians, making up altogether twenty survivors, reached Persia.

Upon landing at Hormuz news was received that Arghun was dead. Accordingly, acting on the orders of the *Il-Khan* Gaykhatu, the Polos travelled north to Khurasan, where Princess Cocachin was duly married to Ghazan Khan. The Polos, having thus discharged their arduous task with complete success, traversed Northern Persia and finally reached Venice " in the year 1295, after Christ's incarnation ", having accomplished the greatest journeys of all time.

Ibn Battuta starts off on the Pilgrimage to Mecca.— Thirty years after the return of the Polos to Venice *Shaykh* Abu Abdulla, generally known as Ibn Battuta, an inhabitant of Tangier and a member of a family of *Kazis* or Judges, started off in A.D. 1325 on a series of journeys that lasted twenty-eight years and covered an even wider area than those of Marco Polo.[1]

His original plan was merely to perform the pilgrimage to Mecca. He consequently travelled across North Africa to Alexandria, which he described as " a beautiful city, well built and fortified with four gates and a magnificent port ". Reaching Cairo, he shows intense enthusiasm for the " mother of cities and seat of Pharaoh the tyrant ". He had intended to cross the Red Sea to Jeddah from the opposite port of Aydab, but, owing to serious disturbances, he was obliged to return to Cairo, and thence traversing the Sinai desert, he visited Jerusalem and Acre. Passing through Antioch he mentions that its " wall of unrivalled solidity " was pulled down by Sultan Baybars. He next visited Armenia, where he refers to " fortresses, several of which belong to a sect called Ismailites or *Fidawis* and may be entered by none

[1] This section is mainly based on the scholarly edition of *The Travels of Ibn Battuta*, by Professor H. A. R. Gibb (Broadway Travellers).

but members of the sect. They are the arrows of the Sultan; by means of them he strikes those of his enemies who escape into Iraq and other lands. . . . They carry poisoned daggers." It is especially interesting to note that these sectaries were still carrying on their diabolical assassinations in Asia Minor at this period.

At Damascus, on which city the Prophet Muhammad had based his description of the Moslem Paradise, Ibn Battuta joined the pilgrim caravan and gives the first reliable description of Medina, Mecca and other cities of Arabia. His journey from Medina to Baghdad was also of especial importance, its value being, of course, enhanced by the traveller's knowledge of Arabic and Arabic literature.

Ibn Battuta meets Orkhan Beg.—During his later wanderings in Asia Minor our *Kazi* gives a good account of the famous *Mevlevi* or "Dancing Dervishes". Of far greater importance, however, is his first-hand account of the early days of the Osmanli Empire. To quote: "The Sultan of Bursa [Brussa] is Orkhan Beg, son of Othman Chuk. He is the greatest of the Turkmen Kings . . . and there [at Nicaea] I saw him." Othman was the eponymous founder of the famous Ottoman dynasty, whose lineal descendant was still ruling alike as Sultan and Caliph at Constantinople until after the World War. Orkhan, it is interesting to note, was the founder of the famous corps of Janissaries.

Ibn Battuta crosses the Oxus into Afghanistan.—Ibn Battuta's visit to Constantinople, to Sara, Bukhara and Samarkand followed the route of the elder Polos and need not be mentioned in this brief summary. At Termez he crossed the Oxus and visited Balkh. He writes: "The accursed Tinkiz [Chenghiz] destroyed this city and demolished about one-third of its mosque on account of a treasure which he was told lay under one of its columns".

Ibn Battuta visits Herat, Meshed and Nishapur.—From Balkh the *Kazi* travelled for seven days to Herat, which had evidently recovered from its destruction by Chenghiz, owing probably to the great fertility of its soil.

Of its *Malik* he writes: " The Sultan of Herat is the illustrious Husayn, son of the Sultan Ghiyas-ud-Din al-Ghuri, a man of notorious bravery and victorious by the Divine Favour on two fields of battle ". The reign of this *Malik* has been briefly described above and hardly appears to merit the praise of our *Kazi*.

From Herat Ibn Battuta visited Turbat-i-Shaykh-Jam which, as we shall see in Chapter XX, was a halting place two centuries later, of the fugitive Emperor Humayun. The *Kazi* then continued his journey to Meshed and mentions that, opposite the tomb of the *Imam* Riza is the tomb of Harun-al-Rashid. He goes on to say that " when a Shiite enters to visit it he kicks the tomb of al-Rashid with his foot, and pronounces a blessing on Riza ".[1]

From Meshed, Ibn Battuta proceeded to Nishapur and writes: " It is given the name of ' Little Damascus ' because of its beauty and the quantity of its fruit-trees, orchards and streams ". Rebuilt on a new site this city, like Herat, had also recovered some of its former prosperity, but, as we have seen, Balkh lay utterly desolate and our *Kazi* also mentions that Merv — the fourth of the great cities of Khurasan — was in the same sad condition.

Ibn Battuta crosses the Hindu Kush.—After visiting Bistam at the south-east corner of the Caspian, our traveller next takes us to Kunduz in Northern Afghanistan, where he halted for some forty days to await the opening of the pass across the Hindu Kush. This range, he states, derives its name of " Slayer of Indians because the slave boys and girls who are brought from India die there in large numbers, as a result of the extreme cold and the quantity of snow ". Ibn Battuta describes how he crossed the pass by starting before dawn and by spreading felts in front of the camels to prevent them from sinking into the snow.

Ibn Battuta visits Kabul and Ghazni and marches down to the Indus.—After crossing the Hindu Kush, the tireless

[1] This was still the custom when I was Consul-General in Khurasan just before the last World War.

traveller halted at Panjshir and remarks that the country had been devastated by Chenghiz and was uninhabited. He then passed through Charikar and visited Kabul, " formerly a vast town, the site of which is now occupied by a village ". He inaccurately states that Kabul was inhabited by a tribe of Persians called Afghans,[1] and writes: " The Afghans hold mountains and defiles and possess considerable strength, and are mostly highwaymen. Their principal mountain is Kuh-i-Sulayman ". Ghazni is next described as the city " of the famous warrior-sultan Mahmud ibn Sabuktigin " and " nothing but a fraction of it remains, though it was once a large city ". It had evidently not recovered from its destruction by Chenghiz. Ibn Battuta then marched down through the Sulayman Mountains to the Indus.

Ibn Battuta compared with Marco Polo.—Our *Kazi* having reached the Indus, writes: " Here ends the narrative of this journey. Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds." The eight years' sojourn in India, the voyage to China and the many adventures, not to mention disasters, so graphically recorded, lie outside the scope of this work. It may, however, be of interest to compare the great Christian with the great Moslem traveller. Ibn Battuta, as a highly educated Moslem, was welcomed by the rulers of each Moslem country, and certainly gives the best account of Moslem lands. On the other hand Ibn Battuta remained only a short time in China and the priceless records of Marco Polo who spent many years in that country naturally rank far above those of the learned, amusing and witty *Kazi*. Both travellers take place among the greatest and supplement one another in the most remarkable manner.

[1] The Afghans are certainly not a Persian tribe. Ghazni, by a second error, is shown as being visited before Kabul.

CHAPTER XVII

TAMERLANE

We'll lead you to the stately tent of war,
Where you shall hear the Scythian Tamburlaine
Threatening the world with high astounding terms,
And scourging kingdoms with his conquering sword.
MARLOWE, *Tamburlaine the Great.*

The Chagatay Dynasty of Transoxiana.—The descendants of Chagatay, the least distinguished of the dynasties founded by the sons of Chenghiz Khan, were still ruling in Transoxiana in the middle of the fourteenth century when Timur first made his appearance on the stage of Central Asia.[1] In A.D. 1345 Kazan Khan, the Western Chagatay ruler, owing to his cruelty, provoked a rebellion and, after much fighting, was dethroned by the nobles under a certain Amir Kazghan, who ruled through puppet Khans until his death in 1357. He was succeeded by his son Abdulla, who, becoming enamoured of the wife of Bayan Kuli, the puppet Khan, put the unfortunate prince to death, whereupon the Amirs, headed by Bayan Selduz and *Haji* Barlas of Kesh (the modern Shahr-i-Sabz) defeated Abdulla, who disappeared from the scene. Bayan Selduz assumed the government but was an incapable drunkard and Transoxiana was broken up into a number of petty states, which were generally at war with one another.

In 1360 Tughluk Timur Khan, the Governor of Jatah or Moghulistan, realizing the state of anarchy prevailing in Transoxiana, decided to annex the country. He marched on Kesh, and *Haji* Barlas, unable to oppose

[1] The authorities for this chapter include *A History of the Moghuls of Central Asia* (the *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*), by Ney Elias and Denison Ross; Professor Browne's *op. cit.*, vol. iii; *The Zafar-Nama* of Sharaf-ud-Din, Ali of Yezd; *The Mohammadan Dynasties*, by Stanley Lane-Poole; and *The Turkish History*, by Knolles.

the Mongol army, fled to Khurasan, where he was killed by brigands.

The Rise of Timur.—Timur, whose name signifies iron, was born at Kesh in A.D. 1336. He was the son of Amir Taraghai, Chief of the Gurkan branch of the Barlas, a Turkish tribe, and the nephew of *Haji* Barlas. Through his mother's family he claimed descent from Chenghiz Khan.

As a youth he entered the service of Amir Kazghan, distinguishing himself both in the field and in the Council Chamber; like Alexander the Great he was noted for his courage, skill and endurance in the pursuit of game. The young soldier accompanied *Haji* Barlas in his flight, but, before crossing the Oxus, gained permission to offer his services to Tughluk Timur Khan.

Tughluk Timur Khan appoints Timur Governor of Kesh. —To quote the *Tarikh-i-Rashidi* on Timur:

> His father was dead and his uncle had fled;
> The people were exposed to the ravages of a stranger.
> Its enemies had placed the tribe in danger:
> It was become as an eagle without wings or feathers.

Tughluk Timur Khan, whose invasion had been successful, received Timur with distinction and appointed him to the family governorship of Kesh.

In A.D. 1361 the Khan appointed his son *Khwaja* Ilyas Governor of Samarkand, with Timur as his councillor. A certain Amir Begjit was, however, given supreme authority, and Timur, finding his position to be an impossible one owing to constant intrigues, decided to flee from Samarkand.

The Early Adventures of Timur.—The young Chief, who was accompanied by his heroic wife, when making for the desert, was hotly pursued, but defeated his enemies in spite of their superior numbers. He then, with a mere handful of followers, joined forces with his brother-in-law, Amir Husayn, the grandson of Amir Kazghan, who, having recently been defeated by Tughluk Timur, was also wandering in the wilds. They asked for protection at Khwarizm, but its ruler attempted to seize the

refugees, who fled back to the desert where, later, they were imprisoned by some Turkoman, from whom they escaped with difficulty.

The Seistan Campaign.—In A.D. 1363, when wandering in Southern Afghanistan, Timur received an appeal for help from Jalal-ud-Din Muhammad, the Keiani Prince of Seistan, whose subjects had rebelled. Nothing loath, the two Amirs accepted the invitation and speedily captured three out of the seven forts held by the rebels. The latter thereupon pointed out to their Prince that, if Timur captured the other forts, Seistan would be his, and they offered to join forces with their own Prince and expel the invaders. Accepting this reasonable point of view, Jalal-ud-Din attacked Timur, and although that warrior broke the centre of the Seistan army, he was permanently lamed by an arrow-wound in his foot and thus acquired his soubriquet of Timur *lang* or " Timur the lame " which in Europe had been merged into the euphonious form of Tamerlane — the Tamburlaine of Marlowe.

The Campaigns against Khwaja Ilyas.—The two allies had collected a considerable body of men at this period, and proceeding to Kunduz in Northern Afghanistan, they won a battle against the Jatah army by lighting an enormous number of fires in the rear of the enemy on the summits of the mountains, which, being mistaken for camp fires of an unknown army, caused a panic. By this victory, termed that of the Stone Bridge, Timur regained possession of Kesh, where thousands of its inhabitants joined his standard.

Tughluk Timur died about this period and Ilyas, marching homewards to Moghulistan to ascend the throne, was again defeated by the allies, who occupied Samarkand. In 1365, however, the situation changed and the allies suffered defeat at the Battle of the Mire,[1] and were besieged in Samarkand by Ilyas. On this occasion the Mongol monarch was forced to abandon the siege owing to heavy losses among his horses caused by an epidemic.

The Struggle with Amir Husayn, A.D. 1365–1370.—

[1] For a most dramatic account of this action vide *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, pp. 31-36.

The friendship of the two Amirs, which had stood the test of adversity, was broken by success and they became bitter enemies. At first Husayn, whose army was far superior in numbers, seemed likely to win the contest, but Timur's feat of arms at Karshi transformed the situation. This town, only a few miles distant from Kesh, had been captured by Amir Husayn and Timur determined to recover it. However, in view of the small force at his disposal, he gave out that he was abandoning the struggle and retreated across the Oxus. Learning through his spies that his enemies, in fancied security, " had spread abroad the carpet of riot and dissipation ", he surprised Karshi by escalading the walls. He slew the guard at the gate and frightened the remainder of the defenders into flight by sounding trumpets.

Amir Husayn, hearing that the followers of Timur were only some two hundred in number, attacked the town when, to the amazement of his army, Timur sallied out repeatedly and finally defeated his assailants. This truly astonishing feat of arms eventually led to the defeat of Amir Husayn, who was forced to capitulate at Balkh in 1370 and was put to death. In this year Timur assumed the title of *Sahib Kiran* or " Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction ".

Tamerlane's Conquest of Jatah and of Khwarizm, A.D. 1370–1380.—Khwaja Ilyas died at this period and Kamar-ud-Din, a usurper, " put to death in one day eighteen sons of Khan ", and assumed the title of Khan for himself. Timur invaded Jatah on many occasions. In 1375 he defeated the army of Kamar-ud-Din and captured the usurper's daughter, Dilshad Aga, whom he married. In the following years further expeditions against Jatah were undertaken, and during the fifth, Kamar-ud-Din died of dropsy. His successor was Khizr Khwaja Khan who, as an infant son of the Khan, had been hidden from Kamar-ud-Din and who now ascended the throne and concluded a treaty of peace with Timur. During these ten years the conquest of Khwarizm, which Timur successfully accomplished, cost the invader four campaigns.

Timur's Early Campaigns in Persia, A.D. 1381–1384.—After consolidating his power in Transoxiana and Khwarizm, in 1381, at the age of forty-five, Timur commenced his conquest of Persia. Sarakhs surrendered to him and the submission of Ghiyas-ud-Din, the Kurt *Malik*, gave him possession of Herat.

He next attempted to capture the famous natural fortress now known as Kalat-i-Nadiri by a surprise. This plan having failed, he delivered fourteen assaults, all of which were repulsed, and he was obliged to admit defeat. However, he left a force to blockade the fortress which, later, owing to an outbreak of plague, was compelled to surrender.

In 1382 Timur took Turshiz and received the submission of the ruler of Mazanderan. In the following year he captured Sabzawar, where he erected minarets of his living captives, compacted with bricks and clay. Having received the submission of Farah, he stormed Zarah and then Zaranj, the capital of Seistan, where both the garrison and the inhabitants were massacred. Zaranj has never been reoccupied, and when I visited it, so desolate and lifeless was it that the verses of Isaiah came to my mind: "An habitation of dragons, and a court for owls. The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the wild beasts of the island, and the satyr shall cry to his fellow."[1] Timur completed this campaign by the capture of Kandahar, where he hanged the Governor.

The Final Conquest of Persia, Armenia and Georgia, A.D. 1384–1386.—During the following years Timur occupied Northern Persia. In 1386 he spent the summer at Tabriz; in the autumn he crossed the Aras and occupied Armenia and Georgia, capturing Nakhichevan, Kars and Tiflis. He also sacked Van, the capital of the rising Kara Kuyunlu or "Black Sheep" dynasty, whose Prince, Kara Yusuf, fled, leaving the city to its fate.

The Emperor's next objective was Isfahan, which submitted. A heavy contribution levied on the city, however, provoked a riot, in which many of the tax-collectors were killed. Timur thereupon ordered a

[1] Ch. xxxiv, verses 13, 14.

general massacre and built up the heads of the thousands who were killed into minarets. He then continued his march to Shiraz where the various petty rulers, including princes of the Muzaffar dynasty and the *Atabegs* of Luristan, wisely tendered their submission.

The Campaigns against Toktamish, A.D. 1388–1391 *and* 1395.—Toktamish, the last great figure in the history of the Golden Horde, had, with the aid of troops supplied by Timur, secured the chiefship of the White Horde, which included the country of the Lower Sir Daria and which marched with the Golden Horde on the west. After seizing the chiefship of the White Horde, in 1378, he overthrew the chief of the Blue Horde and thus became supreme ruler of the Golden Horde. After these successes, in 1382 he ravaged Russia far and wide, Moscow being sacked and burnt.

Toktamish unwisely displayed ingratitude towards Timur, who engaged in two campaigns against him. In 1391 the *Sahib Kiran* defeated Toktamish at the battle of Urtupa and in the second campaign he finally crushed him at a battle fought near the River Terek in 1395, thereby destroying the power of the Golden Horde.

Timur again invades South Persia, A.D. 1393.—Between the two campaigns with Toktamish, Timur again invaded Persia. Marching by way of Kazvin, Burujird, Dizful and Shustar, he made for Shiraz. On the way he captured the Kala-i-Safid, celebrated for its connexion with Rustam, who had obtained possession of it by a ruse. Outside Shiraz he was suddenly attacked by the heroic Shah Mansur of the Muzaffar dynasty, who charged Timur's army at the head of a few thousand armour-clad horsemen and even struck the Emperor twice on his helmet. He was finally killed by Shah Rukh, Timur's famous son, who cast his head at his sire's feet exclaiming: "May the heads of all thy enemies be laid at thy feet as the head of the proud Mansur!" The Muzaffar Princes, with the exception of two, who had been blinded by their relations, were put to death. As Gibbon remarked: "Timur declared his esteem of the valour of a foe by extirpating all the males of so intrepid a race".

Timur occupies Baghdad and captures Takrit, A.D. 1393.—Among the minor dynasties which had arisen upon the disintegration of the Il-Khan Empire, was that of Amir Husayn Jalayr, who had married a daughter of Arghun. Under his successors Iraq was occupied and Baghdad became a capital once again, while Azerbaijan was added to the dominions of the dynasty. At the time of Timur's invasion, Sultan Ahmad, the ruling Jalayr Chief, realizing his weakness, fled to Egypt, but his sons, some of his wives and much spoil were captured by a force which was sent in pursuit, while Baghdad was occupied.

Timur's next exploit was the capture of Takrit, the stronghold of Hasan, a noted brigand, which, built on an inaccessible rock, was deemed to be impregnable. Timur, however, set some seventy thousand men to mine the solid rock, with such success that, upon the combustibles and the props being burned, many of the strongest towers fell. Hasan thereupon retreated into an inner citadel which was also undermined and captured, and the Emperor distributed the members of the garrison among the troops to be tortured to death. In the following year the Great Conqueror continued his campaigns by a victorious march across Kipchak to the heart of Russia. Later he sacked Astrakhan and having strengthened his hold on the Caucasus, returned to Samarkand.

Timur invades India, A.D. 1398.—The question of a campaign in India was discussed by Timur with his princes and generals, who opposed the design owing to the magnitude of the enterprise and the great distance. However, an omen was sought in the Koran, and the verse, "O Prophet, fight with the infidels and the unbelievers," silenced every objection.

The object of the Emperor was not conquest but a raid for plunder, while enthusiasm was strengthened by the feeling that fighting the idolatrous Hindus made his soldiers *Ghazis*. At this period in Northern India there was no effective central authority, the King Mahmud, son of Muhammad and grandson of Firuz Shah of the Tughluk dynasty, being little more than a puppet in

the hands of Mallu Khan (brother of Sarang Khan) and Mukarrab Khan the regent.[1]

In Afghanistan, Pir Muhammad, son of Jahangir (who had died in 1375), was ruler of Kunduz, Kabul, Ghazni and Kandahar with their dependencies. He received orders from Timur to march on India, and to quote the *Zafar-Nama*, " they began with the plunder of the Ouganis [Afghans], inhabitants of Solyman-Couh [Sulayman Kuh] which country they entirely ravaged. They passed the Indus, invested Outchah [Uch] and also laid siege to Moultan, which had then for its governor Prince Sarenk [Sarang], eldest brother of Mallon Can, who govern'd the empire of India for the young Sultan Mahmoud." To continue : an Indian force was despatched to relieve Uch, but Pir Muhammad defeated it and pursued it to Multan, which was captured in May 1398.

Timur left Samarkand in the spring and crossed the Oxus by a bridge of boats at Termez. He then proceeded to Anderab. There, receiving complaints of the exactions and raids of the Siah-Push or " Wearers of black," as the Kafirs of the mountains to the east were, and still are, called, he determined to lead an expedition into their country. Owing to the deep snow and " since the infidels dwelt in narrow passages and precipices and there was no road to get to them ", the expedition was not entirely successful, one division having been roughly handled in an ambush. However, Timur, who had captured one celebrated fort, ordered a pillar of marble to be set up and inscribed with the account of this expedition.[2]

Timur plunders India.—Before quitting Badakhshan the Emperor dismissed Shah Rukh to his government of Khurasan, with its capital at Herat. He then traversed the Hindu Kush to Kabul and, plundering as he marched, reached the Indus at the very same place at which Jalal-ud-Din had swum the river.

Marching across the Punjab, without encountering

[1] For the state of anarchy prevailing at this period in India vide *The Cambridge History of India*, vol. iii, pp. 193-195.

[2] For a dramatic account of this campaign *vide* Sharaf-ud-Din, vol. ii, pp. 8-16.

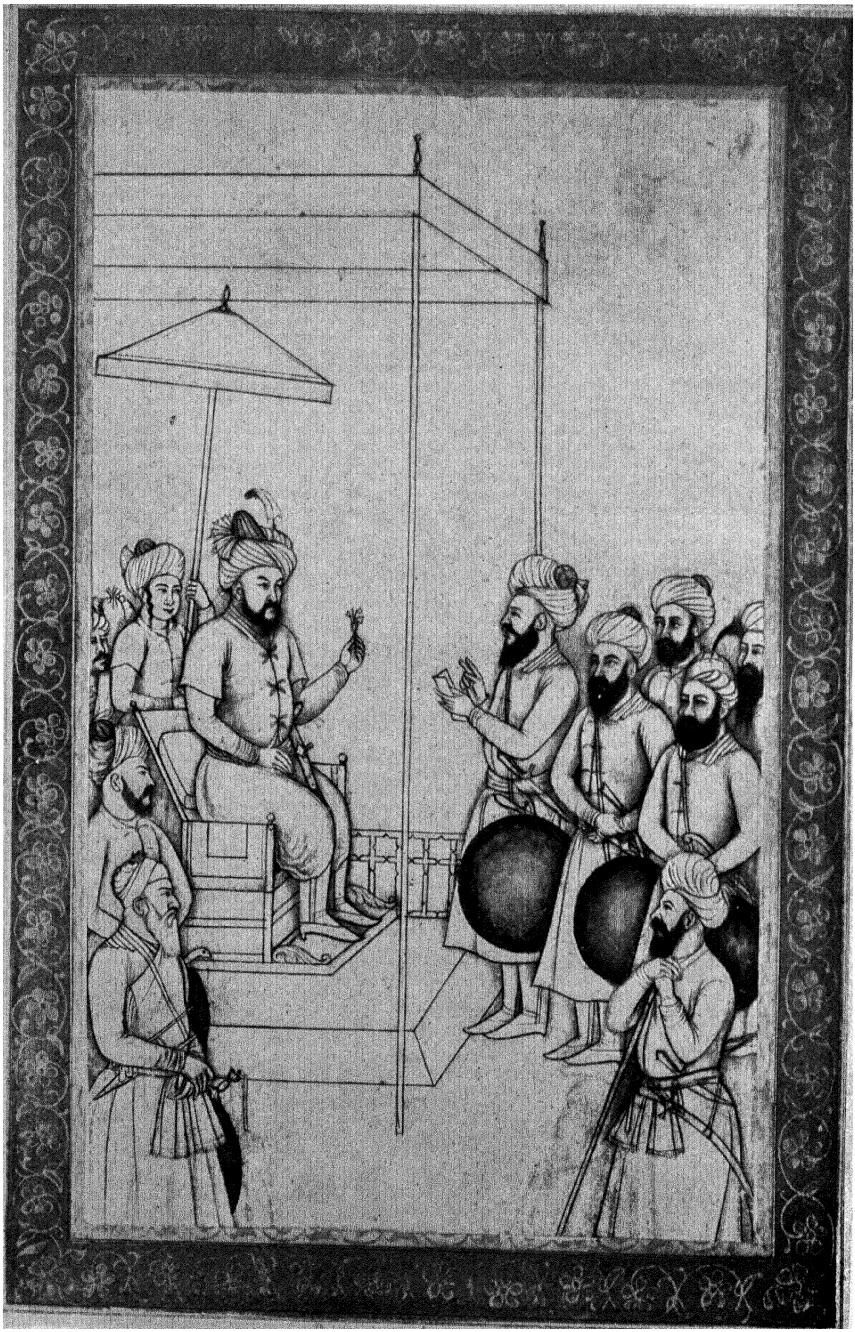
severe opposition, Timur approached Delhi. Mallu ventured a sortie which was not only defeated but led, by way of a military precaution, to the massacre of all the Indian prisoners, one hundred thousand in number.

The Battle of Delhi, December A.D. 1398.—Realizing that his men feared the war-elephants of the Indians, Timur entrenched his camp with a ditch, while buffaloes were hobbled and bound together to form obstacles with "iron-hooks, three-forked, and fix'd to stakes". The left wing of the Indian army, which included the war-elephants, 10,000 cavalry and 40,000 infantry was easily defeated by a detachment which attacked its rear, while Timur's charge on the Indian right wing was entirely successful, and "the great and strong elephants suffer'd themselves to be drove like oxen".

By this victory Delhi fell to the invaders. Timur entered the city where, owing to the rigour of the assessment of the ransom money, a rising took place, followed by a massacre and plundering. To quote Sharaf-ud-Din: "There were some soldiers who took a hundred and fifty slaves, men, women and children, whom they carry'd out of the city; and some soldier-boys had twenty slaves to their share. The other spoils of precious stones, pearls, rubys, diamonds, stuffs, belts, gold and silver vessels, mony, plate, and other curiositys, were innumerable."

Timur's victorious campaign extended to the Ganges, and during its course thousands of Indians were slain. He finally recrossed the Indus, having inflicted a greater loss of life than any other conqueror, while he left behind him famine and anarchy. Marching across Afghanistan he celebrated his victory at Samarkand by a lavish distribution of gold and jewels and of "beautiful male and female Negroes".

Timur's Last Campaigns, A.D. 1399–1404.—Leaving Samarkand in the autumn, Timur first marched to Azerbaijan where the insane vagaries of his son Miranshah, who was executing men of consequence without any reason and squandering the revenues, caused him grave anxiety. Miranshah was punished by the governorship



TIMUR

(From Browne, *The History of Persian Literature under Tartar Dominion*)

Add. 18801 (Brit. Mus.), f. 23.

being transferred to his son Abu Bakr, while the vials of the Emperor's wrath were poured out upon the boon-companions of his unworthy son.

In the spring of 1400, the insatiable conqueror once more devastated Georgia. He then invaded Asia Minor by the way of Erzerum and Sivas. This latter city offered a stubborn resistance, and when it finally capitulated Timur ordered the Armenian soldiers, to the number of four thousand, to be buried alive! Knolles adds to this atrocity: "He over-ran the women and children with his horsemen".[1]

During this period a heated correspondence was taking place between Timur and Sultan Bayazid, the former demanding the surrender of the Jalayr Sultan Ahmad of Baghdad and of Kara Yusuf, Chief of the "Black Sheep" Turkoman. These demands, which were contrary to Moslem custom, Bayazid refused, his letter beginning with: "Know O ravening dog named Timur".[2] Not content with embroiling himself with Turkey, Timur also decided to attack the Sultan of Egypt, who had illegally detained his ambassador at Cairo. The campaign thus had two main objectives.

In the autumn of 1400, Timur reduced Aleppo and then Damascus where the *khutba* was read in his name. Thence he decided to march on Baghdad, which he laid in ruins, and then went into winter quarters at Karabagh.

The Defeat of Bayazid, the "Thunderbolt", A.D. 1402. —The rise of the Osmanli Turks has been referred to in previous chapters and, at this period, they had reached the zenith of their power under Bayazid. In 1396 he had overthrown with crushing losses the chivalry of Europe at Nicopolis, thereby winning the title of *Yildirim*, "the Thunderbolt".

In Transoxiana, in Persia and in India his rival Timur had met no really formidable army and with his thousands of experienced veterans and his own genius for war, victory was practically assured in every campaign he had hitherto undertaken. Now, however, he was to meet the

[1] *The Turkish History*, vol. i, p. 149.
[2] For these letters *vide* Browne's *op. cit.* vol. iii, pp. 204-206.

highly disciplined Janissaries, the best fighting force in Europe.

In February 1402 Timur marched off to meet Bayazid. The decisive action was fought near Angora, now Ankara. The army of Timur was far superior in numbers, and some of Bayazid's levies had been won over by him and deserted the Sultan. The battle was desperately contested, and Sharaf-ud-Din especially praises "the cavalry of Europe all armed in steel from head to foot . . . falling upon our men, gave marks of a prodigious valour and invincible courage". But Knolles sums up: "The multitude, and not true valour prevailed, for, as much as might be done by valiant and courageous men, was by the *Janizaries* and the rest performed. . . . But in the end, the Horsemen with whom *Tamerlane* himself was, giving a fresh Charge, he with much ado obtained the Victory." [1]

Bayazid, who had fought bravely, was captured and brought before Timur. He was suffering from illness and died early in the next year. After this decisive victory, which saved Constantinople for fifty years, Timur despatched a force to capture Brussa. The Emperor himself marched on Smyrna, which was held by the Knights of St. John. After an obstinate defence the city was stormed, the garrison was put to the sword, and the heads of the Knights were hurled by engines on to the decks of two European ships in the harbour.

We learn that, at this period, Timur wrote a letter to Henry IV of England, who, in his reply, congratulated him upon his great victory over the Turks.[2] The victory of Angora was speedily followed by the submission of the Sultan of Egypt, who hastened to release Timur's ambassador, and despatched a Mission to his camp, which was graciously received.

Timur had now won the lordship of Central and Western Asia, and no ruler dared to dispute his orders. He accordingly, after wintering once again at Karabagh,

[1] *Op. cit.* vol. i, p. 152.

[2] *Original Letters illustrative of English History* (third series), vol. i, pp. 54-58, by Sir Henry Ellis.

returned to Samarkand in the summer of 1404. There he celebrated his supreme triumph with marriages of his grandsons and with feasts. Inspections of the groups of buildings and the gardens he had ordered to be laid out, were also made.

The King of Castile despatches an Embassy to Samarkand.—We learn that two envoys from Henry III of Castile were present at the battle of Angora. Tamerlane dismissed them after his victory, with an ambassador of his own, the bearer of rich gifts of jewellery and beautiful women, to the King. To continue this diplomatic intercourse, Henry decided to despatch Ruy Gonzalez di Clavijo on an embassy to the Court of Tamerlane, and to this worthy knight we owe a most valuable contemporary account of Asia, so far as he crossed it, and of Timur.[1]

Landing at Trebizond, Clavijo, who was travelling with Timur's ambassador, was graciously received by Manuel II Comneni, the ruler of a narrow coastal territory for which he paid tribute to Timur. Following the caravan route and being everywhere courteously received, at Khoi he met and joined forces with ambassadors from the Sultan of Egypt who, among other presents, had brought "a beast called a Jornufa [Giraffe], which was strangely made and after a fashion unknown to us".

Clavijo was especially impressed by the splendour of Tabriz and visited "a great palace that stands surrounded by its own wall most beautifully and richly planned and within this building were twenty thousand rooms and separate apartments". Continuing the journey eastwards across Northern Persia in midsummer, the worthy Knight admired the system of post-horses, which still existed in Persia when I first travelled in that country. Suffering greatly from the heat, which caused the death of a member of the embassy, the weary ambassadors reached Nishapur.

Later, at Meshed, the present capital of Khurasan, Clavijo was permitted to visit the shrine of the *Imam*

[1] In this section I have consulted *Clavijo, Embassy to Tamerlane*, 1403–1406, by Guy Le Strange (Broadway Travellers).

Riza, which he describes as " the chief place of pilgrimage in all these parts ", as indeed it is today.

From this centre the ambassadors rode post through the Chagatay country to Balkh where only " the innermost circle of the city is densely populated, crops of cotton being grown in the area between the outer rampart and the first inner wall ".

Crossing the Oxus to Termez, Clavijo passed through the celebrated Iron Gates (described by Hsuan-tsang in Chapter X) to Timur's birthplace at Kesh, where he admired the palaces and the mosque with its exquisite blue and gold tiles. Finally, upon reaching the outskirts of Samarkand, the ambassadors were conducted to a beautiful orchard outside the city, where they encamped for some days spending their official reception by the Emperor. To quote Sharaf-ud-Din: " The emperor went to the garden of Dileucha [Dilkusha or ' Heart's Ease '], where he staid several days and received an ambassador from one of the greatest sovereigns of Europe, who made him several curious and magnificent presents, among which were pieces of tapistry ". Later, he somewhat contemptuously notes the presence of Clavijo and his staff at a banquet: " The European ambassadors were also invited to this great banquet, and partook of the diversions; for the *Casses* have also their place in the sea ".[1]

Clavijo gives us a most interesting account of the pomp and circumstance of his reception by Timur, at which he was instructed to " stand close up to him [Timur] that he might the better see us, for his sight was no longer good, indeed, he was so infirm and old that his eyelids were falling over his eyes and he could barely raise them to see ".

After being greeted graciously by Timur, who showed his appreciation of the honour paid him by a powerful monarch in Western Europe, Clavijo was seated above the ambassador of the emperor of Cathay who " had lately come to Timur to demand of him the tribute, said to be due to his master, which Timur year by year had formerly

[1] *Casses* are described as " a little animal, about the size of a barley-corn, which are seen upon the surface of the sea ".

paid ". Clavijo much admired the palaces, the beautiful tents " with pavilions of coloured tapestries for shade " to which he was bidden and was hospitably received at many feasts. He was also observant and, among many other things, noted that only nobles were hanged, whereas men of the lower classes were decapitated. Altogether his descriptions of the state of the country and of the court are most valuable.

Owing to the sudden illness of the Emperor, from which he temporarily recovered, the ambassadors were somewhat hastily dismissed. Later, when news of his death had reached Tabriz they were imprisoned. After a delay of six months, however, they were released and finally reached " Alcala de Henares where we found our lord King Henry III of Castile ".

The projected Invasion of the Chinese Empire, A.D. 1404.—We read that, before he evacuated Anatolia, Timur had already determined to invade the Chinese Empire. With this object the Emperor, as a first step, despatched a powerful army to subdue the pagan tribes beyond the Sir Daria and to establish depôts for his use. He also sent special emissaries to furnish detailed reports on the routes and supplies. So well served was he that, before he reached Samarkand, he had received what we should call a valuable route report on the country from the source of the Irtish to the Great Wall.

Timur was seventy years of age when he gave audience to Clavijo. Shortly afterwards he convened a Diet and issued final orders for the subjugation of China, on the grounds that the race of Chenghiz had been expelled from that empire and that the war, being against infidels, would be a Holy War. A fully equipped force of 200,000 was organized and marched off eastwards. The Sir Daria was crossed on the ice at Otrar, where Tamerlane again suddenly fell ill.

The Death of Tamerlane, January A.D. 1404.—Feeling his end approaching the Great Conqueror appointed his grandson Pir Muhammad his heir and died a devout Moslem.

Before summing up his character, we have to accept

or reject the famous "Institutes", which profess to contain his views on life and on the policy of empire. The validity of this work is disputed, and since Professor Browne rejected it as spurious, it may be safely disregarded.

Judging Timur by the standards prevailing in Asia during his lifetime, numerous examples of which have incidentally been supplied in this chapter, his valour, both physical and moral, his sagacity and his generosity, together with his rule of having no favourites, prove him as a man to be an outstanding personality. Added to this, his genius, both for strategy and for tactics on the field of battle, led him to be trusted by his soldiers, who followed him with intense devotion. Although having had little education himself, he was a friend of the arts and generously rewarded learned men and poets, while he originated the celebrated Timurid art period. He enriched Samarkand with magnificent buildings, that even in decay caused Lord Curzon to proclaim the Rigistan "the noblest public square in the East".[1] He also made it the chief market in Central Asia. Elsewhere in his empire he constructed important public works and reorganized the administration. To turn to another side of his character: he was devoted to the game of chess. Indeed, he named his youngest son Shah Rukh because he heard of his birth when the *rukh* or knight was on the point of checking the *Shah* or King. Everywhere he encouraged commerce and industry and, by his conquests, opened up new trade-routes, more especially between Transoxiana and India. To conclude: Timur's achievements were unsurpassed by any Asiatic conqueror and, when he died, Asia from the Sir Daria to the sea-coast of Asia Minor and from the Irtish and Volga to the Persian Gulf, obeyed his rule.

Timur lies buried beneath a domed mausoleum at Samarkand. The cenotaph consists of a great block of black jade, while the tomb is in the vault below. I count it a special privilege to have visited the *Gur-i-Amir* or "Tomb of *the* Amir".

