

THE HEART OF ASIA

A HISTORY OF RUSSIAN TURKESTAN
AND THE CENTRAL ASIAN KHANATES
FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES

BY

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WITH 19 ILLUSTRATIONS FROM SKETCHES BY VERESTCHAGIN
NUMEROUS PHOTOGRAPHS AND 2 MAPS

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INTRODUCTION

A TIME when Russia's movements in the East are being watched by all with such keen interest seems a fitting one for the appearance of a work dealing with her Central Asian possessions. "That eternal struggle between East and West," to quote Sir William Hunter's apt phrase, has made Russia supreme in Central Asia, as it has made England mistress of India: and thus it has come to pass that two of the greatest European Powers find themselves face to face on the Asiatic Continent. On the results of that contact depends the future of Asia.

Ten years have elapsed since Lord Curzon of Kedleston published his work entitled *Russia in Central Asia*, and in the interval no book on this subject has appeared in English. The intervening period has been one of change—almost of transformation—in the countries so brilliantly described by the present Viceroy of India.

The authors of the present work have visited independently the land of which they write,

and each may claim to have had exceptional facilities for studying those questions in which they were most interested.

Professor Ross is responsible for the greater part of the research in the historical chapters. He has laid under contribution many Persian, Arabic, and Russian authorities hitherto inaccessible to persons unacquainted with those languages; and has aimed at offering, for the first time in any language, a consecutive history of Central Asian events from the earliest days. His task has been lightened by the generous help of Sir Henry Howorth, M.P.; Mr. Percy Gardner, of Oxford; M. Drouin, of Paris; and especially of Mr. E. G. Browne, of Cambridge. The historical portion does not claim to be exhaustive, but rather introductory, and, such being the case, certain omissions were perhaps inevitable. Thus, for example, the engrossing subjects of Mediæval travel and Christianity in Central Asia—which have already been exhaustively dealt with by Colonel Yule and others—have been but lightly touched on. If, again, such famous men as Chingiz Khān and Tamerlane have been somewhat briefly dismissed, less known figures, such as Kutayba ibn Muslim, have been brought from comparative oblivion into a prominence more worthy the important parts they played in Central Asian history.

It has been Mr. Skrine's province to describe the mechanism of government, the development of railways and commerce, and the social life in the great cities. He owes much to the help of Monsieur P. Lessar, Chancellor of the Russian Embassy; Colonel C. G. Stewart, C.S.I., our Consul-General of Odessa; Monsieur de Klemm, of the Turkestan Staff; Colonel Brunelli, Commandant of Transcaspian Railway Rifles; and Colonel Arandarenko, District Officer of Merv. He is also indebted to the proprietors of the *Standard* and *Pioneer* for the permission to use literary matter which has already appeared in their journals. In the important matter of illustrations the authors desire to acknowledge the generous kindness which prompted M. Verestchagin to consent to the reproduction of his admirable drawings. They have to thank, too, Sir Archibald Buchan Hepburn, Bart. of Smeaton Hepburn, and Mr. A. Adam of Steeton Hall, for lending them a series of most interesting photographs of Central Asian scenes.

PART I

FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES TO THE RUSSIAN OCCUPATION



CHAPTER I

EARLIEST TIMES TO THE DEATH OF ALEXANDER

THE history of Central Asia is that of the cradle of mankind. He who seeks to evolve it from the mass of nebulous tradition is brought into contact with the traces of widely diverse nationalities and religions, and must consult in turn the annals of the Iranians, Greeks, Scythians, Chinese, Turks, and Russians. We propose in the following chapters to review the principal events enacted in that portion of Central Asia which is vaguely styled Turkestan, and is bounded on the north and east by the Sir Darya and the Hindu Kush, and on the west by the Caspian Sea.

The earliest references to Turkestan that have reached us are contained in the Indian and Iranian epics, and give some colour to the theory that the Pamirs were the birthplace of the Aryan race.¹

The ancients gave the name of *Bactria* to the tract lying between the Oxus and the mountains of the Paropamisus.²

The earliest mention of Bactria³ is preserved in the

¹ The Iranian branch of the Aryans is represented in our times by the Tajiks of Turkestan. Cf. *Les Aryens au nord et au sud de l'Hindou-Kouch*, par Ch. de Ujfalvy, *passim*.

² More correctly Paropamisus. See an article on "Bactria," by E. Drouin, in the *Grande Encyclopédie*.

³ The mention of Bakhdi (= Balkh) in Fargard i. of the Avesta, is perhaps still older.

inscription of Behistūn, dating back to the sixth century B.C., in which it is included in the list of the satrapies belonging to the Persian Empire of Darius II. Cyrus I. subdued this country, and, according to Ctesias,¹ Bactria was the first of his conquests in Eastern Asia. The founder of the Persian Empire carried his arms as far as the Jaxartes (or Sīhūn), on the other side of which roamed the Massagetæ (B.C. 550), and near it he built a city called Cyropolis.² The annexation of Bactria involved that of Margiana, Khorazmia,³ and Soghdiana. From Greek sources we learn that under the rule of Darius Hystaspes (B.C. 521-492) these districts were reckoned among the Persian satrapies; although the authority of the Achæmenians was probably but slight there. It is not unlikely that all the eastern countries mentioned in the oldest Darius inscriptions as "subdued," or "rebellious," had already belonged to Cyrus, and that he ruled over Khorazmia and Soghdiana.⁴

The Persian monarchy finally fell before the overwhelming might and genius of Alexander of Macedon. In the space of four years (B.C. 334-331) he carried his victorious arms from the eastern shores of the Medi-

¹ The Greek historians, following a tradition which made the conquests of Sesostris (Rameses II.) even more extensive than they really were, maintain that this conqueror penetrated into Bactria and Scythia. Rameses II. flourished in the thirteenth century before our era. Cf. Maspero, *Hist. Anc. des Peuples de l'Orient*, p. 225. Equally fabulous is the account given by Diodorus Siculus of the conquest of Bactria by Ninus and Semiramis in B.C. 2180. Cf. E. Drouin, *loc. cit.*

² This was the most easterly town of the Persian Empire. Authorities differ as to the site, some identifying it with Ura Tepe.

³ The oases at the embouchure of the Oxus were anciently styled Khwārazm, from a Persian word signifying eastwards. They constitute the modern Khiva. Soghdiana comprises Bokhārā and Samarkand, and the nomenclature is derived from Soghd, the old name for the source of its wealth, the river known to the Greeks as the Polytimetus and to moderns as the Zarafshan.

⁴ Cf. Nöldeke, *Aufsätze zur Persischen Geschichte*, p. 23.

terranean to Persepolis, overthrowing Darius II. at Issus in B.C. 333, and again at Gaugamela¹ in B.C. 331. The latter defeat was the deathblow of the Persian monarchy. Darius fled in an easterly direction, accompanied by a still considerable army, determined if possible to enter Bactria. Alexander took and plundered Persepolis and Pasargadæ, the cradle of the Persian dynasty, and then set out in pursuit of Darius, who had reached Ecbatana, the capital of Media. But at this crisis Bessus, the governor of Bactria and commander of the contingent of that province, in conjunction with other Persian nobles, seized on the person of the king and laid him in chains. Their design was to conciliate Alexander, should he overtake them, by giving up Darius alive; while in the event of their escaping, they proposed to murder the prisoner, usurp his crown, and begin a new war.

Bessus won over the whole army by intimidation and promises, placed the fallen monarch in a covered chariot, and set out again from Ecbatana, where Alexander arrived five days later. The conqueror followed them with all possible despatch. On reaching the Caspian Straits he halted to rest his troops; but when news was brought him of the treachery of Bessus, he at once continued his march. The latter, on hearing that Alexander was rapidly overtaking him, was filled with terror, and entreated Darius to mount his horse and flee with him. The fallen emperor refused to follow a band of traitors; whereupon the conspirators, roused to fury, transfixed him with javelins, and left him weltering in his blood.

Alexander came up only a few moments after he had expired. It is on record that he lamented the "too severe a fate" of his illustrious foe, and caused his body

¹ Called the battle of Arbela, from a neighbouring city, just as the "crowning mercy" of Waterloo was in reality bestowed at a considerable distance from the town indelibly associated with it.

to be embalmed and buried with every demonstration of respect. He then set out on a fresh career of conquest, overrunning the whole country now occupied by Khorāsān, Sīstān, Belūchistān, Kandahār, and Kābulistān.

Meanwhile Bessus hastened back to his satrapy of Bactria, and assumed sovereignty under the name of Artaxerxes IV. That he was able for a brief period to hold his own was due only to the fact that Alexander wished to secure possession of other districts in Eastern Persia before advancing against Bactria and Soghdiana.

In B.C. 329 the conqueror recrossed the Hindu Kush. The first town in the Bactrian valley which he came upon was Drapsaca (corresponding with modern Andarab), where he made a halt of a few days. Thence with an army of 25,000 men he took Aornos (Gori or Khulum) and Bactria (Balkh). Bessus, at the head of a small body of men who remained faithful,—for on hearing of the approach of Alexander many thousands of his Bactrians abandoned him,—crossed the Oxus, burning all the boats which he had made use of, and withdrew to Nautaca.¹

Alexander did not wait to replace the boats, but crossed the river with his whole army on skins and sacks stuffed with straw.

The timidity of Bessus had probably disgusted his few remaining followers, who now turned against him. His chief confidant Spitamenes seized and led him bound before Alexander, who sent him to Ecbatana to be judged and executed as a traitor by the Persians.

Alexander next turned towards Marcanda (Samar-kand), the capital of Soghdiana, which he took. Placing therein a considerable garrison, he laid waste the surrounding country. Thence he advanced to the banks of

¹ According to Grigorieff, this means the district lying between the Oxus and Shahrīsabz.

the river Jaxartes or Sîhûn, the Sir Darya of our days, which he believed to be the Tanais, or Don.

The point at which he reached the Jaxartes is probably the site of the modern Khojend: there he determined to build a town, but the execution of his design was retarded by a rebellion of the Soghdians and the Bactrians. The natives also overpowered the garrisons which he had established in seven different towns on the banks of the Jaxartes, the most important of which was Cyropolis. Alexander crushed the rebels and re-established his authority on the Jaxartes in the course of a few days.

At this juncture he received news of two serious events. The Sacæ, or Scythians, had collected an army on the opposite bank of the river; while Spitamenes, in whom, owing to his past conduct, he had placed reliance, was besieging the Macedonian garrison left at Marcanda. Alexander despatched a considerable force against Spitamenes, while he himself turned towards the Jaxartes, on the left bank of which he built a city in the space of seventeen days, calling it Alexandria according to his custom. It was surrounded by a wall 60 stadia¹ in circumference. Hemmed in as he now was by enemies on all sides, and weakened by sickness, he stood in great need of that magnificent self-confidence which is the birthright of conquerors. Moreover, his army was becoming disheartened, and was disinclined to attempt the passage of the river in the teeth of an enemy drawn up in battle array on the opposite bank. But he was daunted by no difficulty or danger. After completing his new capital he ordered the construction of a multitude of rafts, on

¹ The stadium was 600 feet in length; but, as the foot varied greatly in ancient time, this measure of length was never certain. The "great stadium," otherwise known as the Alexandrian or Egyptian, was .12 of a geographical mile.

which he carried his whole army in safety, fell on the Scythians, and put them to utter rout. They recognised the uselessness of further resistance, and sent envoys to announce their submission.

Meanwhile the division which had been sent to relieve the garrison of Marcanda had been annihilated by Spitamenes in the valley of the Polytimetus, or Zarafshan. On hearing of this disaster Alexander set out in haste for Marcanda, which he reached in four days. Spitamenes on the first news of his approach fled into Bactria. Alexander started in pursuit, but, despairing of overtaking him, turned back and laid waste the whole valley.

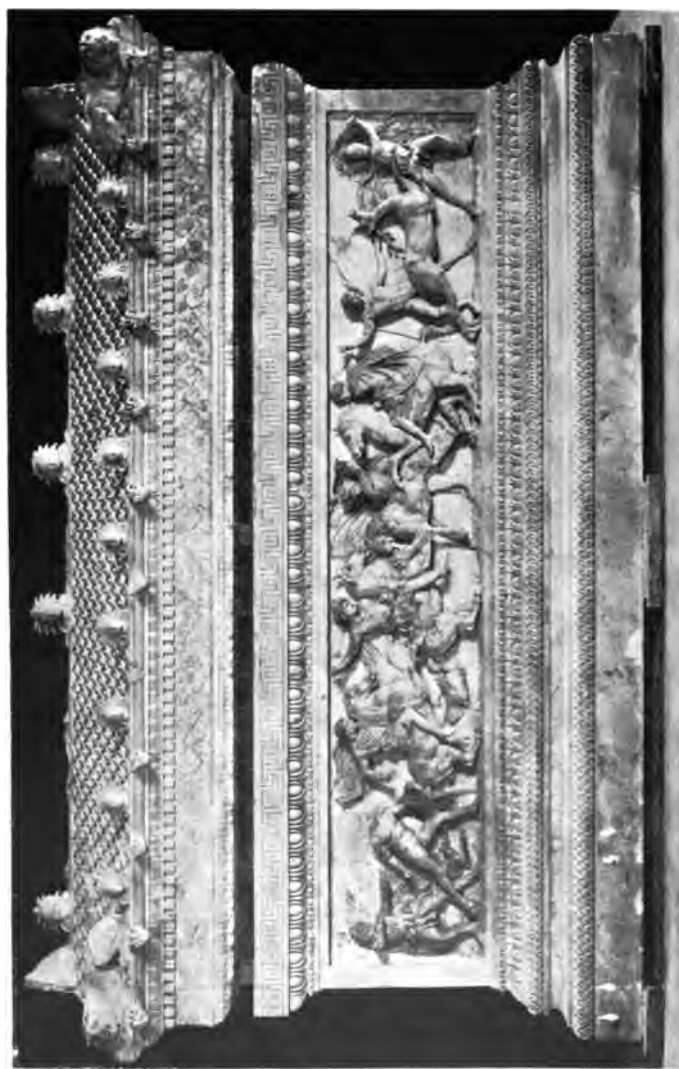
He took up his winter quarters in Zariaspa.¹ During this winter (B.C. 329–328) he received reinforcements from Greece of 19,000 men, which enabled him to overrun Margiana in the following spring. There remained now but one stronghold unsubdued, namely, Petra Oxiana,² which was provisioned for two years, and defended by a Soghdian named Arimazes.³ It finally capitulated, and its brave defender, together with his relatives and the principal nobility, were crucified by the exasperated conqueror.

Alexander established two fortresses south of the town of Margiana or Merv, corresponding with the modern Sarakhs and Meruchak. He next turned eastwards into Bactria, and on his way established four more strongholds, on the sites of the modern Meimena, Andakūy, Shaburgān, and Saripul. From Bactria he

¹ Grigorieff suggests the identification of this place with the old town of Baykand, or with Hezārasp, in the Khorasmian oasis.

² It may perhaps be identified with Kalāt-i-Nādiri to the north-east of Meshed, called also the "Soghdian Rock." The famous Roxana, whom Alexander soon afterwards married, was the daughter of a certain Oxyartes, who was among the captives taken with this fort.

³ Rollin, *Ancient History*, v. 210. See also Quintus Curtius.



SO-CALLED SARCOPHAGUS OF ALEXANDER

PRESERVED IN CONSTANTINOPLE

returned to Marcanda, whence he probably made several expeditions into the surrounding country.¹

His old enemy Spitamenes, after repeatedly attacking the Macedonian garrisons in Soghdia and Bactria, was at length killed by a band of nomads, and his head was sent to Alexander. Having now entirely subdued Soghdiana, Alexander retired for the winter to Nautaca. It was at this time that the tragic death of Cleitus occurred at the hands of the master whom he had loved and served so well.

In B.C. 327 Alexander set out on the conquest of India, leaving in Bactria a contingent of 10,000 foot and 3000 cavalry for the maintenance of order.

His career has left an indelible impression on the Oriental mind, which is slow to grasp new ideas, but extremely tenacious of them when formed. He is associated throughout Islam with the "Two Horned" (Zulkarnayn) of the Koran, and his exploits are the daily theme of professional story-tellers in the market-places of Central Asia.

¹ He may, for example, have visited Iskander Kul, a lake which to this day bears his name.

CHAPTER II

BACTRIANS AND PARTHIANS

AT the epoch of Alexander's death the satrapy of Bactria and Soghdiana was held by his general, Amyntas. The death of the young conqueror was the signal for a mutiny among the Macedonian soldiers who had remained in that country, which was, however, immediately put down. Amyntas was removed from his satrapy and superseded by Philippus of Elymeus, who, within the space of a year, was appointed to Parthia and succeeded by Stasanor.¹

The latter held his post until B.C. 301, when these provinces passed into the hands of another of Alexander's generals, Seleucus I. (Nicator), who since B.C. 312 had been in virtual possession of the greater part of his late master's conquered possessions.² Hitherto the allegiance of Bactria had been of a doubtful character—but it was now finally established.

In 305 he entered on a campaign against Chandra Gupta, a powerful Indian king who was endeavouring to regain the realms conquered by Alexander.

¹ Cf. Gutschmid, *Geschichte Irans*, p. 22.

² In B.C. 327 Seleucus I. had been placed in charge of Syria and the East, and of Babylon—to which, with the aid of Antigonos, he added Susiana. In 316, owing to a quarrel with Antigonos, he fled to Egypt, but in 312 he re-entered Babylon. The era of the Seleucidæ dates from this event. Seleucus extended his dominions as far as the Oxus and the Indus. Not till 306 did he officially adopt the title of king. Gutschmid, *op. cit.* p. 24.

At his hands Seleucus suffered a crushing defeat, in consequence of which he was obliged to abandon all the territory between the Indus and the Paropamisus except Alexandria of the Caucasus.¹ This was the first dismemberment of the gigantic empire. The terrible civil war which began immediately after the death of Alexander lasted, almost without interruption, for forty-two years, when the Macedonians were at last compelled to renounce all hopes of ruling the world.

In B.C. 280 Seleucus was assassinated by one of his officers, and was succeeded by Antiochus I. In B.C. 256, under the rule of Antiochus II., Diodotus, known as "Governor of the thousand cities of Bactria," threw off his allegiance and assumed sovereignty, thus founding the Græco-Bactrian kingdom.² Polybius³ tells us that Diodotus was superseded by Euthydemus, who was in the enjoyment of power at the time of Antiochus the Great's expedition to the East—about B.C. 208.

Euthydemus was defeated by Antiochus, but appealed to his victor's generosity, and pointed out the grave danger that would arise if he were obliged to call in the aid of the Scythians, who were already hovering on the Chinese frontier of his dominions.⁴ Antiochus finally agreed to acknowledge his independence.

In B.C. 250 a certain Arsaces, who seems by his coins to have been the chief of a band of Dahæ Scythians dwelling near the Oxus, overthrew Andragoras, nominally satrap of Parthia, and set himself up as king of Parthia.⁵

¹ Cf. E. Drouin, *loc. cit.*

² Diodotus seems to have prepared his subjects for this change of masters by issuing coins of the type struck by Antiochus II., but bearing his own portrait. Cf. Gardner, *Greek and Scythian Coins*, p. 20.

³ *Hist.* x. *ad fin.* xi. 34.

⁴ Gardner, *Greek and Scythian Coins*, p. 21.

⁵ Cf. Justin, xii. 4: "Parthis deinde domitis prefectus his statuitur ex nobilis Persarum Andragoras: inde postea originem Parthorum reges habuere."

He was the founder of the famous dynasty of the Arsacidæ. As Mr. Gardner¹ observes, the "so-called history of Parthia is really the history of Central Asia under the Arsacidæ."

After a reign of two years he was killed in battle, leaving his kingdom to his brother Tiridates, who was the real founder of the Parthian power. The fifth king of this dynasty was Mithridates (B.C. 190), who extended his conquests to such a degree that, according to Justin, his sway included the Himalayas and the Euphrates.² He also compelled Eucratides, the powerful king of Bactria, who had come to the throne about B.C. 170, to cede certain districts of his kingdom.

After a glorious reign he died about B.C. 140, and was succeeded by his brother Phraates.³ The Syrian Empire of the Seleucidæ was fast falling to pieces, and Parthia was never again invaded by the Greeks. But a more terrible foe was approaching from the East,⁴ for it now came into collision with a Scythian band, called "Su" or "Se" in the Chinese annals, which in the second century B.C. had overrun the provinces bordering the Jaxartes. They are identical with the Sacæ of classical writers, and were afterwards known in Upper India as the Sakas. Phraates⁵ summoned a band of these savages to aid him against the Syrian Antiochus. Arriving at the scene of action too late to be of service in the campaign, they turned against him, defeated his army and slew him.

He was succeeded by his nephew Artabanus II., who

¹ Parthian Coinage, *Numismata Orientalia*, vol. i. p. 2. Strabo, xi. 9. 2.

² Justin, xii. 6: "Imperiumque parthorum a monte Caucaso multis populis indicionem redactis usque flumen Euphratem protulit."

³ *Ibid.* xlii. 1.

⁴ Gardner, *ibid.* p. 6.

⁵ Gardner, *ibid.* p. 6.

after a brief reign fell in battle against the Thogari,¹ mentioned by Strabo as one of the four great Saka tribes.² His son Mithridates II., justly distinguished by the appellation "Great," revived the fading glories of the Parthian Empire. He commenced his reign by administering several crushing defeats to the Sakas, from whom he wrested the greater portion of Bactria. But he was destined to meet a foe more worthy of his steel, and finally to submit after a lifelong struggle. The Romans had entered on the career of foreign conquest which seems inevitable in the case of a powerful republic. Greece was theirs, and they had planted their eagles in Asia Minor.

Between B.C. 88 and 63 Mithridates waged three wars of extreme ferocity against the future conquerors of the world, and inspired them with a dread which they had not felt since the invasion of Hannibal.³ Not till the latter year did this great monarch acknowledge the supreme might of Rome, and then his indomitable spirit forbade him to sink to the condition of tributary. Defeated by Pompey on the Euphrates, he fled to the Caucasian Bosphorus,⁴ and was planning fuller resistance when the rebellion of his son rendered his schemes nugatory. He slew himself in despair, leaving a reputation which still echoes in the Crimea and Northern Caucasus.

From the period down to A.D. 226 the history of Parthia is one of continual struggle and crime, which finally exhausted the emperor's strength and rendered it an easy prey to a Roman invader.

¹ See Note 1 at p. 6 of Chap. iii.

² Strabo, xi. 8. 2.

³ This sentiment finds many echoes in Latin literature. Cf. *Odes* and *Epistles* of Horace, *passim*. It is curious to note the identity between the tactics of the Parthians and those of the hordes of Chingiz and Tímür. The usual charge of bad faith is brought by the Romans against their terrible enemies.

⁴ The Straits of Yenekale.

CHAPTER III

THE HUNS AND THE YUÉ-CHI

IT is to Chinese sources that we must turn for an account of the tribes which overthrew Græco-Bactrian rule, and were a constant thorn in the side of the Parthian Empire. These sources, with faint sidelights thrown on an obscure period by allusions to be found in classic authors, enable us to bridge a gap of several centuries replete with events which exercised a lasting influence on the history of Central Asia.

The Chow dynasty ruled from B.C. 1122 to B.C. 250.¹ After its fall China split up into a vast number of nearly independent principalities, and the reigning sovereign enjoyed but little power. The Tsin succeeded in gaining the foremost rank as feudatories, and finally restored the authority of the central power. Their aim was not achieved without a desperate struggle with their rivals. In the course of the resulting civil war Tsin Chi Hwang-ti began his reign. He was the Louis XI. of the Chinese monarchy, and brought force and stratagem by turns to bear on the task of restoring the imperial prestige.²

¹ The three great reformers Lao-tse, Kung-fu-tse (Confucius), and Meng-tse (Mencius) flourished under the princes of this dynasty.

² The greatest calamity which this ruthless despot inflicted on his country was the wholesale destruction of literature which he ordered, in view of keeping his people in ignorance. This atrocious measure was attended by the slaughter of many learned men. Cf. Legge, *Analects of Confucius*, p. 6.

When he found himself master at home, he turned his attention to the task of protecting his frontier from aggressors. Of these, the Hiung-nu, a Tartar tribe whose habitat was Eastern Mongolia, were the most troublesome. He carried the war into the enemy's camp by despatching an army across the great Gobi Desert, with orders to establish a strong place at Hami.¹ In B.C. 250 he commenced a work which had a more lasting effect in repressing their invasion. This was the Great Wall of China, which starts from the Shan-hi Pass and ends at the Chin-Yü barriers, a distance of not less than 1500 miles. The Hiung-nu, like their kinsmen the Mongols of Chingiz and of Timūr, fought on horseback, and their plan of campaign was simply a succession of raids followed by speedy retreats. This stupendous barrier intimidated them, and turned westwards the tide of their migration. Thus the Great Wall, which it is the fashion to decry as a monument of misplaced labour, was a most important factor in the history of Central Asia. At this epoch the Sakas were settled in Hexapolis, to the east of the Pamirs; while the Usuns dwelt on the southern side of Lake Lob, separated from the Sakas by the Uighurs. About B.C. 300 the empire of the *Yué-Chi*,² who were a branch of the Tung-nu, or Eastern Tartars, extended most probably from the Muztagh Mountains on the north to the Kuen-lun Mountains on the south, and from the Upper Hoang-ho in Shan-si on the east to Koché and Khotan on the west.³

About B.C. 200 a war broke out between the Tung-nu and the Hiung-nu (the Western Tartars or Huns), their neighbours. Mothé, the chief of these latter, falling on

¹ Also called Khamil, a town about 700 miles east of Kulja.

² According to Richthofen, the Yué-Chi were of Tibetan stock, but Vambéry and Gerard de Realle assert that they were Turks. Their nidus was to the north-east of Tangut.

³ Cunningham, *Survey of India*, vol. ii. p. 62.

the Eastern Tartars unawares, utterly defeated them and drove the Yué-Chi from their kingdom. The latter fled to the banks of the Ili River, while Mothé pushed his conquests as far as the Volga on the west and the border provinces of China eastwards. The Emperor Kao-tsu (B.C. 202-194), founder of the famous Han dynasty, who had achieved the subjugation of the whole of China, was alarmed at the progress of Mothé, and marched against him. His troops were, however, surrounded by Mothé's colossal hordes in the north of the province of Shan-si, and only escaped destruction by the employment of a ruse.¹ On the departure of the Chinese army Mothé set out for Tartary. For upwards of fifty years the power of Hiung-nu sustained no check. They continued to press down on the Yué-Chi, who, after suffering a further crushing defeat, broke into separate hordes. The lesser division, or "Little Yué-Chi," passed into Tibet. The "Great Yué-Chi's" first movement was westwards to the banks of the Ili, but finding the Usun too strong for them, they wandered in a southerly direction, and finally descended upon Kāshghar, Yarkand, and Khotan, whence they displaced the Sakas (B.C. 163). The latter, on their expulsion from Soghdiana, invaded Bactria, and from this period until the fall of the Græco-Bactrian kingdom the Greeks had to deal with both Sakas and Parthians. It would seem that the latter were alternately friends and foes. This intercourse possibly accounts for the Parthian characteristics found on the early Saka coins of India.²

The Sakas were driven towards the Pamirs and the Tien-shan. One branch of them fled to Zungaria, while

¹ Cf. d'Herbelot, *Bib. Orient.* vol. vi. p. 10; and Boulger, *Hist. of China*, p. 11.

² Cf. Rapson, Indian Coins, in *Grundriss der Indo-Arischen Philologie* p. 7.

the majority remained in Hexapolis and intermixed with the Uighūrs, who had been for a long period masters of that country. A third branch turned their steps towards the upper valleys of the Yarkand Darya. Some of these fugitives established themselves in the little Iranian States of Serikūl and Shugnān, where appreciable traces of their language still survive.¹ Others crossed the Karakorum, and invaded the north-east of India.

At this epoch the Chinese obtained a glimpse of the position of Western Asia through the medium of prisoners taken from the Hiung-nu. From them they learned that the Yué-Chi had suffered defeat at the hands of the Huns, and been compelled to migrate far from their ancient abode. They had, however, become very powerful in Bactria and Transoxiana, and had conquered Ta-hia (Khorāsān), establishing themselves finally there in spite of the Parthian resistance. The Emperor Wu-ti eagerly desired an alliance with the Yué-Chi against their common enemy the Hiung-nu. With this view he sent his general Chang-Kien on an embassy to the prince, accompanied by a suite of a hundred attendants. The envoy, however, had the misfortune to fall into the hands of the Huns while traversing their territory, and escaped only after a ten years' imprisonment. On joining the Yué-Chi, he found them employed in driving the Sakas out of Soghdiana. He accompanied them on a victorious expedition, and then returned to China, with two followers, sole survivors of his cortege. The emperor expressed his appreciation of the intelligence brought by Chang-Kien regarding Central Asian events, by elevating him to an important post. These events led to the establishment of direct commercial intercourse between China and the West, which, however, the Huns did their utmost to interrupt.

A collation of the Chinese annals, the classic

¹ Cf. Ujfalvy, *Les Aryens au nord et au sud de l'Hindou-Kouch*, p. 64.

authors, and the coins which have come down to us, would render it tolerably certain that the Greeks lost their hold on Soghdiana in B.C. 163; that a little later they were deprived of Bactria by the Sakas, and of Margiana by the Parthians. From this period their dominion was limited to the southern slopes of the Indian Caucasus. That the Græco-Bactrian Empire had attained a high degree of natural civilisation, and, indeed, of artistic culture, is evidenced by the purity of design and the excellence of workmanship displayed by the later coins.

The Bactrians displaced by the Sakas fled eastward, and settled in the confines of Bokhārā, and the surrounding countries.¹ But the dominion of their opponents in Bactria was not destined to be of long duration, for in B.C. 120 the Yué-Chi, who had already overrun the ancient territory of the Sakas, began to pour into Bactria.

After expelling the Sakas, and the remnant of the Græco-Bactrians,² the Yué-Chi settled in that part of Central Asia which is named Tokhāristān, after their tribal appellation, and which included Balkh, Kunduz, Hisār, Bolor, Wakhān, and Badakhshān. Meanwhile the Sakas retreated southwards, and occupied in turn Kiphin, Soghdiana, Arachosia (Kandahār), and Drangiana (Sīstān).³

Their invasion of India was directly due to the usurpation of their country by the Yué-Chi. The latter

¹ A distinctly Greek type survives to the present time in the mercantile and settled agricultural population of Bokhārā, and the neighbouring khanates, who are known as Tājiks.

² Strabo (xi. 8) tells us that the Greek power in Bactria was overthrown by the Asii, Pasiani, Tokhari, and Sakarauli. The first two names are probably identical, and represent the royal family of the Tokhari. They may be identified with the Asiani of Trogus Pompeius. The Sakarauli are the Saranœ of Trogus, and correspond with the Chinese *Sé* or *Su*, *i.e.* the Sakas. Cf. Cunningham, *Survey of India*, vol. ii. p. 65.

³ Cf. *Journal Asiatique, Série Nouvelle*, vii. p. 162, 1896.

parcelled Bactria out among their five clans.¹ Each had its own capital, but the only Yué-Chi headquarters which has been identified is Bamian, at the foot of the northern slope of the Hindu Kush.

The partition continued in force for nearly a century, during which repeated collisions occurred between the Yué-Chi and the Parthians. In B.C. 30 the chief of one of the clans, the Kwei-shuang, subdued the rest, and assumed sovereignty over the whole race. They became thenceforward known by the name of the conquering clan, which in course of time was modified to Kushan, and appears so inscribed on their coins. The recent overthrow of their most persistent enemies the Hiung-nu rendered the more easy the task of consolidating their power, for in the year B.C. 71 the reigning Chinese emperor had administered a crushing defeat on the Huns, who were in B.C. 60 finally enrolled into the Chinese Empire. They thus became masters of all those countries which go to form Turkestan, Eastern Iran, and Afghanistan. The Yué-Chi, or Kushans, relieved of this incubus, turned their arms towards the south, crossed the Paropanisus, and overran Kabul, which belonged in part to the Arsacidæ, and in part to the Sakas, driving the latter out of their kingdom of Kipchin.²

At the dawn of the Christian era the Kushans were a foremost power in Central Asia. The Romans deigned to treat with them as an established empire. Mark Antony, for example, sent ambassadors to Bactria, whose chiefs (all Kushans) were represented at Rome by an envoy under Augustus; while later, in the reign of Trojan and Adrian, they sent ambassadors to solicit an alliance against the Parthians.³

¹ Cf. Colonel Yule, Introduction to Wood's *Oxus*, p. xxv.

² Identified with Kandahâr.

³ Cf. Drouin's excellent article on "Bactria" in the *Grande Encyclopédie*.

From Chinese sources we learn that in the year A.D. 98 their general Panchao¹ was received during an expedition to the Caspian by the Yué-Chi, and that they recognised the imperial sovereignty by annual presents.

Their power was not destined to endure for long. By the end of the third century A.D. they had lost most of their conquests in the south of Paropamisus, including Kashmir. They were finally expelled from Bactria itself by the Ephthalites, or White Huns, about the year A.D. 430.

The last Kushan king of whom we find a trace in history was named Kitolo. He conquered Gāndhāra, or Kandahār; but was forced to return to his own dominion by an irruption of White Huns. The son whom he left in charge of the new province established his capital at Peshāwar.² The name of the founder of the Little Yué-Chi, as they were afterwards called, survives in the title of Shah Kator, chief of Chitral.

The Ephthalites, or White Huns, who, as we have seen, in the year A.D. 430 became possessed of Bactria, were in all probability of the same stock as the Yué-Chi. They are known to history under a great variety of names, such as Naphthalites, Hayāthila, and Yetha. This last is the name by which they are known to the Chinese, who always most carefully distinguish between the Yetha and the Yué-Chi.³ The Yetha were of Tartaric origin, and are described as having anciently lived to the north of the Great Wall, and to have advanced southwards about the first century of our era. They then came

¹ General Cunningham states, without quoting any authority, that the Yué-Chi waged war with the Chinese in Khotan during this year (*Survey of India*, ii. 63).

² General Cunningham, *Survey*, vol. ii. p. 64.

³ This point is worthy of note in that eminent scholars used to maintain that the names were practically identical. Cf. Vivien de St. Martin, *Les Huns Blancs*, 1849, p. 64.

under the domination of the Juen-Juen,¹ but emerging from this, they ultimately became masters of an empire which extended to the borders of Persia, and comprised Kiphin, Kharashar, Kāshghar, and Khotan. The arrival of the Yetha in Transoxiana about the year 425 of our era was the result of those migrations of Tartar peoples which took place in Central Asia at the beginning of the fifth century. About 360 the Juen-Juen advancing westwards became masters of all Tartary.² One of their kings, Tulun by name, who reigned at the beginning of the fifth century, carried his conquest from Corea to the confines of Europe. It was owing to these conquests that the various Hunnish tribes, driven from their ancient habitats by these new invaders, swept into Transoxiana in 425 (*i.e.* the Ephthalites), and into Europe, under Attila, in 430. On the appearance of the White Huns in the Oxus districts that country had been for five centuries in the possession of the Yué-Chi, or Kushans, as we have seen above, and they occupied the land for upwards of 130 years (425 to 557), during which period they were in close contact with the Sāsānides of Persia. The Kushans did not, however, immediately disappear from Central Asia, for we find references after this date in Chinese authors to small Kushan principalities in the Upper Oxus and Farghāna.

¹ These notes on the Ephthalites are taken principally from M. Drouin's excellent *Mémoire sur les Huns Ephthalites dans leur rapports avec les rois Perses Sassanides*, privately printed in Louvain, 1895.

² Their chiefs originally bore the title of Shen-Yü, which in the reign of Tulun (A.D. 402) was changed to *Khākān*, an ancient title which we now encounter for the first time in history.

CHAPTER IV

THE SĀSĀNIDES, THE EPHTHALITES, AND THE TURKS

THE history of Central Asia during the earlier centuries of our era is bound up in that of Persia, and its course was moulded by the fortunes of the great dynasty called after the grandfather of its founder, the Sāsānide, which governed the empire from A.D. 219 until the Arab invasion more than four centuries later. In the third century (A.D. 200) of our era the condition of Persia resembled that of France before the power of feudalism was broken by the crafts and iron will of Louis XI. The authority of the reigning dynasty was little more than nominal, and the land was parcelled out among a host of petty tribes whose mountain fastnesses enabled them to bid defiance to the Parthian dynasty. Among the followers of one of their rabble chieftains was a certain Pāpak, a native of a village lying to the east of Shīrāz. With the aid of a son named Ardashīr, he overthrew his master, and usurped authority over the province of Fars. Ardashīr's bold and restless character appears to have inspired his father with some distrust, for on his death he left his dominions to another son, named Shāpūr. The succession was contested by Ardashīr, but when he was about to enforce his claim with the sword, Shāpūr died, in all probability by poison.¹ Ardashīr's thirst for

¹ The best accounts of the Sāsānide dynasty are to be found in Nöldeke's admirable translation of the portion of Tabari's annals dealing with that period

empire now led him to attack his neighbouring potentates. One after another succumbed to his genius; and he became master, in turn, of Kirmān, Susiana, and other eastern States. Then finding himself in a position to strike a blow for the sovereignty of Persia, he bade defiance to Ardavān,¹ the last of the Parthian line. A decisive battle was fought between them, probably in Babylonia, in the year 218. Ardavān was slain, and Ardashīr was crowned "king of kings" on the field. His capital was Istakhr, but he chose Ctesiphon (or Madā'in) as a residence. How far Ardashīr's personal conquests actually extended, it is hard to define. Oriental historians have greatly exaggerated the extent of his empire, which they allege to have stretched from the Euphrates on one side, to Khwārazm on the other. Ardashīr was a wise and just ruler, and his career can be compared only with Napoleon's. Without the prestige of birth or fortune he won an empire, and was able to maintain order in extended realms which had for centuries been a prey to anarchy. He died in 241, and was succeeded by his son Shāpūr I. For the first ten years of his reign he was, like his father, engaged in chronic warfare with Rome, which did not terminate till 260, when the Emperor Valerian fell into his hands, dying afterwards in captivity. According to extant coins, Shāpūr I. made himself master of the non-Iranian lands to the east of Khorāsān, and to him is ascribed the conquest of Nīshāpūr,² and Shāpūr in Northern Persia. In 272 he was succeeded by his son Hormuz, who con-

—*Geschichte der Araber und Perser zur Zeit der Sāsāniden*, Leyden 1879, and his *Aufsätze zur Persischen Geschichte*, Leipzig, 1887. From these sources we have derived most of our details, and will therefore give no further references.

¹ Or Artabanus.

² Some authorities maintain that this city was founded by Shāpūr II. about 340.

tinued the struggle with the Romans, in which Syria, Asia Minor, and Armenia were alternatively subjects of contention.

The succeeding reigns have little bearing on history until we come to that of Bahrām Gūr,¹ which was signalled by a persecution of the Christians,² and a recommencement of warfare with Rome. Bahrām Gūr was worsted in the latter, and entered into a treaty with the Western Empire, which bound the contracting parties to tolerate the Christian and Zoroastrian cults respectively. The Romans further undertook to pay an annual subsidy towards the maintenance of the fortifications on the Dariel Pass³ in the Caucasus, by which both kingdoms were protected from the inroads of the wild hordes of the North. Bahrām took advantage of his truce with the Romans to make an expedition into Bactria,⁴ where he encountered the Ephthalites, or White Huns, whom, according to Persian accounts, he utterly defeated. We are told that the Khākān⁵ of the "tribes of Transoxiana," being informed that Bahrām and his court were immersed in luxury and had entirely lost their martial spirit, ventured to cross the Oxus and laid waste the whole of Khorāsān.⁶ He was soon undeceived, for Bahrām, at the head of seven thousand men, fell upon the Turks by night,

¹ *Gūr* means "wild ass." The king, who is one of the favourites of Persian tradition, received this *sobriquet* on account of his passion for hunting wild asses. He usurped the crown.

² The Sāsānides were fire-worshippers, disciples of Zoroaster.

³ This pass is traversed by the famous Georgian Military Road connecting Vladikavkaz with Tiflis.

⁴ Transoxiana was never included in the kingdom of the Sāsānides; the possessions of Achemenides stretched far farther east than those of the Sāsānians.

⁵ Cf. p. 21, note 2, *supra*.

⁶ Here we follow Malcolm (*History of Persia*), who bases his account on those of various well-known Persian historians, such as Mirkhwānd and Khwāndamīr.

and put them utterly to rout, the Khākān perishing by the king's own hand. Bahrām then crossed the Oxus and concluded a peace with his eastern neighbours.¹ Bahrām died in 438, and was succeeded by his son Yezdijerd II. During his reign of nineteen years his attention was engrossed by Armenia and by Khorāsān, where he suffered many reverses at the hands of the Ephthalites. On his death in A.D. 457 his two sons, Hormuz III. and Pīrūz, became rival claimants to the throne. Their father, who preferred the former, but feared a quarrel between the brothers, had given Pīrūz the governorship of a distant province, Sīstān. Pīrūz, on learning that his brother had seized the throne and won the support of the nobility, fled across the Oxus, and implored the chief Khākān² of the Ephthalites to espouse his cause. The Huns consented, and sent an army thirty thousand strong to his aid.³ With this accession of strength, Pīrūz invaded Persia, and defeated his brother in a pitched battle. Hormuz III. thus lost his crown, and was put to death together with three of his nearest relatives. The reign of his successful rival was fraught with useful domestic measures. He had to contend against a famine which lasted for seven years; but, so prompt and effectual were the means adopted to combat it, that, if Tabari is to be believed, there was not a single death from starvation.⁴ Pīrūz's foreign policy was by no

¹ We are told that when Bahrām Gūr returned from this expedition to his capital, Ctesiphon, he appointed his brother Governor of Khorāsān, designating Balkh as his residence.

² According to the Persian historians, the Khākān was named Khush-Nawāz. Nöldeke, however, disapproved of this reading, the invention he thinks of Firdawsi, and employs that of Akh-Shunwar.

³ Tabari tells us that Pīrūz had previously ceded to the Khākān the important frontier town of Tālikān.

⁴ Some of the means would hardly commend themselves to modern economists. Pīrūz remitted taxes and large sums from the treasury; but he also compelled the rich to feed their poorer neighbours from these taxes.

means so praiseworthy : though he owed his crown to the ready help of the Khākān of the Ephthalites, we find him in 480 freely attacking his benefactor's son and successor. This apparent ingratitude is ascribed by Joseph Stylites to the intrigue of the Romans, whose jealousy of the power of Persia induced them to incite the Huns to attack her eastern frontier. Nöldeke suggests as the cause of this rupture the exorbitant nature of the demands made by the Huns as the price of their assistance in placing Pīrūz on the throne. Be this as it may, the struggle was disastrous to the Persian army. After obtaining some trivial successes, Pīrūz was obliged to conclude more than one humiliating treaty with the Huns, the terms of which he did not loyally fulfil. On one occasion his son Kobād was left for two years in their hands as a hostage for the payment of a large indemnity. A little later we find Pīrūz himself a prisoner.

A crisis in his affairs came in 484, when he led an immense force against his inveterate foes, only to suffer a crushing defeat at their hands, and to lose his life ; while his daughter was taken prisoner and forced to enter the Khākān's harem. Persia now lay at the mercy of the barbarians whose hordes overran the country, drowning its civilisation in blood. From this anarchy the land was saved by the efforts of a great noble named Sukhrā, or Zermihr. At the time of the Huns' invasion he was essaying to quell one of the periodical revolts in Armenia. Hurrying back to the Persian capital with a considerable force, he established a semblance of order, and placed Balāsh, a brother of Pīrūz, on the throne. The new king bought off the White Huns, probably by undertaking to pay a yearly tribute. But his treasury was empty. He was able to attach no party in the State to his banner, and in 488 he incurred the resentment of

the all-powerful priesthood. Falling into their hands, he was deprived of his eyesight, a loss which under the Persian law incapacitated him from ruling. Balāsh was succeeded by his nephew, Kobād,¹ son of Pīrūz. Tabari tells us that before he came to power, even probably on the accession of his brother, he had fled to the Khākān for help to meet his claim. On his way he halted at Nishāpūr, and took to wife the daughter of a nobleman, who bore him a son, the famous Anūshirawān. He was kept waiting four years for the promised help, but finally, after much entreaty, the Khākān gave him the control of an army, with which he set out for Madā'in.² On reaching Nishāpūr he learnt the news of his brother's death.³ The first act of his reign was to resign the entire administration to Sukhrā, on the score of his own youth and inexperience. Finding, when he came to man's estate, that the people regarded Sukhrā as their sovereign and ignored his own ancestral claims, he determined to rid himself of a too powerful minister, and had him put to death.

When Kobād had been for ten years on the throne a false prophet arose in the person of a certain Mazdak, who taught that all men were equal, and that it was unjust that one should have more possessions or wives than another. The inference was that there should be an equal division of all property. These tenets appear at first identical with the latest plans of social ethics. But

¹ The more ancient form is *Kavadh*.

² *I.e.* Ctesiphon.

³ We are told that this made him look upon Anūshirawān as a talisman, and the interesting detail is added that the mother and the boy were conducted back to Madā'in *in a cart* as became a princess. Wheeled traffic is unknown on these roads, but Professor Nöldeke refers us to Plutarch's *Artax.* 27, where we are told that the king's wife used that means of locomotion. In recent times Europeans have taken their carriages from Meshed to Teheran on Kobād's route.

Mazdakism had a side which is not shared by the Socialistic creed. Its founder preached a life of piety and abstinence, and himself practised an extreme asceticism, refraining from the use of animal food. Kobād saw in the new cult an opportunity of eluding the grip of the nobles and clergy, who stifled his aspirations to govern as well as reign. He espoused the reformer's side with ardour,¹ and thereby hastened the anarchy which such doctrines were certain to promote. The followers of Mazdak adopted such of his principles as appealed to their unbridled lust, and ignored the religious teaching with which he sought to hold it in check. The disorders were stemmed by a combination between the nobles and the clergy, who seized and imprisoned Kobād, setting up his brother Jāmāsp in his stead. But Kobād contrived to escape from confinement, and sought shelter with old allies, the Ephthalites. With them he sojourned until 502, when he returned to Persia at the head of a large force, and overthrew his brother, thus regaining sovereignty. The remainder of Kobād's career was as stirring as the commencement had been. Hardly was he reinstated on the throne ere hostilities broke out with Rome, and then began a series of terrible conflicts which reduced the strength of both parties to the lowest ebb, and rendered them a prey to barbaric invasion.

Not until 506 was a truce concluded between the two powers; but it did not bring rest to Kobād's distracted empire. He was soon plunged into hostilities with the Huns,—whether the Ephthalites, or another branch of the race, is uncertain. The result is not recorded, but

¹ Persian historians assert that he was converted by a sham miracle, and that he continued to believe in Mazdak during the rest of his life. But his motives were probably purely political, and not based on conversion.

it must be assumed to have been favourable to his army. In 528 he was confronted with a more pressing danger than had attended his struggles with Roman legions over barbaric hordes. Mazdak's now rampant army held the land, and a reign of terror set in which threatened the existence of its institutions. Kobād at length became alive to the potency of the force for evil which he had encouraged, and the measures which he adopted for the suppression were drastic and effectual. The effort, however, proved too severe for his declining strength, and three years later he closed a chequered but not unsuccessful career.

His successor, Chosrau I., surnamed Anūshirawān "the Just," stands forth as the most illustrious figure in the annals of ancient Persia. Chroniclers agree in depicting him as a wise and benevolent ruler, and one who made his prowess reflected in distant regions. His first care was to restore order in a realm which still groaned under the curse of Mazdakism; his next to crush the Ephthalites, whose incursions into his eastern provinces had been as disastrous as those of the Roman legions into Armenia. In the meanwhile the Ephthalites were being threatened from another quarter by the Turks.

The Turks proper, that is the Tu-kiu^é of the Chinese, first appear in the history of the Sāsānides about A.D. 550. At that period the Turks were divided into two distinct khanates—(1) the Eastern Turks,¹ who possessed the vast territory between the Ural and Mongolia; and (2) the Western Turks, or Tu-kiu^é, who ruled in Central Asia from the Altai to the Jaxartes. About 550 the Khākān of the Turks, whose name was Tumen,

¹ The famous Orkhon inscriptions which have been deciphered by MM. Radloff of St. Petersburg, and V. Thomsen of Copenhagen, belong to this branch of the Turks.

being elated with successes he had gained over the Tartars,¹ made so bold as to demand in marriage the daughter of the Khākān of the Juen-Juen, Tiu-ping. On receiving an insulting refusal, Tumen at once declared war against the Juen-Juen; at the same time he married the daughter of the Chinese emperor, with whose aid he defeated Tiu-ping. Tumen then took the title of Il-khān (or khān of the people), and established his court in the mountain of Tu-kin, near the sources of the Irtish. He only enjoyed his newly acquired empire for a short time, for in the following year (A.D. 553) he died. His son Ko-lo mounted the throne, but died very shortly afterwards, and was succeeded by his illustrious brother Moka-khān, whom we find in 554 entering into relations with Anūshirawān the Just. Though he had finally crushed the Juen-Juen, and became master of their vast country, he was fearful of the superiority of the Chinese, and therefore turned his arms in a westerly direction.² The Turks now crossed the Jaxartes and entered Badakhshān, where they encountered the Ephthalites, with whom, according to Tabari, they at first dwelt in peace.

Great uncertainty prevails as to the dates and details of the campaigns undertaken by the Anūshirawān in association with the Turks against their inveterate foes. But their result is not open to question; for about the year 560 we find the territories of the White Huns divided between the allies. The Turks then became masters of Transoxiana, while the Persians took possession of Balkh and Tokhāristān. The Oxus served as the boundary between their respective spheres of influence.³ Then Bactria, which had been a perpetual

¹ De Guignes, ii. p. 374.

² Cf. De Guignes, vol. ii. p. 378.

³ Persian and Roman writers assert that Anūshirawān conquered Trans-

thorn in Persia's side, became one of its provinces, and the fate of Pirūz was fully avenged. Anūshirawān set a seal to his friendship with the Turks by espousing their chief's daughter; but the alliance did not produce lasting results. The Romans regarded with unconcealed apprehension the alliance between foes which threatened the existence of their Western Empire, and they sent frequent embassies to the Turkish Khākān with a view to detaching him from Anūshirawān. The reconciliation was partially successful, but the recurrence of disorders on his frontier led the Persian king to build the great city of Darband, to serve as a rallying point in repulsing Turkish attacks. After its completion we hear little of their troublesome neighbours, and Anūshirawān's concluding years were exempt from the troubles which had overwhelmed so many of his predecessors.

On the death of Chosrau Anūshirawān in A.D. 579, Hormuz IV., his son by the daughter of the Turkish Khākān, ascended the throne. The new reign was soon clouded by war with Rome, and his own kinsmen on the maternal side. At one period Hormuz endured simultaneous attacks from four different quarters. A Turkish prince, called by Tabari, Shāba, at the head of 300,000 warriors advanced as far as Bādghīs and Herāt. The Roman emperor, with an army of 80,000 strong, attacked Hormuz in the Syrian desert. The king of the Khazars led a large force against Darband, and finally two Arab chieftains raided the Euphrates Valley. Shāba sent Hormuz a haughty message "to see that

oxiana, but this seems most improbable. For, as Nöldeke points out (foot-note to page 159 of his *Sāsānides*), Huen-Tsang, who visited the country soon after these events, speaks only of Turkish and other barbarian States. Moreover, the State of Transoxiana at the time of the Mohammedan invasion augurs strongly against the extension of Persian rule.

his bridges and roads were in good order, for that he intended to cross Persia on his way to the Romans." The Persian monarch's reply was the despatch of a nobleman of Ray, named Bahrām Chūbīn, in command of twelve thousand picked veterans, to hinder the progress of the Turks. Bahrām advanced against them by forced marches, and surprised Shāba in his camp. The Turks were routed, and Shāba perished by an arrow from Bahrām's bow. The dead chieftain's son was taken prisoner, and sent together with 250,000 camel-loads of booty to Hormuz. The victorious general was straightway despatched to Transcaucasia to oppose the Romans; but there he met with a crushing defeat. It is not within the scope of the present work to record all the details of the extraordinary career of Bahrām Chūbīn, who is one of the favourite heroes of Persian poetry.¹ Suffice it to state that Hormuz, in an evil hour for himself, deprived the great general of his command as a punishment for his failure in the campaign against the Romans, and then drove him into a revolt which led to his own dethronement (590). His successor, Chosrau II., surnamed Parvīz "the Victorious," proved a despot of the true Oriental type. He began his reign by slaughtering an uncle Bendoe, to whose efforts he owed the throne of Persia. Another uncle called Bistām, who had stood by him at the crisis of his fate, escaped his clutches, and held out against him for six years with the aid of the Turks and people of Daylam, succumbing at length to treachery. But Parvīz was a brave and capable soldier; and at one period of his career it seemed as though Persia were destined to build up an eastern empire on the ruins of the Roman sway. In 613 he conquered Damascus, and in the following year Jeru-

¹ For a full account of his life—historical and fictitious—we refer the reader to the Appendix of Nöldeke's *Sāsāniden*, p. 474.

salem bowed its stubborn neck to the Persian yoke.¹ But a new movement was gathering force which was destined to sweep before it the effete civilisation of Persia and Byzantium.

¹ It was reconquered in 629 by Heraclius, the Byzantine emperor, who set up the Cross in the city which had first beheld the emblem of salvation; and the Feast of the Elevation of the Cross is kept on the 14th September in memory of that event.

CHAPTER V

THE RISE OF ISLĀM AND INVASIONS OF THE ARABS

AT the end of the sixth century the western shore of Arabia was inhabited by tribes of Semitic descent, who possessed a complex religion and some literary culture. The capital was Mekka, to the north of Arabia Felix,¹ an ancient city which nestled round a temple called the Ka'ba, or Cube. In this holy of holies was a black stone, probably a meteorite, which served as a tribal fetish, and attracted hosts of pilgrims from the southern provinces of the peninsula. The family who had charge of the temple belonged to the priestly tribe of Koraysh, and one of its members was the future prophet Mohammed. While a youth he gained an insight into the habits of men of various creeds, not only as an inhabitant of Mekka, whither merchants and pilgrims of widely different creeds and nationalities flocked, but as a frequent attendant on caravans during distant journeys to the north. The impression left on his mind was that the religions of the Christian and the Jew had far greater vitality than the lukewarm idolatry of his own people.²

¹ The origin of this well-known expression is curious. The designation Yemen, or the "right hand," was given by its northern neighbours to a strip on the south-eastern coast of the Red Sea. But in Arabic, as in the Latin and many other languages, the right hand is associated with good fortune. Hence by mistranslation the territory became known to the West as "The Blessed," or "Felix." It is well watered, and is better peopled than any other part of the Arabian peninsula.

² The *Kaba* is said to have contained 160 idols, each tribe having its

At the age of twenty-four he entered the service of a middle-aged widow named Khadija, who carried on a large caravan trade, and he found such favour in her eyes that she offered to become his wife. Mohammed, being by this marriage assured of a competence for life, withdrew from the world and began to cast about him for the means of raising the debased moral standard of his countrymen. The conception of a Messiah, which enabled the Hebrews to bear their many afflictions, and of the Comforter promised by Jesus, worked so strongly upon his powerful imagination that he was at length convinced that he himself was the chosen one for whom the world was waiting. Catalepsy, which frequently threw him into long trances, led his superstitious neighbours to believe that he held commune with higher powers. At the age of forty¹ Mohammed came before the Eastern world with his simple gospel: "There is but *one* God, Allah, and Mohammed is his Prophet." At first none but a few of his closest associates believed in his mission, and so much opposition did he encounter that he was obliged to flee from Mekka to the town of Medīna, 270 miles northwards. This was on the 6th of July A.D. 622, which has been taken as the starting-point of the Mohammedan era.² And fitly so, for it was the turning-point of Mohammed's great career. The once flouted visionary gained hosts of adherents in Medīna and the

separate God; and so great was the toleration in ante-Mohammedan times that on the pillars of the temples there were also to be found images of Abraham and of the Virgin and Child. In the sixth century the primitive religion had lost its old signification and had developed into fetishism.

¹ Swedenborg was fifty-eight ere he had his first vision.

² There are two popular fallacies to be noted with regard to the so-called "*Hegira*." In the first place, it should be transcribed as *Hijra*; and secondly, the word does not mean *flight*, but *separation*, for the incident to be recalled was not Mohammed's flight to Medīna—but his *separation from his family*.

surrounding country, and spared no effort to consolidate his influence by appeals to the latent fanaticism of the Arab character. He continued to utter rhapsodies which, two years after his death, were collected and divided into chapters and verses under the name of the Koran, and became the foundation of the religious and civil codes of his followers.

Mekka soon recognised his mission, and after a fierce struggle with many vicissitudes the whole of Arabia accepted Islām.¹

At the time of Mohammed's death, which took place in the 16th year of his Hijra, or A.D. 632, the creed which he had formulated was still a religious rather than a worldly power. But it had profoundly stirred the impetuous, highly strung Arab temperament, which was vaguely conscious of possessing immense hidden force, and of a boundless sphere for its exercise in the worn-out empires which bounded their peninsula. A leader alone was wanted to focus and direct the aspirations engendered by the dead Prophet's teachings, and one was found in the person of Abu Bekr, Mohammed's father-in-law and earliest convert. He was proclaimed as the Khalifa,² or successor of the Prophet, and was the first of that long line of sovereigns who, like the Tsars of our own age, wielded unquestioned spiritual and temporal power, and, like them, became prominent factors in the history of the Eastern world.