[1] *Russia in Central Asia*, p. 220.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE RENAISSANCE OF ART UNDER THE TIMURID PRINCES

The Timurids recall to mind the old Paladins in the *Chansons de Gestes*, passing in the space of a short time from the splendours of a throne to a position of the utmost decay. They were, however, the most artistic princes that ever reigned in Persia. . . . They were no barbarians; indeed everything goes to show that they were highly civilized and refined men, real scholars, loving art for the sake of art alone, and without ostentation. In the intervals between their battles, they enjoyed thinking of their libraries and writing poetry, many of them having composed poetry that far excels that of their court poets.—Dr. F. R. MARTIN, *The Miniature Painting and Painters of Persia, India and Turkey.*

The Fifteenth Century in Central Asia.—The century now under review falls into two distinct periods, divided by the death of Shah Rukh in A.D. 1446. This remarkable Prince, who was undoubtedly the most worthy descendant of mighty Timur, ruled successfully over the greater part of his father's empire, albeit he had to deal with revolts and invasions. In the second period each Prince fought for his own hand and the empire rapidly fell into pieces, mainly at the hands of the Chiefs of the " Black Sheep " and " White Sheep " Turkoman. Then followed the rise to power of the Uzbegs, descendants of Shaybani Khan, a Chief of the Golden Horde. They, under another Shaybani Khan, captured Herat in 1507 and overthrew the Timurid dynasty. Finally, in 1510, Shah Ismail crushes the " White Sheep ", kills in battle Shaybani Khan, the Uzbeg Chief, and founds the mighty Safavi dynasty of Persia.[1]

The Fight for Power after the Death of Timur.—As we have seen, Timur had made Pir Muhammad his sole heir, but when news of the death of the Great Conqueror

[1] In this chapter I have consulted (in addition to former works already mentioned) *The Road to Oxiana*, by Robert Byron, *The Near and Middle East*, by René Grousset and the *Rozat-us-Safa* of the historian Mirkhwand.

reached Samarkand, he was absent at distant Kandahar. Taking advantage of the situation, his cousin Khalil Sultan, son of Miranshah, receiving the support of the nobles and the army, was proclaimed Sultan at Samarkand. However, his reign was a brief one, since he scandalized his supporters by squandering the immense treasure amassed by Timur on his mistress *Shad-ul-Mulk* or "Joy of the State". He was accordingly deposed and banished to Kashgar, and Shah Rukh finally ascended the throne.

The Reign of Shah Rukh, A.D. 1404–1447.—Shah Rukh, as we have seen, had been appointed Governor of Khurasan by his father during his lifetime. In 1396, and, after his accession to supreme power, his dominions were constantly enlarged until he ruled from Transoxiana to the western limits of Azerbaijan. Constituting Herat his capital, he set himself to heal the wounds caused by conquest, rebuilding the walls of Herat and adorning that city with magnificent buildings. He also carried out similar acts of restoration throughout his empire. Nor was his wife Gauhar Shad, sister of Kara Yusuf of the "Black Sheep" dynasty, less active in erecting mosques and other buildings. Notable among them was the Masjid-i-Gauhar Shah at Meshed which, unlike the buildings at Herat, is in a perfect state of preservation and will be described later in this chapter. During the same period Shah Rukh's son, Ulugh Beg, made Samarkand one of the most beautiful cities in Asia.

The court of Shah Rukh at Herat attracted poets, artists, and men of letters from all over his wide empire, while politically and commercially it became the metropolis of Central Asia. To quote Baber: "The whole habitable world had not such a city as Herat".

Embassies were also a special feature of the reign. In 1419 an ambassador was despatched to the Emperor of China bearing letters written by Shah Rukh himself which are still extant.[1] Again, in 1442, Abdur Razzak led a Mission to the Court of the Samuri in the Deccan and his impressions recorded in a volume of the Hakluyt Society make delightful reading.

[1] *Asiatic Miscellanies*, vol. i. Calcutta, 1785.

It must not be thought that this gracious prince, who delighted in the arts of peace, was unwarlike. This was far from being the case, for he defeated Kara Yusuf of the " Black Sheep " dynasty in three great battles and, after the death of that chief, forced his son Iskandar to pay him tribute for the province of Azerbaijan. In 1431 he marched on Kerman where its Governor, Sultan Oways, a Chief of the Barlas tribe, had ceased to pay tribute. On tendering his submission the rebel was sentenced to death but was ultimately pardoned.

Ulugh Beg, the Astronomer-King, A.D. 1447–1449.—Of Shah Rukh's five sons, only Ulugh Beg lived to succeed him. Baisungur, who died from excessive drinking (the bane of the dynasty) at the early age of thirty-seven, was considered to be not only the most talented member of the family, but also the greatest patron of art and learning. He was especially interested in calligraphy, but poets also, and scholars from all parts of Persia, flocked to his Court.

Before he succeeded his father, Ulugh Beg had governed Samarkand for thirty-eight years and had established a golden age for Transoxiana. The encouragement he gave to his favourite science of astronomy has preserved his name as the author of the most accurate and complete astronomical tables that the East has bequeathed to the West. These tables were published in Latin at Oxford about 1650.

The reign of this truly learned monarch ended in tragic disaster. Soon after his accession to the throne of Shah Rukh, his nephew Ala-ud-dola seized Herat and captured his son Abdul Latif. This pretender was driven out, but almost simultaneously Samarkand was sacked by the Uzbegs. Finally, to complete the tragedy, Abdul Latif, after his release, rebelled, imprisoned his father and murdered him in 1449.

Abu Said, A.D. 1452–1467.—Abdul Latif, not content with murdering his father, added to his crimes by killing his brother. However, the parricide, in turn, was killed by a servant of Ulugh Beg in 1450. Mirkhwand, who records these tragic events, quotes the poet Nizami,

as to the speedy retribution that overtakes royal parricides:

> The parricide is unworthy of sovereignty;
> Even if he attains it, he will not survive more than six months.

Abu Said, a grandson of Miranshah, now seized Samarkand. He was driven out by Abdulla *Mirza*, a grandson of Shah Rukh, but, in 1452, collecting a strong force of Uzbegs, he defeated Abdulla, put him to death and ascended the throne of Samarkand.

Abu Said, whose devotion to scholars and men of letters was marked, gradually established his authority in Transoxiana, Afghanistan and Northern Persia. In 1456 he captured Herat and believing that the aged Gauhar Shad was encouraging the garrison of the citadel to hold out, he put her to death. She was buried in the beautiful mausoleum which she had built during her lifetime, and on her tombstone the inscription ran, " The Bilkis of the Age ".[1]

Abu Said, before long, was destined to be punished for this atrocious crime. In 1467 he invaded Azerbaijan, but was defeated and captured by *Uzun* Hasan, the Chief of the " White Sheep " dynasty. He was handed over by the victor to Yadyar *Mirza*, a great-grandson of Gauhar Shah, who put him to death.

Ahmad and Mahmud, the Sons of Abu Said, A.D. 1467–1500.—Upon the death of Abu Said, his son, Sultan Ahmad, ascended the throne of Samarkand. His brother Omar Shaykh, the father of illustrious Baber, who was established in the province of Ferghana, had gained possession of Tashkent, and we read in the Tarikh-i-Rashidi [2] that Yunus, the Chief Khan of the Moghuls, sent an army to support him [Omar Shaykh] against Sultan Ahmad. Peace was, however, made by " His Holiness Nasir-ud-din Ubaidullah (may God bless his hidden soul) ", who decided that Tashkent was to be made over to Yunus Khan.

Upon the death of the Chief Khan in 1487 Omar Shaykh seized a stronghold near Tashkent, but it was

[1] Bilkis was the famous Queen of Sheba, who visited King Solomon.
[2] P. 113.

assaulted by another brother, Sultan Mahmud Khan, the ruler of Badakhshan, who was acting as the ally of Sultan Ahmad; he captured the fort and killed every member of the garrison.

When Omar Shaykh was killed by an accident in 1494, Sultan Ahmad, as mentioned in the following chapter, marched on Andijan, but failed to seize it owing to Baber's prompt action. Upon reaching Marghilan he fell ill and died, forty days after the demise of Omar Shaykh. Sultan Ahmad, although not a successful ruler, adorned Bukhara with some splendid buildings. His brother Mahmud died shortly afterwards and was succeeded by his son *Mirza* Baisungur, who fought for power with his brother Sultan Ali. Baber, as we shall see in the next chapter, took a hand in the game and captured Samarkand from his cousin Baisungur, but it was finally seized by Shaybani Khan Uzbeg who, as already mentioned, overthrew the decadent Timurid dynasty.

Sultan Husayn bin Mansur bin Baykara, A.D. 1468–1506.—The last and, from the literary point of view, perhaps the greatest of the Timurid princes was Sultan Husayn. Originally an adherent of Ulugh Beg, he was imprisoned by Abu Said but escaped and fled to Khiva. In 1457 he captured Astrabad and ruled that province, acknowledging Abu Said as his suzerain. On the death of the latter ruler he captured Herat, where he reigned for thirty-eight years. Ably supported by his celebrated Vizier Mir Ali Shir, Nawai, he created at his capital a remarkably brilliant centre of art and literature, which constituted the culmination of this wonderful renaissance. Not only were he and his Vizier the patrons of Bihzad, the greatest painter of Persia, of Jami, the famous poet, and of Mirkhwand, the great historian, but the monarch himself also wrote in verse and prose with rare distinction. Baber's delightful description of his talented kinsman runs: "Sultan Husayn was a lively, pleasant man, whose temper was rather hasty and whose language was in accordance with his temper. He often engaged sword in hand in fight, and no member of the race of Timur ever equalled him in the use of the scimitar.

He had a turn for poetry, and many of his verses were far from bad. Although not without dignity, he was inordinately fond of keeping fighting rams and of amusing himself with flying pigeons and cock-fighting."

In the year following the death of Sultan Husayn, Shaybani Khan, the Uzbeg Chief, who had already captured Samarkand, took Herat and thus, as mentioned above, overthrew the Timurid dynasty.

The "Black" and "White Sheep" Turkoman.—Reference has already been made to Kara Yusuf of the "Black Sheep" dynasty, whose protection by Bayazid was one of the causes of Timur's hostility to that monarch. After Timur's death he recovered his possessions, adding to them those of Sultan Ahmad of the Jalayr dynasty, whom he defeated and put to death. His successor was Iskandar, who was surprised and killed by *Uzun* or "tall" Hasan of the "White Sheep" dynasty. A deadly feud with the rival tribe had originated in the action of Iskandar who, when fleeing from Timur, had, by chance, captured Kara-Osman, the grandfather of *Uzun* Hasan. He kept this Chief a prisoner and, after his death, exhumed the buried corpse and cutting off the head sent it to the Sultan of Egypt. Accordingly, when Hasan defeated the "Black Sheep" tribe, in revenge for this barbarous insult, he exterminated every member of the chief's family.

By the defeat of Abu Said, *Uzun* Hasan became the virtual ruler of Persia until his death in A.D. 1478. *Uzun* Hasan's alliance with Venice and his marriage to Theodora, a beauteous daughter of Calo Johannes, one of the last of the Comneni emperors of Trebizond, constitutes a fascinating page of history, which lies outside the scope of this work, but can be read in the publications of the Hakluyt Society.[1]

The Timurid Renaissance.—By way of conclusion to this chapter, I propose briefly to comment on the results of the brilliant Renaissance, which had its centre in Herat and which was not surpassed by a similar "Rebirth"

[1] *Six Narratives of Travel in Persia by Italians in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries.*

which broke through the Dark Ages in Europe. In one respect, however, the two movements differed, since the Renaissance of Herat coincided with increased devotion to the Moslem religion, whereas the Renaissance in Europe, to no small extent, constituted a reaction against the Christian religion in favour of reason.

It is important to realize that all art in the East depended on the monarch. This was particularly the case at Herat, where the lovely miniature paintings which delight us were originally created by artists for the adornment and illustration of writings of the rulers, historians or poets. Under the auspices of Baisungur, for example, we read of forty artists who were employed in copying manuscripts, calligraphy (then as now, ranking as an art), while their illustrations, their illuminations and the covers of these works are unequalled.

Persian Miniature Paintings.—The origins of Persian painting may be found in the figures which appear in the lustre decoration of the tiles which were produced at Ray in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. At first these figures were merely a decorative motive, but in course of time the art developed and represented the courts of princes, hunting-scenes and riders playing polo. There were also exquisite pictures of lions, horses, camels, hares and birds. Nor were the delights of the garden forgotten, for fruit trees in blossom, together with cypresses, plane-trees and flowers added a setting of enthralling charm.

It should be remembered that the paintings of the Timurid period are the direct descendants of the Manichaean illuminations of the third century A.D., albeit they were influenced in part by Chinese art. Finally, however, foreign elements were assimilated and, in the fifteenth century, the Timurid Renaissance reached its zenith.

Bihzad.—The greatest Persian painter of all time was Kamal ad-din Bihzad, who, born at Herat in about A.D. 1440, lived and worked at the Court of Sultan Husayn, and painted two portraits of the Sultan which are especially famous. Of equal celebrity are the miniature pictures he painted to illustrate Sharaf-ud-Din's

history, depicting Timur on his throne, the storming of a fortress, the building of a mosque and many other scenes. Bihzad also illustrated a manuscript of the *Bustan* of Sadi with masterpieces of equal elegance and beauty.

Mulla Nur-ud-Din Abdur Rahman Jami.—Jami, who took the title by which he is best known from the little town of Turbat-i-Shaikh-Jam in Khurasan, was born in A.D. 1414 and died at Herat in 1492. He was not only a great poet and a great scholar, but also a great mystic. Baber, a very good judge, writes that he is " too exalted for there to be any need for praising him ".

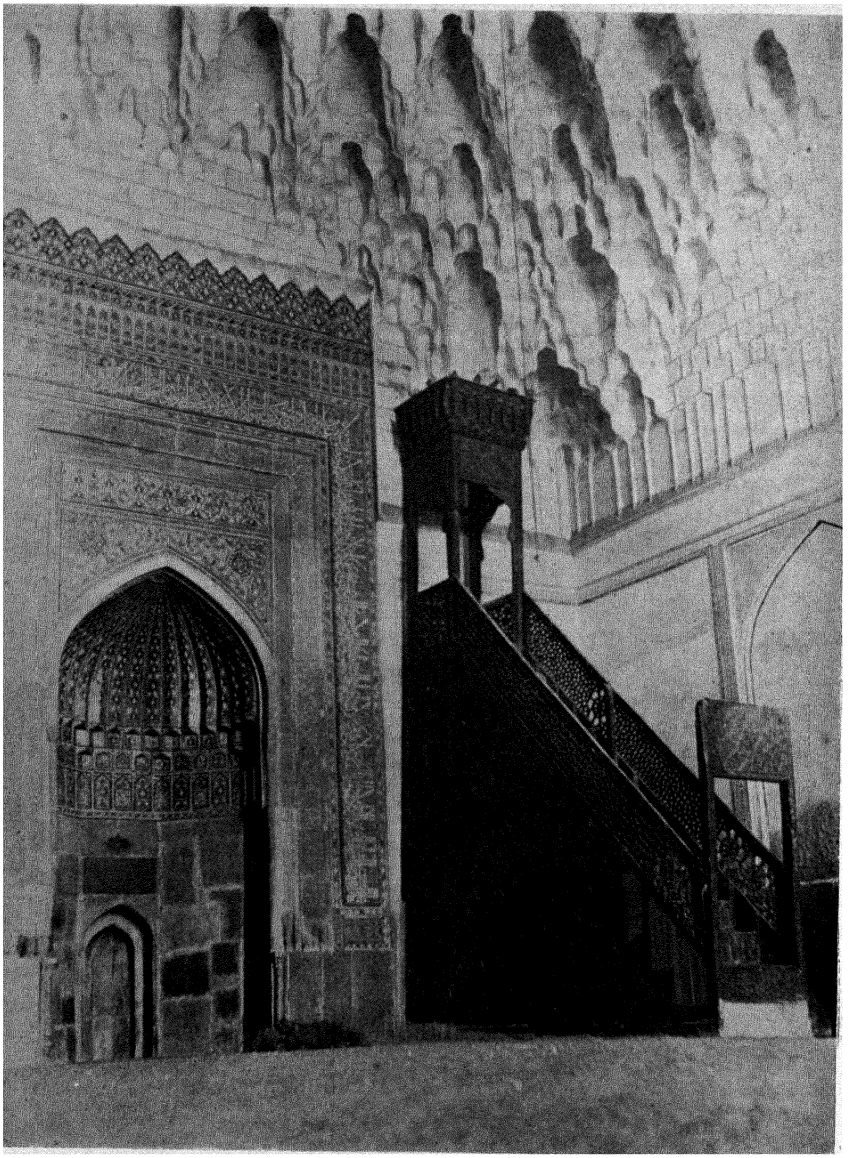
Of Jami's poems I quote an extract from FitzGerald's translation of *Salaman and Absal*:

> When they had sailed their Vessel for a Moon
> And marr'd their Beauty with the wind o' th' Sea,
> Suddenly in mid Sea revealed itself
> An Isle, beyond Description beautiful;
> An Isle that all was Garden; not a Bird
> Of Note or Plume in all the World but there;
> There as in Bridal Retinue array'd
> The Pheasant in his Crown, the Dove in her Collar;
> And those who tuned their Bills among the Trees
> That Arm in Arm from Fingers paralyz'd
> With any Breath of Air Fruit moist and dry
> Down scattered in Profusion at their Feet,
> Where Fountains of Sweet Water ran, and round
> Sunshine and Shadow chequer-chased the Ground.
> Here Iram Garden seemed in Secresy
> Blowing the Rosebud of its Revelation;
> Or Paradise, forgetful of the Day
> Of Audit, lifted from her Face the Veil.

I have also enjoyed Jami's *Yusuf and Zulayka* and his *Layla and Majnun*, scenes from which constituted favourite themes for the painters of the period.

The Mosque of Gauhar Shad.—To turn to the architectural triumphs of the period: I have studied the beautiful buildings of Samarkand and Bukhara, but I unhesitatingly select the mosque of Gauhar Shad at Meshed, which I also studied under somewhat dramatic circumstances,[1] for special mention.

[1] Sykes, *op. cit.* vol. ii, p. 426.



THE PULPIT OF THE MAHDI

(In the Mosque of Gauhar Shad at Meshed)

This magnificent building constitutes a noble quadrangle, with four great arches decorated with the most beautiful tiles. That to the south-west, termed "The Portico of the Sanctuary", supports a shapely blue dome rising between two lofty tiled minarets. Under this "Portico", with its richly adorned *kibla*, is a carved pulpit which, according to popular belief, will be ascended by the Twelfth *Imam* on the Day of Judgment. The beauty of this superb portico is enhanced by an inscription in large white letters on a dark-blue ground, with other colours worked into the scheme. The purport of this inscription, which was copied for me, was to the effect that Gauhar Shad, from her private property, and for the benefit of her future state, built this great mosque. It concludes: "Baisunghur, son of Shah Rukh, son of Timur Gurkhani, wrote this inscription with hope in Allah in 821 (1418)".[1]

Byron writes that if this mosque is not equalled in Samarkand or Bukhara (which he did not visit), "it must be the greatest surviving monument of the period, while the ruins of Herat show that there was once a greater".[2] For me, this noble quadrangle with its loftiness, its perfect proportions and its beautiful tile-work, represents, so far as buildings in existence are concerned, the crowning architectural achievement of the Timurid dynasty.

Other Arts of the Timurid Period.—To conclude this brief survey of what the world owes to the Renaissance which centred in Herat, I would refer to the beautiful carpets, the splendid arms and the exquisite ivory-work. Indeed, so powerful was the impulse derived from the Timurids that it lasted through a great part of the sixteenth century and continued to influence Persia under the patronage of the Safavi monarchs.

[1] This inscription is given in full in Sykes' "Historical Notes on Khurasan", *Journal R.A.S.*, Oct. 1910. The *kibla* is the niche which marks the direction of Mecca.

[2] *The Road to Oxiana*, p. 245.

CHAPTER XIX

BABER FOUNDS THE MOGHUL EMPIRE OF INDIA

Inspired as I was with an ambition for conquest and for extensive dominion, I would not, on account of one or two defeats, sit down and look idly around me.—*The Memoirs of Baber.*

He alone can be Emperor of Hindustan who is first lord of Kabul.—An Indian Proverb.

The Ancestors of Baber.—Baber, the founder of the mighty Moghul dynasty, which ruled Eastern Afghanistan and a large portion of the Indian peninsula, ranks among the greatest and most attractive of the conquerors known to history. His name was Zahir-ud-Din, Muhammad, but it is by the nickname of Baber or "Tiger" that he won world-wide fame.[1] The eldest son of the Timurid prince Omar Shaykh *Mirza*, ruler of Ferghana, he was a descendant of Tamerlane and also, through his mother a descendant of Chagatay, the second son of Chenghiz Khan.

The Death of Omar Shaykh Mirza.—Baber was a mere youth in his twelfth year when, owing to his father being killed by the fall of a house, he succeeded to the throne of Ferghana in A.D. 1494. Of his father, he writes: "Omar Shaykh was a prince of high ambition and magnificent pretensions and was always bent on some scheme of conquest. He several times led an army against Samarkand and was repeatedly defeated." These words aptly epitomize the political situation in Central Asia where the Timurid Princes were incessantly fighting one another for predominance, while their very existence was threatened

[1] This chapter is mainly based on the celebrated *Memoirs of Baber* which, written in Turki, were also translated into Persian with complete accuracy. The best edition of this classic is the *Babur-Nama in English* translated from the Turki by Annette Beveridge, with many valuable notes by the learned authoress. Another work of considerable value is the *Tarikh-i-Rashidi* of *Mirza* Haidar, which was edited by Ney Elias and translated by Denison Ross. I have also consulted *Baber*, by Stanley Lane-Poole.

by the rise to power of the Uzbegs. The situation was made worse by Baber's uncle, Sultan Ahmad *Mirza*, the ruler of Samarkand, who was accorded some nominal authority, but was a weak creature, unfitted to govern such turbulent relations. At Herat, as already mentioned, Sultan Husayn, Baikara, a distant cousin, reigned over a kingdom which stretched from Balkh to Astrabad, and included both Herat and Kandahar.

To complete this brief survey, further east and north, the Mongol tribes, under descendants of Chenghiz Khan, still roamed their steppes. Yunus Khan, their Chief, had given three of his daughters to three of these Princes and one of them, Kutlagh Nigar *Khanim*, was the mother of Baber. His grandmother, the widow of Yunus, played a leading part in his early years. " There were few of her sex ", he wrote, " who equalled my grandmother in sense and sagacity. She was uncommonly far-sighted and sagacious." Finally Mahmud Khan, his maternal uncle, who succeeded Yunus Khan on the " white pelt " of the Mongols, forsook the tents of his ancestors and held his Court at Tashkent.

The early Difficulties of Baber.—At the time of Omar Shaykh's death, he was being besieged by hostile brothers at Akhsi. At that time Baber was living at the garden palace of Andijan. He immediately set out to secure the castle which he succeeded in doing, although a traitorous retainer wished to hand over the state to his uncle Sultan Ahmad *Mirza*. Secure in Andijan, he opened up negotiations and patched up a peace with the invaders, but was forced, for the time being, to surrender Khojand.

Baber takes Samarkand.—In A.D. 1497, the boy-King, taking advantage of the prevailing anarchy, captured Samarkand from his cousin Baisungur. The city and surrounding country had been completely pillaged, so much so that it was impossible to feed his soldiers, who deserted him and returned to Ferghana, where they mutinied and besieged Andijan.

Baber loses Andijan but recovers it.—Baber, unfortunately, fell seriously ill at this juncture. Upon his recovery he decided to leave Samarkand where, as he

writes, he had reigned for just one hundred days and, upon reaching Khojand, he heard of the fall of Andijan. For two years his fortunes were at a very low ebb, but using Khojand as a base, he successfully rallied his supporters around him and, by A.D. 1499, he had recovered his kingdom. However, he foolishly alienated a powerful body of Mongols and was obliged to make a peace, by the terms of which his brother Jahangir, the tool of Tambal, the leader of the conspirators, secured Akhsi.

The Uzbegs under Shaybani Khan.—At this point some account of the rise of the Uzbegs is called for. Juji, the eldest son of Chenghiz Khan, granted his fifth son Shayban an appanage between the Ural Mountains and the rivers Ilek and Irghiz where his tribe, which took its name from Uzbeg, the Great Khan of the Golden Horde, grazed their herds. Later, in the fifteenth century, part of the tribe migrated to Central Asia where Muhammad Shaybani, known also as Shahi Beg, conquered Transoxiana, Khwarizm and Balkh, and finally, as we shall see, overthrew the empire of Tamerlane.

Baber surprises Samarkand in A.D. 1500.—Shaybani Khan had been appealed to for help against Baber by Baisungur, but in vain. He had, however, realized the weakness of the Princes and, later, he had occupied Samarkand. Baber, however, accepting an invitation from the Turkhans, its leading family, after failing at the first attempt, surprised the city with a force of only 240 men. The citizens rose on the garrison and, to quote Baber, "They pursued the Uzbegs in every street and corner with sticks and stones, hunting them down and killing them like mad dogs. They put to death about four or five hundred Uzbegs in this manner."

Baber is defeated by Shaybani Khan at Sir-i-Pul.—The young victor sent embassies to the neighbouring rulers but his missions were failures, so great was the dread of the Uzbegs. However, he raised levies and marched out to meet Shaybani Khan, and without awaiting reinforcements that were on the march to join him, he precipitated an action owing to a supposedly favourable position of the stars. The Uzbegs routed his left wing and attacked

his rear. His front was also broken and he fled back to Samarkand.

The Moghul troops which had come to his assistance " instead of fighting, betook themselves to dismounting and plundering the stragglers ". Breaking out into scornful verse he exclaims:

> If the Moghul race were a race of angels, it is a bad race;
> And were the name of Moghul written in gold, it would be odious.
> Take care not to pluck one ear of corn from a Moghul's harvest;
> The Moghul seed is such that whatever is sown with it, is execrable.

Strange lines these from the founder of the Moghul dynasty of India! Actually Baber considered himself to be a Chagatai Turk, and was not Tamerlane a Turk of the Barlas tribe?

Baber loses Samarkand and Ferghana, but gains a new Army.—Shaybani followed up the defeat of Baber by besieging Samarkand until famine cost the young Prince his adherents and, after holding out for seven months, he was forced to make terms with the Uzbeg Chief, who captured and married Khanzada *Begum*, Baber's elder sister. After wandering in the hills for some time, Baber took refuge with his maternal uncle Mahmud Khan at Tashkent, where he writes: " I endured great distress and misery. I had no country, nor hopes of a country."

Baber fails to recover his Kingdom.—Accompanying his uncles, he attempted to recover Ferghana. During a fight he was badly wounded by an arrow which pierced his right thigh and he then fled to Osh. His uncles with typical duplicity took over the towns in Ferghana which Baber had captured. Later, lured to Akhsi by a traitor, he was nearly caught by his chief enemy Tambal and his *Memoirs* contain a truly dramatic account of his escape from the trap into which he had fallen. Led in his flight by guides, who planned to betray him, he was in utter despair when two of his most devoted servants, with a following of twenty men, rescued him and bound the traitors.

Baber returned to Andijan, but Shaybani Khan, advancing from Samarkand with a powerful army, sacked

Tashkent, and followed this up by defeating and capturing the two Khans his uncles, near Akhsi.

Baber visits Hissar.—Baber, after this final catastrophe, spent a year hiding in the hills. He then in dire distress proceeded to Hissar. This state was ruled by Khusru Shah, a Kipchak Turk, who had been Mahmud *Mirza's* Vizier. To quote Baber: "He put out the eyes of one, and murdered another of the sons of the benefactor in whose service he had been patronised and protected".[1] Upon the arrival of Baber, Khusru Shah, to quote *Mirza* Haidar, "averting the face of compassion, turned the back of unkindness towards that master of benevolence". He adds: "How often in misfortune is there a hidden blessing! For at this very crisis, the advance of the standards of Shahi Beg on Hissar caused the boasting Khusru Shah to desert his kingdom. He fled to the hills of Ghuri; and on his arrival there, learnt that the Emperor was still among the mountains. That same night his servants and retinue, both great and small, from the *Mir* to the groom, all flocked to the Court of the Emperor."[1]

Baber captures Kabul, A.D. 1504.—By this amazing turn of the wheel of fortune, worthy of the *Arabian Nights*, Baber, from being a wanderer with no following, suddenly found himself the leader of a powerful force. He immediately decided to attack Kabul. This state had been ruled by his uncle Ulugh *Mirza* and, upon his death in 1501, Mukim, son of Zunnum Arghun, displacing Abdur Razzak, son of Ulugh *Mirza*, had taken possession of the city. Unable to withstand the powerful army led by Baber, Mukim surrendered the provinces of Kabul and Ghazni to him and was allowed to proceed to Kandahar with his followers and treasure. By this conquest of Kabul, Baber secured the key to India. It remained in the possession of the Moghul dynasty founded by Baber for more than two centuries.

His Description of Kabul.—Of his new conquest Baber writes: "The country of Kabul is situated in the midst of the inhabited part of the world. It is surrounded on

[1] *Op. cit.* pp. 175-176.

all sides by hills. In winter all the roads are shut for five months save one alone. The Kafir robbers issue from the mountains and narrow paths and infest this passage. The country is very stony and difficult of access to foreigners or enemies."

Baber's First Raid to the Indus.[1]—Before very long, the ambitious conqueror decided to make his first raid into the Punjab, a decision which was strengthened by the impossibility of supporting an army on the limited resources of the Kabul province. Of the march he writes: "I wondered as I beheld a new world. The grass was different, the trees different, the wild animals of a different sort, the birds of a different plumage, the manners and customs of the wandering tribes of a different kind. I was struck with astonishment, and indeed there was room for wonder."

Passing through the Khaibar Pass, Baber raided Kohat and Bannu, and reached the Indus. Of the Afghans he writes: "When they are reduced to extremities in war, they come into the presence of their enemy with grass between their teeth; as much as to say, 'I am your ox'".

Apart from cattle there was little plunder, and travelling up the Gumal Valley, Baber made for the *Ab-i-Istadeh*, where he wondered at the enormous flocks of flamingoes and other birds which haunted the lake. He then visited Ghazni and returned to Kabul, with worn-out men and horses and without having gained anything of value.

Baber's Expedition against the Hazaras, A.D. 1506.—"The Hazaras," we read, "down to the time of my arrival in Kabul, had been guilty of numerous insults and depredations; I therefore decided to make an excursion against them." This punitive expedition, executed in mid-winter, resulted in the slaughter of some Hazaras and also in a severe attack of lumbago for Baber, who returned to Kabul in a litter.

The Expedition to Herat, A.D. 1506.—Sultan Husayn, the last of the great Timurid Princes, summoned Baber

[1] There is some disagreement as to the five expeditions, but the matter is of slight importance.

to assist him in a campaign against the Uzbegs, but died before commencing operations against them. Baber's brother Jahangir *Mirza*, discontented with his position as Governor of Ghazni, had fled, at this juncture, towards Herat, and, suspecting treason, Baber followed, and overtook him in the Hazara Mountains where he tendered his submission. They then marched together to Herat, where they were welcomed by Badia-az-Zaman, the son of Sultan Husayn, and his brothers.

Baber soon realized that these decadent Princes, known to Moslem writers as the *Mirzas*, who were immersed in luxury, were totally unfitted to oppose the Uzbegs. As he put it: " The *Mirzas* were good enough as company and in social matters, in conversation and parties, but they were strangers to war, strategy, equipment, bold fight and encounter ".

The Capture of Herat, A.D. 1507.—And so the event proved. Shaybani Khan marched against Herat, which surrendered at the explosion of the first mine. To quote *Mirza* Haidar :[1] " When news arrived of Shahi Beg Khan's approach, everything was thrown into dire confusion and disorder. *Mirza* Zunnun led out our army to oppose him, but saw that it was too late to dam the torrent with earth, or to smother the blazing fire with dust, and he was himself slain at the first onset of the Uzbeg, who forthwith entered and plundered Herat. The *Mirzas* all fled in different directions." Thus, through cowardice and utter decadence fell the great empire founded by grim Timur the Lame.

The Winter March to Kabul.—Although it was midwinter, Baber decided to return to Kabul across the Hazara country. The snow was deep and the country was absolutely deserted, so much so that he lost the way. Fortunately a tragedy was averted by the timely discovery of a large cave, but as Baber writes: " Many lost their hands and feet from the frost ". The army was also attacked by the Hazaras, but he captured many of their leaders.

The Plot at Kabul.—Information reached Baber while

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 205.

he was plundering the Hazaras that the Moghuls who had remained at Kabul had declared Khan *Mirza*[1] King and were besieging the fort. The villain in the plot appears to have been Muhammad Husayn, the father of the historian *Mirza* Haidar, and his son tries somewhat lamely to exculpate him by stating that " the Princes of Herat were expected to kill Baber ". Unperturbed by this news, Baber arranged for his adherents in the fort to signal by lighting a fire in the citadel in response to a fire that he would light on a named hill. His advance guard rushed the besiegers; Khan *Mirza* escaped this party, but was taken later, and Muhammad Husayn was discovered hidden among the carpets. Baber, however, generously decided to forgive the authors of the plot, all of whom were his near relations. Treachery, indeed, was an ordinary event, especially among the Moghuls.

The Raid on the Ghilzais.—In A.D. 1507 Baber decided to plunder the Ghilzais, the great nomadic tribe which ranged the mountain uplands around Ghazni and eastwards as far as Khost. He took thousands of sheep and erected a minaret of skulls to serve as a monument to his prowess. He, however, spared the neighbouring Mohmands and proceeded to Kalat-i-Ghilzai where he levied toll on the merchants from India.

The Arghun Family.—Before dealing with Kandahar, a brief reference to its ruling family is desirable. Zun-Nun Beg Arghun, a descendant of the *Ilkhans* of Persia, was invested by the Timurid ruler with the government of Ghur and Seistan. Later, he received Zamindawar and Garmsir and selected Kandahar to be the capital of a practically independent state. In A.D. 1497, he supported Badia-az-Zaman against his father Sultan Husayn and invaded the Herat province, while his reputation was temporarily raised by Mukim's seizure of Kabul. Upon the death of Sultan Husayn, his power was at its height, but, as we have seen, he was killed in the battle against the Uzbegs.

[1] Yunus Khan, by his wife Isan Daulat *Begum*, had, as already mentioned, a daughter Kutlugh Nigar *Khanim*, who was the mother of Baber. By another wife, Shah *Begum*, he had another daughter, Sultan Nigar *Khanim*, who was the mother of Khan *Mirza*.

Baber captures Kandahar, A.D. 1507.—To resume the narrative, from Kalat-i-Ghilzai Baber advanced on Kandahar. Mukim was defeated with some difficulty and, in his flight, left Kandahar undefended. Baber looted the city and, bestowing the governorship on his brother Nasir *Mirza*, marched north; "and we reached Kabul with much wealth and plunder, and great reputation. Six or seven days afterwards, I learned that Shaybani Khan had arrived and was blockading Kandahar."

The Second Raid towards India.—The news from Kandahar caused grave alarm at Kabul. The Begs were summoned and Baber pointed out that the Uzbegs now held all the countries once held by Tamerlane's descendants. He referred to their strength, and to his own weakness, and decided that, at this crisis, it was advisable to place a wider space between his weak force and his powerful foeman. It was owing to Baber's unusual "inferiority complex" that he started on his second expedition into India. On this occasion, the Afghans attacked Baber in the Jagdalak Pass, but his troops making use of different valleys drove them off. "We stayed one night in the Kafirs' rice-fields", he writes, which statement proves how much more extensive at this period was the habitat of this interesting tribe. Baber states that he did not find it expedient to proceed in his expedition against Hindustan. Actually information had reached him that Kandahar had fallen and that Shaybani Khan had restored it to the possession of the Arghun family and had them returned to Central Asia. Presumably relieved at the departure of his dreaded enemy, Baber celebrated his return to Kabul by proclaiming himself Emperor[1] — he was now the last of the Moghul Princes to rule a state — and at the end of the year Humayun was born.

A Rebellion of the Moghuls.—The *Memoirs* commence the year A.D. 1508 with some account of a plot. They then break off abruptly and are not resumed until 1519. We learn, however, from the invaluable *Tarikh-i-Rashidi* that the Moghuls of Khusru Shah's army, who had joined

[1] *Padshah* or *Badshah*, as the word is pronounced in Afghanistan.

him, conspired to raise his cousin Abdur Razzak *Mirza*, the son of Ulugh *Mirza*, to the throne. Baber, followed by his faithful followers, attacked the rebels repeatedly and won immortal fame by slaying five champions in succession in single combat. As a result of this battle, in which Baber with 500 men defeated 3000 Moghuls, he regained his throne. Abdur Razzak, who had declined to accept the challenge to single combat, was captured, but was generously set at liberty.

The Rise of the Safavi Dynasty.—We must now turn our attention to Persia, which at this period was destined to play a leading part on the stage of Central Asia for some generations. Persian love for the house of the Caliph Ali, the son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad, and for Husayn, the martyr of Kerbela, found expression in the formation of the Shia or "Separatist" sect. The ancestors of the Safavi dynasty traced its descent from this family and Ismail, the founder of the new dynasty, was no mere chieftain of a warlike tribe, whose rise to power would provoke jealousies, but a Priest and King, whose sacred character would unite his followers to serve him with fanatical courage and enthusiasm.

After establishing his claims to the throne and proclaiming himself Shah at Tabriz, Ismail annexed Baghdad and Mosul. Later, he obtained possession of Diarbekir and ruled from Baku on the north to the Persian Gulf.

Shah Ismail defeats and kills Shaybani Khan, A.D. 1510. —Having thus secured his position in Western Persia and Iraq, Shah Ismail marched eastwards to Khurasan where, as we have seen, Shaybani Khan had overthrown the Timurid dynasty and captured Herat.[1]

Ismail, whose army was almost entirely composed of

[1] When travelling in the north-east districts of Khurasan, I photographed an inscription cut on a rock by orders of Shaybani Khan, the gist of which ran: "Abul Fath Shaybani Khan . . . on the second day of Shawal in the year of the Hijra 915 [A.D. 1510] turned his glorious reins from Merv-i-Shahijan towards Dasht-i-Kipchak, and, at the stage of Kindilik . . . defeated a multitude of infidels . . . and marched them to Dār-ul-Islam".

The Dasht-i-Kipchak is situated at some distance to the north-west of Bukhara, while Dār-ul-Islam probably signifies Samarkand. It is interesting to note that this battle in which, according to the historian Khwandamir, Shaybani Khan was defeated, was fought in the same year as that with Shah Ismail. Probably the losses of the Uzbegs in the former battle contributed to their defeat by the founder of the Safavi dynasty.

mounted troops, advanced so rapidly that the Uzbeg Chief was surprised in the vicinity of Merv before his army was assembled in full force. He, however, decided to attack, was drawn into an ambush by a feigned retreat and was defeated with heavy losses. Shaybani Khan fled and, while attempting to jump his horse out of an enclosure in which he had taken refuge, was killed. His skull, mounted in gold and set with iewels, served as a goblet to the victor.

After this decisive victory, Balkh and Herat were occupied. Great efforts, which included persecution, were made to convert the populations of these cities to the tenets of the Shia sect and caused grave discontent.

Baber and Shah Ismail.—Among the captives taken at Merv was Baber's sister, the unfortunate Khanzada *Begum*, who was courteously treated and restored to her brother by an ambassador bearing costly gifts. Baber received the news of the defeat and death of the hated Uzbegs with delight and, by a return embassy, made an alliance with the victor.