¹ "Islām" is synonymous for Mohammedanism in all Arabic-speaking countries. Its literal meaning is "resignation"—a heart-whole submission to the divine will.

² *Khalifa Rasūl Illāh* was the full title of the "Successor of the Prophet of God." The correct designation of the holder of the office is *Khalifa*, while the office itself is *Khilāfaa*. The former word has till quite lately been transcribed "Khalif," or Caliph. The self-styled successor of the Mahdi in the Soudan is, however, known to Europe under the correct designation, Khalifah.

The new-born creed soon showed its strongly militant character. Led by Khālid, a pillar of Islām who won by his prowess the title of the Sword of God, the Arabs defeated a Roman army with heavy loss, and took Damascus. In six years the whole of Syria and Palestine passed under their sway. Persia was the next object of attack. The Zoroastrians struggled long and desperately for their independence, but in 630 they suffered a crushing defeat at Nahāvend, a battle which must rank high amongst those which have influenced the current of the world's history. Yezdijerd, the last of the Sāsānian dynasty, fled through Sistān and Khorāsān to Merv. Here he found no safe asylum, for the governor sent news of his arrival to the Turks, and the Khākān advanced in person to seize so rich a prize. The fugitive became aware of the intended treachery, and concealed himself in a mill near the city. The owner received him with apparent kindness, but was tempted by the splendour of the king's accoutrements to kill him while he slept. He severed Yezdijerd's head from his body, which he cast into the mill stream.¹

The immediate results of the battle of Nahāvend were disastrous to civilisation. Persia was traversed in all directions by bands of marauding Arabs, and the miserable inhabitants suffered as severely as they had suffered at the hands of the Mazdakites. "The Caliph Othman,"² writes Gibbon,³ "promised the government of Khorāsān 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

¹ The outraged hospitality was avenged, for the murderer was torn to pieces by the mob, while the body of Yezdijerd was embalmed and buried in his ancestral tomb at Istakhr.

² He was the Prophet's son-in-law, and had been elected in A.H. 44 by a council of six as successor to the stern 'Omar, the second Caliph.

³ *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, chap. li.

standard of Mahomet was planted on the walls of Herāt, Merou, and Balkh; and the successful leader neither halted nor reposed till his foaming cavalry had tasted the waters of the Oxus." The ill-cemented power of the Caliph was more adapted for conquest than assimilation, and its area overrun by his undisciplined hordes was too vast to be held in permanent subjection. Conscious of their weakness, the Arabs spared no efforts to spread the tenets of Islām, which alone was capable of welding together communities differing widely in race, language, and customs. From this epoch dates the decline of the creed of Zoroaster throughout Persia and the countries of Central Asia. The assassination of the Caliph 'Omar by a Persian slave was the signal for a general insurrection throughout this loosely knitted empire. This was not finally quelled till A.H. 31 (652), when Ibn 'Āmir gained a victory over the Persians at Khwārazm on the Oxus, and compelled the country as far as Balkh to acknowledge the Caliph's suzerainty.¹ In A.H. 41 (661) 'Abdullah ibn 'Āmir organised a successful expedition into Khorāsān and Sīstān;² and in the course of the following year Kays ibn al-Haytham was sent thither as provincial governor. He was superseded in A.H. 43 (663) by 'Abdullah ibn Khāzim. In A.H. 45 (665) Ziyād, whom in the preceding year the Great Caliph Mo'awiya had officially recognised as his brother, was made governor of Basra and "the East." Al-Hakam ibn 'Āmir al-Ghifārī was sent in A.H. 47 (667) on an expedition into

¹ Cf. Muir, *Decline and Fall of the Caliphate*, p. 208.

² Tabari, *Annales*, Series II. p. 15. From this date until the appearance in Central Asia of Kutayba in A.H. 86, our history is little more than an enumeration of Arab governors in Khorāsān, whose rule was usually as uneventful as it was shortlived. We have, however, considered it fitting to enter here into detail somewhat disproportionate to the rest of our narrative, seeing that the facts have hitherto been only accessible in works of Oriental writers.



THE RAHLA, OR READING-DESK
OUTSIDE THE MOSQUE OF BIBI-KHANUM, SAMARKAND



Khorāsān. He occupied Tokhāristān and the country south and south-east of Balkh as far as the Hindu Kush, and was, moreover, the first Arabian general to cross the Oxus.¹ Al-Hakam died at Merv in A.H. 50 (670), on his return from an expedition against the people of Mount Ashall.² In the following year Rabi' ibn Ziyād³ el-Hārithī was sent to Khorāsān to succeed him.⁴ About this date many Arabs migrated with their families to Khorāsān and settled there.⁵ Rabi's first care was the reduction of Balkh, which had been the scene of a revolt, and this he effected without resorting to force. He also engaged the Turks in Kūhistān, and put them to rout. Among the fugitives was Nizak Tarkhūn,⁶ who perished later at the hands of Kutayba ibn Muslim. Rabi' also crossed the Oxus, but made no conquests on the farther side.⁷ His death, and that of his master Ziyād, took place in A.H. 53 (673). He named his son 'Abdullah as his successor, but the latter died two months later, and was succeeded by Khulayd ibn 'Abdullah el-Hanafī. On the death of Ziyād the Caliph gave the governments of Kūfa, Basra, and Khorāsān to his own son 'Ubaydullah, while he appointed Ziyād's son 'Ubaydullah, in supersession of Khulayd, as his lieutenant in Khorāsān. 'Ubaydullah ibn Ziyād collected an army in Irāk, entered Khorāsān and, crossing the Oxus, penetrated into the mountains of Bokhārā,⁸ and conquered Rāmtīna and half of Bay-

¹ Müller, *Der Islam*, i. p. 354.

² Tabari, *Annales*, II. p. 109.

³ He was not the son of the famous governor of Basra.

⁴ In the interim the post seems to have been filled for a short time by Khulayd ibn 'Abdullah el-Hanafī (Tabari, II. p. 155).

⁵ Tabari, II. p. 156.

⁶ Vambéry considers *Tarkhān* (or *Tarkhūn*) to be an old Turkish title, which Mohammedan authors have regarded erroneously as a proper name.

⁷ Tabari, II. p. 156.

⁸ Tabari, II. p. 169. Tabari says he was the first to cross the mountains of Bokhārā on a camel, *loc. cit.*

kand. The Turks of Bokhārā were at that time governed by a princess named Khātūn, who acted as regent during the minority of her son Tughshāda. On the approach of the Arabs with an overwhelming force, Khātūn fled to Samarkand. According to Tabari,¹ so great was her haste that one of her shoes was left behind. It fell into the hands of the Arabs, and was valued by them at 200,000 direms.²

Diplomacy gained for Bokhārā what arms could never have accomplished. Khātūn saved the evacuation of her capital by entering into a treaty by which she bound herself to pay a yearly tribute.³ 'Ubaydullah withdrew to Merv laden with booty, and on his return to Irāk was appointed by the Caliph Mo'awiya, governor of Basra. In A.H. 56 (676) Sa'īd ibn 'Othman, who had superseded him in Khorāsān, determined to complete the conquest of Bokhārā, in spite of the treaty concluded by his predecessor. The Queen-Regent Khātūn was powerless to resist the invasion, for she had reason to doubt the loyalty of her troops, and her resources had been well-nigh exhausted in her struggle with 'Ubaydullah. She therefore came to terms with Sa'īd by the surrender of the last shreds of her sovereignty in Bokhārā. But Samarkand, the wealthiest of its strongholds, was still unmastered. Sa'īd ibn 'Othman embarked on a campaign for its reduction, carrying with him eighty Bokhārān

¹ Tabari, II. p. 169. The Persian Tabari does not mention this queen, but relates the same incident of the *king* of the Turks; Ba'lami, the Persian translator, also adds that the shoe was sold by Ubaydullah to the merchants of Basra. Cf. Zotenberg's *Chroniques de Tabari*, tome iv. p. 19.

² The direm, derived from the Greek drachma, contained 25 grains of silver, and was worth about 5d. of our money. On this basis the value of the shoe would be £4166 sterling!

³ Vambéry, *History of Bokhārā*, p. 20. The author says he has this fact from "Arabic authors," but we have been unable to find any mention of it in either the Arabic or Persian versions of Tabari.

nobles as hostages for their queen's good behaviour. After several successful engagements with the Turks he stormed Samarkand¹ and carried off 30,000 prisoners, with much booty.² When Sa'īd passed through Bokhārā on his return to Khorāsān the queen demanded back the eighty hostages, but he replied that he did not yet feel sure of her good faith, and that he would not part with the Bokhārāns until he had crossed the Amū Daryā. At this stage of his march the queen sent messengers to repeat her demand, but she was informed by Sa'īd that the hostages should be sent back from Merv. Thus he continued to elude compliance, and finally dragged his wretched captives to Medīna. Here they were stripped of the attire proper to their rank and reduced to a condition of slavery. Preferring death to an ignominious existence, the desperadoes broke into Sa'īd's palace, and, closing fast the doors, slew him and afterwards themselves. This tragedy occurred in A.H. 61 (680), under the Caliphate of Yezīd ibn Merwān, who had succeeded his father Mo'awiya in the previous year.

One of the Caliph's first acts had been to appoint Salm ibn Ziyād as his lieutenant in Khorāsān.³ The latter found the northern part of his charge a prey to revolt, for the restless Khātūn had taken advantage of dissension among the Caliph's followers to throw off his hated yoke. Salm took council with a trusted general

¹ According to Tabari (II. p. 179), Sa'īd was met by a great Soghdian force on reaching Samarkand. The rival hosts stood facing each other till nightfall, but on the following day Sa'īd made a furious onslaught and put the defenders to flight, taking fifteen young nobles as hostages.

² Narshakhi, ed. Schefer, p. 39.

³ Bellew and Vambéry both call him "Muslim," a reading which has been adopted in the Russian translation of Narshakhi, published in Tashkent in 1897. The latter, indeed, contains a note to the effect that the name is written "Salm" in Arabic sources. It is also the spelling in the Persian Tabari. Salm was twenty-four years of age on his appointment. His father was 'Ubaydullah, the famous governor of Basra.

named Muhallab,¹ and, establishing a base at Merv, crossed the Oxus with² a force 6000 strong and moved rapidly on to Bokhārā. The queen, in her despair, turned to the Tarkhūn Malik of Soghd, to whom she promised her hand in marriage as the price of his alliance against the invaders. The Tarkhūn, seduced by the dazzling bait, advanced to her assistance at the head of 120,000 men. He put a reconnoitring party of the Arabs to flight, destroying more than half their number, but was beset by the entire force, and after a fierce struggle was utterly routed. So vast was the booty taken by Salm's followers in the pursuit that each man-at-arms received 2400 direms.³

This victory⁴ brought the queen of Bokhārā to her senses. She sued for peace, which was granted, and Salm returned in triumph. Salm seems to have won for himself universal respect during his two years' residence in Merv as governor of Khorāsān, and the fact that during this period 2000 children had received his name⁵ is quoted as a proof of his popularity.

The Caliph Yezīd had died during the previous year (683). He was succeeded by Mo'awiya II., who was less imbued with fanaticism than his lieutenants, and found the Caliphate too heavy a burden. Resigning it after a

¹ This warrior held command of the Arab troops in Central Asia under several viceroys in succession, and thus gained the confidence of his troops and an intimate knowledge of Khorāsān and the adjoining tracts. The stability in the office of generalissimo went far to neutralise any disadvantages occurring from the frequent changes in that of viceroy.

² Tabari (II. p. 394) tells us that Salm took his wife Umm Mohammed with him, and that she was the first Arab woman to cross the Oxus. She bore him a son, who was surnamed the "Soghdian."

³ £55 reckoned in our currency.

⁴ Narshakhi's account of these events brings the lack of discipline among the Arabs into a strong light, and serves to account for the vicissitudes of their rule in Central Asia.

⁵ This curious custom still survives in Merv. "One day," writes O'Donovan, "the town-crier, accompanied by half a dozen other Turcomans,

few months' reign, he left Islām a prey to anarchy. Two claimants appeared for the thorny crown—'Abdullah ibn Zobayr, and Merwān I. of the race of Umayya. The first gained the allegiance of Yemen, including the Holy Places, Egypt and part of Syria; the second was proclaimed lord of Damascus, and speedily drove his rival from Syria and Egypt. Merwān's son and successor, 'Abd el-Melik, concluded a peace with the Byzantine emperor on the basis of the payment of a tribute of 50,000 pieces of gold, and turned the whole of his forces against the pretender, who still held to Mekka and Medina. Him he defeated twice, and slew Mohammaḍ. All Islām was now under his chieftainship, with the exception of Khorāsān, which was governed by 'Abdullah ibn Khāzim as representative of Ibn Zobayr. Finding it impossible to secure the former's allegiance, 'Abd el-Melik incited one of his generals named Bukayr to compass his master's death, on a promise to confer on him the governorship of the province. The bait was swallowed by Bukayr, who formed a conspiracy against 'Abdullah ibn Khāzim, and deprived him of authority (692). He became head of Khorāsān; but his triumph was shortlived. The Caliph naturally doubted the loyalty of one who had shown himself unfaithful to his trust, and superseded him by Umayya ibn 'Abdullah ibn Khālīd (696). Four years later (700), Muhallab, who had left Merv and established himself in Kesh (the modern Shahrisebz), sent his son Habib with a huge army

entered my hut, each to present me a new-born child. I could not catch the exact words; all I could understand was that one of the infants was O'Donovan Beg, another O'Donovan Khan, a third O'Donovan Bahadur. I forget what the others were. It turned out that the Tekkes' newly born children are, as a rule, called after any distinguished strangers who may be on the oasis at the time of their births, or have resided there a short time previously, or after some event intimately connected with the tribe" (*The Story of Merv*, p. 329).

against Bokhārā, whose king he utterly defeated. While Muhallab was in Kesh, his followers entreated him to penetrate farther into the country, but Muhallab replied that his only aim was to bring all his Musulmans safe back to Merv. After two years' stay at Kesh he came to terms with the inhabitants of the surrounding country, and, satisfied with the large tribute they rendered to him, returned to his headquarters at Merv.

Muhallab died A.H. 82 (701), and was succeeded by his son Yezīd in the government of Merv. In A.H. 84 (703)¹ the latter was deprived of his post by the famous Hajjāj,² who had the disposal of all such appointments. Yezīd thereupon quitted Khorāsān, and his brother Mufaddhal, who had formerly been his lieutenant, was appointed governor. He held the post for about nine months, undertaking during that brief period successful expeditions against Khiva and Bādghīs. The immense spoils of war he distributed among his soldiers, keeping, we are told, nothing for himself. In A.H. 86 (705) 'Abd el-Melik died, and in the same year, on the arrival of Yezīd in 'Irāk, Hajjāj appointed Kutayba ibn Muslim el-Bāhili governor of Khorāsān in place of Mufaddhal. The glorious career of Kutayba in Central Asia began at this epoch with his entry into Merv.

¹ Cf. Aug. Müller, *Der Islam*, p. 411, who gives the date as A.H. 85.

² An entertaining account of this cruel and witty governor will be found in d'Herbelot, under the article *Heggiags-ben-Josef-al-Thakefi*.

CHAPTER VI

THE FIRST EASTERN CAMPAIGNS OF KUTAYBA IBN MUSLIM

THE arrival of Kutayba on the scene marks a new epoch in the history of Mohammedan conquests in Central Asia. Though the Arabs had been for many years masters of Khorāsān, with an established capital at Merv,¹ their hold on the country beyond the Oxus was very slight. The expeditions which they had hitherto made into Bokhārā² and other parts of Transoxiana were mere raids, and their authority in those countries departed with the main body of their army. Kutayba was the first Arab leader who compelled the inhabitants of the tract lying between the Oxus and Jaxartes to acknowledge the Caliph's supremacy, and to plant the standard of Islām in lands where the creed of Zoroaster had retained its greatest vitality.

¹ Merv has been styled by almost all European writers on the subject, "The Queen of the World." Now the origin of this high-sounding title is the expression *Merv-i-Shāhijān*, a title used to distinguish this town from Merv er-Rūd. This word Shāhijān has been taken as a corruption of Shah-i-jāhān, or "Queen of the World." Yakūt says that Shāhijān means "Soul of the King." The form as it now stands is probably "Arabicised" from an old Persian form *Shahgān*, "what appertains to a king." Cf. Rückert, *Gram. Poet. und Rhet. der Perser* (Gotha, 1874), p. xix. The mistranslation, if such it be, has shared the fate of most mistranslations of the kind, and become universal among Europeans.

² It must be remembered that Bokhārā is the name of a kingdom as well as of a town.

In A.H. 86 (705), as we have seen, 'Abd el-Melik died. He was succeeded in the Caliphate by his son Welid, and in the same year Kutayba ibn Muslim made a triumphal entry into Merv as governor of Khorāsān. On arriving at Merv, Kutayba called together the inhabitants, and urged them to join a Holy War, emphasising his trumpet-call by quotations from the Koran. The fierce Arabs swarmed to his standard, and Kutayba soon found himself at the head of an army animated with the keenest enthusiasm, to whom he distributed pay sufficient to maintain their families during their career of conquest. The military and civil administration of the oasis during his absence was delegated by him to trusted lieutenants. Having thus organised victory, he set out in a westerly direction across the desert. The first town which he reached was Tālikān.¹ Here he was received by the *dihkans*² and chief men of Balkh, who escorted him across the Oxus. He was met on the right bank by the king of the Chaghāniān, who brought presents and a golden key, and invited him to enter his capital. Kutayba accepted his submission, and allowed him to remain in office under the Caliph's suzerainty. He then marched to Akhrun and Shūmān, and after levying tribute on their chief, returned to Merv. Some authorities relate that Kutayba, before crossing the Oxus, made an expedition into Balkh, and there crushed a rising among the inhabitants, who were attempting to rid themselves of the Arab yoke.³ In the same year he concluded a peace

¹ Between Balkh and Merv er-Rūd, three days' journey from the latter. Istakhri, the geographer, speaks of it as the most important place in Tokhārīstān.

² *Dihkān* = the man (*i.e.* the head man) of the *dih*, or village.

³ Vambéry seems to confuse the two accounts, for he says: "He had not yet arrived within the limits of ancient Bactria when the inhabitants of Balkh came out to meet him, and conducted him with honour into their city." But Tabari speaks distinctly of an engagement, in connection with which he





1



2



3



4

CENTRAL ASIAN TYPES

1. PERSIAN
2. PERSIAN

3. AFGHAN
4. KALMUCK

with Nizek, Tarkhūn of Bādghīs. In the following year, A.H. 87 (705), Kutayba set out for Transoxiana. During his march thither he passed through Merv er-Rūd, Āmul, and Zamīn; and, crossing the Oxus, sat down before Baykand. This place was, according to Tabari, the Bokhārān town nearest to the great river, and lay at the edge of the desert. It was known far and wide as the "City of Merchants," and was equally renowned for the strength of its fortifications. The inhabitants, on learning Kutayba's approach, put their town into a state of defence, and sent messengers into Soghdiana imploring aid. The call was obeyed, and Kutayba's little force was soon hemmed in on all sides by numerous and determined foes. For a space of two months so closely was he pressed that he was unable to send a messenger to Hajjāj, whose consequent anxiety led him to order prayers for the army in all the mosques. Tabari tells us that Kutayba had in his employ a Persian spy, named Tandar, whom the Bokhārāns bribed to induce his master to retire from their country. Tandar obtained a private audience of Kutayba, which was attended only by a certain Dhirār ibn Hasan. He told the Amīr that his patron Hajjāj had lost his office, and that a new governor had arrived to replace the former. Kutayba called one of his slaves named Siyāh, and ordered him to strike off Tandar's head. When this had been done, he turned to Dhirār and said: "No one knows of this affair except you and myself. If it is bruited abroad I shall be certain that you are to blame; so master your tongue. For should

remembers an interesting detail. Among the captives taken at that time was the wife of a certain Barmek. She was taken into the harem of Kutayba's brother 'Abdullah, by whom she had a son, who was commonly regarded as the ancestor of the famous Barmecides of the court of Baghdād. The story was probably invented to give the family a less obscure lineage than that of humble immigrants from Balkh. Cf. Muir, *History of the Caliphate*, p. 358.

the people hear the story, they will be discouraged." He then summoned his followers into his presence. When they saw the body of Tandar they were filled with fear, and threw themselves on the ground before Kutayba. He asked them why they were appalled by Tandar's execution. They replied: "Verily, we thought that he was a friend to the Musulman." "No," replied Kutayba, "he was a traitor—may God punish him for his sins, but he has met with his deserts. Now go and prepare to meet the enemy to-morrow with more courage than you have hitherto shown."

On the following day the Arabs took up their positions and began the fight with fresh vigour, while Kutayba passed through the ranks giving his commands and encouraging his men in every way.¹ The battle lasted till sunset, when the enemy gave way and fled in disorder towards the town, hotly pursued by the Arabs. A few only reached the shelter of its walls, while the rest were slain or taken prisoners. Kutayba immediately began a regular siege of Baykand, which, though the place had lost most of its garrison, cost the assailants many lives.² For fifty days, says Narshakhi, "the efforts of the Musulmans were of no avail, and their sufferings were great. At last they had recourse to stratagem. A party of soldiers dug a trench under the town-wall, near the citadel, connected with a stable within the fortress, where they made another breach in the wall. Hardly had the Musulmans reached the fortress ere these men sallied from the breach. Kutayba shouted: "To the first man who enters the fort by this breach I will give blood-money, and if he should be killed, then his

¹ Cf. Tabari's *Annales*, Series II. p. 1187, and Zotenberg's *Chroniques de Tabari*, vol. iv. p. 157.

² Neither version of Tabari gives any details of this siege, but Narshakhi's account, of which we extract a portion, is most vivid.

children shall receive it." This promise filled the besiegers with emulation. All threw themselves into the breach, and captured the fort. The men of Baykand begged for quarter, which Kutayba granted, and then retired laden with booty, leaving a lieutenant in the town with a detachment of troops. But when he reached Khunbūn,¹ which is only a farsakh's distance from Baykand, on the Bokhārā road, he learnt that the people of Baykand had risen against his lieutenant and garrison, and slaughtered them after cutting off their noses and ears.²

Kutayba immediately turned back and invaded the town a second time. The siege lasted a month, when the Amīr had a tunnel excavated under the wall and filled with wood, which was set on fire. The wall above crumbled and fell, crushing forty men to death. The Baykandis offered to capitulate on condition that their lives were spared, but Kutayba stormed the town and put to death all the fighting men. The rest were carried off into slavery, and the city became a heap of ruins. Kutayba then returned to Merv with much spoil,³ which, according to Tabari, exceeded in value all the booty that had been taken by the Arabs in Khorāsān.

The story of Baykand's resurrection is a curious one. It was a town of long-standing fame and a great centre of

¹ Tabari says that he had gone five farsakhs, but mentions no place-name.

² Narshakhi records that the lieutenant, who was named Varkā, was answerable for this catastrophe. A citizen of Baykand, it seems, had two beautiful daughters. These the lieutenant abducted, whereupon the father remonstrated with him, saying: "Baykand is a large town, why, when you have the whole population to select from, should you carry off my daughters?" As Varkā gave no answer, the enraged father drew out his knife and stabbed him, but not mortally.

³ Narshakhi tells that in Baykand, Kutayba found a heathen temple in which was a silver idol weighing 4000 direms; also a quantity of golden vessels which, when weighed together, amounted to 150,000 *mithkals*.

trade; and, during the siege, most of the heads of families were absent in China and other distant countries with their caravans. On their return they redeemed their wives and surviving relatives from the Arabs, and soon repeopled Baykand. Narshakhi justly remarks,¹ that it is the only town in history which, after undergoing a destruction, root and branch, was restored to its former prosperity by the same generation as saw its ruin. Tabari adds that the inhabitants agreed to pay a yearly tribute to the Arabs, and were guaranteed peace, under a written pact, by Kutayba.

The conquest of Baykand was achieved by Kutayba in the autumn of the year of the Hijra, 87 (705). He then returned for the winter season to his headquarters at Merv. It was not till A.H. 88 (706) that Kutayba entered on a career of conquest. During his first two years of command he had achieved little towards the extension of the Caliph's authority in Central Asia. His predecessors had already carried their arms as far as the city of Bokhārā, while his own had never extended far beyond the frontier of that kingdom. The destruction of Baykand was, however, a feat of no mean value, as, quite apart from the immense booty which fell into the victor's hands, the position of the town rendered it "the south-western gate of Transoxiana,"²

But the most remarkable of his discoveries were two pearls, each the size of a pigeon's egg. Kutayba on beholding them asked the people whence such large pearls had been brought. They replied, "that they had been brought to the temple by birds in their beaks." When Kutayba sent intelligence of his conquest of Baykand to Hajjāj, he also despatched these two pearls, with the account of the tradition relating to them. The reply of Hajjāj ran thus: "We have read your story, and it has filled us with wonder; but more wonderful than the two large pearls, and the birds that brought them, is your generosity in having sent to me these precious prizes you had taken. May the blessing of God be upon you."

¹ Ed. Schefer, p. 43. Khartūm may possibly come to offer a parallel.

² Vambéry, *Bokhara*, p. 25.

and hence its importance to the Arabs as a basis for further encroachments.

The immediate objects of Kutayba's attacks were, according to Tabari,¹ Numushkat and Rāmtīna, which obtained peace on condition of paying a yearly tribute.

Meanwhile the people of Bokhārā, Soghdiana, and the surrounding countries had banded together to oppose the Arab invaders, who found themselves surrounded in the country lying between Tārāb, Khunbūn, and Rāmtīna. The combined forces numbered about 40,000 men, and comprised the armies of the *Tarkhūn Melik* of Soghd, Khunuk-Khudāt, Vardān-Khudāt, and Prince Kur-Maghānūn,² who was a son of the Chinese emperor's sister, and who was, according to Narshakhi, a mercenary soldier of fortune. Kutayba had set out on his return to Merv when the Turks suddenly fell upon his rear-guard. The Musulmans were beginning to waver, but Kutayba appeared on the scene of action and filled them with fresh courage. The battle lasted till midday, when "God put the Turks to flight."³ Kutayba then returned to Merv, taking the road in the direction of Balkh, and crossing the Oxus above Tirmiz. On reaching Fāryāb⁴ he received a letter from Hajjāj ordering him to march against the Vardān-Khudāt, king of Bokhārā. He therefore retraced his steps and crossed the Oxus at Zamīn. On the road through the desert he was met by some Soghdians and the people of Kess (Kesh) and Nasaf (Nakhshab), whom he engaged and defeated. He then plunged into Bokhārā, and pitched his camp at

¹ Tabari, *Annales*, Series II. p. 1195.

² Scholars have hitherto failed to read this satisfactorily. The forms that occur are Kur-Bughanūn, Kurighanūn, etc. Professor Houtsma has suggested that the termination should be read *nūn*, i.e. prince.

³ Narshakhi.

⁴ Not, of course, to be confounded with Fārāb opposite Chārijūy; but the reading of the name is doubtful.

Lower Kharkāna, to the right of Vardān, where he was attacked by superior forces. After a battle which lasted for two days and two nights, victory declared for the Arabs. Kutayba now advanced against the Vardān-Khudāt, king of Bokhārā, but was repulsed and retreated to Merv. Here he informed Hajjāj by letter how he had fared, and was ordered to send his master a map of the country. Having examined this map, Hajjāj wrote to him in the following terms: "Return to your former purpose, and acknowledge in prayer to God your repentance for having abandoned it. Attack the enemy at vulnerable points. *Crush Kesh, destroy Nasaf, and repulse Vardān.*¹ Take care that you are not surrounded; and leave the difficulties of the road to me." On receiving these instructions, Kutayba left Merv, and in the beginning of the year A.H. 90 (708) again invaded the kingdom of Bokhārā. When the Vardān-Khudāt heard of Kutayba's advance, he sent messengers to the Soghdians and their neighbours asking for their help. Kutayba arrived before their allies, and immediately laid siege to Vardān; but as soon as reinforcements appeared the garrison sallied forth and attacked the Arabs.

The versions of the battle that ensued as given by Tabari and Narshakhi² differ materially, while both enter into so much detail that it is hard to reconcile them. That given by Tabari³ is graphic enough to deserve epitomising.

¹ The italics indicate three excellent puns in the original Arabic. Hajjāj had a universal reputation as a master of this difficult tongue. The words may be transcribed as follows: *Kiss bi Kissa wansif Nasafan waridd Wardan.*

² Narshakhi's version of the campaign is full of discrepancies, and the events of the years 88-91 are perforce presented to the reader without much regard for chronology or natural sequence. The results are to be found in Bellew's epitome (*Yarkand Expedition*, p. 117).

³ *Annales*, Series II. p. 1201.

"When the Turks came out of the town, the men of the tribe of Azd asked Kutayba to allow them to fight separately. They straightway charged down on the Turks,—Kutayba remaining seated the while, wearing a green mantle over his armour,—and their endurance was great. At length they were driven back to Kutayba's camp by the Turks, but here the women struck their horses' heads¹ and forced the Musulmans to turn against the enemy. They succeeded in driving them back to his first position, a piece of rising ground which appeared to them inassailable. Then said Kutayba: 'Who will dislodge them for us from this place?' No one advanced, and all the tribes remained where they were. Then Kutayba went up to the Beni Temīm² and appealed to their old prestige, whereupon their chief Waki' seized the banner and said: 'Oh ye sons of Temīm, will you abandon me to-day?' They shouted 'No,' and advanced until they came to the stream separating them from the enemy, over which Husayni, the commander of the horse, leaped, followed by his men. Meanwhile Waki' gave the banner to Husayni and, dismounting, superintended the construction of a small bridge. He then said to his men: 'He who is willing to risk his life, let him cross; and he who is not willing, let him remain where he is!' Eight hundred men dashed across the bridge. Then Waki' told Husayni to harass the enemy with his cavalry, while he himself attacked them with his foot-men. So great was the fury of their double onslaught that the Turks gave way, seeing which the Musulmans sprang towards the bridge as one man, but ere they could cross the Turks were in full flight. The latter were thus completely routed; the Khākān and

¹ Vambéry says, evidently following his Turkish Tabari: "Their women . . . tore their faces!"

² One of the most famous tribes of Yemen.

his son were both wounded. When the inhabitants of the surrounding countries saw what had happened to the men of Bokhārā they trembled before Kutayba."

After this victory Kutayba again withdrew to Merv. The chroniclers differ as to the part which the Tarkhūn Melik of Soghd played in this battle. Tabari relates that the Tarkhūn, seeing that the day was going with the Musulmans, rode, accompanied by two horsemen, close up to Kutayba's camp—there being only the river of Bokhārā between them, and asked him to send a man across to confer with him. A certain Hayyān, the Nabataean, came over, and through his mediation a peace was settled upon, the Tarkhūn agreeing to pay tribute to Kutayba. The Tarkhūn then returned to his own country, while Kutayba, as stated above, retired to Merv, accompanied by Nīzek. Narshakhi, on the other hand, says that Hayyān, the Nabataean, told the king of Soghd that it would be much wiser for him to abandon the allies and return to his own country. "We," he said, "will remain here as long as the warm weather lasts, but when the winter sets in we shall retire, and then you will find the Turks all against you,—for nothing will induce them to leave your beautiful Soghd." The Tarkhūn, convinced of the value of this advice, asked what course he should pursue. Hayyān replied: "First, you must make peace with Kutayba, and pay him an indemnity. Next represent to the Turks that Hajjāj is sending reinforcements by way of Kesh and Nakhshab. Then you must turn back; and haply they will do likewise."

That same night the Tarkhūn concluded a treaty with Kutayba, and gave him 2000 direms;¹ Kutayba, for his part, promising not to molest his kingdom. He then sounded his trumpets and marched off, and his example

¹ Vambéry says a yearly tribute of 2,000,000 direms!

was very soon after followed by the emperor of China's nephew.

"Thus did God deliver the Musulmans from the great straits in which they had been plunged for four months." During this period Hajjāj had received no news from Kutayba, and his anxiety was so great that special prayers were offered in the mosques for his safety.

"This was Kutayba's fourth expedition into Bokhārā."¹

¹ Narshakhi, ed. Paris, p. 40.

CHAPTER VII

KUTAYBA'S LAST CAMPAIGNS

AMONG Kutayba's followers was a certain noble named Nizek, prince of Bādghīs, and a minister of Jighāya, ruler of Tokhāristān, who was in all probability attached temporarily to his court as a prisoner on parole. Nizek had watched Kutayba's campaigns with keen interest, in the fond hope that he might receive a serious check, and that Transoxiana and Khorāsān might be emboldened to throw off the Arab yoke. The great leader's success in Bokhārā convinced the moody rebel of the folly of such anticipations; and he saw only too clearly that the moment had come for the oppressed nationalities of Central Asia to strike a last despairing blow for freedom.¹ His first step was to obtain from the unsuspecting Kutayba permission to visit Tokhāristān, his next to raise the standard of revolt, which he did on reaching the defiles of Khulm.

As a measure of precaution he sent his valuables for safe keeping to the king of Kābul, whose support he entreated for his arduous enterprise. He sent messengers to the *Ispahbad*² of Balkh and to the princes of Merv er-Rūd, Tālikān, Fāryāb, and Jūzajān, inviting them to join

¹ Vambéry follows Narshakhi in ignoring this revolt, which was certainly a very serious one as far as Kutayba was concerned, but both versions of Tabari give detailed accounts of its various phases.

² Old Persian word signifying commander-in-chief.

the coalition. All replied in the affirmative. After these negotiations Nizek placed his master Jighāya in chains,¹ and dismissed Kutayba's agent from Tokhāristān.

When Kutayba received intimation of this revolt winter was setting in. His army was dispersed, and there only remained with him the contingent supplied by the town of Merv. He sent his brother 'Abd er-Rahmān, at the head of 2000 men to Balkh, with instructions to remain there inactive till the spring, when he was to proceed to Tokhāristān, adding, "Be sure that I shall be near thee." Towards the end of the winter A.H. 91 (709), Kutayba summoned reinforcements from Abarshahr, Bivard, Sarakhs, and Herāt. On their arrival he set out against Tālikān, leaving, as was his practice, a trusted follower in charge of the garrison, and another in that of the civil affairs of Merv.² The first operation was the storming of Merv er-Rūd. Its chief had fled, but his two sons who had remained were hanged. At Tālikān he met the enemy in the open field, and at the first onslaught the Turks were put to rout by his rear-guard, which was commanded by 'Abd er-Rahmān. No quarter was given, and all who were not slain outright were hanged,—the line of gibbets extending for a distance of sixteen miles. After appointing an Arab as governor of the town, Kutayba received the submission of Fāryāb and Jūzajān, and placed those towns under one of his lieutenants. He now proceeded to Balkh, where he was peaceably received by the inhabitants; and, after remaining there for a day, advanced into the defiles of Khulm. Meanwhile Nizek had retired to Baghlān and established a camp there, leaving a small force to guard

¹ He was opposed to Nizek's design. We are also told that, in order that a certain appearance of respect might be kept up, his chains were of gold. Cf. Tabari, *Annales*, Series II. p. 1206.

² Tabari, *Annales*, Series II. p. 1218.

the entrance of the pass. Kutayba halted opposite the castle of Nizek, but found it too strong for reduction. While disheartened at this failure, he received an offer from the king of Rūb and Siminjān to point out to him a road leading to the castle in return for an amnesty. Kutayba consented, and, guided by the king, his troops turned the defiles and poured down upon Nizek's garrison and advance-guard. The Turks were taken at a disadvantage, and all were put to the sword who did not make good their escape. The army of Kutayba now advanced to Siminjān, which was separated by a desert from Baghlān, where Nizek had his fortified camp. Hearing of the approach of Kutayba, the latter retreated to Kerz, a position which was assailable only on one side, and was quite unapproachable for cavalry. Here for two months he sustained a siege, and, as all the approaches were occupied by Kutayba, provisions grew scarce in this retreat. On the other hand, Kutayba dreaded the prospect of remaining in a country so remote and barbarous, and determined to hasten his triumph by the aid of diplomacy. Calling to him a trusted councillor named Sulaymān, he ordered him to make his way to Nizek's camp and endeavour to secure his surrender. Quarter was not to be promised unless it was insisted on, and the messenger was informed that his own fate was at stake. Sulaymān, with the certainty of the gallows before him as the result of failure to bring the rebel to terms, obtaining a covering party to guard his retreat, and taking with him several days' provisions, started for the enemy's camp.

He was admitted to a parley with Nizek, whom he exhorted to submit to overwhelming force. The prince stipulated for mercy, but was assured that no formal guarantee was necessary. On the understanding that his life would be spared, he surrendered and accom-

panied Sulaymān to Kutayba's camp. He was at once placed in a tent under strict guard, while his own camp was occupied by the Arab forces. Kutayba's then asked instructions from his chief Hajjāj at Basra as to what should be done with the prisoner, and in forty days a reply arrived that he must be put to death. The order was not obeyed without considerable hesitation. For three days Kutayba shut himself up in his tent and held converse with no one. On the fourth he took council with his officers, and all agreed that the breach of faith implied was a just and necessary measure. And so Nizek, with 700 of his followers, was put to death, and their heads were sent to Hajjāj.

The prince of Tokhāristān was released from his golden chains and despatched with a retinue to Damascus. The perfidy which Kutayba had practised towards Nizek was too outrageous even for the Arabs, but it was followed by another action scarcely less scandalous. When Kutayba returned to Merv, the king of Jūzajān, who had made common cause with Nizek, sent messengers offering his submission on condition that his life should be spared. The terms were agreed to, but Kutayba insisted that the king should present himself in person, and also give hostages. Kutayba, on his side, sent him an Arab hostage named Habib. The king of Jūzajān intrusted several members of his own family to Kutayba's care, and betook himself to Merv, where he concluded a peace with Kutayba. But on his return to his native country he died at Tālikān, and the inhabitants, in the belief, real or pretended, that he had been poisoned, slew Habib. On hearing of this Kutayba put all the hostages to death. In the year A.H. 91 (709) Kutayba marched against Shūmān, Kesh, and Nakhshab, and after capturing the three towns he sent his brother Rahmān to attack the Tarkhūn of

Soghd. The latter, however, offered to pay tribute, and gave hostages. After accepting this proposal 'Abd er-Rahmān joined Kutayba in Bokhārā, and the two brothers returned to Merv.

Meanwhile the people of Soghd rose against their chief, and set up another named Ghūzek in his stead. The deposed Tarkhūn put an end to his own life.

In A.H. 93 (711) Chighān, king of Khwārazm, secretly invited Kutayba to help him against his brother Khorzād, who, though younger than himself, usurped much of his power and appropriated a large share of his possessions. Kutayba, satisfied with the terms offered, arrived unexpectedly at Hazārasp,¹ whereupon Khorzād gave himself up, and was handed over as a prisoner to his brother Chighān. After recompensing Kutayba handsomely, he begged him as a further favour to assist him in crushing the king of Khāmjerd, who had repeatedly invaded his territory. Kutayba intrusted the operation to his brother, who slew the king, conquered his realm, and brought 4000 slaves to Merv.

Having thus brought his Khwārazmian campaign to a successful termination, Kutayba turned his attention to Soghdiana, which, as related above, had been the theatre of a revolution. He reached Samarkand without adventure, and at once invaded the historic city. The resistance of the Soghdians was most stubborn; they made frequent sorties,² and defied the besiegers to do their worst. The new king, however, alarmed at the

¹ On the river Jihūn, one of the three principal towns of Khwārazm, of which Medinat-el-Fil, or the Town of the Elephant, was the largest.

² Tabari relates that one day several Soghdians mounted the rampart and called out: "Oh ye Arabs, why do ye exert yourselves thus vainly? Know that we have found written in a book that our town shall not be taken except by one whose name is "Camel-Saddle," whereupon Kutayba called out—"God is great! for verily that is my name." (In Arabic, Kutayba means literally "camel-saddle.")

persistence of the Arabs, sent a letter to the king of Shāsh asking his aid. Two thousand men of Shāsh set out at once for Samarkand; but Kutayba, hearing of their movements, surprised them in ambuscade and put them to rout. Two days later the king sued for peace. Kutayba agreed to retire on payment of a heavy tribute, but stipulated that he should be allowed to enter the city and build a mosque and inaugurate a religious service. His terms were accepted, but instead of masons he sent 4000 armed Arabs to uproot idolatry. All the graven images of Samarkand were burned, Kutayba himself commencing the conflagration and inaugurating the *auto-da-fé*.

The hostility of Shāsh was not forgotten. At the beginning of A.H. 94 (712) Kutayba set out from Merv, crossed the Oxus, and marched against Shāsh and Farghāna at the head of a large army.¹ The expedition resulted in the reduction of the towns of Shāsh, Khojand, and Kāshān on terms similar to those accorded to the people of Samarkand.²

In A.H. 96 (714) Kutayba set out on his last expedition. He carried the Mohammedan arms farther east than any of his predecessors had done; and, though his conquests on the borders of China were not of a permanent nature, he established an eastern frontier to Islām which has never since been encroached on. Before setting out on this last campaign Kutayba received news of the death of the Caliph Welid, and the succession of Sulaymān his brother. As he knew that the Caliph was his enemy he³ took the precaution of carrying

¹ He is said to have obtained no less than 20,000 native levies, men from Kesh, Nakhshab, and Khwārazm. Cf. Tabari, *Annales*, Series II. p. 1256.

² In the year 95 Hajjāj died at the age of fifty-four.

³ Welid had been most anxious to make his own son heir-apparent in the place of his brother, and in his designs had been supported by Hajjāj and

his family with him to Samarkand, where they were placed in safe keeping. On this expedition Kutayba reached, and apparently entered, Kāshghar, but though it is stated that he conquered the province, we have no particulars of an engagement of any kind.

Kutayba. Hence the bad blood that existed between the conqueror and the new Caliph.

Vambéry adds the following details without reference (not to be found either in Tabari or Narshakhi): "Having conquered Farghāna, he went through the Terek Pass into Eastern Turkestan. Here he encountered the princes of the Uigurs, who in default of union among themselves were easily conquered. We are told that the Arabs extended their incursions into the province of Kansu. . . . Turfan, on the very first appearance of the Arabs, embraced Islam" (*Bokhara*, pp. 31, 32).

CHAPTER VIII

KUTAYBA'S FALL AND DEATH

THE realm of Arabic literature contains no more vivid picture of contemporary life and manners than that given us by Tabari in his account of Kutayba's fall.¹ Many circumstances conspired to effect his ruin. The unbounded arrogance arising from uniform success, and the many acts of perfidy of which he was guilty, had weakened the attachment of his followers, which was based rather on greed for booty than devotion to a cause. His friend and constant patron Hajjāj had died in A.H. 94. The new Caliph, Sulaymān, had never forgotten that Kutayba had supported his predecessor Welīd in an attempt to exclude him from the succession; and his principal adviser was Yezīd ibn Muhallab, whom Kutayba had ousted from the government of Khorāsān. But tribal hatred was the most telling factor in Kutayba's

¹ Gibbon recognised the greatness of Kutayba as a conqueror, while lamenting the scanty notices to be found of him in European works; cf. *Decline and Fall*, chap. li. D'Herbelot, in his *Bibliothèque Orientale*, dismisses our hero, under the heading *Catbah*, in a very summary manner. "Ce fut un des plus vilains Arabes de son siècle, Valid, sixième Khalife de la race des Ommiades, le fit général de ses armées en Perse, l'an de l'Hégire 88. Il conquît tout le grand pays de Khorazan, et obligea en ces quartiers-là à brûler leurs idoles et à bâtir de Mosquées. Après cette conquête, il passa dans la Transoxiana et prit de force les fameuses villes de Samarcande et de Bokhara, et défit Mazurk roi de Turkestan, qui s'était approché pour les secourir. Ce grand capitaine finit ses conquêtes l'an 93 (*sic*) de l'Hégire."

fall. It raged with intense fury among the Arabs during the Caliphate, and was at the root of every revolution of that stirring period.

Kutayba's first thoughts¹ on hearing of the accession of Sulaymān were that the Caliph would certainly reinstate Yezīd as governor of Khorāsān. In view of forestalling this action he sent a messenger to Sulaymān bearing three letters. The first contained assurances of his loyalty; the second, expressions of his contempt for Yezīd; the purport of the third, which was written on a smaller sheet, was as follows: "I have ceased to recognise Sulaymān as my sovereign, and have revolted against him." His envoy was intrusted to hand the first missive to the Caliph and watch his movements narrowly. If he should read it and then pass it to Yezīd, the second was to be submitted to him. Should it be similarly treated, the gauntlet of defiance was to be thrown down in the third letter.

The injunctions were strictly followed. The three messages were delivered successively; but, beyond communicating each to Yezīd, the Caliph betrayed no sign of resentment. The messenger was allowed to depart in company with a courtier, who carried with him an Act of reinvestiture in the governorship of Khorāsān in favour of Kutayba. When the pair reached Holwān² they learnt that Kutayba had already raised the standard of revolt, and Sulaymān's messenger returned straightway to Syria. When Kutayba's messenger reached Khorāsān his master asked him how matters had gone. On learning that his action of throwing off his allegiance had been, to say the least of it, premature, Kutayba was filled with repentance, and took counsel with his brothers and captains as to what course he should pursue. They were agreed that

¹ Tabari, *Annales*, Series II. pp. 1283-96.

² An important town on the Perso-Turkish frontier, north-east of Baghdād.

Sulaymān would never pardon Kutayba, but opined that his life would be spared in remembrance of his past services to Islām. "Alas," cried Kutayba, "it is not death I fear, but that the Caliph will certainly give the government of Khorāsān to Yezīd, and humiliate me before all the world; I prefer death to that!"¹ Among the many projects suggested to him the wisest seems to have been that of his brother 'Abd er-Rahmān, who advised him to proceed to Samarkand and then give his followers the option of staying with him or returning to their homes. Having by this means surrounded himself with men whom he could trust, he might declare his independence of Sulaymān. But Kutayba was too confident in his own influence to listen to counsel savouring of timidity. The only plan which suited his temper was one formulated by another brother named 'Abdullah. It was that Kutayba should call his officers together and urge them to join in a revolt against the Caliph. This desperate scheme was promptly acted upon. Kutayba harangued his followers in brief but stirring words, dwelling on the want of capacity shown by his predecessors, especially by Yezīd; he reminded his troops of the successes that had attended them under his leadership, of the fairness with which he had always divided the spoil among them, and of his prosperous administration of Khorāsān. He then awaited the acclamations which his lightest utterances had hitherto received. A deep and anxious silence reigned on the assembly. Kutayba, lashed to fury by the ingratitude of those who owed everything to him, lost all semblance of self-restraint and burst forth into a tirade, in which his lieutenants were designated as "cowardly Bedouins, infidels, and hypocrites." Then, trembling with half-suppressed passion, he withdrew to

¹ This saying is not to be found in the Arabic Tabari, but in the Persian version. See Zotenberg, vol. iv. p. 204.

his palace, where he joined the members of his family. They attempted to remonstrate, and pointed out the folly of exasperating men on whose goodwill everything depended. The Arab troops, too, entered into negotiations with 'Abd-er-Rahmān, who was regarded as the most reasonable of Kutayba's brothers, and he proffered his services as a peacemaker. But Kutayba had by this time entirely lost his head, and turned a deaf ear to all advice. The Arabs, lashed to madness by his obstinacy, beset his palace with shouts of vengeance. Some set fire to his stables, and in the confusion that ensued another band broke into the council-hall and attacked their fallen chief. He received a wound from an arrow, and was straightway hacked to pieces with swords, A.H. 96 (714).

Thus fell, at the age of forty-six, a man whose personality stands out in bold relief in the earlier annals of the most militant of creeds.

It would be unjust to omit mention of Kutayba's zeal in the propaganda of Islām. Narshakhi has much to tell us of his pious exertions in the town of Bokhārā. On each of his four expeditions thither he compelled the inhabitants to accept the faith of Mohammed, but as soon as his back was turned they reverted to idol-worship. In A.H. 94 Kutayba built, on the site of a fire-temple, a large mosque, where prayers were read every Friday; a reward of two direms was given to every attendant in order to assure the permanent conversion of the people. Kutayba quartered an Arab in every house, who played the dual part of spy and missionary. His character was an epitome of the qualities which made Islām a terror to mankind, and ultimately conspired to reduce it to impotence.



GENERAL VIEW OF BOKHARA

CHAPTER IX

KUTAYBA'S SUCCESSORS

ON the death of Kutayba, Wakī, who had been a ring-leader in the revolt, took upon himself the direction of affairs in Khorāsān. After a lapse of nine months, however, a new governor arrived, in the person of Yezīd ibn Muhallab, and Wakī was placed under arrest, while his partisans were subjected to punishment. According to the Persian translation of Tabari, Yezīd this year "began a series of expeditions beyond the frontiers of Khorāsān, to countries where Kutayba had not penetrated,"¹ but they are not mentioned in the Arabic original, nor are such undertakings consistent with the rest of Yezīd's career. For his attention was turned to the subjection of the countries to the west of Khorāsān,² rather than to the extension of Mohammedan authority towards the Chinese frontier.

Thus we find him in A.H. 98 conducting his troops against Jurjān and Tabaristān. The former country was regarded as the key of Western Asia. It was strongly fortified; and its walls, extending as far as the Sea of Azof, were an effectual barrier to the aggressions of the Turkish hordes.³ But these attacks appear to have told

¹ See Zotenberg's translation of the Persian Tabari, vol. iv. p. 221.

² After remaining, as Tabari tells us, four months in Khorāsān to settle the administration of the province.

³ Zotenberg, vol. iv. p. 225 *et seq.*

flag of revolt against the new Caliph, one of his bitterest enemies, and made himself master of Basra. The movement spread over most of the Eastern provinces, and was not crushed until the end of the following year, A.H. 102 (720), when Maslama, who held the viceroyalty of the two 'Irāks,¹ defeated and slew Yezīd in a fierce battle fought near Kūfa on the banks of the Euphrates. In the same year Maslama appointed a new governor of Khorāsān in the person of Sa'īd ibn 'Abd ul-'Azīz. This step was followed by a general rising of the inhabitants of Khojend and Farghāna. The tributary Soghdians, being thus threatened on their eastern frontier, asked help from Merv, but the new governor, who was of a weak and vacillating disposition, delayed so long in sending reinforcements that the Soghdians made overtures to the Turks. When at length the Arabs arrived they were joined by the former; but disputes arose, which ended in the slaughter of the Soghdians to the number of 3000. Throughout the reign of Yezīd II. the Moslem Far East was plunged in continual warfare, with no very marked results; for the army of 'Irāk was fully occupied with operations against the Khazar and Kipchāk tribes occupying Armenia, which were, for the most part, attended by ill-success. In A.H. 102 (720) Yezīd II. dismissed Maslama from his post, on the ground that his leniency had led to a serious falling off in the revenues from 'Irāk and Khorāsān. 'Omar ibn Hobayra replaced him. In the following year Sa'īd, "the Effeminate,"² while fighting beneath the walls of Samarkand, received the news of his dismissal. He was superseded in the governorship by a namesake, Sa'īd

¹ His post was the same as Hājāj's, and was equivalent to a viceroyalty of the Eastern conquests of the Caliphate.

² Known by the sobriquet of *Khusayna*, "the Village Girl," because of his effeminate ways.

ibn 'Amr el-Harashī.¹ El-Harashī at once set out for Farghāna by way of Bokhārā and Samarkand,² and on reaching Farghāna besieged the king in one of his fortresses. The king at last came to terms and paid an indemnity of 100,000 direms, besides surrendering many slaves. During the following night, while most of the Musulmans were asleep, the treacherous chief, at the head of 10,000 men, fell upon them and slew a great number. The main body, however, on receiving the alarm, hastily mounted and charged the infidels fiercely, putting them to rout and killing the king with 2000 of his followers. In the same year, A.H. 104 (722), El-Harashī was in his turn deposed,³ and Muslim ibn Sa'id, the Kilābite, put into his place as generalissimo of the Eastern army.

The Mohammedans meanwhile had their hands full in reducing disorders in Transcaspia, and their ill-success accounts for the perpetual changes made in the leaders of their troops. The Turks, indeed, were yearly growing in power and insolence. Muslim ibn Sa'id suffered a series of defeats at their hands which culminated in an utter rout of the Mohammedan army, the survivors escaping with difficulty across the river of Balkh. In A.H. 105 (723) Yezīd II. died, and was succeeded by his brother Hishām, who at once appointed Khālīd ibn 'Abdullah al-Kasrī governor of the two 'Irāks, while he despatched Khālīd's brother Asad with a powerful army to bring the Turks into subjection. He failed as miserably as his predecessor ;

¹ See Tabari, *Annales*, Series II. pp. 1431 and 1433. Vambéry (who reads the name as *Tarshi*) states that this man succeeded Yezīd ibn Muhallab on the appointment of Maslama. Cf. *Bokhara*, p. 37. The Persian Tabari also says that the nomination was made by Maslama. Cf. Zotenberg, vol. iv. p. 268.

² The *Annales* devote many pages to his progress, but as the details are of small importance we refrain from summarising them, and merely follow the abridged account of the Persian Tabari.

³ He seems already to have been dismissed, and to have been reinstated.

for thrice in successive years he crossed the Balkh River and marched into Soghdiana, as often to retreat with severe losses. Enraged by his continued misfortunes, he called together his generals and roundly accused them of being the cause. He then had them stripped, bastinadoed, and shaved, and sent them in chains to his brother Khālid.¹ This outrageous behaviour disgusted the Caliph, who dismissed Asad and gave the command of the Eastern army to Ashras ibn 'Abdullah.² The new general was held in high esteem by his followers, and received the title of "the Perfect." He made great efforts to induce the Christians of Central Asia to embrace Islām, by promising them exemption from the capitation tax. He appears, however, not to have abided by his word, but to have reimposed the tax, with the result that many of the recent converts rose in rebellion and attached themselves to the Khākān. But Ashras, too, met with a crushing defeat at the hands of the Turks, and was consequently recalled. In the person of his successor, Junayd ibn 'Abd er-Rahmān,³ we find a man more fit for supreme command than those who had preceded him. In his first engagement with the Turks he defeated the Khākān with a force of 170,000 men, of whom the Musulmans killed about 3000.⁴ Junayd then retired across the Balkh River to Merv, where he wintered.

In the following spring he crossed the Oxus with

¹ It is very remarkable that from this point in the history the account in the Arabic is as prolix as that in the Persian translation is compressed and condensed.

² Vambéry calls him (wrongly) Esresh.

³ Called by Vambéry, Jandab. He succeeded to the command in A.H. 111. He had previously been in Sind, and on his way to join the army at Bokhārā he narrowly escaped falling into the Khākān's hands. Tabari relates that he obtained his promotion by offering to Hishām's wife a necklace of precious stones, which the Caliph admired so greatly that Junayd procured another like it for him. See Tabari, *Annales*, Series II. p. 1527.

⁴ In this battle a nephew of the Khākān was taken prisoner, and after-

his whole force, and on gaining the right bank divided it into three corps. The first, consisting of 10,000 men, he sent under Saura ibn el-Hurr to occupy Samarkand. The second division was ordered to Tokhāristān under Omāra ibn Horaym, who quickly reduced the whole province; while Junayd himself took command of the remainder.

The accounts of the fighting that ensued, as given by the two versions of Tabari, offer great discrepancies. The Arabic original, which in this case seems the most trustworthy source, points to an almost total defeat of the Mohammedan forces in the first instance, while the Persian translation, in abridging this account, omits many of the details of disaster. According to the Arabic, Junayd was marching on Tokhāristān when news reached him that Saura was hard pressed in Samarkand by the Khākān of the Turks, whereupon Junayd resolved to march to his relief. But his forces were so scattered that he was obliged to set out with the small contingent under his personal command. When about half-way he was surrounded by the Turkish hordes, and a fearful struggle ensued in which hundreds of his brave Arabs were slain. At last he withdrew to a defile,¹ threw up entrenchments, and called a council of war. His officers pointed out to him that either he or Saura must perish. He therefore sent word to Saura² to march out of Samarkand, which with much reluctance he did at the head of 12,000 men. Saura set out in the direction of Junayd's camp, and had nearly reached it when he was suddenly attacked

wards sent to the Caliph. Tabari notices that there is a doubt as to the year in which these engagements took place, some saying A.H. 112 and others 113 (730, 731).

¹ This defeat was known as the battle of the Defile (ash-Shīb), A.H. 112 (730).

² Tabari, *Annales*, Series II. p. 1539.

by the Turks. So great was the slaughter that of the 12,000 we are told only three finally escaped,¹ Saura himself perishing with his army. Having created this diversion, Junayd thought fit to sally from his retreat, but only to find himself again outnumbered by the Khākān's forces. He now promised freedom to the slaves of his camp if they would fight for him,² and by the valour of these impromptu auxiliaries he was able to push his way through to Samarkand. When the Caliph Hishām received Junayd's report³ of what had passed he sent him larger reinforcements of men from Basra and Kūfa, numbering in all some 25,000. When Junayd had been four months in Soghdiana, tidings were

¹ About ten or eleven thousand perished in the battle, the remainder were betrayed to the Khākān (Tabari, *loc. cit.* p. 1542).

² Tabari, *loc. cit.* p. 1543.

³ Junayd in his report seems to have laid the blame of his defeat on Saura for advancing too far out of Samarkand. According to Tabari, his words were: "Saura disobeyed me; I ordered him to keep near the river, but he did not do so" (*loc. cit.* p. 1544). Beladhori also, in his very brief account of this campaign, makes no mention of defeat or even disaster. He merely says that Junayd fought the Turks till he had utterly repulsed them, and then asked the Caliph for reinforcements. The account in the Persian Tabari is roughly as follows:—Junayd's first brush with the Turks was successful; but their Khākān was not discouraged by his reverse. He mustered a host so formidable that Junayd found it necessary to order Saura, who had taken possession of Samarkand, to join forces with him. He then marched against the Khākān with 20,000 men. The Turkish leader adopted tactics which have again and again enabled a prescient leader to triumph against immense odds. On learning that Saura had left Samarkand, he turned and fell upon him with such ferocity that not one of his 20,000 troops escaped to tell the tale. Thereupon Junayd summoned every town of Khorāsān and Tokhāristān to send him its quota of reinforcements; and having thus gathered an army of 43,000 strong, despatched it under a trusted follower to relieve Samarkand, which was closely besieged by the victorious Khākān. The Mohammedans reached the city when their garrison was on the point of surrendering, and attacked the beleaguering host. For the first time during many disastrous years the banner of Islām prevailed. The Khākān was smitten hip and thigh, and forced to raise the siege of Samarkand. Junayd placed a garrison there of 5000 men under Nasr ibn Sayyār, and returned to Merv, where death soon closed his brilliant career.

brought to him that the Khākān was threatening Bokhārā; he thereupon set out from Samarkand, leaving there a garrison in charge of Nasr ibn Sayyār. In the course of two years Junayd appears to have restored order in Transoxiana, and with the help of his new reinforcements to have driven out the Turks. The 'Abbāsīd faction, which a little later brought about the downfall of the Umayyad dynasty, in the year 113 began to send emissaries into Khorāsān; Tabari tells us that Junayd seized one of these men and put him to death. But, apart from this fact, Tabari has scarcely anything to relate of Junayd between the years 113 and 116.

In A.H. 116 (734) Junayd, in spite of his great services, was dismissed from his post by the Caliph for having married the daughter of Yazīd ibn Muhallab, and 'Āsim ibn 'Abdullah was appointed in his stead. He died of dropsy before his successor reached Merv. By his cruelty and injustice to all who had held office under Junayd, 'Āsim incurred the bitter hatred of his people.

A certain Hārith ibn Surayj rose against him, took possession of many towns in Khorāsān, such as Merv er-Rūd, Balkh, and Bab-el-Abwāb, and gathered a crowd of soldiers of fortune to his banner by distributing amongst them the tribute levied from his acquisitions. 'Āsim, failing to crush this revolt, was dismissed by the Caliph, and Asad el-Kasrī was reinstated in the governorship of Khorāsān.¹ Asad at once advanced against Hārith at the head of a large army, drove him to Turkestan, where he entered into league with the Khākān, who assigned him and his followers the town of Fārāb as a residence.

In A.H. 118 (736) Balkh became temporarily the

¹ He appears to have received the appointment from his brother Khālid, the governor of 'Irāk.

Mohammedan capital of Central Asia. In the same year Asad planned a campaign into Khottal, but the Khākān took measures to forestall him. Asad's advance column was taken completely by surprise, and his camp and harem were captured. A parley ensued without result, after which he returned to Balkh, while the Khākān again withdrew to Tokhāristān. But in the following spring Asad attacked and completely routed the Khākān and rescued all the Moslem provinces.¹ The Turk fled back to Tokhāristān, and shortly afterwards, while on his way to attack Samarkand, he was waylaid and killed by a rebellious follower.

¹ It is worthy of remark that in the Persian Tabari the record of Asad's second tenure of office is not only very brief, but even differs essentially from that of the Arabic original.

CHAPTER X

NASR IBN SAYYĀR AND ABŪ MUSLIM

IN A.H. 120 (737)¹ Asad died, and was succeeded by Nasr ibn Sayyār, one of the ablest rulers and generals ever sent to the East in Mohammedan times. He was as generous as he was strong, and seems to have won the affection of those under him. During the nine years of his governorship his position was by no means an easy one, for he had to contend with the growing influence of the 'Abbāsīd faction,² and to support, with a loyalty worthy of a better cause, the last degenerate representatives of the house of Umayya. His first care on assuming the supreme command was to subjugate the Khākān of the Turks, whose name was Kūrsūl, against whom he led three successive expeditions. The first two seem to have been without result, but in the last, which was directed against Shāsh, the Khākān fell into his hands and was put to death.³

In the same year Nasr renewed his attempt to subjugate Shāsh to the Moslem yoke. The campaign was a bloodless one. He received the submission of Ushrūsana, and concluded an advantageous peace with the king of Shāsh.⁴ He thereupon appointed a Mohammedan governor of Farghāna.

¹ In Schefer's edition of Narshakhi (p. 59) the date is absurdly given as 166.

² Descendants of 'Abbās, uncle of the Prophet. See note below, p. 80.

³ Cf. Tabari, *loc. cit.* p. 1988 *et seq.*

⁴ Hārith ibn Surayj mentioned above was still with the Turks, and when

In the year A.H. 123 (740) this judicious ruler established order throughout Transoxiana, Khorāsān, and Farghāna.¹ But he had other difficulties to meet which were not of his own making. The star of the Umayyads was in the descendent, and the 'Abbāsīd party were daily adding to the number of their adherents. And, apart from dynastic struggles, the whole of Islām was rent with the dissensions of the rival sects of the Khārijites and the Shī'ites. The sectarian zeal of the latter, which to this day remains the cause of bitter discord in the realm of Islām, began now to make itself felt in Persia and in Central Asia.

In A.H. 125 (742) Hishām, the last Umayyad Caliph of any distinction, died. The dynasty lasted seven years longer, and in that short period no less than four Caliphs² attempted to restore the fading glory of their house. While such disorders reigned at headquarters there was small hope of quelling sedition in the outlying provinces. The 'Abbāsīd pretender, Ibrāhīm, thanks to the efforts of his father's³ emissaries, had now a powerful and rapidly increasing faction in Merv. But Nasr still held command in Khorāsān, and his personal influence was still great enough to avert open rebellion. It failed; and the fierce tribal jealousy which always smouldered in Arab breasts burst into civil war. The two rival factions were the Yemenites and the Modharites. Nasr ibn Sayyār belonged to the tribe of Modhar, and bestowed the highest offices on his clansmen. In fact, all the towns of Khorāsān were governed by members of

Nasr ibn Sayyār reported his victory to the governor of 'Irāk the latter ordered him to capture Hārith, subdue Farghāna, and destroy the town of Shāsh.

¹ By the promulgation of a general amnesty the Soghdians were brought back to their allegiance.

² Their names were Welīd II., Yezīd II., Ibrāhīm, and Merwān II.

³ His father, Mohammed, had died in A.H. 124.

one or the other of the three principal branches of the tribe, Asad, Temīm, or Kināna. Now, there was a man of the tribe of Azd called, after his birthplace, Juday' el-Kirmānī, who, before the promotion of Nasr, had held a higher position, and retained some authority among his own people. To him came the Beni Rabī'a with complaints of the partiality of Nasr. He promised his intercession with the governor. On attempting remonstrance he raised Nasr's ire, and was cast into prison, whence escaping¹ he rejoined his own people. All efforts at reconciliation proving fruitless, the rival parties had recourse to armed strength. In A.H. 127 (744) Hārith ibn Surayj, who was permitted to return to Khorāsān from his captivity in Fārāb, set up his standard at Merv, and, gathering many followers around it, openly revolted against Nasr. In the following year Nasr called upon him to swear allegiance to the Caliph Merwān, but Hārith refused, and boasted that he was "the man with the black flag"² who was to overthrow the Umayyad dynasty. Hostilities thereupon commenced between Nasr and Hārith, in which the latter was worsted. He fled to the camp of El-Kirmānī, whom Nasr had meanwhile been vainly endeavouring to conciliate.

Their combined forces now marched against Nasr, whom they defeated in a pitched battle. Nasr fled to Nishāpūr, while the allies occupied Merv, where, however, dissensions arose between them which cost Hārith his life, A.H. 128 (745).³

It was in the midst of these disorders that Abū

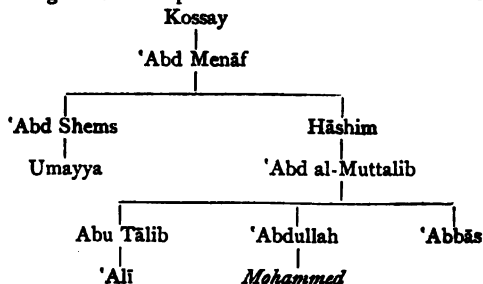
¹ An amusing incident is given in this connection by Tabari. Kirmānī was very stout, and the passage by which he had to escape was so narrow that his servant was obliged to drag him through by main force, and the operation very nearly killed him.

² See note 1, p. 82.

³ For a full account of the story of El-Kirmānī and Hārith ibn Surayj, see Tabari, *Annales*, Series II. pp. 1855-69, 1887-90, and 1917-35.

Muslim, the virtual founder of the 'Abbāsīd dynasty, raised the black banner in Khorāsān. The advent of the 'Abbāsīds to the Caliphate was an event of such moment for the future of Central Asia that it is necessary in this place to give a brief account of the rise of the new dynasty. The fall of the Umayyads was the death-knell of unity in Islām. In spite of numberless rebellions in all parts of their conquered provinces the Umayyads had never recognised independent rulers, but with the establishment of the house of 'Abbās there set in a general dismemberment of the empire of the Caliphs. The origin of the dispute between the Hāshimītes (or 'Abbāsīds) and the Umayyads dates back to a period anterior to the birth of Mohammed. It was a rivalry between the two chief stocks of the house of Koraysh.¹ We have seen above that, although Mohammed, on first declaring his mission, met with opposition from his own tribe, after the conquest of Mekka they temporarily reconciled the conflicting interests. So after the Prophet's death discussions again arose between 'Alī and the Caliph Mo'āwiya. The Khārijites, who demanded a purely theocratic rule, were also continually in a ferment. After the tragic death of Husayn, the son of 'Alī, at Kerbelā, a party arose devoted to the house of 'Alī, and claiming the succession of his family to the Caliphate,

¹ The following table will explain the descent of the two branches :—



who called themselves the Shī'a (or faction), and who are known to Europeans as the Shi'ites.

In the reign of Hishām (A.H. 105), Mohammed, the great-grandson of the Prophet's uncle, 'Abbās, who was living in retreat in the south of Palestine, began to advance his claims to the Caliphate. Emissaries and secret deputations were sent to all the principal towns of Persia, 'Irāk, and Khorāsān, and, in spite of the severe measures taken to check the movement, the cause of the Hāshimites began rapidly to spread. The Shi'ites and the Khārijites were induced to make common cause with the Hāshimites, on the plea that the only object of the movement was to secure the Caliphate for a member of the Prophet's own family.

In the year A.H. 125 (742) Mohammed visited Mekka, and in the same year Abū Muslim was taken there on a pilgrimage by a party of the Hāshimite faction. This Abū Muslim, whose real name was 'Abd er-Rahmān ibn Muslim, was a native of Khorāsān, and had been a saddler in the service of a distinguished Arabian family.¹ While residing at Mekka he attracted the attention of the 'Abbāsīd claimant, who at once singled him out as a youth of great promise,² and prophesied that Abū Muslim would be greatly instrumental in bringing the 'Abbāsīds to power. He spent the two following years in journeys between Khorāsān and Homyā, in order to promote the cause and report its progress. By means of an active propaganda the Hāshimites had been most successful in winning over large numbers of adherents, and Abū Muslim was only watching for a suitable moment to raise the flag of revolt. In A.H. 129 (746), on the death of Hārith ibn Surayj, Nasr ibn Sayyār sent a small force from Nīshāpūr

¹ Zotenberg, *op. cit.* vol. iv. p. 323 *et seq.*

² He was then not twenty years of age.

against El-Kirmānī, which was repelled, and Nasr now moved on to Merv with all the troops he could command. Abū Muslim, deeming the moment favourable for his designs, unfurled the black standard¹ of the 'Abbāsids. Ere a month had elapsed contingents began to pour in from all quarters. Nasr, finding himself unable to check the movement, implored reinforcements from Merwān, the governor of 'Irāk, and pointed out that the loss of Khorāsān would be fatal to the house of Umayya.

But no help arrived, and Abū Muslim, conscious of his foe's weakness, invited El-Kirmānī to join with him against Nasr; the latter, foreseeing this contingency, caused El-Kirmānī to be killed by one of his soldiers, and sent his head to the Caliph. The Yemenites and the two sons of El-Kirmānī attached themselves to Abū Muslim. In despair Nasr sent to Merwān a despatch in verse,² in which he pointed out the perils surrounding his situation, and asked whether the house of Umayya was asleep or awake.

In the year A.H. 130 (747) Abū Muslim made his entry into Merv, and ordered public prayers to be offered for the 'Abbāsid claimant as Caliph. Nasr, who had abandoned the struggle for power and was living in retirement at Merv, withdrew on his approach to Nishāpūr by way of Sarakhs.³ In his flight he was joined

¹ We are told that Abū Muslim wished to have a distinctive colour for his party, the Umayyads having adopted white. After making one of his slaves clothe himself in suits of various colours, he ordered him to dress in black, and finding the sombre hue the most awe-inspiring adopted it for his party. Cf. Zotenberg, *loc cit.* p. 327. Later the Khārijites adopted red, and the Shī'ites green.

Nasr ibn Sayyār was a poet of no mean order, and Arabic histories contain many quotations from his compositions, specimens of which will be found on p. 87 and 88 of Nöldeke's *Delectus Vet. Carm. Arab.*

² Two very different versions of the end of Nasr are to be found in Oriental histories. That given in the text is the usually accepted one; but in the Persian translation of Tabari (cf. Zotenberg, *loc cit.* p. 329), in the *Tārīkh-i-Gusida*, etc., we are told that he fled unaccompanied as far as Ray, where

by such of his troops as remained faithful, but near Nishāpūr he was overtaken and defeated by Kahtaba ibn Shebīb, who had been despatched by Abū Muslim in pursuit. Nasr now fled farther westward, and on reaching Jurjān was joined by the Syrian troops from 'Irāk; but they came too late. Kahtaba again overtook the fugitive and inflicted a final defeat. Nasr fled towards Hamadān, but he died worn out by years and toil at Sāva at the age of eighty-five. With this faithful viceroy perished the last hopes of the Umayyads, A.H. 131 (748).

he died. No mention is made here of the engagements with Kahtaba, who, according to the author of the *Gusida*, gained possession of Jurjān, Ray, Sāva, and Kum without striking a blow.

CHAPTER XI

KHORĀSĀN UNDER THE FIRST 'ABBĀSIDS

THE Umayyad Caliph at last recognised the gravity of the situation, and sent all the forces he could muster to oppose Kahtaba. But the Hāshimite troops carried all before them. They defeated a large Syrian army near Isfahān, and captured the important stronghold of Nahāvend, A.H. 132 (749). Then Kahtaba started for Kūfa, making a slight detour to avoid Ibn Hobayra, who was encamped at Jalūlā. On reaching the Euphrates, Ibn Hobayra came up with him, and a battle ensued at nightfall near Kerbelā. Kahtaba perished,¹ but his son Hasan continuing the fray defeated Ibn Hobayra, and drove him back on Wāsīt. Meanwhile the Yemenites revolted in Kūfa, and on the arrival of the victorious Hāshimite forces² delivered up the town to them. On the entry of Hasan ibn Kahtaba into Kūfa the head of the 'Abbāsīd house, Abū-l-'Abbās, emerged from his hiding-place, and the town for the time became the seat of the 'Abbāsids. Abū Sālama was provisionally recognised as the Vezīr of the house of Mohammed. Meanwhile the fate of the Umayyads had been decided by the battle of the Zāb in Mesopotamia, A.H. 132

¹ His horse ran away with him and, slipping on the banks of the river, threw its rider into the water, where he was drowned. His disappearance was not remarked until daybreak. The *Gusīda* says that Ibn Hobayra also perished in the battle.

² Numbering, according to the Persian Tabari, more than 30,000 men.

(750), where Merwān himself, surrounded by his greatest generals, encountered the Hāshimites under 'Abdullah, Abū-l-'Abbās's uncle. Merwān suffered a crushing defeat, and fled, hotly pursued, to Egypt, where he was finally captured and slain.

At the beginning of this year Abu-l-'Abbās, called Es-Saffāh, or the "Shedder of Blood," was proclaimed Caliph in the great mosque of Kūfa. The new Caliph's first measure was to sweep the entire Umayyad race from the face of the earth. The traditions which have come down to us of his butcheries pass all belief.¹ Syria was soon reduced, and Ibn Hobayra surrendered his last retreat, Wāsit. But troubles continued throughout his reign. Abū Muslim's attempts to put all the Umayyad faction to the sword led to a serious rising in Khorāsān. The partisans of the fallen dynasty, in Bokhārā, Soghdiana, and Farghāna, aided by the emperor of China, took the field in force, but were soon dispersed with great slaughter by Ziyād, governor of Samarkand. "It is plain," says Vambéry,² "from the historical sources before us that the original Iranian population of the land, namely, the Tājiks, fought under the banner of Nasr, and long remained true to the cause of the Ommayyades."

"The resistance which Nasr ibn Sayyār offered not

¹ The Caliph's two uncles, Dā'ūd and 'Abdullah,—the former in Mekka and Medina, the latter in Palestine,—were responsible for the wholesale extermination of the Umayyads in those countries. The historians tell us that 'Abdullah on one occasion invited seventy members of the house of Umayya to a feast, under promises of a full amnesty, and that, at a given signal, the servants fell upon the unsuspecting guests and put them all to death. This tragedy recalls the famous "Blood bath" in Stockholm, but the Umayyads had no Gustav Wasa to avenge their death. We are told that the spirit of revenge carried them so far that they caused all the tombs of the Umayyad Caliph to be opened, and what remained of their corpses to be scattered to the winds. Cf. *Chroniques de Tabari*, vol. iv. p. 343.

² *History of Bokhara*, p. 40.

only to the superior force, but also to the allurements of Ebu Muslim, deserves our respect."

"On the other hand, the adroitness of Ebu Muslim deserves our admiration, who in an astonishingly short space of time gained over to his side all the Turks of Transoxiana, and attached them to himself to such a degree that the myths which even now live in the mouths of the Ozbegs and Turcomans compare him to the Caliph Ali for valour and wondrous works. At all events the influential individuality of Ebu Muslim first made the warlike supremacy of the Turks, although only mediately, felt in Western Asia."

About the year A.H. 134 (751) the new Caliph's brother paid an official visit to Merv, in order to report on the state of the Eastern provinces. So much alarmed was he at the influence and independence of Abū Muslim that on his return to Kufa he recommended his brother to rid himself of the man to whom he owed his throne. In the following year Ziyād, the governor of Samarkand, probably at the instigation of the Caliph, rose against Abū Muslim; but the movement was quickly crushed, and Ziyād was deposed and put to death.

In the following year, A.H. 136 (753), while Abū Muslim and Abū Ja'far were returning from a pilgrimage to Mekka, the Caliph es-Saffāh died in Anbār. Abū Ja'far, who is well known in history as El-Mansūr, had been designated by his brother to succeed him,¹ but he had a rival in the person of his uncle 'Abdullah, who was at the head of a considerable army, including a contingent of 17,000 men of Khorāsān. Abū Muslim, compelled to choose between the pretenders, declared for Abū Ja'far, whereupon 'Abdullah caused a

¹ Es-Saffāh was ten years younger than Abū Ja'far, but, as Weil suggests, was preferred to the latter, because his mother was a free woman, while his brother's was a slave.

massacre of the whole of his Khorāsān contingent,¹ in the knowledge that they would refuse to draw the sword against the governor of their province. But the precaution was of no avail, for shortly afterwards his Syrian army was utterly defeated near Nisibis by a Persian force under Abū Muslim, and 'Abdullah was compelled to abandon his claim. Hardly was this danger averted when the Caliph el-Mansūr again allowed his jealousy of Abū Muslim to get the better of him. Abū Muslim was warned of his ill-will, so resolved an immediate return to Khorāsān. In order to prevent this the Caliph appointed him to the governorship of Syria and Egypt, and invited him to an audience in Madā'in. The correspondence² which followed between the Caliph and his too powerful lieutenant gives us a graphic picture of the times, and also possesses some historical importance. Abū Muslim was too wary to accept the Caliph's invitation. "A certain king of the Sāsānides," he replied, "once said: 'There is no more dangerous time for a Vezīr than when complete tranquillity reigns in the kingdom.' . . . I therefore deem it expedient to avoid the proximity of the Commander of the Faithful, without, however, ceasing on this account to be his faithful subject. Should the Commander of the Faithful allow me to do so I will be the most humble of his servants, but if he gives vent to his passions I shall be compelled for my own safety to recall my allegiance."

To this the Caliph replied: "I have grasped the meaning of thy letter; but thy position is different from that of the bad Vezīrs of the Sāsānide kings, . . . a humble and faithful servant like thyself has nothing to fear

¹ See Weil, *Geschichte der Khalifen*, vol. ii. pp. 24, 25.

² The correspondence is fully reported by Tabari; and Weil, recognising its historical interest, has translated in full three of the letters. Cf. Weil, *op. cit.* vol. ii. pp. 27, 28.

during a state of peace. Although the conditions hinted at towards the close of thy letter do not bespeak an entire submission, thou wilt doubtless return with the bearer of this letter. I pray God that He may give thee strength to withstand the enticements of Satan, who hopes to frustrate thy good intentions, and opens for thee the gate which leads to destruction."

Abū Muslim rejoined in the following remarkable letter: "I had a guide closely connected with the house of the Prophet whose business it was to instruct me in the teachings and duties prescribed by God. From him I had hoped to learn the sciences, but he led me into ignorance and error by means of the Koran itself, which, from love of worldly things, he misinterpreted. He ordered me, in God's name, to draw the sword, to banish feelings of pity from my heart, to accept no excuses from my enemies, and to pardon no offence. I did everything to pave his way to dominion. Nothing now remains for me but to entreat God to pardon me for the sins I have committed." Having despatched this letter, Abū Muslim set out for Khorāsān, but in the meanwhile El-Mansūr wrote privately to Abū Dā'ūd Khālid, whom Abū Muslim had left as his lieutenant in Khorāsān, appointing him to the governorship. He further pointed out that the army of Khorāsān had obeyed Abū Muslim because he had been fighting for the 'Abbāsids; that he was now in open revolt, and ought to be put to death at the first opportunity. Abū Dā'ūd communicated this letter to the army and chiefs of Khorāsān, who at once recognised him as governor. He then sent news of this momentous occurrence to Abū Muslim, who, seeing that he could no longer count on the attachment of the Khorāsānīs, and deceived by the false assurances of his former friends, consented to wait upon the Caliph at Madā'in. On arriving there he was basely murdered

at his master's instigation by five hired assassins, A.H. 137 (754).

Abū Muslim was barely thirty-five years of age when he met his fall. It was certainly deserved, for, according to computations of Arabian historians, he was responsible for the slaughter of no less than 600,000 human beings. But though the monster richly merited punishment, his master, on whom he had bestowed the Empire of the East, should have been the last to inflict it; and the treachery with which Abū Muslim's fate was compassed is an additional stain on El-Mansūr's memory.

CHAPTER XII

THE CALIPHATES OF EL-MANSŪR, EL-HĀDĪ, AND HĀRŪN ER-RASHĪD

EL-MANSUR'S troubles did not end with the defeat of 'Abdullah and the murder of Abū Muslim. The rebellious Mesopotamians, under their leader Mulabbab esh-Shaybāni, more than once repulsed the troops sent against them by the Caliph, and not till A.H. 138 (755) was order restored by Khāzim ibn Khuzayma.¹ In the meantime a "Magian," or Zoroastrian of Nishāpūr, named Sinbad,² disgusted at the murder of his patron Abū Muslim, rose in rebellion to avenge the blood of the fallen general.³ He soon found himself at the head of a large following,⁴ and gained possession of Nishāpūr, Kūmis, and Ray. In the town last mentioned the treasure which had been left there by Abū Muslim fell into his hands. Against him El-Mansūr despatched Jahwar⁵ ibn Marrār el-'Ijlī, at the head of 10,000 men, who encountered and put to flight the rebels between Hamadān and Ray. Sinbad escaped from the field of battle, but was overtaken and killed between Tabaristān and Ray, his revolt having lasted just seventy days.⁶

¹ Tabari, *Annales*, Series III. p. 122.

² An account of this man may be found in the *Siaset Namèh*, pp. 122-23 of Schefer's text.

³ In the Arabic, *Wadhālika innahu kāna min sanāy'i'ihī*.

⁴ Numbering 6000 men.

⁵ Wrongly read by Weil as *Jumhur*.

⁶ Tabari, *loc cit.* p. 120.

In A.H. 138 (755) Jahwar was deprived of his command for having failed to deliver over to the Caliph the treasure of Abū Muslim which had fallen into his hands. He now in turn took up arms against the Caliph, who sent a force against him under Mohammad ibn el-Ash'ath. Jahwar suffered a crushing defeat and fled to Āzerbāyjān, whither he was pursued and slain.

Although El-Mansūr had now, A.H. 139 (756), secured comparative tranquillity and recognition of his sovereign rights in most of his dominions, the distant province of Khorāsān, yearly rising in importance, was still under the heel of the rival faction of the Hāshimites and the Shi'ites, quite apart from minor sectarian movements which rendered the attempt to maintain order there almost hopeless.

In the year A.H. 140 (757) the Shi'ites broke out into open revolt, in the midst of which the then governor, Abū Dā'ūd Khālīd ibn Ibrāhīm, died.¹ His successor, 'Abd el-Jabbār, was powerless to assert his authority, and, on learning that he was about to be dismissed from his office, turned against El-Mansūr. Khāzim ibn Khuzayma, who had already distinguished himself in Mesopotamia, accompanied by the Caliph's son and successor El-Mahdi, at once marched against 'Abd el-Jabbār and his following, A.H. 141 (758). 'Abd el-Jabbār was, however, captured by his own people and sent, mounted backwards on an ass, to the Caliph, who, after extorting from him by torture all his treasure, put him to death. The governorship of Khorāsān was now given to El-Mahdi,² the Caliph's own son and successor—an appointment which

¹ According to both versions of Tabari, he fell from a window and broke his back.

² El-Mahdi, who was at this time about twenty years of age, had, we are told, a lieutenant to assist him in his duties as governor.

seems to indicate the growing importance of the far Eastern provinces.

In the year A.H. 141 (758) a strange sect of Persian origin styled *Rāvandīs* caused no little trouble to the Caliph, and even placed him in imminent personal danger.¹ The old chronicles have little to tell us of Khorāsān between the years A.H. 141 and 150, although during this period they have many grave events to record in other parts of the Caliph's dominion,—such as the rising of Mohammad and Ibrāhīm, descendants of the martyred Hasan (A.H. 145), and the foundation of Baghdād, A.H. 145 (762). We also hear of frequent engagements in Armenia between the Caliph's troops on the one hand and the Khazars and Turks on the other. These matters, however, do not directly concern our narrative.² We propose, therefore, to chronicle the years A.H. 150 to 180 briefly, recording only such facts as are connected with the history of Central Asia proper, and mentioning the names of those who held the governorship of Khorāsān during this period.³

In A.H. 150 (767) a serious rising took place in Khorāsān, under the leadership of a Persian named

¹ The *Rāvandīs* believed in the transmigration of souls, and held that the soul of the Deity was temporarily resident in the body of the Caliph, while the souls of Adam and Gabriel were residing in the bodies of two of his generals. For accounts of this sect, see Weil, *Geschichte der Khalifen*, vol. ii. p. 36 *et seq.*; Muir, *The Caliphate*, p. 448; Tabari, *Annales*, Series III. p. 129 *et seq.*; and Zotenberg, *Chroniques de Tabari*, vol. iv. p. 137 *et seq.*

² In the preceding pages undue space may appear to have been given to the history of the Caliphs, but the growing importance of Central Asia will in future render our history almost independent of events at Baghdād.

³ The famous *Annales* of Tabari (which have been our *Haupt-Quelle* for the history of the Arabs in Central Asia), like those of Ibn el-Athīr, are arranged under the heading of each succeeding year. We make a point of giving throughout the name of each governor of Khorāsān appointed by the Caliphs, for, though such details are in themselves trivial, no list of them has, to our knowledge, appeared in any European work.



RELIGIOUS MENDICANT, BOKHARA



Ustādsīs,¹ who, placing himself at the head of 300,000 men of Herāt, Bādghīs, Sistān, and other provinces, put to flight a large force of Khorāsānīs and men of Merv er-Rūd. On hearing of this, El-Mansūr immediately sent Khāzim ibn Khuzayma, who had been so successful in quelling the revolt in Mesopotamīa, to help El-Mahdi, the governor of Khorāsān,² to meet this new danger. El-Mahdi gave over the supreme command of his troops to Khāzim, who led a force of 20,000 men to meet the rebel Ustādsīs. On approaching the enemy, Khāzim threw up a zariḇa and prepared for battle, whereupon Ustādsīs advanced to the attack. But while a portion of his army was forcing the entrenchments Khāzim created a diversion by causing a body of his men to sally forth from an opening on the opposite side. This party fell on the rear of the rebel army and put them completely to rout, killing 70,000 and taking 14,000 prisoners. Khāzim fled to the hills, but was at length obliged to surrender.

A.H. 151 (768). El-Mahdi returned to Baghdād, and took up his residence in the new town of Rusāfa, which had been built for the Khorāsānīs, who were unable to dwell in peace with the haughty Arabs of the capital.

A.H. 152 (769). Humayd ibn Kahtaba was appointed governor of Khorāsān, and proclaimed a Holy War against Kābul.

A.H. 158 (774). El-Mansūr died, and was succeeded by his son El-Mahdi.

A.H. 159 (775). Humayd was succeeded in the governorship of Khorāsān by Abu 'Aun. A rising took

¹ Weil, *op. cit.* vol. ii. p. 65, says that he gave himself out as a *prophet*, but Tabari says nothing of this. Cf. Tabari, *Annales*, Series III. p. 149.

² El-Mahdi had held this post since A.H. 141 (758).

place in Khorāsān in connection with the appointment of the heir-presumptive (*vali-'ahd*).

A.H. 160 (776). Another rising occurred in Khorāsān under the leadership of Yūsuf ibn Ibrāhīm, called El-Barm, which was quelled by Yezīd ibn Mazyad. Yūsuf was sent captive to El-Mahdi, who, after subjecting him to the cruellest torture, crucified him.

Abu 'Aun having provoked the Caliph's wrath was dismissed from his office, and succeeded by Mu'āz ibn Muslim.

A.H. 161 (777). The revolt of Mokanna', "the Veiled Prophet of Khorāsān," originated in a village near Merv. He taught the transmigration of souls, and gave out that the Deity had lately been incarnate in the person of Abū Muslim, and had now passed into his own. He secured a great following from among the people of Khorāsān and Transoxiana, who, from the colour of their clothes, took the name of *Sefīd-Jāmegān*, or the "White-robed."

A.H. 163 (779). Mokanna' was besieged by Sayyid el-Harashī in his fortress in Kesh, and on finding his position hopeless poisoned himself. His head was sent to El-Mahdi in Aleppo.¹

Mu'āz was supplanted by Musayyah ibn Zobayr in the governorship.

A.H. 166 (782). A general rising took place against Musayyah, who was superseded by El-Fadhl ibn Sulaymān Tūsī in the governorships of Khorāsān and Sistān.

A.H. 167 (783). Death of El-Mahdi. Succession of El-Hādi.

¹ We have not thought fit to dwell at any length on the adventures of this famous impostor. Professor Vambéry, in his *History of Bokhara*, devotes no less than ten pages to the rising. The story, in its main outlines, is familiar to Englishmen from Moore's *Lalla Rookh*.

A.H. 170 (786). Death of El-Hādi. Succession of Hārūn er-Rashīd.

A.H. 171 (787). Ja'far el-Ash'ath, governor of Khorāsān.

A.H. 172 (788). El-'Abbās el-Ash'ath followed his father as governor, and was, A.H. 175 (791), succeeded by his uncle El-Ghatrīf ibn 'Atā.

A.H. 176 (792). Shi'ite revolt in Daylam. Hamza el-Khuzā'i, governor of Khorāsān.

A.H. 178 (794). El-Fadhl ibn Yahya was appointed governor of Khorāsān.

A.H. 178 (794). He built mosques and post-stations in Khorāsān, conducted a "Holy War" in Transoxiana, and was unsuccessfully attacked by the king of Oshrūsana Khārakhara.¹

A.H. 179 (795). Mansūr el-Himyari was governor of Khorāsān.

A.H. 180 (796). Ja'far ibn Yahya was governor of Khorāsān and Sistān.

A.H. 182 (798). The famous Caliph Hārūn er-Rashīd appointed his infant son Ma'mūn ruler over all the countries from Hamadān to the farthest East, under the guardianship of Ja'far ibn Yahya.

The year A.H. 187 (802) was memorable in Moham-medan annals for the sudden disgrace and fall of the all-powerful favourites of the Caliph, the Barmecides,² at that time represented by the brothers Fadhl and Ja'far and their aged father Yahya. Their story has been told

¹ Cf. Tabari, *loc. cit.* p. 631.

² This powerful family took its descent from one Barmek, a physician of Balkh. One of its members, Khālid ibn Barmek, became vezir of the first 'Abbāsīd Caliph, and under El-Mahdi was intrusted with the education of the heir-apparent Hārūn. Khālid's son Yahya succeeded him as vezir in A.H. 170 (786), and showed himself one of the most capable rulers of his age. For an account of their fall consult Sec. iii. of the Terminal Essay in vol. x. of Burton's *Thousand and One Nights*.

too often to bear repetition in this place, although, as we have seen, the Barmecides had from their origin been closely connected with Khorāsān.

On the fall of the Barmecides, A.H. 187 (802), 'Alī ibn 'Isā¹ was appointed to the governorship of Khorāsān, but the complaints against his misgovernment and extortion grew so loud that in A.H. 189 (804) Hārūn resolved to undertake a journey of inspection into the province. He accordingly set out at the head of 50,000 men,² leaving the government in the hands of his heir-apparent Amīn. On reaching Ray, however, he found 'Alī ibn 'Isā awaiting his arrival with rich presents for himself and his generals, and, soothed by these gifts and by the flattery of the cruel governor, Hārūn took him into favour and sent him back to Khorāsān, while he himself returned to his capital, A.H. 190 (806).

In the following year a certain Rāfi' ibn Layth, a grandson of the Umayyad governor, Nasr ibn Sayyār, for reasons of private vengeance, killed the governor of Samarkand and became master of that town. With the aid of the discontented citizens and some Turkish tribes he repulsed the army sent against him by 'Alī ibn 'Isā, A.H. 191 (807). Hārūn, on hearing of this revolt, at once despatched his trusted general Harthama to re-establish order; but the seditionary movement under Rāfi' continued to grow with such rapidity that the Caliph thought fit to take the field against him in person.³ So, again leaving Baghdād in the hands of his son Amīn, he set out for Khorāsān with a large army. On reaching Kirmānshāh, he sent forward Ma'mūn,

¹ August Müller, generally so accurate, calls him erroneously Isā ibn Aḥ, and equally erroneously states that he was killed in battle in the year 191, whereas he did not die till 195 (see below).

² Zotenberg, *op. cit.* iv. p. 469.

³ Cf. Müller, *op. cit.* i. p. 497; Vambéry, *Bokhara*, pp. 53, 54; Zotenberg, *op. cit.* iv. 71 *et seq.*

accompanied by Fadhl ibn Sahl as his vezīr, with orders to establish himself in Merv and to send Harthama to attack Rāfi', who had established his camp in Bokhārā and was now practically master of Transoxiana. Meanwhile the Caliph, who was suffering from a severe malady,¹ was advancing by slower stages towards Khorāsān with the main body of his army. On reaching Tūs the symptoms became more acute, and on the 3rd of Jumāda II. 193 (24th March 809), the great Caliph succumbed at the early age of forty-five, and was buried in that town.

¹ Its exact nature is not known, but it was probably the fruits of a life of reckless dissipation.

CHAPTER XIII

DECLINE OF THE CALIPHS' AUTHORITY IN KHORĀSĀN. THE TĀHIRIDES

ON the death of Hārūn er-Rashīd, A.H. 193 (809), a serious dispute arose between his two sons, Amīn and Ma'mūn. The former, probably on the advice of his vezīr, Fadhl ibn Rabī'a,¹ ordered the army, which was at Tūs, to return to Baghdād. This act was not only unfriendly towards his brother, but was also in direct contravention of his father's will. Ma'mūn, in retaliation, put a stop to all postal communication between Baghdād and the East, and assumed the title of Caliph over a kingdom which extended from Hamadān to Tibet, and from the Caspian to the Persian Gulf. With the help of his able vezīr, Fadhl ibn Sahl,² he succeeded in establishing order throughout his realms. Meanwhile Harthama took Samarkand after a protracted siege; whereupon Rāfi' threw himself on Ma'mūn's mercy and was pardoned, and thus peace was restored throughout Khorāsān. But the elements of civil disorder still held sway. While Amīn, on the one hand, struck Ma'mūn from the succession, the latter ordered the omission of his brother's name from the public prayers. Amīn, angered at his rival's attitude, resolved on reducing him by force of arms. To this end

¹ Cf. Zotenberg, *op. cit.* tome iv. p. 481.

² He was minister of both the civil and military departments, and was hence known as *Dhu-l-Riyāsatayn*, or "Lord of the two Ministries."

he despatched 'Alī ibn 'Isā against him at the head of 50,000 men. On reaching Ray, A.H. 195 (810), he encountered Tāhir, who had been posted there by Ma'mūn to watch the frontier. In the battle that ensued 'Alī was slain in single combat by Tāhir, and his army was put to flight. Tāhir, in obedience to Ma'mūn's orders, now marched on Baghdād, and with reinforcements brought by Harthama defeated all the armies sent to stop his progress. Having secured the submission of Arabia and Mesopotamia, he laid siege to Baghdād, and took the city by storm in A.H. 198 (813), after twelve months' investment. Amīn made a vain attempt to escape, and was finally slain by a party of Persian soldiers.

Ma'mūn, who was now the undisputed master of the Caliphate, made Merv his capital instead of removing to Baghdād. He took this fatal step, which gave offence to the people of the West generally, on the advice of Fadhl ibn Sahl; for Ma'mūn, like his brother, was overruled by a selfish and masterful vezīr. After the capture of Baghdād, Tāhir placed himself at the head of affairs in that town; but the people soon rose against him to avenge the death of Amīn. The revolt was quelled by the distribution of largesses, and all 'Irāk acknowledged Tāhir's sway.¹ It is impossible to enumerate the disorders which distracted Baghdād and the West, and the countless difficulties which Ma'mūn had to face during the next few years. Suffice it to say that, in spite of repeated risings and conspiracies against the Caliph's authority, Ma'mūn continued to be guided by the short-sighted counsels of his vezīr, who, as a Persian² and a Shi'ite, was hated in the orthodox West. Not till A.H. 202 (817) did the monarch awaken to the dangers of the situation and set

¹ Cf. Weil, *Geschichte der Khalifen*, vol. ii. p. 197.

² He was called "the Magian, the son of a Magian."

out from Merv to Baghdād. On reaching Sarakhs, Fadhl, the real cause of all Ma'mūn's misfortunes, was murdered in his bath—it appears, at the instigation of his master. In A.H. 204 (817) Ma'mūn entered Baghdād, and Tāhir, who had during the recent troubles fallen into disfavour with the Caliph, was now appointed governor of Baghdād. He did not remain long in this office, for at his own request he was appointed to the viceroyalty of the East, A.H. 205 (818).¹ With him the Caliph sent a confidential eunuch, who had orders to poison Tāhir should he show any signs of insubordination. After a successful rule of two years Tāhir suddenly omitted the Caliph's name in the weekly prayers, and on the following day he was found dead in his bed, A.H. 207 (822). But so great were the esteem and influence which the viceroy had gained in Khorāsān, that the Caliph did not dare to take the governorship of that province out of the hands of Tāhir's family. His two sons, Talha and 'Abdullah, did not inherit his turbulent character; and whilst 'Abdullah was fighting Ma'mūn's battles in Mesopotamia and Egypt, his brother Talha governed the Eastern provinces (from A.H. 207–213 (822–828)) in the Caliph's name. His residence was Nishāpūr, whence he exercised complete authority over Khorāsān, Tabaristān, and Transoxiana.

It is fitting in this place to revert to the rise of a family destined to play an important part in the East under the Tāhirides, and, after succeeding their former masters in the governorship of Khorāsān, to found the first independent Mohammedan dynasty in Central Asia.

While Asad ibn 'Abdullah el-Kasrī² held the governor-

¹ Ma'mūn had conceived an aversion for Tāhir (some authors say because Tāhir reminded him of his brother Amīn's death), and, being conscious of his, Tāhir naturally feared the proximity of the Caliph. He superseded a certain Ghassān, whom Ma'mūn had left in charge of Khorāsān.

² Who died A.H. 166 (782).

ship of Khorāsān a certain nobleman of Balkh named Sāmān,¹ who had been driven out of his native town, came to Asad in Merv and begged the governor to help him against his enemies. Asad warmly espoused his cause and succeeded in reinstating him in Balkh. Out of gratitude for this action, Sāmān, who had hitherto been a Zoroastrian,² embraced Islām and named his son Asad after his protector. This Asad had four sons, who rendered excellent services to Hārūn er-Rashīd in quelling the revolt of Rāfi' ibn Layth.³ Ma'mūn, mindful of the obligations under which the sons of Asad had placed his father, ordered the then governor of Khorāsān, Ghassān ibn 'Abād,⁴ to give to each of them the government of a town. Thus in the year A.H. 202 (817)⁵ Nūh, the eldest son, became Amīr of Samarkand; Ahmed, Amīr of Farghāna; Yahya, Amīr of Shāsh (Tashkent) and Oshrūsana; and Ilyās, lord of Herāt.⁶ When, in A.H. 205, Ghassān was superseded by Tāhir, these grants to the family of Sāmān were confirmed, and continued in the same hands until the downfall of the Tāhirides and the rise of the Sāmānides to the supreme power in the East.

In A.H. 213 (828) Talha died and was succeeded by his son 'Alī, who, however, perished shortly afterwards in a conflict with the Khārijites near Nishāpūr. Ma'mūn thereupon sent Talha's brother 'Abdullah to Khorāsān

¹ His full title was Sāmān-Khudāt, being lord of a village which he himself had built and given the name of Sāmān. He claimed descent from the Sāsānide Bahrām Chūbīn. Cf. Narshakhi, ed. Schefer, pp. 57, 58.

² Vambéry (*Bokhara*, p. 55) notes that "the fact that Sāmān, whilst still a heretic, had held a command long after the Arab conquest, proves the small progress Islāmism had at first made among the followers of Zoroaster."

³ See above, p. 96.

⁴ See note 1 above, p. 100.

⁵ Narshakhi, ed. Schefer, reads absurdly 292 !

⁶ Cf. Mirkhwānd, *Historia Samanidarum*, ed. Wilken, p. 3. Narshakhi says that Ahmed was made governor of Merv, but from what follows this seems erroneous.

to assume the reins of government, which he held until his death in A.H. 230 (844), at the age of forty-eight, after seventeen years of most successful administration. But although the Caliph's name was scrupulously mentioned in Friday prayers, Khorāsān was now to all intents and purposes independent of Baghdād. The falling away of this essentially Persian province was but the first step towards the final separation of the Arabs and the Persians which was shortly to follow, after two hundred years of involuntary and unnatural association. The Tāhirides continued to rule Khorāsān and the East during a period of fifty-six years, when their last representative, Mohammad,¹ in A.H. 259 (872), was overthrown by the Saffāride Ya'kūb ibn Layth, of whom we must now speak.

¹ D'Herbelot quotes a Persian quatrain in which the Tāhirides are enumerated—

*Dar Khorāsān zi āl-i-Massābshāh,
Tāhir u Talha būd u Abdullāh,
Bās Tāhir, digar Mohammad dān
Kū be Yakkūb dād takht u kulāh.*

Translation.—In Khorāsān, of the house of Massāb (Tāhir's name was Tāhir ibn Husayn ibn Massāb) there were the following princes—Tāhir, Talha, 'Abdullah, another Tāhir and then Mohammad, who gave up throne and crown to Ya'kūb.

CHAPTER XIV

THE SAFFĀRIDES AND THE RISE OF THE SĀMĀNIDES

DURING the Caliphate of Mutawakkil¹ the government of the province of Sistān was usurped by a man named Sālih ibn Nasr, who, under the pretext of putting down a rising of the Khārijites, had gathered round himself a large body of adherents. The then governor of Khorāsān, Tāhir II., hearing of the disorders in Sistān, took the field in person in order to put an end to the hostilities between the Khārijites and Sālih's adherents. This he succeeded in doing, but scarcely had he returned to his residence when news reached him that Sālih had again taken the field. Among the lieutenants of the latter was a certain Ya'kūb ibn Layth, who was destined to play an important part in the history of his time, and to establish a powerful though short-lived dynasty. He is one of the most popular heroes of Persian history, and so many anecdotes have clustered round his name that it is difficult to separate truth from romance. His origin was certainly obscure, and he appears to have been the son of a coppersmith,² though authorities are divided as to whether he ever plied that trade himself.³ Many tales

¹ He ruled from A.H. 232-247 (846-861).

² In Arabic *Saffār*, whence the dynasty took its name.

³ Cf. Khwāndamīr's account of the Saffārides in his *Habīb-us-Siyar*. We refer the reader also to Nöldeke's brilliant sketch of this man's career, entitled "Ya'qūb the Coppersmith" (*Sketches from Persian History*, pp. 176-206).

are told of his reckless generosity as a boy, and his consequent popularity among his schoolfellows. His Persian biographers tell us, without apology or comment, that on reaching the age of adolescence he became a highway robber; and he was doubtless followed by those whom his masterful bearing had attached to his person during childhood. "The number and character of his followers, and the success of his enterprises, soon gave him fame and wealth, and his generous and humane usage of those whom he plundered added to his renown and popularity. In such a state of society the transition from the condition of a successful robber to that of a chief of reputation was easy and natural. A man who possessed activity and courage, and who was able to command a number of adherents, could not fail of early attaining rank and consequence."¹ Sālih was only too glad to obtain the services of the bold highwayman, who rose so rapidly to power that the governor's successor, Dirham ibn Nasr, in A.H. 247 (861), gave him command of his army, which henceforth became the terror of the surrounding countries. Meanwhile the Tāhirides remained inactive in Nishāpūr, and followed a policy of *laissez-faire* which wrought their downfall.

Ya'kūb soon set upon a career of extended conquest, and made himself master of Herāt (A.H. 253 (867)), Kirmān, and Shīrāz. In A.H. 257 (871) he sent a message to Muwaffak, the Caliph Mu'tamid's brother, declaring himself one of the Caliph's most humble slaves, and proposing to pay him a visit. The Caliph, wishing at any cost to keep this redoubtable warrior at a safe distance, sent him an investiture of the government of Balkh, Tokhāristān, and all the country as far as the Indian frontier. These districts were inhabited by widely different races, and included the Turks of Kābul and their neighbours the

¹ Malcolm, *History of Persia*, vol. i. p. 148.

Afghans. Ya'kūb now crossed the passes of the Hindu Kush and entered the Kābul valley. For the past hundred years or so it had never entered the mind of any Eastern governor to disturb the independence of the Turkish king of Kābul.¹ But Ya'kūb succeeded where the early Moslem conquerors had failed, for he carried off the king and all his idols, and was the first to establish Islām in a district hitherto under the influence of Buddhism. In A.H. 259 (872) he administered a crushing defeat to the last of the Tāhirides, and thus became master of Khorāsān and the East. He died in A.H. 265 (878), leaving nearly the whole of Persia to his brother 'Amr, who for some years enjoyed a prosperous rule and remained obedient to the Caliph at Baghdād. But in A.H. 271 (884), owing to the complaints of the inhabitants of Khorāsān, the Caliph Mu'tamid deprived 'Amr of the governorship of that province, which was apparently given to Rāfi' ibn Harthama, and sent an army to attack him. In the first encounter 'Amr was defeated, and fled to his native state of Sīstān by way of Shirāz and Kirmān. At this point we must for a time leave 'Amr, and revert to the story of the Sāmānides.

It has been stated above that the province of Māvarā-un-Nahr, or Transoxiana, had been held during the supremacy of the Tāhirides by various members of the house of Sāmān. At the time of the overthrow of the Tāhirides by Ya'kūb ibn Layth, Nasr ibn Ahmed was governor of Samarkand. We are told² that, after the fall of the Tāhirides, Muwaffak sent a regal mandate to Nasr ibn Ahmed appointing him to the government of all Transoxiana, from the banks of the

¹ Cf. Müller, *op. cit.* vol. ii. p. 29.

² Narshakhi (ed. Schefer, p. 78) gives the date as A.H. 260 (872), Mirkhwānd (ed. Wilken, p. 4) as A.H. 261 (873).

Oxus to the farthest East.¹ It is not apparent how he became independent of the new masters of Khorāsān;² but in the year 261 we find Nasr, with the help of his brother Isma'īl, engaged in the direction of affairs in Transoxiana. Narshakhi tells us that the names of both were mentioned in the public prayers, while that of Ya'kūb ibn Layth was omitted. Nasr appears to have had a natural predilection for the town of Samarkand, and on this account, perhaps, on receiving his appointment from the Caliph, he did not proceed to the then capital, Bokhārā, but sent thither a deputy in the person of his brother Isma'īl, who was then but twenty-seven years of age. Bokhārā was at this period in a state of great disorder owing to the dissensions of political and religious factions, and partly to the rapine caused by organised robber-bands which infested the country. Isma'īl, who shone as a general and an administrator, and possessed the rarer faculty of winning men's hearts by his justice and clemency, soon established order throughout the country, and succeeded in extirpating the banditti, whose numbers, we are told, even between Rāmtīna and Barkad, amounted to 4000.³ All would have gone well in Nasr's dominions had not his jealousy, or proneness to listen to the voice of slander, led him to quarrel with his brother. It is not necessary to recount the various phases of these one-sided disputes. Suffice it to say that while, on the one hand, Isma'īl always remained loyal to his brother, Nasr himself was too

¹ Narshakhi, *loc. cit.* Muwaffak is here spoken of as Caliph, but he was merely chief minister of state to his brother the Caliph Mu'tamid.

² This point is not made clear by Persian historians. The Saffārides had by their victories become masters of all the provinces ruled by the Tāhirides, of which Transoxiana was certainly one. It is hard to conceive either that they should have renounced their claim on Transoxiana, or that the feeble Caliph should have taken upon himself to pronounce the Sāmānides independent of Khorāsān.

³ Narshakhi, ed. Schefer, p. 79.



A JEWISH CHILD OF BOKHARA



prudent to withdraw him abruptly from Bokhārā, where he had won the esteem and affection of the people. But in A.H. 272 (885) he succumbed to the wiles of self-interested advisers and marched against his brother, who fled from Bokhārā and called upon his friend Rāfi' ibn Harthama,¹ the viceroy of Khorāsān, for aid.² Nasr soon brought most of the towns of Bokhārā to submission, and forbade their citizens to furnish supplies to Isma'il and his army, who soon felt the stress of famine. So pitiable, indeed, was their plight by the time that Rāfi' arrived, that the governor of Khorāsān, rather than embark upon so losing a venture, suddenly declared to Nasr that he was not come to make war, but peace, between the brothers. Terms were soon arrived at by which the government of Bokhārā was given to Ishak, while Isma'il was appointed tax-collector (*āmīl-i-kharāj*), A.H. 273 (886). These matters being settled, Nasr returned to Samarkand, and Rāfi' to Khorāsān. But in the following year Nasr, dissatisfied with the accounts rendered by Isma'il, and perhaps suspecting treachery on the part of Isma'il and Ishak, again prepared to attack Bokhārā. To this end he drew large reinforcements from Farghāna. Isma'il, determined on this occasion to be better prepared to encounter his brother, raised a powerful contingent in Khwārazm. After suffering a few slight reverses, Isma'il, at the end of the year A.H. 275 (888), administered a crushing defeat on his brother and took

¹ Vambéry is in this place (see *Bokhara*, p. 58) guilty of a curious error, for he says that this Rāfi' was the *Rāfi' ibn Layth* who had rebelled against Hārūn er-Rashīd in A.H. 190 and was pardoned in 196 by Ma'mūn. He would by the year 272 have been rather old to receive a governorship of a province.

² Mirkhwānd (ed. Wilken, p. 6) says that it was in connection with this friendship that certain mean persons poisoned the mind of Nasr against his brother. This author tells us that Isma'il had requested and received of Rāfi' the province of Khwārazm, and this, so Nasr's advisers said, was merely a plot to deprive Nasr of Transoxiana.

him prisoner. At this crisis, as on many other occasions,¹ if we are to believe the historians, Isma'il displayed an almost incredible degree of generosity, for he treated his fallen brother with the utmost deference and kindness, and sent him back to Samarkand without suggesting any change in their relative positions. Nasr seems from this date to have ruled peacefully until his death in A.H. 279 (893).

¹ See below, p. 110.

CHAPTER XV

THE SĀMĀNIDES

On the death of Nasr ibn Ahmed, A.H. 279 (892), Isma'īl became the acknowledged lord of Transoxiana and Khwārazm, with Bokhārā as his capital. His succession was furthermore confirmed by a royal patent from the Caliph Mu'tadhid. The first recorded act of Isma'īl's reign was the *ghasā*, or Holy War, which he conducted against the Christian settlement of Tarāz.¹ The undertaking, according to Narshakhi,² cost him no little trouble; but finally "the Amīr and many of the *Dihkāns* embraced Islam," and opened the gates of Tarāz to Isma'īl, who immediately converted the principal church into a mosque and had prayers in the Caliph's name. His troops returned to Bokhārā laden with booty.³ In the meantime 'Amr ibn Layth had reorganised his shattered forces,⁴ and set out on a fresh career of conquest. In 279 Mu'tadhid, on the death of his brother, succeeded to the Caliphate.

¹ Five farsakhs to the south of Aulié-ātā. For a full account of what is known of Christianity in Central Asia in early times we refer the reader to an excellent monograph on this subject by M. Barthold, of St. Petersburg, which was published in vol. viii. of the *Zapiski*, or Journal of the St. Petersburg University Oriental Faculty. Much valuable information on this subject is also to be found in Col. Yule's *Cathay and the Way Thither*.

² Ed. Schefer, p. 84.

³ Bellew (*Forsyth Mission*, p. 119) says that Isma'īl received his patent of succession from the Caliph while engaged in this campaign; but this is not in agreement with Narshakhi, whom he gives as his authority.

⁴ See above, p. 105.

'Amr ibn Layth, who had been the late Caliph's bitterest enemy, now offered his services to his successor, who appointed him to the governorship of Khorāsān. The Caliph doubtless thought that 'Amr would act as a useful counterpoise to the Sāmānides, whose power was daily increasing in Transoxiana, and Rāfi' ibn Harthama, who was in possession of part of Khorāsān and Persian 'Irāk.¹ In A.H. 283 (896) 'Amr defeated Rāfi' and took possession of Nishāpūr. Rāfi' was cruelly murdered, and his head sent as a trophy of 'Amr's successes to Baghdād. 'Amr's ambition now knew no bounds. He insisted that the Sāmānides should be removed from Transoxiana, and that the province should be added to his governorship. The Caliph, in reply to these demands, urged him to attack Isma'il, and practically offered him the province should his expedition prove successful, while at the same time he confirmed Isma'il in his governorship, and encouraged him to withstand 'Amr.² He doubtless hoped, by provoking a conflict, to weaken the power of both men. These hostilities finally culminated in the siege and capture of Balkh, A.H. 288 (900), when 'Amr fell into Isma'il's hands.³ In this connection, again, wonderful stories are told of Isma'il's generosity towards his fallen enemies. It is said, indeed, that he would have

¹ Cf. Weil, *op. cit.* ii. p. 483.

² Weil, *op. cit.* ii. p. 485, hints at this duplicity, basing his statement on the fact that the Caliph praised and rewarded Isma'il when he heard of his victory over 'Amr. Khwāndamīr, in his *Habīb-us-Siyar*, leaves the question open, and expressly says that Isma'il acted "either on the Khalif's orders or on his own initiative."

³ Nizām ul-Mulk, in his *Siyāset Namé*, tells an amusing anecdote in this connection. After 'Amr had been taken prisoner, towards nightfall one of his fellows, having procured some meat and borrowed a saucepan, was preparing a meal for his master: while he for a moment left his cooking to fetch some salt, a dog came and poked his head into the saucepan. In trying to pull out a bone the handle of the pot fell round his neck, and he scampered off, carrying the scalding pot with him. On seeing this, 'Amr remarked: "This morning 300 camels bore my kitchen, and to-night a dog has carried it off."

kept 'Amr by him, and treated him with kindness and distinction, had not the Caliph demanded that his enemy should be delivered over to him for punishment. 'Amr was therefore sent to Baghdād, where he remained a close prisoner until his death by the executioner's hand in A.H. 290 (903).¹ He was nominally succeeded by a son, Tāhir, who, however, only held his post for one year.

As soon as 'Amr arrived a prisoner in Baghdād the Caliph sent a royal patent confirming the appointment of Isma'īl to the governorship of "Khorāsān, Turkestān, Māvarā-un-Nahr, Sind, Hind, and Jurjān."² Isma'īl's government is spoken of in the highest terms, and we are expressly told by Narshakhi that throughout his rule he owed implicit obedience to the Caliph. He chose Bokhārā as his capital,³ and appointed separate governors for all the towns in his realms.

The last campaign in which he engaged was against the Turks in the modern Hazrat-i-Turkestān, whom in A.H. 291 (903) he drove back within their own frontiers, while Isma'īl returned to Bokhārā laden with plunder.