The Defeat of the Uzbegs at Pul-i-Sanghin, A.D. 1511.—Burning to recover Samarkand, the Emperor crossed the Hindu Kush in mid-winter, was joined by a Persian force and marched on Hissar. The Uzbegs collected a powerful army and fighting continued throughout the day. *Mirza* Haidar, a boy of twelve, eagerly watched his first battle and that with the slayers of his father. He vividly describes how " one of my men took one of the enemy prisoner, and led him before the Emperor who viewed it as a good omen ".

Neither side had won, but the Uzbegs were forced to retire with the object of camping near water. To quote *Mirza* Haidar once again: " The infantry descended the hill, shouting Hai! Hai! and making a great noise ". Finally, Baber's army charged and pursued the Uzbegs through the night and the following day. Joined by further reinforcements of Persians and by bodies of men from all the surrounding tribes, Baber marching night and day drove the Uzbegs out of Bukhara. The garrison of Samarkand meanwhile had fled and Baber entered the

city " with such pomp and splendour as none has ever seen or heard of, before or since. The angels cried aloud, ' Enter with peace ', and the people exclaimed, ' Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Universe '." For a time Baber ruled Tashkent, Kabul, Balkh, Samarkand, Bukhara and Ferghana.

The Uzbegs defeat Baber at Kul-i-Malik.—We learn from *Mirza* Haidar that Baber's alliance with the Shia monarch, Shah Ismail, and his adoption of the Persian style of dress, soon made him unpopular, and at this period victory ceased to crown his arms. In A.D. 1512, with a small force, he attacked Ubaydulla (the nephew and successor of Shaybani Khan), whose army was much stronger, at Kul-i-Malik, and was defeated.[1]

The final Defeat of Baber at Ghazdavan, A.D. 1512.—Unable to hold Samarkand after this defeat, Baber retired to Hissar. His appeal to Shah Ismail for reinforcements was granted and, once again, he marched against the Uzbegs with a powerful army. He attacked Ghazdavan to the north of Bukhara, but the Uzbegs, taking advantage of the cover provided by its suburbs, finally defeated him. *Mirza* Haidar exults over the defeat of his cousin: " The Uzbeg infantry began to pour forth their arrows from every corner, so that very soon the claws of Islam twisted the hands of heresy and unbelief, and victory declared for the true faith ". Baber, who was now thirty years of age, accepted this defeat as final and, " having placed the foot of despair in the stirrup of despondency ", he returned to Kabul.

The Situation in India.—Before describing the expeditions of Baber into India, a brief account of the position in that country is perhaps desirable. The atrocities which accompanied Tamerlane's raid, his capture of Delhi and the overthrow of the Tughluk dynasty have been described in Chapter XVII. Upon his departure, his nominee Khizr Khan, Governor of

[1] In Beveridge's *Babur-Nama*, it is shown that Khwandamir's statement that Baber met Ubaydulla with a small force is correct and that *Mirza* Haidar's story of the Uzbegs with 3000 men defeating Baber's 40,000 men is inaccurate. *Mirza* Haidar had become violently prejudiced against Baber for favouring the Shia sect. He left his service at this period, which was perhaps a prudent step for him to take.

Multan, and his descendants, known as the Sayyid dynasty, ruled in Delhi for some forty years. No regular government was established until, in A.D. 1450, an Afghan of the Lodi tribe, Buhlul Khan, who was the independent ruler of the Punjab, was proclaimed Sultan at Delhi; but his power only extended to Benares and the borders of Bundelkand.

Buhlul Khan was succeeded by his son, who assumed the title of Sultan Sikandar *Ghazi*, and the ruler at the period with which we are now dealing was Sultan Ibrahim Lodi, who had ascended the throne in 1517. Owing to his savage cruelty, he was hated by his semi-independent feudatories, who continually revolted. Ultimately their discontent led to Daulat Khan, Governor of the Punjab, inviting Baber to come to their assistance.

From Baber's point of view another advantage at this juncture was the flight to Kabul of Alam Khan, the uncle of Sultan Ibrahim, who claimed his support to enable him to ascend the throne of Delhi. Baber himself mentions that, when he first invaded Hindustan, it was ruled by five Moslem and two pagan Princes.

Baber's First Indian Expedition, A.D. 1519.—Invaders of India fall into two classes, namely, raiders who retired laden with booty or conquerors who established themselves permanently in a portion of the Indian peninsula. Alexander the Great, Chenghiz Khan and Tamerlane belonged to the first class, while Mahmud of Ghazni and Baber represent the second.

In this campaign, following in the footsteps of Alexander the Great, Baber crossed the Kunar Valley, stormed the fort of Bajaur, and put to the sword the garrison which "followed the customs and usages of the infidels". On this occasion he gives a vivid account of the execution done by his matchlocks. "The defenders", he writes, "at first were not in the least apprehensive of them, so that when they heard the report of the matchlocks, they stood opposite to them, mocking and making many unseemly and improper gestures."

Crossing the Indus, as his great predecessor had done, near Attock, Baber, considering that the lands Tamerlane

had conquered were his domains — he carried the *Zafar Nama* with him on this campaign — gave orders that the inhabitants and their possessions should not be touched, and accepted the equivalent of £20,000 as the ransom of their property.

Baber sends an Ambassador to Sultan Ibrahim and to Daulat Khan.—At this juncture, on the principle that it could do no harm, Baber sent a certain *Mulla* Murshid as his ambassador to Sultan Ibrahim to demand that the countries " which from old times had belonged to the Turks should be given to me. I also gave *Mulla* Murshid letters to Daulat Khan (Lodi). . . . Daulat Khan detained my ambassador some time at Lahore, neither seeing him himself, nor suffering him to proceed to Sultan Ibrahim; so that my envoy, five months later, returned to Kabul without having received any answer."

Baber penetrates to the River Jhelum and returns to Kabul.—On this expedition, the objective of Baber was Bhira. He accordingly marched on it and dismounted on the bank of the river Jhelum " in a sown field without hurt or harm being allowed to touch the people of Bhira. The inhabitants of Khushab, which province extended to the Chenab, also submitted." Baber, satisfied with the results of this reconnaissance, carried out with quite a small force, decided to return to Kabul. On the way he described the exquisite spring beauty of the flower-beds of Peshawar and was equally interested in a tiger hunt of which he gives a detailed account. He had entered the Punjab and had gained valuable knowledge of the political position, but he had made no permanent conquest. Indeed, almost immediately after his departure, his representative was driven out.

Baber becomes a Heavy Drinker.—It was apparently on this campaign that Baber, now approaching his thirtieth year, became a heavy drinker of wine and *arak*, while he also took to hashish. The *Memoirs* at this period contain little else than his delight in parties at which he does not hesitate to write that, on occasions, he was " miserably drunk "; indeed he revelled in these orgies. His vitality must have been amazing, as there is no apparent lessening

of his activity or initiative, while dissipation never dulled his delight in flowers, in music and in poetry.

A Campaign against the Yusufzais, A.D. 1519.—In the autumn of the same year Baber, who was probably in need of grain for his army, decided on an expedition against the Yusufzais. Leaving his baggage at Ak Masjid in the Khaibar Pass, he forded the Kabul River at midnight and raided the Yusufzais, but was much disappointed with the small quantity of grain in their wheat-fields. He then raided the neighbouring Khizr-Khels, whereupon neighbouring Chiefs agreed to pay tribute. During this campaign Baber, for political reasons, married the daughter of the Yusufzai Chief.

Events from A.D. 1520 *to* 1525.—At this period there is another break in the *Memoirs*, this time of five years. We learn from other sources that, on the death of his cousin Khan *Mirza*, in 1520, Humayun *Mirza* was appointed Governor of Badakhshan, and that Baber himself also visited the province.

The Expedition into India of A.D. 1520.—Baber, who considered Bhira the borderland of India, marched into India in this year, punished the rebels in the Bhira province and crossed the Chenab to Sialkot. Upon receiving news of an invasion of his territory by the Arghun Chief of Kandahar, he returned to Kabul.

The Capture of Kandahar.—In A.D. 1522, Kandahar, which Baber had coveted for many years and had lately twice besieged, was finally surrendered to him by Shah Beg, who retired to Quetta and Sibi, where he established himself. By its possession his southern flank was made secure, since Kandahar dominated the trade-route leading from the Indus.

Baber's Fourth Expedition to India, A.D. 1524.—There is some vagueness as to various intermediate expeditions, but Baber reappeared in the Punjab supported by the discontented Afghan nobles. Near Lahore, he fought Sultan Ibrahim's army, defeated it with great slaughter, and pursued it into Lahore which he plundered. He then advanced on Dipalpur, which he also stormed. Daulat Khan, the ex-Governor of Lahore, who met Baber

at this city, was discontented at not being reappointed to Lahore, was suspected of treachery and finally fled. Baber consequently decided to garrison the Punjab and to return to Kabul. Scarcely had he quitted India, than Daulat Khan reappeared on the scene, seized his son Dilawar who had joined Baber, and defeated Aluni Khan, who fled for help to Kabul.

Baber's Fifth Expedition to India, A.D. 1525.—Baber's army, reinforced by a contingent from Badakhshan, led by Humayun, and by the Ghazni troops, constituted the most powerful force that he had commanded in India but yet, including camp followers, it numbered only 12,000 men.

Marching on Lahore, the enemy who were encamped on the banks of the Ravi fled and scattered before he could attack them. Daulat Khan hastened to make his submission and Baber here writes: "I placed my foot in the stirrup of resolution, my hand in the reins of confidence in God, and marched against Sultan Ibrahim . . . whose army in the field was said to amount to one hundred thousand men and who had nearly one thousand elephants". However accurate this estimate of numbers may have been, it must be remembered that Ibrahim possessed no artillery.

The Battle of Panipat, A.D. 1526.—Sultan Ibrahim met Baber at Panipat, the historical site where the throne of Delhi has been thrice won. Baber, following the Turkish custom, made a strong central position, fastening together his gun-carriages with twisted bull hides and building breastworks between each two guns with shields for the matchlock men. His right flank was protected by the town of Panipat and his left by ditches and abattis. He was careful to leave gaps in this line through which one hundred cavalry could charge out in line. One of Baber's advisers considered that, in view of the strength of his position, Ibrahim would not attack him; but Baber rightly guessed that Sultan Ibrahim was inexperienced and unable "to discriminate when it is proper to advance and when to retreat".

Baber arranged a night attack on the enemy camp but, having broken up, the force effected nothing. This failure, however, encouraged Sultan Ibrahim who, on the following morning, April 20, 1525, attacked Baber. Advancing rapidly, the huge array checked its speed on approaching Baber's strong position, thus spreading confusion in the ranks that followed. Baber took advantage of this check to send out the troops which had been told off to attack the rear of the enemy by the Moghul turning movement, tactics that had cost him so dear at the action of Sir-i-Pul. The fire of the gunners on the central body of the enemy was then opened with considerable effect and, although the battle was stoutly contested, Baber's superior tactics, carried out by war-experienced veterans and supported by an exceptionally powerful artillery, which must have struck terror into the enemy, won the day at noon. The Afghans left 15,000 dead on the field, including Sultan Ibrahim. To quote Baber: "In consideration of my confidence in Divine aid, the most High God did not suffer the distress and hardships that I had undergone to be thrown away, but defeated my formidable enemy, and made me the conqueror of the noble country of Hindustan".

The Capture of Delhi and Agra.—Baber himself entered Delhi unopposed and, on April 26, the *khutba* was read in the Great Mosque in his name with the title of "Emperor of Hindustan". Humayun was despatched to Agra where the fort was not immediately surrendered but was surrounded by his cavalry. The wives of the Raja of Gwalior, which Prince had also fallen at Panipat, were seized when attempting to escape. Humayun, however, treated them courteously and was presented with the famous *Koh-i-noor*, which is now set in the crown of the British King-Emperor. Baber writes: "It is so valuable that a judge of diamonds valued it at half of the daily expense of the whole world".

The Distribution of Largesse.—No conqueror, known to history, equalled Baber in generosity. He gave Humayun "£700,000 from the treasury, and, over and above this treasure, a palace, of which no account or

inventory had been taken ". Amirs were given £100,000 and, as a result of this prodigal liberality, which included the immediate members of his family and even his relations in Samarkand, Khurasan, Kashgar and Iraq, he was left with an empty treasury.

Disaffection in the Army.—As was perhaps natural, the arrival of the hot weather made his officers and men wish to return to the cool hills and hand over their wealth to their families. Baber, however, assembled his leaders and pointed out the folly of leaving the numerous kingdoms and provinces they had won and, so powerful was his influence, that they changed their minds and agreed that Hindustan should be their permanent possession. As Baber put it: " By these words, which recalled just and reasonable views to their minds, I made them, willy-nilly, quit their fears ". As soon as this decision became known, some Afghan chiefs began to surrender, to be followed by the army, which the late King of Delhi had despatched against rebellious Bihar. These reinforcements were most valuable since Baber was very soon to meet the onset of the formidable Rajput chivalry.

The Advance of Rana Sanga.—Rana Sangraur Singh, generally called Sanga, was the chief of the Rajputs of Chitor, who claimed descent from the Sun. He was universally acknowledged to be leader of the noblest and the oldest tribe and was, moreover, a heroic and chivalrous warrior covered with wounds.

Baber's Renunciation of Wine.—Baber's campaigns had hitherto been entirely against Moslems, but he fully appreciated the valour of the Rajputs and so did his officers and men who were dispirited. Realizing the serious position

> I said to myself, O my soul!
> How long wilt thou continue to take pleasure in sin?
> Repentance is not unpalatable — Taste it.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Since thou hast set out on a Holy War,
> Thou hast seen death before thine eyes for thy salvation.

In this exalted spirit he renounced the use of wine, thus

"purifying" his spirit. The gold and silver goblets were broken up and divided among the poor.

Baber's Speech to the Officers.—He then addressed his officers as follows: "Whoever comes to the feast of life must, before it is over, drink from the cup of death. He who arrives at the inn of mortality, must one day inevitably take his departure from that house of sorrow — the world. How much better is it to die with honour than to live with infamy! The Most High God has been propitious to us, and has now placed us in such a crisis, that if we fall in the field, we die the death of martyrs; if we survive, we rise victorious, the avengers of the cause of God." Inspired by these stirring words, officers and men swore on the Koran "never even to think of turning their faces from the battle". Here we see Baber at his greatest!

The Battle of Khanua, March 17, A.D. 1527.—Baber drew up his forces as at Panipat and the battle opened with a desperate charge on his right, which was repelled partly by artillery fire. On the left also there was severe fighting. Baber then ordered the flanking columns to attack the rear of the Rajputs and at the same time ordered a general advance. The Rajput centre had been shaken by the artillery fire, whose "huge balls did fearful execution among the heathen". Finally the Rajputs were completely beaten and fled from the field. Baber's description of the battle shows how deeply he had imbibed the spirit of *jihad* and is a masterpiece of oriental phraseology with frequent quotations from the Koran.

Baber assumes the Title of Ghazi.—After this victory the Emperor assumed the title of *Ghazi* and wrote the following quatrain:

> For Islam's sake, I wandered in the wilds,
> Prepared for war with pagans and Hindus,
> Resolved myself to meet the martyr's death,
> Thanks be to God! a *Gházi* I became.

The Battle of the Gogra, May, A.D. 1529.—Baber had won two great victories and it seemed unlikely that he would have to fight any other campaigns. However, in

THE EMPEROR BABER ON HIS THRONE

(From a MS. in the British Museum)

his third great battle fought in India his opponents were the Afghan Chiefs, who had espoused the cause of Sultan Mahmud Lodi, the brother of Sultan Ibrahim. At the junction of the Ganges and its tributary the Gogra, he won a third victory which was named after the latter river. As a result, Baber was joined by practically all the Afghan Amirs, and his wide-spreading dominions extended from the Oxus to Bengal.

Movements of Afghan and Baluch Tribes.—This successful campaign ended a period which was marked not only by Baber's great conquest, which founded the mighty Moghul Empire, but by the foundation of the petty kingdom of the Arghuns in Sind. Simultaneously the Yusufzais, the Lohanis and other Afghan tribes occupied the lands they hold today in the valleys of Peshawar, Kohat and Bannu; there was also a mass movement of Baluch tribes into the Indus Valley.

The Death of Baber.—The course of the Conqueror was now nearly run, and in the winter of A.D. 1530, he passed away at the age of forty-eight. Thus died the greatest soldier of his age, and one of the earliest in Central Asia to appreciate the value of artillery. He was also a gifted writer and a great poet.

Of him Stanley Lane-Poole writes: "Baber is the link between Central Asia and India, between predatory tribes and imperial government, between Tamerlane and Akbar". He lies, as he wished, in the beautiful garden outside Kabul, which he had planted. *Mirza* Haidar wrote a noble eulogy in his honour: "This prince was adorned with various virtues, and clad with numberless good qualities, above all of which bravery and humanity had the ascendant. . . . He excelled in music and in other arts. In fact, no one in his family ever possessed such talents as his. Nor did any of his race ever perform such wonderful exploits, or experience such strange adventures as he did."

CHAPTER XX

AFGHANISTAN AND THE EMPERORS HUMAYUN AND AKBAR

Great as a soldier, it is as an administrator that he has gained highest fame. . . . He had the genius of taking pains and the open-mindedness which is symbolized by his favourite motto, "Peace with All".—ANNETTE BEVERIDGE on Akbar.

From the most ancient times Kabul and Kandahar have been considered to be the gates of Hindustan; the one gives entry from Turan [Central Asia] and the other from Persia. If these two cities are strongly held, the vast Empire of India is safe from foreign invasions.—ABUL FAZL in 1602, from the *Ain-i-Akbari*.

A General Survey of the Political Situation.—In this and the following chapters I propose to deal with the influence on Afghanistan that was exercised chiefly by the Emperors Humayun and Akbar, whose possession of Kabul was never successfully challenged. The Persians, however, generally speaking, occupied Herat and constantly aimed at Kandahar, which they sometimes occupied; moreover the Uzbegs, those ubiquitous horsemen, were able to ravage far and wide and even captured Herat when Persia was weak, but were unable to hold provinces outside Central Asia proper with any degree of permanency.[1]

Baber's Military Administration.—Baber, as we have seen, defeated the Afghan Sultan Ibrahim, the Hindu *Rana* Sanga, and the Afghan Chiefs of Bihar and Bengal. He conquered and held a widespread empire, but neither he nor his followers had the time, nor indeed the aptitude, for the heavy task of consolidating and administering the empire that had been won. As Baber himself remarked, upon his first conquest of Kabul, the government was by the sword and not by the pen. Moreover, it must be

[1] Among the works consulted is vol. iv of the *Cambridge History of India*; *The Life and Memoirs of Gulbadan Begum*, translated by Annette Beveridge, *R.A.S.*, 1902; *Akbar the Great Mogul*, A.D. 1542–1605, by Vincent Smith.

remembered that Baber did not commence his campaigns of conquest in India until A.D. 1524; he completed them, with the exception of Oudh, in 1527; and died three years later.

Humayun had been despatched to Kabul and Badakhshan after the battle of Khanua, and was present at the deathbed of his father, who warned him of possible claims for domination by his three younger brothers and bade him always to forgive their faults. As will appear in this narrative, the worst enemies of the new ruler were his brothers, Kamran, Hindal and Askari, and his dying father's injunctions were the main cause of his troubles, mercy being out of place, being construed as mere weakness by the rebels.

Humayun's Campaign against Mahmud Lodi, A.D. 1531.—The first challenge to his authority was the seizure of Jaunpur by Mahmud, the brother of the late King Ibrahim. Humayun defeated the invaders, but later Sher Khan, another Lodi Chief, collected a strong force. Humayun, thereupon, despatched an army to deal with this rising, but owing to Kamran's hostility now to be described, he was obliged to accept an unsatisfactory peace which left Sher Khan free to develop his ambitious plans.

Kamran secures the Punjab.—The second son of Baber, who was the Governor of Kabul and Kandahar, after his father's death, marched on Lahore, which he secured by a clever stratagem. Protesting his loyalty all the while, he was not only allowed to retain Lahore but was granted other districts by the too generous Humayun.

The Indian Campaigns of Humayun.—Humayun's campaigns were, at first, crowned with success. He met an army despatched by Bahadur Shah of Gujarat, but with the support of Hindal and Askari from Agra, this force was routed and its leader slain. The Rajput stronghold of Chitor was next bombarded with heavy artillery fire. Realizing that the city was doomed, the women perished voluntarily in the flames, while the garrison rushed on the besiegers and fought to the death.

The Capture of Champaner, A.D. 1535.—Humayun

was now free to deal with Bahadur Shah, whose stronghold of Mandu he captured through negligence of the garrison, which allowed the wall to be scaled and a gate to be seized by a small party of Moghuls. Bahadur Shah escaped to Champaner, burned that city and then took refuge at the port of Diu. The campaign was crowned by the feat of a party which scaled the high wall of Champaner by using spikes driven into the wall, Humayun, to his credit, forming one of the scaling party. It contained the treasury of the Kings of Gujarat. After such a well-deserved success, Humayun, instead of following it up, divided the rich spoil and wasted months in revelry.

The Success of Bahadur Shah.—Bahadur Shah displayed great energy at this crisis. He possessed a fleet and, aided by the Portuguese, he was able to recapture the ports from the Moghul garrisons. Humayun marched north, only to be met by Askari, who had been driven out of the Gujarat province, of which he had been appointed Governor, and Western India was thereby lost to the Moghuls.

The Final Defeat of Humayun, A.D. 1540.—Meanwhile, Sher Khan was strengthening his forces, and Humayun who, upon his return to Delhi, devoted his time to pleasure, did not march against the Lodi Chief until 1537. He then captured the fortress of Chunar on the Ganges by means of a floating battery, but advancing too far eastwards, in 1539, his lines of communication were severed, and through the treachery of his brothers, who failed to come to his aid, and to the loss of *moral* of his troops, his army was cut to pieces. Humayun, escaping with difficulty, fled through Agra to Delhi and thence to Lahore. Even in his brother's sore distress, Kamran displayed his treacherous character by opening up secret negotiations with Sher Khan and by his hostile attitude. With the route to Kabul blocked by Kamran's troops, at the end of 1540 the unfortunate Emperor decided to follow Hindal to Sind.

The Reign of Sher Shah Lodi, A.D. 1540–1545.—Sher Shah, the victor in the contest, thereupon ascended

the throne and, during the five years of his reign, proved himself to be one of the greatest Moslem rulers, who not only restored law and order, but constructed four great roads, equipped with well-stored caravanserais.

Humayun's Exile.—Thus began the long exile which lasted for some fifteen years. Shah Husayn Arghun, the ruler of Sind, was found to be hostile and reduced the Moghul forces to such extremities that the soldiers killed their horses and camels for food.

Humayun marries Hamida Begum.—In A.D. 1541 Humayun insisted on marrying Hamida *Begum*, the daughter of Hindal's spiritual guide, much against his brother's wishes and also against those of the girl. In the following year she became the mother of the future Emperor Akbar.

Humayun takes refuge in Persia.—Humayun finally accepted money and transport from Shah Husayn and decided to take refuge in Persia. His brother Askari, who was Governor of Kandahar, wrote to the Baluch Chiefs to arrest the Emperor, who just escaped from them, but was obliged to leave the infant Akbar behind. Wonderful to relate, he was well treated by his uncles.

After this escape the refugee Emperor and his followers crossed the Persian frontier. Many years ago I saw a memorial of these bitter days of exile in the form of an inscription at Turbat-i-Shaikh Jam, situated between Meshed and the Afghan border. It ran:

> O Thou whose mercy accepts the apology of all,
> The mind of every one is exposed to Thy Majesty,
> The threshold of thy gate is the *kibla* of all peoples.
> Thy bounty with a glance supports every one.
>
> A Wanderer in the Desert of Destitution.
> Muhammad Humayun.
> 14th Shawal, A.H. 951 (Dec. 29, 1544).

The Reception of Humayun by Tahmasp.—Humayun was received by Shah Tahmasp at Kazvin, which was the capital of Persia at that period. The fanatical monarch who subsequently insulted Queen Elizabeth's envoy Anthony Jenkinson,[1] was ready to help Humayun with

[1] *Vide* Sykes, *op. cit.* vol. ii, p. 168.

an army, but stipulated that his guest must profess the Shia doctrine, as Baber had done. Indeed he is reputed to have threatened to burn him and his followers alive unless he did so. Humayun thereupon perforce signed the paper and, by so doing, acknowledged his acceptance of the doctrine.

Humayun captures Kandahar, A.D. 1545.—Shah Tahmasp, in accordance with his promise to restore Humayun to his throne, supplied him with a powerful army which marched on Kandahar. The city was held by Askari who, after awaiting a relief force for five months, capitulated, and in proof of his submission, met the victors with his sword hanging round his neck. Carrying out the agreement between Tahmasp and Humayun, Kandahar was occupied by the Persians, and at a feast which was held to celebrate its capture, Humayun, who had most generously forgiven Askari, placed in front of him the incriminating letters he had written to the Baluch Chiefs.

The position of Humayun, encamped outside Kandahar without supplies for his force of 5000 men, was most unsatisfactory since his Persian allies refused to advance on Kabul owing to the approach of winter. However, the death of the Persian general caused serious confusion of which Humayun took advantage and seized Kandahar. Meanwhile he had been winning over the chief adherents of Kamran, and when he marched on Kabul, Kamran, not feeling strong enough to oppose him, fled to Sind, where he was welcomed by Shah Husayn, whose daughter he married. Humayun entered Kabul where, to his joy, he found the young Akbar unharmed.

Kamran retakes Kabul, A.D. 1546.—After occupying Kabul, Humayun proceeded to Badakhshan where he recovered the province from his cousin *Mirza* Sulayman. He decided to winter north of the Hindu Kush, but suddenly fell ill and nearly died. Kamran, seizing the opportunity thus afforded him, raised a thousand horsemen and, moving rapidly, surprised the citadel of Kabul, where he established himself once again.

Humayun retakes Kabul, A.D. 1547.—Upon hearing

of this disaster, Humayun proved himself a great leader. While realizing that not only his own family but those of his adherents were in Kamran's power, he decided to recross the Hindu Kush in winter and, in spite of difficulties from the cold and snow and from armed opposition, he reached Charikar. He then besieged Kabul, whereupon Kamran, finding that his supporters were deserting him, fled to the mountains on foot. He was actually captured by Hindal, but was permitted to escape. He then took refuge with the Uzbegs of Balkh, who gave him troops, with which support he gained some success and was rejoined by many of his old adherents.

The Submission of Kamran, A.D. 1548.—In the following year Humayun marched north, and Kamran, hanging a whip round his neck to express his sense of guilt, pleaded for pardon in public audience. Humayun, with unwise generosity, not only forgave but appointed the traitor to govern a district north of the Oxus.

Kamran again occupies Kabul, A.D. 1549.—Humayun was attacking Balkh in 1549 when a sudden rumour spread through the army that Kamran, who had not joined the expedition when summoned to do so, was marching on Kabul. Fearing for the safety of their families, the panic-stricken soldiers abandoned the siege and scattered. Later, invited by traitors, Kamran once again advanced on Kabul, defeated and wounded Humayun and reoccupied the key city. Before long, however, Humayun, raising a force in Badakhshan, once more defeated Kamran, who fled. He also captured Askari, who was sent on a pilgrimage to Mecca and disappears from the scene.

Humayun blinds Kamran.—Profiting by the lessons of adversity, Humayun determined to abandon his weak policy of forgiveness to rebels. He pursued Kamran, who took refuge in India in A.D. 1552, where he was forced to humiliate himself before Islam Shah, the successor of Sher Shah, and was treated with gross discourtesy by his Afghan nobles. Placed under open arrest for an indiscreet utterance, Kamran escaped and

took refuge with Adam, the Gakkar Chief, who surrendered him to Humayun. To quote Gulbadan: "All the assembled Khans and Sultans, and plebeians and nobles and soldiers . . . represented to his Majesty: '. . . This is no brother! This is Your Majesty's foe!' To make an end of words, one and all urgently set forth: 'It is well to lower the head of the breacher of a kingdom'."[1] Expressing deep regret, Humayun sentenced the rebel to be blinded in both eyes. Hindal had recently been killed in a night attack by an Afghan, and thus Humayun was, at long last, freed from his treacherous brothers.

The Situation in India, A.D. 1545–1554.—During the long absence of Humayun from India, much had happened to cause dissension among its rulers. Upon the death of Sher Shah in 1545, Jalal Khan, the younger of his two sons, was hastily enthroned and assumed the title of Islam Shah. His reign was disturbed throughout, owing to the cruelty, vindictiveness and meanness of his character. He died in 1553.

Mubariz Khan, a brother-in-law of Islam Shah, murdered the son of the deceased ruler, a boy of twelve, who had been enthroned. He was then proclaimed King under the title of Adil Shah. His chief officer was Himu, the "Corn-Chandler", a clever Hindu who displayed marked ability alike in the conduct of public affairs and in the field; the monarch himself wallowed in sensual pleasures and drank deeply.

Adil Shah became suspicious of his Afghan nobles, who fled from the Court and rebelled. Among them was Ibrahim Khan Sur, whom he intended to execute but, warned by his wife, the King's sister, Ibrahim fled. Being joined by other Afghan nobles, he assumed the royal title. Another noble, Ahmad Khan, whom Adil Shah also designed to put to death, was, in like manner, warned by his wife, and took the field against Ibrahim Shah, whom he defeated to the west of Agra. He then entered Delhi where he was enthroned as Sikandar Shah.

[1] *Op. cit.* pp. 200-201.

The position at this period was that Adil Shah ruled over Agra and Malwa, Sikandar Shah held the country from Delhi to Rhotas in the Punjab, while Ibrahim Shah ruled from the foot-hills of the Himalayas to Gujarat.

Humayun invades India, January A.D. 1555.—The royal exile, who had been closely watching the state of confusion prevailing in India, now decided to lead his army into the Punjab. Reaching Peshawar at the end of December 1554, he crossed the Indus and was joined by his capable general Bairam Khan with reinforcements from Kandahar. Marching on Lahore, its garrison fled. Humayun's army then occupied Jullundur and Sirhind without opposition, while another column won a victory over an Afghan force at Dipalpur.

The only really formidable opponent to meet Humayun was Sikandar Shah, whose advance guard was defeated at the Sutlej. He had collected a force 100,000 strong, and formed an entrenched camp outside Sirhind, but, in the battle which followed, Humayun's army, after desperate fighting against superior numbers, won the day. On July 23 the Emperor re-entered Delhi in triumph.

The Death of Humayun, January 26, A.D. 1556.—The Emperor's enjoyment of the recovery of his throne — albeit the area actually occupied was small — was short-lived. Deeply interested in astrology, he had been observing the transit of Venus from the roof of his library, with the intention of issuing important orders at an auspicious moment, when, while descending the steps from the roof, which I noted were steep, he fell, fracturing the base of his skull, and died two days later. In New Delhi I have admired the magnificent tree-bordered Kingsway, which runs from Viceroy's House to the *Pirana Kila* or " Old Fort " in which Humayun met his death.

The Character of Humayun.—Baber's eldest son excites our sympathy, if only for his kindliness, which was often misplaced and led to disaster when ruthlessness would have won the day. As we have seen, his worst enemies were his brothers, whose rebellions he constantly forgave. His personal courage, in scaling the wall of Champaner

and again when in adversity, shone brightly, but after winning a victory he was wont to waste time in banquets and sensual enjoyments, which corrupted his troops.

Akbar ascends the Throne, A.D. 1556.—Humayun had two sons; the elder, Akbar, who was aged thirteen at the time of his father's death, succeeded to the empire; his half-brother Muhammad Hakim *Mirza*, some two years younger, was the nominal Governor of Kabul. Akbar's position at first was most precarious. Delhi and Agra had been recovered by Himu for Adil Shah, and the "Corn-Chandler" had then assumed royal state for himself as Raja Vikramaditya.

The Battle of Panipat, November 5, A.D. 1556.—Akbar, who had been enthroned in the Punjab, heard of the fall of Delhi at Jullundur and was strongly advised by the majority of his adherents to retreat immediately to Kabul in view of the 100,000 men who followed Himu as against his own force of 20,000. His guardian, Bairam Khan, however, decided to risk everything in the attempt to recover Delhi. Himu's advance guard was met on the historical field of Panipat and was completely defeated by Akbar's general Ali Kuli Khan, who captured the artillery of the enemy. In the main battle Himu, who had enveloped both wings of Akbar's army, was winning the day when an arrow pierced his eye and his army, panic-stricken, fled from the field. This victory was final, so much so that it may be considered to mark the definitive establishment of the Moghul Empire in India.

The Capture of Kandahar by Shah Tahmasp in A.D. 1558. —At the time of Akbar's accession Kandahar was held by Shah Muhammad, an officer of Bairam Khan, in whose domain it was situated. Tahmasp, realizing the weakness of Akbar, besieged it, but was baffled. Later, a second Persian army appeared on the scene. Shah Muhammad appealed to Akbar for help, but, unable to provide it, he ordered him to surrender the city to the Persians. The loss of this fortress, which constituted the southern key to the plains of India, was a serious blow to the young Emperor.

The Invasion of the Punjab by Hakim Mirza.—In A.D. 1581, Hakim invaded the Punjab at a time which coincided with a serious rebellion in Bengal. Akbar, upon being urged to crush the revolt, replied: "It is clear that the audacity of the rebels is being backed by the ruler of Kabul". Hakim first attempted to capture the strong fort of Rohtas but, failing to do so, marched upon Lahore. Here again he failed, and, hearing of the advance of Akbar from Agra, he fled back to Kabul. He was pursued by the Emperor but finally, fearing to drive his brother into the arms of Abdulla Khan, the Uzbeg Chief, Akbar decided to pardon him, but appointed his sister Bakht-un-Nisa *Begam* the official Governor of Kabul.

Abdulla Khan II, the great Uzbeg Chief.—In the previous chapter some account is given of the Uzbegs who, under Ubaidulla Khan, finally defeated Baber and drove him out of Central Asia into Afghanistan. Ubaidulla Khan died in A.D. 1539 and, after his death, there was a fight for power until 1556, a period which marked the rise to power of Abdulla Khan II, who proved himself to be the greatest of the Shaybanids. Occupying Bukhara, by treacherously murdering its governor, he proclaimed his own father Iskandar as *Khan*. In 1568 Abdulla invested Balkh, and in spite of the efforts of Sulayman *Mirza* of Badakhshan and Hashim Sultan of Hissar, he captured that city. Some five years later he seized Hissar and finally Samarkand. In 1583, upon the death of his father, he was proclaimed *Khan* at Bukhara.

Abdulla Khan conquers Badakhshan, A.D. 1584.—Having consolidated his position, Abdulla Khan invaded Badakhshan, which was occupied without much difficulty, Sulayman *Mirza* and his grandson Shahrukh *Mirza* fleeing to Kabul. The annexation of Badakhshan by the Uzbegs and the flight of its ruler alarmed Hakim *Mirza*, who appealed to Akbar for assistance. This was promised in case of an attack on Kabul, which did not, however, take place.

The Death of Muhammad Hakim Mirza, A.D. 1585.—Akbar had every reason to consider his brother an enemy

and, consequently, that Prince's death at this period was ultimately of considerable advantage to the empire. At first Akbar was anxious for the safety of Kabul in view of a plot by the treacherous Moghul nobles to flee to Abdulla Khan with Hakim's two sons. He accordingly despatched trustworthy officials to occupy Kabul and to win over its inhabitants, which they succeeded in doing. Akbar also prepared to march on Kabul himself at the head of a powerful army. These preparations alarmed Abdulla Khan, who realized that a move against Kabul would involve war. Finally, *Raja* Man Singh, Akbar's best general, who had occupied the city, assumed the governorship.

The Central Asian Policy of the Emperor.—Akbar realized that Kabul was the northern key of India and that its possession was essential for the safety of his empire. He was also most anxious to recover Kandahar, the southern key, and was aware that, since the death of Tahmasp in A.D. 1576, anarchy prevailed in Persia. This favoured his policy, always provided that his hold on Kabul remained strong. As regards Abdulla Khan, whose force was mainly composed of cavalry, it was clear that he could never do more than threaten Kabul in view of the formidable ranges of high mountains with narrow defiles, by which it was guarded to the north and that the open plains of Khurasan which the Uzbeg had raided for generations would be far more likely to tempt him. In the event, Abdulla besieged and captured Herat in 1588, the year after the accession of the youth who was destined to be known as Shah Abbas the Great.

It is interesting to note how the Moghuls, when they were strong, held Kabul and Kandahar, which were interdependent to them, as were Samarkand and Bukhara to the Uzbegs. Persia, on the other hand, when strong, held Herat and aimed at, and generally conquered, Kandahar. The Shah never attacked Kabul nor did the Emperor ever attack Herat, which city was disputed between the Persians and Uzbegs.

Akbar's Treaty with Abdulla Khan, A.D. 1588.—In the year that Herat fell to the Uzbegs, Akbar agreed to

the permanent retention of Badakhshan and Balkh by Abdulla Khan on condition that the Uzbegs on their part agreed to refrain from attacking Kandahar or its dependencies. From the strategical point of view this realistic policy of Akbar to constitute the Hindu Kush his northern boundary was undoubtedly sound, albeit it must have gone sorely against the grain for him to surrender his ancestral states of Badakhshan and Balkh. Abdulla Khan, on the other hand, was anxious to be free from an attack from India on his eastern provinces and to hold the rich provinces of Khurasan and Herat.

Akbar's Campaigns against the North-West Frontier Tribes, A.D. 1586–1588.—Akbar had much trouble with the turbulent tribes who lived in the vicinity of the Khaibar Pass, notably the Roshanais, a fanatical sect, whose leader was tinged with the Ismaili doctrines. The Yusufzais also completely defeated a Moghul army, but the Emperor finally subdued these turbulent tribesmen by a strict blockade, and in 1588 the Afridis and Orakzais agreed to keep the pass open in return for allowances. To strengthen the Moghul position along this vitally important highway, the Khaibar Pass was made fit for wheeled transport, while forts were constructed to guard the route.

Akbar obtains Possession of Kandahar, A.D. 1595.—For many years, as we have seen, the Emperor had wished to regain Kandahar. At this juncture the Safavi Governor of Kandahar, Muzaffar Husayn *Mirza*, who held the province nominally as a fief of Persia, was on bad terms with Shah Abbas and, seeing the lands under his rule being ravaged by the Uzbegs, he surrendered the city to the Moghuls, receiving in return an important command and large properties in India.