The last four years of Isma'īl's reign were characterised by internal peace and progress, which enabled him to devote much of his attention to the welfare of his beloved city of Bokhārā, which now became a great centre of Mohammedan learning and culture.⁴ Many of the principal buildings in Bokhārā date back to the days of Amīr Isma'īl, and among her children are to be reckoned some of the greatest theologians, jurisconsults, historians, and

¹ Narshakhi, ed. Schefer, p. 90. The editor was here (as in only too many places in this uncritical edition) guilty of allowing an absurd date to be printed in his text; for the date of 'Amr's death is given as 280!

² Narshakhi, *loc. cit.* Vambéry points out (*op. cit.* note to p. 66) that Sind and Hind are "a random boast" of the author.

³ The governor before him had made Bokhārā his residence.

⁴ A very striking description of the literary talent gathered there is given by *ash-Thālabī*, in the *Yatīmatu 'd-Dahr*, vol. iv. p. 30 (Damascus ed.).

poets of the day. Bokhārā was, moreover, the capital of an empire which included such famous and widely separated towns as Merv, Nishāpūr, Ray, Āmul, Herāt, and Balkh.¹ At this date Bokhārā fully deserved the title of *Sherīf*, or "the Noble," which she has retained to the present time, when the memory alone of her ancient greatness survives.

Such was the inheritance which Isma'il, on his death² in A.H. 295 (907), left to his son Ahmed.

While, on the other hand, the Būyide or Daylamite dynasty was becoming daily more powerful, and was gradually absorbing the whole of Persia and trespassing on the Western possessions of the Sāmānides, the representatives of this house had become mere puppets in the hands of their ministers, many of whom were Turks, who, like their kinsmen the Mamlūks of Egypt, had risen from the position of slaves to the highest offices in the state.

Thus in the year A.H. 350 (961), on the death of 'Abd el-Melik I., Mansūr I., his brother and successor, met with serious opposition from a certain Turk named Alptagin, governor of Nishāpūr, who refused to recognise his claims. Resort was had to arms, and, after a battle at Balkh, the results of which are variously stated, Alptagin withdrew to Ghazna, where he established himself so strongly that he was able to repulse the army sent by Mansūr to attack him. On the death of Alptagin in A.H. 366 (976) the leadership of those men who had

¹ Vambéry (*Bokhara*, p. 67) adds to this list Kazwīn, Shīrāz, and Isfahān, which were towns in the dominion of the Būyides. The Būyides and the Sāmānides practically shared the whole of Persia and Central Asia as follows:—

Sāmānides—Khorāsān, Sīstān, Balkh, Bokhārā, and Samarkand.

Būyides—The two 'Irāks, Fars, Kirmān, Khuzistān, and Luristān. Tabaristān and Jurjān were continually changing hands.

² He died of some malady at a place called Zarmān, whither the doctors had sent him for change of air.

accompanied him to Ghazna passed to another Turk named Sabuktagin. The choice was fortunate, for Sabuktagin proved himself to be a general of great talent; and by means of little frontier engagements he succeeded in rapidly extending his territories, and ultimately in founding a powerful dynasty which, under his successor, was to bring Northern India, Persia, and the East under its sway. Although Sabuktagin was the nominal vassal of the Sāmānides,¹ he was in reality an independent ruler. This was, moreover, the case in a lesser or greater degree with many of the governors in Khorāsān and the neighbouring dependencies.

¹ Dawlat Shāh, in his *Lives of the Poets* (see Browne's edition, p. 44), quotes from 'Unsuri the following quatrain in which the rulers of the house of Sāmān are enumerated—

Nūh kas būdand xi āl-i-Sāmān mazkūr
Dā'im bi imārat-i-Khorāsān mashhūr
Ismā'il ast u Ahmādī u Nasrī
Dū Nūh u dū 'Abd-ul-Malik u dū Mansūr.

Translation.—Nine members of the house of Sāmān were famous in the government of Khorāsān, namely, Ismā'il, one Ahmad, one Nasr, two Nūh's, two 'Abd el-Melik's, and two Mansūr's.

CHAPTER XVI

THE KARA-KHĀNIDES, OR UĪGHŪRS

WHILE the Sāmānides were thus harassed by the powerful Daylamites in the west, by the growing power of Sabuktāgin in the south, and the fear of insubordination in their own states, a force still more formidable had arisen on their northern frontier, where a Turkish state had been founded which extended from Kāshghar to the Sea of Aral. The relations of this state with its southern neighbours were at first of a peaceful and even friendly character; but when the nomads perceived that Iranian authority was on the wane they began to cast longing eyes across the Jaxartes. They probably belonged to the tribe of *Uīghūr*, which had been the first to separate ✓ from the main body of the Turkish race and settle down in a home on the slopes of the Tien-shan.¹

¹ Cf. Vambéry, *Bokhara*, p. 81, and Bretschneider, *Medieval Researches from Eastern Asiatic Sources* (London, 1888), vol. i. p. 236 *seqq.* An interesting article was published in 1874 by Grigorieff in the *Memoirs of the Eastern Branch of the St. Petersburg Archaeological Society*, vol. xviii. p. 191 *seqq.* This article contains the Turkish text of an extract from the *Tārīkh-i-Munajjim-Bāshī*, with an introduction, a translation, and copious notes. The name of Kara-Khānides was first suggested by Grigorieff for this dynasty, after Satuk Kara Khān, who was the first of its kings to embrace Islām. The title is more convenient than the others by which this dynasty has been known, such as Uīghŭrs, Ilēk-khāns, and Ilkhāns, as will appear from note below, p. 116. Bretschneider, whom on such subjects it is hard to contradict, was by no means convinced by Grigorieff's positive assertion that the Kara-Khānides were not Uīghŭrs.

According to the Mohammedan historian Juvaynī,¹ the Uighurs originally came from the valley of the Ōrkon River. The first king whose name has come down to us was Būkū Khān, whom tradition has identified with the great Afrāsiyāb.²

Būkū Khān, having learnt in a dream that he would possess the entire world, assembled his troops and sent his brothers to wage war against the Mongols, Kirghiz, Tanguts, and Khitāys.³ They returned to their dwelling-place with great booty, and founded the city of Urdu Bālik. Būkū Khān again dreamt that a piece of jade was given him with the assurance that as long as he

¹ The passage from his famous history, the *Tārīkh-i-Jahān-Kushāy*, dealing at great length with the Uighurs, has been translated by d'Ohsson. Cf. *Histoire des Mongols*, vol. i. p. 430 *et seq.*

² Narshakhi (ed. Schefer, p. 233) calls this dynasty of "Turkish Khāns" the "house of Afrāsiyāb." Afrāsiyāb is one of the most prominent figures in Firdawsi's great epic of kings, the *Shāh Namē*. B.C. 700 is given as a conjectural date of the first migration of the Turks across the Oxus—as far as India and Asia Minor. According to the coins, it appears that the Turks (under what name it is not known) entered the Greek kingdom of Bactria. Cf. Reinaud, *Relations de l'Empire, Rom. avec l'Asie Centrale* (Paris, 1863), p. 227. Tradition has it that Afrāsiyāb flourished about B.C. 580. He was the emperor of Tūrān, of which Turkestan was a province, and was the great foe of Irān. During his reign Siyāwush, son of the emperor of Irān, Kay-Kā'ūs, having incurred his father's displeasure, fled across the Oxus, which formed the boundary between the two kingdoms, to Afrāsiyāb, who held court at Rāmtīn. Siyāwush received Afrāsiyāb's daughter Ferengis in marriage, with the provinces of Khotan and Chīn as her dowry. Afrāsiyāb's brother Gersīwaz, jealous of the stranger's growing power, set his brother's mind against Siyāwush, and induced him to take the field against his son-in-law, who was captured and conveyed to Rāmtīn and there put to death. Siyāwush left a posthumous son by Ferengis, named Kay-Khosrū, who became emperor of Irān. Kay-Khosrū, bent on avenging his father's death, besieged Rāmtīn, drove Afrāsiyāb out of his country, and occupied it for seven years; Afrāsiyāb afterwards returned and recovered his capital, but was finally defeated and slain. Kay-Khosrū now became master of Samarkand and Bokhārā; but, wishing to devote his days to religious contemplation, resigned his government to Lohrāsp, the son-in-law of Kay-Kā'ūs, who soon exacted homage from the rulers of Tartary. Thus the Persian dynasty existed till the overthrow of Darius II.

³ The accurate transcription of this name is *Khiūd'i*; however, for convenience the more familiar spelling of *Khitāy* has been retained throughout.

preserved it he would rule the world. The prospect induced him to turn his arms to the west and enter Turkestan, where he built the city of Balāsāghūn.¹ We know from Chinese sources that these Uighurs² had their abode in the seventh century in the north-west of Mongolia; that in the eighth century they dwelt near the place where, in the five hundred years later, the Mongols built Karakorum. In the ninth century their empire in Mongolia was destroyed by the Kirghiz, when they were dispersed, and apparently split into two parties. The eastern branch came into contact with Chingiz Khān. After and thenceforward they appear in the Mongol-Chinese annals as under the name of Wei-wu-rh.³ Of the Western Uighurs little is known, but they may be identified with the Eastern Turks of Moham-medan authors of the eleventh and twelfth centuries.⁴

¹ The exact position of this town, which during the tenth and eleventh centuries was the capital of the Khāns of Turkestan (see Ibn el-Athīr), is not known. Abulfeda says it was not far from Kāshghar. Juvayni says that in the days of the Mongols it was called Gu-Balik.

² Grigorieff, in his well-known but harsh, and indeed unjust, review of Vambéry's *Bokhara*, published as an Appendix to vol. i. of Schuyler's *Turkestan*, says (1) that the Ilik Khāns were not Uighurs, but Karlukhs, and (2) that the Kara-Khitāys were their descendants. Though he takes M. Vambéry to task for not knowing such "facts," neither of these statements will bear the light of modern research. Vambéry was, however, wrong in calling the Kara-Khitāys Uighurs.

³ Klaproth (*Sprache und Schrift der Uiguren*) proves convincingly that the Hui-ho of the Chinese authors anterior to the Mongol period are identical with the Uighurs, and that the Uighurs are to be classed among the Eastern Turks. The term Hui-ho was, however, used by Chinese writers of the Mongol period to designate Mohammedans generally (cf. Bretschneider's article on the Uighurs in his *Medieval Researches from Eastern Asiatic Sources*, to which excellent monograph most of these notes are due). Translations of the principal Chinese records of the Uighurs are to be found in Videlou's supplement to d'Herbelot's *Bib. Orient.*

⁴ The name *Uighūr* is first found in Mohammedan histories at the beginning of the thirteenth century. Previously to this they seem to have been known by the name of Taghazghaz, which is doubtless a corruption. Cf. *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, or, *History of the Moghuls of Central Asia*, by Ney Elias and E. Denison Ross, p. 94 of Introduction.

The first of the Uighūr Khāns of Turkestan who plays any great part in Mohammedan history is Boghrā Khān, whose capital was Balāsāghūn, and who ruled over Kāshghar (called Urdu Kend), Khotan, Karakorum, Tarās, and Fārāb (Otrār).¹ He was contemporaneous with Nūh III., seventh of the Sāmānide line, whose reign was characterised by the utmost confusion and anarchy. Two of Nūh's most powerful nobles—Abu 'Alī Sīmjūr, governor of Khorāsān, and Fā'ik, governor of Herāt, whose insubordination had received severe but well-merited punishment at the hands of their master—made treacherous overtures to Boghrā Khān, and invited him to attack Nūh. The invitation was accepted with alacrity by the Uighūr prince, who at once set out for Samarkand, which was delivered over to him by the faithless Fā'ik, whom Nūh had intrusted with its defence. The feeble representative of the Sāmānides, thus betrayed, fled from his capital, which Boghrā Khān shortly after entered in triumph, and became practically master of Transoxiana. But the climate of Bokhārā did not suit him. He set out for his home, when death overtook him ere he had gone many stages, A.H. 383 (993). Meanwhile Nūh re-entered Bokhārā and regained possession of his dominion. But though he was heartily welcomed by the people he did not feel secure from the treachery of his nobles, and on this account he invited the great Sabuktagin, in the year A.H. 384 (994), to come to his aid. Sabuktagin immediately hastened over the mountain passes at the head of 20,000 men, and, crossing the Oxus, joined Nūh at Kesh. Seconded by his son Mahmūd, he gained three victories over the rebel lieutenants at Herāt, Nishāpūr, and finally at Tūs. Fā'ik had in the meanwhile fled to Ilik Khān, the

¹ For notices of these places, consult Grigorieff's article on the *Kara-Khānides*, and Bretschneider's *Medieval Researches*.

son and successor of Boghrā Khān, and Bokhārā was threatened with a second Uighūr invasion. In reply to the menace, Sabuktagin, who had quarrelled with Nūh, concluded a peace with Ilik, and appointed the rebellious Fā'ik governor of Samarkand.

In A.H. 387 (997) both Sabuktagin and Nūh died, and were respectively succeeded by the valorous and talented Mahmūd, and by Mansūr II. who exhibited qualities precisely the reverse.

Transoxiana fell into the power of Ilik Khān, while Mahmūd of Ghazna gained possession of Khorāsān. Turks had long held high office in the states of Islām in Central Asia, as well as in Baghdād and in Egypt, where they had founded a powerful dynasty. It was, therefore, no great change for them to find themselves, as a nation, masters of the extensive kingdom of which Bokhārā was the capital.

Mansūr II., after a reign of less than two years, was deprived of sight by one of his discontented courtiers named Bektuzun ; and 'Abd el-Melik II., a mere child, was set up in his stead. All power was now concentrated in the hands of Fā'ik and Bektuzun. When news of these events reached Ilik Khān in Kāshghar he sent a message to 'Abd el-Melik to the effect that he would speedily take measures to protect him. Bektuzun immediately set out to oppose Ilik Khān, but he was unsuccessful, and in A.H. 389 (999) Ilik Khān entered Bokhārā. Instead, however, of helping the young prince, he cast him into prison, where he soon afterwards died.¹

¹ He was not actually the last of the Sāmānides, for one member of the family named Isma'īl el-Muntazir had escaped from Ilik's hands. His subsequent adventures would go to make an exciting story. For six years he maintained himself at the head of a faithful following. With the help of the Ghuz he twice defeated Ilik's troops, and (in 391-1001) actually wrested Nishāpūr from the hands of the governor, Mahmūd of Ghazna's brother. He finally perished at the hands of a Bedouin in A.H. 395 (1005).

When, in A.H. 389 (999), Ilik Khān¹ wrested Transoxiana from the Sāmānides, their capital was removed to Bokhārā. In A.H. 398 (1007) they attempted to establish themselves south of the Oxus, but were driven back by Mahmūd of Ghazna, and henceforward their territory was restricted to Transoxiana, Kāshghar, and Eastern Tartary.²

About the beginning of the tenth century a prince of the hereditary house of the Khāns of Kāshghar, named Satuk Boghrā Khān,³ became the first convert in that country to Islām, which he proceeded to force upon his subjects at the point of the sword, in the face of a determined and protracted opposition which prevented its spread beyond the limits of his own territory. It was only on the downfall of the Sāmānides that the creed of Mohammed, through proselytising zeal—of Mahmūd in the direction of Hindustān, and of Ilik Khān in that of Turkestdān—received a fresh impetus, and spread north, south, and east with a rapidity only equalled by the violence employed by its propagators.⁴

According to Narshakhi,⁵ Ilik Khān died in A.H. 403 (1012), and was succeeded by his brother Toghān Khān, who, a few days after his accession, was attacked by what appeared to be an incurable malady. The Sultans of

¹ His name was Abū-l-Husayn Nasr I.

² A tentative list of the Khāns of Turkestdān is given in S. Lane-Poole's *Mohammedan Dynasties*, p. 134. They ruled, according to this author's computation, from about A.H. 320–560 (932–1165).

³ He was born in A.H. 333 (944). Cf. *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, p. 287.

⁴ Cf. Forsyth's *Mission to Yarkand*,—Dr. Bellew's chapter on the History of Kāshghar, p. 121. The account of the first introduction of Islām into Kāshghar is given in a Turki work entitled the *Taskira Bughra Khān* (which was translated from the Persian of Shaykh 'Attār). Extracts from this somewhat fantastic work have been published in the original in Shaw's *Turki Grammar*.

⁵ Ed. Schefer, p. 233.

Khitāy and Khotan, thinking to take advantage of his helpless state, advanced with an enormous host to attack his dominions.¹ But, on hearing of the approaching invasion, the Khān miraculously recovered his health and forthwith set out to oppose his enemies. We are told that they retreated without striking a blow as soon as they learnt that their quarry had regained his strength, but were hotly pursued and harassed by the Khān for three months.

Toghān Khān died in A.H. 408 (1018). He is spoken of in terms of the highest praise, both on account of his piety and his learning. His successor was Arslān Khān, who, however, was unable to preserve the integrity of his kingdom. Coming into conflict with Sultan Mahmūd, he was defeated and killed in the year A.H. 410 (1020).

Kādir² Khān, who now ascended the throne at Samarkand, is said to have brought the whole of Kāshghar and Khotan under his subjection. He died in A.H. 423 (1031), and was succeeded by his son Arslān Khān. During his reign he received a deputation from some Turks of Tibet, who, hearing of his justice and clemency, asked permission to settle in the neighbourhood of Balāsāghūn. He granted their request, and when they arrived he tried to compel their acceptance of Islām. This they refused, but as they were otherwise loyal and obedient he gave way and allowed them to remain in a state of heathenism.³ Arslān Khān was overthrown in A.H. 425 (1033) by his brother Boghrā Khān, during whose reign the immigrant Turks embraced

¹ They advanced within three stages of Balāsāghūn. They are spoken of as coming from *Sin* (China), but they were probably not Chinese but Eastern Uighurs (cf. Bretschneider, i. 253).

² His name is often given in Oriental histories as *Kadr*. See Raverty, *Tabakāt-i-Nāsiri*.

³ Cf. Narshakhi, ed. Schefer, p. 234.

Islām (A.H. 432).¹ He died by poison in A.H. 439 (1047), and was succeeded by his son Ibrāhīm—the last chief of the house of Boghrā Khān.²

The kingdom of Kāshghar seems shortly afterwards to have fallen into the hands of another branch of the Eastern Uighurs, called by Narshakhi the Tufghāj,³ the first of whose representatives, Ibrāhīm, was killed in battle against Alp Arslān, the Seljūk, in A.H. 472 (1079), and was succeeded by his brother Khidhr Khān.⁴ He apparently died in the same year, when his son Ahmed Khān came to the throne. The latter, in A.H. 482 (1089), was attacked and defeated by Melik Shāh, and sent prisoner to Isfahān; but soon afterwards he was re-instated as governor of Transoxiana. In 488 he was condemned to death by the mullās or doctors of Samarkand, on the ground that he professed heretical tenets acquired during his residence in Persian 'Irāk. After him Mas'ūd Khān⁵ reigned for a short period, and was succeeded by Kādir Khān, who in A.H. 495 (1101) perished in an insurrection fomented by him against Sanjar, the then governor of Khorāsān.

The next ruler of Samarkand was Mohammad Khān⁶ ibn Sulaymān, who in A.H. 503 (1109) success-

¹ We are told by this same author that they had caused much depredation among the Mohammedans, which seems inconsistent with what has been said of them before.

² S. Lane-Poole gives the date of Boghrā Khān's death as 435, and makes no mention of his son Ibrāhīm.

³ Narshakhi, ed. Schefer, reads this name *Tumghāch*.

⁴ S. Lane-Poole (*loc. cit.*) says Ibrāhīm died in 460, and was succeeded by his son Nasr, who died in 472. It will be seen that great confusion exists with regard to these Khāns. Major Raverty, in his translation of the *Tabakāt-i-Nāsiri*, furnishes a long list of Ilik Khāns; but it is hard to reconcile any two accounts, so much do the names and dates differ.

⁵ S. Lane-Poole (*Mohammedan Dynasties*, p. 135) says Mahmūd Khān II.

⁶ S. Lane-Poole (*loc. cit.*) reads Mahmūd Khān III., and from this point the list he gives no longer corresponds with Narshakhi's account.

fully defended his capital against the attack of a large Turkish force under a certain Sāghir Beg. He held this post until his death, and apparently continued in his loyalty to Sanjar, who, as we have seen, ascended the throne of the Seljūks in 511. We are not told when he died, but Narshakhi says that his son Nasr Khān was killed during a revolt in Samarkand in A.H. 523 (1128). On the death of his father, Nasr's son Mohammad Khān wrote to inform Sanjar of what had passed. Sanjar thereupon set out with a force to establish order in Samarkand, but when he approached the town Mohammad Khān sent him an insolent message that the Sultan would do well to retreat, inasmuch as he (Mohammad) had subdued his opponents. Sanjar was much incensed, and promptly invested the city. After a protracted siege he captured Samarkand and took Mohammad prisoner, A.H. 524 (1129). A new governor was now appointed, but he died two years later, when the reins of power were given to Mahmūd Khān, the son of Mohammad.¹

In the meanwhile another mighty host was advancing on Transoxiana ; but before describing their progress we must retrace our steps and recount the downfall of the Ghaznavides and the rise of the great Seljūk dynasty of Persia.

¹ Mirkhwānd (Vüllers, *Historia Seldschukidarum*, p. 176), and Vambéry following him, say that Mohammad was reinstated.

CHAPTER XVII

THE GHAZNAVIDES AND THE RISE OF THE SELJŪKS

THE struggles between Mahmūd of Ghazna and Ilik Khān of Kāshghar continued till the year A.H. 401 (1010), when the latter, owing to a quarrel with his brother Toghān, was obliged to withdraw his troops, and a long period of peace ensued, with but slight interruptions, during which the Oxus continued to be regarded as the frontier of their respective realms.

Before the actual downfall of the Sāmānides the province of Khwārazm,¹ which lay between the states of the Turkish Khāns and the Ghaznavides, had become practically independent. On the final overthrow of the Sāmānides, the Khwārazm Shāh,² as their ruler was called, had thrown in his fortunes with the Ghaznavides. In A.H. 407 (1017) the then ruler was murdered by rebels, whereupon Mahmūd marched into the country at the head of a large force and conquered it, setting up a governor of his own creation named Altuntāsh.

Great difficulties attend an attempt to define the ethnographic affinities of the Turks. A similarity of language forces one to associate the Tartars of Southern Russia, the Turkomans of the Oxus countries, and the Uzbeqs of Transoxiana. This race, in the broadest

¹ The modern Khiva.

² See chap. XX.

sense of the word, may be divided into three groups:—

(1) The Northern Turks, comprising the Siberian nomads, such as the Yakuts, etc.

(2) The Eastern Turks, including those of Chinese Turkeṣtān and the Uzbegs of Russian Turkeṣtān, to whom are related the Tartars of the Crimea and the Volga.

(3) The Western Turks, comprising the Osmānlīs, or Ottoman branch, the Āzerbāyjānīs of Persia, and the Turkomans,—in fact, what we commonly in Europe understand by the word Turk.

The habitat of the original Turks was in the Altay, whence they migrated in large numbers at an early period towards China and Turkeṣtān. It was in this latter direction that they met with least resistance, and thither, therefore, they wandered in the greatest numbers.

But, apart from these lesser migrations, two great Turkish waves poured, at an interval of two hundred years, over Western Asia and Southern Europe—the Seljūks and the hordes of Chingiz Khān.

The former, composed of what we now call Western Turks, of whom the Ghuz and the Turkomans were the predominant element, swept over the Oxus-lands into Armenia and Asia Minor. From them sprang, at a later date, the Osmānlīs, who finally overthrew the Byzantine Empire. A portion, however, of the Seljūks either remained in the Oxus country, or were pressed across that river by the advances of the Eastern Turks into modern Turkomania.

The second great migration spread simultaneously in two directions. The larger body penetrated north of the Sea of Aral into Southern Europe, where they carried all before them until their progress was stayed by Western skill at the memorable battle of Leignitz



1



2



3



4

CENTRAL ASIAN TYPES

1. UZBEG WOMAN

2. UZBEG

3. UZBEG

4. UZBEG

(A.D. 1241). The smaller horde was composed of Eastern Turks, who, under Mongolian leadership, drove their Western cousins out of Transoxiana in the thirteenth century.

According to the *Tārīkh-i-Gusīda*,¹ the Turks of the tribe of Kabak, to which Seljūk belonged, passed in the year A.H. 395 (985) from Turkestān into Transoxiana, and settled in the neighbourhood of Samarkand and Bokhārā. They were a race of shepherds, and were prompted to cross the Jaxartes by the scarcity of pasturage on their own side.

They are said to have lived on peaceful terms with Sultan Mahmūd of Ghazna, who, not long afterwards, gave them permission to cross the Oxus and settle in the environs of Nisā and Abīverd. Their chief at this period was named Mikā'il, and he had two sons named Toghrul and Chakir, who were the founders of the Seljūk dynasty.²

It is not within the scope of the present sketch to describe the wonderful campaigns of Sultan Mahmūd³ in India and elsewhere, and the brilliant circle of poets and writers which he had gathered round him at Ghazna. In the year before his death, A.H. 420 (1029), he con-

¹ This history, by Hamdullah Mustawfī, is one of the most important Persian chronicles. The whole text has never yet been published, but the portion relating to the Seljūks was edited and translated by M. Defrémery.

² There is some confusion as to the precise origin of this branch of the Turks. Aug. Müller says that during the disorders which attended the downfall of the Sāmānides and the struggles between the Ghaznavides and the Khāns of Kāshghar, the Ghuz, through internal dissensions, became split up into subdivisions. The foremost of these was a branch who in A.H. 345 (956) settled down in Jend (east of Khwārazm). They received the name of Seljūk from their chief, who had been compelled to quit the court of his master Pighu Khān of the Kipchāk Turks. He is said to have embraced Islām (Müller, *Islām*, ii. 74).

³ He was the first prince to bear the title of *Sultān*. Cf. Gibbon, chap. 47.

ducted a successful expedition against the Seljūks, who had invaded his Persian territories. The last of his successes was the conquest of nearly the whole of 'Irāk, which, together with Ray and some other territories, he formed into a government for his son Mas'ūd, declaring at the same time his other son Mohammad heir to his throne and the rest of his possessions.¹

On the death of Sultan Mahmūd, in A.H. 421 (1030), Mas'ūd's whole energies were absorbed in withstanding the Ghuz hordes which invaded his province of Khorāsān in ever-increasing numbers. He tried in vain to conciliate them by granting fresh pasture-lands. In A.H. 425 (1034), while he was engaged in quelling a rebellion in India, a formidable rising against the Ghaznavides took place in Khorāsān, whose inhabitants felt that they were deserted by their chief and left at the mercy of the Ghuz. At the same time the prince of Tabaristān and Jurjān, deeming the occasion favourable, reasserted their independence. In the following year Mas'ūd marched northwards, and succeeded not only in driving back the Ghuz beyond Tūs and Nishāpūr, but in bringing to submission the rebellious prince of Tabaristān.

Meanwhile events were taking place in the north which were to render these minor successes valueless,² for in A.H. 425 (1034) Hārūn, the Ghaznavide governor of Khwārazm,³ profiting by the embarrassed position of Mas'ūd, threw off his allegiance. Although the immediate result of this step was an interval of disorder, during which Hārūn was murdered, his successor persisted in a policy of rebellion, and ceased to pay any regard to the court at Ghazna. This event in itself seemed of small importance, but it brought grave results

¹ Malcolm, *op. cit.* i. p. 195.

² Cf. Müller, *op. cit.* ii. p. 76.

³ The son of Altuntāsh mentioned above, p. 123.



1



2



3



4

CENTRAL ASIAN TYPES

1. TURKOMAN

2. KIRGHIZ

3. TAJIK

4. SARI

in its train. We are told that the Seljūks, in A.H. 426 (1035), helped Mas'ūd to drive the rest of the Ghuz out of Khorāsān, but the alliance did not survive this campaign; and thus, while Mas'ūd was absent in Ghazna in the following year, we find his lieutenant in Khorāsān engaged in hostilities with the Seljūks. During the same year, A.H. 427 (1036), the Ghaznavide general suffered a severe defeat at the hands of Chakir Beg in the vicinity of Merv. From this event dates the rise of the Seljūks. In A.H. 428 (1037) Merv surrendered to Chakir, and in the following year Toghrul was declared master of Nishāpūr. Khorāsān was now practically in the hands of the Seljūk brothers. Mas'ūd had been too busily employed with troubles in India to give due attention to the protection of his richest province. At length, in A.H. 431 (1040), he determined to make a final effort to retrieve his losses, and led an army in person against Merv, where he suffered a final and crushing defeat at the hands of Chakir and Toghrul.¹ He still clung to Khorāsān with all the energy of despair. Leaving his son in Balkh, he hastened to India to raise a fresh army. But his influence with his troops had gone, and no sooner had he crossed the Indian frontier than his lawless soldiers began to plunder the treasures which had been accumulated by his illustrious father. When they recovered their senses they "were seized with a dread of punishment, and came to the sudden resolution of reinstating Mohammad,² who was a prisoner in the camp."³ Mas'ūd was captured, and in the following

¹ Gibbon (chap. lvii.) speaks of this victory as the "memorable day of Qandacan" which "founded in Persia the dynasty of the shepherd kings." He gives the date as A.D. 1038.

² Mohammad, who, as stated above, had been nominated by his father Mahmūd to succeed him in Ghazna, had been almost immediately deposed by his brother Mas'ūd.

³ Malcolm, *op. cit.* i. p. 199.

year, A.H. 433 (1042), murdered by his own nephew. The princes of Ghazna continued to reign until A.H. 555 (1160),—in fact, they outlasted the Seljūks of Central Asia,—but no chief of the dynasty ever attained to the greatness of its earlier representatives. Their hostilities with the Seljūks were finally brought to a close by a treaty concluded in A.H. 451 (1059) between Chakir and Ibrāhīm, the then ruler of Ghazna, who thereby for ever lost the province of Khorāsān.¹

¹ Müller, *op. cit.* i. 77.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE SELJŪKS

TOGHRUL BEG'S career of conquest is admirably epitomised by Gibbon in the 57th chapter of his immortal work. After driving the Ghaznavides back to India, he overthrew the powerful dynasty of the Būyides,¹ and with their fall the whole of Persia passed into the hands of the Turks. "By the conquest of Āzerbāyjān, or Atropatene, 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."²

The expeditions of these fortunate brothers, Toghrul and Chakir, in their results at all events, more closely resembled the migration of entire peoples than military campaigns. By the year A.H. 440 (1048) Āzerbāyjān, Mesopotamia, and Asia Minor were entirely overrun by Turkish bands. Four hundred years before this a huge wave of conquering Arabs and Persians had swept in an easterly direction over all Persia as far as the Oxus and

¹ *Vide supra*, p. 112, note 1.

² Cf. Gibbon, chap. lvii. De Guignes gives a somewhat different version of the relations between the Emperor and the Turk (vol. iii. p. 191). He says: "Constantin-Monomaque qui regnoit alors à Constantinople, ne crut pas devoir négliger l'alliance d'un prince qui faisoit trembler toute l'Asie: il lui envoya des ambassadeurs pour lui proposer de faire la paix, et Thogrul-beh y consentit." This difference is due to the fact that Gibbon's authorities were Byzantine, while De Guignes' were Mohammedan.

beyond it. We now find a still vaster influx of Turks over the same country, but starting where the other had ended. The first flood-tide took the form of a religious war into the infidel countries, and brought with it the influence of culture and solid learning. The reflex wave was an irresistible migration of savage tribes, who, though well-nigh destitute of any tincture of letters,¹ were still, it must be remembered, the children of Islām. The marks left on the East by the Western wave were ethnographically slight, but psychically of great importance; while precisely the opposite is true of the second immigration. Bokhārā and Balkh became, and for centuries remained, the centres of Mohammedan lore, while Asia Minor and Āzerbāyjān were the permanent abodes of the descendants of the Seljūks. The forces of the two brothers were probably augmented by the westward flow of new bands of Turks, and victory attended them wherever they turned.

In A.H. 449 (1055) Toghrul Beg entered Baghdād, and helped to establish the Caliph Kā'im on his throne.²

Toghrul Beg had no male issue. On the approach of death he selected as his successor his nephew Alp Arslān, the son of his deceased brother Chakir. Thus, in the year A.H. 455 (1063), Alp Arslān became lord of a kingdom which extended from the Oxus to the Euphrates, and from the Caspian to the Persian Gulf. One of his first measures was to rid himself of his uncle's

¹ It would, however, be wrong to regard these Turks as uncultured people; for though few traces of their early literature have come down to us, testimony is not wanting to the fact that they had, long before they began their westward migrations, a written language and perhaps a literature.

² He was not received in audience by the Caliph till A.H. 451 (1059). In 455 (1063), in spite of his outward show of respect, Toghrul Beg practically forced the Caliph to give him his daughter in marriage. But, in the same year, as Toghrul was about to claim his bride, fortune suddenly deserted him, and he died at the age of seventy in Ray, where, according to Mirkhwānd (see ed. Vüllers, p. 65), he wished to celebrate his nuptials.

vezīr, and appoint in his stead a man who afterwards bore one of the most exalted names in the history and literature of the East. Hasan ibn 'Alī, better known as Nizām ul-Mulk, or Regulator of the State, was born in Tūs in A.H. 408 (1018), and early displayed signs of administrative power. He held office first under the Ghaznavides, and later, at Balkh, under the Seljūks. The post of chief vezīr, which now fell to his lot, he continued to hold for a period of thirty years. He was celebrated alike for justice, tolerance, and literary attainments.¹

It was under Alp Arslān that the Turks first invaded the Roman Empire.² Having temporarily satisfied his ambition in the West,³ he returned to his capital, and formed the project of crossing the Oxus and invading the countries whence his ancestors had come. His career was, however, cut short in A.H. 465 (1063) by a mortal wound received at the hands of a man whom he had condemned to death.⁴ He was succeeded by his son Melik Shāh, whose claims were disputed by several rivals,⁵ but these were disposed of with little difficulty. In A.H. 446 (1073)

¹ His name is familiar to the English public through the medium of 'Omar Khayyām. All who have read Fitzgerald's admirable translation of the *Rubāiyāt* know the story of the three famous schoolfellows—'Omar Khayyām, the poet; Nizām ul-Mulk, the statesman; and Hasan ibn Sabbāh, "the Old Man of the Mountain." These three, as schoolboys at Nishāpūr, had sworn that whichever of them should rise highest in the world should help the others. Of two of them we shall have to speak below.

² His was not actually their first expedition, for, in 1050, parts of Armenia had been laid waste and countless Christians massacred by the Turks. Cf. Gibbon, chap. xlvii.

³ We refer the reader to Gibbon's 57th chapter for a vivid account of Alp Arslān's dealings with the Romans (see also Malcolm, *op. cit.* i. 209-213).

⁴ This was a chief named Yūsuf, who had long held out against the Sultan in his fortress of Berzem in Khwārazm. Cf. Malcolm, *op. cit.* i. 213; and De Guignes, iii. 213.

⁵ Notably his uncle Kāwurd (see Müller, *op. cit.* ii. 94),—whom Vambéry calls *Kurd*; and Vüllers (in Mirkhwānd's Seljūks), *Kādurd*; and Malcolm (*op. cit.* i. 216), *Cawder*.

he engaged in warfare with Altagin, the Turkish Khān of Samarkand, who, on hearing of the death of Alptagin, had presumed to lay siege to Tirmiz, a town included in the Seljūks' realms, though it lay on the right bank of the Oxus.¹ He soon drove the Khān back, and forced him to sue for peace. Melik Shāh apparently remained on peaceful terms with the Turks until A.H. 482 (1089), when, in response to a call from the oppressed inhabitants of Transoxiana, he crossed the great river and made himself master of Bokhārā and Samarkand. Pushing beyond the last-named city, he threatened to invade the territory of the Khān of Kāshghar,² who, overcome by fear, consented to recognise the suzerainty of the Seljūks,³ both in his coins and in the public prayers. At the zenith of his fortunes the great Sultan held sway from the frontiers of China up to the gates of Constantinople. August Müller⁴ aptly compares Alp Arslān and Melik Shāh with Trajan and Hadrian. Brilliant as were the military successes of Melik Shāh, they are cast into the shade by his cultivation of the peaceful arts and his sedulous care for the development of his territories. Though five years passed by ere he was firmly established on his throne, the remaining fifteen years of his reign were attended by a degree of internal prosperity, an advance in literature and learning, which will ever associate his name with one of the most brilliant epochs in the history of Islām. There is, however, one great blot on his escutcheon: his treatment of his able and faithful minister, Nizām ul-Mulk. Influenced by lying reports brought to his ears by the enemies of the vezir, he

¹ Müller, *op. cit.* ii. 94.

² See below, chap. xix.

³ Vambéry (*op. cit.* p. 100) qualifies these statements as the "mere fabrications of partial Arab and Persian writers."

⁴ *Op. cit.* ii. 95.

degraded his devoted servant and indirectly brought about his death. For, shortly after Nizām ul-Mulk's removal from office, he was murdered by an assassin,¹ employed perhaps by his successor in office, who feared a change in the Sultan's sentiments, A.H. 485 (1092). Melik Shāh did not long survive the fallen minister. Within a month he was seized with a violent illness, which terminated his life in the thirty-eighth year of his age.

He left four sons, who each in turn succeeded to his throne.² The youngest, Mahmūd, was only four years of age when his father died; but the ambition of his mother, the Sultana Khātūn Turkān, placed the crown upon his infant head, and the Caliph Muktadi was prevailed on to have his name mentioned in the public prayers. The Sultana marched to Isfahān, preceded by the corpse of Melik Shāh. Berkiyāruk, the eldest prince,³ was residing there; but, powerless to resist, he retired to Ray, attended by Mu'ayyad ud-Dawla, the son of the late vezīr Nizām ul-Mulk, who warmly espoused his cause, with all the adherents of his family. This support enabled him to return, and Khātūn Turkān was compelled to resign a great part of her treasures as the price of permission to retain control of Isfahān. All

¹ This assassin was one of the emissaries (or *fadhwi*) of Hasan ibn Sabbāh, Nizām ul-Mulk's old school friend. For an account of the Assassins we refer the reader to the article under that heading in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. For more than a century the devotees of the Old Man of the Mountain played a part in politics not dissimilar to that of the Jesuits at certain periods in Europe. See J. von Hammer's *Hist. de l'Ordre des Assassins* (Paris, 1833); S. Guyard's "Un Grand Maître des Assassins," *Journal Asiatique*, 1877; and an article by Mr. E. G. Browne in *St. Bartholomew's Hosp. Journ.*, March 1897.

² The history of the remaining Seljūk kings (of the original branch) is so admirably epitomised by Malcolm that it was considered unnecessary in this place to do more than quote from his well-known *History of Persia* (vol. ii. p. 222 *et seq.*). These sons were Berkiyāruk, Mohammad, Sanjar, and Mahmūd.

³ He was himself but fourteen years of age at the time of his father's death.

her schemes of aggrandisement were soon afterwards terminated by her own death and that of her son, A.H. 487 (1104).

The death of the Caliph Mukṭadī, which occurred about the same period, induced Berkiyārūk to go to Baghdād, where he confirmed Mostadhīr as the new Caliph, and was in return hailed by him as Sultan of the empire. He enjoyed that dignity for eleven years,¹ but his reign was a perpetual war in which his nearest relatives and all the great nobles of the state were engaged. His usual residence was Baghdād. His brother Mohammad ruled over Āzerbāyjān, while Sanjar established a kingdom in Khorāsān and Transoxiana, whence he extended his conquests over the fallen princes of Ghazna, compelling them to pay him tribute. Berkiyārūk, who appears to have had an excellent disposition, and to have been wanting neither in courage nor conduct, died on a journey from Isfahān to Baghdād,² A.H. 498 (1104). He felt his end approaching, and before he expired made his army take the oath of fidelity to his son Melik Shāh II. The young prince was, however, unable to resist his uncle Mohammad, who seized Baghdād treacherously and took him prisoner, A.H. 498 (1104). The reign of Mohammad, which lasted thirteen years, was remarkable only for continual civil disturbances, and for the wars which his generals carried on in Syria against the European armies engaged in their crusade to recover the sacred city of Jerusalem and the Holy Land from the Mohammedans. He died at Isfahān in A.H. 511 (1117), and was nominally succeeded by his son Mahmūd, who was almost

¹ A.H. 487-498 (1094-1104). Malcolm throughout his otherwise excellent history scarcely ever condescends to supply the reader with a date of any kind.

² He died of consumption at the early age of twenty-seven (perhaps even younger). Cf. Müller, *op. cit.* ii. 120.

immediately reduced by his uncle Sanjar to the condition of a dependant.¹ Sanjar, who had been governor of Khorāsān and its dependencies for the past twenty years, now became Sultan, and as such enjoyed a reign of no less than forty years, A.H. 511-552 (1117-1157).

We must now turn our attention to Transoxiana and the East, where important events were passing.

¹ He allowed his nephew the two 'Irāks on condition that his (Sanjar's) name should be mentioned first in the public prayers (cf. *Habīb-us-Siyar*).

CHAPTER XIX

SULTAN SANJAR AND THE KARA-KHITĀYS

THE country of Khwārazm¹ was one of the first conquests of the Seljūks. On becoming masters of Khorāsān, the 'Irāks, Persia, and Syria, they chose men from among their Turkish slaves whom they placed in charge of the various provinces. The governor thus set over Khwārazm was named Balkategin, who was *Tasht-dār*, or Grand Ewer-bearer,² to Sultan Melik Shāh, who exercised paramount authority in that country. He had under him a Turkish slave whom he had purchased, named Nūshtegin, who by his conduct at his master's court was in such esteem that on the death of Balkategin³ he succeeded to the government of Khwārazm. He became even more powerful than his lord, but, though he is regarded as the first of the dynasty of Khwārazm-Shāhs, he remained loyal to the Seljūks. He bestowed great care in the education of his son Kutb ed-Dīn Mohammad, who succeeded him in A.H. 490 (1097) with the additional title of *Khwārazm-Shāh*, or emperor of Khwārazm. He was a great patron of letters, and made himself generally beloved in his province.

¹ The modern Khānate of Khiva.

² The Khāns of Khiva still bear the title of Ewer-bearers to the Sultan of Constantinople.

³ About A.H. 470 (1077).

It was during his tenure of office that the Kara-Khitāys began to make their inroads westwards.

The empire of the Kara-Khitāys had been founded by the last prince of the Kitan or Liao dynasty,¹ whose name was Ye-liu Ta-shi.² On the destruction of that line by the Kin dynasty³ in A.D. 1123, Ye-liu Ta-shi, with a following of some two hundred men, passed into the country lying to the north-west of Shen-si,⁴ where he was joined by numbers of Turks. He now set out in a westerly direction and carried all before him. He conquered Kāshghar, Yarkand, Khotan, and Turkeṣtān, and at the beginning of A.D. 1124 or 1125 he reached Ki-rh-man.⁵ Here all his officers assembled and proclaimed him emperor, whereupon he assumed the title of *Gūr-Khān*, or "Universal Lord."

Mahmūd, the Uīghūr Khān mentioned above,⁶ was driven into Transoxiana, which shortly after became tributary to the Kara-Khitāys. Ye-liu Ta-shi, whose dominions reached from the Gobi to the Oxus, and from the mountains of Tibet to Siberia, now fixed his residence at Balāsāghūn.

Towards the end of Kutb ed-Dīn's rule they advanced so far into Transoxiana that the Grand Ewer-bearer sent an army of 100,000 men to oppose

¹ He was a descendant in the eighth generation of *T'ai-tsu*, or Apaoki, the first Liao emperor. Cf. Bretschneider, *op. cit.* i. 211; Visdelou, p. 28. For the various forms his name has taken, cf. Howorth on the "Kara-Khitāy," *J.R.A.S.*, New Series VIII. 273, 274.

² De Guignes called him *Taigir*.

³ Called by the Mohammedans *Churché*, which corresponds to the *Niuchi* of Chinese historians. Cf. Bretschneider, *op. cit.* i. 224, note.

⁴ Cf. d'Ohsson, *Histoire des Mongols*, i. 163.

⁵ Some scholars have wished to identify this name with Kirmān in Persia, but this seems most improbable. Bretschneider (*op. cit.* i. 216, note) suggests Kerminé, which is the site of the summer quarters of the present Amīr of Bokhārā. Cf. also Howorth, *loc. cit.*

⁶ P. 134.

them.¹ He, however, suffered a crushing defeat, and the prince of the Kara-Khitāys, after imposing tribute on his vanquished enemies, returned to Kāshghar, which now became his capital.²

Soon after his deliverance from these barbarians Kutb ed-Dīn died,³ and was succeeded by his son Atsiz. For many years the latter remained at the court of Merv, fulfilling the office of Grand Ewer-bearer to Sultan Sanjar; and so great was his influence with the Seljūk prince that he made himself many enemies at court, and on this account he asked permission to proceed to Khwārazm, which was then suffering from anarchy. In spite of the warnings of his ministers, Sanjar allowed Atsiz to depart. As soon as the governor reached his province he rose in open revolt against his master, who was compelled to march against his too powerful vassal.⁴ But the rebels were no match for the troops of Sanjar, who utterly defeated them.⁵ The province was restored to obedience, and Sulaymān Shāh, Sanjar's nephew, was appointed as its governor.⁶ No sooner had Sanjar reached his capital than Atsiz, collecting the scattered remnants of his army, proceeded to attack Sulaymān Shāh. This latter, with whom Sultan Sanjar had left but a few troops, deeming resistance useless, fled to his uncle, and thus the whole of Khwārazm again fell into the hands of Atsiz.

In the year A.H. 536 (1141) Ye-liu Ta-shi died with-

¹ Cf. De Guignes, iii. pt. ii. p. 253.

² Some confusion exists as to whether Kāshghar or Balāsāghūn was his residence. It seems improbable that he should have changed in so short a space.

³ A.H. 521 (1127).

⁴ A.H. 533 (1138).

⁵ Il-Kilij, the son of Atsiz, perished in the battle.

⁶ Cf. d'Herbelot, article "Atsiz"; and De Guignes, vol. ii. pt. ii. p. 254.



MAUSOLEUM OF SULTAN SANJAR, OLD MERV

out male issue, and the empire of the Kara-Khitāys fell to two princesses in succession,¹ the daughter and the sister of the late ruler. It was in this year that Atsiz invited, or rather encouraged, the Kara-Khitāys to push their conquests farther west into Transoxiana. Sanjar, hearing of their advance, crossed the Oxus at the head of 100,000 men to meet them.² In the battle which ensued, in the valley of Dirgham, Sanjar met with the most crushing defeat which the Moslems had yet endured in their struggles against the infidels in the East.³ Sanjar himself, who had hitherto been invincible, fled to Khorāsān by way of Tirmiz, accompanied by the remnants of his huge army. Transoxiana was now in the entire possession of the Kara-Khitāys, and for the first time a Mohammedan community became subject to the enemies of their faith.⁴ The Kara-Khitāys, in the same year,⁵ pushed on as far as Sarakhs, Merv, and Nishāpūr, but they appear to have retired satisfied with the Oxus as their western boundary. Meanwhile Atsiz took advantage of Sanjar's fallen fortunes, and began to ravage Khorāsān. The Sultan, however, had mustered forces sufficient

¹ Thus, according to Narshakhi (p. 243). The statements of historians are somewhat conflicting in this place. De Guignes, following Abulfidā, says that Ye-liu Ta-shi (whom he calls Taigir) died in 1136, when about to abandon Kāshghar and return to his ancient settlements in Tartary. The Khitāys then set upon the throne his infant son, Y-li, with his mother Liao-chi as queen-regent. Bretschneider has translated a Chinese work which gives a list of all the line of Kara-Khitāy rulers, whose dynasty became extinct about 1203. We have not thought it necessary to reproduce a list of their names in this place. It may be mentioned, however, that Bretschneider's account does not agree with De Guignes.

² Cf. De Guignes, vol. iii. pt. i. p. 254; Muller, *op. cit.* vol. ii. p. 173. Rashid ud-Dīn tells us he had drawn auxiliaries from all parts of his dominions.

³ The Kara-Khitāys were Buddhists.

⁴ Cf. Müller, *loc. cit.*

⁵ A. H. 537 (1142).

to reassert his authority. He marched on the town of Khwārazm and invested it, whereon Atsiz bought him off with rich presents and assurances of good conduct in the future, A.H. 538 (1143).¹ This truce was of short duration.

In the year A.H. 541 (1147) Sanjar again attacked Atsiz, but a permanent reconciliation was soon attained.²

In A.H. 551 (1156)³ Atsiz died at the age of sixty-one, and was succeeded by his son Il-Arslān, with whom the independent dynasty of Khwārazm-Shāhs properly begins. Meanwhile the affairs of Sultan Sanjar were going from bad to worse, and the end of the last great Seljūk was as ignoble as his career had been glorious. Strange to say, his ultimate ruin was caused by a Turkish tribe who came of the same stock as the Seljūks themselves.

The domination of the Kara-Khitāys in Transoxiana does not appear to have affected the condition of the dwellers in towns, the peaceful Tājiks, who were even allowed to appoint their own tax-collectors and other officials.⁴ The only classes who suffered at the hands of the invaders were the Ghuz Turks, who were nomads like the Kara-Khitāys themselves, and occupied all the best pasture-grounds. They now found themselves forced to seek fresh fields. Crossing the Oxus, they obtained permission from Sanjar to settle in Khatlān, Chaghāniyān, and the environs of Balkh.⁵ They numbered, we are told, 40,000 families, and the tribute imposed upon them was an annual contribution to the royal kitchen of 24,000 sheep. These supplies were carried

¹ Cf. De Guignes, *loc. cit.*; and Müller, ii. p. 174.

² Cf. De Guignes, iii. pt. i. pp. 256, 257.

³ De Guignes (following Abulfidā) says A.H. 550 (1155).

⁴ Cf. Müller, *op. cit.* ii. 173.

⁵ Mirkhwānd (ed. Vüllers, p. 183). Khwāndamīr (*Habīb-us-Siyar*) adds "Kunduz and Baklān" to the list.

off as occasion required by an officer of the Household.¹ On one occasion the man sent to fetch the sheep was so scrupulous in his choice that the Ghuz took offence and put him to death. The chief butler was thus obliged to supply the royal kitchen from his own flocks. The official complained of this outrage to Kamāj, the governor of Balkh, who immediately reported it to Sultan Sanjar, offering to bring the Ghuz to obedience, and further to extract from them 30,000 sheep for the royal kitchen. With the Sultan's permission he returned to Balkh and demanded of the Ghuz the sheep that had been withheld; but the herdsmen refused to comply, adding that the Sultan of Merv was their master, not the governor of Balkh. Kamāj, much incensed at the slight put upon his authority, attacked the nomads, but in the first engagement he was utterly put to rout.² On hearing of this disaster, Sultan Sanjar marched on Balkh at the head of 100,000 men.³ In spite of his vast numerical superiority he suffered a crushing defeat, A.H. 548 (1153), and was taken prisoner.⁴ Intoxicated by this unlooked-for success, the Ghuz attacked the capital itself. They found the Merv oasis in a state of brilliant prosperity;⁵ for since the days of

¹ The word used is *Khānsālar*, which means the "Taster," or "Table-Decker of the Household."

² Mirkhwānd (ed. Vüllers, p. 185) says that Kamāj and his son perished in this battle, but Hamdullah Mustawfi, in the *Tārīkh-i-Guzida*, says they were spared.

³ De Guignes, vol. iii. pt. i. p. 256.

⁴ Mirkhwānd relates (ed. Vüllers, p. 188) that when Sanjar fled with his army, and was hotly pursued by the Ghuz, a man who bore a striking resemblance to the Sultan was captured. Say what he might, the Ghuz would not be convinced that this was not Sanjar, and paid him all the respect due to royalty, until finally some one recognised him as the son of Sanjar's cook, whereupon he was beheaded.

⁵ Professor Shukovski, of St. Petersburg, published in 1894 an excellent and exhaustive monograph on the ruins and past history of Merv, under the title *Rasviliini starago Merva*, "The Ruins of Old Merv."

Chakir Beg it had never been molested, and, as the author of the *Rawsat-us-Safā* says,¹ "it had slumbered in peace and tranquillity." The greedy nomads, spurred to madness by the sight of so much wealth, seized all that met their eyes, and then tortured the inhabitants till they revealed their hidden treasures.² The fallen Sultan, meanwhile, was kept in close confinement,³ but was treated with the respect due to his rank. Having ransacked Merv, the Ghuz laid waste the whole of Khorāsān, so that, says Mirkhwānd, "not a single spot in that province escaped their destructive hands." Sanjar remained for about four years in captivity; and while his consort, Turkān Khātūn, who acted as queen-regent, lived, he made no attempt to escape, lest harm should befall her. On her death, in A.H. 551 (1156), he took advantage of a hunting expedition to evade his captors. Gathering a few devoted followers on the other side of the Oxus, he set out for his capital, but on reaching Merv he was so heartbroken at the desolation that met his eyes that he sickened and died.⁴ The ruins of his splendid mausoleum are the chief glory of ancient Merv.

¹ Ed. Vüllers, p. 189.

² Mirkhwānd has in this place evidently followed Hafiz Abru (the author of the *Zubdat-us-Tawārikh*), who says that the first day of plunder was devoted to articles of gold, brass, and silver; the second to bronzes, carpets, and vases; and the third to whatever of value was left, such as cotton-stuffs, glass, wooden doors, and the like. Cf. Professor Shukovski's *Ruins of Old Merv*, pp. 29, 30.

³ He is said to have been kept in a cage at night. Cf. De Guignes, iii. pt. i. 257. Mirkhwānd has been followed in this relation, and we have seen what he considered to be the cause of the hostilities between the Ghuz and Sanjar. From Ibn el-Athir (*Tārīkh-i-Kāmil*, xi. 118, as quoted by Professor Shukovski, *Merv*, p. 29) it would appear that the cause of the conflict was Sanjar's refusal to give up Merv to the Ghuz, on the plea that he could not be expected to abandon his royal residence. De Guignes (iii. pt. i. p. 257) introduces this anecdote after the capture of Sanjar.

⁴ Many say he died of an internal malady, A.H. 552 (1157). He was in his seventy-third year.

It was built by him during his lifetime; and so great was its solidity that he gave it the name of *Dār ul-Ākhirat*, "the Abode of Eternity." Sixty years after his death it was destroyed by Chingiz Khān.

CHAPTER XX

THE KHWĀRAZM-SHĀHS

ON the death of Melik Shāh in A.H. 485 (1092) a civil war broke out between the brothers Berkiyārūk and Mohamad, which resulted in the formation of separate semi-independent states, under various branches of the Seljūks, in different quarters of the dominions of that family. Chief among their representatives were—the Seljūks of Kirmān, A.H. 433–583 (1041–1187); the Seljūks of Syria, A.H. 487–511 (1094–1117); the Seljūks of 'Irāk and Kurdistān, A.H. 511–590 (1117–1194); the Seljūks of Rūm (or Asia Minor), A.H. 470–700 (1077–1300). Until the death of Sanjar the main branch preserved a nominal suzerainty over the rest, although their empire had been so greatly reduced that Sanjar's rule was practically confined to Khorāsān. On his death in A.H. 552 (1157) the authority of the great Seljūks came to an end, and Khorāsān fell into the hands of the Khwārazm-Shāh, Il-Arslān, who had succeeded his father in the previous year. In 567 (A.D. 1171) the Kara-Khitāys advanced into Khwārazm, and Il-Arslān marched out to oppose them; but on reaching Amūya¹ he fell dangerously ill, and was obliged to resign command of his army to one of his generals. After gaining a decisive victory over the Khwārazmians the Kara-Khitāys again withdrew, A.H. 568 (1172).² In the following year

¹ The modern Chārjūy.

² Cf. De Guignes, iii. pt. ii. p. 258.

Il-Arslān died, leaving his realms to his youngest son, Sultan Shāh Mahmūd. His elder brother Tekish, however, disputed the succession, and, with the aid of the Kara-Khitāys, overthrew the young prince and set himself upon the throne, A.H. 568 (1172).¹

Sultan Shāh Mahmūd, with his mother, Queen Turkān, fled to Nīshāpūr, and sought the aid of its governor, Mu'ayyad. Reinforced by a contingent under his command, Sultan Shāh made a fresh bid for sovereignty. Tekish advanced to meet him in the desert of Khwārazm, and inflicted a crushing defeat on his brother. The queen-mother was slain, and Mu'ayyad was captured and cut in two. Sultan Shāh escaped a similar fate by flight, and found safety among the Ghūrides of Ghazna.

Tekish² was, in A.H. 588 (1192), firmly settled on the throne of Khwārazm. Confident in the devotion of an army which he had led to victory, he grew ambitious and forgot the obligations under which the Kara-Khitāy had placed him. He incurred the wrath of that powerful tribe by putting to death one of their envoys who had come to claim the annual tribute, and brought them into the field against him. On learning that his brother was sorely beset, Sultan Shāh left the protection of the Ghūrides and joined the Kara-Khitāys, whose queen he persuaded that the Khwārazmians were anxious for his return to the throne. As the Queen-Gūr-Khān was incensed against Tekish, she allowed herself to be

¹ Cf. De Guignes, *loc. cit.*

² He entered into a union with the Khān of the Kipchāk, named Ikrān, and married his daughter, who became the mother of the famous Sultan Mohammad Khwārazm Shāh; cf. *Tabakāt-i-Nāsiri*, Raverty's translation, i. 240. This Khān of the Kipchāks is called, on p. 254 of the same work, *Kadr Khān*, a discrepancy which escaped the notice of Major Raverty, who, however, calls attention to three different Kadr Khāns in one chapter (see *op. cit.* p. 267, note).

gained over by Sultan Shāh, and sent her husband Karmā¹ with a large force into Khwārazm to defend the rights of Sultan Khān. Tekish, hearing of their advance, commanded the waters of the Jihūn (Oxus) to be diverted across their line of march, so that the progress of the Kara-Khitāys was rendered almost impossible. Meanwhile he busied himself with military preparations. Karmā, seeing clearly that Sultan Shāh's pretensions to the esteem of the Khwārazmians were unfounded, led his army home. Sultan Shāh, with his own followers and a small body of Kara-Khitāys, marched to Sarakhs, and, evicting its governor, established himself there.

In A.H. 576 (1180) we find him at the head of 10,000 horsemen, and lord of Nishāpūr. In A.H. 582 (1186) Tekish set out for Khorāsān with a large army; while Sultan Khān hastened to Khwārazm by another road. These hostilities between the two brothers continued with only short intermissions until the death of Sultan Shāh in A.H. 589 (1192), when Tekish became master of all Khorāsān and Khwārazm.²

In A.H. 590 (1194) he entered Persian 'Irāk and overthrew Toghrul III., the last of the great Seljūks of Persia.³ After adding Ray, Isfahān, and other important towns to his dominions, he obtained an investiture from Caliph Nāsir li Dīn-illāh of all the countries which he had conquered.

¹ Cf. *Ḥabīb-us-Siyar*.

² In this account of the reign of Tekish we have followed the *Ḥabīb-us-Siyar*. There is, however, a great discrepancy in this part of the history, for in one place Khwāndamīr says that the hostilities lasted only ten years (A.H. 568-578), when they were brought to a close by a treaty between the two brothers, in which Tekish granted the rule of certain towns in Khorāsān to his brother. An account of Sultan Shāh Mahmūd may be found in the *Tabakāt-i-Nāsiri*, trans., i. 245-249.

³ There is a misprint in d'Ohsson, *op. cit.* i. 180, the date being given as 1149. He also waged war on the Assassins in 'Irāk and Kūhistan, and took from them their strongest fort, Arslān Kushāy.

From this epoch-time till his death Tekish appears to have paid tribute regularly to the Gūr-Khān, and retained his friendship. He recommended his son and successor to follow the same policy, for the Kara-Khitāy were a bulwark against the dreaded hordes of the East.¹

In A.H. 596 (1200) Tekish died, and was succeeded by his famous son, 'Alā ud-Dīn Mohammad, who soon made himself master of Khorāsān, Balkh, Herāt, Māzenderan, and Kirmān.² He now considered himself sufficiently powerful to assert his independence of the Gūr-Khān, to whom, like his three predecessors, he had paid an annual tribute. He was encouraged to resist his liege lord by 'Othmān, prince of Samarkand and Transoxiana, who was also a vassal of the Gūr-Khān, who promised to pay him the same allegiance as he had rendered to the Kara-Khitāys in return for his assistance against the common enemy.³ An occasion for the rupture of friendly relations between the Khwārazm-Shāh and the Gūr-Khān was soon found. It was identical with the method employed by Tekish,—the slaughter of one of the receivers of tribute.⁴

After perpetrating this outrage, Mohammad entered the Kara-Khitāy territory, A.H. 605 (1208), where he suffered a crushing defeat and barely escaped capture.⁵

¹ *Tārīkh-i-Jahān-Kushāy*, as quoted by Bretschneider, *op. cit.* i. 229, from d'Ohsson.

² Cf. d'Ohsson, *op. cit.* i. 180; and *Tabakāt-i-Nāsiri*, trans., i. 253-260.

³ He had solicited the hand of a daughter of the Gūr-Khān, and, having been refused, had become his secret enemy. Howorth, *J.R.A.S.*, New Series VIII. p. 282.

⁴ Cf. d'Ohsson (*op. cit.* i. 181), who does not quote his authority.

⁵ Thus according to d'Ohsson. But De Guignes gives a very different account of Mohammad's first Eastern campaign, which he dates A.H. 604 (1209). He says that Bokhārā and Samarkand were delivered over to him by the friendly Turkish princes, that on entering the Kara-Khitāy territory he gained a splendid victory. Thus the first disastrous campaign is wholly ignored. De Guignes, *op. cit.* i. pt. ii. pp. 266, 267.

In the following year Mohammad made a second incursion into the land of the Kara-Khitāy. Crossing the Jaxartes at Fināket, he gained a signal success over their general, Tanigū, beyond Tarāz, pushed his conquests as far as Otrār¹ (Fārāb), and returned in triumph to Khwārazm. But the tangled knot of Central Asian politics was soon to be cut by a conqueror whose annals are as devoid of complexity as his career. In the place of paltry struggles for supremacy in isolated states, attended by obscure and ever-changing fortunes, we have the triumphant advance of one who, like Alexander of Macedon, was destined to give a new impulse to the world's history.

¹ Cf. De Guignes, i. pt. ii. p. 267. D'Ohsson says as far as Uzkend, *op. cit.* p. 182.

CHAPTER XXI

CHINGIZ KHĀN

IT is not within the scope of the present work to trace in any detail the meteor-like path of Chingiz; for we are concerned with it only in so far as it affected the internal affairs of Central Asia. His career has exercised a peculiar fascination for students of Oriental history, though by no means all the available evidence has yet been marshalled in elucidation of the controversies which still rage round that mighty name.¹

¹ The name of this famous conqueror has been spelled in many different ways,—e.g., *Genghis* (De Guignes), *Gengis* (Voltaire, in his tragedy of that name), *Zingis* (Gibbon), *Tchinguis* (d'Ohsson), etc. We have adopted the one which most nearly approaches the Turkish and Persian pronunciation of the name. For authorities we would refer the reader to Sir H. Howorth's *History of the Mongols*, part i. (1876); R. K. Douglas, *Life of Jinghis Khān* (1877); an article by same author in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*; Erdmann's *Temudschin der Unerschütterliche* (1862); and d'Ohsson and De Guignes (vol. iv.). The principal *original* sources for the history of Chingiz Khān are: (1) the Chinese account of a contemporary named *Men-Hun*, which has been translated into Russian by Professor Vassilief, and published in his *History and Antiquities of the Eastern Part of Central Asia* (see Transactions of Oriental Section of the Russian Archæological Society, vol. iv.); and (2) the *Tabakāt-i-Nāsiri* of Juzjāni, translated by Major Raverty. This important work comprises a collection of the accounts of Chingiz Khān written by his Mohammedan contemporaries. Other Chinese and Persian sources might be mentioned, but the above are the most important.

One very important authority for the Mongol period is the compilation, from Chinese sources, by Father Hyacinth, entitled *History of the first four Khāns of the House of Chingiz*, St. Petersburg, 1829. This Russian work is

"All that can safely be said about the early history of the Mongols,"¹ writes Mr. Stanley Lane-Poole, "is that they were a clan among clans, a member of a great confederacy that ranged the country north of the desert of Gobi in search of water and pasture; who spent their lives in hunting and the breeding of cattle, lived on flesh and sour milk (kumis), and made their profit by bartering hides and beasts with their kinsmen the Khitans,² or with the Turks and Chinese, to whom they owed allegiance. The name Mughal was not known until the tenth century, and probably came to be applied to the whole group of clans only when the chief of a particular clan bearing that name acquired an ascendancy over the rest of the confederacy, and gave to the greater the name of the less."³ Yissugāy, the father of Chingiz Khān, if not the founder of his clan, was a notable maintainer of it, and it was probably he who first asserted the independence of the Mongols from Chinese

comparatively little known outside Russia. Both Erdmann and d'Ohsson often lay it under contribution. It may be added that Sir Henry Howorth, in his first volume on the Mongols (published in 1876), gives a complete bibliography of all the available sources for the history of Chingiz and his successors.

¹ M. Barthold, of the St. Petersburg University, has devoted much time to the study of the Mongol period in Central Asia, the fruits of which he has not yet published on an extended scale, though some shorter articles of great value have appeared in Baron Rosen's *Zapiski*. The expeditions of Chingiz Khān and Tamerlane were admirably treated by M. M. I. Ivanin in a work published after his death, entitled *On the Military Art and Conquests of the Mongol-Tatars under Chingiz Khān and Tamerlane*, St. Petersburg.

² Since the discovery and decipherment of the Orkon inscriptions it may be regarded as certain that the form *Khitān*, or *Kidan*, is but the Chinese transcription of the word *Kitai*, which is the name of a people, most probably of Manchurian origin, who, as is well known, ruled over Northern China during the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries. It was borrowed by some of the tribes inhabiting those parts. Cf. note on p. 106 of vol. x. of Baron Rosen's *Zapiski*, article by M. Barthold.

³ Precisely the same thing occurred in the case of the Yué-Chi and the Kushans.



NOMADS CHANGING CAMP

rule. In spite, however, of conquest and annexation, the people who owned the sovereignty of Yissugāy numbered only 40,000 tents. Yet it was upon this foundation that his son, Chingiz Khān, built up in twenty years the widest empire the world has ever seen."¹

Temuchin,² known to history as Chingiz Khān, was born most probably in 1162,³ and was therefore thirteen years of age at the time of his father's death, in 1175.

The Mongolian, or, as they called themselves at that period, the Tatar people, were divided into a number of tribes, among which the Chinese distinguished three groups, according to the degree of their civilisation,—the white, the black, and the savage Tatars. The first, who dwelt in Southern Mongolia, near the Chinese Wall, were under the influence of Chinese civilisation. The black Tatars, who occupied the greater part of what we now call Mongolia, remained unaffected by their uninterrupted contact with more advanced races whose representatives entered their country only in the quality of merchants. The trade of barter and exchange with the nomads was in the hands of men of Turkestan, Uighurs, and Musulmans, who in such matters were far more enterprising than the Chinese. These Uighurs and Musulmans, moreover, kept in their own hands the commerce between Mongolia and China; that is to say, they bought goods in China and sold them to the nomads.

¹ This admirable summary is taken from S. Lane-Poole's *Catalogue of Oriental Coins in the British Museum*, vol. vi. (also reprinted in his *Mohammedan Dynasties*, pp. 201, 202). It is a condensation of what may be read in great detail in Howorth's *Mongols*, vol. i. pp. 27-50. Cf. also De Guignes, vol. iv. p. 1 *et seq.*; and d'Ohsson, vol. i. chaps. i. and ii.

² For information with regard to this name, cf. d'Ohsson, *op. cit.* vol. i. pp. 36, 37, note.

³ Thus according to the Chinese authorities. The Mohammedan historians give the date of his birth as A.H. 550 (1155).

By means of the knowledge thus gained, these merchants were able to influence the Khāns, and through them the people. Moreover, Buddhist, Nestorian, and Musulman merchants were always closely followed by the missionaries of their respective religions. Islām at that period had not yet obtained predominance in Central Asia, and in Mongolia its propaganda was practically non-existent. Over the Uighūrs, the nearest neighbours of the Mongols, Buddhists and Nestorian Christians still had the upper hand. These latter even succeeded in converting some of the most powerful tribes of the black Mongols, such as the Keraites and the Naimans, to Christianity. The savage Tatars, whom the Mongols called "forest peoples," led a roving life in the forests of the modern province of Trans-Baikal and the north-west of Mongolia. They practised Shamanism in its purest form.¹

Authorities are in disagreement as to which of these Mongol clans claimed Temuchin as its own. The Chinese aver that he belonged to the black Tatars; while Mongolian tradition² would enrol him among the savage tribes. Rashid ud-Dīn tells us that Yissugāy married a woman belonging to the white Tatars, who became the mother of Temuchin and his brothers; and that the lads were adepts as hunters and fishermen.

Whatever may have been Yissugāy's position among his tribe,³ it seems clear that on his death in battle his eldest son, Temuchin, then thirteen years of age, was not recognised as a chief, and supported a miserable existence with his mother on roots, game, and fish. Such a life

¹ The above remarks on the Mongols have been translated from an article in Russian by M. Barthold in Baron Rosen's *Zapiski*, vol. x. (St. Petersburg, 1897) pp. 107-8.

² Rashid ud-Dīn, *Jāmi'-ul-Tawārīkh*, Berezine's ed. i. 89.

³ The Chinese and Persian authorities are here again at variance.

probably served to develop his genius, signs of which, not less than the memory of his father's military prowess, attracted round him a band of young nobles who afterwards formed his bodyguard. The growing power of the Mongols in the twelfth century alarmed the Manchurian dynasty of the Tsin, then reigning in Northern China, who incited the Buyr-Nūr Tatars to attack them. It was in this war that Yissugāy perished. As soon as they had crushed the common enemy, the Buyr-Nūrs turned against their former allies and invaded China.

The Tsin emperor now sent other nomad chiefs to oppose the Buyr-Nūrs, of whom the mightiest was Toghrul, the Khān of the Christian Keraites,¹ whose habitat was on the shores of the Tola. Temuchin allied himself with this tribe, and in the final campaign against the Buyr-Nūrs, when the Tsin emperor himself led his forces into Mongolia, Temuchin so distinguished himself as to gain an honorific title.² This occurred in 1194. The next ten years Temuchin spent in struggles with confederacies of hostile tribes whose jealousy he had incurred by his uninterrupted successes. Having reduced all who dwelt north of the desert of Gobi, from the Irtish to the Khinggan Mountains,³ he found himself in the year 1202 engaged in a war against his former ally Toghrul, Khān of the Keraites. He was at first defeated, and compelled to retire; but in the following year (1203) he collected another army and inflicted a crush-

¹ They had been converted to Christianity by the Nestorians at the beginning of the eleventh century. See very interesting note in d'Ohsson, *op. cit.* i. p. 48. This Toghrul received the title of Oang, or King, and called himself Oang-Khān. The similarity of this in sound to the name *Johan*, or Johannes (John), led to the fabulous personage so familiar in Marco Polo and other travellers, as Prester John. Cf. Yule's *Cathay* and *Marco Polo*, *passim*.

² Cf. d'Ohsson, i. p. 47.

³ Cf. S. Lane-Poole, *loc. cit.*

ing defeat upon the Keraites, reducing them to abject submission. In 1206¹ he summoned a Kurultāy,² or Diet of the Nobles, and, in the presence of all the tribal chieftains, formally adopted the title of Chingiz Khān, or "The Very Mighty King."

His ambitions were now aroused, though they were as yet bounded by the narrow horizon in which they had found scope; and he could not have foreseen the goal to which they would carry him.

¹ The exact date is uncertain.

² This word may be read either *Kuriltāy* or *Kurultāy*. Cf. Pavet de Courteille, *Dictionnaire Turk-Oriental*, p. 429.

CHAPTER XXII

MONGOL INVASION OF CENTRAL ASIA

TĀI YĀNG KHĀN, king of the Christian tribe of Naimans, alarmed at the growing power of the young ruler, sent Alakush-Tekin, chief of the Onguts, or white Tatars, an invitation to join him against the ambitious Mongol. Alakush-Tekin immediately informed Chingiz of the Naimans' intentions, assuring him at the same time of his own friendly feeling. Chingiz promptly marched against Tāi Yāng, who descended from the Altai to the foot of the Khanggai Mountains, attended by many allies, among whom was Tukta, king of the Merkits.¹ In the battle which took place the Naimans were utterly routed. Among the prisoners who fell into the hands of the Mongols was Tatatungo, the chancellor of Tāi Yāng, who belonged to the Uīghūr tribe, and tradition attributes to his influence the veneer of civilisation of the Mongols; and it is certain that Chingiz caused him to instruct his sons in the language, laws, and customs of the Uīghūrs.²

Tāi Yāng Khān perished in this battle, while his son Guchluk fled by way of Bish Bālik to the country of the Gūr-Khān of Kara-Khitāy.³ After wandering for some time and enduring great privations, he at length arrived at the court of the Gūr-Khān (1208). He was hospitably received, and the Khān gave him his daughter in marriage;

¹ Cf. d'Ohsson, i. 86.

² *Ibid.* p. 89.

³ Cf. Howorth, *J.R.A.S.*, New Series VIII. p. 283.

but the favours showered on him did not prevent his plotting to dethrone his benefactor. He obtained permission to enlist the remnants of the Naiman tribe, and thus collected a considerable force; then he entered into a league with Mohammad Shāh of Khwārazm, and 'Othmān, prince of Samarkand, who, as we have seen above, were both vassals of the Gūr-Khān. They arranged that they should attack their Gūr-Khān suzerain simultaneously, the one from the east and the other from the west. The conditions determined on were that if Sultan Mohammad should be the first to gain a victory, Almāligh, Khotan, and Kāshghar, which were in Guchluk's hands, should be ceded to him; but if, on the other hand, Guchluk should win the initial success, Kara-Khitāy, as far as Fināket, should be delivered over to him.¹ Guchluk arrived before the Sultan, and was at first successful, but was afterwards defeated on his way to attack Balāsāghūn, and obliged to retreat. In the meantime the troops of Mohammad and 'Othmān had entered Kara-Khitāy, and gained a victory over the Gūr-Khān's general, Tanigū, near the city of Tarāz. Guchluk, taking advantage of this reverse, hurried back, surprised the Gūr-Khān, and took him prisoner, A.H. 608 (1212). Two years later the Gūr-Khān died, at a very advanced age. Guchluk, now firmly established on the throne of Kara-Khitāy, reduced his new subjects to complete obedience. He was a cruel persecutor of Islām, being himself a Nestorian Christian until his marriage with the Gūr-Khān's daughter, when he became a Buddhist.²

Chingiz had been occupied since the overthrow of the Naimans with the conquest of China, and "though it

¹ The above facts are from the *Jahān-Kushāy*. Cf. Bretschneider, *op. cit.* i. 230, 231; the *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, p. 289; and d'Ohsson, *op. cit.* i. 166 *et seq.*

² Cf. d'Ohsson, i. 170 *et seq.*; Bretschneider, *op. cit.* i. 231.

was reserved for his grandson to complete the subjugation of the Celestial Empire,¹ a great part of the northern provinces . . . was added to the Mongol dominions during the great Khān's own lifetime."²

In 1218 he despatched an army 20,000 strong, under Noyan Chebe, to attack Guchluk Khān in Kāshghar. Hearing of their approach, Guchluk fled, but was shortly afterwards overtaken in the mountains of Badakhshān and put to death. He was, as we have seen, a bigot, and especially intolerant in his dealings with Mohammedans. The Mongols proclaimed religious liberty, and thereby ensured for themselves the favour of the people.³

After the downfall of the Kara-Khitāys the possessions of Mohammad of Khwārazm extended into the heart of Turkestan, with Samarkand as a capital. Those of Guchluk Khān were restricted to Kāshghar, Khotan, and Yarkand.⁴

Chingiz's relations with his powerful neighbour in Khwārazm were long of a peaceful and even friendly nature, but causes were at work which altered them radically.⁵ Abū-l-Ghāzi states⁶ that the Caliph Nāsir's intense jealousy of the northern empire led him to adopt every means in his power to weaken it, and that he invited Chingiz to attack Sultan Mohammad. It is probable that this perfidious policy caused a coldness between the two potentates; but the immediate cause of rupture was an act for which the Khwārazm Sultan was alone responsible. He cruelly slew, at

¹ This occupied him between the years 1210 and 1214.

² S. Lane-Poole, *loc. cit.* See also Gibbon's 64th chapter.

³ Cf. Bretschneider, *loc. cit.*; and on the subject of the religious tolerance of Chingiz, Gibbon, chap. lxiv.

⁴ Cf. d'Ohsson, i. 204.

⁵ He had put his former ally 'Othman to death in A.H. 607 (1210). See d'Ohsson, i. 183.

⁶ Abū-l-Ghāzi, ed. Desmaisons, p. 99.

Otrār, some Mohammediān traders who had incurred his animosity, in spite of the fact that they were travelling under Chingiz's protection. The avalanches which descended on the habitable world in the twelfth century were thus set in motion by princes whose interest required that the vast forces controlled by Chingiz should remain pent up in their native steppes.

In A.H. 615 (1218) he set out for Otrār, determined to avenge the insult offered by Sultan Mohammad, and on his way was joined by large reinforcements of Karliks, Uighūr and other Mongol tribes, eager to share in the plunder of the West.¹ On reaching that goal he divided his forces among his sons, and laid down for each the object of attack.

Ogdāy and Chaghatāy were to reduce Otrār; Jūjī Khān was despatched in the direction of Jand; while two of his generals, with 5000 men, were sent to attack Fināket and Khojend. With the remainder of his forces Chingiz himself, accompanied by his son Tūli, set out for Bokhārā,² and arrived at that capital in A.H. 616 (1219), having carried all before him on his march. No sooner had he appeared than the garrison, 20,000 strong, fled towards Khwārazm, but were overtaken on the banks of the Oxus and cut to pieces by the Mongols sent in their pursuit. Meanwhile the shaykhs and mullās of Bokhārā sallied forth and presented the keys of the town to Chingiz Khān, who made a formal entry, penetrated the courtyard of the principal mosque on horseback, and asked whether this fine building was Sultan Mohammad's palace. On being told that it was God's house he dismounted, and, ascending the pulpit, hurled the Koran beneath his horse's feet. He next insisted that the inhabitants should deliver up their hidden treasures. Here his destroying hand would

¹ Abū-l-Ghāzi, ed. Desmaisons, p. 100.

² Abū-l-Ghāzi, *loc. cit.*

have been stayed had he not learnt that some remnants of Sultan Mohammad's garrison were still in hiding. In order to compass their death he ordered the city, which was mainly built of wood, to be given to the flames. His behests were obeyed, and Bokhārā for a time ceased to exist. Chingiz, however, caused it to be rebuilt.¹

Meanwhile success had attended all his other army corps; and Otrār, Jand, and Khojend, together with many other towns, submitted to the Mongols. The sons and generals of Chingiz now joined the main body, and their united forces together marched on Samarkand. Before the end of the year A.H. 616 (1219) this great city, after a three days' siege, fell. The garrison was put to the sword, and Samarkand was given over to reckless pillage.

It is not necessary here to record the story of the Mongol's progress of conquest. Khwārazm soon succumbed, and Khorāsān was overrun by his hordes. The Sultan himself took no active part in the hopeless effort to stay the advance of Chingiz, but fled across Khorāsān² to an island in the Caspian named Ābasgūn, not far from the modern Astarābād, where in A.H. 617 (1220) he died in utter destitution.³ A manful struggle to revive the glory of his house was made by Sultan Mohammad's heroic son Jalāl ud-Dīn, whose career forms one of the most exciting narratives in history.⁴ This last representative of the Khwārazm Shāhs, after having boldly faced death on a hundred battlefields, was brutally murdered in A.H. 628 (1231) by a low-born Kurd.

¹ Abū-l-Ghāzi, pp. 101-103 of Desmaison's text.

² The route he took was Kazwīn, Gilān, and Māzenderān (*Tarikh-i-Mukīm Khānī*).

³ He is said to have died a lunatic. The island in question has long since been swallowed up by the sea. Cf. *Tabakāt-i-Nāsiri*, Major Raverty's trans., vol. i. p. 278, note.

⁴ We refer the reader especially to Müller's *Geschichte des Islams*, pp. 213-225.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE LINE OF CHAGHATĀY

"THE Mongol armies," writes Mr. S. Lane-Poole, "divided into several immense brigades, swept over Khwārazm, Khorāsān, and Afghanistān, on the one hand; and on the other, over Āzerbāyjān, Georgia, and Southern Russia; whilst a third division continued the reduction of China. In the midst of these diverging streams of conquest Chingiz Khān died in A.H. 624 (1227), at the age of sixty-four. The territory he and his sons had conquered stretched from the Yellow Sea to the Euxine, and included lands or tribes wrung from the rule of Chinese, Tanguts, Afghans, Persians, and Turks.

"It was the habit of a Mongol chief to distribute the clans over which he had ruled as appanages among his sons, and this tribal rather than territorial distribution obtained in the division of the empire among the sons of Chingiz. The founder appointed a special appanage of tribes in certain loosely defined camping-grounds to each son, and also nominated a successor to himself in the Khānate."¹

In this division of the newly founded Mongol Empire, —*i.e.* Transoxiana, with part of Kāshghar,—Badakhshān, Balkh, and Ghazna fell to the lot of Chingiz Khān's second son, Chaghatāy, the founder of the Khānate of that name, which existed for 146 years, till its overthrow by Tīmūr in A.H. 771 (1370).

¹ *Mohammedan Dynasties*, p. 204.

The annals of his branch of his dynasty have hitherto been obscurer than those of the other descendants of Chingiz.¹ He appears to have profited by the lessons of the Naiman chancellor,² and to have developed into a just and energetic ruler, capable of preserving order among the heterogeneous population under his charge.

He scrupulously observed the *Yasāk*, or Civil Code, established by his father, and, like him, was tolerant towards all religions and creeds. He fixed his capital at Almāligh,³ in the extreme east of his dominions. His Mongol ministers, loving the life of the steppes, probably induced him to choose this locality rather than Samarkand or Bokhārā.⁴ They would serve no Khān who did not lead a life worthy of free-born men; and Chaghatāy and his immediate successors saw, as did his later descendants, that the one way of retaining the allegiance of his people was to humour their desires in this respect and live with them a nomad's life.⁵

¹ The best account of this offshoot is to be found in an excellent paper entitled "The Chaghatai Mughals," by W. E. E. Oliver, in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. xx. New Series, p. 72, sec. 9. It will be found in a condensed form in Ney Elias and Ross's *Introduction to the Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, or "History of the Mughals of Central Asia."

² *Vide ante* on p. 155.

³ In the valley of the Upper Ili, near the site of the present Kulja.

⁴ During the reign of Chaghatāy Khān a curious rising occurred in the province of Bokhārā. A half-witted sieve-maker, from a village near Bokhārā, managed by various impostures to gather round him a number of disciples from among the common people, and so numerous and powerful did they become that in 630 (1232) they drove the Chaghatāy government out of the country, and, assuming the government of Bokhārā, proceeded to put to death many of its most distinguished citizens. They at first successfully repulsed the Mongol forces sent against them, but were finally vanquished, and order was again restored in Bokhārā. For this episode consult Vambéry, *op. cit.* p. 143 *et seq.*; Major Price's *Mohammedan History*, iii. 2.

⁵ *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, Introduction, p. 32.

In the year A.H. 639 (1241) both Ogdāy and Chaghatāy,¹ the great Khāns of the Mongolian Empire, died, and the successors of Chingiz fell to disputing the succession.

We do not propose to enlarge on the struggles and disorders which existed almost without cessation in Turkeṣtān during the whole period of the Chaghatāy Khān's rule, and will confine ourselves to a consideration of the social conditions of that country under his successors.² The Mongols in contact with communities possessed of a comparatively high standard of civilisation lost none of their passion for their boundless steppe. In their eyes the town, the settled abode, were abominations, indicating deep-seated effeminacy and corruption: the only life worth living was that of the herdsman, roving free as air, with his tent of white felt.

Their subjects who preferred a sedentary existence, so long as they were obedient and orderly, were left in tranquil occupation of their homes, and were even encouraged by their nomad lords to repair the damage suffered by their cities in war. Ruin doubtless fell on many great centres of population, such as Herāt;³ but in Persia and Transoxiana there was no systematic obliteration of organised society,⁴ no reversion to the nomadic level. The case in Mongolia and Kāshgharia was different. Less than a century prior to the rise of the Mongols

¹ Chaghatāy is said to have died from grief at his brother's death (*Ḥabīb-us-Siyar*).

² For historical data we have already referred the reader to Mr. Oliver's paper and Vambéry's *Bokhara*. S. Lane-Poole, in his *Mohammedan Dynasties*, gives a list of twenty-six Khāns of this house who ruled in Central Asia from A.H. 624 to 771 (A.D. 1227 to 1358), *i.e.* 140 years. The *Zafar-Nāmē* of Nizām Shāmi (see note below, p. 168) gives a list of thirty-one Khāns of this line.

³ Cf. Müller's *Geschichte des Islams*, ii. p. 217.

⁴ In A.H. 671 (1273) Bokhārā was sacked by the Mongols of Persia (Müller, *op. cit.* ii. p. 260).

these countries had been occupied by the Uighūrs, who were a race which had attained a certain degree of development, and evinced it by preferring a settled existence in towns. Their successors, the Kara-Khitāy, though less civilised, seem also to have affected urban life. In these countries, however, during the Chaghatāy period, no new towns sprang up, while those already in being fell into a state of ruin.

"Amidst the terrible ravages committed by the Mongolians," writes Vambéry,¹ "the science of theology and its votaries alone continued to flourish. In the days of the earlier Chaghatāy Khāns the mullās of Turkeṣtān had enjoyed a certain amount of protection, thanks partly to the principle of religious toleration, and partly to the superstitious awe in which every class of the priesthood was held; and in almost every town there was some one or other holy man to whom the Moslems had recourse in the day of peril. The spiritual teachers thus became at the same time secular protectors, and from this time forward we find the *Sadr-i-sharī'at* (heads of the religious bodies) and chief magistrates, and in general all men of remarkable piety, attaining an influence in the towns of Transoxiana unknown in the rest of Islām; an influence which maintains itself to this day, though the land has been for centuries governed by Musulman princes. The seats of spiritual authority were filled by regular dynasties of learned men of certain families, as though they had been thrones."

It appears that about the year A.H. 721 (1321) a final division of the Chaghatāy Khānate took place. The two branches established were the Khāns of Transoxiana and those of Jatah, or Moghūlistan;² but each had other

¹ *Bokhara*, pp. 159-60.

² This Khānate embraced the present Zungaria and the greater part of Eastern and Western Turkeṣtān; but the exact meaning of this geographical

provinces in its possession. As for the history of the western branch, it is only necessary to mention that during the fifty years of their rule, which continued until Timūr made himself master of the country, we find no less than fifteen Khāns recorded—some of them strangers in blood to the Chaghatāy line—and long periods of anarchy.¹

Leaving, then, this confused chapter of Central Asian history, we will pass to the rise of the mightiest of her conquerors.

term is still undetermined. The subject has been fully discussed in the *Tarikh-i-Rashidi* (*passim*). Cf. also Bretschneider, *op. cit.* ii. 225 *et seq.*

¹ See *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, Introduction, p. 37.

CHAPTER XXIV

TIMŪR, THE GREAT AMĪR

IN the year A.H. 733 Kazān Khān¹ mounted the throne of the western Chaghatāy family. He is described by his contemporaries as a cruel and tyrannical villain, who inspired so general a terror that when his nobles were summoned to a *Kurultāy*, or general assembly, they made their wills before leaving their homes.² To such a pitch did the dissatisfaction of his nobles rise, that in the year A.H. 746 (1345) they banded together under the leadership of a certain Amīr Kazghan, and broke into open revolt. The Khān at once set out with his troops to crush them. In the first encounter³ he gained the upper hand, and Amīr Kazghan lost an eye from an arrow shot by the Khān himself. The conqueror thereupon retired to Karshī; but, owing to the severity of the winter, most of his horses and transport cattle perished. Amīr Kazghan, hearing of the Khān's misfortunes, took courage and, in the following year, A.H. 747 (1346), attacked Karshī. The fortune of war on

¹ The Calcutta text of the *Zafar-Nāmē* of Sheref ud-Dīn 'Alī Yazdī, the famous biographer of Timūr, reads throughout *Karān*. S. Lane-Poole, *op. cit.*, gives the date of his accession as 744 (A.D. 1343),—upon what authority it is not clear. Price (following the *Khulāsāt ul-Akhhbār*) is in agreement with the *Zafar-Nāmē*. We are, moreover, expressly told that he ruled fourteen years, and died in 747.

² *Zafar-Nāmē* (ed. Calcutta), i. p. 27.

³ This took place in the plains round the village of *Dara-Zangi* (*Zafar-Nāmē*, ii. p. 28).

this occasion veered towards his side. He defeated and slew the tyrant, becoming thus master of Transoxiana and Turkeṣtān. He next assumed the rôle of king-maker, and placed on the throne one of the descendants of Ogdāy,¹ named Dānishmandja,² whom, however, he put to death two years later, setting up in his place Bayān Kuli, a Chaghatāy by descent, A.H. 749 (1348). For ten years this prince sat upon the throne of the Chaghatāy Khāns, but he governed in name only, for all the affairs of the state were directed by the skilful hand of Amīr Kazghan, who made himself loved and respected by his prudence and equity.

In A.H. 759 (1357) this worthy chief was murdered while hunting in the vicinity of Kunduz, to the deep regret of the people.

His son 'Abdullah was universally recognised as the successor to Amīr Kazghan's peculiar office of Prime Minister. The residence of the Khāns—in fact the capital of the western branch of Chaghatāys—had lately been Sālī Sarāy, but was transferred to Samarkand, owing, we are told, to 'Abdullah's great love for that town. Thither he carried his puppet, Bayān Kulī; but, falling in love with the Khān's wife, he put the ill-starred husband to death, and set up in his stead Tīmūr Shāh Oghlān, A.H. 759 (1357). The nobles were deeply incensed at this arbitrary and cruel deed, and, with the intent of avenging their prince's death, one of their number, named Bayān Seldūz, raised an army and marched on Samarkand. On his way thither he was joined by Hāji Birlās³ in Kesh,⁴ and the united forces

¹ The third son of Chingiz, who had inherited the kingdom of Mongolia proper.

² *Zafar-Nāmē* (ed. Calcutta) reads Dānishmand Oghlān.

³ Perhaps a corruption of the older form *Berūlās*.

⁴ The modern Shahr-i-Sabz.

administered a crushing defeat to 'Abdullah, who fled across the Oxus to Andarāb, where he remained in obscurity till his death. The family and partisans of Amīr Kazghan were now scattered far and wide, and the government of Transoxiana passed into the hands of Bayān Seldūz¹ and Hāji Birlās. The former, however, was a hopeless drunkard, and utterly unfit to rule in times so charged with storm. The western Chaghatāy states were parcelled out among a host of prominent nobles, whose rivalries plunged the country into the throes of civil war; and the town of Kesh, with its immediate dependencies, was all that Hāji Birlās could call his own.

At this period the chief of Jatah, or Moghūlistan, was Tūghluk Tīmūr Khān.² Perceiving the state of disruption into which the kingdom of Transoxiana had lapsed, he resolved to take up the fallen sceptre. Gathering round him a large army, he set out from Kāshghar for the Khojend River, A.H. 761 (1360). After crossing it he was joined by Amīr Bāyazīd Jalā'ir, and they proceeded together in the direction of Shahr-i-Sabz. Hāji Birlās, hearing of the Khān's approach, attempted to organise resistance; but, at the last moment, he deemed discretion the better part of valour, and fled towards Khorāsān ere the two armies had come into conflict.

The darkest period of a country's annals is often illumined by the light of a better time to come. Transoxiana, torn by civil war, and a prey to the worst form of tyranny, that of a horde of greedy and imperious nobles, sighed not in vain for a deliverer. Rarely in history do we find a state of society readier to deliver itself into the

¹ Sheref ud-Dīn affirms that his love of wine was so inveterate that he was not sober for a week in the whole year (*Zafar-Nāmē* (Calcutta edition), i. p. 41).

² He was born in A.H. 730. In 748 he became Khān of Jatah; in 754 he was converted to Islām; in 764 he died. His history, and the story of his conversion, is told at some length in the *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, pp. 5-23.

hands of a man of destiny than was the shattered empire of the Chaghatāy Khāns in the middle of the fifteenth century.¹

The early biographers² of him whom his contemporaries styled Timūr Leng, the "Lame Timūr,"³ delighted to give him a common ancestry with Chingiz Khān, and traced his descent from a vezīr in the service of Chaghatāy named Karāchār Nuyān, whose genealogy merges with that of the earlier conqueror. This, however, is a long-exploded myth; for Timūr was certainly a Turk by descent, and belonged to one of the numerous tribes which participated in the Mongol occupation of Central Asia, and, after the downfall of Amīr Kazghan, gained the mastery over all Transoxiana and Turkestan.⁴ Timūr was the son of Amīr Turghāy, who had preceded Hāji Birlās in the government of the province of Kesh and its dependencies.⁵ He was born in the town of Kesh, now called

¹ Our readers will have traced for themselves the parallel afforded by France, exhausted by the horrors of the Revolution at the outset of Napoleon's career.

² The sources for the biography of Timūr are plentiful. The best known, both in the East and in Europe, is the *Zafar-Nāmē*, by Sheref ud-Dīn 'Alī, of Yezd. This was completed in 1424 by the order of Ibrāhīm, the son of Shāh Rukh, the son of Timūr. It was first translated into French in 1722 by M. Petis de la Croix, whose work was in turn englished shortly afterwards. It is this history that has served as a basis for all European historians, Gibbon included. There is, however, an older biography of Timūr, which, owing to its scarcity, is very little known. The only MS. in Europe is in the British Museum. It, too, bears the title of *Zafar-Nāmē*, or *Book of Victory*. It was compiled at Timūr's own order by a certain Nizām Shāmī, and is brought down to A.H. 806, i.e. one year before Timūr's death. The MS. itself bears the date of A.H. 838 (1434). Owing to the vast interest attaching to such a contemporary account, Professor Denison Ross has undertaken to prepare an edition of the text for the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences.

³ He had gained the sobriquet "Leng" from a wound which caused him to halt through life, inflicted during the siege of Sīstān (Wolff, *Bokhara*, p. 243).

⁴ For example, the names Jalā'ir, Berülās, and Seldüz are those of well-known Turkish tribes.

⁵ According to the *Zafar-Nāmē* of Sheref ud-Dīn 'Alī Yazdi, and other historians who follow him, Hāji Birlās was the uncle of Timūr. The *Zafar-Nāmē* of Nizām Shāmī, however, states that he was Timūr's brother.

Shahr-i-Sabz, the Green City, in the year A.H. 736 (1333). According to his autobiography, he became conscious of his own powers at an early age, and distinguished himself alike in council and in the hunting-field.

When Hāji Birlās reached the Oxus in his flight from the army of Tūghluk Tīmūr Khān, the young Tīmūr,¹ who had accompanied him, requested leave to return to his native city and seek an audience of the Khān, in order to intercede for his suffering fellow-townsmen. Having obtained the required permission, he hastened to the camp of the allied Amīrs, whom he so favourably impressed by his earnestness and eloquence that they not only desisted from their hostile intentions, but conferred upon him the government of his native city. Tīmūr took leave of the Amīrs of Jatah, and entered upon the administration of his state and the levy of troops in the country between Kesh and the Oxus. Meanwhile the Amīrs quarrelled, withdrew their troops from Transoxiana, and returned to headquarters in Kāshghar.

In the following year, A.H. 762 (1361), the Khān of Jatah again entered Transoxiana, and, after a successful campaign against various rebellious nobles, took possession of Samarkand. He intrusted the government of the conquered districts to his son Iliyās Khwāja Oghlān, while Tīmūr, whose sagacity had attracted the Khān's attention, was appointed chief councillor to the young prince. Tīmūr, however, was disgusted with the conduct of certain of his colleagues, and fled the country in search of his brother-in-law Amīr Husayn, the grandson of Kazghan.² After a career of marvellous adventure in company with Amīr Husayn, he had by the year

¹ He was at this period about twenty-seven years of age, and had served with some distinction under Amīr Kazghan (Wolff, *Bokhara*, p. 245).

² We refer the reader to Gibbon's 65th chapter for a striking account of Tīmūr's wanderings in the desert, and to Petis de la Croix's translation of the *Zafar-Nāmē* for Tīmūr's thrilling adventures with his friend Amīr Husayn.

A.H. 765 (1363) collected sufficient troops round him to make a stand against Iliyās Khwāja, whom in an encounter near Kunduz he entirely routed, and compelled to withdraw across the Oxus.

At the close of A.H. 771 (1370) he had made himself absolute master of the dominions of the western Chaghatāys, and had restored order in the state. He did not, however, place himself on the throne of the Chaghatāys, but made another rightful descendant of that line nominal head of the empire.

This apparent self-abnegation was probably due to the universal respect enjoyed by the house of Chaghatāy as descendants of Chingiz, and to the associations which clustered round their name. Be this as it may, it is certain that Tīmūr was content with the absolute power won by his genius, and scorned the sounding style of emperor. That his rule made for the happiness of the peoples who owned his sway is evidenced by the hold which his personality had, and still retains, on the fickle population of Central Asia. "The love and attachment of the army to Tīmūr," writes Wolff,¹ "was so great and so unlimited that they would forego plunder in time of need if ordered by him; and the subjection to him was so blind and unconditional that it would only have cost him an order to cause himself to be proclaimed not only as emperor, but even as Prophet of the Tartars. He endeavoured to soften the inclination to cruelty of his soldiers, composed of so many nations, by poets and learned men, by musicians and *sufis*, who came in swarms to the army and wandered with him through Asia."² Under his enlightened rule Samarkand became the

¹ *Bokhara*, p. 244.

² The famous order of dervishes called *Nakshabandi* was founded in Tīmūr's reign by a certain Khwāja Bahā ud-Dīn, who died in A.H. 791 (1388). The three saints held in reverence by the dervishes next after him are



DERVISHES OF THE NAKSHABANDI ORDER



centre of a great and brilliant court, and was embellished with palaces, mosques, and colleges which extort the admiration of those who view them in their decay.

It is the hard fate of a conqueror that he can never pause in his onward progress. The fierce passions let loose by war can be assuaged only by their repeated exercise; and Tīmūr's hordes were ever clamouring to be led to fresh victories. Thus, when he had restored peace and prosperity to Central Asia, he set out on a triumphant march which threatened to include the whole inhabited world. In A.H. 793 (1390) Persia and the Caucasus, that halting-place in the migration of human masses westwards, were overrun by his armies. Then, in A.H. 798 (1395), he attacked the Kipchāks, a Mongolian tribe firmly settled in South-Eastern Russia and the lower Volga, which for the first time in history were united under their great chief, Tokhtamish Khān. Long and desperate was the struggle between the rivals, but it ended in Tīmūr's triumph. His eyes now turned to India, whose fabulous wealth had attracted other adventurers such as he. The Panjāb and the whole Gangetic Delta fell an easy prey to his legions; and in A.H. 801 (1398) he returned to Samarkand laden with spoils. The Egyptian dynasty established in Syria and the Turkish lords of Asia Minor alone retained their independence. Tīmūr stormed Damascus and broke the Mamlūk power. Then, on the field of Angora, A.H. 805 (1402), he utterly defeated the Sultan Bāyazīd I., a conqueror of a renown only second to his own. Con-

Khawja Ahrār (whose mausoleum is to be seen a few miles outside Samarkand), Ishān Mahzūm Kāshāni, and Sūfi Allah Yār. It is a group of members of this mendicant brotherhood which forms the subject of the frontispiece to this work by M. Verestchagin. There are two other sects of dervishes in Samarkand—(1) the *Kādirīyya*, whose founder was 'Abd el-Kādiri Gilāni, and (2) the *Alf Tsāni*, an order whereof the founder seems to be unknown, and which is sparsely represented.

stantinople and the empire of the East lay at his mercy. Happily for European civilisation, his darling Samarkand attracted the war-spent conqueror. He returned thither in triumph, and three years later died at Otrār, while on his way to subdue China, A.H. 807 (1404)¹—

Mors sola faletur

Quantula sunt hominum corpuscula!

¹ "He was of great stature, of an extraordinary large head, open forehead, of a beautiful red and white complexion; and with long hair—white from his birth, like Zal, the renowned hero of Persian history. In his ears he wore two diamonds of great value. He was of a serious and gloomy expression of countenance; an enemy to every kind of joke or jest, but especially to falsehood, which he hated to such a degree that he preferred a disagreeable truth to an agreeable lie,—in this respect far different from the character of Alexander, who put to death Clitus, his friend and companion in arms, as well as the philosopher Callisthenes, for uttering disagreeable truths to him. Timūr never relinquished his purpose or countermanded his order; never regretted the past, nor rejoiced in the anticipation of the future; he neither loved poets nor buffoons, but physicians, astronomers, and lawyers, whom he frequently desired to carry on discussions in his presence; but most particularly he loved those dervishes whose fame of sanctity paved his way to victory by their blessing. His most darling books were histories of wars and biographies of warriors and other celebrated men. His learning was confined to the knowledge of reading and writing, but he had such a retentive memory that whatever he read or heard once he never forgot. He was only acquainted with three languages—the Turkish, Persian, and Mongolian. The Arabic was foreign to him. He preferred the Tora of Chingiz Khān to the Koran, so that the Ulemas found it necessary to issue a Fetwa by which they declared those to be infidels who preferred human laws to the divine. He completed Chingiz Khān's Tora by his own code, called Tuzukat, which comprised the degrees and ranks of his officers. Without the philosophy of Antonius or the pedantry of Constantine, his laws exhibit a deep knowledge of military art and political science. Such principles were imitated successfully by his successors, Shāh Baber and the great Shāh Akbar, in Hindustān. The power of his civil as well as military government consisted in a deep knowledge of other countries, which he acquired by his interviews with travellers and dervishes, so that he was fully acquainted with all the plans, manœuvres, and political movements of foreign courts and armies. He himself despatched travellers to various parts, who were ordered to lay before him the maps and descriptions of other foreign countries" (Wolff's *Bokhara*, p. 243).



INTERIOR OF TAMERLANE'S MAUSOLEUM, BOKHARA



THE TOMB OF TAMERLANE



CHAPTER XXV

THE SUCCESSORS OF TĪMŪR

THE method taken by Chingiz Khān of assuring the continuance of sovereignty in his house was inspired by statesmanlike prescience. It is well-nigh impossible for a single individual to maintain intact an empire inherited from a father who has won it by the sword. Its founder may, indeed, say with far greater truth than the scion of a long line of kings, "the State is Myself"; but his hour of triumph is embittered by the reflection that possessions amassed by ruthless greed are apt to melt away when the strong arm that secured them has mouldered into dust. Chingiz, by dividing his unwieldy dominions among his four sons, removed all cause of jealousy, such as would inevitably have arisen had one child been exalted above the rest, and established a community of interest among his descendants which for several generations sufficed to keep the greater portion of the known world in his family.

Tīmūr's disregard of the sound principles of statecraft in the disposal of his conquests brought upon his dynasty the curse of perennial rivalries, of mutual hatreds which led to the disruption of his empire and paved the way for the advent of alien rulers.

When the news of Tīmūr's death reached Samarkand, his grandson, Pir Mohammad, to whom he had bequeathed his crown, was absent in Kandahār. Khalil Sultan,

another grandson, assured of the support of the army and the more powerful nobles, took possession of Samarkand and proclaimed himself king, A.H. 807 (1405).

Meanwhile the dead conqueror's son, Shāh Rukh,¹ who ruled Herāt, with the concurrence of the feudal chiefs of his province, laid claim to the succession, and was acknowledged as the rightful heir throughout Khorāsān, Sistān, and Māzanderān. Leaving followers devoted to his interests in charge of these three important districts, he set out for Transoxiana, and on his way thither learnt that Khalil had been proclaimed king of Samarkand. On hearing this news he sent back one of his generals with orders to place Herāt in a state of defence, while he himself continued his march towards the Oxus.

In the meantime his rivals came to terms; Sultan Khalil being left in possession of Transoxiana, while Pīr Mohammad was acknowledged as his heir.² Shāh Rukh was conscious of his inability to contend against these combined forces, and he wisely resolved to secure a realm which they were not likely to dispute with him.

He hastened back to Herāt and seized Khorāsān, Māzanderān, and Sistān. In A.H. 817 (1414) he added Isfahān and Shirāz to these acquisitions, and ruled over the fairest province of Irān until his death, in A.H. 850 (1447).

Sultan Khalil possessed many admirable qualities, with no small share of the vices which are associated with every virtue. He was too lavish in gifts and in affection. Had it not been for the slavery in which he was held by his beloved mistress, *Shād Mulk*, the "Joy

¹ Shāh Rukh was Timūr's favourite son. He derived his name, which means "King and Castle," from a well-known move in chess, which royal game was one of Timūr's few amusements (Wolff's *Bokhara*, p. 244).

² Cf. Price's *Mohammedan History*, iii. 492, quoting the *Khulāsāt-ul-Akhbār*. As a fact, Pīr Mohammad only obtained the government of Balkh, and was murdered in Kandahār in A.H. 809 (1406). Cf. De Guignes, v. 79.

of the State," he might have revived the lustre of his grandsire's rule. But his submission to every whim of an extravagant woman soon depleted Tīmūr's brimming treasury, and estranged from his person even those who had been his most ardent supporters.

The general discontent came to a head in A.H. 809 (1406), when two nobles, named Khodāyād and Shaykh Nūr-ed-Dīn, suddenly took up arms against their master, and advanced to attack Samarkand. They were repulsed by Khalīl, and in the following year Shaykh Nūr-ed-Dīn made peace with the Sultan. Meanwhile Khodāyād, allying himself with other malcontent nobles, returned to the attack. On arriving before Samarkand, the rebels decoyed Sultan Khalīl from his defences under a pretence of parleying, seized his person and obtained possession of the city,¹ A.H. 812 (1409).

On learning this piece of treachery, Shāh Rukh at once despatched an army under his general, Shāh Mulk, to punish Khodāyād. The latter abandoned Samarkand, which remained without a ruler until the arrival of Shāh Mulk, to whom the gates were opened. Shāh Rukh himself arrived shortly afterwards, and, after establishing order in the town, heaped the most galling indignities on Shāh Mulk, who had been the cause of Khalīl's misfortunes.² He then made his young son, Ulugh Beg, governor of Transoxiana, and returned to Herāt.

The thirty-eight years during which the cultured prince ruled as his father's lieutenant in Samarkand were the golden age of Central Asia. Himself an

¹ Cf. De Guignes, v. 81.

² De Guignes, v. 81. Khalīl spent some years in Moghūlistan, but, unable to bear a longer separation from Shāh Mulk, joined her in Herāt. Shāh Rukh gave him the government of Khorāsān, and he died the same year (A.H. 812).

astronomer and mathematician of no mean renown,¹ he gathered round him a galaxy of stars of science, which made Timūr's capital a beacon-light for the Eastern world. His liberality and deep artistic sense were not less conspicuous. They stood revealed in palaces, mosques, and colleges, which during their brief existence made Samarkand the most beautiful of Asiatic cities. The long peace that had brooded over Transoxiana under the reign of this enlightened prince was rudely dispelled by the death of his father, Shāh Rukh, which took place in A.H. 850 (1448).² Ulugh Beg, as heir-apparent, was proclaimed emperor, and set out for Herāt to take possession of his father's treasure. But his nephew, 'Alā ud-Dawlé, had seized the citadel and the person of Ulugh Beg's son, 'Abd ul-Latif. Paternal love induced the emperor to come to terms with the pretender on certain conditions, first and foremost amongst these being his son's release. This was achieved, but the other stipulations were not carried out by 'Alā ud-Dawlé. The war was therefore renewed, and it ended in his discomfiture and flight towards Meshed. While pursuing his enemy through Khorāsān, Ulugh Beg received disquieting news from home. Herāt had been plundered by a Turkoman chief, and Samarkand by the uncouth Uzbeks, who destroyed in a few hours the marvels of art with which he had decorated it. But

¹ His astronomical tables are amongst the most accurate and complete that come down to us from Eastern sources. They treat of the measurement of time, the course of the planets, and of the position of fixed stars. The best editions are those printed in Latin in 1642-48 by an Oxford professor named Greaves, and reprinted in 1767. The remains of his celebrated observatory still crown the hill known as Chupān Ata in an eastern suburb of Samarkand.

² Shāh Rukh's authority, to judge by the coins which have come down to us, extended nearly as far as his more celebrated father's. We have his superscription on the issues of mints as widely distant as Shirāz, Kaswīn, Sabzawār, Herāt, Kum, Shuster, and Astarābād.

worse was still in store for the unhappy monarch. His darling, 'Abd ul-Latif, for whom he had sacrificed so much, set up the standard of revolt at Balkh and invaded Transoxiana. Ulugh Beg was forced to oppose his claims, but was defeated and taken prisoner. To 'Abd ul-Latif's eternal disgrace, he caused his father to be put to death in prison by a Persian slave.¹

The parricide did not prosper long. Abū Sa'īd, a descendant of Tīmūr's third son, Mirān Shāh, seized the throne of Samarkand; and, though 'Abd ul-Latif proved himself the stronger in the field, his triumph was cut short by his assassination by one of Ulugh Beg's trusted servants, A.H. 854 (1450). Abū Sa'īd claimed the succession, but was repulsed by one of Shāh Rukh's grandsons named 'Abdullah Mirzā, who took possession of the oft-contested throne of Samarkand. Gathering a strong force of Uzbeks, he returned to the charge and deprived 'Abdullah, his cousin, of his crown and life, A.H. 856 (1452).² The history of the following thirty years is a dreary record of struggles for supreme authority between Tīmūr's descendants. At length, in A.H. 870 (1465), Abū Sa'īd had defeated every rival and found himself unquestioned master of Transoxiana, Northern Persia, and Afghanistān. Central Asia enjoyed, too, a brief respite from the stress of civil war under a prince of real military and administrative genius. Two years later, A.H. 872 (1467), his evil star tempted him to intervene in the affairs of Āzerbāyjān. He marched against a pretender named Hasan Beg with a powerful army, but was utterly defeated and handed over by his captor to the tender mercies of Prince Yādgār Mirza, son of Shāh Rukh's consort, Gawhar Shād, whom Abū Sa'īd had put to death. The Mohammedan law is based on the Mosaic code, which prescribes blood for blood: and

¹ Vambéry's *Bokhara*, p. 223.² *Ibid.* p. 244.

the once-powerful emperor was beheaded by the inexorable Yādgār.

His son, Sultan Ahmed, was permitted to mount the throne of Samarkand. He was known to be of moderate abilities and a yielding nature; and revolts against his authority were frequent. The southern provinces threw off their allegiance, and were never reconquered during Sultan Ahmed's lifetime. His brother 'Omar Shaykh successfully withstood him on the extreme east, and he had the greatest difficulty in bringing back Turkeṣtān to obedience. His reign was, however, more peaceful than might have been anticipated in times so stormy. If Sultan Ahmed was given to alternate fits of drunkenness and devotion, he was at least devoid of the lust of conquest which proved so fatal to his predecessors. Transoxiana enjoyed comparative repose during his twenty-seven years' reign, and its capital was adorned with public edifices which rivalled those of Ulugh Beg in beauty and grandeur. He slept with his fathers in A.H. 899 (1493); whereon his brother, Sultan Mohammad, seized the throne, and basely slaughtered his five youthful nephews. This infamous cruelty and his own debauched life roused the ire of his nobles, whom good Sultan Ahmed had raised to a comparatively high standard of civilisation. He died after a reign of six months (1494), probably by violent means. The succession was, as usual, disputed by his children, Mas'ūd, Sultan 'Ali, and Baysunkur, the latter of whom, a youth of eighteen, was elevated to supreme authority by a powerful faction; for by this time a new factor had been introduced into Central Asian politics. The Uzbek chieftains and the ecclesiastics, who had been restrained by the strong arm of Tīmūr and his descendants, gained the mastery under the feeble Sultan Ahmed. Baysunkur's youth and inexperience rendered him unable to hold the balance true

between the contending parties. His lukewarmness made him disliked by all; and his brother, Sultan 'Ali, was invited from Karshī to supplant him. Baysunkur sought refuge in flight, but was soon afterwards restored, while his rival, Sultan 'Ali, escaped to Bokhārā. Here he organised resistance so effectually that Baysunkur was foiled in an attempt to capture Bokhārā, and driven back to his capital. Sultan 'Ali now turned the tables effectually on his brother. He advanced on Samarkand at the head of overwhelming forces, while Mas'ūd pressed forward from the south to assist him; and the famous Bāber Mīrzā, grandson of Abū Sa'id, raised the standard of revolt in Kokand.¹

Baysunkur felt resistance to this powerful combination hopeless, and he fled² to his brother Mas'ūd for protection, dying in obscurity in A.H. 905 (1499). His dominions were, in name, divided between Sultan 'Ali and Bāber Mīrzā, but their extreme youth forbade them to assert authority over the powerful nobles who had usurped every species of power. They abandoned the contest; and a chieftain named Mohammad Khān Shaybāni, a descendant of Jūjī, the son of Chingiz Khān, seized the throne of Samarkand. Thus fell the dynasty of Tīmūr, after a duration of 140 years.³ Their age has cast undying lustre on the Turkish name, for their own culture attracted an array of scholars and men of science whose works recall the brightest days of Moorish

¹ The young prince was born in 1483, the son of 'Omar Shaykh Mīrzā, whom he succeeded in the sovereignty of the eastern portion of Tīmūr's dominions. His conquest of India, and foundation of the Moghul dynasty of Delhi, do not come within the scope of this work. He was equally great in war, administration, and literature: perhaps the most remarkable figure of his age.

² A.H. 903 (1497).

³ An excellent table, showing the ramifications of the Tīmūrides, will be found in vol. vii. of the *Mohammedan Coins of the British Museum*.

dominion in Spain. Shāh Rukh was a song-writer of no mean order ; while Ulugh Beg won fame in the severer studies of the mathematician and astronomer. Bāber Mirzā, who afterwards sat on the throne of Delhi, was famous alike as statesman, philosopher, and writer ; and, indeed, there was hardly one of Tīmūr's descendants but manifested a taste for letters. The annals of this house are rendered illustrious by the names of poets, philosophers, and theologians which are still household words throughout the East. During this period of Central Asian history, Bokhārā, Samarkand, and Merv all gave birth to distinguished Mohammedan writers, as did many other less important towns of Transoxiana and Turkestān ; but rarely did these authors employ in their compositions the principal vernacular of these countries, namely, Eastern Turkish. All theological and didactic works were written—as they still are—in Arabic : and thus it is that many of the masterpieces of Arabic literature owe their origin to Mohammedans of Central Asia. The alternative literary language was Persian, which probably came in vogue for poetical compositions about the time of the Tāhirides.