Akbar was now at the zenith of his power and prestige. In 1592 Kashmir, Orissa, Sind and Gujarat had become obedient to his orders ; Baluchistan, including the coastal region of Makran, was added to the empire in 1594, while the occupation of Kandahar completed what, in modern terms, would be called the scientific frontier for the defence of India.

Shah Abbas captures Herat.—The death of Abdulla II in A.D. 1598 was followed by a temporary break-up of the Uzbeg empire. Shah Abbas took immediate advantage of it and, by a great victory won near Herat, he recovered Nishapur, Meshed and Herat, all of which cities remained integral portions of the Persian Empire until the Afghan invasion in the second decade of the eighteenth century. Upon hearing of the death of the Uzbeg Khan, Akbar thought of recovering Balkh and Badakhshan, but his councillors persuaded him that his presence in the Deccan was of greater importance to the state, and he gave up all ideas of a campaign in the north.

Benedict Goës traverses Afghanistan, A.D. 1603.—Towards the end of Akbar's reign the Jesuits, who were in high favour at his Court, decided to send a member of their order across Central Asia to discover Cathay, not realizing that Cathay was China, where the order had been established for some years.

Benedict Goës, a lay-brother, was selected for the task and Akbar not only contributed handsomely in money, but furnished Goës with letters to various potentates, who were either tributary rulers or who were friendly to him.[1]

Leaving Lahore with the annual caravan destined for Kashgar, the Jesuit reached Peshawar without incident. Upon entering the defiles, which lay between that city and Jalalabad, the account of the journey runs: "They fell in with a certain pilgrim and devotee, from whom they learned that, at a distance of thirty days' journey, there was a city called Capperstam, into which no Muhammadan was allowed to enter, and if one did get in he was punished with death. . . . He related also that the inhabitants of that country never visited their temples except in black dresses." This constitutes the first meeting between a European and a native of Kaffiristan although, as we have seen in Chapter XVII, Tamerlane led an expedition into their mountains.

[1] In this section I have consulted *Early Jesuit Travellers in Central Asia*, by C. Wessels.

For the defiles beyond Jalalabad an escort of 400 soldiers was provided by the Moghul authorities to picket the heights. In spite of these precautions, however, the tribesmen attacked the caravan and " Our Benedict ", we read, " fled with the rest into the jungle, but coming back at night they escaped the robbers ". At Kabul the caravan halted for eight months. Here it was joined by the sister of the King of Kashgar who " was now on her return from that immense journey to Mecca, which she had performed for the sake of her blasphemous creed ". In spite of his hostile feelings to Islam, Goës was ready to advance the *Haji Khanum* or " Pilgrim Lady " a large sum of gold which she ultimately repaid at Khotan with valuable blocks of jade.

Resuming his journey, Goës crossed the Hindu Kush and struck the route of Marco Polo at Talikan, where the caravan was held up by a revolt of the tribesmen against the Khan of Bukhara. Further on, Goës was attacked by four brigands, but escaped by throwing his cap with its glittering jewel among them and galloping off while they were fighting for it.

Traversing Badakhshan, the travellers ascended to the Pamirs where it was noted that " both men and beasts sometimes felt oppressed beyond endurance and gasped for breath ". From the " Roof of the World ", Yarkand was reached in safety.

The intrepid traveller finally crossed the *Gobi* to China. The account of his journey provides, among other valuable notes, an interesting sidelight on the difficulties which the Moghuls had to face in safeguarding the Peshawar-Kabul caravan route.

The Death of Akbar, A.D. 1605—*His Character.*—The last years of the Emperor's life were rendered unhappy by the treachery and cruelty of Prince Salim, his eldest son, and by the death from delirium tremens of Prince Daniyal. The great qualities of Akbar, his courage, his kindness to his subjects, his improvements in the revenue system, his encouragement of art and literature, his toleration and his justice, were famous and are certified by both Moslem and European writers. He reigned in a century

of illustrious monarchs, Elizabeth of England, Henry IV of France and Shah Abbas of Persia being his contemporaries and, as the greatest of Moslem rulers in India, Akbar can indisputably claim inclusion in this illustrious band.

CHAPTER XXI

AFGHANISTAN UNDER THE LATER MOGHUL EMPERORS

One cannot rule without practising deception. . . . A government that is joined to cunning lasts and remains firm for ever, and the master of this [art] becomes a king for all time.—SARKAR, *Anecdotes of Aurangzeb*, p. 96.

Jahangir ascends the Throne, A.D. 1605.—Prince Salim, whose mother was a Rajput princess, upon his enthronement assumed, among other titles, that of Jahangir or "World Conqueror" by which he was thenceforth known. He had promised to protect the Moslem religion and also not to harm any supporters of his son Khusru's claims. His popularity among his subjects was increased by his changed attitude towards the Jesuit fathers, whom he had previously favoured, but henceforth ignored.[1]

The Rebellion of Prince Khusru, A.D. 1606.—Jahangir's son, whether actuated by fear or ambition, decided to rebel and, fleeing from Agra, collected a force and made for Lahore. The Governor of that city refused to open its gates and the Pretender, who was pursued with relentless energy by his father, was defeated and captured while attempting to cross the Chenab. The rebellion was crushed with terrible severity, hundreds of the rebels were impaled on stakes and Khusru, loaded with chains, was taken past them riding on a small elephant. He was subsequently blinded, but not completely, and was murdered in 1622. Husayn Beg, the leader of his cavalry, was sewn up in a raw hide and paraded through the city on an ass, while the skin was slowly drying; it finally crushed him to death!

Shah Abbas makes Peace with the Turks, A.D. 1612.—

[1] In this chapter, in addition to other authorities already mentioned, I have consulted *The Oxford History of India*, by Vincent Smith; also *Anecdotes of Aurangzeb*, by Professor Jadunath Sarkar, 1912; and *History of India*, by Mountstuart Elphinstone, 6th ed., 1874.

To turn to the position in Persia, Shah Abbas had been on the throne for fifteen years before he felt strong enough to attempt to regain the western provinces that had been annexed by Turkey. In 1603 he recaptured Tabriz and, in the following year, Erivan; he also occupied Shirwan and Kars. A second great battle was fought with the hereditary foe at Chaldiran in the vicinity of Lake Urumia where Shah Ismail had been defeated in 1514, and, on this occasion, the Persians, supported by artillery for the first time, won a decisive victory which led to a treaty, favourable to the Shah, being signed in 1612.

Shah Abbas captures Kandahar, A.D. 1622.—There is no doubt that Shah Abbas made the capture of Kandahar the main objective of his policy for some years before he decided to take military action. In 1617 the death of Sultan Ahmad, whose immediate successors were merely puppets, freed him from all fear of Turkey and enabled him to prepare for the desired conquest. Meanwhile, many embassies were exchanged with Jahangir, until, in 1620, Abbas demanded the restoration of Kandahar. We also learn from *Sir Thomas Roe*,[1] the first English Ambassador to the Moghul Court, that Abbas intrigued with the rulers of the Deccan, who, he hoped, would occupy the Moghul forces, and actually, the march of the Moghul army into the Deccan was the signal for the premeditated attack.

The Governor of the threatened city appealed for help and Shahjahan, the future Emperor, marched with reinforcements to Mandu. But apparently Jahangir fatuously forbade him to move further. "Kings", he wrote, "should be opposed by Kings." Abandoned by Jahangir, the weak garrison was unable to hold the city, the walls of which were mined and, within three weeks of the commencement of the siege, Kandahar fell. Abbas, in a letter to Jahangir, stated that Kandahar would be regarded by him as a gift from "that brother dear as life!" and for fifteen years, this key city remained in the possession of Persia.

Upon the capture of Kandahar the Ghilzai and

[1] Hakluyt Society, p. 259.

Abdali tribes became the subjects of Shah Abbas. Complaining to the monarch of the tyranny from which they suffered at the hands of his officials, he appointed a *Kalantar* or "Administrator" from among the tribesmen to deal with their internal affairs. The Abdalis, however, who had risen in revolt, were forced to migrate to the Herat province.

The Janid Uzbegs.—At this period we find a new family ruling the Uzbegs. When the Russians occupied the Khanate of Astrakhan, in the middle of the sixteenth century, one of the Uzbeg Chiefs, by name Jan, who had been driven out, took refuge at Bukhara with Iskandar. There he married the daughter of Iskandar and their son Baki Muhammad, after the usual fight for power, succeeded his maternal uncle Abdulla II as *Khan* in A.D. 1599, and for most of the seventeenth century the Janid dynasty ruled Samarkand, Bukhara, Ferghana, Badakhshan and Balkh.

Jahangir visits Kabul, A.D. 1625–1626.—The last tour of the Emperor was made to Kabul. When crossing the Jhelum he was treacherously seized by Muhabbat Khan, his leading general, who had incurred the enmity of Jahangir's wife Nurjahan, and feared the worst. Dramatic events followed, but finally, thanks to his wife's subtle genius for intrigue, the Emperor was released, while Muhabbat Khan fled to join Prince Shahjahan.

The Death of Jahangir, November A.D. 1627.—Jahangir, whose later years were clouded by the unsuccessful rebellion of his heir Shahjahan, left Lahore in the spring to spend the summer in his beloved Kashmir. There the high altitude increased his sufferings from asthma and he died during the return journey to the plains of India.

Jahangir's character was a compound of fiendish cruelty and of acts of kindness. His habitual intemperance undoubtedly marred his better qualities, while the rebellions of Khusru and, later, of Shahjahan, no doubt embittered his nature. The administration was generally conducted on the lines laid down by Akbar, but, both in

internal and foreign policy, there was a marked deterioration during the reign of Jahangir.

The Accession of Shahjahan.—The fight for power upon the death of Jahangir was brief. Shahyar, the youngest son of Jahangir and a concubine who was supported by Nurjahan, assumed the royal title, but his army was defeated and he was blinded. Shahjahan, determined to avoid further dynastic strife, mercilessly killed his male relations and even some of the princesses.

Shahjahan reoccupies Kandahar, A.D. 1637.—Shah Abbas had died in 1629 and his successor Shah Safi, upon his accession, murdered most of his relations and his grandfather's most trusted generals and councillors. The Governor of Kandahar, Ali Mardan Khan, was one of his most distinguished generals. He was also wealthy, and when ordered to Isfahan he realized the sinister import of the summons. He accordingly surrendered Kandahar to a force despatched by Shahjahan, which also defeated a Persian army that was marching on that city.

Shahjahan and the Uzbegs.—During the last years of the reign of Jahangir, Nazr Muhammad, brother of Imam Kuli, had raided towards Kabul and in a second raid had captured Bamian in A.D. 1629. A few years later, he sent apologies for these raids, which were accepted by Shahjahan.

The Emperor, however, who was much elated by the capture of Kandahar, decided to win back the possessions of his ancestors in the Oxus Valley. In 1639 he visited Kabul with the object of examining the military situation, but was temporarily deterred from undertaking a campaign by the appearance of Imam Kuli at Balkh with a powerful army. Famine conditions also prevailed at Kabul. Consequently the main result of this visit was the construction of a beautiful mosque adjacent to the tomb of illustrious Baber.

The Capture of Balkh, A.D. 1646.—At this period, the Uzbeg state had been disturbed by the deposition of Imam Kuli, who had become blind, by Nazr Muhammad. The latter had weakened his position by making unpopular changes in the administration, while an attempt

to annex the state of Khiva had led to an insurrection. Abdul Aziz, the son of Nazr Muhammad, who had been despatched to quell the rising, took advantage of his position to proclaim himself Khan of Bukhara, which act led to his father agreeing to return to Balkh, where he had previously been Governor for many years.

Shahjahan, freed from commitments in other parts of his empire, collected a powerful army and advanced on Balkh. As the army approached that city Nazr Muhammad retreated to the west and Balkh was captured and plundered, much treasure being secured. Termez was next taken and the Moghul army pursued Nazr Muhammad to Shibarghan. There he was defeated and fled to Persia.

The Moghuls, who had also occupied Badakhshan, detested service in this remote part of Asia with its rigorous climate and the lack of the luxuries to which they had grown accustomed. The climate of India had sapped both their courage and their hardihood.

In 1647 Prince Aurangzeb arrived at Balkh to take over charge of the Government and, mainly by the fire of his artillery, defeated Abdul Aziz. The bravery of the Moghul Prince, who dismounted to pray at sunset during the battle, won the admiration of both armies. Indeed, Abdul Aziz cried out, "To fight such a man is to court ruin", and suspended the battle.

The Moghuls evacuate Balkh and Badakhshan, A.D. 1647. —The defeated Uzbegs harassed the invaders and cleared the country of supplies with such success that Shahjahan decided to restore Balkh and Badakhshan to Nazr Muhammad, who had reappeared on the scene with Persian troops at his back. This unsuccessful campaign constituted the last attempt of the Moghul Emperors to recover their ancestral lands. Its failure weakened the Empire and lowered its prestige.

Abbas II recaptures Kandahar, A.D. 1649.—To turn to Persia once again: Shah Safi had died in 1642, and had been succeeded by his son, a boy of ten, who was crowned as Abbas II. Suffering from internal troubles caused by the intrigues of rival noblemen, on grasping

the reins of government, he renewed with Ibrahim of Turkey the treaty which that Sultan had concluded with his father.

Abbas had watched the Moghul operations intently and, as we have seen, had helped Nazr Muhammad with troops. Realizing the weakness of the Emperor, he concluded that the time was ripe for an attempt on Kandahar. Carefully concealing his preparations, he decided on a winter campaign, since he knew that the passes from India would be closed by snow or rendered very difficult in that season for the passage of troops.

Shahjahan met this serious crisis without taking the obvious step of immediately despatching the large reinforcements that were needed if the city was to be saved. Kandahar occupied a strong position on three hills, on the highest of which was a fort termed the Chehel Zina, which was connected with the city by a wall. But the Moghul defenders possessed little artillery, whereas Persian heavy guns fired 75 lb. shots. The Chehel Zina was first taken and in February 1649 Kandahar surrendered to the Persian army.

Three Sieges of Kandahar — The First Siege, A.D. 1649. —The fall of Kandahar into the hands of the formidable Persians created a serious strategical situation for India, and Shahjahan made strenuous, if badly organized, efforts to recover the city. Under Aurangzeb a large force of horse and foot was collected, and appeared before the city in May 1649. A relieving Persian force was defeated on the Arghandab River, but the absence of siege guns made the recapture of the city impossible, more especially as the Persian garrison was well supplied with artillery. Aurangzeb consequently failed and withdrew in the autumn.

The Second Siege of Kandahar, A.D. 1652.—The defeats suffered in Badakhshan and at Kandahar necessitated the strengthening of Kabul, of Charikar to the north and of Ghazni to the south. The disadvantage of the possession of Kandahar by the Persians was also enhanced by their advance into Baluchistan, where their intrigues with the border tribes affected the safety of

Multan. Aurangzeb, therefore, as a preliminary measure to another attempt on Kandahar, reasserted the Imperial authority over the wild Baluch tribesmen, more especially those who inhabited the districts bordering on the Kandahar route. After these preliminary operations, in A.D. 1652, he despatched another army against the city. On this occasion, 8 heavy guns and 120 swivel-guns constituted the artillery park, while a reserve force of 50,000 troops was stationed at Kabul under the Emperor's orders.

The Persians on their side had materially strengthened the defences, while their allies the Uzbegs incessantly raided up to Ghazni and thus struck the Moghul lines of communication. When the siege opened, the Moghul artillerymen burst some of their guns from overcharges of powder and were generally inefficient as compared with the enemy, whose sudden sorties, moreover, caused heavy casualties. Finally, after operations lasting less than three months, the baffled Moghul army retired to Kabul.

The Third Siege of Kandahar, A.D. 1653.—The Persians, who were much encouraged by these failures of the Moghuls, now occupied portions of Baluchistan and garrisoned Duki and Chotiali in the vicinity of the modern Dera Ghazi Khan. Dara Shukoh, the eldest son of the Emperor, who was Governor of the Punjab, thereupon begged his father to allow him to retrieve the honour of the Imperial house. His request was granted and a formidable army was organized under his command.

On this occasion the artillery that was provided was of heavier calibre than before, while, in other respects, this was the most powerful of the armies raised for the recapture of Kandahar. Indeed, so good was the staff work that a model of the fort was constructed for the guidance of the European gunners! Actually the siege was commenced before the arrival of the heavy artillery. Two of the guns when they arrived were spiked by a European gunner who had quarrelled with the chief artillery officer, while Dara, who believed in the mystic efforts of Yogis and Sadhus, was unable to make his officers work together. Mining and artillery fire were alike tried in

vain, while the appearance on the scene of an Uzbeg force, which had to be bought off, and the approach of a powerful Persian relief force, induced the desperate Prince to attempt a general assault, which also failed miserably. The Moghul army then retreated, to be pursued by the Persian relief force.

The cost of these three sieges on a reliable estimate was placed at 120 millions of rupees, or more than half the imperial revenue of 220 millions. To such an extent was the empire weakened that no further attempt was made by the dynasty to recover Kandahar. Moreover, it had been definitely proved that Persia was a stronger military power than the Moghul Empire, at whose prestige a severe blow had been struck.

Aurangzeb wins the Fight for Power, A.D. 1657.—Dara Shukoh, Shuja, Aurangzeb and Murad Bakhsh, the Emperor's sons, were all men in the prime of life with considerable experience alike in military and civilian affairs. Shahjahan favoured Dara Shukoh, but in the fight for power which began in this year, upon Shahjahan's life being for some time despaired of owing to an illness, each prince fought for his own hand. Finally, Aurangzeb, the victor in four severely contested battles and certainly the most capable of the four brothers, won the throne. In 1658 he captured Agra and, making Shahjahan a prisoner for the rest of his life, was formally enthroned at Delhi in 1659; he thereupon assumed the title of Alumgir or "World Conqueror".

A Summary of the Reign of Shahjahan.—The reign of Shahjahan marks the climax of the Moghul dynasty. During a period of thirty years — from A.D. 1628 to 1658 — the power of the Emperor was never seriously challenged in India, albeit the loss of the northern provinces of Balkh and Badakhshan, and later of the city of Kandahar, undoubtedly weakened the prestige of the empire. They did not, however, react adversely on the position in India.

Shahjahan as a man does not invite favourable comment. An undutiful son, a murderer of his male relations and a ruler prone to constant acts of ferocity, his character

is partially redeemed by his unfailing love for Mumtaz Mahal, while his memory is preserved for all time in the magnificent masterpiece known as the Taj Mahal[1] which was erected in her memory.

The Threats of Shah Abbas II.—The long reign of Aurangzeb falls naturally into two divisions. In the earlier section he devoted his attention mainly to his northern provinces; in the later, he was immersed in problems connected with the Deccan. A special feature of the early period of his reign was the reception of foreign embassies from Persia, Balkh, Bukhara, Kashgar, Khiva, to name only the countries with which this work is specially concerned. The most splendid embassy was that despatched by Shah Abbas II, who, unable to forget that Humayun had been a suppliant refugee of his ancestor Tahmasp, addressed insulting letters to Aurangzeb. He also humiliated the Indian ambassador at his Court. Abbas finally threatened to invade India, but his death, in A.D. 1667, removed the Persian menace, since his successor Sulayman was an unwarlike voluptuary.

Aurangzeb and the North-West Frontier, A.D. 1667–1675.—The problem of the North-West Frontier was, and still remains, mainly an economic question. The virile Afghan clans, unable to gain a living from their barren lands, and aided by every advantage of terrain, have always considered highway robbery an honourable profession, as did the Scottish highlanders.

The Moghul Emperors paid subsidies to various border Chiefs which, under Aurangzeb, amounted to an annual expenditure of 600,000 rupees, but even this sum was not always sufficient to guard the all-important route between Peshawar and Kabul.

A rising of the Yusufzais in 1667 had been crushed with heavy slaughter and destruction of crops, but in 1672 the Afridis rose and proclaimed *Jihad* or Holy War against the Moghuls. They attacked and destroyed a Moghul army at Ak Masjid, situated at the Kabul side of the Khaibar Pass, capturing some 20,000 men and women, besides plunder valued at 20 million rupees. In

[1] The word "Taj" is a corruption of Mumtaz.

1673 a second force was cut off in the Karapa Pass, only a remnant being rescued by a body of Rajputs.

Aurangzeb then took command of operations in person. From his headquarters at Hasan Abdal, in the vicinity of Peshawar, he won over many of the headmen by grants of allowances, while his troops mercilessly attacked rebel tribes. Even so, in 1673, a Moghul army, which was attacked in the Jagdalak Pass, lost its baggage and was only saved by the opportune appearance of reinforcements. Other reverses were suffered but, generally speaking, the Moghul forts on this line of communication were strengthened, while the most important chiefs were recipients of allowances. Accordingly, in December 1675, Aurangzeb left the North-West Frontier. Amir Khan, who was appointed Governor of Kabul in 1677, and who ruled until his death in 1698, was remarkably successful in maintaining friendly relations with the Afghan Chiefs, whom he cunningly encouraged to devote their energies to local quarrels.

The Rise of the Marathas under Sivaji.—The country in which the Maratha language is spoken lies between the range of mountains running along the south of the Narbada to a line drawn from Goa on the sea-coast north-east to Chanda. Its most important feature consists of the Western Ghats, whose flat summits, well provided with water, form almost impregnable fortresses.

Sivaji, the founder of the Maratha Empire, which played such an important part in Indian affairs, started his career as a robber chief, by gaining possession of forts and lands in Bijapur territory, his first important acquisition being the capture of the hill-fort of Torno, situated twenty miles to the south-west of Poona. He next took possession of the rich Konkan. In A.D. 1659 the Bijapur army marched against Sivaji, who, at an interview with the Moslem general, treacherously murdered him and destroyed his army in an ambush. In 1664 he sacked Surat, winning loot valued at 10 million rupees. In 1665 he acknowledged himself a vassal of the Emperor and, in 1666, he visited Aurangzeb, by whom he was imprisoned. Escaping in a large basket of sweetmeats, the

Maratha Chief again took the field, conquering far and wide. So successful was he that, aided by the opportune death of Ali Adil Shah II of Bijapur in December 1672, and also by the absence of the main body of the imperial forces on the North-West Frontier, he was able to make annexations in every direction and to levy blackmail, termed *Chauth* (one-fourth of the land revenue), over ever-increasing areas. In 1674, taking advantage of the favourable position, Sivaji crowned himself as King of Kings, while in 1677 he spent the year in conquering a vast realm in the Madras Carnatic and Mysore. In 1679 he suffered a severe reverse but, when he died in 1680, he had founded the Maratha State.

Sivaji's successor, *Raja* Sambhaji, was surprised and captured by Aurangzeb, and by the Emperor's orders was tortured to death with his Ministers. His eldest son, Shahu, was, however, spared to be educated at the Imperial Court. The successor of Sambhaji was his brother *Raja* Ram, who retreated to the south and died in 1700. It might well have been thought that the Marathas would have been crushed by these events, but at this period Aurangzeb had completely lost control of his generals, who accepted bribes from the Marathas and deliberately allowed them to develop their power, which was based on guerrilla warfare of the most elusive type. As Smith aptly puts it: "The Deccan, from which Aurangzeb never returned, was the grave of his reputation, as well as of his body".[1]

The Death of Aurangzeb, A.D. 1707.—The second period of the reign of the last great Moghul Emperor does not directly concern Afghanistan and it remains to sum up his long reign. During the first period he was a successful ruler, but in the second, in dealing with the widespread Maratha raids, his generals played him false, while the finances of the Empire were totally unable to bear the enormous and constant military expenditure.

To turn to his personal character; he was essentially a brave man, not more cruel or treacherous than the

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 445.

rulers of the period, while he was highly educated, being especially well versed in Moslem sacred literature. He was absolutely free from the vices of his predecessors, and his piety, not to say bigotry, gained him the esteem of his Moslem subjects.

He was a very hard worker and insisted on supervising every detail of the administration, delegating very little authority to his officials. To give an instance from Professor Sarkar's *Anecdotes of Aurangzeb*: "The Emperor learned from the news-letter of Ghazni that the *thanadar* of the Persian frontier had written a letter to Amir Khan, the Governor of Kabul, saying, 'Between the two frontiers there is a distance of four leagues. Praise be to Allah! friendship and alliance prevail between the two countries, and there is no apprehension of a quarrel or rupture on any account whatever. It is proper that the people of each side should go to the other side for buying and selling, so that both the places may increase in prosperity.' Amir Khan wrote in reply, 'I shall report the matter to His Majesty, and inform you of the order that I receive'."

The reply of the Emperor ran: "I wonder that Amir Khan — a hereditary servant aware of my sentiments, whose ancestors from generation to generation had lived in the society of my ancestors of the house of Timur — has forgotten the sense of this couplet:

> Give not up caution when your enemy becomes gentle:
> Stratagems may be concealed under a veil, like water under grass."

This intense personal supervision, accompanied by jealousy and mistrust of his sons and officials, his hatred of Hindus, whose temples and schools he destroyed, and the lack of responsible officials and generals caused by the above qualities, gradually led to his campaigns against the ubiquitous Marathas entirely failing to achieve their objectives.

To conclude, Aurangzeb has been well compared in his distrust of men, his passion for hard work and his religious bigotry to his contemporary, Louis XIV of France. Both monarchs at one time appeared to be

victorious conquerors, but their campaigns, in both cases, exhausted their kingdoms and led to discontent and to revolution.

The Reign of Bahadur Shah, A.D. 1707–1712.—Aurangzeb was fortunate in not suffering the fate of his father, since the fight for the throne among his sons did not take place until after his death. Each of them promptly proclaimed his own accession, but the eldest, Prince Muazzam, also called Shah Alam, who was at Kabul, rapidly marched down to the Punjab and met his second brother Azam at Jajau to the south of Agra, on June 10, 1707. The battle was hotly contested but ended in the defeat and death of Azam. Shah Alam thereupon secured the Imperial treasury at Agra, and by his liberal distribution of its contents was enabled to ascend the throne under the title of Bahadur Shah. He then marched against his third brother Kambaksh, who was defeated near Hyderabad, and later died of his wounds.

The Death of Bahadur Shah, A.D. 1712.—Bahadur Shah was an old man when he ascended the throne, and died in his sixty-ninth year after a reign of only five years. The repression which his father had exercised on him had destroyed all initiative, and although he possessed a generous character he was a mere nonentity who earned the nickname of the " Heedless King ".

The Accession of Muhammad Shah, A.D. 1719.—The successors of Bahadur Shah created reigns of terror and are unworthy of mention. They disappeared in quick succession until, in 1719, Muhammad Shah was placed on the throne, which he held until 1748.

The Moghul Empire was breaking up rapidly during this period. In 1722 Asaf Jah retired to his province, the Deccan, and founded the dynasty of the Nizam, which still exists. In the same year Saadat Khan, the founder of the Kingdom of Oudh, became the practically independent ruler of the province with the title of *Subadar*. Allah Verdi Khan, the Governor of Bengal (1740–1756), in similar fashion ceased to pay tribute or to acknowledge the sovereignty of the Emperor.

The Rise to Power of the Marathas.—Bahadur Shah had determined to utilize Shahu as a claimant for the position of Raja of the Marathas. To effect this he had sent him to the Maratha country under the imperial patronage. Tara Bai, the widow of Raja Ram, had declared herself regent for her infant son, but Shahu, supported by the Moghul authorities, was crowned in January A.D. 1708. His position was most insecure, very few of the great Maratha Chiefs supporting him, and Tara Bai was able to found a rival kingdom in the province of Kolhapur. He was, however, joined by a remarkable Brahman, Balaji Vishvanath, who, appointed to the office of *Peshwa*, aided him in winning over Angria, the Maratha admiral, and secured the rights of collecting the *chauth* in the Deccan, Mysore and other provinces. In 1719 Balaji marched on Delhi, where the wretched Emperor Farrukh-siyar, who was opposed to granting these rights, was killed. Balaji remained at the capital until Muhammad Shah, the newly enthroned Emperor, confirmed, in 1720, the rescripts which he demanded.

Balaji Vishvanath, who had refounded the Maratha Empire, died in this year and was succeeded by his still more competent son Baji Rao, who as *Peshwa* entirely overshadowed his royal master. This remarkable minister, having occupied Gujarat, Malwa and Bundelkand, evaded the imperial army and appeared in the suburbs of Delhi. To conclude this chapter, I quote Elphinstone, who wrote: " Baji Rao took possession of his conquests, but before he could receive the promised confirmation from the emperor, the progress of the transaction was arrested by one of those tremendous visitations, which for a time render men insensible to all other considerations ".

CHAPTER XXII

NADIR SHAH RECOVERS THE LOST PROVINCES OF PERSIA

Un homme d'environ quarante ans, élevé dès son enfance dans le métier des armes; valereux s'il en fut jamais; d'ailleurs homme d'entendement, franc et sincère, récompensant bien ceux qui se portent vaillamment, et punissant de mort ceux qui se lâchent le pied dans les occasions où il y a moyen de résister.—LE CHEVALIER DE GARDANE, French Consul at Isfahan.

The Ghilzais and Abdalis of Kandahar.—In the previous chapter we have seen the vicissitudes of the province of Kandahar. In A.D. 1650 it was recovered by Abbas II, and, although the city was besieged time and again by the Moghuls, it continued to form part of the Persian Empire when, in 1694, the pious but weak Shah Husayn was taken from the harem to ascend the throne.[1]

The most powerful tribe in the province was that of the Ghilzais who, over a century earlier, had migrated from the mountains of the Ghazni province westward and south-westward and had settled in the fertile lands of the valley of the Arghandab and the plains to the north of Kandahar. Their rivals, the Abdalis, who had also migrated with them, owing to a rebellion which took place in the reign of Shah Abbas, had, as mentioned in the previous chapter, been forced to move to the province of Herat.

Gurgin Khan and Mir Wais.—The Ministers of Shah Husayn had good reasons for believing that the Ghilzais were intriguing with the Court of Delhi. They had also rebelled, but their revolt was crushed with ruthless severity by the Georgian Prince whom the Persians termed Gurgin Khan. Once again the tribesmen rebelled but

[1] This and the ensuing chapter, which Dr. Laurence Lockhart has kindly read, are mainly based on his admirable *Nadir Shah*; also on Sykes' *op. cit.* vol. ii, chs. lxvi-lxxii. I have also consulted *The Historical Account of British Trade over the Caspian*, containing a "Life of Nadir Shah", by Jonas Hanway. Finally I had many talks with an aged Chapashlu Chief, whose ancestor had been a favourite general of Nadir.

again they were crushed and Mir Wais, their Chief, was sent to Isfahan as a prisoner. There he won over the foolish Shah, who not only released him but sent him back to Kandahar. Re-established as Chief of his tribe, he successfully conspired, killing Gurgin Khan and most of his men. Several expeditions were sent to exact retribution, but all met with disaster.

Mir Wais died in A.D. 1715 and was succeeded by his brother Abdul Aziz, who advocated the unpopular policy of submission to Persia. Incited by the Chiefs, Mahmud, the eldest son of Mir Wais, killed his uncle in 1717 and seized the reins of power.

The Rebellion of the Abdalis.—In A.D. 1716 the Abdalis of Herat, encouraged by the success of the Ghilzais, also rebelled and defeated several forces that had been sent against them. At this period corruption and maladministration at the Court were leading Persia to certain disaster.

Mahmud, who, in return for his nominal submission to the Shah, had been appointed Governor of Kandahar, soon showed his true colours by raiding the Kerman province in 1720. He captured Kerman city, but Lutf Ali Khan, the Shah's most capable general, routed the Afghans and drove them from the province.

The Battle of Gulnabad, A.D. 1722.—Lutf Ali Khan was subsequently dismissed and his army thereupon dispersed. Accordingly, in 1722, Mahmud, encouraged by the favourable situation, again invaded Persia. Unable to capture the fort of Kerman or the city of Yezd, he boldly marched on Isfahan.

On the level plain of Gulnabad, some twelve miles from the city, 20,000 Afghans, whose artillery merely consisted of swivels, mounted on camels, and throwing a ball weighing two pounds, were met by a Persian force of double their numbers, provided with ample artillery. After an initial success, the Persians were completely routed, and the Afghans besieged Isfahan. The defenders of the city attempted no sallies, although they repulsed some Afghan attacks, inflicting severe losses, and finally, owing to famine, Shah Husayn surrendered and abdicated.

The Escape of Tahmasp Mirza.—Before the occurrence of this disastrous event, Tahmasp *Mirza*, who had been hurriedly taken from the harem, broke out of the city at the head of 600 cavalry. He then proceeded to Kazvin, where he attempted to raise an army — at first with scant success.

Malik *Mahmud of Seistan*.—At this period *Malik* Mahmud, who claimed to be a scion of the ancient Keianian family of Seistan, had raised an army and marched to Gulnabad, intending to attack the Afghans and to raise the siege. He was, however, bought off by Mahmud's promise of the provinces of Khurasan and Seistan, and marched away, to secure those provinces, leaving Isfahan to its fate.

The Annexations of Peter the Great.—The position of Mahmud after the capture of Isfahan was not an easy one. During the progress of the siege Peter the Great, who had finally triumphed over Sweden, determined to take advantage of Persia's weakness and, at the same time, to forestall the Turks. He accordingly seized Darband (now Derbent) and was advancing on Shamakha and Baku when a Turkish ambassador visited his camp to announce that Shamakha had already been occupied by a Turkish force. Peter, unwilling to face war with Turkey at this period, garrisoned the key position of Darband and withdrew to Russia. In the following winter he occupied Resht, and later, Baku was bombarded and surrendered.

The Death of Mahmud, A.D. 1725.—Fearing a rebellion, Mahmud had ordered all the Safavi princes, with the exception of the wretched ex-Shah Husayn, to be put to death. Shortly afterwards he became insane. The Chiefs thereupon released from prison his cousin Ashraf, who promptly beheaded Mahmud and succeeded him.

Ashraf defeats the Turks, A.D. 1726.—In 1724 Russia and Turkey had signed a treaty for the dismemberment of Persia and, in 1725, Turkey began to occupy her western provinces, capturing Hamadan, Erivan and Tabriz, in spite of heroic defences of the two last-named cities.

Ashraf was thus faced with a grave crisis since, owing to the hostility of Husayn Sultan, the brother of Mahmud who ruled Kandahar, there were very few Afghan recruits to replace his losses. However, with exceptional courage, he decided to attack the Ottoman army which, after capturing Kazvin, was marching on Isfahan, and although outnumbered, he won a signal victory over the invaders. He allowed no pursuit, but released his prisoners and restored their personal property. As a result of this politic moderation, in 1727, a treaty was concluded by the terms of which the provinces held by Turkey were ceded to her. In return Ashraf was recognized as Shah of Persia by the Porte.

The Origin of Nadir Shah.—Having thus set the stage in Persia, we now turn to the extraordinary man who was destined to conquer an empire which stretched from the borders of Turkey and the Caucasus to Delhi and included the Uzbeg states of Bukhara and Khiva. Nadir Kuli Beg was the son of Imam Kuli Beg, a member of the Kiriklu section of the powerful Afshar tribe. Their summer grazing grounds were in the vicinity of Kupkan, situated in the uplands to the south of the Allahu Akbar range, where his father was still referred to by the rustics of that village as a *pustin duz* or "sewer of skincoats", when I discovered it some thirty years ago. He also owned a few sheep and goats and, in the autumn of 1688, when migrating northwards to the low-lying country for winter grazing, his wife gave birth to her famous son at the village of Dastgird in the district of Darragaz.[1]

As a youth Nadir Kuli entered the service of Baba Ali Beg, an Afshar Chief who was Governor of Abivard at that time. Owing to his courage and ability he rose to be the Commander of Baba Ali's guards; he also became his son-in-law. Baba Ali died in A.D. 1723 and Nadir, probably handicapped by his humble birth, being unable to succeed him as Chief, entered the service of *Malik*

[1] The site of Nadir's birth was subsequently marked by a building termed the *Mauludkhana*. During my journey I acquired the revenue accounts of Darragaz for the year A.D. 1746. In this interesting document, which I presented to the Royal Asiatic Society, charges on the land are shown for the upkeep of the "Birth-building" and of the grave of Imam Kuli at Kupkan.

Mahmud at Meshed. Nadir arranged to assassinate his new master, but the plot miscarried and he fled back to Abivard, where he raised a band of desperadoes who raided in Khurasan and gradually captured various tribal forts, including the celebrated natural fortress of Kalat-i-Nadiri, as it is still called today.

The Fortunes of Tahmasp Mirza.—Tahmasp was at Tehran when Ashraf secured the throne. He attempted to capture the refugee Prince who fled into the forests of Mazanderan in December A.D. 1725. At Sari his small band of followers was much strengthend by the adherence of Fath Ali Khan, Kajar, of Astrabad, who joined him with 2000 men. Proceeding to Astrabad, where other Chiefs rallied to his standard, on the advice of Fath Ali Khan, who somewhat prematurely was given the title of "Regent of the State", he decided to march against *Malik* Mahmud.

In this campaign Tahmasp was twice defeated by *Malik* Mahmud, who also routed Nadir and killed most of his followers. However, Nadir soon collected more men and reports of his prowess induced Tahmasp, in 1726, to enlist the services of this Chief, who joined him at Kuchan at the head of 2000 Afshars and Kurds.

Tahmasp appoints Nadir Commander-in-Chief.—The army advanced on Meshed and, during the course of the siege that followed, Nadir induced Tahmasp to execute Fath Ali Khan on a charge of disloyalty, and to appoint him to the post. Ultimately Meshed was captured by treachery.

Nadir defeats a Force of Abdalis.—Tahmasp soon began to mistrust his new Commander-in-Chief. Nadir, on his part, clearly understood that his future depended on military successes. After much fighting with hostile tribes, he was attacked by a force of 7000 Abdalis from Herat. Realizing that, owing to the crushing victories recently won by the Ghilzais in Persia, his raw troops greatly feared the Afghans, Nadir entrenched his infantry and artillery and only skirmished with his cavalry. The Abdalis, unwilling to attack the entrenched force, finally retired from the field.

Nadir decides to crush the Abdalis.—Nadir had determined to recover Persia from the Ghilzais, but with the instincts of a great general, he decided to crush the Abdalis and to win back Herat before attempting to march on Isfahan.

Feuds in the Abdali Tribe.—At this period the Abdalis were much weakened by family feuds. In A.D. 1718, Abdullah Khan Sadozai was murdered by Muhammad Zaman Khan, a rival belonging to the same clan. The latter's position as Chief was soon successfully challenged by another Chief, Muhammad Khan Afghan, and under his leadership Meshed had been besieged in the winter of 1722–1723, but without success.