In the days of the Tīmūrides, however, the dialect of Turkish, known as Chaghatāy, became honoured by a definite position in literature, chiefly in the department of poetry. The Chaghatāy dialect is the oldest form of Turkish which has come down to us in the Arabic character, and it is still spoken throughout Transoxiana, Turkestān, and Kāshghar. As with the Aryan family of languages so with the Turkish, the farther east we go the nearer we approach its source. In Yarkand and Kāshghar this language is called Turkī, while in Samarkand and Bokhārā it is known by the name of Uzbegī. Although Uzbegī is the language most commonly heard in the bazaars of Samarkand and Bokhārā, it does not

hold the field alone, its rival being a corrupt form of Persian spoken by the Tājiks, and hence known as Tājikī. This dialect, while on the one hand preserving many old Persian words which in Persia itself have dropped out of the spoken tongue, has, on the other hand, with regard to its grammatical forms and its syntax, been greatly influenced by its Turkish neighbour.¹ Under the Tīmūrides there flourished a poet named Mīr ‘Alī Shīr, or Navāy, who certainly did more than any other to enrich the Chaghatāy literature, and who may justly be regarded the national poet *par excellence* of the Eastern Turks.

¹ In the case of possessive pronouns and verbal inflexions, for example, we find direct and obvious imitations of the Turkish grammar.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE SHAYBĀNIDES

THE Mongol dynasty, established in China and known as the Yuen, founded by Kubilāy Khān¹ *cir.* 1260, began to decline very soon after his death (1294); and in 1353 a native of humble birth, named Chu Yūan Chang, succeeded in overthrowing the alien line, and, in 1368, originated the famous dynasty of Ming. The nomads' rule was again confined to the steppes of Mongolia.

Eastern and Western Turkeṣtān continued, in the Ming period, to constitute the dominions of the Chaghatāys.² This so-called Middle-Empire originally included Transoxiana, but in the first half of the fourteenth century Transoxiana came under the sway of a separate line of Chaghatāy Khāns.

North of the Middle-Empire was that of the Dasht-i-Kipchāk, which included the vast steppes extending east and north of the Sea of Aral, a part of modern Siberia, the land north of the Caspian, and both sides of the Lower Volga.³ These broad realms had been given to Chingiz Khān's first son, Jūjī, on whose death, in 1225, it was divided into two sections. The Eastern division, the habitat White Horde, fell to Jūjī's eldest son, Orda; while the Western, that of the Golden Horde,

¹ The "Great Caan" of Marco Polo.

² Cf. Bretschneider, *op. cit.* ii. pp. 139, 140.

³ Cf. Bretschneider, *loc. cit.*



INTERIOR OF A KIRGHIZ TENT

was ruled over by Bātū, the conqueror of Russia, who had his residence in Sarai, on the Lower Volga.¹

Another branch of the house of Jūjī was the heritage of his fifth son, Shaybān, whose dominions were contiguous with those of the White Horde.² They became famous in the fifteenth century under the name of Uzbeks, and the origin of their name has given rise to many strange conjectures.

The real founder of the Uzbek power was Abū-l-Khayr, a descendant of Shaybān in the sixth degree, who was born in A.H. 816 (1413). His rule extended over the western portion of the present Kirghiz steppes. About the year A.H. 870 (1465) a number of these Uzbeks, discontented with their Khān, Abū-l-Khayr, migrated into Moghūlistan, with the Sultans Girāy and Jānibeg, of the line of Jūjī.³ Isan Bughā, the then Khān of Moghūlistan, or Jatah, received them hospitably, and allotted them some territories on the river Chū, to the west of his own domains. These emigrants were subsequently known as the Uzbek-Kazāks, or simply Kazāks.⁴ After the death of Abū-l-Khayr, in A.H. 874

¹ *Idem.* Tūkā Timūr, from whom sprang the Khāns of the Crimea, was the youngest son of Jūjī. Cf. Lane-Poole's *Mohammedan Dynasties*, p. 233. Tokhtamish, the inveterate foe of Tamerlane, belonged to the Crimean branch of the Khāns of Dasht-i-Kipchāk. The Khānate of Kazan was founded in 1439, on the remains of the Bulgarian Empire, by Ulugh Mohammed of the same line.

² Bretschneider, *loc. cit.*

³ There seems some confusion on this point; I have followed Veliaminof-Zernof, but Bretschneider does not call this movement a migration of Uzbeks but a flight of the White Horde, whom he says were expelled from their original seats by Abū-l-Khayr. Cf. *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, p. 82.

⁴ The results of M. Veliaminof-Zernof's careful researches into the history of the Kazāks were published in three volumes of the *Memoirs of the Eastern Branch of St. Petersburg Archaeological Society*, under the title of *The Emperors and Princes of the Line of Kasim*. He called this dynasty the *Kasimovski*, after Kāsim Khān, the son of Jānibeg. Cf. also Levshin's *Description of the Hordes and Steppes of the Kirghis-Kazaks*, St. Petersburg, 1864. Mīrzā Haydar says: "The Kazāk Sultans began to reign in

(1469), a large number of his Uzbegs passed into Moghūlistan and joined their kinsmen.¹

Abū-l-Khayr overran Khwārazm and part of Turkes-tān; and at the beginning of the sixteenth century his son Mohammad Shaybānī, also known as Shāhī Beg, made himself master of Samarkand and Transoxiana, and was the first of the so-called dynasty of the Shaybānides. / It is more than a mere coincidence that the appearance of the Uzbegs and Kazāks in Southern Central Asia was contemporaneous with Russia's liberation from the Tartar yoke.

Shaybānī Khān achieved the conquest of Transoxiana in A.H. 906 (1500),² but soon after this event Zahīr ud-Dīn Bāber, then aged nineteen, entered that country and captured Samarkand, Soghd, Miyānkul, Karshī, and other strong places; Bokhārā alone remaining in the possession of the Uzbegs. However, in the following year, A.H. 907 (1501), Shaybānī Khān defeated Bāber and regained the lost territory. By A.H. 911 (1505), from which date historians reckon the commencement of his reign,³ he had made himself master of Transoxiana, Farghāna, Khwārazm, and Hisār.

His attention was now turned towards Khorāsān, which was in the hands of Husayn Mīrzā, also called Sultan Husayn Baykara, a descendant of Timūr's second son, 'Omar Shaykh. In A.H. 912 (1506) Bāber, hearing of the Uzbeg designs, marched northwards from Kābul to assist his relatives.⁴ But in the interval Mīrzā Husayn

A.H. 870 (1465), and continued to enjoy absolute power in the greater part of Uzbekistān till the year A.H. 940" (1533). See *Tarikh-i-Rashidī*, p. 82.

¹ *Tarikh-i-Rashidī*, pp. 82 and 92.

² Thus according to both the *Tārikh-i-Tīmūrī* and the *Tārikh-i-Abū-l-Khayr*, quoted by Howorth, *op. cit.* ii. 695.

³ There is in the British Museum a silver coin of Shaybānī Khān, dated A.H. 910: Merv.

⁴ An account of this campaign will be found in the *Tarikh-i-Rashidī*, p.

died, and Bāber, on his arrival in Khorāsān, A.H. 913 (1507), found that the two sons of the late prince had instituted a dual government. So disgusted was he with their lack of definite policy and their mutual recriminations, that he returned to Kābul and left them to fight their own battles. In this year Shaybānī Khān, entering Khorāsān, defeated these ill-assorted colleagues and made himself master of the country. The next three years were passed in successful expeditions in the direction of Khorāsān and India, and against the Kazāks. But in A.H. 916 (1510) his career of conquest was brought to a sudden close. Shāh Ismaʿīl, the Safavī,—who eight years previously had overthrown the Turkoman dynasty of the “White Sheep” in Āzerbāyjān, and had set upon the conquest of all Persia,—now marched into Khorāsān. Here he defeated and slew Shaybānī Khān in the vicinity of Merv, thereby making himself master of the whole country.¹

For two years, from A.H. 916 to 918 (1510 to 1512) Transoxiana practically passed out of the hands of the Uzbek Sultans. At all events, we find no coin of theirs during that period, though Persian historians aver that Shaybānī Khān was succeeded in the chief Khānate by Kuchunji. The nobles were probably too much occupied in providing for their own safety, after the disaster of Merv, to give consideration to the choice of a new chief.²

Bāber, on hearing of the death of Shaybānī Khān, and having been led to suppose that his presence would be attended by most important advantages, again set

243 *et seq.* The account of the Emperor Bāber's doings at this period are all the more interesting and valuable from the fact that in the famous *Memoirs of Baber* a break occurs from the year 1508 to the beginning of the year 1519; though an account is also given in the *Tārīkh-i-Ālam-Arāy* of Mirza Sikandar, which was used by Erskine in his *History of India*.

¹ *Lubb ul-Tawārīkh*, book III. pt. iii. chap. vi.

² Cf. Veliaminof-Zernof, *op. cit.* p. 247.

out from Kābul, and, entering Transoxiana, entirely defeated the Uzbek army sent out to meet him under Hamza Sultan, A.H. 917 (1511). The Uzbeks were pursued as far as the Iron Gates. Meanwhile Bāber's victorious army assembled in Hisār, where it was now reinforced by a larger body of Persians, sent by Shāh Isma'il, who made common cause with Bāber against the Uzbeks. The united forces, numbering 60,000 men, next marched against Karshī, where Sultan 'Ubaydullah had fortified himself, while the most of the Uzbek Sultans had fled to Samarkand. On the march, Bāber learnt that 'Ubaydullah had abandoned Karshī and fled to Bokhārā. Bāber at once followed him, marching day and night until he reached the city, whence he drove 'Ubaydullah into the deserts of Turkeṣtān.¹ When the rest of the Uzbek Sultans in Samarkand learnt this disaster, they were filled with terror and fled in disorder into different parts of Turkeṣtān, leaving Bāber absolute master of Transoxiana. He now entered Samarkand amid the rejoicings of the people, who welcomed him as the rightful successor to the realms of Tīmūr. But the enthusiasm of the orthodox Sunnis began to cool when they found that Bāber still maintained cordial relations with the Shi'ite Shāh Isma'il and carried out the stipulation on which the alliance was based by recognising his suzerainty.

Becoming aware of the popular discontent, the Uzbek Sultans collected their forces and marched out of Turkeṣtān.² Their main body took the direction of Tashkent, while 'Ubaydullah, with the remainder, proceeded to

¹ *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, p. 245.

² Cf. *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, p. 259. Cf. also Veliaminof-Zernof (p. 353), who bases his statements on the *'Abdullah Nāmē* of Hāfiz ibn Tānish. Copies of this valuable work are very scarce. Its scope and contents have been described (from a copy in the Imperial Academy in St. Petersburg) by M. Veliaminof-Zernof. See *Mélanges Asiatiques de St. Petersbourg*, vol. iii. p. 258 *et seq.*

Bokhārā by way of Yati Kudūk.¹ Bāber also advanced on Bokhārā at the head of 40,000 well-equipped men, and overtook 'Ubaydullah at Kūl-Melik.²

The Uzbek had only 3000 men under his command ; but, nothing daunted by the fearful odds, he rallied his troops and attacked Bāber's force with such fury that, after a bloody encounter, he put them utterly to rout, A.H. 918 (1512). After this disaster Bāber returned to Samarkand, but, finding no supporters there, fled to Hisār, after a reign of just eight months.³

Though the Uzbeks were again masters of Transoxiana, their position was by no means secure. On the west, Bāber, with the aid of 60,000 Persians, sent at his request by Shāh Isma'īl, under Amīr Yār Ahmed Isfahānī, known as Najm-i-Sāni, or the Second Star, passed the Iron Gates and, entering Karshī, massacred the inhabitants and sacked the town. On the east, the Khān of Moghūlistan, on learning Bāber's success at Karshī, marched out by way of Andijān to attack Suyunjik Khān, one of the chief Uzbek Sultans. An encounter took place at Bishkand,⁴ in which the Khān was utterly defeated.

Meanwhile Bāber and his Persian auxiliaries were marching in the direction of Samarkand, causing great alarm among the Uzbeks. On reaching Ghujduvān⁵ they encountered Jānibeg Sultan,⁶ who had thrown himself into the fort. A fierce battle ensued, which is

¹ "The Seven Wells." V.-Zernof reads Yati Kurūk, which might mean "the Seven Walls." The former reading seems more probable.

² On the locality of this place, cf. Vambéry's *Bokhara*, p. 257.

³ Cf. *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, p. 260.

⁴ Probably to be identified with Panjakand, in the Zarafshān valley, forty miles east of Samarkand.

⁵ Some distance north of Bokhārā.

⁶ Cf. *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, p. 261. Howorth (ii. 713) says 'Ubaydullah was in this fort.

vividly described by Mirzā Haydar in the following words: "The Uzbeg Sultans entered the fort on the same night on which the Turkomans and Bāber, who were encamped before the place, were busy preparing their siege implements. At dawn they arranged their forces in the midst of the suburbs, and stood facing the enemy. On the other side, too, preparations were made for a fight. Since the Uzbegs were in the suburbs, the field of battle was a narrow one. The Uzbeg infantry began to pour forth a shower of arrows from every quarter, so that soon the grip of Islām wrenched aside the hands of heresy and unbelief, and victory declared for the true faith.¹ The victorious breezes of Islām overturned the banners of the schismatics. The Turkomans were so completely routed that most of them perished on the field; all the wounds that had been effected by the swords at Karshī were now sewn up by the arrow-stitches of vengeance. They sent Mīr Najm and all the Turkoman Amīrs to hell; and the emperor retired, broken and crestfallen, to Hisār." Bāber now determined on relinquishing his designs on Transoxiana, and, returning to Kābul, he prepared for an easier conquest—that of Hindustān. On gaining possession of Transoxiana, the Shaybānides divided it into a number of appanages, the eldest Sultan usually assuming the leadership of the rest. His name alone was read in the public prayers throughout the whole empire, and appeared on the coins of all the states which composed it.

For nearly ninety-nine years did the Shaybānīs, that is, the descendants of Abū-l-Khayr Khān,² rule in Transoxiana. M. Veliaminof-Zernof was the first to

¹ Mirza Haydar does hesitate to speak thus of the fortunes of his own cousin Bāber, who had in his opinion sold himself to the heretic Persians.

² As Grigorieff suggested, the name Abū-l-Khayride would fit this dynasty far better than that of Shaybānide.

elucidate the complications in their system of government during the sixteenth century.¹ In his article on the coins of Bokhārā and Khiva, above quoted, he published a list of the chief Khāns, whom he calls the *Khākāns*, of the Shaybānīs, and also a genealogical table showing their descent from Abū-l-Khayr Khān.²

The separate appanages passed from father to son, and thus the residence of the Khākān, or chief Khān, was continually changing from one city to another. Thus Bokhārā lost its proud position as capital of Transoxiana, and took rank with other towns as the headquarters of successive chiefs.³

After the battle of Ghujduvān, in A.H. 918 (1512), in accordance with their established custom, *tūra* and *yasāk*, the Shaybānī Sultans proceeded to elect their Khākān. Kuchunji Khān, as the eldest, was appointed to the high office; while Suyunjik was nominated *Kālgha*, or heir-apparent. The latter, however, died before Kuchunji, whereupon Jānibeg became the *Kālgha*; but he too predeceased Kuchunji, and the title of *Kālgha* passed to Abū Sa'īd Khān, who eventually became Khākān, A.H. 936 (1529). On his death he was succeeded by 'Ubaydullah Khān, A.H. 939 (1523).

The various appanages of Transoxiana were thus apportioned in 918 by Jānibeg:—Kuchunji received Samarkand; Suyunjik, Tashkent; and 'Ubaydullah,

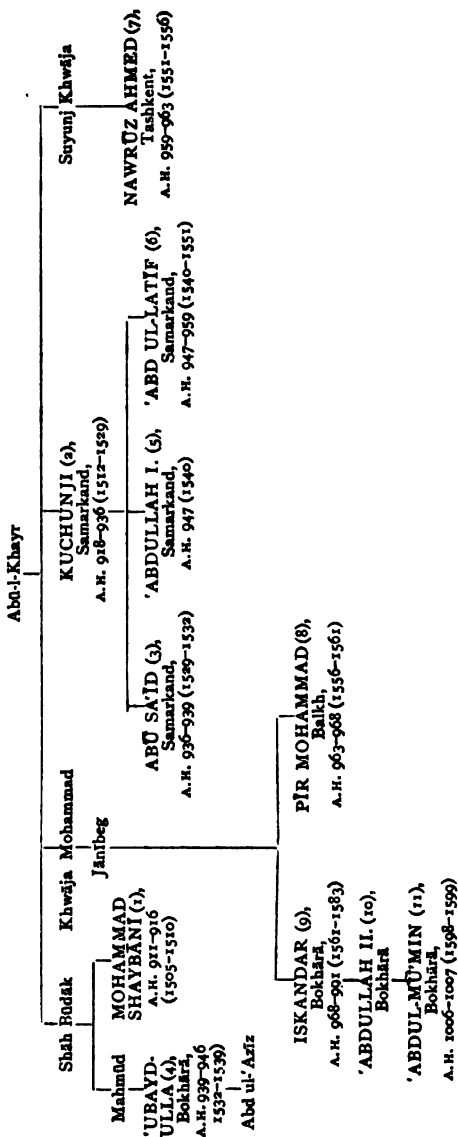
¹ "Bokharan and Khivan Coins," a monograph published in the *Memoirs of the Eastern Branch of the Russian Archaeological Society*, vol. iv., St. Petersburg, 1859. This excellent and original monograph is extensively laid under contribution in the present chapter, as it was also by Sir H. Howorth in his chapter on the Shaybānides, pt. ii. div. ii. chap. ix.

² See note, p. 190.

³ The *Taskira Mukīm Khānī*, being a history of the appanage of Bokhārā, makes no mention of Kuchunji, or Abū Sa'īd, who ruled in Samarkand, though they both attained the position of Khākān. Cf. *Histoire de la Grande Bokharie*, par Mouhamed Joussouf el-Munshi, etc., par Senkovsky, St. Petersburg, 1824.

THE UZBEG APPANAGES.

A full account of the Uzbek Khakāns, based on all available authorities, will be found in Part II. of Howorth's *Mongols*. Space will not permit us to enter into details with regard to all these petty chiefs. The following is a list of Khakāns and the genealogy of Abd-*i*-Khayr's descendants, with the locality of their respective appanages, where information on the point is available. The *Khakāns* are printed in capitals, and the numbers after their names represent the order in which they ruled.



Karakul and Karshī, besides Bokhārā, which was his by inheritance. Jānibeg reserved for himself and his children all the country of Miyānkul, Soghd of Samarkand, and the town of Kerminé, which was his residence. Omitting the unimportant reigns of the seven following *Khākāns*,¹ we will pass at once to a short account of the greatest of the Abū-l-Khayrides, 'Abdullah II., the last but one of his dynasty; and for this purpose we cannot do better than summarise the account given by Professor Vambéry in his *History of Bokhara*.²

In A.H. 964 (1556) he had put an end to the sub-dynasty of Bokhārā, and in A.H. 968 (1560) proclaimed his father in that town as "Khākān of the world"; in A.H. 986 (1578) he similarly abolished the sub-dynasty of Samarkand, which had sprung up during Iskandar's reign at Bokhārā; and in A.H. 991 (1583), on his father's death, he became Khākān.

"In imitation of Shaybānī Khān and 'Ubaydullah, who, although practically sovereigns of the country, had left the actual seat of the Khānate to others, the more freely to pursue their military career, 'Abdullah placed his father Iskandar on the throne, and put himself at the head of his army to re-conquer the original frontiers of Shaybānī's empire. The greater part of his life was spent in this enterprise, but he was more fortunate in his conquests than any of his predecessors, and also contributed more to the restoration of prosperity to the countries of the Oxus and the Jaxartes. . . . Under him the frontiers of the Khānate of Bokhārā were pushed forward in the north far beyond the inhabited province

¹ Their names were—Abū Sa'id, 'Ubaydullah, 'Abdullah I., 'Abd-ul-Latif, Nawrūz Ahmed, Pīr Mohammad, and Iskandar. All are described at some length by Vambéry and Howorth, the latter basing his account on a great variety of authorities.

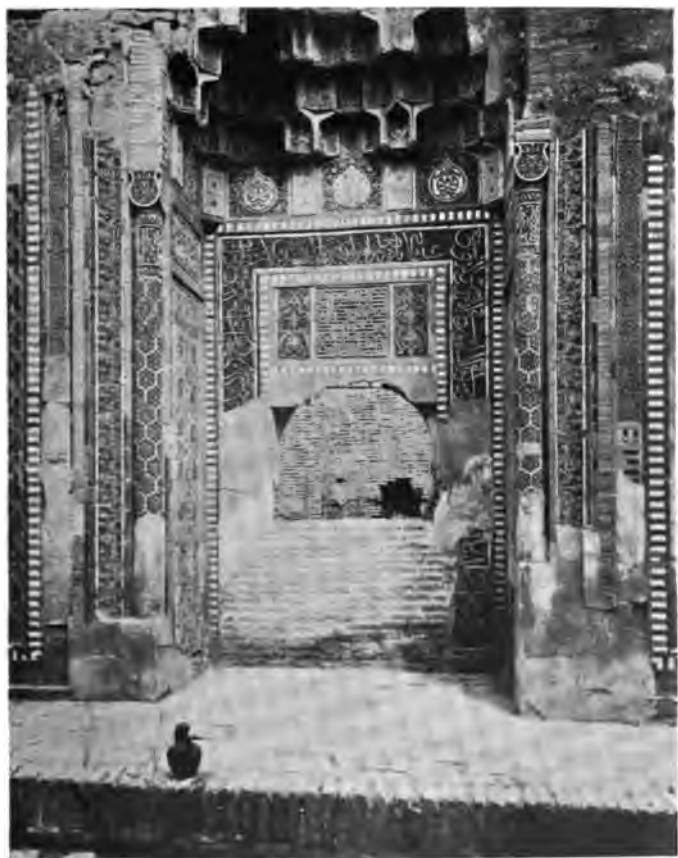
² P. 284 *et seq.*

of Turkeṣtān. In the east, not only all Farghāna, but also Kāshghar and Khotan, were subdued by the Shaybānides. In the south, an aggressive policy had been pursued—on the one hand by the family of Bāber, and on the other by the Safavīs, who both coveted the possession of Balkh; but the power of the Uzbegs was even greater than in the time of the first Shaybānides. Balkh was fortified, Tokhāristān and Badakhshān were incorporated with Transoxiana, and once more the bright green waters of the Murghāb became the frontiers of Turania. In the west, the armies of 'Abdullah were again victorious, in spite of the united opposition of the Iranians and Khwārazmians. Astarābād was surprised and taken; the Prince of Gilān, an ally of Sultan Murād III., had to take refuge at Constantinople, and the frontiers of the empire of the Shaybānides were extended in this direction farther than they had ever been before. For the moment 'Abdullah . . . got possession of a great part of Khorāsān, including the towns of Herāt, Meshed, Sarakhs, Merv, etc., all of which he retained very nearly to his death."

Soon after 'Abdullah's death anarchy broke out in Transoxiana, and the way was prepared for a change of dynasty. The line of Shaybānī, after holding the government for nearly a century, gave place to the dynasty of Astrakhan.¹ During its tenure of power the Khāns of Bokhārā and Khwārazm were continually at variance. On the conquest of Transoxiana by Abū-l-Khayr and Shaybānī, both Khānates were simultaneously occupied by the invaders. Subsequently, when Shāh Isma'il drove Shaybānī out of Khwārazm, he placed a Persian governor in charge of the province, but the Sunni people detested the Shī'ite Shāh, and expelled him in 921.² During the Khākānship of Kuchunji the Uzbegs

¹ *Cat. Coins Brit. Mus.* vii.

² Cf. Howorth, ii. 876.



DECORATIONS IN THE SHAH ZINDA, SAMARKAND

founded an independent principality in Khwārazm;¹ Ilbars, son of a chief named Bereghe, being the first Khān of the new line.

¹ Khwārazm had never properly belonged to Chaghatāy's territories in Transoxiana, and accordingly it is a common mint name on coinage of the Golden Horde (*Cat. Orient. Coins Brit. Mus.* vii. p. 26).

CHAPTER XXVII

THE HOUSE OF ASTRAKHAN

AMONG the Mongol chiefs who struggled for mastery in Eastern Russia at the epoch of Timūr's intervention¹ was a descendant of Chingiz, named Kutluk, who rose to fame by defeating Timūr's great rival, Tokhtamish Khān, near Kiev in 1399.² His offspring vegetated in obscurity for nearly two centuries in the Khānate of Astrakhan, on the lower reaches of the Volga, and were then driven eastwards by the growing power of the Russian princes. Thus, towards the close of the sixteenth century, the head of this ancient line, Yār Mahammad Khān, sought refuge in Transoxiana, and was received with honour by the Shaybānides, whose pride in their descent from Timūr was flattered by the exile's recognition of their claims to kinship. Iskandar Khān gave his daughter, the sister of 'Abdullah, greatest of the Shaybānide line, in marriage to the Astrakhan chief's son, Jāni Khān.

The new-comer soon showed that he possessed the warrior's instincts, and took a prominent part in his brother-in-law 'Abdullah's campaigns. And so it came to pass that when the last of the Shaybānides, 'Abd ul-

¹ *Vide ante*, p. 169.

² His genealogy is very doubtful; but, according to the best authorities, his ancestor was Jūji Khān, one of the mighty conqueror's sons, who had predeceased him (note at p. 304 of Vambéry's *History of Bokhara*). Cf. Howorth's *Mongols*, part ii. p. 744.

Mū'min, was slain, the nobles of Transoxiana offered the crown to Jāni Khān. He, being well stricken in years, declined it in favour of his son Din Mahammad, who united the blood of Chingiz and of the fallen dynasty. He did not long survive to enjoy his fortune; perishing in battle with the Persians, who attempted to drive the Uzbegs from Khorāsān. His successor, A.H. 1007 (1598) was his brother Bāki Mohammad, while Vāli Mohammad, another of old Jāni's sons, took possession of Balkh and the country west of the Oxus. A third brother was murdered in A.H. 1011 (1602) by the Kara Turkomans who dwelt at Kunduz, and from them Bāki Mahammad exacted a terrible vengeance. Kunduz was taken by storm, and the entire garrison was put to the sword. This punishment brought Shāh 'Abbās of Persia into the field, determined to guard his north-eastern frontier from foes who threatened the existence of his authority. He met with a crushing defeat near Balkh, and escaped with the greatest difficulty from capture. The remainder of Bāki Mohammad's reign was disturbed only by those insurrections, fomented by kinsmen, from which few Eastern princes were free. He died in A.H. 1014 (1605), and was succeeded by his brother Vāli Mohammad, the erstwhile lord of Balkh. Vāli Mohammad's rule was brief and inglorious. He wallowed in debauchery, and surrendered all power to an unscrupulous vezīr, whose fiendish cruelties aroused fierce resentment, and led to his master's defeat and death at the hands of a kinsman, Imām Kulī Khān (1611). The new ruler was of sterner and purer mould. He courted the society of the learned and pious, and laboured to secure his country's prosperity. And so, under his wise and just régime, Bokhārā regained a share of her ancient glory. She grew rapidly in wealth, and again became a beacon-light in the darkness of Central Asia. At length, after a reign of thirty-eight

years, the good Imām Kulī Khān felt himself unequal to the task of governing, and sought the repose which is the ideal of all true Musulmans. He summoned his brother Nāzir Mohammad from Balkh and surrendered his realm to him.¹ Then, taking a pilgrim's staff, he set out for Medīna, where he died in the odour of sanctity, leaving traces of his munificence which have endured to the present day.

His successor (1642) found it impossible to secure a place in his people's affections. He was immensely rich, and endeavoured to win public regard by his largesses; but Bokhārā sighed for the good times of old Imām Kulī Khān, and the popular feeling found vent in a revolt which raged in the northern provinces. Nāzir Mohammad sent his son 'Abd el-'Azīz to quell it, but the faithless prince placed himself at the head of the rebels and marched on Bokhārā. The unhappy father fled to Balkh, leaving his capital at his unnatural foe's mercy, and 'Abd el-'Azīz took up the fallen sceptre (1647). Nāzir Mohammad, in despair, divided the rest of his realms among his sons who had remained faithful to him—the fourth, Subhān Kulī Khān, receiving in fief the country round the ford of Khwāja Sālū on the Upper Oxus. But his old age was still embittered by his children's contests for supremacy. Worn out at last by the unequal struggle, he resolved to spend the brief remainder of his days in the sacred soil of Medīna, and died, broken-hearted, on his pilgrimage thither.² His death served only to increase the hostility between his sons. Subhān Kulī Khān, who had established himself at Balkh, became a thorn in the side of his brother 'Abd el-'Azīz of Bokhārā. A third

¹ Vambéry relates that when, in the great mosque of Bokhārā, the public prayers were read for the first time for the new ruler, the whole congregation burst into sobs and bitter tears (*History of Bokhara*, p. 319).

² Vambéry, p. 323.

brother, Kāsim Mohammad,¹ was despatched with an army to reduce him to submission; but he was defeated, and driven to take refuge at Hisār, and peace was restored on the masterful Subhān Kulī Khān being recognised as heir to the throne. Hardly had the clouds of civil war been dissipated ere Bokhārā became the prey of foreign invasion (1663). Khiva had long been a province of the southern Khānate, but its prince, Abū-l-Ghāzi, a man whose life had been one long romance, determined to throw off the hated yoke. He drove the Bokhārāns from the Lower Oxus, and carried the war into the enemy's camp. Defeated with great slaughter by 'Abd el-'Azīz near Kerminé, he escaped with a grievous wound by swimming across the great river. Nothing daunted, he soon took the field again, and carried his ravages to the very gates of Bokhārā.

His son and successor, Anūsha Khān, was still more venturesome. He invaded 'Abd el-'Azīz's territory at the head of a great force, A.H. 1076 (1665), and actually gained possession of the capital during the sovereign's temporary absence at Kerminé. The latter hastened to his people's aid. With only forty devoted followers he hewed his way to the citadel, and summoned his subjects to oust the invader. The call was but too eagerly obeyed: all classes rose as a man against the abhorred Khivans. The Sicilian Vespers were repeated, and but few escaped to tell the tale of disaster. This splendid heroism exhausted 'Abd el-'Azīz's stock of mental vigour.² He

¹ This prince was famed throughout the East for his love of letters. He was a poet of no mean skill, and an adept at prose composition. His end was untimely. Enticed to give a private interview to some of his brother Subhān Kulī Khān's party, he was foully murdered by them (Vambéry, p. 323).

² Vambéry tells us that he was a man of amazing corpulence; and one of his historians avers that a child four years old could find accommodation in one of his boots! (*History of Bokhara*, p. 325).

determined to abdicate in favour of his brother Subhān Kulī Khān, and seek the secure refuge which Medīna offered to those oppressed with the carking cares of life. His temperament, indeed, predisposed him in favour of a course which had become traditional in his family. It was a rare mixture of the adventurous and the contemplative. Daring in battle, prompt in action, 'Abd el-'Azīz inherited a tendency to asceticism, and was wont to withdraw himself from worldly affairs and remain plunged in prolonged meditation on the ineffable goodness of his Maker. Without regret he laid down his crown and betook himself as a humble pilgrim to the Holy City, which is the goal of every true follower of the Prophet.

Subhān Kulī Khān assumed the insignia of royalty on his brother's departure; but gratified ambition brought with it no accession of happiness. The Astrakhanides, with many virtues, were deficient in filial love, and Subhān Kulī's heart was wrung by the jealousy and disrespect of his children. His neighbour of Khiva, too, did not take to heart the terrible lesson taught him in the preceding reign. In A.H. 1095 (1683) he invaded Bokhārā, and, though defeated by a loyal chief named Mohammad Bī, he repeated his incursions in the following year. In A.H. 1100 (1688) his successor advanced to the very gates of Bokhārā; but he, too, was soundly beaten by Mohammad Bī, and Khiva fell for a time under Subhān Kulī Khān's dominion. This age witnessed the apogee of Bokhārā's greatness in the estimation of the Mohammedan world. Aurangzib, the narrow-minded zealot who sat on the throne of Akbar, sent thither ambassadors with elephants and other costly gifts; and Ahmad II. of Turkey, whose lust for conquest far exceeded his military genius, did not disdain to address his Bokhāran brother a grandiloquent

epistle describing mythical successes against the Frankish unbelievers.¹

In spite of endless trouble with rebellious nobles, Subhān Kulī Khān found a leisure to cultivate the Muses; and he was also the author of a book on medicine which epitomises the lore of Galen, Hippocrates, and Avicenna, but suggests nostrums in the shape of prayers and talismans of which none of those worthies would have approved. He was now eighty years of age, and felt that a time had come when he must bid adieu to ambition. He called around him his nobles, and publicly designated his son Mukīm Khān, who ruled at Balkh, as his successor. Then he peacefully resigned his breath after a reign of twenty-four years, A.H. 1114 (1702).

Mukīm Khān found an obstacle in his path in the person of his elder brother 'Ubaydullah, and a civil war broke out in which the great Uzbeg nobles of Bokhārā found their account. The faithful Mohammad Bi took up the gauntlet for Mukīm, while the elder pretender's cause was espoused by Rahīm Bi, the chief of the powerful Mangit tribe. It lasted for five years, when, thanks to his nominal vassal's support, 'Ubaydullah triumphed. He chafed under the dictation of the Mangit king-maker, and was promptly suppressed by poison; another brother named Abū-l-Fayz being elevated to the throne in his stead, A.H. 1130 (1717).

The new sovereign's character was wholly deficient in the strength of purpose so needful in one who aspires to rule his fellow-men, and he owed to his utter insignificance his recognition by the turbulent nobles who surrounded him. It is the fate of all long-lived dynasties to end miserably with a succession of *rois faibles*; and the Astrakhanides were no exception to the rule.

¹ Vambéry, *History of Bokhara*, p. 333.

Not only did Abū-l-Fayz meekly submit to the dictation of Rahīm Bi ; he bowed the neck to a foreign potentate, and disgraced his country in the eyes of Islām.

In 1736 Nādir Shāh of Persia, whom Vambéry styles the last of the Asiatic conquerors of the world,¹ after crushing the Ottoman power in Georgia, turned his eagle glance on the states on his north-eastern frontier. A host under his son Rizā Kulī Khān was hurled against Andakhūy and Balkh, and soon the Sun and Lion of Persia waved over both citadels. Flushed with victory, Rizā Kulī Khān crossed the Oxus and fell upon Abu-l-Fayz Khān's dispirited legions. But Ilbars, the lion-hearted ruler of Khiva, came to the rescue, and the forces of the two Khānates gained the day in an encounter with the invaders at Karshī. Nādir Shāh, who had far deeper designs at stake, recalled his impetuous son, and informed the Khāns of Central Asia that the expedition had been undertaken without his consent, and that he wished to live in amity with the descendants of Chingiz. Meantime Persian gold was brought into play. Rahīm Bi and other Uzbek chiefs were won to his side, and a breach was produced by the jealousy between Bokhārā and Khiva. Then, secure from attack from his dreaded foes of Khiva, Nādir Shāh invaded India, A.H. 1152 (1739), took Delhi with fearful slaughter, and bent his steps homewards with booty valued at eighty millions sterling.

When the news of this successful raid reached Abū-l-Fayz he sent an embassy to the conqueror, who was resting on his easily won laurels at Peshawar. "I am the last off-shoot," he wrote, "of an ancient line. I am not powerful enough to withstand a monarch so redoubtable as thou, and so I keep myself apart, offering prayers for thy welfare. If, however, thou shouldst deign to

¹ *History of Bokhara*, p. 339.

honour me by a visit, I will show thee the regard due to a guest."¹ The fatuous prince at the same time sought to associate his neighbour of Khiva in his abasement, but his overtures were received with outspoken contempt.

Nādir Shāh saw in the submission tamely offered by Bokhārā (1740) a means of crushing his inveterate enemy, Ilbars Khān, and he accepted Abū-l-Fayz's invitation.

He marched from Peshawar to Herāt with three hundred elephants, a tent embroidered with pearls, and the famous Peacock Throne, ravished from the Hall of Private Audience at Delhi.² Thence he travelled to Karki on the Oxus frontier of Bokhārā, where he was met by Rahīm Bī with presents and supplies for his locust-

¹ Page 95, *History of Central Asia*, by 'Abd ul-Kerīm Bokhārī; translated into French by Charles Schefer, Paris, 1876.

² This throne was "so called from its having the figures of two peacocks standing behind it, their tails being expanded, and the whole so inlaid with sapphires, rubies, emeralds, pearls, and other precious stones of appropriate colours as to represent life. The throne itself was six feet long by four broad; it stood on six massive feet, which, with the body, were of solid gold, inlaid with rubies, emeralds, and diamonds. It was surmounted by a canopy of gold supported by twelve pillars, all richly emblazoned with costly gems, and a fringe of pearls ornamented the borders of the canopy. Between the two peacocks stood the figure of a parrot of the ordinary size, said to have been carved out of a single emerald. On either side of the throne stood an umbrella, one of the Oriental emblems of royalty. They were formed of crimson velvet, richly embroidered and fringed with pearls. The handles were eight feet high, of solid gold and studded with diamonds. The cost of this superb work of art has been variously stated at sums varying from one to six millions sterling. It was planned and executed under the supervision of Austin de Bordeaux, already mentioned as the artist who executed the Mosaic work in the Ām Khās" (Beresford's *Delhi*, quoted by Mr. H. G. Keene at p. 20 of the third edition of his *Handbook for Visitors to Delhi*, Calcutta, 1876). Tavernier, who was himself a jeweller, and visited India in 1665, valued this piece of extravagance at two hundred million of livres, £8,000,000; Jonas Hanway estimated it as worth, with nine other thrones, £11,250,000 (*Travels*, ii. 383). It stood on a white marble plinth, on which are still to be deciphered the world-renowned motto in flowing Persian characters: "If there be a paradise on earth, it is even this, even this, even this."

Agar Fardawsī ba rūyi samīn ast:

Hamīn ast, hamīn ast, hamīn ast.

horde of followers. Thence he fared to Charjūy, and traversed the mighty river by a bridge which he threw across it in three days. Leaving half his army to protect the priceless baggage, he moved on to Karakūl, a fortress one day's march from the capital. Here he was met by Abū-l-Fayz, attended by his nobles, courtiers, and clergy, bringing a present of beautiful Arab horses. The titular sovereign of Bokhārā presented himself as a suppliant, but was given a seat by Nādir Shāh. Clad in a robe of state and crowned, the imperious guest carried his complaisance so far as to address his host as "Shāh." But further honours were in store for the obsequious Abū-l-Fayz. Nādir deigned to accept his lovely daughter as a wife, bestowing her sister, at the same time, on his nephew. He created Mohammad Rahīm Bī, to whose influence he owed his reception, Khān, and gave him command of 6000 chosen troops levied in Turkestan. Having thus brought Bokhārā to heel, Nādir Shāh turned his attention to Khiva. He sent an envoy to Ilbars Khān, demanding his instant submission. The Khivan was a man of ungovernable temper, and his reply was to put to death those who held out to him the olive branch. This breach of the usages of Islām sealed his fate. He was attacked by Nādir Shāh with an overwhelming force, and closely invested in his fortress of Khanka. After undergoing a cannonade for three days, the proud Ilbars was forced to throw himself upon the mercy of a man whose fearful butchery of the population of Delhi showed that he was insensible of the softer feelings; and against him pleaded the children of the slaughtered envoys, whose blood cried aloud for vengeance. He was put to death, and twenty-one of his principal officers shared his fate.¹ Having thus rid himself of a perpetual thorn in his side, Nādir Shāh returned to

¹ 'Abd ul-Kerīm Bokhārī, p. 106.

Charjūy, whence he sent back to her father the young princess whom he had lately wedded. He then returned to Khorāsān by way of Merv, and fell a victim to a conspiracy among his followers, provoked to extremities by his insane cruelty, A.H. 1160 (1747).

The news of his death led the all-powerful Mo-hammad Rahīm Bi to throw off the semblance of loyalty to his effete master.¹ He entered Bokhārā with a strong force, seized the person of the wretched Abū-l-Fayz, confiscated his treasure, and finally put him to death. With him virtually ended the dynasty of the Astrakhanides, which had exhibited many virtues, neutralised, however, by an absence of will-power and a bias towards the mystic side of their religion. Their age was one of profound decadence. Its architectural remains, which reflect the spirit of an era much more closely than is generally supposed, are insignificant. They are, indeed, limited to the great college known as Shīr Dar, which was built at Samarkand in 1610, and a few other public edifices which do not shine by contrast with those dating from Tīmūr's happier days. But Bokhārā was destined to wallow in a yet deeper abasement under the uncouth Uzbegs, who supplanted the cultured sovereigns of the Astrakhan line.

¹ Vambéry gives the date of this *coup d'état* as 1737 (p. 343); but 'Abd ul-Kerīm Bokhārī makes it follow the assassination of Nādir Shāh, the epoch of which is not open to question (p. 110). The dates of events of the eighteenth century in Bokhārā are strangely uncertain, contemporary chroniclers rarely deigning to aid posterity by recording them.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE HOUSE OF MANGIT

THE family thus raised to royal rank by the ambition of Rahīm Bi¹ belonged to the great Uzbek tribe of Mangit, which had been brought from the north-east of Mongolia by Chingiz, and had settled on the lower reaches of the Oxus and around Karshī, a Bokhāran citadel 140 miles south-east of the capital. Their warlike spirit had placed them at the head of the Uzbek clans; and while the Astrakhanide sovereigns retained any real power, the loyalty of the Mangits was as conspicuous as their courage. We have seen how the imbecility of the degenerate Abū-l-Fayz tempted his headstrong minister, Rahīm Bi, to throw off the mask of allegiance. The latter sealed his disloyalty by assassinating the murdered Khān's young heir, 'Abd ul-Mū'min, who had married his daughter.² By an irony of fate Rahīm Bi was destined, in his old age, to sink to the condition of a *roi fainéant*. His vezīr, a Persian slave named Dawlat Bi, usurped all the functions of royalty,

¹ "Bi" is an Uzbek word meaning "judge." It is not spelt "bai," nor does it mean "superior grey-beard," as M. Vambéry supposes (*History of Bokhara*, p. 347).

² There are many versions of the death of 'Abd ul-Mū'min. The most probable is that related by 'Abd ul-Kerīm of Bokhārā, at p. 115, which is to the effect that Rahīm Bi had the young prince taken by his own followers on a pleasure-party, and then pushed into a well while he was dreamily peering into its depths.

and misgoverned Bokhārā in his name. On his death-bed, having no male heirs, he designated his uncle Dāniyāl Bi as his successor—the choice having been probably dictated by his vezīr, who was acquainted with Dāniyāl's weak and overscrupulous character, and fondly hoped to retain the mastery which he had won over the degenerate Rahīm Bi. Dāniyāl was, at his nephew's death, governor of the town of Kerminé. His modest disposition forbade him to assume the purple. He contented himself with the title of Atālik,¹ and placed Abū-l-Ghāzi Khān, the last scion of the Astrakhanides, on the throne.² But his son, the famous Ma'sūm, who afterwards assumed the name of Shāh Murād, was not of a nature to brook an inferior position. Under a mask of asceticism and insensibility to the promptings of ambition, which imposed on the priesthood and the mob, he cherished deep-seated schemes of conquest. He gained unbounded influence over his doting father, and persuaded him to connive at his assassination of the vezīr, Dawlat Bi, under circumstances of peculiar atrocity. Then he gathered all the threads of authority in Bokhārā into his own hands, and, when the dotard Dāniyāl Bi died, in 1770,³ none of his brethren ventured to dispute his claims to the successorship.⁴ He was at first content to govern without reigning; and Abū-l-Ghāzi, the grandson of Abū-l-Fayz,

¹ This is the highest degree in the Bokhārān official hierarchy (see Khanikoff's *Bokhara: its Amir and People*, p. 239; Meyendorff's *Voyage à Bokhara*, p. 259).

² Note at p. 120 of Schefer's edition of 'Abd ul-Kerīm Chronicles.

³ See note at p. 135, *ibid.* The editor corrects an obvious *lapsus calami*, —A.H. 1148 for 1184.

⁴ With characteristic Pharisaism, 'Abd ul-Kerīm tells us that "fear and terror fell upon Ma'sūm's brethren, even as they had possessed the brethren of Joseph. He set himself to repress their iniquities, and had their accomplices in crime put to death. He suppressed prostitution, and tolerated no disorders condemned by law. Bokhārā became the image of Paradise!" (p. 125).

was permitted to retain the trappings of royalty. In 1784, however, Ma'sūm had rendered intrigue and overt opposition to his rule hopeless, and felt strong enough to deprive the forlorn descendant of Chingiz of his shadowy crown. From that year dates the commencement of the reigning house, although the founder eschewed the title of king and adopted that of "Dispenser of Favours." Ma'sūm, secure at home, turned his eyes to foreign conquest. Khorāsān, the richest province of Persia, was powerless to resist his encroachments; but the road thither was blocked by Bahrām 'Alī Khān, a Persian of the Kajar tribe to which the present Shāhs belong. This remarkable man had established himself in the chief strategical position of Central Asia in 1781.¹ He had built for himself a citadel out of the ruins of Old Merv, which, even in its decay, conveys the impression of overwhelming strength; and his stern rule had reduced his kinsmen, the Turkoman tribes, to abject submission.² In vain did he attempt to propitiate the ruthless Amīr by an embassy, and offering prayers for the repose of the soul of Dāniyāl Bi. In 1785 Ma'sūm set out for Merv at the head of 6000 Uzbek horsemen. After lulling Bahrām 'Alī into security by one of those ruses in which he was so great an adept, he suddenly appeared before Merv, and drew its defenders into an ambushade, in which Bahrām 'Alī was slain. But the royal city defied his forces, secure in the wealth poured into her lap by a system of irrigation, the work of the Sultan Sanjar of the Seljūk line. Its headworks were a mighty barrage on the Murghāb, thirty miles above Merv, which was guarded by a strong castle.³ The governor of these defensive works quarrelled desperately with Mahammad

¹ 'Abd ul-Kerīm, p. 132.

² His mother belonged to the noble Salor tribe, *ibid.*

³ 'Abd ul-Kerīm, p. 137. For descriptions of ancient Merv the reader is

Khān,¹ the son and successor of Bahrām Khān; the *causa teterrima belli* being, as is generally the case, a woman. In the torments of disappointed love he had recourse to the Amīr Ma'sūm, to whom he delivered his charge. Thus Merv's relentless foe was enabled to strike at the root of its prosperity. He destroyed the Sultan Band, as the barrage was called, and turned the most fertile spot on the world's surface into a desert. Famine stared the inhabitants in the face, and they had no other resource but to submit to the ruthless Amīr. He obtained possession of the coveted prize without striking a blow, and transported the bulk of its population to Bokhārā, where they have left indelible traces in the population.²

Ma'sūm's thirst for conquest was not stayed by this splendid capture. He carried his raids far into Persia, laid Khorāsān waste, and swept off so many of its wretched inhabitants that the price of Persian slaves fell in the Bokhārā bazaar to a few pence.³ His conduct towards other princes who had the misfortune to be his neighbours was equally devoid of mercy and good faith; and at his death, in 1799,⁴ the people of Khiva, Kokand, and Balkh felt that Central Asia had been delivered from a scourge almost as terrible as that wielded by Chingiz Khān. Amongst his own subjects Ma'sūm left behind him a reputation of piety and virtue. "Under his reign,"

referred to vol. v. *Dictionnaire géographique de la Perse*, by C. Barbier de Meynard, p. 526; Burnes' *Travels into Bokhara*, London, 1834; Khanikoff's *Mémoire sur la partie Méridionale de l'Asie Centrale*, pp. 53, 57, 113, and 128; and Prof. Shukovski's exhaustive work referred to on p. 144—note 3, *supra*.

¹ 'Abd ul-Kerīm assures us that this prince was the Plato of the century, a man full of wisdom and knowledge (p. 135).

² 'Abd ul-Kerīm tells us that the number of families then deported was 17,000, which would give a total of about 85,000 individuals (p. 142).

³ Vambéry, *History of Bokhara*, p. 354.

⁴ 'Abd ul-Kerīm (p. 151) gives the date as Friday, 14th Rajab A.H. 1214. Vambéry is apparently in error in placing it as 1802 (p. 360).

writes 'Abd ul-Kerīm,¹ "the prosperity of Bokhārā excited the envy of Paradise. Religion had then taken a new lease of life. The prince was occupied only in good works, in prayers and practising devotion. He had renounced the pleasures and pomps of this world; he touched neither gold nor silver, and he spent on his own needs only the proceeds of the capitation tax levied from Jews and infidels." Historians who are not blinded by religious prejudice give us a very different estimate of his character and the influence of his reign.

Under this cruel and hypocritical bigot Bokhārā lost the last semblance of national spirit, and succumbed to a terrorism such as that which sapped the power of Spain. Ma'sūm it was who revived the office of Rā'is-i-Sharī'at, or religious censor, which had fallen into desuetude in the rest of Islām. These officials drove the people to prayer with whips, visited neglect of outward observances with severe floggings, and, on its repetition, with death. The use of wine and tobacco was forbidden under the like penalties, and thieves and prostitutes were delivered over without trial to the executioner. Spoliation and the levy of black-mail were carried by these pests to the height of a fine art, and the sanctity of the harem itself was not respected.² No system can be conceived which was better calculated to repress all independence of thought and action, and encourage the growth of hypocrisy and even darker vices.

Ma'sūm had designated his son Sayyid Haydar Tūra as his successor; but the new sovereign had to reckon with three paternal uncles, 'Omar Bi, Fāzil Bi, and Mah-mūd Bi, who raised the standard of revolt in the northern

¹ P. 151.

² See Meyendorff's *Voyage d'Orenbourg à Boukhara en 1820*, p. 281; *Bokhara: its Amir and People*, by Khanikoff, p. 248; Vambéry, *History of Bokhara*, p. 360.

provinces. Amīr Haydar¹ marched against them at the head of an army so powerful as to render resistance impossible. The rebels threw themselves into strong places, but were driven from these retreats by concentrated artillery fire. Two of them, 'Omar Bi and Fāzil Bi, were tracked to a village by the Amīr's troops, were captured and put to death; while Mahmūd Bi, the third, sought safety in Kokand.² Amīr Haydar's store of energy was apparently exhausted by this early test. He permitted Iltuzar Khān of Khiva to ravage the suburbs of his capital, and not until the cry of his suffering subjects could no longer be disregarded did he give orders for an expedition to avenge their woes. It consisted of 30,000 Uzbegs under the command of a general of distinction named Mahammad Niyāz Bi. The avenging host followed the course of the Amū Daryā until the confines of Khiva had been reached.³ In the meantime, Iltuzar, overjoyed at the prospect of victory, crossed the Amū Daryā in the enemy's rear and established himself in an entrenched camp with 4000 chosen men. The invaders were on the horns of a dilemma. To leave the river was to enter a waterless desert, wherein none would emerge alive; while retreat to Bokhārā was barred by the Khivans' entrenchments. In desperation they attacked the foe with suddenness and vigour, driving them into the Amū Daryā and securing a decisive victory. Khiva lay open to their attack, but the pusillanimous Haydar was content to rest on his vicariously won laurels, and to pass the rest

¹ Amīr Haydar was the first of the present dynasty to assume the title of Pādishāh.

² 'Abd ul-Kerīm, pp. 154-156. Vambéry gives a different version (*History of Bokhara*, p. 462), but we prefer to follow the native chronicler, who held high diplomatic posts in Bokhārā at the commencement of the century, and may be presumed to have had personal knowledge of the events which he records (see M. Charles Schefer's Introduction to his Chronicle, p. iii).

³ 'Abd ul-Kerīm, pp. 163, 164.

of his reign in the practice of a pharisaical piety and association with priests, who ruled the people in his name with a rod of iron. As is too frequently the fate of Oriental princes, he was unable to resist the enervating influence of the harem, and lost his power of initiative by wallowing in licensed debauchery.¹ He died in 1826, after an inglorious reign of twenty-seven years.

¹ "He always has four legitimate wives: when he wishes to espouse a new wife he divorces one of her predecessors, giving her a house and pension corresponding with her condition. Every month he receives a young virgin, either as wife or slave. He marries the slaves who have not given him children, either to priests or soldiers" (Abd ul-Kerim, p. 163).

CHAPTER XXIX

AMĪR NASRULLAH, A BOKHĀRAN NERO

IN writing of the monkish Haydar's successor, Vambéry appositely quotes an old Uighūr proverb, "The princes of an age are its mirrors."¹ Nasrullah Khān epitomised the vices which flourished unchecked in Bokhārā. The passion for low intrigue, the lust and cruelty, the self-righteousness and hypocrisy so often associated with the Mohammedan character, were found in him in their highest development.

As the third son of Haydar, he had small chance of succeeding to the throne ; but he kept that goal constantly in view during his father's lifetime, and paved the way thither by pandering to the greed of the military caste. No opportunity was lost of gaining adherents among the Amīr's courtiers. Hākīm Bī, the Kushbegī, or vezīr, and his father-in-law Ayāz Topchi-bāshi,² who held an important military command, were devoted to his interests.³

On Haydar's death, his eldest son, Husayn Khān, took possession of the citadel of Bokhārā and was proclaimed Amīr. He received fervent assurances of loyalty from Nasrullah, who was the while actively plotting

¹ *History of Bokhara*, p. 365. A long chapter is devoted to Amīr Nasrullah by Sir H. Howorth. See his *History of the Mongols*, part ii. pp. 790-809.

² "General of artillery."

³ Khanikoff, *Bokhara*, p. 296.

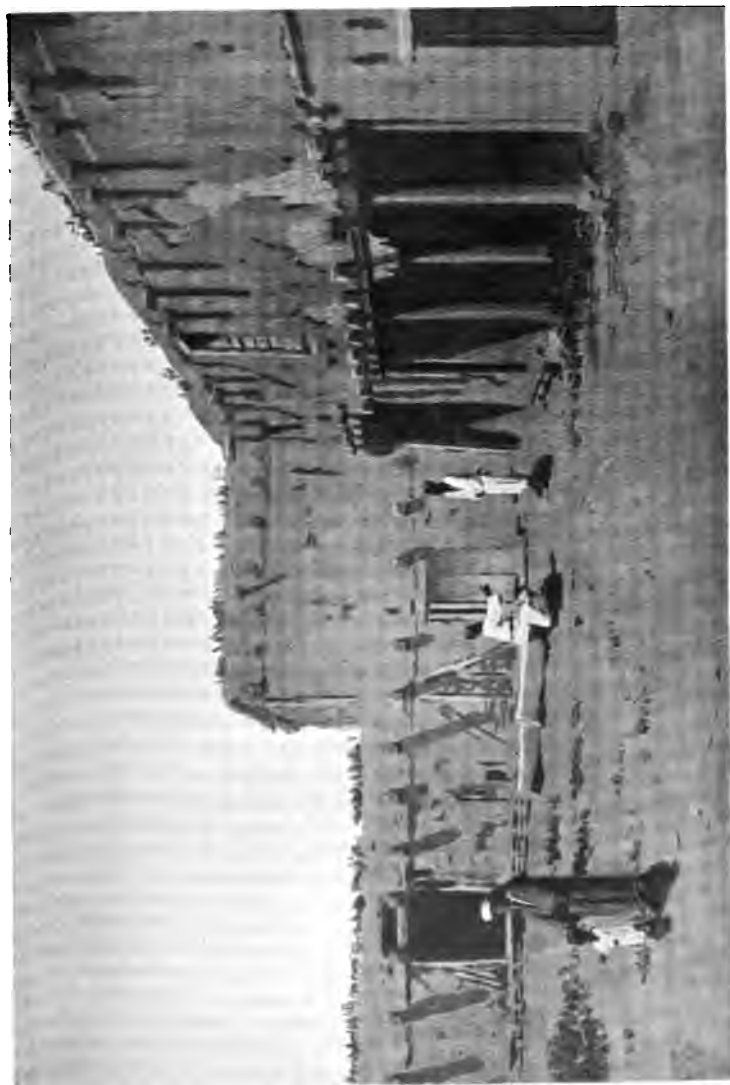
to subvert his authority, and who held a council of war at Karshī, at which Mū'min Beg Dādkhāh, one of Husayn's chief lieutenants, assisted.

At this crisis he learnt that his brother had died suddenly after a reign of barely three months, and took immediate steps to assert his claims.¹ He obtained a legal decision in his favour from the chief-justice of Karshī, who also invited the clergy of Samarkand to espouse his cause. In the meantime another brother named 'Omar Khān seized the reins of power at Bokhārā, and sent orders to the governor of Samarkand on no account to surrender his charge. But on Nasrullah's arrival the gates were flung open to him by the influence of the mullās, and he was enthroned on the famous Blue Stone, or Kok-tāsh, whereon nearly every Amīr since Tīmūr's reign had received investiture. Then began a triumphant progress throughout the realm. Katti-Kurgān, Kerminé, and other cities surrendered to the pretender, who replaced their governors by creatures of his own, and bade the former swell his train. Thus attended, he arrived before Bokhārā and closely invested the city. Starvation soon decimated its swarming population. A pound of meat sold for seven *tangas*,² flour was introduced through Nasrullah's trenches in coffins, and the stench of stagnant water in the irrigation canals grew intolerable. The Kushbegi and his father-in-law Ayāz took advantage of the people's agony to proffer their submission, and undertook to give the signal of capitulation by blowing up an ancient cannon, said to have weighed nearly thirteen tons.³ On hearing the muffled roar of the explosion, Nasrullah immediately at-

¹ The Kushbegi was vehemently suspected of removing him by poison (Khanikoff, p. 298).

² About four shillings.

³ Khanikoff, p. 301.



COURT-YARD OF A HOUSE IN SAMARKAND

tacked the city from two quarters, and entered it in triumph on the 22nd March 1826. 'Omar saved his life by instant flight, but three of his brothers, with many of their adherents, were butchered in cold blood.¹

The policy with which Nasrullah inaugurated his reign partook of the ingrained cunning which was his chief characteristic. He seemed to prefer amusements to affairs of state, and thus induced the Kushbegi to believe that his own lease of power would be indefinitely prolonged. Meantime no occasion was lost of strengthening his hold on the lower classes by acts of apparent generosity and justice. The motto on his seal was that adopted by the noble-hearted Tīmūr, whom he affected to regard as his prototype. It was "Truth and Equity"! ² When he felt himself strong enough to throw off the mask, he banished his benefactor to Karshī, and afterwards to Samarkand. Ayāz Topchī - bāshi's suspicions were lulled by ardent asseverations of friendship, lest he should make away with the vast possessions which Nasrullah had long marked as his own. He summoned the old man to his presence, gave him a beautiful horse, and aided him to vault into the saddle with his own royal hands.³ The victim set out for Samarkand, of which he had been appointed governor, in the assurance that he had not participated in his son-in-law's disgrace; but he was soon ordered back to Bokhārā, and thrown into prison with the Kushbegi. To Nasrullah's eternal disgrace, he put both of these early friends to death in the spring of 1840. Then he turned his attention to the military class, which had attained preponderance in an empire won and kept together by the sword. They were butchered in large numbers without any form of trial, or banished to a distance from the capital. The clergy had

¹ Vambéry, p. 366.

² Wolff, *Bokhara*, p. 232.

³ Khanikoff, *Bokhara*, p. 304.

been permitted by his bigoted predecessor to meddle in the affairs of state, and even the warrior-prince Ma'sūm had not ventured to thwart them. Nasrullah overturned their authority, and substituted his royal commands for the hitherto sacred injunctions of law and custom.¹

His evil passions gained a complete mastery as he grew older. He gave full rein to the foulest lust, and neither rank nor sex were sacred in his eyes. His temper became utterly ungovernable. "When angry," writes one who knew him well,² "the blood comes into his face and creates a convulsive action of his muscles; and in such fits he gives the most outrageous orders, reckless of consequences." These spells of madness alternated with periods when he became a prey to the wildest suspicion. To gratify it, an army of spies was maintained, who were paid to report the most trivial words of those whom he believed to be disaffected.³

Our readers may well wonder why a tyrant of his mould was allowed to reign for more than a generation and to die in his bed. The key to the mystery is to be found in his attitude towards the populace, by whom he was idolised as their protector against the violence of the military class.⁴ Juvenal, in lamenting the atrocities of a monster of the like nature, remarks that he did not perish until he came to be feared by the dregs of the people.⁵

His foreign policy was as perfidious as his domestic. He attacked Shahrīsabz, a little state enclosed in his dominions, which had, like Holland, preserved its independence by the bravery of its people and their ability to lay the environs of their capital under water at an invader's

¹ Wolff, *Bokhara*, p. 233.

² *Ibid.* p. 233.

³ Wolff, p. 181.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 232.

⁵ "Sed periit postquam cerdonibus esse timendūz Cœperat" (Sat. IV. 153).

approach.¹ He was baffled, and Shahrisabz continued to be a thorn in his side during his long reign,—albeit that he endeavoured to gain a footing there by espousing the ruler's sister. With Kokand he was more successful. That state was governed by Khān Mohammad 'Alī, a prince descended in the female line from the great Baber, emperor of Hindustān, who had won glory by successes against the Chinese on his western frontier.² Thus he incurred Nasrullah's jealousy, and his ruin was determined on. It was compassed by the aid of a Persian soldier of fortune named 'Abd us-Samad Khān, who had fled his country after attempting to assassinate his master.³ He knew how to cast and work cannon—engines of war which exercise an overwhelming influence on the Oriental mind; and commended himself to Nasrullah by military knowledge and an eagerness to pander to his worst vices. He became his *âme damnée*, even as the infamous "Azimulla" prompted every atrocity committed by Nana Sahib during the Indian Mutiny. The excuse for aggression was afforded by the frontier fortress of Pishagar, which Nasrullah declared had been erected by the Kokandis on his territory. Its destruction was peremptorily demanded; and, on Mohammad 'Alī's refusal to comply, it was attacked by a strong force, accompanied by a breaching battery under 'Abd us-Samad's command.⁴ The mud walls of Pishagar were unable to resist the iron shower, and its surrender was followed in the succeeding year by that of Ura Teppe and of Khojend. The Khān of Kokand, seeing that the capital was in peril, sued for peace, and, by the treaty of Kohna Bādām, ceded Khojend and recognised the Bokhāran Amīr as his suzerain.

With the cunning which in the East passes for the highest manifestation of diplomacy, Nasrullah placed the

¹ Wolff, p. 248.

² Khanikoff, p. 306; Wolff, p. 152, *et passim*.

³ Vambéry, p. 372.

⁴ Vambéry, p. 373.

newly conquered territory under the governorship of Sultan Mahmūd, a brother of the Khān of Kokand and a pretender to his throne. But hardly were these arrangements completed ere Mahmūd and his brother came to terms, and both Khojend and Ura Tepe were temporarily lost to Bokhārā. The wrath of the Amīr was unbounded. In April 1842 he took the field against Kokand with a host of 30,000 horsemen and regulars,¹ and 10,000 Turkoman mercenaries. He reached Khojend by forced marches, and captured that city without firing a shot, though it was defended by a garrison 15,000 strong.² Thence he moved rapidly on the capital and drove Mohammad 'Alī to seek refuge in Marghilān. Here he was taken prisoner, dragged back to Kokand, and slaughtered with the greater part of his relatives.³

Nasrullah's relations with Khiva were bitterly hostile throughout his reign; and he played into the hands of the common enemy, Russia, by harrying the Khān's territory at a time when all his force was needed to oppose an expedition under General Perovski.

The petty states of Balkh, Andakhūy, and Maymana on the southern frontier were the objects of his constant aggression, and the mutual jealousy of Persia and Afghanistan allowed him to assume suzerainty over them. Thus the weakness of his neighbours turned to his advantage. He was hailed by his obsequious courtiers as king of kings, and firmly believed himself destined to repeat the conquests of his model, Tīmūr.

This was the man at whose gates knocked the two greatest of European Powers. England had watched the constant advance of Russia towards her Indian frontier

¹ Under 'Abd us-Samad's advice he had organised a corps of soldiers who were drilled and accoutred in the European fashion.

² Khanikoff, p. 313.

³ *Ibid.* p. 314. Wolff adds that the unfortunate Khān's pregnant wife was also butchered (*Bokhara*, p. 232).

with ill-concealed alarm, and in 1832 Alexander Burnes was despatched on an unofficial mission to Bokhārā. He accomplished nothing, and was fortunate indeed to escape from the bloodthirsty tyrant's clutches.¹

The next attempt made by England to establish friendly relations with the leading Central Asian Powers was less fortunate. Her agent was Colonel Stoddart of the Indian Army, a man utterly unfitted by training and temperament for a diplomatic mission.² His rude and overbearing manners gave the deepest offence to a despot accustomed to see all around him tremble at his slightest movement.³ He was thrown into a loathsome dungeon, and languished there, with brief intervals of comparative liberty, till death put an end to his sufferings. In 1840 he received a companion in affliction in the person of Captain Arthur Conolly, whose gentle disposition and high culture rendered him equally unfit to cope with a truculent monster such as Nasrullah. He had been charged with the duty of uniting the Central Asian Khānates in an informal alliance against Russia—a task which their common jealousies rendered absolutely impossible. Thus his overtures were politely rejected by Khiva and Kokand in succession. Enticed by Nasrullah into his camp, he was seized, robbed of all his possessions, and sent to join poor Stoddart in captivity. In the meantime the Russians had begun to compete for Nasrullah's favour.⁴ Major Batanieff was despatched to Bokhārā in 1840 by the Tsar Nicholas, with orders to

¹ He published an interesting account of his wanderings in his *Travels into Bokhara, being an account of a Journey from India to Cabool, Tartary, and Persia in 1831-33*. London, 1834-39.

² Wolff, p. 176. It appears that he drew his sword on the court official charged with the duty of presenting him to His Majesty.

³ "He delights to hear that people tremble at his name, and laughs with violence when he hears of their apprehensions" (Wolff, p. 233).

⁴ The first regular Russian embassy to Bokhārā was that of M. Regni in

conclude a treaty of commerce and amity with the Amīr. He was received with ostentatious courtesy, and his presents found especial favour in Nasrullah's eyes. But every attempt to arrive at a *modus vivendi* was baffled by those excuses and procrastinations in which Oriental monarchs are past masters. He left in 1841, after vainly interceding for his rivals, who languished in daily expectation of death. Their fate was sealed by his departure and by the news of our disasters in Kābul.¹

On the 17th June 1842 the unfortunate men were brought out to die. Stoddart, who had been forced to embrace Mohammedanism, was the first to suffer. When his head had been severed from his body the executioner paused, and Conolly had an offer made of life as the price of his apostasy. He scorned the bargain, and stretched out his neck to receive the fatal blow. This atrocious crime was never avenged by the country which had sent her sons forth to perish,² but for many years Bokhārā was a word full of evil associations in the English mind. It was undoubtedly prompted by the fiendish 'Abd us-Samad, who lost no opportunity of gratify-

1820, which was described by Colonel Baron Meyendorff in his *Voyage d'Orenbourg à Boukhara*. Paris, 1826. The Russian reply to Burnes' mission were those of Desmaison in 1834, and of Vitkovich in the following year (Vambéry, p. 380).

¹ The issue of our first attempt to meddle in the affairs of Afghanistan is too well known for recapitulation. The British forces left Kābul on January 1842 on their homeward march, and, out of 16,500 troops and camp followers, only one man lived to carry the news of disaster to Jalālābād. See Kaye's *History of the War in Afghanistan*, 1851.

² Nasrullah was tormented by remorse to his dying day. He told the Shaykh ul-Islām of Bokhārā that "he had given himself a terrible wound by having killed Stoddart and Conolly." And the chief-justice assured Wolff that the Amīr had more than once exclaimed, "The wounds of my heart, for having slain these English people, will never heal!" (Wolff's *Bokhara*, pp. 176, 233). Even this black heart had one white spot. But we must not judge a bad man by the good he may do on impulse, nor a good one by the evil which alloys the finest nature.

ing his hatred of Europeans. Nor were Stoddart and Conolly Nasrullah's only victims. A lust for blood seized him, and all who professed Christianity were proscribed. The missionary Wolff, who visited Bokhārā in 1844 in order to learn the two young officers' fate, and if possible to procure their release, gives a list of seven Englishmen who were slaughtered at 'Abd us-Samad's instigation.¹

Nasrullah's closing years were embittered by conspiracies amongst his nobles; and his successor Mozaffar ud-Dīn was strongly suspected of having incited one of those movements, which was put down with much bloodshed.² He was maddened, too, by the repeated failure of his attempts to reduce Shahrisabz. On his deathbed, in 1860, he learnt that that last stronghold of independence had fallen to his conquering arm. His last act was to order the execution of its chief, who was his brother-in-law, and all his children, and his own wife, whose only crime was her relationship to the rebel, beheaded in his presence.³

Sayyid Mozaffar ud-Dīn Khān, who succeeded this monster of iniquity, had attained the mature age of thirty-eight on his death. He was the son of a Persian slave-girl, and at the age of fourteen was appointed governor of Karshī, the Dauphinée of modern Bokhārā.⁴ That he lived to reign in his turn was due to his extreme circumspection, for he was swayed by the same vices as his

¹ Wolff, *Bokhara*, p. 231. It is not exhaustive, for Vambéry (p. 389) mentions a poor Italian watchmaker named Giovanni Orlando as one of Nasrullah's victims. Wolff's work is disfigured by its author's eccentricities, and is deficient in information of value as to the manners and economy of the country. But his courage and self-devotion are beyond all praise.

² Vambéry, p. 391. The date which he gives tentatively, 1840, is certainly wrong: had it occurred then, details would have appeared in the works of Wolff and Khanikoff. H. Moser, who twice visited Bokhārā during his reign, says that he lived in idleness till his father's death, the date of which he inexplicably states to have been 1842 (*A Travers l'Asie Centrale*, p. 156).

³ Vambéry, p. 391.

⁴ H. Moser, p. 156.

father had been. His first care was to regain the confidence of the priestly caste, which had been alienated by the insane excesses of Nasrullah. Then, inspired by those dreams of universal conquest which had been the curse of his dynasty, he turned his attention to Shahrisabz, which continued in a state of revolt. Undeterred by his failure to reduce the stubborn mountaineers to subjection, he next attacked Kokand. That Khānate had fallen into the hands of Khudā Yār, a grandson of the murdered Mohammad 'Alī, who had been brought up under Nasrullah's eye in that gilded sty, the Bokhāran Court. He attained power at a period pregnant with danger to his country. The lower reaches of the Sir Darya were enclosed in the coil of the Russian advance. In 1853 the fortress of Ak-Mechet had fallen, and eleven years later the Eagle waved over Turkestan and Chimkent.¹ The onward movement was checked in 1864 by the failure of an assault on Tashkent; but Khudā Yār was foiled in his turn in a like attempt on Turkestan, and retreated to his capital only to find that the warlike Kipchāks,² a tribe who, then as now, were the backbone of the population, had set up a younger brother named Mollā Khān in his stead. Khudā Yār fled to Bokhārā and implored the Amīr to aid him to regain the throne. Mozaffar ud-Dīn saw in these events an excuse for extending his own authority up to the frontier of China. As a preliminary measure, he had Mollā Khān assassinated,

¹ It was regarded in Central Asia as a bird of ill omen, and nicknamed *Kara-Kush*, "black bird" (Vambéry, p. 394).

² The Kipchāks are a race of Turkish origin, who, according to Howorth (*History of the Mongols*, part ii.), settled on the south-eastern Russian steppes, in the tenth and eleventh centuries. They afterwards split up into hordes, the "Golden" and the "Eastern," but were united under Timūr's great antagonist, Tokhtamish Khān. When his power was shattered the Kipchāks dispersed over Central Asia, and large numbers found their way to Kokand, then styled by its present name, Farghāna.

and, marching on Kokand, reinstated Khudā Yār. The Kipchāks, however, were far from approving his choice. They rose in rebellion, and, after a protracted struggle with the Bokhāran forces, they succeeded in wresting the eastern half of the Khānate from Mozaffar ud-Dīn's protégé.¹ But their strength was sapped by the war raging on the northern frontier, and their trusted leader was slain by the Russians at Tashkent. Thus when in 1865 the Bokhāran Amīr invaded Kokand, in order to repress their insolence, he found the task an easy one. Khudā Yār was replaced on his tottering throne, and, had Mozaffar ud-Dīn possessed a trace of political foresight, he might have united the forces of Central Asia against the common danger. But his lust for conquest was increased by his cheaply won successes in Kokand, and, spurred to his ruin by a fanatical priesthood, he flung the gauntlet of defiance in the teeth of Russia. Though General Chernaieff had made himself master of Tashkent, and had Kokand at his mercy, he received a haughty summons to evacuate his conquests, accompanied by a threat of a Holy War.² His reply was couched in language equally peremptory, and a struggle began which closed in the deep humiliation of the proud Amīr.

It remains for us to trace the origin of a Power which was destined to play a part of the first importance in the history of Central Asia, and to repeat the conquests of Chingiz and Tīmūr.

¹ Vambéry, p. 395.

² H. Moser, *A Travers l'Asie Centrale*, p. 156.

PART II

RUSSIA IN CENTRAL ASIA

CHAPTER I

THE MAKING OF RUSSIA

DURING the long dark centuries whose annals we have endeavoured to reconstruct, the tide of conquest ran westwards. It was checked at times by the might of civilisation or fanaticism, but its flow was tolerably steady and quite beyond control. Had it not been for the evolution of a still greater force on her eastern borders, the whole of Europe would have been enveloped in the coils of a Mongolian invasion. The world was saved from this calamity by the unconscious agency of Russia. It remains to trace succinctly the history of her rise, and to show how she combated the Yellow Terror, and, by a reflex action, carried the banner of European civilisation eastwards.

Long ages before the Christian era the vast plains of Eastern Europe were invaded by an Aryan race called the Veneti by Ptolemy.¹ In the fourth century we find them struggling for existence with the Goths on the plains watered by the Vistula.² They afterwards split into three branches—the Veneti proper, afterwards known as the Wends, the Antes, and Slavi. The first-named pitched

¹ Born at Pelusum in Egypt, A.D. 70, and flourished under M. Antoninus and Hadrian.

² Our authority here is Jornandes, more properly styled Jordanes, who lived at Byzantium under Justinian II. His work, *De Gothorum Origine et Rebus Gestis*, is to be found in Muratori's *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores ab Anno 500 ad 1500*, 27 vols. folio.

their tents in north-eastern Europe, and have left indelible traces in the Baltic provinces of Prussia.¹ The second spread over the plain between the Dnieper and Dniester; while the Slavs² occupied the land between the latter river and the Vistula. Their progress was impeded for a while by contests with the Huns, but the overthrow of their fierce foes which followed the death of Attila gave full scope to their expansion. They crossed the Danube and occupied the rich country between the Adriatic and the Black Sea; then, spreading northwards, they took possession of the lake region of Pskov and Novógorod. These movements ceased in the seventh century, the close of which saw the Slavs firmly established in European Russia, Illyria, and Bulgaria. They were employed in agriculture and stock-raising, and their characteristics appear to have been much the same as those observed at the present day in the rural populations of Eastern Europe. Ancient writers agree in depicting them as being hospitable and cheerful, firmly attached to ancient customs, courageous, and fighting only in self-defence. In point of culture the Slavs of a thousand years ago failed to reach the low standard attained by their contemporaries of the West; for they were sparsely scattered over vast areas and plunged in continual warfare with aggressive neighbours. Society was organised on a patriarchal basis. The soil was held in common by the tribe or "land," whose affairs were discussed and whose chiefs were elected at a general gathering of the members. The religion of the Slavs betrayed its Eastern origin. The supreme deity was

¹ The Grand Dukes of Mecklenburg claim a Wendish origin, and are officially styled "Princes of the Wends."

² Slav, originally Slovene or Slovane, was, according to Miklositch, *Vergleichende Grammatik den Slavischen Sprachen* (Vienna, 1879), the tribal name of one of several Aryan clans, whose settlements stretched from the Arctic Ocean to the Ægean Sea, from Kamskatka to the Elbe.

called Bog, his wife Siwa; but there were good spirits (*belbog*) to be worshipped and evil ones (*chernebog*) to be propitiated, and every village had its patron divinity.¹

It is possible to carry too far the theory on which Mr. Buckle insisted so strongly—that the destinies of a race are moulded by their physical environment; but its general truth is demonstrated by the history of Russia. The European dominions of the Tsar are an unbroken plain. They contain no mountain fastnesses serving as a refuge for inferior races, and were thus fit arenas for a struggle for existence in which the most vigorous stem of the human family was sure to survive and to expand. And then, Russia lay on the highway of commerce between the East and West. The silks, spices, and sugar of China traversed her plains on their passage to mediæval cities, and the growth of local trade was fostered by the 35,000 miles of navigable river which the empire possesses. To this cause is due the accretion of great urban centres, which played as great a part in Muscovite history as they did in that of Western Europe. These cities were fortified to serve as rendezvous for the surrounding population in time of stress. Their government was strictly democratic; affairs being directed by a general assembly of the citizens, which elected a mayor, a commander of their trained bands, and, later, a bishop. Traders and merchants, who were the backbone of the urban population, were divided into self-governing guilds; and the city, not the individual, sent out its fleets and caravans and colonised distant regions. Each town became a nucleus of a territory whose peasant-inhabitants rendered the City Fathers the allegiance formerly paid to the tribe.

¹ "God" in Sanskrit is Bhagvan. Siva was the devoted wife of the demigod Rama, who is worshipped by Hindus with a fervour like that inspired by the Virgin Mary in Catholic lands.

With the decay of the tribal conception came radical modifications in the tenure of land. Individualism slowly triumphed over socialism; a class of agriculturists sprang up, who long remained free yeomen. But prisoners of war were reduced to slavery, and freemen who continued in service for more than a year encountered a similar fate. Hence the origin of a great body of serfs, tied down to the soil and acknowledging the mastership of their wealthier brethren. Such was the Russian township in its earlier stages of growth. It was the nidus of a self-governing republic, impelled to expand and conquer by the growth of population which follows increased material prosperity, but powerless to defend itself against foreign aggression. The consciousness of this defect led the citizens to invite soldiers of fortune to lead their militia and give organised means of repelling attack. These adventurers were styled princes (*knias*). They were called on to engage to rule according to custom and law. They were bound to keep a body of armed retainers, who were paid by a stipulated tribute.

The prince was not only the head of the executive, but the right arm of the general assembly (*vetché*), which still arrogated to itself the right of deciding on peace and war. He exercised judicial functions, pronouncing sentence on the findings arrived at by the jurors¹ who decided civil and criminal suits, and levying the fine adjudged, which he appropriated to the maintenance of his dignity. The Russian princes of the tenth century held a position analogous to that occupied by the podestà of the Italian republic; and, indeed, the political evolution of the two countries for many years proceeded on parallel lines. It was reserved for Chris-

¹ They were judges rather than jurymen of the British type. Their number was twelve, half of whom were chosen by the plaintiff and half by the defendant. See Stubbs' *Constitutional History*, chap. xiii.

tianity, which had played so vast a part in the disintegration of the Roman Empire, to modify profoundly the relations between prince and city. The form in which this highly militant creed reached the cities of Russia was that which had ruled supreme in Byzantium. It was first preached in northern countries in the ninth century by two monks named Cyrillus and Methodus, who are still venerated as the "Apostles of the Slavs." They are also regarded as the founders of the national literature, for they reduced the melodious accents of the Slavonic tongue to writing, and translated into it the Holy Writings and the Byzantine ritual. The seed thus sown fell upon fruitful soil; for the impulsive, dreamy character of the Slavs, a heritage from their remote Indian ancestors, was powerfully attracted by the gorgeous and rather sensual rites whose glory is still faintly shadowed in the desecrated splendours of St. Sophia. Russia soon swarmed with missionaries preaching a creed which appeals with greater force than any other to the idiosyncrasies of Aryans. The princes themselves were carried away by the movement, and paused in their career of tyranny and bloodshed to bow before the emblems of peace and goodwill to men.

In 987 Vladimir of Novogorod was baptized at Kieff¹ with his warrior band. He married a Greek princess named Anna, who was a powerful ally of the priests in maintaining her half-savage husband in the path which he had adopted. The influence of these churchmen was by no means an unmixed blessing for Russia; for they brought with them conceptions of government which were wholly alien to Slav traditions. In the great Eastern Empire, which had inherited no small share of

¹ Other writers give Cherson as the scene of this historic rite. Vladimir wears a halo in monkish legend, and is commonly styled the Saint, or the Great.

the power and glory of Rome, the chief of the state was much more than a first magistrate. He was the head of the Church, Pontifex Maximus as well as Autocrat, and exacted implicit allegiance and submission. His sovereignty was transmissible to his heirs; and a wide gulf separated the imperial family from the noblest subject. The law in Byzantium was mainly that of Rome, which regarded offences as injuries to the state and as calling for sanguinary punishments rather than compensation to the private individual aggrieved. Women there occupied a position of inferiority. They were jealously guarded, and were forbidden to show their faces in public or in the church. The Russian priests sought in a monarch of the European type a secular arm for the defence of their privileges. Their teachings were eagerly assimilated by Vladimir, who, at his death in 1015, parcelled out his domains amongst twelve sons. The new theory of kingship received a wider extension at the hands of Yaroslav the Wise, a politic sovereign whose chief care it was to elevate the status of his caste. Henceforward Kieff was regarded as the mother city, and the seat of the eldest of his kin. The other centres—Novogorod, Pskov, Smolensk, and Polotsk—were free to select their own princes, with the proviso that the chosen one must be descended from Yaroslav. But the narrow tyranny of the Church and the growth of a royal caste were not the only cankers eating into the heart of the Russian commonwealths. The eleventh and twelfth centuries saw the rise of the Bolars, or Boyars, a class of great proprietors descended from successful warriors, or citizens enriched by commerce, who engrossed huge tracts of soil and reduced the free cultivators to a status of bondage. Their power as councillors of the prince soon ousted that of the popular assemblies, and its expansion was furthered by the importation from Germany of the worst

features of feudalism, unillumined by the tender light of chivalry. The revolution received a vast impetus by the transfer of the seat of power from Kieff to Suzdal and Rostov, peopled by the colonisation of the territories watered by the Oka and Upper Volga. The inhabitants of the Great Russia which thus took its origin were without traditions of independence, and offered their necks willingly to the feudal yoke. In the twelfth century the prince of Suzdal built the town of Vladimir and subdued Kieff, making his own metropolis the centre of Russian politics. Then, pushing their boundaries ever in advance, his people founded Nijni Novogorod at the confluence of the Oka and Volga, which soon eclipsed the glories of its namesake. Thus, at the beginning of the thirteenth century, Russia was studded with republics governed by oligarchies, and resembling in most essentials those which were in process of formation in Italy. The popular liberties were already undermined by the encroachments of prince and noble, fostered, for selfish ends, by the Church; but material civilisation was on the increase, and, had it been permitted to grow on Slavonic lines, the arts which adorn and sweeten life would have found a home in Russia. This nascent culture was destroyed by an eruption of foes more ruthless than those who had completed the ruin of imperial Rome, and the clock of moral and industrial advance was put back by several centuries.

Human progress is stimulated by the tendency exhibited by population to outstrip the means of subsistence. No sooner has a community attained a certain degree of physical well-being than this great natural law comes into play. The numbers begin to press too heavily on the land, and the younger and more vigorous are driven to seek new spheres for their energies. They colonise distant lands, subdue their weaker neighbours,

and the mother state becomes a centre of dominion, of luxury and its attendant arts. It is the process which gave the world the priceless boon of Greek civilisation, and made Rome a storehouse whence we moderns have drawn our principles of law and government. In the earlier centuries of our era the regions lying between the Gobi Desert and Lake Baikal were the habitat of a congeries of Mongolian tribes belonging to the Ural-Altaic family.¹ They were a pastoral race, living in tents of felt and skins which they moved when the surrounding pastures had been exhausted by their flocks and herds.

The nomad instinct thus became with them a second nature, and as they were tireless horsemen and inured to hardships, it led them to carry bloodshed and rapine over neighbouring territories. In their case the tendency to spread over the face of the earth was keener far than in that of communities engaged in settled avocations. But much of their strength was expended in intertribal war, until a man of genius arose who knew how to reconcile discordant interests and to forge a weapon of aggression which no living force could withstand. This Napoleon of Asia was known to his contemporaries as Temuchin, and to posterity as Chingiz Khān. He was born in 1162, the son of a chieftain whose authority was supreme in the tract between the Amur and the Great Wall of China. His youth was spent in struggles for supremacy with rival chieftains, but he at length welded together the whole Mongolian race by sheer personal ascendancy, and dangling before his followers the bait of plunder. Then began a career of conquest which finds

¹ According to Ujfalvy, the Mongols were leading a peaceful and patriarchal life round Lake Baikal in the second century before our era. Richthofen thinks that the primitive land of the Turks was not in the Altai Mountains, as their legends would have it, but rather in the country below the Anan, the Lena, and the Seleuga (*Les Aryens* (Paris, 1896), p. 25).

no parallel save in that of his greater successor Tamerlane. He entered Khwārazm¹ in 1218 at the head of three hordes,² overran Khojend, Samarkand, Bokhārā, and devastated Northern Persia. Merv, Nishāpūr, Herāt, and other great and wealthy cities were overwhelmed in the avalanche. After penetrating far into India he returned to his darling steppes in 1225, gorged with booty. The impetus thus given to the teeming forces of disorder continued. Two lieutenants of Chingiz Khān skirted the southern shore of the Caspian and carried ruin through Georgia and the Crimea, returning by way of Bulgaria, while a third subdued nearly the whole of China. The death of Chingiz in 1227 brought no cessation to the movement. The greed of his followers was inflamed by rumours of the wealth and luxury of the Russian republics; and in 1238 his grandson, Bātū Khān, headed an invading host which ravaged the central and eastern plains, and ruined Riazan, Rostov, Yaroslav, and Tver. In the following year the cities of South-Western Russia shared their fate; and then the Khān retired to his camp at Serai on the Lower Volga, where he rested awhile from rapine and slaughter. His headquarters became a centre for intrigue among the Russian princes, who were permitted to retain a certain degree of authority by their conquerors.

The Mongols, indeed, interfered but little with the internal affairs of the country. The Church was not molested, taxes were farmed out to merchants, and after a while commerce began to rear its drooping head.

¹ Khwārazm, an old Persian word said to mean "eastwards," comprises the embouchure of the Sir Daryā, and is now known as Khiva.

² "Horde" is derived from the Old Turkish *Urdu*, meaning encampment. Hence Urdu, the *lingua franca* evolved in the progresses which the Mongolian emperors of India used to make yearly throughout the peninsula. The people of Samarkand still call the citadel *Urda*, "the encampment."

With it came a recrudescence of the civil struggles which had made Russia an easy prey to the invaders. The princes sought the countenance of Tartar Khāns, and employed their warrior bands against neighbouring states. But the influence of the Mongols was not restricted to the arena of public affairs. It penetrated the social life of the Slav, and produced a strain which is still conspicuous in the physiognomy of every class of the population.¹ It leavened the national character, implanting in Russian breasts that nomad instinct which is destined to sweep away the effete political organisations of the Asiatic continent. Intercourse with the West was not without its effects on the conquerors. Dissensions arose among them. The Golden Horde gathered round Bātū Khān, and the White Horde separated from the main body. Unity of interests gave place to mutual jealousy and distrust. Bātū's brother Barak embraced Mohammedanism, and with it obtained the thin veneer of Arab civilisation. The Mongolian tent was exchanged for the walled town, and commerce grew apace. But the nomads' strength lay in their barbarism, and the growth of luxury among them encouraged the Russians to shake off lethargy and dream of political redemption.

At the commencement of the fourteenth century Russia was parcelled out into the principalities of Suzdal, Nijni Novogorod, Riazan, and Tver. This age witnessed the rise of a fifth which was destined to subdue them all, and to become the nucleus of a world-shadowing empire. The village of Moscow had been fortified by a Dolgoroucki in the middle of the twelfth century; and its situation, at the point of intersection of many caravan routes, led to the rapid development of its wealth and

¹ *A Historical Sketch of Russian Policy in Central Asia*, by Professor V. Grigorieff; Schuyler's *Turkestan*, App. IV. vol. ii. p. 391.



ENTRANCE TO THE SHAH ZINDA, SAMARKAND

population. The Church, ever alive to the advantage of recognising the imperial principle, set up its standard in a centre which promised to give full scope to its own influence. The Metropolitan migrated hither from Vladimir in 1325, taking with him a holy image of widely acknowledged efficacy, and the princes were encouraged by the wily priests to persist in a policy of weakening the adjacent states. In 1380 Prince Dmitri, finding his Mongol oppressors distracted with internecine feuds, was emboldened to refuse tribute; and, gathering a huge army, he met the enemy at Kulikovo on the Don. The conflict was indecisive; but the Russians asserted that victory had been bestowed on their arms at the intercession of the *eikon* which had accompanied their hosts. The claim was acquiesced in by the Russian people, and from this epoch dates the rise of Moscow. But the Mongolian incubus still weighed upon them. A great chieftain named Tokhtamish Khān arose who united the rival hordes, and in 1381 their forces obtained possession of Moscow and massacred 24,000 of its citizens. But the citadel already known as the Kremlin defied his attacks, and became the rallying-point for a state more powerful than that which had undergone a baptism of blood. And now a greater warrior appeared on the scene and became an unconscious ally of the cause of Russian independence.

Timūr Leng, or Lame Timūr, possessed a genius for civil administration as well as for conquest. He seized the throne of Samarkand and became undisputed master of Central Asia. Then he overran Persia and Georgia in 1369, and came to blows with the redoubtable Tokhtamish Khān. Fierce and prolonged was the struggle for supremacy, but in 1395 it ended disastrously for the western chief. After effectually breaking his rival's power, Timūr destroyed that of the Turkish

Sultan Bāyazīd in Angora, and was on his way to subdue China when death overtook him at Otrār on the Sir Daryā, or Jaxartes. With the defeat of Tokhtamish and the disappearance of Tīmūr the Mongolian power steadily declined. In 1408 the Khān Edighei attempted to chastise rebellious Moscow, but was baffled by the ramparts of the Kremlin. The development of the vigorous capital continued under Vassili I., who purchased from the Mongolian Khān the right to reign supreme at Kieff, and afterwards subdued Rostov. He assumed the style of Great Prince, and levied tribute in return for his protection from all the cities of Muscovy. But the real founder of the Russian autocracy was Vassili III., rightly styled the Great. His ambition was fired by the promptings of the priesthood and of his Greek wife Sophia, who was a daughter of the Byzantine emperor, Constantine Paleologus. He persistently undermined the autonomy of other states; and, after adding all but Novogorod to his empire, he finally, with Mongolian aid, crushed that last stronghold of Russian independence. To Vassili the Great, Russia owes its claim to succeed the mighty emperors of the East and the grandiloquent style and title assumed by its Tsars, for he adopted the arms of Byzantium and was proclaimed Ruler of All the Russias. In 1480 he found himself strong enough to throw off the Mongolian yoke, and, when the Khān marched against Moscow with 150,000 men, he was confronted by a Russian army and was fain to abandon his enterprise. Vassili's grandson Ivan IV., surnamed the Terrible, was crowned Tsar at Moscow in 1547. After a prolonged struggle with the haughty Boyars he shook off their influence and became, in deed as well as in name, an autocrat. Then his restless energies found vent in aggression.

He conquered Kazan and Astrakhan in 1554; but,

falling a prey to insanity, he was guilty of excesses which weakened his authority and emboldened the Mongols to make a fresh bid for supremacy. The Khān Dawlat Girāy appeared before Moscow in 1571 with 120,000 followers and burnt the suburbs.¹ But the Kremlin again held out, and the nomads retreated to the Volga, never to return. Thus was Russia delivered from an influence which had paralysed her energies, and was free to work out her destinies. We shall see how profoundly they were affected by the action of the Mongolian restlessness on the dreamy, sluggish nature of the Slav.

¹ For further details consult Howorth's *Mongols*, pt. ii. div. i. p. 507.

CHAPTER II

CROSSING THE THRESHOLD OF ASIA

THE Ural range had hitherto been the eastern boundary of Russia. Beyond lay a region of steppes and rivers, peopled towards the polar seas by tribes of Tartar and Esquimaux origin, employed in hunting; and on the southern frontier, by Kirghiz and Kalmak nomads. Under Vassili III. (1505-1533) the Western Urals were annexed to the nascent empire, and peopled by Yaik Cossacks, a race addicted to raiding and pillage.¹ These freebooters recognised no natural barriers. Crossing the mountain-chain, they attacked the Ostiaks, Samoyeds, and Kirghiz who had hitherto roamed unchallenged over the wind-swept plains. The collision was disastrous for the invaders, and the frontier became a prey to anarchy. Meantime the Tsar, Ivan the Terrible, had bestowed a huge tract of land in the Urals on his favourite, Strogonoff, who at once began to exploit its rich deposits of gold. His schemes were rendered abortive by the incursions of tribesmen from the west, and Strogonoff, in despair, summoned a Cossack named Iermak to his aid. The new ally was promised a free pardon for his numerous outrages, and his followers were supplied with firearms from Russian arsenals. Thus equipped Iermak made short work of the invaders, and

¹ *Russia in Central Asia*, by Hugo Stumm, pp. 2, 3; *En Asie Centrale*, by N. Ney, p. 203.

in 1587 captured Sibir, the capital of Kushan Khān, chief of the Kirghiz. In 1604 Tobolsk was built and fortified on a site twelve miles from the town which gave its name to the entire country. The victorious Cossacks plunged deeper into the hitherto unknown regions, and came to blows with the Kirghiz, who ranged the steppes between Lake Balkash and the Urals on the northern shore of the Aral Sea. Hearing vague rumours of the wealth of Khiva or Khwārazm, a Khānate embracing the fertile embouchure of the Amū Daryā, a band of Cossacks swooped down on Urgenj, its capital, at a time when the Khān and his warriors were absent on a distant expedition.

The city fell an easy prey, and they bent their steps homewards, dragging with them a vast amount of booty, and a thousand of the most beautiful inmates of Khivan harems. Their cupidity was their ruin, for they were overtaken by the incensed husbands, and cut to pieces. A still worse fate was encountered during a later raid; for the Cossacks who undertook it lost their way, and were overtaken by winter on the wind-swept shores of the Aral. To such straits were they reduced that they had recourse to cannibalism.¹ But the stream of Russian immigration continued steadily eastwards. Irkutsk was founded in 1661, and before the end of the century the northern limits were pushed forward to the polar ice. The southern boundary, however, was conterminous with steppes occupied with Mongolian nomads, and was open to their incursions. No part of his immense empire escaped the notice of Peter the Great. In the brief leisure left him by his self-imposed task of reform he did not neglect his Siberian possessions.² He perceived

¹ The Cossacks have never been able to shake off the stigma imprinted by this dire necessity. They are still called "Man-eaters" in many parts of Central Asia.

² *En Asie Centrale*, by N. Ney, pp. 203-5.

the necessity of giving them a defensible frontier, and of securing commercial relations with the Khānates of Khiva and Bokhārā, in order to pave the way for an intercourse with China and the Indies. With this aim in view he took counsel of an adventurer named Khwāja Nefes, who had studied in Samarkand and Bokhāran colleges, and was well acquainted with the politics of the Khānates. Under his promptings, Peter sent congratulations to the Khān of Khiva on his accession. His overtures were welcomed by that sovereign, who was hard pressed by the legions of Bokhārā. He sent an embassy to Peter,¹ offering to accept his suzerainty in return for protection against his powerful neighbours. The great reformer had too many cares nearer home to permit of his taking immediate action on this tempting offer, and it was not till 1714 that he was reminded of his distant vassal's existence by another embassy, the object of which was to induce the Tsar to build a chain of forts on the east of the Caspian as a protection against Turkoman raids. Peter was now convinced that the time had come for effective interference in Central Asian affairs. He cast about him for an instrument, and found one in a young Circassian chieftain who had changed his name from Dawlat Girāy to Bekovitch Cherkaski on his conversion and baptism, and had been given a commission in the famous Preobajinski regiment, with the title of prince. The Tsar appointed him to the command of an exploring expedition, the objects of which were enumerated in a decree of the 29th May 1714. Bekovitch was enjoined to congratulate the Khān of Khiva on his accession, and to confirm him in his acknowledgment of Russian suzerainty. He was to explore the lower reaches of the Sir Daryā for gold, and ascertain whether it was practicable to reopen the old

¹ Stumm, p. 5.

course of that river into the Caspian on the south of the Balkan range. Bekovitch's voyage of discovery began in 1715. He sailed along the east coast of the Caspian, landing at the extremity of the Mangishlāk peninsula, and erected a fort to serve as a base for his advance into the desert. The former bed of the Amū Daryā was examined, and a report was submitted to the Tsar. Peter instructed his lieutenant to build a strong place on the banks of the old channel, and to induce the Khān of Khiva to join in thoroughly investigating its course, in view of a possible diversion of the great waterway. Mercantile expeditions were also to be sent to Bokhārā and India. While preparations were in progress for a second expedition, the friendly Khān died, and his successor was reported to be ill-disposed towards Russia.

Nothing daunted, the intrepid adventurer set out in 1717 for Garieff, on the river Ural, at the head of a force of 4000 men, with engineers and marine officers. After struggling across the wind-swept desert of Ust Urt, he reached a lake known as Bara Kilmas, about 200 miles north-west of Khiva. Here he rested his travel-worn troops, and built a fort with a solidity which has resisted the elements for 180 years. The suspicions of the Khān that Russia contemplated the annexation of his country were confirmed by the strength of Bekovitch's expedition, and the measures adopted by him. But, feeling that his ill-disciplined forces were no match for those of comparative civilisation, he had recourse to treachery. Bekovitch was lulled into security by promises of aid and alliance, and was persuaded to divide his little army into weak detachments, on the plea that it would be easier to furnish them with provisions. Then the Khān fell upon the isolated Russian posts and crushed them in detail. Not a man escaped to give news of the

failure of this first plunge into Central Asian politics. To this day the expression "Lost as Bekovitch" is synonymous in Russia for hopeless ruin. So disgusted was the great Tsar with this unexpected failure that when, in 1720, the Khān of Khiva sent an envoy to solicit pardon and a renewal of friendship, he was thrown into prison at St. Petersburg, and died there.¹

Russia's next step in advance was the outcome of the mischievous activity of the Kirghiz, a race of Mongolian origin which roams over the steppes between the Volga and the Irtish, and north of the Turkoman desert and the Ala Tau Mountains.² Peaceful colonisation was impossible while these restless neighbours retained their independence. Omsk and the middle course of the Irtish became Russian in 1716-1719; and for 1500 miles the Siberian frontier marched with that of tracts claimed as their own by these untamed nomads. In the reign of the Empress Anne disputes arose between the Kirghiz of the Middle and Little Hordes, who ranged over the western steppes, and their brethren of the Far East; and in 1732 the former offered submission to the empress in return for protection against their foes. Thus the Russians obtained a footing in immense tracts which were claimed by the Khānates of Khiva and Bokhārā, and a collision with their forces was rendered inevitable. The foundation of Orenburg marks a second stage in the Russian advance. It became a rendezvous for caravans between Russia and Central Asian cities,

¹ Tradition has it that the Khān retaliated by tearing in pieces a letter, subsequently received from Peter, and giving it to his children to play with (*Peter the Great*, by Oscar Browning, p. 323).

² The Kirghiz affirm that they were divided into three Hordes by an ancient chieftain named Alash. The Great Horde wander over Chinese and Russian Turkestan, near Lake Balkash; the Middle occupy the northern and eastern shores of the Sea of Aral; the Little Horde, now more numerous than the others combined, feed their flocks between the Tobol and the Aral Sea. An interesting account is given by Stumm of their manners and character. See *Russia in Central Asia*, pp. 227-34.

and a basis for the expeditions which followed. In 1803 the Tsar had received the allegiance of the tribes of the Mangishlāk peninsula, on the eastern shore of the Caspian. Ten years later Turkoman envoys asked help against Persia. It was refused, for Russia had her hands full with the Napoleonic wars, and a profound irritation was aroused among the savages.¹ In 1822 an ordinance was issued bringing the Little Horde within the government of Orenburg, while the western Kirghiz were made subject to that of West Siberia. These attempts to annex territories with southern boundaries so ill-defined aroused intense suspicion throughout the Khānates, and it found a vent in raids on Russian caravans. One despatched to Bokhārā was robbed in 1829 of property to the value of 500,000 roubles by Kirghiz and Khivans. The Turkoman bands, still more to be dreaded, pillaged the Bokhāran traders.

Friction followed between the Kirghiz of the west and Cossack settlers, who, in common with old-established policy, had been pushed forward to occupy strips of fertile soil on the southern frontier, and the unrest was increased by the levy of a tax on the nomads, which was fiercely resented by those who rendered a nominal allegiance to Khiva. Count Perofski, who governed Orenburg, endeavoured to cope with the disturbance by constructing a chain of forts on his southern boundary, beginning with one named Alexandrovsk, on the Mangishlāk peninsula. But the Kirghiz carried their incursions far into Russian Orenburg, and plundered caravans close to Alexandrovsk. In 1839 it became clear that neither forts nor flying expeditions of Cossacks could effect the pacification of so chaotic a frontier. In Khiva the nomads found support in their attacks on Russian caravans, and a market for the sale of their prisoners and booty.

¹ Stumm, pp. 20, 21.

There, too, hundreds of Russian subjects were held in a state of abject slavery.¹ The prestige as well as the peace of the empire was at stake. The Tsar Nicholas was not a man to brook any infringement of either, and he decided that prompt and heavy punishment should be meted out for Khivan treachery. Perofski, the governor of Orenburg, was an agent fitted by nature and training for the accomplishment of the Tsar's designs. He equipped an army of $3\frac{1}{2}$ battalions of picked infantry, 2 regiments of Ural and 5 squadrons of Orenburg Cossacks, and 22 guns with a rocket train. Transport was effected by nearly 2000 horses and 10,000 camels, tended by 2000 Kirghiz, and the utmost care was lavished on every detail of the equipment.² Perofski calculated on reaching his objective, a distance of 900 miles, in 50 marches, and never doubted of a triumph over the ill-trained forces of Khiva.

He had reckoned without a force which had again and again won the battle for Russia,³ and committed the fatal mistake of starting from his base at Orenburg in November, a month which brought his army to the centre of the Ust Urt at the most inclement season of the year. The sufferings of men and beasts in the ice-storms which swept over the desert in the winter of 1839 are paralleled only by those endured by Napoleon's legions during the retreat from Moscow. The expedition struggled on as far as Ak Bulak, about half-way to the Khivan frontier, and was there fain to retreat, leaving the bones of 1000

¹ Meyendorf, *Voyage d'Orenburg à Boukhara*, p. 285.

² For a detailed account of the Khivan expedition, see Hugo Stumm's *Russia in Central Asia*, chap. ii. p. 26.

³ It is well known that the Tsar Nicholas, on learning the disasters suffered by the allied forces during the terrible Crimean winter of 1854-55, complacently remarked that there were two generals who fought for Russia—Generals January and February.

men and 8000 camels whitening the pitiless sands. Nothing daunted by his failure, Perofski set about the organisation of a second attempt on a far more elaborate scale, but it was rendered unnecessary by the submission of the Khivans. The ruler, 'Alā Kulī Khān, was cowed by the persistence and the might of Russia, and in 1840 he despatched an embassy to Orenburg, accompanied by more than 400 released Slavs. Perofski accepted the olive-branch, and in 1842 a treaty of peace and alliance was concluded with the new ruler. The failure of the expedition of 1840 had shown the incurable defects of Orenburg as a base for operations in Central Asia. If the trackless steppes, the oases teeming with robber-tribes, were to be dominated by Russian influence, some route must be chosen which possessed the advantage of water transport. The vast lake known as the Sea of Aral is connected with the heart of Asia by the Sir and the Amū Daryā, and is easier far to traverse than the steppes on either side. Batakoff explored it thoroughly in 1844, employing vessels brought in sections from Orenburg. Four years later a fort named Kazalinsk was erected at the mouth of the Sir Daryā, and, ere many months had elapsed, Russia was in possession of a chain of strongholds completely commanding the lower reaches of the great river. These precautionary measures raised an intense irritation in the breast of the Khān of Kokand, who claimed the whole course of the Sir Daryā as his own. His subjects were encouraged to invade Russian territory, compelling costly reprisals. In order to put a period to these aggressions, Perofski attacked the fortress of Ak Mechet, 280 miles from the embouchure of the Sir Daryā, and after an abortive attempt took it by storm in 1853. Thus the second great highway of Central Asia fell under Russian control, and it was soon afterwards navigated by a steamer

constructed in Sweden, and brought in sections with incredible labour by way of Nijni Novogorod. The amazement excited in the nomads by the spectacle soon died away, and Perofski was besieged by the Kokandis in vain. The grip of Russia tightened. In 1854 an expedition penetrated the valley of the Ili, and a fort was built at Verni, between the lakes of Balkash and Issik Kul. But between this stronghold and Perofski there was a gap of more than 500 miles, which included the desert of Ak Kum, and through it the Kirghiz and Turkoman bands carried devastation far into Siberia. The Kokandis, too, were determined to break the net in the meshes of which they were struggling. Frequent attacks were made on Russian outposts, and the whole Siberian border was kept in a ferment.¹ Russia resolved to strike a decisive blow at the recalcitrant Khānate, and to obtain possession of the northern portion, which gave a more defensible boundary, and was desirable by reason of its fertility. With this object in view, Staff Colonel Chernaieff marched southwards from the basin of the Ili on the fortress of 'Alī Ata, commanding the Kara Tau range, while Colonel Verefkin, starting from a base on the Sir Daryā, moved eastwards and captured Hazrat, another strong place which, under the name of Turkeṣtān, stands sponsor to the whole province. The two columns then joined hands and stormed the citadel of Chimkent, nearly 300 miles south-east of the old frontier post at Perofski. This steady advance aroused the susceptibilities of the British public, which saw in the Russian invasion of the Mohammedan states on the Siberian frontier a foreshadowing of similar designs on India. In order to allay suspicion and enlighten the communities of the West as to the motives of the recent encroachments, Prince Gortschakoff issued

¹ Stumm, p. 50.

a circular addressed to the Great Powers.¹ It is a remarkable state paper, which enunciates the principles governing the Russian advance in a manner as convincing as it is accurate and logical. The prince pointed out the dilemma in which civilised states in contact with wandering tribes are placed. They find it impossible to live in unity with such neighbours, and must establish a system of control or see their frontier a prey to chronic disorder. But the tribes brought under the strong arm of law and order become, in their turn, victims of similar aggression on the part of more distant ones. Thus the process of subjugation must be repeated until the paramount Power comes into direct contact with one which affords reasonable guarantees that it can maintain order within its own territory. Prince Gortschakoff fondly hoped that this boundary, safeguarded by a long chain of strong places stretching over a fertile and well-watered country between the Sir Daryā and Lake Balkash, would secure two desiderata—supplies for Russian garrisons, and the vicinity of a state strong enough to be mistress at home and willing to unite in fostering that true civiliser, commerce. He had omitted, however, the consideration of factors which are at the root of all conquests, the fierce passions evoked by warfare, and the lust for fame and booty. Such are the motives that inspire successful generals to fresh exploits, and they burned in the breast of Staff Colonel Chernaieff, a man who, under happier auspices, might have been the Clive of Central Asia. Learning that a host of Kokandis was massed at Tashkent, the second city of the Khānate, eighty miles south of Chimkent, he determined to anticipate attack by adopting the only safe policy in dealing with Orientals. He advanced with every available man, and, on the 2nd October 1864, attacked Tashkent. The want of a

¹ See Appendix.

breaching-train and scaling-ladders was an insuperable obstacle to success, and the Russians were fain to retire, baffled by the lofty ramparts of Tashkent. The effect of this disaster on the excitable Asiatic character was marked and instantaneous. A Kokandi force of 10,000 men, under the Khān in person, burned Chimkent, and attacked Turkeṣtān far in its rear. They surprised a squadron of Cossacks during a halt near the fortress, but met with a reception which should have convinced them of the superiority of the Russian arms.¹ The Khān was compelled to raise the siege of Turkeṣtān and retreat on Tashkent. But this incident rendered it clear that no peace could be expected on the frontier while a town of 72,000 inhabitants, inspired by the fiercest fanaticism, remained unsubdued in the proximity of the outposts. General Chernaieff resolved to plant his country's flag on the fortifications of Tashkent; but his master, Tsar Alexander II., was a monarch who loved peace from a personal knowledge of war's horrors, and on learning of the failure of Chernaieff's first attempt he positively forbade a repetition. The general, however, postponed taking cognisance of His Majesty's orders till he had made a second onslaught on Tashkent. It was delivered by a column of 951 men with 10 pieces of artillery, and in spite of the vast disproportion in numbers the city was stormed with a loss of 125 men only. Then only did the daring commander peruse his master's despatches, and his reply was a characteristic one. "Sire," he wrote, "your Majesty's order forbidding me to take Tashkent

¹ The Cossacks numbered only 104, under Sub-Lieutenant Saroff. They made a *zariba* of their horses' bodies, and, after repelling incessant attacks for two days, they cut a path through the dense masses of their foes, and joined a relief column from Turkeṣtān. Only nine escaped unwounded, and the killed numbered fifty-seven. Such actions abound in modern Central Asian annals, and they are as glorious as any performed by our own brave troops in India (Ney, p. 213).

has reached me only in the city itself, which I have taken and place at your Majesty's feet." ¹ The Tsar was furious at the breach of discipline, but he did not refuse the fruits of his lieutenant's too daring enterprise. In 1865 Turkestan was constituted a frontier district, with Tashkent as its capital.

¹ Ney, p. 214.

CHAPTER III

THE STRUGGLE WITH THE KHĀNATES

THUS was a third stage reached in Russia's advance. Her Siberian frontier extended from the north-eastern shore of the Caspian to the borders of China. It had been pushed forward to the edge of the plateau of Samarkand, then a province of Bokhārā, and lay within striking distance of the three Central Asian states which still maintained their independence. A sense of common danger united the forces which had hitherto been hostile: Kokandis, Bokhārāns, and Khivans felt instinctively that the hour had come for a combined attempt to shake off the Russian incubus. A leader alone was required, and one was found in Sayyid Muzaffar ed-Dīn, Amīr of Bokhārā. He claimed a descent from Tīmūr, and doubtless dreamed of repeating the conquests of his great predecessor on the throne of Samarkand. His ambition was fanned by the fierce breath of fanaticism, for the Amīr was notoriously subject to priestly influence, and the mullās of Central Asia were among the bitterest foes of Russian designs. At his prompting the bazaars of the three Khānates swarmed with emissaries, who preached a Holy War, and exhorted true believers to drive back the invaders into the Siberian steppes. The Amīr soon found himself at the head of a huge force drawn from his own subjects, while he obtained control over those of Kokand by assuming the guardian-

ship of the minor Khān.¹ Thus reinforced he occupied Khojend, a city on the north-east corner of Samarkand only a hundred miles from the new Russian capital, and summoned Chernaieff to release his conquests. At the same time he imprisoned four Russian envoys² sent him by the general. This act of war met with a prompt response.

Chernaieff advanced from Tashkent with 14 companies of infantry, 6 squadrons of Cossacks, and 16 guns as far as Jizāk, a fortress barely 60 miles from Samarkand. But the population was hostile, supplies failed, and he was obliged to retreat on his capital. Retrograde movements in the face of Asiatic forces are always pregnant with disaster. General Chernaieff's was interpreted by the Bokhārans as a confession of weakness. Crowds flocked to the Amīr's standard, and he moved on Tashkent with 40,000 men. In the meantime Chernaieff, who had not been forgiven for his breach of instructions in the occupation of Tashkent,³ was superseded by General Romanovski, who had received peremptory orders from the Tsar that hostilities with the Khānate must cease. Like his predecessor, he found himself compelled by force of circumstances to disobey orders.

The Bokhāran host was within three marches of Tash-

¹ Ney, *En Asie Centrale*, p. 214. Stumm asserts that the Bokhāran Amīr made the exiled Khān named Khudā Yār his Bey, or governor of Kokand (*The Russians in Central Asia*, p. 57).

² The chief was Colonel Von Struve, who afterwards attended Kauffman in a diplomatic capacity during his campaign against Khiva in 1873, and, at a later period of his career, was envoy of Japan. Among the other members was Colonel Glukhovsky, who was an ardent pioneer for Russia in these little-known tracts (see Schuyler's *Turkestan*, ii. 354, 386), and published an interesting account of his mission in the Paris Geographical Society's *Bulletin* for September 1868.

³ This illustrious soldier never regained imperial favour, and died almost unnoticed in August 1898.

kent. The city with its 70,000 inhabitants was seething with rebellion, and to maintain a defensive attitude was to court defeat. Romanovski adopted the only tactics which afforded a chance of success. He marched from Tashkent with a force of 14 infantry companies, 5 Cossack squadrons, 20 guns, and a rocket apparatus, and, following the left bank of the Sir Daryā, encountered the enemy at Irjai, between Jizāk and Khojend. The battle that followed on the 20th May 1866 recalls Plassey: 3600 Russians utterly routed a force of 5000 well-armed Bokhāran regulars and 35,000 horsemen with 2 guns which had taken up an entrenched position on the road to Samarkand, on which the beaten host retreated in the utmost disorder. That hotbed of fanaticism lay open to the invader, but he deemed it safer to seize the fortress of Khojend, thus driving a wedge between Bokhārā and the Kokand territories. On the 6th of June 1866 Khojend fell after a siege of eight days and a bombardment by 2 mortars and 18 field-pieces.¹ The news of the rout of Irjai, and the capture of Khojend, created a profound dismay throughout Central Asia; but the proud Uzbegs were loth to acknowledge themselves beaten; and the mullās were still less inclined to forfeit the great position which they held under so pious a ruler as Muzaffar ed-Dīn. He was persuaded to disregard the ultimatum sent by Romanovski, and actively pursued preparations for a new campaign. The Russians therefore took the offensive with unabated vigour. During October they seized the Bokhāran border strongholds of Ura-teppe and Jizāk, thus obtaining a complete command of the valley of the Zarafshān. In the spring of 1867 Yani Kurgān was added to the list of Russian conquests, and was twice heroically defended by General Abramoff against a

¹ See Schuyler's *Turkestan*, i. 312.

Bokhāran force of 45,000 men bent on wresting it from the invader. Thus, in the middle of 1867, the Russians found themselves masters of the great sources of Bokhāran prosperity—the basins of the Zarafshān and the Sir Daryā. The vast extent of this newly conquered territory, and its distance from Orenburg, still the administrative capital of Russian Central Asia, led to a revision of the boundaries.