This failure led to Muhammad Khan's deposition in favour of Zulfikar, the elder son of Muhammad Zaman Khan, whose younger son Ahmad was destined to found the kingdom of Afghanistan. In 1725–1726 Rahman, a son of the murdered Abdullah Khan Sadozai, seeking for vengeance, attacked Zulfikar Khan. The Abdali Chiefs interposed in this intestinal feud, sending Zulfikar to Bakharz while Rahman was exiled to Kandahar. Allah Yar, a brother of Muhammad Khan Afghan, was next elected Chief by the tribe, but his authority was almost immediately challenged by Zulfikar. However, upon hearing of the impending attack by Nadir, the rival factions made peace with one another, Allah Yar being appointed Governor of Herat with Zulfikar in command at Farah.

Nadir left Meshed in May 1729 and the two armies met at Kafir Kala, close to the present Perso-Afghan frontier. As in the previous action, Nadir surrounded his infantry with his artillery, while he posted his cavalry on a flank. The Abdalis charged home and threw the infantry into confusion, but the day was finally won by Nadir's charge at the head of the cavalry. Three other successful engagements followed. The Abdalis then not only submitted but many of their Chiefs enlisted in the army of the victor. This campaign was of the greatest importance to Nadir, since it proved to his soldiers that, under his command, they were more than a match for the once dreaded Afghans.

Nadir defeats Ashraf at Mehmandost.—To return to the Ghilzais at Isfahan: the situation of Ashraf was essentially a weak one, since, although he had made terms with Turkey, his losses in the battle had been heavy and very few recruits had taken their place. At the same time his generalship and prestige were well established.

Nadir, who was well informed as to the military and political position, in Persia, now decided to march against Ashraf. The two armies met at Mehmandost, situated some miles to the east of Damghan on the Meshed-Tehran caravan route. Nadir, as in previous actions, surrounded his infantry with artillery and when the Afghans charged in three divisions they suffered heavy casualties from artillery and musketry fire; and, upon Ashraf's standard-bearer being killed, they broke and fled. This constituted the decisive battle of the campaign since, although Ashraf took up an entrenched position at Murchakhar to the north of Isfahan, Nadir drew him from it by making a feint at Isfahan and, after some desperate fighting, Ashraf, who lost his artillery, fled from the field and from Isfahan.

Nadir occupied the capital, where Tahmasp was set upon the throne, although the power rested in the hands of his victorious general. Both Nadir and the Shah met the European colony, consisting of English, French and Dutch representatives; there were also a number of priests and missionaries. Their records make most interesting reading.

In December 1730 Nadir advanced south. The Afghans, who still numbered some 20,000 men, awaited him at Zargan, a stage to the north of Shiraz. They fought with the courage of despair, but were defeated and fled. Nadir pursued to beyond Shiraz, but Ashraf escaped, only to be killed by a force sent out to intercept him by his cousin, Husayn Sultan. A miserable remnant indeed survived, but its members were generally enslaved.

Nadir reoccupies Hamadan, Kermanshah and Tabriz.—Nadir had accomplished his first great task of exacting full and complete vengeance on the Ghilzai invaders.

Persian *moral* was fully re-established by these victories, and with amazing initiative the Great Afshar general immediately attacked the Turkish garrisons in Western Persia and recaptured Hamadan, Kermanshah and Tabriz. The Ottoman Empire at this period was in a state of extreme weakness, owing to the deposition of the Sultan. It was therefore impossible for the Porte to despatch an army to the threatened area.

The Rebellion of the Abdalis.—Nadir had intended to continue his campaign against Turkey under these favourable conditions, but a report reached him from his eldest son Riza Kuli that the Abdalis, instigated by Husayn Sultan of Kandahar (who realized his own dangerous position), had rebelled under the leadership of Zulfikar Khan, and had seized Herat. Furthermore, not content with this act of contumacy, they were actually besieging Meshed.

To meet this emergency, after arranging for a truce with Turkey, Nadir marched eastwards one thousand miles to relieve Meshed, but hearing on the way that the Abdalis had abandoned the siege, he turned aside to punish some rebellious Yamut tribesmen in the Astrabad province and then marched *via* the Gurgan Valley to Meshed, the city that practically became his capital.

Nadir besieges Herat.—Zulfikar, realizing that Nadir would exact stern retribution, sought for help from Husayn Sultan who, at first, refused it, but finally despatched a force of 3000 Ghilzais to his support, under Muhammad Saidal Khan, his most distinguished general.

In the spring of A.D. 1731 Nadir marched to a small village seven miles west of Herat. There he was attacked by the Abdalis and an indecisive action followed. But that night Muhammad Saidal Khan, the Ghilzai general, made a surprise attack on the Persian camp, and nearly captured Nadir, who, with only eight men, was isolated in a small tower. A few days later, however, Nadir inflicted a severe defeat on Zulfikar.

Having received reinforcements, Nadir decided to invest Herat and gradually completed the encirclement

of the city. In July Zulfikar sallied out and crossed the Hari Rud, but once again was routed with such heavy losses that Saidal and his Ghilzais secretly stole away.

The Abdalis thereupon made overtures for peace but broke faith under the mistaken belief that the dust of approaching Persian troops was raised by a Ghilzai relief force. However, realising their unfortunate mistake, the besieged again sued for peace and Nadir once more granted them terms.

Nadir captures Herat, February A.D. 1732.—Allah Yar Khan, at the request of the Abdalis, was reappointed Governor of Herat, but, in September, hearing false rumours of the approach of a powerful Ghilzai army, he also renounced his allegiance. Nadir was naturally incensed with the Abdalis who, yet once again, made fresh peace proposals and again withdrew them. He accordingly renewed siege operations with great vigour and, in February 1732, Herat surrendered and was occupied by the Persian army.

Nadir sent Allah Yar Khan and other Chiefs into exile at Multan. He then transferred 60,000 Abdalis to the districts of Northern Khurasan. He had already transferred some 50,000 families from Azerbaijan and Fars to this province, among these tribesmen being 12,000 families of Afshars, including 2000 families of his own section, the Kiriklu. In spite of their constant violation of pledges, Nadir treated the vanquished Abdalis with marked clemency, since he realized their martial qualities and was determined to win them over by generous treatment to serve in his army.

The Defeat of Tahmasp by the Turks.—While Nadir was engaged at Herat, Tahmasp decided to take the field in person. At first he won some successes against the Ottoman troops, but his army was finally routed with heavy losses near Hamadan, and by a treaty signed in January A.D. 1732, Persia retained only the provinces which Nadir had recaptured south and east of the Aras, together with Tabriz, while Turkey was to hold Ganja, Tiflis, Erivan and Daghestan.

The Treaty of Resht, A.D. 1732.—Almost simultaneously the Treaty of Resht was signed with Russia, by the terms of which that Power, viewing with dismay the heavy mortality from fever and plague among her garrisons in Gilan, agreed to evacuate that province and all the Persian districts held by her to the south of the Kur or Cyrus. The provinces situated to the north of that river were to be retained until the Turks had been expelled from them. Russia hoped by this policy to win Persia to side with her against Turkey.

The Deposition of Tahmasp, August A.D. 1732.—Upon hearing of Tahmasp's treaty with Turkey, Nadir immediately denounced it strongly and warned the Sultan that he must either evacuate every Persian province or be prepared for war. He then took advantage of the indignation which it had excited in Persia to depose the unworthy Tahmasp, and to invest his infant son with the symbols of sovereignty as Abbas III.

The Defeat of Nadir, July A.D. 1733.—The Turkish army, which included the famous Janissaries, a corps raised from young Christians, who served for life, was the most formidable in Europe. Nadir, however, nothing daunted, decided to start the campaign against Turkey by besieging Baghdad. Unable, from lack of a siege-train, to breach its walls, he had nearly succeeded in forcing the surrender of the city by famine when a Turkish army, 80,000 strong, under *Topal* Osman,[1] an ex-Grand Vizier, appeared on the scene.

Nadir unwisely divided his force, leaving 12,000 men to continue the siege, and marched north to meet Osman. The Turks occupied an entrenched position on the left bank of the Tigris, not very far from Kirkuk, and, at the opening of the battle, the Persian main attack forced the Turkish centre to retire and captured some of their guns, but the advance by Osman of his reserve stemmed the Persian attack. Nadir's troops, unable to reach the river, suffered terribly from thirst, but the issue of the battle remained uncertain until the Afshar leader who had already had one horse wounded under

[1] Osman was a *Topal* or Cripple from wounds received in action.

him, was thrown to the ground by a second wounded charger. Fearing that he was killed, his men were seized with panic and fled from the field. Their losses were estimated at 30,000 men and those of the Turks at 20,000. Nadir's artillery and baggage fell to the victors.

The Defeat and Death of Topal *Osman*, A.D. 1733.—Nadir's strategy was evidently at fault in dividing his force at a crucial time, but in defeat his greatness was fully proved by the iron resolution he displayed. He made no recriminations; he distributed money lavishly to his soldiers to make good their losses in arms, equipment and horses, and sent them to their homes to refit. He also despatched orders for artillery and munitions of better quality to be manufactured, for recruits to be drilled and for baggage animals to be collected. So great was his influence that, in the short space of two months, he was able to march against *Topal* Osman with a larger and better equipped army than before.

That general, whose urgent requests for reinforcements had not been complied with by the Porte, was much weaker than his opponent. At Leilan, in the vicinity of Kirkuk, an engagement between detachments of both armies was indecisive. Nadir then, hearing that a Turkish division had entered the defile of Ak Darband, marched across very difficult country into the defile above the Turkish position. After this, sending some *jezailchis* to cross the Turkish line of retreat, he attacked. *Topal* Osman soon marched up with the main force, but, after a tremendous artillery fire by both sides, the Persian troops, thirsting for revenge, charged and carried all before them. The Turks were routed with very heavy losses and gallant *Topal* Osman was killed.

The Battle of Baghavand, A.D. 1735.—In December 1733, Nadir and Ahmad Pasha, the defender of Baghdad, signed a treaty, by the terms of which Turkey agreed to revert to the frontier laid down by the Turko-Persian Treaty of 1639, which allowed her to retain Baghdad. The Porte did not ratify this treaty although it did not actually denounce it. Their intention was to delay matters while strong reinforcements were being sent to

the army at the front. Nadir, who fully realized the situation, led his army into the Caucasus and besieged Ganja (the modern Elizabetpol), but in spite of Russian aid in the shape of siege artillery, he was unable to capture it. However, by besieging this fortress and also Tiflis and Erivan, he forced the Turkish leader to advance from Kars and give him battle. At Baghavand, in the vicinity of Erivan, the Persian army, under their great leader, routed the Turks, whose general was among the thousands that were killed. The besieged cities were surrendered and peace was made between the two Powers on the basis of *uti possiditis*. This battle, as was only to be expected, did not constitute a final settlement between the two Powers.

The Coronation of Nadir Shah, A.D. 1736.—Having repeatedly defeated the Ghilzais and the Turks, and having driven them from Persia, Nadir ordered a great assembly to meet him on the Mughan plain where a National Council was held " to confer the crown of Persia upon the individual whom the Council considered to be most worthy of it ". A committee of six of his trusty adherents announced that Nadir, with his sharp sword, had defeated the enemies of Persia and had restored peace, but that he was worn out by his campaigns and only wished to retire to his fortress of Kalat. The delegates thereupon replied that they wished their Shah to be Nadir " who had cleared the page of the kingdom from its pollution by enemies ". After this scene had been repeated for three or four days, Nadir consented to be Shah. Finally, in a magnificent hall especially erected for this great occasion, the Afshar shepherd ascended the throne of Cyrus, of Noshirwan and of Shah Abbas.

Nadir prepares to attack Kandahar.—Nadir in A.D. 1736 had, as we have seen, negotiated a Treaty with Turkey which he never ratified and which was in reality little more than a truce. At the same time, Russia declared war on Turkey and wished him to co-operate; but he had decided that his next campaign would aim at regaining Kandahar for Persia, while he probably also formed vague plans as to further campaigns eastwards.

The March on Kandahar.—After crushing a rebellion of the virile Bakhtiaris, Nadir began to make serious preparations for the reconquest of Kandahar. Organizing a force 80,000 strong, which consisted mainly of cavalry, he left Isfahan in November A.D. 1736 for Kerman. He then proceeded *via* Bam to Seistan, and marching to Farah, he advanced towards Girishk on the Upper Helmand, which was held by a Ghilzai force, but was surrendered, as soon as a bombardment was opened.

The Siege of Kandahar, A.D. 1737–1738.—Unable to meet Nadir's army in the field, Husayn Sultan shut himself up in the city, which was strongly fortified, fully provisioned for a siege and held by a large garrison. Nadir, after a reconnaissance, decided that Kandahar was too strong to assault without heavy guns and decided on a blockade. Accordingly, he gradually constructed a ring of forts, with towers at intervals of one hundred yards, round the doomed city, while for his army he built a walled town two miles to the south-east of Kandahar, complete in every respect. This he named Nadirabad. Meanwhile, his troops captured Bust, Kalat-i-Ghilzai and other centres, and emptied, not only the surrounding country, but also the province of Kerman, of supplies for the support of the army.

The Campaign in Baluchistan.—A subsidiary expedition was despatched at the same time to prevent Muhabbat Khan, the Chief of Kalat, from sending help to Husayn Sultan. Marching by Bandar Abbas and the Makran coast, the troops, like those of Alexander the Great in the same area, suffered greatly from thirst, but twice defeated the force of the Brahui Chief who submitted to Nadir in his camp. The Shah received him kindly and appointed him Governor of Baluchistan.

The Surrender of Kandahar, March A.D. 1738.—At the beginning of 1738 the besiegers captured a stone tower from which they were able to command much of the fortress with their cannon and mortars. An assault by a Bakhtiari forlorn hope, however, failed owing to treachery, the defenders having been pre-warned. Later, hearing that on Fridays the defenders attended the

mosques, leaving only a skeleton force on duty, Nadir took advantage of this fact to organize a grand assault against the Burj-i-Dada, the chief fort. This was captured and the assailants pressed on until only the citadel was left to the Afghans.

Husayn decided to surrender, and, in accordance with Afghan custom, sent his sister Zainab, with a number of Ghilzai Chiefs, to ask for quarter. Nadir granted Husayn and his followers their lives but sent them to captivity in Mazanderan. In Kandahar he found the Abdali Chief Zulfikar and his younger brother Ahmad, who was then a youth of fifteen. Treating them generously, he sent them also to Mazanderan, whence Ahmad Khan shortly afterwards rejoined Nadir to serve as an officer in his Afghan corps.

Nadir then ordered the destruction of Kandahar and moved the population to Nadirabad. He also moved the Abdali tribesmen, whom he had transferred from Herat to Khurasan, back to the lands they had formerly occupied in the Kandahar province. To effect this, he arranged for the Hotiki Ghilzais, the clansmen of Husayn Sultan, to settle on the lands vacated by the Abdalis in Khurasan. He also enlisted several thousand Ghilzais in his body-guard.

The capture of Kandahar adds but little to Nadir's fame as a soldier, since he was content to blockade the city for a year without seriously attempting to take it by mining or other means, while the Ghilzais were far weaker than the force opposed to them. Apart from this, he had not only fully avenged the disaster of Isfahan on the Ghilzais, but had restored to Persia the last of the provinces that the decadent Shah Husayn had lost.

CHAPTER XXIII

NADIR SHAH — HIS CONQUESTS AND DEATH

We find a man, whose birth and beginning were so obscure as with difficulty to be traced out, conducting to an issue, with resolution and steadiness, opportunities he had worked out for himself . . . carrying his designs into execution, with an unwearied application, till, like other mighty conquerors before him, he became terrible to Asia and the undoubted arbiter of the East.—JONAS HANWAY on Nadir Shah.

The new Nebuchadnezzar has been rendered quite mad by his triumphs. He says: " It was not difficult for me to conquer all India. . . . If I move with only one leg I take India; if I move with both legs, I shall conquer the whole world."—KALUSHKIN, the Russian Resident, on Nadir Shah.

Nadir despatches an Envoy to Delhi.—In May 1737 Nadir had despatched a letter by an envoy to Muhammad Shah, the Emperor of Delhi, with complaints that the Moghul frontier authorities, despite his repeated requests, had made no attempt to arrest fugitive Afghans. He instructed his envoy not to remain at Delhi more than forty days but to secure a reply and return. The Emperor and his ministers were much perturbed at the receipt of this missive. In the East the formalities of address are most important, and they could not make up their minds how to address Nadir. They therefore decided to wait for the issue of the siege of Kandahar before writing a reply. Meanwhile, despite his repeated remonstrances, the envoy was not permitted to leave Delhi.

The Plans of Nadir Shah.—Nadir, whose ambition was undoubtedly to rival Tamerlane and who was well aware of the weakness of the Court of Delhi, which, unwarlike and torn by intrigues, closely resembled that of Shah Husayn, for some time had certainly decided to invade India. He had therefore taken every opportunity to gain accurate information of all kinds. Moreover, although definite proofs are lacking, it has often been

alleged that Nizam-ul-Mulk, the Viceroy of the Deccan, and Saadat Khan, the *Subadar* of Oudh, had opened up disloyal communications with him. The former official was of Central Asian extraction, while the latter was a Persian by birth. Finally, Nadir fully realized that he had still another campaign to fight with the highly trained, well-equipped Turkish army; that Persia was drained of men, supplies and money; that he could, if funds were available, recruit his army from the warlike Afghans; that a campaign in India might well supply him with wealth beyond the dreams of avarice, and thus enable him to achieve his final ambition of leading a victorious army to the Bosphorus.

The Capture of Kabul and Peshawar.—At the end of May Nadir marched north, crossing the frontier of the Moghul Empire some four or five stages south of Ghazni. Upon his approach to that city its Governor abandoned his post and fled to Kabul, but the notables came to Karabagh, where the Shah had halted, and tendered their submission. Ghazni was occupied on June 11 and the army then marched on Kabul. Nadir wrote to Nasir Khan, the *Subadar* of Kabul and Peshawar, stating that it was his object to extirpate Afghan refugees. He ended a somewhat cryptic letter: "Be not anxious for yourselves, but undertake the obligations of hospitality".

On receipt of this communication Nasir Khan wrote to Delhi that "he himself was but a rose-bush withered by the blasts of autumn, while his soldiery were no more than a faded pageant, ill-provided and without spirit". He then made the reasonable request that of the five years' salary due to him, one year might be paid. However, this pathetic appeal produced no results, and when Nadir arrived within two stages of Kabul the notables, as in the case of Ghazni, made their submission, but Nasir Khan himself retreated towards Peshawar.

After occupying Kabul, Nadir again sent an envoy to the Emperor, accompanied by some notables of Kabul, but his representative was murdered at Jalalabad by a mob. In September Nadir himself marched to Jalalabad, where the murder of his envoy was duly punished. At

this city he was joined by his son Riza Kuli, who had not only subdued rebellious Andkhui and Balkh, but had also invaded Bukharan territory, until ordered to recross the Oxus by his father.

Advancing from Jalalabad, a report was received that a force of 20,000 Afghans under Nasir Khan held the Khaibar Pass. Accordingly, adopting the device he had found so successful in former campaigns, Nadir marched by a track which led across a very difficult mountainous country, *via* China, the Tsatsobi Pass and the Bazar Valley,[1] and attacked Nasir Khan's force from the rear, capturing the leader himself and many other officers. The way having been opened by this brilliant exploit, the main body marched down the Khaibar Pass to Peshawar.

The Advance on Delhi, A.D. 1739.—Crossing the Indus in January, no opposition was met with until a force of 15,000 cavalry was encountered and easily defeated outside Lahore. Zakariya Khan, its Governor, who saved that city from being sacked by the payment of 20 *lakhs* of rupees of gold, was reinstated in his post and, leaving Lahore in February, Nadir marched to Sirhind.

The Situation at Delhi.—Muhammad Shah had summoned Nizam-ul-Mulk, who, upon his arrival at Delhi, found that no attention was paid to his advice. Khan Dauran, the Commander-in-Chief, and his hated rival wrote orders to the Rajput Chiefs, but they made excuses and delayed. The *Subadar* of Oudh, however, obeyed the summons. In due course a large army was assembled which marched to Karnal. There an entrenched camp was formed in which to await the attack of the invader. The army of Muhammad Shah may have been 100,000 strong, but with non-combatants it was probably swollen to one million.

Nadir, who realized the strength of the Emperor's position, which could only be directly approached by a narrow track leading through dense jungle, decided to outflank it and avoid the jungle by making a detour to the east and, camping some five miles to the east-north-east of Karnal, he rode up to reconnoitre the Indian camp.

[1] *Vide* map in Lockhart's *op. cit.* p. 127.

That evening his scouts reported that Saadat Khan, with a force 30,000 strong, had reached Panipat. Nadir accordingly despatched a body of troops to intercept him.

The Battle of Karnal, February 24, A.D. 1737.—Nadir drew up his army in three divisions and he himself proceeded once again to reconnoitre. While engaged on this task, the officer in command of the intercepting force reported that Saadat Khan had eluded him by making a detour, but that he had pursued these troops to the Emperor's camp, capturing prisoners and booty. At this juncture, Saadat Khan, who had joined the Indian army, heard that his baggage was being looted. He thereupon ordered his tired troops to fall in and attack. Followed by only 1000 cavalry he charged out, sending urgent appeals to the Emperor for the whole army to follow. Khan Dauran responded with a force of 8000 cavalry, but Nizam-ul-Mulk refused to move. This relatively small force was led into an ambush, where it was decimated by *jezailchis* firing from under cover. Saadat Khan, whose elephant bolted with him, was taken prisoner; Khan Dauran was mortally wounded and, unsupported by the treacherous Nizam-ul-Mulk, the force was annihilated.

In this action the numbers engaged on either side constituted but a small percentage of the two armies. However, owing to personal quarrels and jealousies, the army of Muhammad Shah was paralysed, whereas the veteran army led by Nadir, a general of genius, obeyed him like one man and were the unchallenged victors.

Panic and a spirit of defeatism reigned among the advisers of Muhammad Shah, who himself visited Nadir at his camp, where the victor received him with courtesy, stress being laid on their common Turkoman descent. Nadir, however, had kept the Indian camp closely invested and, although he had at first agreed to accept an indemnity of 50 lakhs of rupees, he was easily persuaded by the traitor Saadat Khan to march on Delhi and win vast sums of gold, besides jewels, not only from the Emperor's treasury but also from the nobles and merchants. Purposely waiting a few days to allow the

shortage of supplies to produce its full effect, Nadir ordered the Emperor to visit him once again. On this occasion Muhammad Shah, who had apparently abdicated, practically became his prisoner, while Persian troops were despatched to seize the artillery of the Indian army and to arrest all leading officers. The rank and file were informed that they could disband, which they hastened to do.

The Emperor then proceeded to Delhi in advance of the Persian army, to prepare for the reception of his guest. Nadir Shah entered the city as a victor, riding on horseback in a procession headed by 100 elephants. He took up his quarters in the palace built by Shah Jahan; his troops occupied the city; the *khutba* was read in his name, and coins were struck bearing the inscription, "The Sultan over the Sultans of the Earth is Nadir the King of Kings, Lord of the Fortunate Conjunction".

The Massacre.—Nadir had already assumed charge of the city when suddenly a false rumour spread that he had been taken prisoner by the Emperor or poisoned. The mob thereupon rose on the scattered parties of soldiers, while some of the Indian nobles took advantage of the disturbance to kill the Persian guards mounted at their houses. Throughout the night the rising continued, some 3000 Persian and Afghan soldiers being killed. In the morning Nadir ordered his troops to massacre men, women and children wherever one of his soldiers had been murdered. For some hours the massacre continued but, upon the Emperor's plea for mercy, it was stopped. At Delhi I was shown the platform of the Roshan-u-Daula mosque where Nadir sat and ordered the massacre. Close to it is the *Khuni Darwaza* or "Bloody Gate", where the slaughter commenced.

Nadir replaces Muhammad Shah on the Throne.—Nadir collected wealth beyond computation at Delhi, among the most famous of his spoils being the peacock throne and the Koh-i-Noor diamond, which now forms part of the British regalia. He also married his second son Nasrulla *Mirza* to a great-granddaughter of Aurangzeb. As required by Moghul etiquette, the pedigree of the Afshar

Prince for seven generations was demanded. Nadir thereupon exclaimed, " He is the son of Nadir Shah, the son of the sword, the grandson of the sword and so on, not merely for seven, but for seventy generations ".

On May 12 Nadir held a great durbar at which he placed the crown of Hindustan on the head of Muhammad Shah. He also advised the nobles to obey their monarch and threatened to return to Delhi in case of rebellion and to punish the guilty. Moreover he engaged masons, goldsmiths, craftsmen, boat-builders and carpenters. Many of the two latter classes he sent to Balkh to construct boats suitable for transport on the Oxus. Finally, on May 16, he rode off on the return march to Kabul.

The Results of the Delhi Campaign.—Hitherto Nadir's campaigns had been fought in little known lands to win back for Persia her lost provinces and to drive out her invaders. Now, in the course of a few months, and without any serious opposition, he had conquered Delhi and could claim to have won the title of a " World Conqueror ". Throughout this campaign he had acted with consummate skill and had secured his magnificent prize with trifling loss of life. Had he attacked the strongly entrenched camp at Karnal, his casualties would inevitably have been heavy, but, as we have seen, he won the battle by defeating a mere fraction of the Indian army. He had shown much wisdom in refusing to annex the Punjab, but by occupying the provinces up to the Indus he had greatly enlarged the borders of Afghanistan.

The Return March to Kabul.—Marching across the Punjab during the rains, the army suffered alike from the swollen rivers and the heat. Attacking the martial Yusufzais, of the Indus Valley, who displayed great bravery, Nadir made terms with them and, as in similar cases, enlisted hundreds of them in his army. Recrossing the Indus, he marched up the Khaibar Pass to Kabul where he arrived in early December, to be given a great reception by the assembled Afghan Chiefs.

The Sind Campaign, A.D. 1739–1740.—Nadir, some months previously, had ordered Khudayar Khan, the Kalhora Chief of Sind, to present himself at Kabul and

NADIR SHAH

(Reproduced by kind permission from the portrait in the India Museum, South Kensington)

do homage for his government. Relying no doubt on the improbability of the great Afshar troubling to conduct a campaign at such a distance, the Chief failed to obey. He made a mistake, since, although it was mid-winter, Nadir led his army by the Kurram Valley into Sind and finally, after crossing the waterless desert to Umarkot, the birthplace of the Emperor Akbar, secured the submission of Khudayar Khan, extracting a large sum of money from his captive. He took him in chains to Larkana, where he forgave the rebel Chief, made him Governor of a portion of his former dominions and arranged for a force of 2000 cavalry, commanded by his son, to join his army. He also took two of his sons to serve as hostages. After this minor, but very difficult, operation which, once again, showed the great Afshar leader at his best, the army marched back to Kandahar by the Bolan Pass.

The Campaign against Bukhara, A.D. 1740.—Nadir arranged for a great Assembly of the Chiefs and officials of Khurasan to be held at Herat. There he rested his army for forty days and displayed the treasures he had brought from India; he also celebrated his victories by pageants and feasts.

He had long determined to conquer Bukhara and, marching to Balkh, he found that over one thousand boats, which had been constructed by his orders, were ready to be loaded on the Oxus. The army then marched downstream in two divisions, guarding the flotilla on each bank and, upon its arrival at Charjui, a bridge of boats[1] was constructed across the Oxus, guarded by two strong forts.

Abul Faiz, the degenerate Amir of Bukhara, was panic-stricken upon hearing of the arrival of the Persian army and agreed to visit Nadir at Charjui. He had actually started from the city for this purpose, when thousands of Uzbeg tribesmen, assembling from every side, persuaded him to fight. Upon hearing reports of this intention, Nadir advanced to meet the army of the

[1] In 1892 I crossed the Oxus at Charjui by a rickety wooden bridge which had recently been constructed by the Russians.

Amir. The Uzbegs charged but, alarmed by the heavy cannonade, which many of them had never experienced or indeed heard of, they recoiled and a counter-attack led by Nadir won the day, the Uzbeg losses being very severe.

Abul Faiz duly made his submission and Nadir, as at Delhi, upon entering Bukhara, ordered the *khutba* to be read in his name. He decided to replace Abul Faiz on the throne, but he annexed Charjui and all Bukharan territory south of the Oxus. He also enrolled 30,000 Uzbegs in his army and arranged for various matrimonial alliances between his family and that of Abul Faiz, marrying one of the princesses himself.

The Campaign against Khiva.—While halting at Bukhara, Nadir had despatched an envoy, accompanied by two Bukharan *Khwajas*,[1] to Ilbars, the Khan of Khiva, summoning him to his camp to ask pardon for his invasion of Khurasan. Ilbars, enraged by this message, put the envoys to death. Nadir thereupon again set his flotilla in motion downstream, carefully guarded by troops on each bank. On reaching the Deveh Boyun ("Camel's Neck") gorge where the river narrows to one-third of its normal width, he constructed a fortified depôt for his heavy baggage and then marched on Fitnak, the first of the *Besh Kala* or "Five Fortresses" of the oasis. Near Fitnak he met and defeated the army of Ilbars, who retreated to Hazarasp, a fortress protected by inundations. Hearing that the family and treasure of the Khan were at Khanka, further north, Nadir immediately marched on that fortress, with the result that Ilbars quitted Hazarasp and, once again, met the Persian army near Khanka, where he was again worsted and retreated into the fortress. There, terrified by the explosion of mines beneath the walls, he surrendered under promise of pardon. The relations of the two murdered *Khwajas* of Bukhara, however, demanded the execution of the Khan, who, with thirty of his chief followers, was put to death. Khiva, the chief city, after a short siege was also taken, and its capture ended the campaign.

[1] A *Khwaja* is a member of a religious class and highly respected as such.

In Khiva, Nadir found 12,000 Khurasan slaves, whom he liberated, furnished with food, transport and money and settled at a town termed Khivakabad, which he built for them near Abivard. We owe our account of this campaign to Thompson and Hogg, two English assistants of Jonas Hanway. They visited Nadir and were granted liberty " to trade through all his dominions; and if any wrong was done them and they were not redressed by his officers, they should apply to him ".[1] Nadir also freed ten Russian slaves, provided them with funds and transport, and sent them back to Russia. Throughout this campaign the military skill and the political arrangements of Nadir were alike admirable. While at Khwarizm (to give the country its correct name), he appointed a local Chief, who was descended from Chenghiz Khan, to succeed Ilbars. He also restored Bukhara to its Amir.

The Daghestan Campaign, A.D. 1741–1743.—From Khiva the army marched back to Charjui and crossed the desert to Merv. It then proceeded to Kalat, where Nadir deposited the spoils of Delhi in a treasure-house, which I have visited, and reached Meshed in January 1741.

His next campaign was intended to avenge the death of his brother Ibrahim Khan, who had been killed in an ambush in the mountains of densely wooded Daghestan. Travelling westwards, he was fired at by an assassin in the forests of Mazanderan, and was wounded in the thumb. The would-be assassin was not caught at the time, but was finally seized in the Herat province.

At Tehran Nadir received Kaluskin, the Russian Resident, whose report serves as a motto to this chapter. Then, proceeding westwards with his army, estimated to be 150,000 strong, he received the submission of the Lazgis. In September he had penetrated to a point west of Darband and was returning to the Caspian coast when he heard that the Karakaitak [2] tribesmen had cut up one

[1] Jonas Hanway, *Historical Account of British Trade over the Caspian*, 1753, vol. iv, p. 207.

[2] For an excellent map of this area *vide* Lockhart's *op. cit.* p. 202.

of his columns. Later they even raided his own camp and carried off some of his women. He attempted to avenge this insult, but failed to do so.

Spending the winter near Darband and receiving supplies of grain from Astrakhan, in May 1742 Nadir renewed his campaign against the rebels, but, again, was defeated by them. Finally, although the Karakaitak tribe submitted, Avaria, owing mainly to its steep mountains and dense forests, remained unconquered.

The Blinding of Riza Kuli Mirza.—Nadir, influenced no doubt by the young Prince having surrounded himself with royal state during his father's absence in India, and by other unwise actions, but still more so by malicious imputations as to his disloyalty, decided that his son had instigated his would-be assassin, who was examined by Nadir himself. Accordingly Riza Kuli was blinded in his father's presence and that of his councillors. Today in Persia it is believed that, upon Nadir informing him that the punishment was inflicted for his crimes, the unfortunate Prince replied: " It is not my eyes that you have put out, but those of Persia ".

Widespread Rebellions, A.D. 1743 – 1744. — The prestige of Nadir had suffered severely owing to his reverses in Daghestan, while his merciless taxation drove his subjects to revolt. These rebellions were, however, put down with ruthless severity. Hanway, who was horrified at the sight, describes two pillars of rebel heads that were erected at Astrabad.[1] There is no doubt that Nadir, embittered by his failures in Daghestan, suffering from dropsy, and possibly pricked with remorse for the blinding of his heir, had lost the fine qualities that he had possessed and had become liable to fits of savage passion.

The Second Battle of Baghavard, A.D. 1745.—Nadir's last great victory was won against his only really formidable enemies. After negotiations and sieges, in August a Turkish army, as ten years previously, met the conqueror of Delhi on the old battle-ground at Baghavard. The fighting was fierce but Nadir's charge on

[1] Vide *op. cit.* vol. i, p. 295, for an engraving of the pillars.

the Turkish flank drove that army back to its fortified camp. There the troops finally mutinied, killed their general and fled in utter confusion, leaving their artillery and baggage to the victors. By a treaty which was signed in 1746, the frontier as laid down in 1639 [1] was to be observed, and peace was re-established between the two countries.

The Risings in Persia.—Although serious revolts had occurred in Persia, as mentioned above, the resentment of the people was being replaced by desperation at the Shah's increasing thirst for blood and money. To quote Hanway: "From an incessant fatigue and labour of mind, attended with some infirmities of body, he had contracted . . . a diabolical fierceness with a total insensibility of human sufferings".[2] He was obviously becoming insane.

At Isfahan he strangled thirty men a day, while without any trial eight men were seized, were blinded in one eye and were then chained and cast into a fire! In January A.D. 1747 Nadir travelled to Yezd and Kerman, everywhere torturing and erecting towers with the heads of his victims.

The Assassination of Nadir Shah.—Ali Kuli Khan, the eldest son of Ibrahim Khan, who had been ordered to pay a special levy of 100,000 tomans, rebelled. Among his partisans were the Kurds of Kuchan. Nadir decided to punish the rebels, but realizing that his own officers were plotting against him, he despatched his family for security to Kalat. He then marched on Kuchan.

He now relied solely on the loyalty of his corps of 4000 Afghans, who were commanded by Ahmad Khan Abdali, and ordered them to arrest the officers of his Persian guards on the following morning and to place them in irons. This order was overheard by a spy, and the threatened men, led by Muhammad Kuli Khan Kajar, his relation, and by Salih Khan, the Superintendent of his household, determined to kill the tyrant before he could carry out his sinister purpose.

[1] For this peace *vide* Sykes, *op. cit.* vol. ii, pp. 210-211.
[2] Hanway, *op. cit.* vol. iv, p. 258.

Aware that he was spending the night with Chuki, the daughter of Muhammad Husayn Khan Kajar, the two leading conspirators strangled the sentry and entered the tent.[1] Chuki awoke Nadir, who sprang up and drew his sword but tripped over a tent rope and fell. His assailants first cut off one of his hands and finally his head. Terrible confusion ensued in the camp and, hearing a report of the assassination, the Afghan corps, led by Ahmad Khan, forced its way through hostile Persian troops and saw Nadir's headless trunk lying in a pool of blood.

To summarize his character; he was a great strategist and a great tactician, who frequently won his battles by a charge which he led on the enemy's flank. Partly owing to lack of roads, his siege artillery was not powerful enough against strongly fortified cities which he seldom carried by breach and assault. As a statesman he ranks high, as we see from Hanway's opinion, which serves as a motto to this chapter, although, owing to his passion for conquests, that would rival those of Tamerlane, he regarded his subjects mainly as cannon fodder and as furnishing money and supplies for his army. He also abolished the unwise practice of keeping the heirs to the throne immured in the harem until their accession. It had been initiated by Shah Abbas, who murdered his sons from jealousy.

To conclude: Nadir had driven out the Ghilzais and Turks, who had practically enslaved Persia, and had made her a greater empire than under the rule of Shah Abbas. Had he died directly after his successful campaigns in India and Turkistan, he would have been the national hero for all time.

[1] I have been shown the exact spot where Nadir was killed, about seven miles south of Kuchan. It is termed Tappa-i-Nadiri.

CHAPTER XXIV

AHMAD SHAH FOUNDS THE KINGDOM OF AFGHANISTAN

Ahmad Shah, Durrani, was an illustrious King. Such was the fear of his justice, that the lion and the hind lived peacefully together. The ears of his enemies were incessantly deafened by the sound of his conquests.—Epitaph on the Tomb of Ahmad Shah.

The Rise of the Durrani Tribe to the Throne.—In the last two chapters the amazing career of Nadir Shah, which ended with his assassination, was dealt with. We now turn to the fortunes of the Abdali tribe, later termed Durrani, whose Chief founded the kingdom of Afghanistan.[1]

The Abdalis were one of the leading tribes of the Kandahar province — *Abdal* signifies a saint — and, in the sixteenth century, its Chief Sado obtained concessions from Shah Abbas the Great. Later, as we have seen, owing to outbreaks against the Government, some of its sections were exiled by their Persian rulers to the Herat province. When the Persian Empire became decadent, the Abdalis not only occupied the Herat province, but seized Meshed, the capital of Khurasan.

Nadir Shah, after the expulsion of the Ghilzais from Persia, attacked the Abdalis at Meshed and inflicted severe losses upon them. However, realizing their value as soldiers, he won them over by arranging for their return to the Kandahar province and enlisted large numbers in his army, where they served him well.

Ahmad Khan, the Abdali Chief.—Ahmad Khan was the Chief of the Sadozai clan. His father and grand-

[1] I have consulted the *History of the Afghans*, by J. P. Ferrier; the *History of Afghanistan*, by Colonel G. B. Malleson; *Afghanistan*, by Lieut.-General Sir George Macmunn, and *The Fall of the Mughal Empire*, by Sir Jadunath Sarkar. Sir Louis Dane has most kindly read this and many following chapters, thereby helping me with his profound knowledge of a country in which he has played such a distinguished part.

father having been killed in battle, Ahmad, a boy of fourteen, took refuge with the Ghilzai tribe. Upon the capture of Kandahar, Nadir, as mentioned in Chapter XXII, took Ahmad into his service. He greatly distinguished himself and rose to the command of the Abdali contingent, 6000 strong.

Ahmad Khan is elected King, A.D. 1747.—Upon the assassination of Nadir Shah, the Afghan contingent, after some fighting with the Persian force, decided to march back to Afghanistan, capturing on the way a treasure convoy, together with the famous diamond, the *Koh-i-Noor*. Upon reaching the Kandahar province, the first step to be taken was to withdraw the command from Nur Muhammad Alizai, on the grounds that his family was not sufficiently noble for him to retain it.

The chiefs of the Abdali and Ghilzai tribes then assembled at the tomb of *Shaykh* Seurk, in the neighbourhood of Kandahar, to decide upon the formation of a regular government for an independent Afghanistan. The question as to who should be elected Shah created dissensions between rival Chiefs, each of whom loudly pressed his own claims on the Assembly. Ahmad Khan had been present at eight of these tumultuous meetings, without bringing forward his own claims or indeed offering any opinion on the subjects discussed. Such was the position when the highly respected dervish who was the guardian of the tomb rose and exclaimed : " Why all these verbose words? Allah has created Ahmad Khan, a much greater man than any of you; he belongs to the most noble of all Afghan families. Maintain therefore the work of Allah or fear his wrath."

Haji Jamal Khan, who was perhaps the most influential Chief present at the meeting, upon hearing this speech, immediately withdrew his claims in favour of the Sadozai Chief. Thereupon the dervish, after pouring a measure of wheat on his head, formed a wreath of straw and, crowning Ahmad Khan with it, pronounced, " May this serve you as a diadem! " By this ceremony, signifying that abundance and prosperity would attend him, the kingdom of Afghanistan was founded by the Abdali

Chief, aged twenty-three years, who assumed the title of Ahmad Shah.

The Policy of Ahmad Shah.—The newly elected King, as mentioned above, was the Chief of the Sadozai clan of the Popolzai branch of the Abdali tribe. The rival clan was the Muhammadzai, belonging to the Barakzai branch, whose Chief, Jamal Khan, was appointed Vizier, on the understanding that the post would be hereditary in his family. In 1818, as we shall see, his grandson ascended the throne. Ahmad Shah, in consequence of a dream, further assumed the title of *Dur-i-Durran* or "Pearl of Pearls", and the Abdali tribe consequently became known as the Durrani.

The Seizure of a Treasure Convoy.—During the rejoicings which followed the election, by a stroke of amazing good fortune, a caravan loaded with the customs dues of the Punjab reached Kandahar. This large sum — it was estimated at more than £1,000,000 — was promptly seized and distributed by Ahmad Shah, whose reputation for liberality firmly established his position in the hearts of his subjects.

Ahmad Shah's System of Government.—The Afghan King appointed a Council of Chiefs with whom he consulted on all measures of importance, and since his policy was aggressive and included frequent expeditions, which provided rich loot, he was seldom opposed by his Council. The chief offices of state he reserved for the Durranis, making them, as a rule, hereditary; and the privileges of his own clan he exalted in every way. Apart from centralizing power in matters of importance in his council, each Chief ruled his own tribe, provided contingents, and received payments of money in respect of such services. The system was thus feudalism pure and simple.

Ahmad Shah occupies Kabul.—The first act of the new ruler was to organize a force for the capture of the key city of Kabul from its Persian garrison. The *Bala Hissar*, or "Upper Citadel", was strongly held by 12,000 families of Persians. In spite of the religious antagonism prevailing between Sunnis and Shias, Ahmad Shah, who was no fanatic, succeeded in making terms with the

garrison, by which, if they surrendered, they would be treated on the same footing as the Afghans. Consequently both Kabul and Ghazni submitted without serious fighting. Nasir Khan, the Governor of Kabul, had indeed attempted to gain support from the Hazaras and Uzbegs, but despairing of being able to oppose Ahmad Shah, after a skirmish he fled to Peshawar, which city he surrendered to the Afghan King and, with it, tendered his own submission.

Ahmad Shah's First Invasion of the Punjab, A.D. 1748. —The Afghan monarch clearly recognized that constant attacks on surrounding states were most desirable, if only to provide plunder and food for his poor turbulent subjects whose rivalries and feuds, unless they were occupied abroad, would have constituted a serious danger to the stability of his kingdom. Consequently he decided to invade the Punjab and crossed the Indus at the head of 30,000 horsemen.

The Moghul Governor, Hayatulla Khan, had taken up a position to the north of Lahore in the first instance. Later he decided to retreat to the city, and this movement being construed by his supporters to be a proof of weakness, his army retreated in disorder towards Delhi.

Muhammad Shah, upon receiving this serious news, organized a powerful army which marched to Sirhind. There the heavy baggage, treasure and surplus stores were deposited in the small fort under a weak garrison, while the army advanced towards the Sutlej. No scouting or other military precautions were observed, with the result that, when only one march north of Sirhind, news was received of its capture by the Afghans. Ahmad sent his booty and heavy baggage to Lahore and then sought out the Imperial army which had entrenched itself at the neighbouring village of Manupur, and here, on March 11, 1748, took place the battle which derived its name from this village.

Ahmad's army was only 12,000 strong and the Imperial forces numbered 60,000, supported by a much more powerful artillery than that of its opponents. The battle opened with 3000 Kizilbash cavalry charging the

Imperial vanguard. Although inflicting heavy losses they also suffered severely from the Moghul heavy artillery. As a result, Muin-ul-Mulk (son of Kamr-ud-Din, the Vizier, who had been killed by a cannon-ball early in the morning) maintained his position. On the Imperial left wing the Rajputs were demoralized by the fire of 200 swivel-guns and fled, pursued by the Afghans, who penetrated to the baggage, which they plundered. About this time Safdar Jang, the Nawab of Oudh, advanced 1700 musketeers against a hillock which was occupied by a force of their opponents with numerous guns. The volleys of the Indians killed many of the Afghans and the position was captured. Thereupon a general advance of the Indian army was made. At this juncture some carts laden with rockets, which the Afghans had captured, exploded; their sparks ignited the gunpowder of the Afghan artillery; 1000 gunners were burned to death, and the Afghans were defeated.

Ahmad Shah, however, made a stand in a small fort behind the battlefield, which he held with musket fire until nightfall, when he retired. The victors, unable to realize this unexpected success, guarded their entrenchments during the night and only started in pursuit five days later.

The Second Invasion of the Punjab by Ahmad Shah, A.D. 1749.—Muhammad Shah died shortly after the battle of Manupur and was succeeded by his son Ahmad, who had been brought up in the harem and had no experience of ruling. He was consequently a danger to the declining empire.

Encouraged by this state of affairs, Ahmad Shah again invaded the Punjab, and after some indecisive skirmishing in 1750, the Afghan monarch was promised 14 lakhs of rupees, constituting the annual surplus of the four districts which the late Muhammad Shah had assigned by treaty to Nadir Shah. Upon this agreement being signed, Ahmad Shah returned to Afghanistan.

The Conspiracy of Nur Muhammad, Alizai.—Upon Ahmad Shah's return to Kandahar a widespread plot to assassinate him was formed by Nur Muhammad Alizai,

the late Commander of the Afghan troops under Nadir Shah. Upon its discovery, Nur Muhammad, the Chiefs who had joined him, and ten men from the tribe of each guilty Chief were executed.

Ahmad Khan captures Herat and Meshed, A.D. 1750.—The next objective of the Durrani monarch was the province of Khurasan. Marching at the head of a powerful force, Herat, which was held for Shah Rukh *Mirza*, surrendered after a siege.

The province of Khurasan was in a state of anarchy at this period.[1] The various successors of Nadir Shah had been successively killed or blinded. In the latter category was a grandson of Nadir, Shah Rukh *Mirza*, a boy of fourteen who was at that period merely a puppet in the hands of Mir Alam of Seistan. This Chief, who had defeated his rivals, left Meshed with a strong garrison with the intention of surprising Herat. He was, however, himself surprised at Turbat-i-Shaykh-Jam by Timur *Mirza*, who was marching on Meshed in command of the Afghan advance guard. Mir Alam, recovering from the surprise, fought bravely, but was defeated and his army was cut to pieces by a charge of 3000 Baluch cavalry under Nasir Khan of Kalat. Ahmad Shah then besieged Meshed, without much success, but finally, upon receipt of a large sum of money, he replaced Shah Rukh on the throne under his suzerainty.

The Capture of Nishapur, A.D. 1751.—The Afghan monarch then advanced on Nishapur, which he merely invested, hoping that it would be surrendered without a siege. However, negotiations were protracted until the winter set in. Finally he was forced to retreat, losing thousands of men and abandoning his artillery. One of his officers kept himself alive by disembowelling camel after camel and creeping into the warm carcass with his blankets.

In the following year — 1751 — Ahmad Shah, having recruited fresh troops, again besieged Nishapur. He had cast a gun which threw a projectile weighing some 500 lb. On its first discharge the citizens were so

[1] *Vide* Sykes, *History of Persia*, vol. ii, pp. 275-276.

alarmed that they surrendered, without being aware that the gun had burst!

The Treaty with Shah Rukh.—After the surrender of Nishapur, Ahmad Shah signed a treaty with Shah Rukh by the terms of which he received various districts bordering on the Herat province, while his suzerainty was to be acknowledged and money to be coined in his name. He then returned to Herat and from this centre he despatched an army which secured the submission of Balkh, Badakhshan and other provinces north of the Hindu Kush, thereby completing the new kingdom as it is today.

The Third Invasion of the Punjab, A.D. 1751–1752.—No sums of money due to Ahmad Shah by the terms of the treaty of 1750 had been made. He demanded the immediate payment of 24 lakhs of rupees but, failing to receive this sum, invaded the Punjab at the head of a much larger army than before, in December 1751. Muin-ul-Mulk sent 9 lakhs of rupees to meet the invader, but since the Afghan army continued to advance, he took up a position north of Lahore. Ahmad left his main body facing it, but led his cavalry by a wide detour to the outskirts of Lahore, and the Indian army perforce marched back to that city where it was invested.

No reinforcements arriving from Delhi, after four months it was decided to evacuate Lahore. Panic followed this movement and finally Muin-ul-Mulk was invited to a conference to arrange terms. Upon his arrival Ahmad Shah asked, "What would you have done if you had captured me?" Muin-ul-Mulk replied, "I should have cut off your head and sent it to the Emperor". Ahmad Shah then asked, "What should I do to you?" The fearless Governor replied, "If you are a shopkeeper, sell me for a ransom; if you are a butcher, kill me; but if you are a monarch, pardon me". Ahmad Shah was delighted with the answer. He embraced Muin-ul-Mulk and bestowed on him a robe of honour, an aigrette and the turban he was wearing. Finally, Muin-ul-Mulk was reappointed Governor and the terrified Emperor formally ceded the Punjab and Multan to the Afghan victor.

Ahmad Shah's Fourth Invasion of the Punjab, A.D. 1756–1757.—Muin-ul-Mulk died in 1753 and, in accordance with the Afghan feudal system, the succession was granted to his infant son, represented by his mother, Mughlani *Begum*, who was unfitted for the task owing to her profligacy and to her allowing eunuchs to rule. Much intrigue resulted in the kidnapping of Mughlani *Begum*; general anarchy ensued, which was increased by the constant raiding of the province by the Sikhs.

At this juncture, considering the position favourable for the recovery of the Punjab, Adina Beg, a notorious intriguer, was appointed Governor by Imad-ul-Mulk, who was now the all-powerful Vizier at Delhi.

Ahmad Shah took up the challenge and, crossing the Indus, drove Adina Beg from the Jullundur Duab and then occupied Lahore. His objective this time was Delhi, which was defenceless, and was occupied without even a skirmish. Alamgir II was deposed and the *khutba* was read in the name of Ahmad Shah. Money and treasure were extorted by torture, while the undisciplined Afghans murdered and pillaged much as they had done under Nadir Shah a generation previously.

Again, following the example of Nadir Shah, the Afghan conqueror took advantage of the situation to arrange for his son Timur *Mirza* to marry Alamgir's daughter, whose dowry consisted of the provinces of the Punjab and Sind.

The summer of 1757 was now approaching and Ahmad Shah returned to Afghanistan with booty valued at 12 million rupees, leaving Timur *Mirza* to rule his dominions east of the Indus, with Jahan Khan as his adviser.

The Marathas seize the Punjab, A.D. 1758.—The rise of the predatory Marathas is referred to in Chapter XXI. At the period with which we are dealing, these hordes of light horsemen constituted the most powerful force in India, and were the supporters of the Imad-ul-Mulk — at a price. Adina Beg, who had been appointed Governor of the Duab of Jullundur, invited Raghunath Rao, the brother of the *Peshwa*, to occupy the Punjab, promising

him large sums of money. Accordingly the Marathas appeared on the scene in 1758, and, driving Timur *Mirza* across the Indus, occupied Lahore. After this easy conquest, Raghunath Rao appointed Adina Beg Governor and, leaving a force of Marathas in the neighbourhood of Delhi, retired to the Deccan. Shortly afterwards Adina Beg died and a Maratha Chief, Sabaji Bhonsle, was nominated to be his successor. The Marathas, by their occupation of the Punjab, challenged the powerful Afghan monarch. They had reached their furthest limits of expansion and conquest, but this, their latest conquest, led to their downfall.

The Rebellion of Nasir Khan, A.D. 1758.—Baluchistan, at this period, was ruled by the famous Brahui Chief, Nasir Khan. He had represented his tribe at the election to the throne of Ahmad Shah, to which he was favourable. He had also accompanied the Afghan army to India on each of Ahmad's invasions and, as we have seen, had also served him well in Khorasan. Yet, as soon as he heard that the Marathas had conquered the Punjab, he declared his independence. The Afghan army under Ahmad's Vizier was therefore sent to attack Kalat, the Baluch capital. Nasir Khan marched out to meet it near Mastung, and won a victory. Ahmad Shah, realizing the bad effect which this reverse might well produce, rapidly appeared on the scene at the head of a powerful force which defeated Nasir Khan's army and besieged it in Kalat. Failing in five attempts to storm this stronghold, terms were come to, by which Nasir Khan again acknowledged the suzerainty of Ahmad Shah and agreed to furnish contingents for foreign service. After this escapade, as he probably considered it, Nasir Khan served his suzerain loyally. When I first visited Kalat some forty years ago, his name, as the ruler who had given Baluchistan a long period of unexampled prosperity, was still cherished.

Ahmad Shah attacks the Marathas, A.D. 1759.—Nasir Khan having resumed his allegiance, the Afghan monarch was free to turn his attention to the usurping Marathas. Crossing the Indus in August, Sabaji was compelled to

evacuate Lahore which Ahmad Shah reoccupied, and upon advancing in the direction of Delhi, the Afghan army was strengthened by the Rohilla and Bangash Afghan Chiefs. Driving the main body of the Marathas in front of him, in January 1760 Ahmad Shah defeated the Maratha Chief Dattaji Sindia at a point some ten miles north of Delhi. Realizing the seriousness of the position, Dattaji, after despatching the remnants of his army under his nephew to Rajputana, fought to the death.

Mulhar Rao Holkar, the ruler of Indore, met Jankaji Sindia, and a campaign of guerrilla tactics was decided upon, but by a forced march of 110 miles, the Afghan force surprised and routed Holkar with heavy losses. The power of the Marathas was thus temporarily shattered in Northern India.

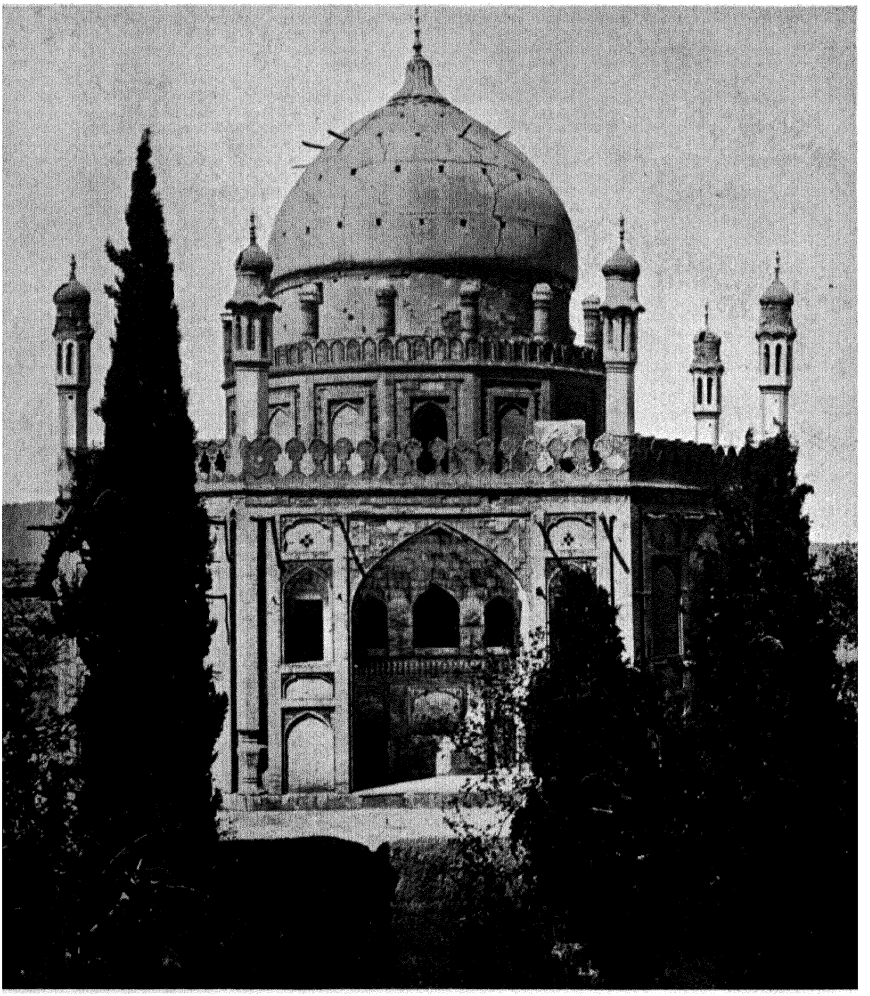
The Maratha Army of Sadashir Rao.—The *Peshwa*, upon hearing of these serious disasters, prepared a great army, with his son Viswas Rao in nominal command, but with Sadashir Bhao [1] as the real Commander-in-Chief. Marching north, its numbers were swollen by Hindu rulers, who regarded this campaign as a national cause, and by thousands of irregulars of every sort.

At Bharatpur the Jat Chief Suraj Mal, with Holkar and Sindia, advised the *Bhao* to leave the women and to park his artillery and heavy baggage at this town, and to start the usual guerrilla tactics against Ahmad Shah's rear and flanks ; but this advice was contemptuously refused by the *Bhao*, who thereby deeply offended his allies.

The Movements of Ahmad Shah and of the Bhao.—Ahmad Shah had encamped during the rains at Sikandarabad, situated on the left bank of the Jumna, and some thirty miles to the north of Delhi.

During this period Najib Khan, the astute Rohilla Chief and the bitter enemy of the Marathas, had won over to his side the Shuja-ud-Daula, Nawab of Oudh, who possessed a formidable army equipped with artillery. The story runs that while Shuja was hesitating and expressing doubts as to his reception by the Afghan monarch,

[1] *Bhao* signifies " brother ", a term applied by the Marathas to all male relations.



KANDAHAR — THE TOMB OF AHMAD SHAH

(Reproduced by kind permission of Captain P. Johnston Saint)

The building is usually termed the *Khirka Shurif*, and was erected to house the "noble robe", believed to have belonged to the Prophet Muhammad. It is a sanctuary, as mentioned in Chapter xli, p. 154.

Najib Khan with true Oriental hyperbole exclaimed: "Allah be my witness that if the Shah himself frowns at Your Highness, I shall immediately dig out his two eyes". Finally, realizing that Ahmad Shah had no intention of settling in India, whereas the Marathas, if successful, would dispossess its lawful rulers, Shuja-ud-Daula decided to join the Afghan army.

To return to the Marathas: in July the *Bhao* seized Delhi without much difficulty and obtained some prestige from so doing, although owing to the murder of the Emperor, Alamgir II by a Rohilla Chief in November A.D. 1759, there was no monarch with whom he could treat, while supplies of food and forage were very scarce. On the other hand he insulted and alarmed Suraj Mal, the Jat Chief, who left him. In October the *Bhao* marched north to Sirhind, his object apparently being to cut Ahmad Shah's lines of communication. He attacked and stormed the fort of Kanjpura, putting to the sword its garrison of 10,000 Rohillas, and thereby secured supplies and treasure, both of which he sorely needed.

Ahmad Shah had been unable to succour Kanjpura, but, undaunted by that disaster and escaping the vigilance of the Marathas, who were celebrating the Dosahara festival at the captured city, he marched rapidly down the Jumna, found a ford, and unmolested by the Marathas, transferred his army to the right bank, albeit with heavy losses from drowning. This operation took three days, during which period a Maratha attack might well have caused complete disaster. Ahmad Shah then marched north, and the two armies gained touch in the vicinity of Panipat.

The Tactics of the Two Armies. — Contrary to the Maratha custom the *Bhao* formed a huge entrenched camp with guns mounted at regular intervals and despatched raiding parties across the Jumna to harry the country and prevent supplies from reaching the Afghan camp. Ahmad Shah also formed an entrenched camp about three miles distant; and both sides attempted to starve out the other. Actually the Afghans were the more successful. Seizing the initiative, they posted strong

pickets around the enemy camp at night, and thanks to the activities of their patrols, large quantities of supplies and also a treasure convoy were captured. Although there were raids and skirmishes, partly owing to the presence of women, with their attendants and innumerable camp-followers, the Marathas first ran short of supplies. So serious did the position become that on the night of January 13 the shortage forced the *Bhao* to agree to fight the Afghans.

The Battle of Panipat, January 14, A.D. 1761.—At dawn on this day, with the ends of their turbans flowing loose and their faces anointed with saffron, to signify death or victory, the Maratha army drew up outside the camp. Their centre was composed of the household cavalry. On the left was Ibrahim Khan with his artillery and French-trained Sepoys, and on the right were the contingents of Holkar and Sindia.

Sadashir Rao, after surrendering to the army's insistence on fighting, despatched a letter to the Nawab of Oudh urging him to arrange a peaceful settlement. "The flood", he wrote, "has risen above my head." The Nawab thereupon awakened Ahmad Shah, who ordered his troops to fall in while he himself rode out to reconnoitre. The Maratha guns, on taking up their position, fired a salvo and thereby confirmed the news.

The Afghan army formed up with Durrani cavalry (mounted on Turkoman horses), infantry and artillery in the centre under the command of Shah Wali Khan, the Vizier. On the left flank was Najib-ud-Daula with his Rohilla infantry, the line being continued by the Oudh contingent. On the right flank were Rohilla and Moghul allies. The Afghan army being 60,000 strong as against the Maratha strength of 45,000, extended beyond their enemy on both flanks, which were strongly supported by brigades of Afghan cavalry. It is important to note that the Afghans were much better mounted than the Marathas. Both sides had large numbers of camp-followers, many of them, especially on the Afghan side, being useful fighting men.

The battle opened with a cannonade and discharges of

rockets from the Marathas, but the shots mainly passed overhead. Ibrahim Khan thereupon ordered his infantry to charge with the bayonet, and the Rohillas were forced back, but not defeated. Seeing the Afghan centre exposed, the *Bhao* charged into the gap with the household cavalry, breaking through the Afghan horsemen, who were surprised and caught at the trot. They, however, continued the contest, fighting fiercely. The Afghan position was now serious, but, on the left, Najib-ud-Daula advanced by short rushes and broke up the Marathas' formations by salvos of rockets.

Ahmad Shah, great general as he proved himself to be on that day, realizing that the commander who can throw in the last reserve wins the battle, collected every possible body of troops, including the camp guard, for a final great effort. He sent 10,000 cavalry to Shah Wali Khan, directing him to charge in close order, while other troops were instructed to attack the flanks. In support, three squadrons of mounted slaves fired their muskets at the Marathas, galloped off to reload and then returned to repeat the attack. The enemy was now massed together and very heavy losses were inflicted.

Shortly after 2 P.M. Viswas Rao was killed by a bullet, and the Marathas, who for caste reasons were fighting on an empty stomach, lost all hope, and were beaten. The situation for them was now made desperate by the attack of 1500 swivel guns. "All at once", we read, as if by enchantment, the whole Maratha army turned their backs and fled at full speed, leaving the field of battle covered with heaps of dead."[1]

The gallant *Bhao*, under whom three horses had been killed, fell fighting like a lion to the end. The pursuit by moonlight cost tens of thousands of lives, the Marathas' ponies being easily overtaken by the fleet Turkoman horses of the Afghans. On the following day the entrenched camp was stormed; the men were beheaded and the women and children were sold into slavery. The tragedy of the catastrophe was expressed in a banker's letter which ran: "Two pearls have been dissolved,

[1] Kasi Raja, pp. 39-40.

twenty-seven gold Mohurs have been lost, and of the silver and copper the total cannot be cast up ".

The Results of the Battle.—The third battle of Panipat was one of the decisive battles of the world. Had the Afghans been defeated and driven across the Indus, all India would have paid tribute to the Marathas. But their overthrow on this stricken field weakened their power for a generation, dealing a fatal blow to the prestige of the Peshwa. Panipat indeed facilitated the conquest of India by the British.

For Ahmad Shah, Panipat was a Pyrrhic victory which brought no commensurate political gains, although it won him fame and prestige. His soldiers, laden with booty, insisted on returning to their homes. Accordingly, after extracting as much money as possible at Delhi, where he nominated Ali Gauhur, son of the murdered Alamgir, as Emperor, under the title of Shah Alam, Ahmad Shah marched back to the highlands of Afghanistan.

The Origin and Rise of the Sikhs.—Before describing the campaigns of Ahmad Shah against the Sikhs, it seems desirable to give some account of this remarkable sect, which for many years played such an important part in Indian affairs.

Baba Nanak (A.D. 1469–1538), the founder of the sect — Sikh actually signifies a disciple — drew his converts mainly from among the Jats of the Punjab.[1] He aimed at spiritual liberation by means of humility, prayer, self-restraint and fixed concentration on the one immortal, pure, invisible god. He denounced idolatry, set prayers and fixed ritual and was largely inspired by the teachings of Islam.

The early leaders of the sect, the Gurus, as they were termed, were honoured for their saintly lives by the Moghul Emperors. But the fifth Guru (A.D. 1581–1606) aspired to temporal power. He organized the collection of tithes, surrounded himself with courtiers, completed the two sacred tanks and built the first temple at Amritsar, in which were enshrined the Sikh Scriptures, termed

[1] Vide *Cambridge History of India*, vol. iv, pp. 244-247.

Adi Granth. He, however, unwisely supported Prince Khusru, the rival of Jahangir, for the Moghul throne and, upon his defeat, was fined two lakhs of rupees. Refusing to pay this sum, he died under torture.

His successor, Har Govind, increased his bodyguard and, arousing the hostility of Shah Jahan, his property was confiscated and he died a refugee in the Kashmir hills. A peaceful Guru succeeded him but, upon his death in 1661, there was a fight for power between his sons. Finally, Tegh Bahadur, the youngest son of Har Govind, succeeded in securing recognition by the majority of the Sikhs.

Aurangzeb's religious persecutions, which included the destruction of the Sikh temples, aroused Tegh Bahadur's resistance. He rebelled, was captured and, refusing to embrace Islam, was tortured and then beheaded in December 1675.[1] The result of this impolitic action was to turn the Sikhs into a military sect, vowed to avenge the death of Tegh Bahadur, and henceforth implacable enemies of the Moghuls.

Govind Singh, the tenth and last Guru, bound the Sikh community together by the ceremonies of *putul*, which consisted essentially of drinking consecrated water stirred by a sword, and by a communion rite of partaking together of a cake of consecrated flour, butter and eggs; this latter rite set the partakers free from all restrictions of caste. The brotherhood, which invites comparison with the Templars of medieval Europe, was termed the *Khālsa*, or " Pure ". Inspired by this teaching, the Sikhs became as obedient to their Chief as the *fidai* or devotees of Alamut were to their Grand Master. Throughout his life he fought the Moghuls with varying successes and defeats, but was murdered by an Afghan follower in 1708.

Govind Singh was the last of the great Gurus, but his followers produced a man who closely resembled him. This impostor, generally termed Banda, or " The Slave ", collected 40,000 armed men, defeated the Moghuls and

[1] It is stated that Aurangzeb accused the Guru of gazing at the walls of the Imperial harem. To this charge he replied that he was looking beyond the seas, whence a fair-haired white race would come, which would overthrow the Moghul dynasty. This prophecy constituted the battle-cry of the Sikhs at the siege of Delhi in 1857.

sacked Sirhind in 1710. Although finally routed, he was not captured, and, after the death of Bahadur Shah in 1712, he recovered his fortresses. Three years later, however, during the reign of Farrukh-Siyar, the Sikh leader and his chief followers were captured, were paraded through Delhi and were then tortured to death. Not one of them would save his life by embracing Islam.

Ahmad Shah defeats the Sikhs, A.D. 1762.—It might have been thought that the victor of the decisive battle of Panipat would have been able to rest on his laurels for the rest of his life. But this was by no means the case, since the rising power of the Sikhs demanded his serious attention. In February 1762 he was able to overtake their elusive forces and to inflict heavy casualties on them. This defeat, however, by no means crushed them and the foolish steps of razing the Amritsar temple to the ground and of the desecration and filling up of the Sikh "Pool of Immortality", only increased their fanatical courage.

The Political Settlement of A.D. 1762.—During his long residence in the Punjab in this year, in order to ensure the peace of Northern India, Ahmad Shah invited the Maratha envoys at Delhi and other centres to visit him, when the new *Peshwa* was recognized by the despatch to him of the symbols of Rajaship and rich gifts. It was also agreed that Shah Alam II should be recognized as Emperor in return for an annual tribute of 40 lakhs of rupees. While these arrangements were being negotiated, Ahmad Shah recovered the province of Kashmir, which had rebelled.

The Sikhs Dominate the Punjab.—Upon the departure of Ahmad Shah in December 1762, the Sikh power rapidly recovered and gradually overran the Punjab. In 1764, Ahmad Shah reappeared at Lahore, but was obliged to hasten back to Afghanistan to quell a civil war. The Sikhs, after his departure, captured Lahore, while they avenged the insult on their holy city by demolishing and defiling mosques and compelling Afghan prisoners to excavate the "Pool of Immortality" anew.

The Last Invasion of Ahmad Shah, A.D. 1767.—The

Afghan King had in vain attempted to root out the warlike Sikhs. He realized the fact and finally granted the Sarhind-Patiala districts to a Sikh Chief. He himself kept Peshawar, but abandoned the Central Punjab to the Sikhs. The Punjab, from this date, ceased to be the base for Afghan attacks on Delhi, " though the fear of such invasions ", to quote Sarkar,[1] " continued to haunt the Indian rulers for a generation after, even down to Lord Wellesley's time ".

The Death and Character of Ahmad Shah.—The campaigns of the Afghan King were now ended owing to his being attacked by malignant cancer in the face. In A.D. 1773 he proclaimed Timur *Mirza*, his second son, Viceroy and heir to the throne, and died shortly afterwards.

The death of this great soldier forms a convenient point to pause and to look back on his remarkable career. The country, now termed Afghanistan, had merely consisted of a congeries of petty states, ruled by tyrannical Chiefs, who were frequently at war with one another. Later, it became provinces of great empires which were ruled by foreign conquerors and their descendants. Later again, it was a dismembered country, with its provinces held by three neighbouring states. Now, for the first time in its chequered history, Afghanistan became an independent state, ruled by a monarch whose high descent and warlike qualities made him peculiarly acceptable to his aristocratic and virile Chiefs, as well as to his warlike subjects in general. In short, he possessed all the qualities that enabled him successfully to found the kingdom of Afghanistan.

[1] Vol. ii, p. 501.

CHAPTER XXV

TIMUR SHAH AND ZAMAN SHAH

The Afghan character is a strange medley of contradictory qualities in which courage blends with stealth, the basest treachery with the most touching fidelity, intense religious fanaticism with an avarice which will even induce him to play false to his faith.—DOCTOR T. L. PENNELL.

The Accession of Timur Shah, A.D. 1773.—The heir-apparent was ruling at Herat when his father died. His elder brother, Sulayman *Mirza*, supported by Shah Wali Khan (who had been Ahmad Shah's Vizier), was proclaimed King at Kandahar. Timur, however, marched on that city at the head of a powerful force, whereupon Sulayman fled and disappears off the scene, while Shah Wali, accompanied by his two sons and two Durrani Chiefs who had supported Sulayman, submitted to Timur at Farah and was promptly executed. This act of severity caused all organized resistance to disappear.

The Transfer of the Capital to Kabul.—The hostility of the Durranis of the Kandahar province to the new King resulted in the transference of the capital to Kabul which, as we have seen, was the strategical centre of the kingdom.

Timur then turned his attention to securing the foundations of his government. While respecting the hereditary offices created by his father, he transferred their duties to his own nominees under different titles. *Sirdar* Payanda Khan, son of *Haji* Jamal Khan, was confirmed as Chief of the Barakzai section of the Durranis and given the title of Sarafraz Khan. But his Chief Councillor, whom he entirely trusted, was Dilavar Khan, to whom he gave the title of Madad Khan and the grade of *Sirdar-i-Sirdaran* or " General of Generals ". This officer commanded the bodyguard, which was recruited

in his own tribe, the Ishakzai. At the same time a division of 12,000 Kizilbash cavalry was raised, but was commanded by *Sirdar* Muhammad Khan, Bayat. Timur organized his government well, but he was not a warlike sovereign like his father and had to pay the penalty for his peaceable disposition.

The Sind Campaign, A.D. 1779.—The Amir of Sind, a member of the Kalhora tribe, had revolted against Ahmad Shah when the Marathas occupied the Punjab, but had submitted, had paid a large sum of money for arrears of tribute and had been reinstated. The Sind Chief was now ousted by a rival, Mir Fath Ali Khan, Chief of the rival Talpora tribe, who had attacked him, inflicting very heavy losses, and had compelled him to take refuge at Kandahar. Timur drove out the usurper, who, however, shortly afterwards regained Sind. Finally, in 1786, Madad Khan accepted Fath Ali Khan as the ruler of Sind, on condition of the payment of tribute. In the third year after this agreement had been made the tribute was refused and Sind became practically independent of Afghanistan.

The Bukhara Campaign.—The second campaign of Timur was due to the policy of Shah Morad of Bukhara. Realizing the slackening of Afghan authority in the northern provinces, this ruler incited Balkh to revolt and crossed the Oxus with an army to support the rebels. The two forces met near Akchah, and had Timur attacked immediately, the Afghans would undoubtedly have won the battle. But delay gave time for gold to corrupt the disloyal *Sirdars*, with the result that a peace was concluded on the unsatisfactory terms that Shah Morad withdrew his army and recognized the authority of the Afghan monarch over Balkh. In the event the disputed provinces became practically independent, partly through the ill-judged parsimony of Timur. To illustrate the state of affairs, the wandering dervishes taught their monkeys to cast earth upon their heads, a sign of woe, whenever they were asked if they would be Governor of Balkh!

The Position in Khurasan.—During the reign of Timur Shah, Khurasan was continually in a state of revolt against

the blind Shah Rukh.[1] After the first campaign, which replaced the unfortunate monarch on the throne, a rising followed the departure of the Afghan army. A second army which had broken down all opposition was destroyed near Farah by the dread simoom or poison wind, but a third army finally re-established the position of Shah Rukh and the authority of Timur Shah.

The Conspiracy against Timur Shah.—The Afghan ruler generally spent the winter months at Peshawar. In A.D. 1791 a conspiracy was formed, headed by the Chief of the Mohmand tribe and the Commander of the Guard of the royal harem. The object was to kill Timur Shah and to place Iskandar Khan, son of Sulayman *Mirza*, on the throne. At the time agreed upon, some thousands of tribesmen and Peshawaris suddenly attacked the palace during the siesta hour. They were admitted through the collusion of the Commander of the Guard, by a sally-port, but Timur, who was awake, realizing the situation, took refuge in a tower guarded by an iron-bound door. He then waved his turban to the Kizilbash guards below, who came to his rescue, killing most of the conspirators. The Mohmand Chief, however, escaped, but being induced by an oath sworn and inscribed on a Koran to submit, was promptly put to death, as were thousands of the Peshawaris.

The Death of Timur Shah, A.D. 1793.—The violation of his oath was regarded with horror by the religious Afghans, and Timur, during the remainder of his reign, is described as having become morose and cruel. He died at Kabul of internal inflammation, which was possibly due to poison. Upon the whole it may be placed to his credit that during his reign there was little civil war in Afghanistan, in spite of the fact that he did not imitate Ahmad Shah who occupied his turbulent *Sirdars* in foreign campaigns. Timur Shah left behind him thirty-six children, of whom twenty-three were sons.

The Accession of Zaman Shah, A.D. 1793.—As was only to be expected, there was wild excitement as to which of the numerous sons of the deceased King should

[1] *Vide* Sykes, *op. cit.* vol. ii, p. 290.

be elected to the throne. Some of them were Governors of provinces. Those who were close to the capital hastened to the death-bed of their father, and, upon his decease, blood flowed in Kabul.

Payanda Khan, the Chief of the Barakzai who, as mentioned above, was the most powerful of the *Sirdars*, favoured Zaman *Mirza*, the fifth son, who occupied the key-position of Governor of Kabul.[1] The *Sirdar* won over to his views many other Chiefs together with the leaders of the Kizilbash, and the election of Zaman *Mirza* was finally secured by locking up the other princes and their supporters in the building to which they had been summoned. Meanwhile the citizens of Kabul were induced to declare Zaman *Mirza* to be their King and, after five days of starvation diet, the rival princes made their submission and were then transferred to the prison of the Bala Hissar.

Humayun *Mirza*, the eldest son, marched from Kandahar to dispute the succession but was defeated at Kalat-i-Ghilzai and fled to the protection of Nasir Khan of Kalat. With Mahmud *Mirza* Governor of Herat, Zaman Shah, unwilling to quit the capital for a distant campaign, negotiated a temporary agreement.

The Policy of Zaman Shah.—The new King decided to abolish the chief hereditary posts which Ahmad Shah had established and, unconsciously following the example of Rehoboam, son of Solomon, chastised his people with scorpions. Sanguinary executions were the order of the day and these alienated the Afghans, while the release of his ill-treated brothers resulted in almost incessant civil wars and finally caused the downfall of the dynasty.

The Demand of Aga Muhammad Khan, Kajar, A.D. 1796.—At this period, the founder of the Kajar dynasty sent an envoy to request Zaman Shah to cede Balkh, since the possession of the city was necessary to him in view of his intended attack on the Amir of Bukhara.

Since the Kajar conqueror was already at Meshed with a powerful army, Zaman Shah apparently agreed

[1] Ex-King Amanulla also benefited by holding this key-position upon the death of his father.

to the request and promised to assist in the expedition by the despatch of troops. Aga Muhammad was, however, suddenly called away to the west by a Russian invasion.[1] Actually at this juncture the Amir of Bukhara, incited by Mahmud of Herat, had captured Balkh, but upon hearing of Zaman Shah's victory over his brother and his capture of Herat, he renewed the treaty which had been made with Timur Shah.

The Rebellion in the Punjab.—The Punjab, soon after the accession of Zaman Shah, attempted to regain its liberty. The King crossed the Indus at the head of an army, but was forced to postpone the expedition by the rising of Humayun *Mirza*, who was supported by the Baluch Chiefs. However, upon the approach of the Afghan army, Humayun was betrayed, was captured and was blinded.

Zaman Shah invades Sind.—Being freed of one pressing anxiety, Zaman Shah decided to invade Sind, and had reached the Bolan Pass when he heard that Mahmud *Mirza* intended to attack his rear while he was involved in this campaign. The Afghan King was consequently obliged to make terms with Fathullah Khan Talpora, the usurping ruler mentioned above, who paid him £300,000 on account of arrears of tribute. He then marched against Mahmud *Mirza*. The two armies met near Girishk and, after a hotly contested battle, Mahmud was defeated and fled to Farah. Zaman Shah next marched on Herat, which he assaulted in vain, and finally, through the intervention of the mother of Mahmud *Mirza*, it was agreed that her son should tender his submission and be reinstated as Governor of the province.

Then occurred an extraordinary event. The sons of Mahmud, who were in command of the citadel of the city, were entirely ignorant of the new arrangement. Consequently, when they saw the army of Zaman Shah marching off towards Kandahar they concluded that this retirement was due to the appearance of their father at the head of an army, and decided to pursue. Upon their

[1] For the campaign of Aga Muhammad Khan in Khurasan *vide* Sykes *op. cit.* vol. ii, pp. 293-294.

departure from the city, Kalaj Khan of Khaf, who had been left in command, sent a messenger to Zaman Shah that he held the citadel at his disposal. The young princes, realizing their mistake, in vain attempted to induce Kalaj Khan to resume his allegiance; a bombardment produced no effect and, upon the appearance of Zaman Shah's army, the princes fled towards Khurasan. Zaman Shah remained at Herat for some months and appointed his son Kaisar *Mirza* as Governor.

Zaman Shah fails to restore Afghan Authority in the Punjab, A.D. 1796.—Although threatened from more than one direction, Zaman Shah could not refrain from wasting his strength in his attempts to rival his grandfather's conquests in India. Accordingly, after arranging matters at Herat, he returned to Kabul across the Hazara country, with a small escort of cavalry, sending his main body by the Kandahar route. At the capital he organized an expeditionary force, marched to Peshawar, crossed the Indus and was well on the way to Lahore when information reached him of the capture of Meshed by Aga Muhammad Shah. He thereupon returned to Kabul and opened negotiations with the Shah, who had already left Khurasan.

Zaman Shah reaches Lahore in A.D. 1797.—Freed once again from anxiety as to his western province, the Afghan monarch again entered the Punjab and reached Lahore in January 1797. His appearance at the head of his powerful army created a strong sensation throughout India. The weakness of the Marathas, the feebleness of the Vizier of Oudh and of the Emperor invited him to follow the example of his grandfather, while he had been promised the support of the Rohillas, and it was probable that the Moslems, generally speaking, would flock to his standard. Consequently the British authorities considered that his descent on India would constitute a grave peril.

He was preparing to march on Delhi when news that Mahmud, the deposed ruler of Herat, had appeared at Farah with a large force and was attacking that city, forced him to return to meet the invader. On this

occasion the probable loss of Herat was avoided by a forged letter written by the Vizier of Kaisar *Mirza*, the new Governor, which upset the confidence of Mahmud, who fled to the Court of the Uzbeg ruler at Bukhara. There, ascertaining that he was likely to be killed, he escaped to Khiva and finally reached Tehran.

British Policy in India, A.D. 1798–1804.—Hitherto in this work Afghan affairs have not directly concerned Great Britain, and, before dealing with this question, a brief description of our position in India at this period is called for.

In the spring of 1798 the Earl of Mornington (later the Marquess Wellesley) assumed the post of Governor-General of India. He found that French interest was paramount at the Courts of Mysore and Haiderabad; that Tippu, Sultan of Mysore, was negotiating with the French at Mauritius; and that a strong force, officered by Frenchmen, was established at Haiderabad. Furthermore, civil administration in the Carnatic had collapsed; the Raja of Berar was hostile to the British; Poona was at the mercy of Sindhia; and finally, the situation in Oudh was most unsatisfactory.[1]

Mornington took action in the first place at Haiderabad. In September 1798 the Nizam, influenced by his Vizier who favoured the British as a counterpoise to the Maratha menace, signed a treaty by the terms of which he agreed to dismiss his French officers and to disband the troops they had raised, in return for the protection of a British force. The British also agreed to mediate between the Nizam and the *Peshwa*. In October 1800, this treaty was succeeded by an alliance which guaranteed 10,000 British troops to guard the territories of the Nizam.

To turn to Mysore: upon hearing of Napoleon's expedition to Egypt, and Tippu's overtures to the French at Mauritius, which had been warmly welcomed, Mornington demanded the dismissal of all Frenchmen by the Sultan. Failing to secure this demand, in February 1799 he declared war. After a series of defeats, Tippu was

[1] Vide *Cambridge Modern History*, vol. ix, pp. 721 *et seq.*

besieged in Seringapatam, which was stormed, and the Sultan himself was found among the dead.

The Nawabs of the Carnatic were proved, from correspondence found in Seringapatam, to have supported Tippu against the British. As a result, in 1801, upon the death of the ruling Nawab, the administration was taken over by the civil and military officials of the Company.

To turn to Oudh; the Nawab Vizier's army was merely a rabble which invited attack by Zaman Shah, the Sikhs or the Marathas. In 1801 the Marquess Wellesley obliged the Nawab, who was a most incompetent ruler, to cede a frontier district sufficiently extensive to protect his province, and to support the cost of a force of British troops.

To continue this brief sketch: in 1802, the powerful Maratha Chief, Holkar, defeated the *Peshwa* and his ally Sindia at Poona, and set up a pretender. In December of this year Baji Rao, the defeated *Peshwa*, agreed to accept British protection and to assign extensive districts, whose revenue would pay for the strong British force which guaranteed his protection.

In August 1803 the inevitable hostilities with Sindhia broke out. Colonel Arthur Wellesley with a force of less than 5000 men attacked the Maratha army, which included Sindhia's French-trained troops. In spite of an enormous superiority in numbers, the future victor of Waterloo, after a desperate struggle, completely routed the enemy, first at Assaye on September 23, and finally at Argaum on November 29.

The Victories of General (Lord) Lake.—In Northern India Lake won more than one victory. At Laswari, outside Delhi, leading 10,000 troops, he defeated Sindia's army commanded by the French General Bourquin, which included a body of 5000 Sikhs. The British force, outnumbered by four to one, had to advance under the fire of a hundred guns. However, marching steadily towards the enemy line, in spite of heavy losses, they fired a single volley and then charged home, winning a decisive victory. As a result the unfortunate Moghul Emperor,

Shah Alum II, was restored to the throne.

The Campaign against Holkar.—Holkar, who had held his hand, now made such extravagant demands that Wellesley was obliged to undertake a fresh campaign. At first, in 1804, there were British reverses, but at the battle of Deeg, in November 1804, Lake defeated the Maratha Chief, inflicting severe casualties. But, against this victory, in the spring of 1805, Lake's assaults on Bharatpur completely failed. However, the Raja of that state, realizing that his final defeat was inevitable, resumed his allegiance and agreed to pay a heavy indemnity.

It remains to add that, upon the conclusion of these operations, it may be considered that the north-west boundary of British India was the Sutlej for a short distance, while, beyond it, lay the Punjab and Sind, both of which states were tributary to the ruler of Afghanistan.

Napoleon's Expedition to Egypt, A.D. 1798–1801.—Napoleon laid down that: "La puissance qui est maîtresse de l'Égypte, doit l'être à la longe de l'Inde". In pursuance of this theory, during the same year that Wellesley was destroying French power and influence in India, the great French general, who relied on the help of Tippu and the Marathas, sailed from Toulon for Egypt, with a powerful fleet guarding a powerful French army, but without first securing naval control of the Mediterranean. In June he won the battle of the Pyramids and occupied Cairo in the following month, but, on August 1, Nelson annihilated the French fleet at Aboukir Bay and thus isolated Napoleon in Egypt. In the following year, after defeating a Turkish army at Aboukir, he marched into Syria, hoping to capture Constantinople, but, thanks to British support under Captain Sydney Smith afforded to the Turks, Acre baffled the utmost efforts of the French, who retreated.

Napoleon thereupon quitted his army and evading the British frigates, returned to France, while the French force, which was marooned in Egypt, surrendered to the British in 1801. During this period British squadrons patrolled the Red Sea to prevent a French squadron from Mauritius joining hands with the French garrison at

Suez. Moreover, a British force, mainly composed of Bombay troops under Sir David Baird, landing at Kosseir on the Red Sea coast, crossed the desert to the Nile and reached Cairo six weeks after its capture, but in time to impress Menou at Alexandria with a full consciousness of his inability to continue the struggle.[1] Thus, in complete disaster, ended the plan of Napoleon to attack the British in India through Egypt. Much credit is undoubtedly due to the Marquess of Wellesley for the defeat of the French party, if it may be so termed, but undoubtedly the chief rôle was played by British sea-power, alike in the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean.

Napoleon's Plan to attack India across Persia, 1800–1808.—A second plan of the great French soldier was to utilize the Persian army as an auxiliary force for the invasion of India by Tehran, Herat and Kandahar. In 1800 this campaign was seriously contemplated by Napoleon and Tsar Paul of Russia, although, at the period, it was fantastic. In 1801 Paul ordered the Cossacks of the Don to march on India. Unprovided with supply columns or maps, the obedient Cossacks marched off eastwards but, on reaching the Volga, they heard of the assassination of the Tsar — with much relief one would think — and marched back to their homes. The scheme would inevitably have ended in disaster, owing to the great distance to be traversed, the desert nature of much of the country and the certainty of attack by the warlike tribes of Central Asia and Afghanistan.

The Mission of Mehdi Ali Khan to the Court of Persia.—In A.D. 1798 Wellesley had received a letter from Zaman Shah giving notice of his proposed expedition into the Punjab and requesting that the English army should co-operate in driving back the Marathas from the north into the Deccan. Wellesley, who was aware that the Afghan monarch was corresponding with Vizier Ali of Oudh (who had offered him large sums of money in return for his help) with other Moslem Chiefs and with Rajas, decided to take action. He instructed Mehdi Ali Khan, a naturalized Persian, who was acting as the Resident of the Company

[1] *Vide* Charles Roux, *L'Angleterre et l'expédition française*, vol. ii, pp. 213-214.

at Bushire, " to take measures for inducing the Court of Persia to keep Zaman Shah in perpetual check (so as to preclude him from returning to India), but without any decided act of hostility ". Fortune favoured Wellesley since, at this period, Zaman Shah had sent an envoy to the Persian Court demanding that Khurasan should be surrendered to Afghanistan. Fath Ali Shah, who had succeeded his uncle in 1797, replied that it was his firm resolve to restore the eastern boundaries of Persia to their position under the Safavi dynasty when Herat and, at intervals, Kandahar belonged to Persia. Actually Fath Ali Shah did little beyond supplying some troops to Mahmud and his brother Firuz, but this action and the march of his army towards Khurasan, in 1799, undoubtedly caused the retirement of Zaman Shah to Peshawar.

Malcolm's First Mission, 1800.—Mehdi Ali Khan had successfully prepared the way for a British Mission to the Shah, and Wellesley instructed Captain (later Sir John) Malcolm to induce Fath Ali Shah to maintain pressure on Zaman Shah by threatening Khurasan and Herat, and to counteract the designs of the French; commercial relations were also to be settled.

The brilliant young envoy won favour by his knowledge of the language, by his pleasing personality and by his gifts to the Shah and his Ministers. Fath Ali consequently agreed to make no peace with Zaman Shah, unless that potentate renounced his designs on the British possessions in India. Malcolm, on his part, agreed to furnish munitions to the Shah in case he were attacked by the Afghans and the French. Against the latter nation the treaty contained stringent provisions relating to expulsion and even to extirpation.[1] Malcolm's first Mission was successful, albeit Fath Ali Shah showed little inclination to bring any direct military pressure on the Afghans, but the submission of the turbulent Chiefs of Khurasan to the Persian Government lowered the prestige of Zaman Shah.

French Negotiations with Persia, 1804–1808.—In 1804

[1] Vide *Aitchison's Treaties*, No. XII, p. 38.

Napoleon was hostile to Russia, and, realizing that Persia resented the recent annexation of Georgia by the Northern Power, he made proposals to her for an alliance against the common enemy. Fath Ali Shah was unwilling to come to terms with the regicide nation but, owing to the absence of a permanent British representative in Persia and the procrastination of the British Cabinet, to whom the matter had been referred by India, the Shah, in 1807, agreed, by the Treaty of Finkenstein, to attack Russia. He also declared that " if the French have an intention of invading Khurasan, the King will appoint an army to go down by the road of Kabul and Kandahar ". Neither of these cities was in the possession of the Shah, but the treaty clearly proved his readiness on paper to invade India.

A few months later General Gardanne, at the head of an important military mission, appeared in Persia and set to work to train Persian troops, who were intended to march across Persia and Afghanistan to India.

But Napoleon, in July of this same year, made peace with Russia by the signature of the Convention of Tilsit. Fath Ali was naturally deeply chagrined by the Convention, since it contained no reference to the return to Persia of Georgia. Yet Napoleon, with somewhat misplaced optimism, undoubtedly hoped to retain the Shah as his ally against the English, and, with his assistance, to launch a Franco-Russian army against their possessions in India.[1]

The Second Mission of Malcolm, 1808.—The Home and Indian Governments were naturally alarmed at French influence being paramount in Persia. Accordingly, in the spring of 1808, Malcolm was despatched on a second Mission to Persia, but was treated with scant courtesy and was debarred from visiting Tehran, where the French were still supreme. The British envoy, who was naturally much upset by this rebuff, advised the despatch of an expedition to seize the island of Kharak.

The Mission of Sir Harford Jones, 1808–1809.—By

[1] Vide *England and Russia in the East*, by Sir Henry Rawlinson, p. 19.

the autumn of the same year, Gardanne had overplayed his hand, and the Shah had realized that his good offices were powerless to secure the return of Georgia. Consequently Fath Ali welcomed Sir Harford Jones, who landed in Persia late in 1808 as the accredited representative of King George III. In spite of the feeling caused by the proposed expedition to Kharak, which was finally cancelled, and the hostility of Lord Minto, the Governor-General, to Harford Jones, which was known to the Persians, his proposals for an alliance, which included an annual subsidy of £120,000 so long as Great Britain continued to be at war with Russia, were accepted. The experienced British envoy had also brought as a gift from George III a fine diamond, which especially appealed to Fath Ali. General Gardanne was now given his passports ; Harford Jones was afforded a splendid reception, and Fath Ali again became an ally of Great Britain by a treaty signed in 1808.[1]

The Definitive Treaty, or the Treaty of Tehran as it was also termed, was signed in 1814, and it was generally realized that both the Afghan and the French menace to India had disappeared, only to be replaced by the Russian menace. From this period, British relations with Persia remained, generally speaking, in the hands of the Foreign Office.

Zaman Shah appoints Ranjit Singh, Raja of Lahore, A.D. 1799.—To return to Zaman Shah once again. Freed from anxiety as to Herat, in 1798 he again visited the Punjab, where the situation was serious owing to the capture of Lahore by Sikh raiders who defeated the Afghan garrison and killed the Governor.

Upon reaching the capital, which the Sikh rebels had abandoned upon his approach, he received the homage of the Chiefs, among whom was Ranjit Singh. He then agreed to their petition that the Governor of Lahore should be selected from among the Sikh Chiefs to the exclusion of the unpopular Afghans. Zaman Shah there-

[1] For details of these Missions and treaties *vide* Sykes, *op. cit.* vol. ii, pp. 304-310 ; also *Aitchison's Treaties*, No. XII, p. 46 and p. 54. The preamble of the latter treaty runs: "These happy leaves are a nosegay plucked from the thornless garden of concord ", etc.

upon appointed Ranjit Singh, who, although only nineteen years of age, had already acquired a great reputation for courage and statesmanship. After having duly installed the Sikh Chief as Raja, Zaman Shah, whose departure was hastened by news that Fath Ali Shah was threatening to invade Khurasan, returned to Peshawar. There a halt was made to reorganize and rest his troops, who had suffered severely in the rains ; after which, appointing his brother, Shuja-ul-Mulk, Governor of the city, Zaman Shah marched to Herat.

The Conspiracy of the Chiefs, A.D. 1799.—The policy of Zaman Shah, contrary to that of his predecessors, had been to keep the Chiefs at his court without consulting them on affairs of state. He went further and alienated them by a system of silent persecution, reserving all his confidence for his unworthy Vizier, who was universally detested. The Chief of the Barakzais, of the Kizilbash and other notables accordingly formed a conspiracy to end this intolerable state of affairs. Their plan was to replace Zaman Shah by Shuja-ul-Mulk and in future to keep the election of Amirs in their own hands.

The conspiracy was betrayed by one of its members, and Paianda Khan, Chief of the Barakzais and other Chiefs were executed. Fath Khan, the eldest son of Paianda, however, escaped and rode across the Persian frontier. At Tabas he joined Mahmud, whom he persuaded to make another bid for the throne. Proceeding to Farah, he was joined by the Barakzais and other tribesmen and captured Kandahar.

The Blinding of Zaman Shah, A.D. 1800.—Considering his position strengthened by the execution of the conspirators, Zaman Shah marched on Peshawar, which had rebelled. He occupied this city and then despatched an army to reconquer Kashmir. This expedition failed completely but, not realizing the seriousness of Mahmud's new rebellion, the Amir left the main body of his army at Peshawar and returned to Kabul. There he suddenly understood that his situation was deplorable owing to the defection of the Chiefs and the sullen hostility of the population. He decided to retreat on Peshawar, with the

small force he hastily collected, and halting at a small fort near Jagdalak, by issuing a proclamation and by offers of money, he collected 30,000 tribesmen, among whom Ahmad Khan, Chief of the Nurzai clan, was the most influential leader.

Marching to meet Mahmud, Ahmad Khan, who had been secretly won over by Fath Khan, deserted Zaman Shah, with thousands of the tribesmen. Realizing that all was lost, the Afghan King took refuge at a fort belonging to a *mulla* who, hearing that Mahmud had occupied Kabul, detained his guest and informed Mahmud. That night the fallen Zaman Shah hid the *Koh-i-Noor* and other jewels in the wall of his room and, being despatched a prisoner to Kabul, he was met on the way by a brother of Fath Khan, accompanied by a surgeon, who blinded him.

Zaman Shah escaped to the Amir of Bukhara, who treated him shamefully, seizing his daughter, who was famed for her beauty. Escaping again, the unfortunate monarch was finally granted an asylum and a liberal pension by the British in India.

Thus passed off the scene Zaman Shah whose power and "vaulting ambition which o'erleaps itself", had excited the fears of the British in India. He was, like most Afghans of the period, brave and cruel. He was a good general but, by failing to conciliate the *Sirdars* as his father and grandfather had been careful to do, and by making a bad choice in the selection of his Vizier, he was defeated, was blinded and fell, never to hope again.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE DOWNFALL OF THE SADOZAI DYNASTY

The history of the Afghan monarchy is a history of a long series of revolutions. Seldom has the country rested from strife — seldom has the sword rested in the scabbard.—J. W. KAYE, *History of the War in Afghanistan.*

Mahmud Mirza *ascends the Throne*, 1800.—Seven years of warfare, attended with more misfortunes than successes, were rewarded by Mahmud *Mirza* overthrowing Zaman Shah and being declared Shah. His position was exceptionally strong since the Sadozai Chief had the wholehearted support of the Barakzai clan. He naturally appointed Fath Khan, his wise adviser and staunch supporter, his Vizier, while he treated his adherents most generously and, in rewarding them, nearly exhausted the treasure accumulated by his predecessors.

The Defeat of Shuja-ul-Mulk.—One of the first acts of Mahmud was to despatch a force to seize Peshawar and, if possible, to capture Shuja-ul-Mulk. Determined to make an attempt to secure the throne, this prince enrolled the tribesmen by a profuse distribution of money and started to march on Kabul. Fath Khan commanded a body of only 3000 men, whereas the tribesmen were superior in numbers. They were apparently defeating their opponents, when they started looting the treasure. Fath Khan, thereupon seizing the opportunity, made a general advance and won the day. Peshawar was taken but Shuja-ul-Mulk escaped.

The Ghilzai Rebellion, 1801.—The powerful Ghilzai tribe never forgot that their Chiefs had reigned at Isfahan and, at this juncture, decided to make a bid for the throne. Mastering Kandahar, they marched in great strength on Ghazni, defeating its Governor in the field. They were, however, unable to capture that strong fortress, and leaving

a small force to contain its garrison, they boldly advanced on Kabul.

Mahmud's only available general, Shir Muhammad Khan, was in prison under suspicion of high treason. However, not daring to leave the capital himself, he sent Shir Muhammad to lead the Kizilbash division against the rebels. The Ghilzais were defeated by artillery fire, but not decisively, and receiving reinforcements, they avoided the army of Shir Muhammad and might have seized the undefended capital but for their stopping to plunder the villages on their march. This gave Shir Muhammad time to take up a new position guarding Kabul and on the following day he overthrew the Ghilzai bands with heavy losses. The rebellion was not finally suppressed until the Ghilzais had been worsted in four battles, the last action, fought in May 1802, being decisive.

The Defeat of the Uzbegs, 1802.—Mahmud, in addition to the successes described above, worsted the Uzbegs near Balkh and drove them back across the Oxus. He also once more inflicted a crushing defeat on the tribesmen of the Khaibar who had again risen in favour of Shuja-ul-Mulk. He thus was securely seated on the throne, with his son Kamran *Mirza* in possession of Kandahar, while Herat was governed by his brother *Haji* Firuz-u-Din.

The Attack on the Kizilbash.—The fanatical Afghans always hated the Kizilbash, who belonged to the Shia sect. Excited by complaints made of ill-treatment to an Afghan youth, Mir Vaiz, the venerable Chief *Mulla*, issued a *fatwa* authorizing the extermination of the Shias in Kabul, and promising the joys of Paradise to those who should fall in the fight. For two days the Kizilbash defended themselves stoutly, Mahmud merely sending messages begging the *Mulla's* followers to desist. Finally, however, Fath Khan declared himself the supporter of the Kizilbash and, charging their assailants, put an end to the disturbance. At the same time this action caused various *Sirdars* to conspire against Mahmud Shah and Fath Khan.

The Dethronement of Mahmud Shah, 1805.—This plot

against the King was headed by Shir Muhammad, who had defeated the Ghilzais but whose valuable services had not been adequately recognized. Mahmud Shah, realizing the situation, attempted to seize its ringleader, but Shir Muhammad fled to the camp of Shuja-ul-Mulk, while the head *Mulla* excited the townspeople against Mahmud for supporting the heretical Kizilbash. Mahmud and the Kizilbash were driven to take refuge in the Bala Hissar and Shuja-ul-Mulk camped outside the city, realizing that his fate depended on the issue of the battle to be fought with the Kandahar army under Fath Khan, which was marching to the rescue of Mahmud Shah. When the armies met, Fath Khan charged, but his supporters, won over by the anti-Kizilbash feeling of the capital, went over to Shuja-ul-Mulk.

Shuja-ul-Mulk ascends the Throne, 1803.—On the following day the victor rode in triumph into Kabul. Mahmud was at first sentenced to be blinded, but this order was revoked and he was thrown into a dungeon, while Shuja became the King of Afghanistan.

The Question of Kandahar.—Shah Shuja owed his success to Shir Muhammad, whom he appointed Vizier but whom he by no means entirely trusted. The first step taken was to recover Kandahar. There Fath Khan arranged for Kamran *Mirza* to abandon the city and to take refuge at Herat. The Barakzai *Sirdar* himself remained at Kandahar and made his submission to Shah Shuja, but, presumably owing to the advice of Shir Muhammad, he was treated with coldness and retired to his fort at Girishk. Shah Shuja thereby lost the support of the powerful Barakzai *Sirdars*.

After appointing Kaisar *Mirza*, son of his blind brother, Governor of Kandahar, Shah Shuja marched to Peshawar at the head of 30,000 men, with the intention of asserting his suzerainty in the outlying provinces of Kashmir and Sind. However, upon learning that, instigated by Fath Khan, Kaisar *Mirza* had rebelled and had become a claimant for the throne, he returned to Kandahar, defeated his nephew and was marching back to Peshawar when he was once again obliged to return,

owing to Kandahar having been occupied a second time by Kaisar *Mirza* and the Barakzai *Sirdar*. On this occasion the rebel swore to be loyal to Shuja and to renounce all connexion with Fath Khan, whereupon he was once again appointed Governor of Kandahar.

Firuz-ud-Din, ruler of Herat, was incited by the influential Fath Khan to rebel, but wisely accepted Shah Shuja's offer of the governorship of Herat on terms of semi-independence and, freed from internal troubles, as he thought, Shah Shuja marched into Sind and received the arrears of tribute. He then proceeded to Peshawar where he arrived in April 1805.

The Escape of Mahmud.—Fath Khan, the arch intriguer, while negotiating with Kaisar *Mirza* and his cousin Kamran, had determined to restore Mahmud to the throne. The escape of the ex-King was effected by the treachery of the Kizilbash and, escorted by Dost Muhammad, destined to be the most famous of the twenty-two Barakzai brothers, he reached the fort of Girishk in safety.

The Rebellion of Shir Muhammad, 1808.—Shah Shuja, ignoring the seriousness of the position, proceeded to Sind, whereupon Shir Muhammad proclaimed Kaisar *Mirza* King, and marched upon Peshawar, which he occupied. Shuja immediately attacked and defeated the rebel army. Shir Muhammad was killed; Kaisar *Mirza* was captured, submitted and, with unwise leniency, was again pardoned. After this success Shah Shuja defeated Mahmud near Kandahar towards the end of 1808. He then returned to Peshawar to meet a British Mission from India.

The British Mission to Ranjit Singh, 1808–1809.—Some reference has already been made to the rise of the Sikhs and the bestowal in 1799 of the government of Lahore on Ranjit Singh by Zaman Shah.[1] In 1802 the great Sikh Chief added Amritsar to his dominions and, two years later, the civil wars in Afghanistan encouraged him to march down the Indus and to receive the homage of various Moslem Chiefs, while Muzaffar Khan of

[1] I have consulted *A History of the Sikhs*, by J. D. Cunningham, for this section.

Multan made him rich gifts.

As narrated in the previous chapter, the invasion of India by Napoleon loomed large in the minds of English officials at this period, and it was decided to negotiate a defensive alliance with the Sikhs and Afghans to serve as an outer line of defence to India. In accordance with this policy, Mr. C. T. Metcalfe was despatched on a Mission to the Sikh ruler, who, resenting the intention of the British Government to make the Sutlej his boundary, suddenly broke off negotiations and raided to the south of that river. However, Lord Minto despatched a force in January 1809 which occupied Ludhiana, and this action was followed by a proclamation declaring the Cis-Sutlej states to be under British protection.

Fearing that the Punjab Chiefs might also tender their allegiance to the British, Ranjit Singh signed the Treaty of Lahore in April 1809. By its terms it was acknowledged that the British " will have no concern with the territories and subjects of the Raja to the northward of the river Sutlej " ; and that the Raja on his side " will never maintain in the territory which he occupies on the left bank of the river Sutlej more troops than are necessary for the internal duties of that territory ".[1]

For some time, as was but natural, Ranjit Singh continued to intrigue with Sindhia and with Holkar, but gradually his fears of British invasion vanished and he became loyal to the terms of the treaty.

The Elphinstone Mission to Shah Shuja, 1809.—Shah Shuja at first had been opposed to receiving a British mission, since he was informed by Ranjit Singh and other Chiefs that he would be asked to surrender one or more of his provinces. However, when he realized that the sole object of the British was to form an alliance to defend Afghanistan against invasion by France and Russia, he decided to welcome Mr. Mountstuart Elphinstone, the British envoy, who, he hoped, would make him gifts of great value.[2]

[1] The treaty is given in full in Cunningham's *op. cit.* Appendix IX.

[2] *Vide* account of the *Kingdom of Caubool*, by the Hon. Mountstuart Elphinstone, 1839.

At the official reception we read: "In the centre arch sat the King, on a very large throne of gold or gilding. His appearance was magnificent and royal: his crown and all his dress were one blaze of jewels. . . . On coming in sight of the King, we all pulled off our hats and made a low bow; we then held up our hands towards heaven, as if praying for the King. . . . The Chaous Bashee repeated our names, without any title or addition of respect, ending, 'They have come from Europe as ambassadors to your Majesty. May your misfortunes be turned upon me'." The King answered in a loud and sonorous voice: "They are welcome". Later the King retired to a low throne and the Ambassador was invited to take a seat by him with his interpreter. Elphinstone then explained the objects of his Mission "to which His Majesty made a very friendly and judicious reply". Without much difficulty, in June 1809, a somewhat useless treaty was concluded, by the terms of which no Frenchman or other European was to be allowed to enter Afghanistan.[1]

During the stay of many months by the Mission at Peshawar, the news of the capture of Kandahar by Shah Mahmud caused some depression. Not long afterwards information was received of the "entire defeat and destruction" of the army which had been sent to restore Afghan authority in Kashmir. This disaster constituted a heavy blow to Shah Shuja and, partly in view of the uncertainty of his position, the Mission, its task concluded, took leave of the monarch and departed.

Mahmud again becomes King of Afghanistan, 1809.—Shah Shuja recruited fresh troops among the tribesmen and, in June, set off for Kabul. Meanwhile Mahmud and Fath Khan had seized the capital and were marching on Peshawar. The two armies met at Gandamak; Shuja was defeated and fled, leaving his treasure, valued at £2,000,000, to the victors. Thus Mahmud Shah again reigned.

Shuja-ul-Mulk's attempts to recover the Throne.—In 1810 the ex-Shah recovered Kandahar for a very short

[1] *Aitchison's Treaties*, No. XI, p. 336.

period, only to be expelled by the *Sirdars* who clearly realised that he insisted upon ruling as a haughty and aloof autocrat, who would listen to none of his advisers. Nothing daunted by this rebuff, in the same year he held Peshawar for some months but was expelled by a brother of Fath Khan. He then made an ineffectual attempt to win over the Governor of Multan. He was next imprisoned at Attock and in Kashmir. In 1812 he took refuge with Ranjit Singh at Lahore. There he was shamefully treated by his host, who, to gain possession of the celebrated *Koh-i-Noor*, starved and threatened his unfortunate guest. Nevertheless, thanks to the plan made by his capable wife — at the expense of the famous diamond — horses were stationed at various stages and, creeping out of Lahore through the city sewer, in disguise, the refugee Prince rode off to safety.[1] With remarkable initiative, he now made an attempt on Kashmir but was stopped by a heavy snowfall. Finally he reached Ludhiana, where he was granted an asylum by the British.

Afghanistan under Fath Khan.—Mahmud was a mere voluptuary and left the difficult task of governing the turbulent tribesmen to Fath Khan. Under this truly great *Sirdar* law and order were re-established; the Amirs of Sind and Baluchistan returned to their allegiance, while even the unruly Hazara tribe was reduced to obedience. To quote Ferrier: " The name of Fath Ali soon became celebrated and popular throughout Central Asia; the Afghans more especially held him in the greatest admiration, and had, on the contrary, the greatest contempt for the King ".

Fath Khan and the Sikhs, 1811.—Fath Khan, who was determined to recover Kashmir, made an agreement with Ranjit Singh who, in return for a promise of 9 lakhs of rupees (£90,000), despatched a body of 12,000 Sikhs to support the Afghan army. Owing to this overwhelming force no opposition was offered and Ata Muhammad, the Governor, surrendered at discretion. Fath Khan, however, refused to pay the stipulated sum to Ranjit Singh

[1] *Vide* Ferrier's *History of the Afghans*, pp. 143-144, for a full account of the dramatic escape from Lahore.

and, accordingly, Attock was held against him on his return. Dost Muhammad, in command of the Afghan advance-guard, was defeated and Fath Khan, misled by false news of a complete disaster, burned his baggage and crossed the Indus without being attacked by the Sikhs.

The Herat Question, 1800–1816.—*Haji* Firuz, as he was termed, had ruled Herat practically as an independent Prince for some sixteen years. In 1805 he had made an unsuccessful attempt on the Persian frontier fort of Ghorian and, being defeated and pursued by a Persian force, had agreed to pay tribute to the Shah. Again, some years later, he had bought off a Persian force by the payment of a sum of money and a promise that coinage should be struck in the name of Fath Ali Shah.

In 1816 Khurasan had been reconquered by the Persians and a powerful army was ready to advance on Herat. *Haji* Firuz, in despair, perforce applied for assistance to Kabul, although he had neglected to pay the stipulated tribute to Mahmud.

Fath Khan occupies Herat, 1816.—Fath Khan, in reply to his appeal, marched rapidly to Herat with a strong force. Entering the city he won over the garrison and sent *Haji* Firuz under escort to Kabul. Dost Muhammad Khan with a party of his men then inexcusably violated the harem of the ex-ruler, stripping the princesses, one of whom was the sister of Mahmud Shah, of their jewelry and even of their clothes.

Fath Khan defeats the Persian Army.—Having occupied Herat and taken over command of its garrison the Afghan Vizier attacked the powerful Persian army at Kafir Kala on the Persian frontier. The battle was hotly contested, but the charges of Afghan cavalry broke the Persian infantry, which retired with a loss of 10,000 men. Fath Khan, riding to the front, was struck in the mouth by a spent ball and fell senseless off his horse. A rumour of his death was believed; the pursuit was stopped and a panic ensued at Herat, with the result that it was not until nine days later that the artillery and baggage of the defeated Persians was collected by their adversaries.

The Blinding of Fath Khan, 1818.—Kamran *Mirza* had murdered his cousin Kaisar *Mirza* and was, on Fath Khan's advice, debarred from holding a governorship. He consequently hated the Vizier. The arrival at Kabul of *Haji* Firuz, who bitterly complained to Shah Mahmud of the indignity he had suffered by the looting of his property and, above all, by the violation of his harem, excited Mahmud against Fath Khan and he issued an order that he should be blinded. Kamran *Mirza* undertook to carry out the sentence, and proceeding to Herat he was welcomed by the unsuspicious Fath Khan, whom he suddenly seized and blinded.

The Downfall of the Sadozai Dynasty.—Retribution speedily followed this outrage. The Barakzai brothers raised the standard of revolt in Kandahar and Kashmir, and Kamran's troops deserted to the rebels. Mahmud made his last stand at Ghazni, where he was joined by Kamran, who brought the unfortunate Fath Khan with him and there flayed him alive.

This atrocious outrage shocked the tribesmen, who joined the Barakzai brothers in their thirst for vengeance. Mahmud and Kamran were fortunate enough to be able to retire to Herat. There they reigned, father and son, disputing the sovereignty with one another. With this exception the Sadozai Dynasty, founded by Ahmad Shah in 1747, fell in 1818.

CHAPTER XXVII

DOST MUHAMMAD BECOMES AMIR OF KABUL

All the sympathies of Dost Muhammad were with the English, and he had done everything in his power to enter into a sincere alliance with the East India Company. But Messieurs the Directors would listen to nothing; they had admitted as a principle that the consolidation and extension of Ranjit Singh's power under their protection was a counterpoise against every evil that could happen to them.—FERRIER.

The Position in 1818.—Upon the break-up of the Sadozai dynasty, as was only to be expected, Balkh to the north asserted her independence, as did Baluchistan and Sind to the south. To the east Ranjit Singh obtained possession of the Punjab and Kashmir, while he exercised suzerainty over Peshawar, with Sultan Muhammad Khan, one of the Barakzai brothers paying him tribute. Ultimately he also annexed Peshawar.

The Policy of the Barakzai Brothers.—The historian of Persia and Afghanistan has frequent occasion to note the dire results of polygamy and the fortunes of the Barakzai brothers, with which we are now concerned, serve as a classical example of the hatreds, the wars and the assassinations to which it gave rise.

The Muhammadzai branch of the Durrani tribe now held the supreme power in Afghanistan, but, as we shall see, its members were hostile to one another. Their general idea at this period was to place a Sadozai prince on the throne, but to retain the power in their own hands. They thereupon invited the ex-Shah Shuja to Kandahar but, quickly realizing that he insisted upon absolute power, they drove him out.

In 1819 it was arranged that Ayub *Mirza*, a son of Timur Shah, should reign as a puppet, with Muhammad Azim Khan, the eldest of the Barakzai brothers who held

Kabul, as his Vizier. This arrangement worked for a short time until it was discovered that Ayub was corresponding with Mahmud Shah and also with ex-Shah Shuja. He was thereupon promptly expelled.

The Struggle with Ranjit Singh.—Ranjit Singh had entered Peshawar in 1818, but did not garrison it. At the same time he held Khairabad, a fort on the right bank of the Indus.[1] In 1819 he sent a force to invade Kashmir. The Afghan troops repulsed the invaders in the first action but the Sikhs finally won an almost bloodless victory and annexed that desirable province. Later in the same year Dera Ghazi Khan, another dependency of Kabul, was occupied, and in 1821, Dera Ismail Khan was also annexed, thus giving the *Maharaja* a commanding position on the Central Indus.

In 1822 Muhammad Azim visited Peshawar but was called back to Kabul. Ranjit Singh, however, marched westwards and demanded tribute from its governor, Sultan Muhammad Khan. The Afghan *Sirdar* offered him some valuable horses, which were accepted by the Sikh monarch. Muhammad Azim disapproved of the action of his brother and again appeared at Peshawar at the head of an army in January 1823, whereupon Sultan Muhammad took refuge with the Yusufzai tribe.

The *Maharaja* realized the importance of the challenge and a decisive battle was fought at Nowshera in March 1823. Muhammad Azim had organized a powerful body of *Ghazis* among the tribesmen. These warriors he stationed on the left bank of the Kabul River while, with supreme ineptitude, he posted his own troops on the right bank, thereby making it impossible for them to support the *Ghazis*. The battle opened with an attack by fanatical Akali Sikhs, who crossed the Kabul River and charged the *Ghazis*. These fierce hillmen repulsed the Sikhs, and advancing on Ranjit's infantry, were in turn held up by artillery and musket fire. Finally Ranjit Singh led a cavalry charge and won the day. Azim Khan and his brothers made no effort to support the tribesmen and covered themselves with ignominy by

[1] *Vide* Cunningham, *op. cit.* pp. 196-198.

flying from the field in a panic, abandoning their guns and baggage. Ranjit Singh thereupon plundered Peshawar. However, realizing the hostility of the local tribesmen to the Sikhs, he accepted Sultan Muhammad's submission and reappointed him Governor of Peshawar, upon his agreeing to pay tribute. This important city was thereby permanently lost to Afghanistan.

The Ascendancy of Dost Muhammad Khan.—Muhammad Azim died shortly after his defeat at Nowshera. At this period Dost Muhammad ruled Ghazni while his brothers Purdil Khan and Kohandil Khan held Kandahar, and a fight for power between the brothers ensued. After more than one reverse, Dost Muhammad, who was strongly supported by his maternal uncle, the Chief of the Kizilbashis of Kabul, finally defeated Sultan Muhammad, the Governor of Peshawar, his most bitter opponent, and in 1826, after two years of civil war, Dost Muhammad became the acknowledged ruler of Kabul and Ghazni. Later he occupied Jalalabad and held these three cities without any serious fighting until 1834, while his brothers held Kandahar, and Shah Mahmud governed Herat. Balkh, Khulm, Kunduz and Badakhshan remained independent petty states.

The Expedition of Shah Shuja against Kandahar.—The ex-King was permitted—unwisely, one would think — to reside at the frontier station of Ludhiana. Provided with an ample income of about £5000 per annum by the British, he was able to engage in intrigues with Kabul, Kandahar, Lahore and Sind.[1]

In 1832 rumours of an attack by Persia on Herat encouraged his designs, and the Sind Amirs offered him their support in return for the acknowledgment of their independence, should his attempt to recover the throne succeed. To some considerable extent Shah Shuja won over Captain C. W. Wade, the Political Agent, to his plans, and, with his consent, he promised Ranjit Singh to waive his rights on Peshawar and adjacent districts in return for his assistance. The *Maharaja* accordingly

[1] The best account of the intrigues preceding this expedition is given by J. D. Cunningham (who was assistant to Captain Wade) in *The History of the Sikhs.*

negotiated a treaty with the ex-King, but did not immediately ratify it. He was willing to secure his title to Peshawar but realized that, if he succeeded, Shah Shuja would attempt to recover Peshawar whenever he felt strong enough to do so.

The important question of funds was not settled altogether satisfactorily, but the Governor-General, Lord William Cavendish-Bentinck, permitted an advance of his pension to be granted to Shah Shuja. " Such an act ", to quote Sir Henry Durand, " could not fail in the East of being construed into a material aid and effectual countenance of the Shah's designs." [1]

Starting from Ludhiana in February 1833, at the head of a force some 3000 strong, Shah Shuja marched down the left bank of the Indus and, crossing that river, occupied Shikarpur without opposition.

The Defeat of the Amirs of Sind, 1834.—By this stroke the ex-King gained a base and was also able to levy contributions on its wealthy merchants. Moreover, Ranjit Singh, seeing the successful start of the campaign, ratified the treaty referred to above. The Sind Amirs pressed Shah Shuja to leave Shikarpur but he demanded a heavy subsidy from them as the price of his departure. Their refusal resulted in a battle fought in January 1834. The ex-King was victorious and dictated terms which brought in 500,000 rupees to replenish his empty military chest.

The Advance on Kandahar, 1834.—Shah Shuja's force now consisted of 22,000 troops, including a body of infantry trained and commanded by Campbell, a capable Scottish adventurer. Having settled matters satisfactorily with the Sind Amirs, the ex-Shah marched up the Bolan Pass and advanced on Kandahar. Kohandil Khan met the invaders at the Khojak Pass but was defeated and retreated on the city.

The Policy of Dost Muhammad.—Before the advance from Shikarpur had begun, Kohandil, in alarm, had sent messenger after messenger to beg Dost Muhammad to march to his rescue. That astute ruler, before deciding what action he should take, inquired of Wade whether

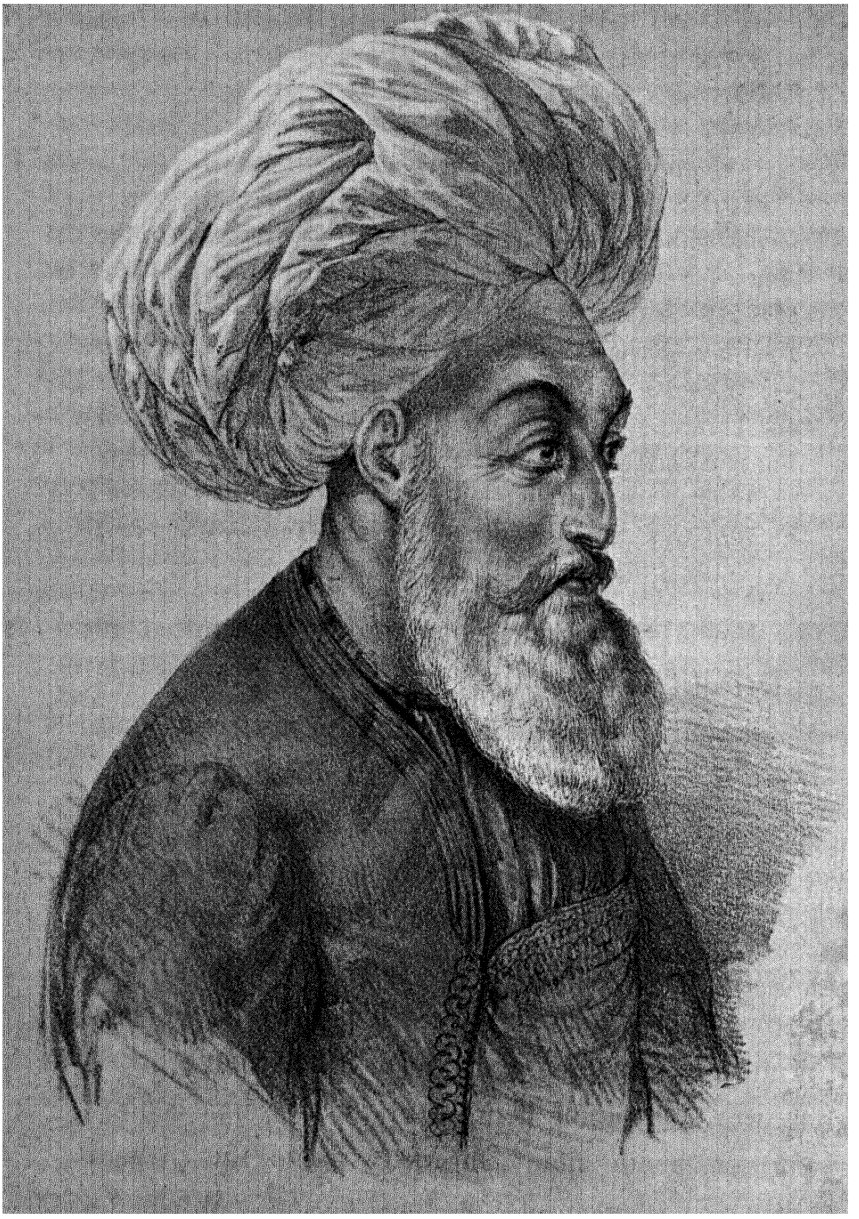
[1] *The First Afghan War*, p. 18.

Shah Shuja was supported by the British Government. Wade replied that the Government of India had taken no part in the expedition, but that Shah Shuja had their best wishes—a most improper letter for a British official in his position to have written. Dost Muhammad thereupon, realizing that no British troops would support Shah Shuja, decided that he would march to the aid of his untrustworthy brothers.

Shah Shuja was already besieging Kandahar and had made a general assault, which had been repulsed with heavy losses, on June 29, 1834. Upon hearing of the approach of the Kabul army he moved out of the strong position he occupied at Old Kandahar and made no attempt to prevent the junction of the forces of Dost Muhammad and Kohandil Khan, which was speedily effected.

Dost Muhammad, aware of the unreliability of his *Sirdars*, whose loyalty was being undermined by Shah Shuja's intrigues, decided to fight immediately. He sent his less trustworthy troops to engage the enemy, while keeping in reserve a reliable body of his own followers. Little determination was displayed by either side and the battle degenerated into a loose skirmish in which Campbell's two disciplined battalions were carrying all before them. Cowardly Shah Shuja, who had viewed the battle from a safe distance, instead of leading a final charge, fled the field in a panic, thus giving the victory to Dost Muhammad. Gallant Campbell, who was wounded, was well treated by his captor. He entered his service and, as mentioned in Chapter XXXIX, taught Abdur Rahman the art of war.

The Political Result of the Battle.—The correspondence captured on the battlefield revealed the web of intrigues which Shah Shuja, supported by Wade, had woven, and proved to the victor not only that many of his own Chiefs had been disloyal to him, but what was of far greater importance, the fact that the expedition had been countenanced by the representative of the British Government. Had the Governor-General firmly advised against the expedition, coupled with a refusal to subsidize it, he



AMIR DOST MUHAMMAD KHAN

(From a drawing by J. Rattray)

would have saved much bloodshed in Sind and in Afghanistan and would not have been responsible for Dost Muhammad's justifiable distrust of the British Government with all its tragic consequences.

Dost Muhammad proclaimed Amir-ul-Muminin.—Much strengthened by this important victory, Dost Muhammad decided to assume a sovereign title. He was urged to declare himself King, but being a realist, he refused to do so. Finally, Mir Vaiz, the chief *Mulla* of Kabul, proclaimed him *Amir-ul-Muminin*, or " Commander of the Faithful ".

Dost Muhammad attacks the Sikhs.—It might have been expected that the victory gained by the Amir who had rescued his brothers at Kandahar from disaster would have healed the family feuds. But this was far from being the case. While Dost Muhammad had been engaged with Shah Shuja, Ranjit Singh had occupied Peshawar and had driven out Sultan Muhammad and his brothers, who retired to Jalalabad. There they decided to make an attempt to capture Kabul, but speedily abandoned it upon hearing of the result of the battle of Kandahar. Indeed they visited Dost Muhammad to congratulate him on his victory. The Amir was not deceived, but yet, foolishly one would think, sent 9000 cavalry to attack the Sikhs under their command. Since they effected very little he went to the front himself. The *Maharaja*, unwilling to fight the experienced Amir, sent negotiators (including Harlan, an American adventurer who describes his activities) to his camp, nominally to treat with, but actually to bribe, his *Sirdars*. So successful were their efforts, seconded by the hostile brothers, that the army of the Amir melted away and he retired hastily to Kabul with the loss of his prestige and his camp equipment. Sultan Muhammad, as a reward for his services to the Sikh monarch, was appointed Governor of the fortress of Rotas, while Dost Muhammad, we read, temporarily abandoned worldly ambition, and plunged deeply into the study of the Koran.

The Battle of Jamrud, 1837.—Ranjit Singh, mistaking the character of his opponent, followed up his " golden "

victory by threatening villages dependent on Kabul. Thoroughly aroused, the Amir despatched his son, Akbar Khan, with a force which won a victory at Jamrud, the noted Sikh general, Hari Singh, being among the slain. But reinforcements reaching the Sikhs, the Afghans were unable to recover Peshawar.

Dost Muhammad's Appeal to Lord Auckland.—Such was the position of affairs when the Amir, hearing of the arrival of a new Governor-General, Lord Auckland, wrote him a letter of congratulation. In it he complained of Sikh aggression. He asked that the Indus should constitute the boundary between the two states and offered, in return for this concession, to abandon his rights on Kashmir in favour of the Sikhs.

Auckland replied curtly to these reasonable proposals. He said that it was not the practice of the British Government to interfere in the affairs of other independent states, but that he would request the *Maharaja* to restore the government of Peshawar to Sultan Muhammad — the most bitter foe of the Amir. At the same time he notified his intention to depute some gentlemen to the Amir's Court to discuss commercial topics. This refusal of Lord Auckland tended to prove to the Amir that he must seek the support of Russia and Persia.

The Action of the Barakzais of Kandahar.—Hearing of the above correspondence with the Governor-General, the Kandahar Barakzais, fearing that it would bring increased power to Dost Muhammad, despatched an envoy to Persia accepting the suzerainty of the Shah in return for protection. They also wrote a petition to the Czar through the Russian embassy at Tehran. The replies were favourable in both cases. To the Kandahar envoy Persian support was promised, while Russia went further and, as we shall see, despatched Captain Vitkavich, a Cossack officer, to Kandahar.

The Policy of the Government of India.—At this point it seems desirable to discuss the policy of the Government of India so far as Ranjit Singh, Afghanistan and Persia were concerned. As we have seen, influenced by the indefatigable Wade, the Sikhs were regarded not only as

valuable allies but also as an outer line of defence against French or Russian invaders. This policy was distinctly short-sighted since it depended not only upon the loyalty but also on the power, life and health of Ranjit Singh, who had ruined his health by debauchery and drink and had already been struck with paralysis in 1834. He had a second seizure in 1838, in which year he met Lord Auckland. Upon his death in 1839, six years of anarchy succeeded, which led to the ultimate annexation of the Punjab by the British. Surely to make paralytic Ranjit Singh the sheet-anchor of the British policy was most unwise.

The Government of Bombay favoured the policy of using Persia as a bulwark against the French or the Russians. Napoleon's threat of an invasion by land was fantastic but the conquests of Russia described in the last chapter proved conclusively that Persia could not form an outer line of defence against the great Northern Power and that the Definitive Treaty was valueless from that point of view. It actually lowered British prestige, since Persia maintained that we had deserted her in her dire need.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE MISSION OF BURNES AND THE SIEGE OF HERAT

Dost Muhammad's comprehension is quick; his knowledge of character very great; and he cannot be long deceived. He listens to every individual who complains, and with a forbearance and temper which are more highly praised than his equity and justice.—BURNES.

Though Lieutenant Pottinger did not at once declare himself — having no office under government — yet never did his courage and resolution relax. He, taking himself to the craggy fissures of breaches, was present at every onset; drawing not his foot from the path of valour. . . . So that again and again the Persians demanded one thing only, the dismissal of Lieutenant Pottinger from Herat.—YAR MUHAMMAD'S Letter to Lord Auckland.

The New Trend of Persian Policy.—In Chapter XXV, the disasters suffered by Persia at the hands of Russia have been summarized. For the next generation, until 1857, persistent attempts were made by her rulers, who had recovered Khurasan from its semi-independent chiefs by the end of 1832, to recover also the fertile province of Herat and, if possible, Kandahar. This policy was viewed with apprehension alike by the British Government, whose Foreign Secretary was Lord Palmerston, by the Government of India and by the Amir. It was clearly realized by the British that, if the policy of Persia, strongly supported by Russia, were successful, Russian agents would be established at Herat and Kandahar and would be in close touch with Kabul. Moreover, it was evident that in this case Russia, without throwing any strain on her own resources, would secure her influence in Afghanistan, whereas a serious strain would be placed on Great Britain to meet the demands of the new situation.

The Siege of Herat, 1833.—At this period Mahmud Shah, the Sadozai ruler, had died, and Herat was held as an independent principality by Kamran *Mirza*, who was a confirmed debauchee, and entirely in the hands of his Vizier, Yar Muhammad Khan.

Abbas *Mirza*, the heir-apparent to the throne of Persia, invited Kamran to send his Minister to Meshed in order to make a friendly arrangement and Yar Muhammad was accordingly appointed to undertake this mission. His host attempted to induce him to agree to his wishes as regards the Herat question, and when words failed, ordered two of his teeth to be extracted. Eventually Yar Muhammad was released, upon the arrival of another hostage, and returned to Herat. There Kamran *Mirza*, acting upon his advice, returned an evasive reply to the Persian Prince. A powerful army under Muhammad *Mirza*, the eldest son of Abbas, thereupon marched against Herat. Under the instructions of a Polish officer the siege was being pressed forward with some success when news of the sudden death of Abbas *Mirza* was received. Muhammad *Mirza* raised the siege immediately and hastened to Tehran in order to secure his proclamation as heir-apparent, but, before crossing the frontier, he swore to avenge his failure in Afghan blood.

In 1834 the aged Fath Ali Shah died, and, after a fight for the throne, was succeeded by Muhammad *Mirza*. The new Shah, who was entirely under Russian influence, prepared to organize a powerful force and to make good his oath, but it was not until 1837 that his army actually invaded Afghanistan. In addition to the question of Herat was that of Seistan, which Persia coveted and claimed as one of her provinces, and its annexation at this juncture by Kamran *Mirza* was held to constitute an additional affront to the Shah.

The Mission of Captain Alexander Burnes, 1837.—We must now turn our attention to the Mission announced by Lord Auckland to Dost Muhammad, which was mentioned in the previous chapter. It was headed by Alexander Burnes, a distinguished officer who had already visited Kabul some four years previously, during the course of an important journey to Bukhara, and had been received by the Amir.

On the staff of the British envoy were Lieutenant John Wood of the Indian navy, who explored the Pamirs

and discovered Lake Victoria,[1] and Dr. Lord, who crossed the Hindu Kush to Kunduz.

Travelling by Peshawar and the Khaibar Pass, Burnes was received with "great pomp and splendour" and entered Kabul riding on an elephant by the side of Akbar Khan, the son of Dost Muhammad. Although nominally bound on a "commercial" mission, Burnes was actually despatched to the Court of the Amir to make peace between Dost Muhammad and the *Maharaja* of the Punjab, and to inform the Governor-General of the views and policy of the Amir. He was also expected to report on the state of the country, politically as well as commercially.[2]

The Proposals of Dost Muhammad.—The Amir was most friendly. He agreed to suspend hostilities with Ranjit Singh, as requested by Burnes, but pointed out how the *Maharaja* had taken Kashmir from him and how, owing mainly to the hostility of his own brother, Sultan Muhammad, the Sikhs now held Peshawar. He then frankly stated that his policy was to recover Peshawar on the east and Herat on the west. In return for his recognition by the Indian Government as Amir of Kabul and for the receipt of a subsidy, he would send an army to the rescue of Herat in spite of his mortal feud with Kamran *Mirza*, and would be the devoted ally of the British. Burnes realized that it would be sound policy to agree to the Amir's requests and strongly supported them. As regards the delicate question of Peshawar, he recommended that Dost Muhammad might hold the city and pay tribute for it to Ranjit Singh, as his brother had done, and to this Dost Muhammad consented.

Burnes and Kohandil Khan.—At this period Burnes was informed by Dost Muhammad that Kohandil Khan, who had received a Persian agent, in spite of his warning against taking such a step, had decided to send his second son to Muhammad Shah with gifts for his Majesty and for the Russian Ambassador. To prevent this action, Burnes wrote a strong letter to Kohandil advising him to

[1] Vide *Journey to the Source of the Oxus*, by J. Wood.

[2] I have especially consulted *The War in Afghanistan*, by J. W. Kaye, a most valuable work; also *England and Russia in the East*, by Sir Henry Rawlinson.

drop negotiations with Persia and Russia and, in case of an attack by a Persian army, he promised him the support of Dost Muhammad. He also offered him some money. In a letter dated December 30, he wrote to Mr. (later Sir William) Macnaghten, who, as Chief Secretary, dealt with Afghan affairs under the Governor-General: "Russia has come forward with offers which are certainly substantial. Persia has been lavish in her promises, and Bukhara and other states have not been backward. Yet, in all that has passed or is daily transpiring, the Chief of Kabul declares that he prefers the sympathy and friendly offers of the British to all these offers." [1]

Dost Muhammad corresponds with Muhammad Shah and the Tsar.—At this period, as we learn from Mohan Lal,[2] Dost Muhammad, who was corresponding with the Shah and also with the Tsar, wrote to the former: "Should it prove that I be unable to resist that diabolical tribe [the Sikhs], then I have no choice, and must connect myself with the English, who will thus obtain a complete authority over the whole of Afghanistan". The Amir had also written to the Tsar stating that since Muhammad Shah had closely connected himself with Russia, he also, being a Moslem, was desirous of following his example. He added that if he were not assisted by the Tsar against the Sikhs, that race, who were allies of the British, would overpower him and that the British, under the guise of merchants, would destroy the trade between Moscow, Bukhara and Kabul. These letters represented the customary policy of the rulers of Persia, Bukhara and Afghanistan, and might be termed a policy of "feelers".

The Arrival at Kabul of Captain Vitkavich.—While the negotiations between Burnes and the Amir were proceeding, a Russian "commercial agent" reached

[1] Kaye points out that the despatches dealing with these important matters were garbled, so much so that, as he puts it in one case, the *suppressio veri* was virtually the *assertio falsi*. This question is fully dealt with in *David Urquhart*, by Gertrude Robinson, pp. 142-145. The above quotation is marked by Kaye, *Ungarbled Correspondence of Sir A. Burnes*.

[2] *Life of Amir Dost Muhammad Khan*, by Mohan Lal, 1846. This individual accompanied Burnes on his journey to Bukhara. He was also on his staff during this Mission and, later again, during the First Afghan War.

Kabul. Captain Vitkavich,[1] who had served on the Governor's staff at Orenburg, had joined the Persian army on its march towards Herat, and had been accorded many audiences by the Shah and by *Haji Mirza* Aghasi the Vizier. Quitting the royal camp at Nishapur, he had travelled to Kandahar, where he was welcomed by Kohandil Khan. He quickly concluded an agreement with this Chief, who, owing to his hatred of Kamran *Mirza*, was ready to co-operate with Muhammad Shah against Herat. He then proceeded to Kabul, where he arrived in December 1837.

The position of the Amir was very difficult. Still hoping for British support, he asked the advice of Burnes as to whether he should receive Vitkavich, and only did so with the approval of the British envoy.

The Russian emissary was the bearer of two letters of a commercial tendency, one from the Tsar himself and one from Count Simonich, the Russian Minister at Tehran. The genuineness of the Tsar's letter was at first questioned, but was subsequently established. It contained the following passages: "In a happy moment the messenger of your Highness, *Mirza* Husayn, reached my court, with your friendly letter. . . . It flattered me very much, and I was satisfied with your friendship to my everlasting government. In consequence of this. . . . I shall always feel happy to assist the people of Kabul who may come to trade into my kingdom. . . ."[2]

Temperamental Burnes wrote to a friend: "Herat is besieged and may fall; and the Emperor of Russia has sent an envoy to Kabul to offer Dost Muhammad money to fight Ranjit Singh!! I could not believe my eyes or ears; but Captain Vitkavich — for that is the agent's name — arrived here with a blazing letter, three feet long, and sent immediately to pay his respects to myself. I, of course, received him, and asked him to dinner."

Burnes sent copies of these letters, supplied by the Amir, to the Governor-General. In October 1838 Lord

[1] Kaye in vol. i, p. 192, of his work gives an interesting account of Vitkavich and his proceedings.

[2] Sent from St. Petersburg on April 27, 1837. Quoted from Kaye, *op. cit.* vol. i, p. 197.

Palmerston, in a note to be presented by the British Ambassador to Count Nesselrode, the Foreign Secretary, detailed the activities of Russian agents in Persia and Afghanistan and pointed out that they were contrary to the assurances given to Great Britain in 1837.[1] Nesselrode in reply stated that the Mission of Vitkavich was purely commercial and that it did not contain " the smallest design hostile to the English Government, nor the smallest idea of injuring the tranquillity of the British possessions in India ".[2] The tone of this reply was both friendly and reasonable.

The Policy of the British Government.—Viewing the situation as a historian, long after the event, it is evident that the policy advocated by Burnes of a friendly Afghanistan was sound. Mr (later Sir John) McNeill, the British Minister at Tehran, wrote to Burnes on March 13, 1837: " I sincerely wish if the Amir Dost Muhammad Khan and you come to a good understanding, that he were in possession of both Kandahar and Kabul. . . . A loan of money would possibly enable him to do this and would give us a great hold upon him."

Unfortunately Wade, through whose hands this letter and those of Burnes passed, was entirely hostile to this policy and wrote to Colvin, the private secretary of the Governor-General: " Such an experiment on the part of our government would be to play into the hands of our rivals, and to deprive ourselves, as it were by a *felo-de-se*, of the powerful means which we have in reserve of controlling the present rulers of Afghanistan ". He went on to lay down that " whilst distributed into several states, the Afghans are, in my opinion, more likely to subserve the views and interests of the British Government ". These views from the ardent partisan of Shah Shuja undoubtedly carried considerable weight. They were supported by Macnaghten, an influential official who, however, had no experience of Afghans or Afghanistan.

We now come to Lord Auckland. His policy was

[1] *Parl. Papers*, 1839, xl, p. 180.

[2] Nesselrode to Pozzo di Borgo, Nov. 1, 1838. *Parl. Papers*, 1839, xl, pp. 187-190.

perforce deeply influenced by a despatch which he received in 1836 from the Secret Committee of the Court of Directors, whose president was Sir John Hobhouse, later Lord Broughton. This document, which is too long to permit quotation,[1] instructs the Governor-General to endeavour to enter into commercial or political relations with Afghanistan and to adopt any interference in the affairs of Afghanistan "either to prevent the extension of Persian dominion in that quarter, or to raise a timely barrier against the impending encroachments of Russian influence".

The views of the Governor-General are clear from a letter to Hobhouse, which states that to Dost Muhammad he could only speak words of friendliness, and if he desired it, of mediation. He continues: "In his pressing need he has courted Persia, he has courted Russia, and he has courted us. But it would be madness in us, though we may wish to see his independence assured, to quarrel with the Sikhs for him."

The Reply of Lord Auckland to Burnes.—Shortly after the arrival of Vitkavich, Burnes received the reply of Auckland to his recommendations. It advised the Amir to waive his claims on Peshawar and to accept such arrangements as Ranjit Singh might be prepared to make with Sultan Muhammad for the governorship of that city. On January 20, 1838, Macnaghten wrote that Auckland disapproved of the unauthorized promises which he had made to the Kandahar Chiefs, and insisted on these chiefs being informed of the fact. Finally, on February 21, 1838, letters were received by Burnes stating in decisive language that the Governor-General had no intention of acceding to the proposals of the Amir, that Peshawar must be left to Ranjit Singh and that the dismissal of Vitkavich must be demanded. Dost Muhammad, whose attitude throughout these negotiations excites our respect, broke off negotiations and Burnes left Kabul on April 25.

Seldom, if ever, has a British envoy been so badly treated as Burnes. Unprovided with suitable gifts, to which Oriental potentates attach great importance, as

[1] It is given in *John Russell Colvin*, by Sir Auckland Colvin, pp. 86-88.

furnishing an indication of their importance in the eyes of the donor, he was sent to ask Dost Muhammad to grant a great deal and, in return, was only entitled to state that Peshawar might as a favour be ruled by Sultan Muhammad, his deadliest enemy! The Amir, indeed, heard much of the friendliness of the British but, when he asked for some proof of it, none was forthcoming. As was inevitable and only reasonable, Dost Muhammad, in addition to listening to the promises of Vitkavich, who guaranteed him Russian support, made a treaty with Muhammad Shah against Kamran *Mirza*. Thus through Auckland's ineptitude and lack of vision, the position in Afghanistan became entirely unsatisfactory. His behaviour alike to Burnes and to Dost Muhammad proved that both he and his advisers lacked the qualities demanded by the situation.

The Conclusion of the Mission of Vitkavich.—Dost Muhammad naturally turned to Russia after the unwise refusal of the Governor-General to help him in any way. Vitkavich promised Russian support to the Barakzai brothers and proposed to visit Ranjit Singh on their behalf, but British influence was too strong at Lahore for this plan to succeed. However, he drew up a treaty between the Kandahar brothers and the Shah, which was signed by the latter. The Russian Ambassador, to whom it was forwarded, returned it to the *Sirdars* with the following words: " Muhammad Shah has promised to give you possession of Herat; I sincerely tell you that you will also get Ghorian, on my acccount, from the Shah ". It is satisfactory to record that the Tsar entirely rejected this guarantee and Simonich's successor, General Duhamel, was given a definite order to inform the Shah of this rejection.[1]

To conclude this section: Vitkavich, upon his return to St. Petersburg, was refused an audience by Count Nesselrode, who stated that " he knew no Captain Vitkavich, except an adventurer of that name who . . . had lately been engaged in some unauthorised intrigues at Kabul and Kandahar ". Vitkavich, aware of the recent

[1] Nesselrode to Pozzo di Borgo, March 5, 1839.

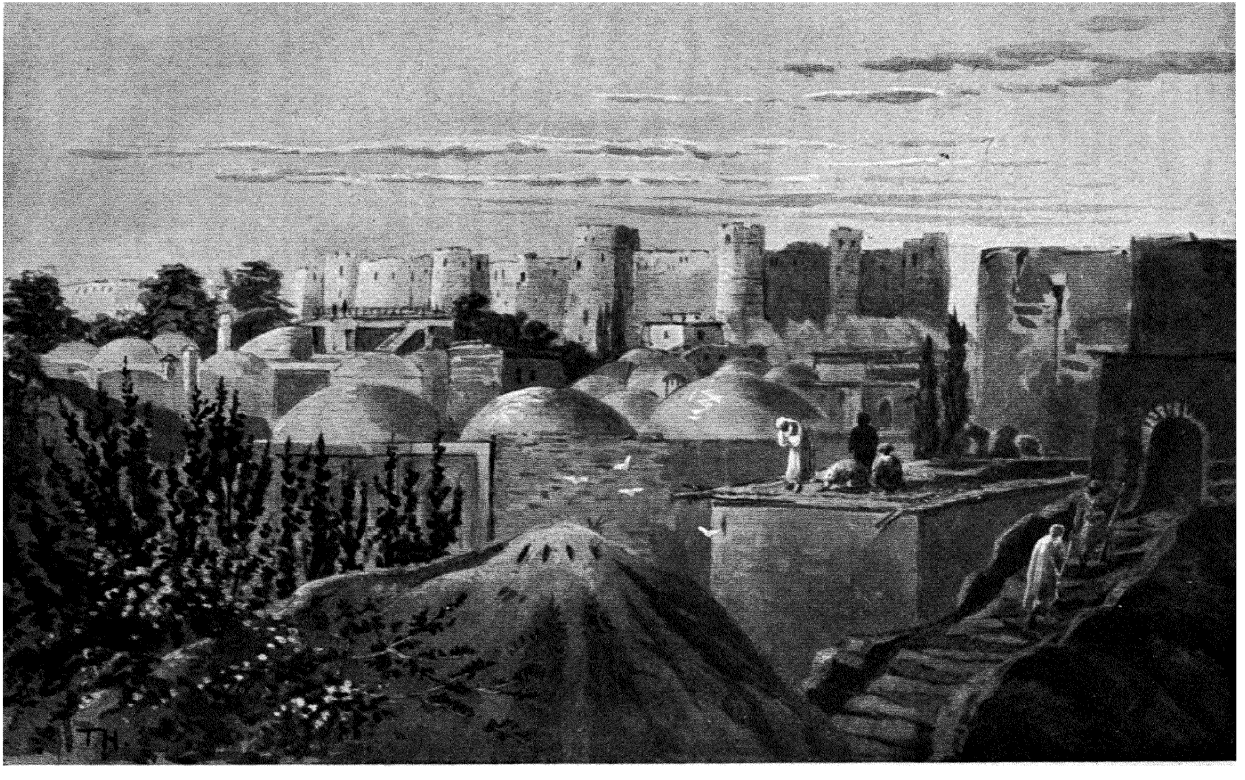
expostulations of the British and realizing that he was being sacrificed by the ignoble Nesselrode, wrote a reproachful letter to him and then blew out his brains.

The Second Siege of Herat, 1837–38.—Yar Muhammad, forewarned as to the impending invasion of the "Granary of Central Asia", burned every village within twelve miles of Herat and collected in the city all the available wheat and barley together with forage and cattle. Ten thousand horsemen were instructed to keep the field and harass the enemy from strongholds that were garrisoned. The ramparts of Herat were repaired to some extent, and the ditch was cleaned out and deepened. Of far greater importance at this juncture was the arrival at Herat of Eldred Pottinger, a young British officer of the Bombay Artillery, who had been sent to explore in Afghanistan by his uncle, Sir Henry Pottinger, the Resident in Cutch.

The Persian army, some 30,000 strong, well provided with artillery, opened the siege in November 1837, and the Shah, to show the spirit in which he was waging war, ordered the first prisoner that was taken to be bayoneted in his presence. Establishing themselves among some ruined houses on the west side of the city, the Persian batteries wrought havoc with the crumbling parapets, but the resolute Afghans repaired the damage and built up new defences to the rear. At the end of the first month Pottinger wrote: "The Persians have wasted some thousand rounds of ammunition, and are not more advanced than when the firing commenced".[1]

During the winter months the siege dragged on without decisive results. The Persian commanders refusing to obey the orders of General Semineau, a capable French engineer, who served Muhammad Shah, worked without any definite plans and declined to co-operate with one another. Indeed, each general rejoiced at the failure of one of his rivals. The Afghans, on the other hand, sallied out at night, attacked outposts and destroyed works that were being erected and killed the soldiers and workmen.

[1] *Vide* the MS. *Journal of Eldred Pottinger*.



HERAT CITADEL FROM THE CITY

(From Holdich, *The Indian Borderland.* Methuen)

During this period the advice of Pottinger was sought and, to some extent, followed, while the mere presence of a British officer, who was naturally believed to have been sent to Herat by his Government, heartened the defenders.

Ferrier's Account of the Siege Operations.—Ferrier visited Herat some years after the siege and writes of it as follows: "Although the operations were disjointed and subject to the caprice of a score and a half of commanders in the trenches, *Haji Mirza* Aghasi, an old *mulla*, entirely ignorant of military science, reserved to himself the chief direction of the siege; his object was to prolong it until the diplomatic struggle in which he had, with Russia, engaged against England, should be decided. But as the Shah had not, at that time, been convinced by his arguments, and pressed his generals to take the town as quickly as possible, the Vizier gave them secret orders to do nothing." [1]

In February 1838 Pottinger visited the Persian camp as an envoy from Kamran *Mirza*. He was received politely by Muhammad Shah who, however, declared that he would not be satisfied until he had stationed a garrison in the Herat citadel.

The Visit of Mr. McNeill to Herat.—McNeill, the British Minister, who reached the Shah's camp in April 1838, visited Herat as a mediator. After discussing matters with Kamran and the Vizier, he returned to the Persian camp, where the Shah went back on his promises and curtly refused British intervention.

The Arrival of Count Simonich at the Persian Camp.—The reason for this *volte-face* was the arrival of Count Simonich who distributed money freely among the soldiers, while his officers instructed the Persians how to erect more effective batteries. The besiegers were heartened by this definite support by Russia; and the Shah, a true son of Iran, hoped everything from the newcomer.

The Discourtesy of Muhammad Shah to the British Minister.—Relying on Russia, the Shah treated McNeill with marked discourtesy, while Colonel Stoddart, the

[1] *History of the Afghans*, p. 230.

military member of his staff, was abused by a Persian in the presence of the Vizier, who failed to rebuke him. Other incidents aggravated the position, and finally the Shah wrote a letter in which he accused the British Minister of attacking the sovereign independent rights of the King of Kings.

McNeill's demands for reparation and satisfaction having been refused, he broke off relations and left the Persian camp in June. Upon reaching Shahrud, he received instructions from Lord Palmerston to express to the Shah the strongest disapproval of Her Majesty's Government at his attitude and to state that the occupation of Herat would be regarded as a hostile act by Great Britain. Finally he was to inform the Shah that the island of Kharak had been occupied by British troops.

The General Assault on Herat.—On June 24 a general assault, organized by the Russian General Berowski, was delivered at five different points of the city. At four of these the enemy attacks were repulsed. At the fifth, however, a storming column attacking with courage and dash carried the ditch and other defences — and Herat lay open to the besiegers.

Pottinger saves Herat.—The discouraged Afghans were retreating by twos and threes and Yar Muhammad, his heart having failed him, was fleeing. But Pottinger seized the unwilling Vizier by his arm, reviled him as a coward and dragged him forward to the breach. Finally, the indomitable British officer was rewarded by seeing the frenzied Vizier belabour the retreating Afghans, who, fleeing from his blows, rushed on the Persian stormers. They, in their turn, seized with panic, abandoned the position.[1] Herat was saved. The losses on both sides were severe. Berowski was killed, while Samson, who commanded a regiment of Russian deserters, was wounded. But, owing to the severity of the crisis, there was no exultation in Herat, where Yar Muhammad failed

[1] This episode reminds me of a Chinese general who, when his troops were retreating from the warlike Nepalese in a battle, turned his guns on his own men. Thereupon fleeing from the gunfire, they frantically rushed on the Nepalese and drove them into a river in their rear, where most of them were drowned. The Chinese thus won a complete victory.

to recover his *moral*, while the Persians were equally dispirited. In both cases supplies of all kinds had fallen short. There was famine in the city and dire hunger in the camp of the besiegers.

McNeill's Message to Shah Muhammad.—On August 11 Stoddart reached the Persian camp with instructions to inform the Shah of the decisions of the British Government. The Shah, who was utterly crestfallen by the failure of the general assault, and was much alarmed by rumours that the British had not only seized Kharak but had invaded Fars, replied to Stoddart: "We consent to the whole of the demands of the British Government. We will not go to war. Were it not for the sake of friendship, we should not relinquish the siege of Herat." On September 9, 1838, the dejected Shah mounted his horse and the baffled Persian army retired from Herat.

A Summary.—Looking back on these stirring events, British opinion, swayed by the valour of the Hero of Herat,[1] is undoubtedly liable to be prejudiced against the action of the Russian Minister on this occasion. But justice demands us to own that, during the nineteenth century, both Great Britain and Russia were approaching Afghanistan from different directions and that, while Russian officers and money supported the Shah on this occasion, it was a British officer whose courage and advice saved Herat. To quote Swinburne:

> Things gained, are gone,
> But great things done — endure.

From the larger point of view Great Britain had triumphed over Russia's attempt to push her Persian protégé into the heart of Afghanistan. That peril had been averted and the position demanded that the new situation that had been created should be carefully re-examined from every point of view by British statesmen.

[1] Maud Diver has written two admirable historical novels under the titles of *The Hero of Herat* and *The Judgment of the Sword*, both of which I have read with deep interest.

END OF VOL. I

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