By a ukase¹ dated 11th (23rd) July 1867 Turkestan was placed under a governor-general, with headquarters at Tashkent. His authority extended over the provinces of Sir Daryā and Semirechensk, the latter including the vast territory lately acquired between the lakes of Balkash and Issik Kul. General Kauffman, a general who has written his name indelibly on Central Asian annals, was appointed to the important post. On taking the helm he found Kokand quiescent, but Bokhārā still in a state of suppressed excitement, which found occasional vent in attacks on Russian outposts.

He began by making the Amīr overtures of peace, on the basis of the *statu quo* as regards boundaries, the grant of equal rights to Russians and natives in the matter of trade, and the payment of a war indemnity of 125,000 tilās.²

No reply was returned by the Amīr, but he obtained reinforcements from Khiva, and massed troops to attack the Russian outpost at Jizāk. The general, in consonance with the policy pursued by all Asiatic conquerors, anticipated the onslaught by a forward movement.

¹ It is to be found *in extenso* in the *Journal de St. Petersburg* of 16th July 1867.

² 500,000 roubles; equivalent to about £53,000. This ultimatum is omitted in Vambéry's admirable description of the Samarkand campaign in the *Monatsschrift für deutsche Litteratur*, 1896. He alleges that Kauffman ignored the Amīr's embassies, and fell unexpectedly on Samarkand when the preparation for the campaign was complete.

Samarkand was the objective, the holiest of Central Asian cities, with a fierce and crafty population and many remains of past splendour to remind its inhabitants that it had been once the seat of an empire which regarded Russia as an outlying province. On the 12th May 1868 Kauffman, at the head of 3600 troops, attacked the united Bokhāran and Khivan host, 40,000 strong, massed on the heights on the left bank of the Zarafshān, fifteen miles from the capital. The Russians forded the shallow river and fell upon the foe with such impetuosity that an utter rout followed. Samarkand surrendered on the following day.¹ The cowardly Sarts² offered sumptuous banquets to the victors. But a note of warning was sounded by the Jews, whom ages of cruel oppression had rendered friendly to the Russian cause. They were disregarded by Kauffman, who had hurried on to capture the towns of Urgut and Katti Kurgān, on the direct road to Bokhārā. Learning that the warlike population of Shahrisabz had joined the movement, and were encamped to the east of Samarkand, while the Bokhāran forces menaced Katti Kurgān, he moved out to attack the foe. His wounded were left in the citadel, a fortress nearly surrounded by scarped ravines in the centre of Samarkand, under a guard of 762 men, commanded by Major Von Stempel, under whom Colonel Nazarov, with a chivalry equal to Outram's, consented to serve.

Hardly were the main body out of sight than a force of 20,000 men from Shahrisabz were surreptitiously introduced into the city by the treacherous inhabitants,³

¹ Schuyler denies that this affair was really a battle. Judged by his standard, Plassey was a mere skirmish. The two battles closely resemble one another. See his *Turkestan*, i. 242.

² Sarts, as we shall presently see, is the Russian term for the sedentary inhabitants of Central Asia.

³ Schuyler denies that the attack on a small isolated garrison was an act of

and the citadel was closely beset. It was defended as heroically as the Residency of Lucknow had been by a handful of Britons. Every wounded Russian capable of pointing a rifle took his place on the ramparts; and though the enemy repeatedly penetrated the enceinte, never did they effect a lodgment thereon. And now provisions and ammunition ran short; 189 of the defenders were killed or wounded, and surrender seemed inevitable. But the terrible Kauffman heard of his brave followers' distress from a messenger who had contrived to slip through the beleaguering lines. He had defeated the last remnant of Bokhārā's forces, and was free to retrace his steps. Like Gillespie's vengeance on the Vellore mutineers was that taken by Kauffman on the foe. They were smitten hip and thigh, thousands of prisoners were massacred in cold blood, and the villainy of the Sart inhabitants was punished by the surrender of the town for three days to pillage by the infuriated army. The avenger was able to report to his master that tranquillity reigned in Samarkand. The Amīr Muzaffar was at length convinced that the Great White Tsar's arm was too long to be withstood or evaded. His proud spirit was crushed by repeated misfortunes, and he implored permission to abdicate and end his days at Mekka. But policy demanded that the ruler of Bokhārā should be one who had learnt submission by bitter experience. Muzaffar ed-Dīn was confirmed as Amīr, while his whilom province, Samarkand, was incorporated with Turkeṣtān, and placed under Lieutenant-General Abramoff, who had given innumerable proofs of dauntless energy. The general soon had his hands full, for the

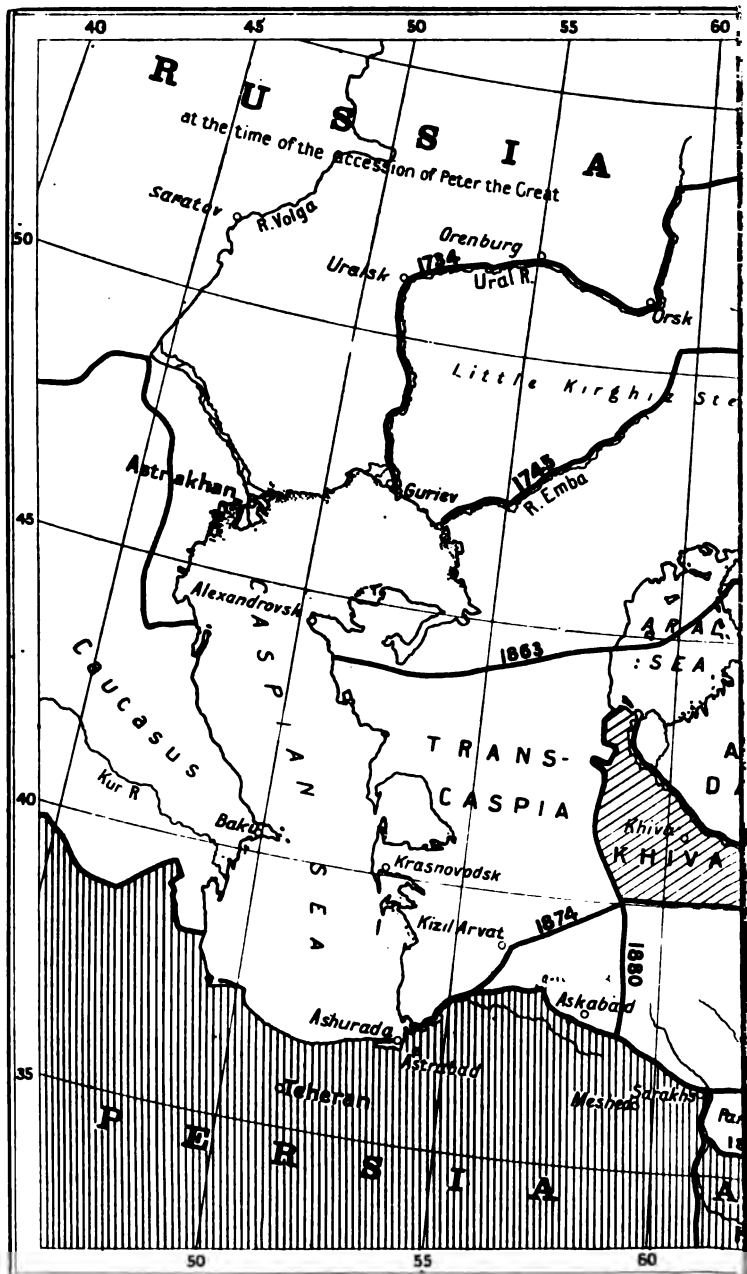
treachery. It may not have been so on the part of the people of Shahrīsabz; but the inhabitants of Samarkand were undoubtedly guilty of the basest dissimulation in welcoming the Russians and then secretly conspiring their destruction (*Turkestan*, i. 246).

mullās were by no means inclined to share their sovereign's despondency. They worked upon the ambitions of Katti Tūra, the heir-presumptive, a youth of seventeen, whose reckless cruelties would have made him a meet successor of his grandfather, the murderer of Stoddart and Conolly. This prince raised the standard of revolt, and declared his father to have forfeited the throne. He routed a detachment of Bokhāran regulars sent against him, and took the stronghold of Karki,¹ a fortress commanding the upper reaches of the Amū Daryā. Abramoff had little difficulty in quelling the insurrection. He took Karshī, the cradle of the reigning dynasty, stormed Karki, and drove the prince into the mountains which occupy the centre of Bokhārā. Here he found no hiding-place. He was driven to the western border of Samarkand, and finally captured through the treachery of a peasant. The young rebel was dragged into the presence of his outraged father, who ordered his head to be struck off and exposed at the palace gate.

General Abramoff completed the pacification of Bokhārā by subduing Shahrīsabz, the last refuge of highland independence. He then politely invited the Amir to assume the sovereignty of the pacified territory.

So effectually was Muzaffar ed-Dīn's proud spirit crushed by adverse fortunes that he humbly received his province as a boon from his Russian suzerain. He saw the once hated and despised infidels in possession of Samarkand, the richest inheritance of his fathers, and masters of the Zarafshān, the source of Bokhāran prosperity. He knew that it was in their power to divert its life-giving waters and render his capital a prey to the ever-advancing desert sands. Thus the remainder of his days was spent in vain repentance, in indulging "sorrow's

¹ This is now a Russian cantonment.



crown of sorrow"; and the Tsar had no more obedient vassal than the man who had aspired to sit on the throne of Tīmūr. His later policy has been adopted by his son, the present Amīr 'Abd ul-Ahad. With the conquest of Bokhārā and the annexation of Samarkand the fourth great stride in the Russian advance was completed. She was mistress of Central Asia, from the confines of China to the Amū Daryā, that historic river which rises in the Pamirs to empty its waters into the Sea of Aral.

These immense accessions to an empire which already rivalled that of ancient Rome served but to open up a vista of future possibilities.

"Since the reign of Peter the Great," wrote a contemporary Russian author,¹ "we have advanced with diligence and at the price of immense sacrifices across the steppes which barred our passage. They are now left behind. Our dominion has reached the basin of two great rivers whose waters lave thickly peopled and fertile regions. We have a right to seek compensation for sacrifices and labours endured for more than a century. We have a right to attain a secure frontier by pushing our colonies up to the summit of the Himalayan range, the natural barrier between the Russian and English possessions. When this point has been reached, then only can we look calmly on the development of Great Britain's empire." The reduction of Khiva was a corollary of that of Bokhārā. The Khānate stretched northwards as a wedge into the newly acquired territory and dominated the lower reaches of the Amū Daryā. Its ruler and its entire population were bitterly hostile to Russian designs. A Khivan contingent had fought side by side with the hosts of Samarkand during the recent campaigns, the result of which did not intimidate them.

In the year which followed the conquest of Samar-

¹Quoted by Ney, *En Asie Centrale*, p. 221.

kand, Khivan bands penetrated the steppes of the Orenburg government and urged the Russian Kirghiz to revolt. Caravan trade between Western Siberia was paralysed; and in 1870 the Khān had the presumption to forbid the export of grain.¹ General Kauffman, now in supreme command in Turkestan, was compelled by his imperial master's explicit instructions to show a degree of forbearance which ill-suited his temper. He was content to demand the release of the Russians whom the Khān still held in slavery, and an explanation of the offensive tone adopted by his ministers in their despatches. As is invariably the case in dealing with Asiatics, the Russians found that moderation was mistaken for weakness. The Khān claimed the river Emba, on the north-eastern shore of the Caspian, as the boundary of his dominions, and endeavoured to collect taxes from the tribes of the Ust Urt Desert, which had long been regarded as within the Russian sphere of influence. The Kirghiz steppes became unsafe for caravans, and postal communication between Tashkent and Orenburg was subject to continual interruptions. It was well known that the mullās had incited the Khān to proclaim a religious war, and that his forces were swollen by refugees from Bokhārā. The limits of forbearance had been reached, and the most timid adviser of the Tsar admitted that Khiva must be reduced to impotence. The story of the fall of the rebellious Khānate has been told often, and so graphically that it is needless to relate it in any detail.² The Russians had by this time amassed great experience in the physical conditions to be encountered, and had profited by the lessons taught by former disasters. Depôts for provisions were formed at

¹ Hugo Stumm, *Russia in Central Asia*, p. 104.

² The best account is one compiled by the Russian staff,—*The Khivan Campaign*, St. Petersburg, 1873.

each halting-place, and columns started severally from the eastern corner of the Caspian, Orenburg, Perovski on the Sir Daryā, and Tashkent. So carefully had the minutest detail been worked out by the Russian staff that the several divisions, after marching for nearly 900 miles through waterless deserts, reached Khiva almost simultaneously. The Khān was unable to cope with a disciplined army 14,000 strong. His capital was taken by storm, and on the 24th of March 1873 he signed a treaty of peace, acknowledging himself to be the humble vassal of Russia, and agreeing to pay an indemnity of 2,500,000 roubles, and to surrender all Russian and Persian slaves. This pact has been loyally observed on both sides. The Khān still retains a nominal sovereignty with even less independence than had been accorded to Bokhārā, and Khiva is *de facto* as much a part and parcel of Russia as the government of Moscow.

Kokand, the third Khānate of Central Asia, was doomed to lose all semblance of freedom. Its ruler had accepted the inevitable on the defeat of his powerful neighbours, had abolished slavery, and had striven to maintain friendly relations with Russia. But his territories were so placed that the annexation was essential to the safety of the eastern borders. They intervened between Turkestan and China, and were inhabited by a fanatical population with a strong leaven of untamed Kirghiz and Kipchāk nomads. Had Kokand possessed a firm and politic ruler, its absorption might have been indefinitely postponed. The reverse was the case; for the Khān, Khudā Yār, was detested by his subjects, and rebellions frequently recurred which kept the whole of Central Asia in a ferment.¹ A climax was reached in 1875, when, after

¹ Schuyler, who visited the capital just before the annexation, mentions that 500 prisoners taken in one of these emeutes had their throats cut in the bazaar, which literally streamed with blood (*Turkestan*, ii. 16).

three years of almost incessant civil war, the Russians found themselves compelled to intervene. Kokand was invaded by a strong expeditionary force under General Kauffman, among whose lieutenants was Skobelev, destined to win imperishable glory in subsequent campaigns. Short work was made of the Kokandis, who had dethroned their Khān and marched under his son's banner. They were routed with prodigious slaughter at Makhram, and the holy city of Marghilān was occupied without resistance. Defeats were afterwards administered to the native levies at Andijān and Nāmangān, and on 20th February the capital was seized by a force under Skobelev. On the 20th March 1876 the Tsar, Alexander II., formally authorised the annexation of Kokand as a province of Turkestan under its ancient name, Farghāna. Skobelev, the ardent soldier who had so greatly contributed to the reduction of the Khānate, became its first governor. Farghāna has a temperate climate, and has bred a hardy and warlike population. Owing to its remoteness from the centres served by the Transcaspian Railway, the Russian officials were not till lately subjected to the vigorous surveillance which is exercised over their colleagues in other provinces, and the reins of administration were slackly held. In the spring of 1898 the discontent inspired by alien rule, which had been sedulously fanned by the priesthood, burst into a flame. The ringleader of the movement was a Mohammedan monk named Ishān Mohammad 'Alī Khalīfa, who claimed the hereditary dignity of Imām, or descendant of the Prophet. He announced that on himself had devolved the task of fulfilling a prophecy widely received, that during the last decade of our century an Imām would proclaim a Holy War against the infidel. As had been the case on the eve of the Indian Mutiny, a general rising had been planned, and

a simultaneous massacre of the Russian troops throughout the province. History repeated itself in the result of their deeply laid conspiracy. India was saved by the premature outbreak at Mirat; and Farghāna by the impatience of the Ishān, who on 29th May attacked a Russian camp near Andijān before his sympathisers were ready for concerted action. The rising was quelled with much bloodshed on either side; 18 of the leaders were executed, and 350 were deported to North-Eastern Siberia. The recent opening of railway lines connecting the cities of Farghāna with Tashkent and Samarkand will render a recrudescence of the spirit of revolt well-nigh impossible.

CHAPTER IV

TURKOMANIA AND THE TURKOMANS

THE reduction of Khiva marks a new era in the history of the Russian advance. The last semblance of organised opposition to the movement had disappeared, and the Tsar saw himself the unquestioned suzerain of the great Khānates. Westwards, his base was planted securely on the Caspian, where the port of Krasnovodsk, founded in 1869 by General Stolietoff,¹ was connected with the Russian colonies in the Mangishlāk peninsula by a chain of strong places. The Amū Daryā, that ancient boundary of nations, marked the limits of the new empire in the west. But the vast tract between sea and river was still unsubdued, and Russia's boundary marched with that of no organised state. Here lay the habitat of the Turkomans, a race with whom no peace or truce was possible, and the story of their subjection forms the final chapter in the history of the heart of Asia. The haunt of these untamed tribes may be described as a triangle, with Khiva as its apex; its sides the Caspian and the Amū Daryā; and its base formed by a line drawn from the city of Balkh in Afghanistān to the south-eastern corner of the Caspian Sea. The area thus enclosed is not far short of 240,000 square miles, more than twice as great as that of the United Kingdom. The north portion is a trackless waste; but it is by no means a desert of the

¹ Moser, *A Travers l'Asie Centrale*, p. 314.



THE SEA OF SAND IN THE KARA-KUM DESERT



THE SEA OF SAND IN THE KARA-KUM DESERT

Sahara type, made familiar to us by so many records of African travel. Variety is its most salient characteristic. In some parts so firm is the surface that a horse's hoof rings on it as on a macadamised road. In others, again, the loose sand forms ridges like petrified waves.¹ After the spring rains the expanse of dull white is carpeted, as if by miracle, with gorgeous lilies, tulips, and other bulbous plants, long grass and tufts of reed. Water is, indeed, required to clothe the arid sand with perennial verdure, and render it a breeding-ground for countless flocks and herds. It is found at depths rarely exceeding thirty feet below the surface, and wells are of frequent recurrence.² The only rivers of importance are the Murghāb and the Tajand, which rise in the mountains of Afghanistan and lose themselves in the sand; but streams innumerable descend their flanks. In times beyond the range of history the western portion of the Turkoman Desert was watered by the Amū Daryā, which discharged itself into the Caspian at the head of the Bay of Michaelovsk. Owing to some convulsion of nature, or to interference with its course by an attempt to employ it for irrigation, the bed of the mighty stream shifted and now discharges into the Sea of Aral. Vegetation is scanty, except during the brief spring-time. The soil is covered, in some parts, with the camel's thorn, a forbidding plant which can be masticated only by the "ship of the desert." The perennial flora are completed by the stunted tamarisk, a root like the stem of a rose called takh, and a shrub termed saxaul (*haloxylon ammodendron*). The latter is full of knots, and has a grain most difficult to cut or split,

¹ Moser, *A Travers l'Asie Centrale*, p. 298.

² The desert wells are termed *urpa* when shallow, and *kuduk* or *kuyu* when they are deep and afford a constant supply. The only sign of their existence is the tracks converging on them from every quarter. They are mere holes, without kerb or fencing, and the sides are roughly shored up by the branches of desert shrubs (*ibid.* p. 299).

but it is precious as fuel, and still more valuable as a means of binding the billowy sands. These steppes contain few traces of animal life. Herds of beautiful wild asses are sometimes seen in the distance, and a species of antelope is oftener met with.¹ Wells are beset with a variety of birds, which fly down to their depths in search of water. But the stillness of the waste is intense, and the boundless horizon is seen through the clear pure air shimmering with the heat or broken only by a mirage. The climate of the Turkoman Desert is one of extremes. In December and January the cold is intense. Moser, who traversed the Kārakūm in the depth of winter, encountered a temperature of 15 degrees below freezing-point, with squalls, snow, and glacial cold.² In the summer months the heat is equally trying, and it is sometimes accompanied by sand-storms which render respiration almost impossible. But the Turkomans are not confined to regions so inhospitable. They have long been established in the south-east of the Caspian, a tract watered by the rivers Gargan and Atrak, which is swampy towards the embouchure, but farther inland is broken by valleys as rich and full of charm as any on the flanks of the Pyrenees.³ The streams descending from the Kopet

¹ "In the Turkoman Desert is a species of antelope almost as numerous as the wild ass. It is smaller than a sheep, which it resembles in body, neck, and head, and has the delicate limbs, horns, and hair of the antelope; the horn, however, is not opaque but white, and like a cow's horn. The nostrils are directly in front, and are closed by a muscle acting vertically. The nose is greatly arched, and provided with an integument which can be inflated at pleasure. The head is extremely ugly. The animal . . . is called by the natives *kaigh*" (Abbott, *Narrative of a Journey to Khiva*, 1856).

² Moser, p. 309. The Kārakūm is the portion of the Turkoman Desert lying between Khiva and the Akkal and Merv oases.

³ "Our path lay through fields and natural meadows of the richest verdure, among groves of oak clothed in young leaves of the most delicate hues, broken into glades and lawns of velvet" (*Narrative of a Journey through Khorasān in the Years 1821-1822*, by James Baillie Fraser; London, 1825).

Dāgh, a mountain range which separates Persia from the Turkoman Desert, has produced a fertile belt of fifteen to twenty-five miles wide, extending from Kizil Arvat to Giaour, a distance of 187 miles. This is the Akkal oasis. Where the Murghāb enters the desert it forms the great Merv oasis, a land which, even in its decadence, is one of the most fertile in the world. This ancient seat of empire, which fell into Turkoman hands after its invasion in 1784 by the forces of the Amīr Murād of Bokhārā, has other advantages precious to a predatory race. It is within striking distance of Northern Persia, and is separated from Herāt by a low range of rolling hills which offer no obstacle to an invading horde.¹ Such is the land which, from time immemorial, has been the haunt of one of the most interesting races in the world. Like the Red Indians, with whom they have many characteristics in common, they have succumbed to the ruthless force of Western civilisation; and a study of their traditions and usages possesses the greater interest because both will soon disappear under the process of Russification to which Central Asia is being subjected. In the opinion of a well-known living authority,² the Turkomans belong to a branch of the Turkish race inhabiting the Altai Mountains and the upper regions of the Yenesei and Irtysh in Mid-Siberia. Long before the Christian era the pressure of population led them to migrate southwards and eastwards, and, following in all probability the old course of the Oxus, their hordes spread over the great steppes extending from the Caspian to the Hindu Kush. The appellation by which

¹ M. P. Lessar, whose knowledge of Central Asian geography is profound, affirms that the Paropamisus, as the range was anciently called, offers no difficulty to the engineer. The summit is reached by an almost imperceptible incline. In fact, the traveller crosses the range almost without perceiving that he has done so.

² Vambéry, in a lecture delivered in London on 10th April 1880.

the race has for centuries been known is considered by Vambéry to be derived from "Turk," a proper name which the nomads always employ when speaking of themselves, and "men," a suffix equivalent to the English "ship" or "dom." That the Turkomans were identical with the Parthians, who were so long a thorn in the side of the Roman Empire, admits of little doubt, and the supposition derived from identity of racial character finds corroboration in the fact that the Dahæ,¹ a famous Parthian tribe, dwelt in ancient days in the region between the Balkans and the river Atrak, which is still called Dehistān. But the strangers from the icy north were not long contented to roam over steppes which were well-nigh as hospitable as those of Siberia. They smelt booty in the richly watered slopes of the Kopet Dāgh and the populous cities of Northern Persia. The era of the Sāmānides (A.D. 218-639) was one of constant struggles between these unwelcome immigrants and the settled Iranians of Northern Persia, and history repeated itself in the ruin and desolation which befell the latter. Towards the end of the Middle Ages the northern portion of the old empire of Darius was given up to Turkoman tribes bent on war and pillage. At this date we find them divided into many tribes. The most famous were the Salors, who possessed some at least of the traits of the noble savage of fiction. They dwelt at the edge of the hills on the oasis formed by the Murghāb and Tajand. In the twelfth century the Sultan Sanjar, the greatest of the Seljūkides, was defeated by the Kara and Alieli Turkomans at Andakhūy and Maymena, where both are still to be found. The Balkan Mountains in the sixteenth century looked down on Ersari encampments, and at an earlier date the peninsula of Mangishlāk was roamed over by various tribes. For centuries unnumbered the Turko-

¹ See Rawlinson's *History of Parthia*, 1873.

mans were free from foreign influence, and maintained the primitive ferocity and power for aggression unleavened by intercourse with civilisation. They found their master in rare exceptions to the long succession of debauchees who filled the throne of Persia. In the seventeenth century Shāh 'Abbās the Great (1585-1626) drove them from the rich valleys of the Kopet Dāgh and planted colonies of 15,000 Kurds along the crest, in the not altogether vain hope that these scourges of Asia Minor would hold their neighbours in check. Nādir Shāh, infamous for the bloodshed attending his capture of Delhi, was himself a Turkoman, and proved more than a match for his kinsmen. In 1796 Āghā Mohammad, the first sovereign of the reigning dynasty, who was also of Turkoman origin, took effectual measures to protect his frontier, and, had his brief career not been brought to a close by the assassin's dagger, he would doubtless have tamed these fierce children of the desert. His successor, Fath 'Alī Shāh, attempted the process, and in 1813 the Turkoman tribes appealed to the Tsar of Russia for assistance against him. Alexander I., however, was then engaged in rolling back the tide of Napoleon's invasion, and was powerless to help them, thus exciting an intense irritation. We obtain a glimpse of the position occupied by the Turkoman tribes in 1831 in the pages of Burnes.¹ At that date the Tekkes were second to no tribe in numbers, though they had not reached the commanding position which they attained at the eve of the Russian conquest. This section of the Turkoman race is found at the dawn of their history occupying the Isthmus of Mangishlāk, on the north-eastern coast of the Caspian. Driven thence in 1718 by the Kalmaks, they dislodged the Yamuds from Kizil Arvat, and the Kurds and Alielis from the strip of fertile land at the basis of the Kopet

¹ *Travels in Bokhārā*, 1834.

Dāgh, known as the Akkal oasis. Their name, which in our tongue signifies "Mountain Goat," is said to be derived from the agility with which they urged their horses over the ravines on the mountain side. The Tekkes proclaimed their allegiance to the Khān of Khiva, and each village paid a tribute of a camel, but they were forced to recognise the supremacy of Nādir Shāh. Until the commencement of the present century they were confined to the limits of the oasis; but population began to press too heavily on the means of subsistence, which, in Central Asia, is synonymous with water. The cultivation spread to such an extent that the *ariks*, or small irrigation canals, proved unequal to its necessities. Hence, about 1830, 10,000 families migrated eastwards and established themselves on the banks of the Tajand. Here they built a fort, called after their chief, Oraz Khān Kal'a. The total number of Tekke tents or kibitkas¹ is put by Burnes at 40,000.

At that epoch the Ersaris roamed over the Upper Oxus, and were equally numerous with the Tekkes. The Merv oasis was inhabited by the Sāriks, numbering 20,000 tents, who were engaged in a struggle with the Khivans, then temporary masters of Merv. The Yamuds, about as numerous as the Sāriks, wandered between Khiva and Astrabad in Khorāsān, while the territory watered by the Atrak and Gurgān was inhabited by the Gokhlans, who acknowledged the sway of Persia. Finally the Salors, who made up by courage for the paucity of their numbers, held the upper reaches of the Tajand near Sarakhs. In 1832 their

¹ Kibitka is the Russian term for the nomads' tent. It is composed of portable felt carpets secured by strips of raw hide to a circular collapsible wooden frame. An old tent, black with age and smoke, is called by the Turkomans "kara ev"; a new one, still whitish-grey, "ak ev." The kibitka is the Russian administrative unit, and is supposed to connote five inhabitants. A group of kibitkas ranging between twenty-five and fifty is called *aul*, "portable village."

constant ravages led to reprisals on the Persian side. They were attacked by an overwhelming force under 'Abbās Mīrzā, son of Shāh Fath 'Alī, and after a desperate resistance their stronghold, Sarakhs, was captured. The survivors fled northwards and occupied the Yoletan oasis, south of Merv. Meantime the Tekkes, who had settled in the upper reaches of the Tajand, had been desolating the northern possessions of Persia, and the cry of the harassed inhabitants reached the capital. Vigorous measures were ordered by the Shāh, and in 1845 Āsaf ud-Dawlé, the governor of Khorāsān, fell on their settlements and utterly destroyed them. The Tekkes, ousted from their coign of vantage, sought refuge in the Akkal oasis, but it was already over-peopled, and their brethren there were constrained to refuse them ingress. They finally obtained Āsaf ud-Dawlé's leave to settle in Sarakhs, which had been depopulated thirteen years earlier by the expulsion of the Salors. At first they respected the Persian territory, for the energetic governor of Khorāsān had shown that he knew how to deal with them. Their relations with Khiva were very different, for that Khānate was surrounded by nomad tribes, and had no outlet for the prowess of their cavalry save in conflict with them. Mohammad Amīn Khān, then sovereign of Khiva, stormed Sarakhs and left a viceroy with a garrison there. Hardly was his back turned when the Tekkes rose at the intruders and put them to the sword. This outrage brought the Khān again into the field. He laid siege to Sarakhs, but, while directing the operations upon a mound on the right bank of the Harī Rūd, was surprised by a body of Turkomans and decapitated. His head was sent to the Shāh and his body to Khiva for burial. The Tekkes were encouraged by this brilliant success to resume their raids into Persia, and again the governor of Khorāsān

was provoked to retaliate. He burnt Sarakhs and drove the Tekkes northwards as far as Merv, which had, with one brief interval, been held by the Sāriks since its devastation by the Amīr of Bokhārā in 1784. The inhabitants resisted the Tekkes' invasion with the fierce jealousy which reigned between all Turkoman tribes. They implored help of the Persians, and the governor of Khorāsān forthwith marched on Merv with 18 battalions and 7000 cavalry. The Tekkes, finding themselves between two fires, offered submission to Persia, and rendered it acceptable by costly gifts. Then they turned on the churlish Sāriks, and drove them from Merv to the oases of Yoletan and Panjdih in the upper reaches of the Murghāb, dispossessing in their turn the Salors, who, with the permission of the Persian authorities, settled at Zarābād on the left bank of the Harī Rūd.¹ Thus the pressure of population in the Akkal oasis led to a dispersal of the Tekkes who inhabited it. In little more than a quarter of a century we find them masters of the wondrously fertile lands irrigated by the Murghāb, after dislodging the former occupants and destroying a force sent against them by the greatest of Khivan rulers. On taking possession of their conquest the Tekkes began to develop its resources according to their lights. They made a rude dam twenty-five miles above Merv, and excavated twenty-four small canals which irrigated lands sufficient to support 48,000 families.² But they were as

¹ The subsequent history of this once powerful tribe is a curious example of the process of agglomeration which raised the Tekkes to supremacy. In 1871 the remnant of the Salors were forcibly deported by the former tribe to Merv, and incorporated with themselves. Petrushevitch, quoted by Marvin (*Merv*, p. 80).

² O'Donovan, who visited these works in 1880, describes them as follows: "For twenty yards on either side the river-bank was revetted with stout fascines of giant reeds, solidly lashed to stakes planted on the bank to prevent the friction of the current, as it neared the dam, from washing away

far from being peaceful cultivators as ever. They overran the whole of Khorāsān, and carried their raids 450 miles south of its capital, Meshed. Stung to madness by the desolation thus wrought, the Persians planned a systematic vengeance.

In 1860 they built a fort as a basis of their operations, which they called New Sarakhs, opposite the old citadel of that name. Then, in the following year, the commander-in-chief advanced against Merv with a force of 12,000 infantry, 10,000 horsemen, and 33 guns. The Tekkes, in great alarm, offered submission and a substantial tribute. But the Persian general, confident in his numbers and armament, would hear of no compromise. The tribesmen, compelled to fight for life and freedom, acquitted themselves with a gallantry which inspired terror in the invaders. The Persian artillerymen and infantry were slain or captured to a man, and the guns served twenty years after to arm a citadel which the Tekkes built as a defence against an anticipated Russian attack.¹ The cavalry alone, including the cowardly commander-in-chief, found safety in flight, and so great was the glut of prisoners that the price of a Persian slave in Khivan and Bokhāran markets fell to a sum equal to a pound sterling.² This was the last organised attempt from the Persian side to subvert Tekke independence, and the tribe, settled firmly in the great oases of Akkal and Merv, were free to pursue their lawless

the earth surface. Huge masses of earthwork closed the narrow gorge by which the stream found exit in the lower level by a passage scarce ten feet wide. The waters rushed thunderously through this narrow gap to a level eight feet below their upper surface. The passage was some fifty yards in length, and, like its approaches, was lined with reed fascines" (*The Story of Merv*, p. 210). Petrushevitch states that the repairs of distributories were provided for by the labour of a contingent of one man in every twenty-four families (Marvin's *Merv*, p. 80).

¹ O'Donovan saw them in 1881. One was an eighteen, the others six-pounders; all were bronze smooth-bores (*The Story of Merv*, p. 198).

² Petrushevitch, quoted by Marvin, *Merv*, p. 81.

impulses at the expense of their neighbours. For Persia was not alone in serving as a quarry. The fierce children of the steppes carried rapine and murder within a few miles of the citadel of Herāt,¹ and spread far and wide a terror as abject as that inspired by the Danish pirates in the coast towns of Saxon England. Such is the history of the rise of the Tekke division of the Turkoman race to a position which rendered it the chief obstacle to the Russian advance. It is a modern reproduction, in miniature, of the great Mongol movement which, starting seven centuries ago, has not yet spent its force. Like the other Turkoman tribes, the Tekkes were ranged in divisions and clans—the Tokhtamish inhabiting the eastern portion of the Merv oasis, while the Otamish occupied the western. In the extreme east lived the Beks.² These great divisions were split up into minor ones, and the latter again ramified into clans.

The organisation applied to Tekkes of the Akkal and Merv oases alike, for members of the various sections were scattered over the entire territory in their occupation.³ Government among the Tekkes of every tribe was a pure democracy.⁴ Affairs of state were discussed by an assembly consisting of the entire population. These gatherings elected a Khān to represent the executive by acclamation, and withdrew the dignity when

¹ Grodekoff found the burial-places full of murdered victims, the villages in ruins, and the fields out of cultivation (Marvin's *Merv*, p. 207).

² O'Donovan, p. 182; Moser, p. 319.

³ Petrusevitch, quoted by Marvin, pp. 82, 83. For an enumeration of the Turkoman clans the reader is referred to Marvin's *Merv*, which is a mosaic of quotations from writers of different value. Petrusevitch is by far the most trustworthy.

⁴ "Residence among these lawless tribes convinces me more than ever that there cannot be a worse despotism than the despotism of a mob. There is nothing, in my eyes, more pregnant with fatal consequences than the sway and power of an ignorant and uncivilised multitude governed by no other motives than its own maddening impulses" (Wolff's *Bokhara*, p. 262).

the chosen one ceased to please. The office was not an object of ambition, for the Khān's authority was little more than a matter of form. He had forty jigits, or attendants, to enforce order; but he had not the power of the purse. For special purposes a tribal representative, termed Ikhtiyār, was chosen by the popular assembly. Thus, in 1881, O'Donovan found one at Merv who had been sent to treat with the Shāh of Persia at Teheran.¹ In latter days the tribe exhibited a tendency to follow the ordinary evolution of a state, which is from a democracy to a hereditary monarchy acquired by the sword. The new departure began with a famous chieftain named Nūr Verdi Khān, who had led the Tekkes in the victories over the Khivans, the Persians, and the Sāriks. He was intrepid, just, and hospitable, moulded in the stamp of those who carve for themselves empire, and his influence was so great that he was permitted to hand over the chiefship of the Akkal Tekkes to his son Makhdūm Kulī Khān,² when he assumed that of the Merv oasis. The growth of the hereditary principle was doubtless fostered by the sense of impending danger from the Russian avalanche. In earlier times an attempt to introduce it would have been fiercely resisted by the untamed nomads. Old age and experience alone commanded weight, and the yoke of Mohammedanism, elsewhere so heavy in the East, pressed but lightly on these popular assemblies. Though nominally Sunnis or orthodox followers of the Prophet, the Turkomans practised few of the interminable observances prescribed by the Koran; and the mullās, mostly steeped in

¹ O'Donovan, *Story of Merv*, p. 220.

² Nūr Verdi Khān was one of those exceptional men, to be found in widely divergent societies, who acquire the commanding influence which all strong personalities must attain. His death, at the comparatively early age of fifty, just before the Russian invasion, was the death-knell of Tekke independence (Moser, p. 319).

ignorance, possessed no influence over them.¹ But the Tekkes felt instinctively the impossibility of maintaining democratic methods in times of stress. Military operations were confided to the tribesmen of known valour and intelligence, termed Sardārs,² who had a minute knowledge of the country to be traversed, and were intrusted with the direction of the raids, which were the main object of the Turkoman's existence. Thus did these banditti acquire prisoners who could be held to ransom, and slaves who found a ready market in the neighbouring Khānates. The things needed were a good horse, arms,³ and a contempt for death. "He who puts his hand to his sword-hilt," runs a Turkoman proverb, "hath no need to ask for a good reason." "On horseback," says another, "a Tekke knows neither father nor mother." When one of these natural leaders of men determined on a foray, he planted his lance, surmounted by a flag, in the ground in front of his kibitka, and invited all good Musulmans, in the name of the Prophet, to range themselves under his banner.

The call to arms was rarely disregarded; and the Sardār soon found his tent besieged by several hundreds, or even thousands, of warriors prepared to yield him a blind obedience. He fixed the date and place of gathering, but the object was not disclosed. On the day prescribed his followers assembled, each on a well-trained

¹ Wolff found a "Calipha," or high priest, named 'Abd er-Rahmān enjoying great influence at Merv in 1843. This was another case of force of character leading to the attainment of greatness (*Bokhara*, pp. 114, 115).

² *Sardār* is a Persian word signifying "head-man." Tokma Sardār, who had commanded the garrison of Geok Tepe during the memorable siege by the Russians, visited O'Donovan at Merv soon after that event. "He was slightly under middle height, very quiet, almost subdued in manner, his small grey eyes lighting up with a humorous twinkle" (*The Story of Merv*, p. 178).

³ The weapons were a long flintlock, laboriously loaded with the contents of a powder-horn and leather bullet bag, but the Tekke trusted chiefly to his sabre and a long murderous dagger, called *pshak* (Moser, p. 296).

stallion, and leading spare horses with provisions. If the object of attack lay in the plains of Khorāsān, the Kopet Dāgh Mountains were scaled by one of the three passes practicable to Tekke horsemen. On reaching the southern slopes, the provisions were left in some sure retreat, known only to the Sardār, under the charge of a few horsemen, while the day was spent in preparing for the raid.¹ Far in the valley below lay the village destined to destruction. The smoke curled upwards from its white cottages embowered in forest trees. The old men gossiped in the evening sun; the maidens were bringing home the cattle from the pastures. This was the moment chosen for the onslaught. In a few moments the village street was thronged with fierce Turkomans bending low over the saddle-bow and hacking and stabbing right and left. Then the survivors, with the cattle and valuables, were gathered together and hurried off to the robbers' lair. When pursuit was feared, 100 or even 130 miles were traversed ere rein was drawn. The girls and child captives, being more valuable than adults, were carried at some warrior's saddle-bow, but all able to run were dragged in chains behind the captors. When they sank from fatigue their sufferings were ended by a thrust from the long Turkoman dagger. If the quarry were a Kurd village, greater precautions were needed, for every settlement had its tower into which the population fled on an alarm being given. These fortresses were sometimes stormed while the defenders slept, and the garrison stabbed with fiendish ferocity. In dealing with caravans, the Turkomans lay in wait for their prey in the vicinity of wells,² and swooped down on the travellers during their halt. At other times they hung on the outskirts of the procession of camels and cut off stragglers. Success depended on

¹ Moser, p. 324.

² *Ibid.* p. 300.

the suddenness of attack ; and if it failed it was seldom repeated, for bravery was not a characteristic of the Turkoman, except when the safety and honour of his family were at stake. Then, as the Russians found to their cost, they fought like lions.

For the slaves a ready market was found in the Khānates of Khiva and Bokhārā, whence dealers visited Tekke settlements at frequent intervals. The traffic was of ancient date, and, until the advent of the Russians, was recognised by law and custom. Florio Beneveni, an Italian who passed some time at Bokhārā in the early part of the eighteenth century, informed Peter the Great that 3000 Russians were held captive there, and, at the commencement of our own, Mouravieff reported that a similar number languished in bondage in Khiva.¹ Wolff, writing in 1843, estimated the number of Persian slaves in Bokhārā at 200,000, and those detained at Khiva about the same period were stated by Major Abbott to exceed 700,000. The price paid varied with the age of the prisoner, children and young girls being twice as valuable as adults.

But the Tekke considered his steed as even more indispensable than a trusted leader to success in pursuing his inherited instinct. The fame of the Turkoman horse is as old as Alexander's days. Tīmūr improved the breed by distributing 5000 Arab stallions among the tribesmen, and in our own day Shāh Nāsir ud-Dīn, of Persia, unwisely sent 600 to his ancient foes.² But the Turkoman's innocent ally in his marauding expeditions showed hardly any traces of Arab ancestry. He was big, leggy, and narrow-chested, with a high crupper, large head, and sloping quarters.³ The neck and tail showed none of the proud curves which characterise the

¹ Moser, p. 247.

² *Ibid.* p. 320.

³ *Ibid.* ; also O'Donovan, p. 298.

courser of Yemen. At short distances he was no match for the English thoroughbred; but with careful training and special diet he was able to amble for 60 or 70 miles a day for an almost unlimited period.¹ When hard pressed, a Tekke has been known to travel with two steeds at the rate of 160 miles a day, and even more. The endurance of the horseman was even more remarkable, for he could keep his saddle for twenty hours out of the twenty-four during eight consecutive days.² The Tekke stallions—mares were rarely ridden—were not indulged in stabling, but picketed outside their owner's tent, and preserved against cold by layers of felt,³ the number of which increased with his age. They were never removed without the greatest precaution, and served to maintain the coat in a lustrous sheen, though a knife and a piece of felt were the only substitutes for the currycomb, brush, and clippers of Western stables. On these coverings was placed the wooden saddle with a high peak, which was covered with a piece of coloured silk tied across the chest. The Turkoman's warmest affections were lavished on his steed, with whom he would share the last drop of water, the last handful of barley meal. The whip was carried merely for show,

¹ O'Donovan, p. 297. The training consisted in a gradual reduction of the rations of food and water. Dry lucern gave place to chopped straw; barley and *juwāri* (*sorghum*), to a mixture of flour and matter-fat.

² Moser, p. 322. It is remarkable that the Tekke seat is precisely the same as that in use among the nomads of the Mongolian plateau north of the Great Wall, who, according to Mr. E. H. Parker in a letter addressed to the *Pall Mall Gazette*, "always ride with very short stirrups, the knee bent forward almost to the withers, the reins grasped short, and (when there is any speed) the body well over the horse's neck. Possibly this is the reason why the Mongol saddle always has a high peak, for it prevents the rider being chucked over the horse's neck." This method is also identical with that adopted by the jockey Tod Sloan.

³ The felt blankets were worked by the cavaliers' women-folk. "The finer the courser's felt," ran a Turkoman proverb, "the greater the love of the maker for the horseman" (Moser, p. 331).

and spurs were unknown. His attachment was repaid by his dumb friend, whose fiercest encounter with another stallion could be stayed by his master's well-known accents.

The daily life of the Turkoman varied with the category to which he belonged. Those who adopted a nomad existence were styled *Chomry*,¹ and dwellers in fixed habitations *Charva*; but they passed from one stage to the other at their own inclination, wealth being the prevailing factor.² The nomads wandered on the banks of the rivers and the limits of the desert where the mountain streams had not been absorbed by the thirsty sands. Their herds were their only wealth, and they rarely pitched their felt abodes for more than three days at any spot. The Chomry, or sedentary Turkomans, dwelt for a portion of the year in fastnesses termed *kal'a*, open spaces crowded with their tents, and fortified with clay walls flanked by towers. Around them spread the fields and gardens of the *aul*, in which barley, juwārī (*holcus sorghum*), rice, and finely flavoured melons were produced in abundance, thanks to the water distributed by the *ariks*, or irrigation canals. In times of stress the fortresses, which had but a single gate, formed places of refuge. At the eve of the Russian conquest³ the whole Akkal oasis was covered with these strongholds. They stretched in a single line, afterwards in two or more lines, from Kizil Arvat to Askabad. The great stronghold of Geok Teppe, destined to give the Russians so much trouble, was situated in the broadest part of the oasis; Askabad, now the headquarters of Transcaspia, was a congeries of eight of these fortified villages.

The physiognomy of the Turkoman betrays the in-

¹ Moser, p. 274.

² *Ibid.* p. 319.

³ See chapter iv. of Marvin's *Merv*, which is a translation of Petrushevitch's account of the Turkomans.

delible Mongolian type. He is above the middle height, of a dark olive complexion, with prominent cheek-bones, and small almond eyes, shifty, and glittering with intelligence.¹ His nose is generally broad and uplifted at the extremity, his lips thick, and moustaches scanty. The ears are very large, and stand up from the head. The senses of smell and hearing are as strongly developed as those of the Red Indian.² In the female the Mongolian strain is even more visible. Their hair is short, but very thick and coarse. In youth they are tall and well formed, with every movement full of grace.³ Their rosy cheeks give a charm to features destined in early middle-life to become a network of wrinkles. No characteristic of savage life is so marked as the rapid decay of beauty. The Turkoman dress has changed but little since he met the Roman legionaries in battle grip. It consists of a long crimson tunic of coarse Bokhāran silk, with slender black and yellow combined stripes.⁴ Over this is worn a loose dressing-gown, termed *jabba*, descending below the knee, of black or dark brown material, which in summer is of cotton and in winter of camel's hair or wool. The wealthier adopt the Uzbek costume of several jabbas of coarse Bokhārā silk, confined by waistbands of silk over a shirt and pantaloons of the same material. The legs are covered with thick socks of a checked pattern, and the feet with high metal-

¹ "The eyes of a cat, with the extremity raised towards the temple" (Ney, *En Asie Centrale*, p. 193).

² A Turkoman, while travelling in the desert with Wolff, said, "I smell a caravan of Uzbegs"; and in a few hours one was met with. They can hear conversation at a great distance by flinging themselves on the ground and listening intently (Wolff, *Bokhara*, p. 242). They can name the tribe and even the individual cavalier by his traces on the sand (Moser, p. 300).

³ "The Tekke is the only woman in Central Asia who knows how to walk. Nothing is more graceful than a girl of this race going to fetch water from a well and carrying the tall amphora on her shoulder" (Moser, p. 330).

⁴ O'Donovan, p. 193.

heeled slippers just large enough to admit the insertion of the toe. They are slow and ungraceful walkers, and show to more advantage when on horseback. Then the jabba is tucked into wide leather boots of a Hessian pattern, giving a most ungainly appearance to the equestrian. But the distinguishing mark of the Turkoman is his large cylindrical head-covering of black sheepskin, termed *kalpak*. It is worn over a skull-cap fitting tightly to the half-shaved head, and is far less heavy than its appearance would imply. The women's dress consists in long floating skirts of red or blue silk.¹ The bosom is covered with a sort of cuirass of silver plaques, coins and amulets, the trophies of her husband's prowess in war or raids. The wealthier add bracelets of thick silver, and collars with plates suspended therefrom, like that worn by Jewish high priests. Married women confine their stubborn locks in a small, round, embroidered bonnet, while those of young girls cover their shoulders. On occasions of ceremony a casque of open silver-work is worn over a red cloth cap, giving a Minerva-like appearance.² The face is partly covered by the end of a silk mantila or *burunjak*.

The character of the Turkomans before the process of Russification began was a compound of the virtues and the vices to be found in half-tamed races of the higher type. He has been branded as an irreclaimable savage because he wrought untold misery on the helpless populations within striking distance of his own den.

But no greater mistake can be made by the student of ethics than to judge men of other nationalities by the standard of right and wrong maintaining in our own.³

¹ Moser, p. 330.

² O'Donovan, p. 254.

³ It is generally admitted that these rules are slowly evolved by the community to which the individual who adopts them belongs. There are some still amongst us who looked with complacency at the cruelties once perpetrated

It would be as unjust to blame the Turkomans for the bluntness of their moral sense in the matter of raids as to condemn George Washington because he did not think fit to emancipate his slaves. By dint of inherited instinct the inhabitant of Merv and Akkal had come to regard depredations as a necessary incident of his daily life. His barbarous insensibility while engaged in an *alaman* was not inconsistent with the exercise of solid virtues. He was hospitable to a fault, and is so at the present day, though the advent of Russians has sorely curtailed his means. A stranger was made welcome to the Tekke's smoky kibitka, and was safe beneath its shelter. He was invited to share the family meal, were it thick cakes of unleavened bread pilaw,¹ compressed curds, or rice boiled with sour milk. For his delectation the tea-pot, the Persian water-pipe,² the chess-board, and the clarionet³ were produced, and he was forced to listen till dawn to tales of ancient prowess, to legends of Iskandar and Timūr, those twin heroes of Central Asian romance. And there was a strain of inbred nobility in the nomad characters. They were robbers on occasion; but they scorned to pilfer. Espionage was unknown amongst them. Rarely, indeed, was the foul abuse so common in Mohammedan countries heard from Tekke lips. His most scathing epithet was "coward." His faults were those of other races which have not come

in this Christian country in the name of justice. We see our own manners at earlier stages of our growth reflected in those of contemporary savages.

¹ Pilaw, a dish which has now spread over the Eastern world, had its origin in Central Asia. It is a stew composed of hot mutton-fat into which meat has been shredded, carrots and rice, and, cooked as only a Turkoman knows how to prepare it, is a dish fit for a royal table.

² Moser, p. 332.

³ The efforts of Tekke musicians can only be described as grotesque. They perform on long bamboo trumpets, called *twidak*, with an accompaniment of bowings and contortions which is in ridiculous contrast to the bird-like notes emitted.

into contact with civilisation. He was greedy, self-indulgent,¹ and prone to take every advantage possible of a wealthy stranger. His childish curiosity and utter disregard of that which is conventionally termed good manners were equally conspicuous. In one essential, indeed, which is rightly considered to indicate an advanced culture, he shone by contrast with the people of every other country governed by the Koran. His women-folk were free from those restraints which dwarf the intelligence and degrade the moral sense. They went unveiled, and associated freely with the tribesmen and even with sojourners in their tents. And yet the standard of chastity was comparatively high; while in times of stress the Tekke girls fought desperately by their husbands' side. It must be admitted that misdeeds were punished with a dagger-thrust, and that, in a Tekke's affections, a wife ranks far below a horse. She rose early to bake her husband's bread, cooked and fetched water for him, and presumed not to eat till he had finished his meal. Her industry was extraordinary.² Her embroidery was once a marvel of good taste, and she still weaves carpets which are unrivalled in Asia for beauty and durability. The superintendent of the state domains at Bahrām 'Alī, near Merv, has specimens which are more than three centuries old and are yet as brilliant as if they had just left the loom.³ The method of manufacture can be watched in every Turkoman village.

¹ No Turkoman troubled his head about the ordinary business of life after fifty. His work was then done by the women and younger men; and his attitude was one of ease with dignity. In raids, however, and warfare, he was always ready to take an active part up to an advanced age (O'Donovan, p. 306).

² O'Donovan, pp. 307, 308; Moser, pp. 330, 331.

³ A small mat costs £40, and a work of larger size sometimes as much as £400 (Moser, p. 331). The ordinary kinds were made of sheep's wool and camel's hair, with a little cotton; the better, wholly of silk. O'Donovan saw one, eight feet square, priced at £50 (p. 308). Carpets of the highest quality are now not procurable. They are cherished as heirlooms, and all





TURKOMAN MUSICIANS

The warp is merely a piece of canvas pegged out on the ground, with the transverse threads removed. The weaver, who crouches over her handiwork, takes a pinch of coloured wool and, with a deft twist of her fingers, attaches it to one of the horizontal threads, pressing it afterwards into position with a heavy wooden comb. It is a curious fact that the intricate patterns are never committed to paper, and have been handed down from mother to daughter from generations unnumbered. The marriage customs of the Turkomans are unique. Polygamy is permitted by the Mohammedan law, but rarely can a Tekke afford the separate kibitka and establishment which any wife is entitled to demand. Wedded life begins early—at fourteen or fifteen for males, and in the case of girls before the age of puberty. As married women wear no veils, a youth has little difficulty in selecting his future bride. When a damsel has found favour in his eyes he waits on her father and offers a given price for her—slaves, horses, or cattle to the value of £40 to £80. This essential once agreed upon, the father-in-law presents the young couple with a new kibitka, *āk ev*, untarnished by smoke, in which the relatives assemble. Then a mullā recites a few verses from the Koran—and the wedded pair are left to themselves.¹ Should the price agreed on be not paid, at once the bride returns to her parents after a brief honeymoon. In old times her absence stimulated the youthful husband to prowess in distant raids, which afforded the only opportunity of gaining the needful wealth.

are essential parts of a Turkoman maiden's dowry. Those of the second grade, but coloured with honest native dyes, fetch 13s. a square yard.

¹ Marvin, quoting Vambéry and Conolly, mentions more ancient forms of marriage customs—the simulated abduction of the bride and the pursuit of her on horseback. These, however, are obsolete. For a considerable time after the fall of Geok Tepe the price of Tekke spouses sank to a low ebb, owing to the fearful slaughter of eligible males.

CHAPTER V

THE LAST STEP IN ADVANCE

THE ignominious campaign of 1861 was the last organised effort put forward by Persia to protect her northern provinces. Secure in a splendid strategic position,¹ the Tekkes extended their devastations far and wide. When, in 1871, a fearful famine² more than decimated the population of Khorāsān, bands of Tekke horsemen took advantage of their neighbours' weakness to sweep the entire province with their marauding parties. It would have been an easy task to check the aggression which depopulated the richest province of Persia and caused incredible misery to the people. But so utterly corrupt was the administration of the Shāh that the governing class found its account in encouraging the perpetrators. Troops were paid for by Government which existed only on paper, and the local authorities shared in the Tekkes' booty. The first effectual blow struck at this gigantic machinery for plunder and oppression was the direct result of the Khivan campaign of 1873. General Kauffman had encountered some opposition from the Yomud

¹ The Merv oasis is a wedge driven between Persia and Afghanistan. Meshed is only 150 miles from the centre, Herāt about 240; and the Paropamisus range which intervenes was no deterrent in the eyes of Tekke horsemen.

² According to the agents employed by a London relief committee, a fifth of the population perished (Petrusevitch, quoted by Marvin, *Merv*, p. 326).

Turkomans who ranged the desert of Khiva, and he was not a man to tolerate half-measures. He waged a war of extermination against this once powerful tribe, and the ruthless cruelty that attended it struck terror throughout the southern steppes. The Gokhlan Turkomans, inhabiting the estuary of the Atrak and the rich valleys behind it, had been brought to heel by an energetic governor of the Persian province of Bajnard in 1869,¹ and their piracies on the Caspian had been put down with a strong hand by the Russian naval authorities.² With the pacification of Khiva, too, came the formation, in 1874, of a Transcaspian military district, subordinate to the Caucasus,³ which was placed under the governorship of Major-General Lomakin. On the north-west the Tekkes saw an iron wall arise which checked their aggressions and was a standing menace to their independence. Nor were the prospects in the west of their habitat more encouraging. The Russian treaties with Khiva and Bokhārā forbade slavery, and closed the principal markets for the captives of their bow and spear. In 1877 the Tekkes turned to Persia, and made her an offer of their allegiance in return for support against the white man's encroachments. This contingency was not to be regarded with equanimity by the Russians, for they rightly considered the Turkomans as within the sphere of influence of the Transcaspian district.⁴ Nor were commercial considerations wanting. Russia was by this time the virtual mistress of the Khānates, and was directly interested in the development of their trade; but caravans were unable to cross the Turkoman Desert while the nomads remained untamed, and were driven to

¹ Petrushevitch, quoted by Marvin, *Merv*, p. 321.

² Astrabad Consular Report for 1879.

³ Provisional Ordinance of the 21st March 1874, quoted by Ney, p. 225.

⁴ Ney, p. 225.

take circuitous routes in order to reach the commercial centre of Orenburg.¹ And the authorities in St. Petersburg were still dominated by the schemes first promulgated by Peter the Great for diverting the course of the Oxus into the Caspian, and regarded the Turkoman Desert as a potential breeding-ground for cattle which would supply the home markets with hides. The Tsar Alexander II. was thus led, much against his wish, to permit his lieutenants to adopt a forward policy against the one obstacle to the Russification of Central Asia. In the spring of 1877 General Lomakin received orders to occupy the Tekke fortress of Kizil Arvat,² 200 miles east of Krasnovodsk. He set out on the 12th of April with 9 companies of infantry, 2 squadrons of Cossacks, and 8 guns, and soon came to blows with the Tekkes. His artillery and arms of precision struck terror into their hearts. They dispersed and afterwards sent delegates from every village of the Akkal oasis to offer submission; but Lomakin did not wait to receive it. Seized with a sudden panic, he retreated on the 9th of June. Then came the Russo-Turkish War, and the Tsar had more than enough to occupy his attention nearer home. The Turkomans were left unmolested for a while,³ but hardly had peace been restored ere measures were concerted against the tribesmen. In April of that

¹ In 1875 a caravan, fitted out by the energetic Colonel Glukhovsky, was destroyed between Krasnovodsk and Khiva. In 1877 the Turkomans looted one proceeding northwards from the Atrak; and a little later they cut up, near Krasnovodsk, some of their brethren who had accepted Russian rule, and intercepted many postal couriers (Petrusevitch, quoted by Marvin, *Merv*, p. 331).

² Ney, p. 226. It is now the site of a great railway workshop.

³ In 1878, when Russia was within an ace of going to war with England on the Eastern question, it was arranged that columns from Turkestan and the Caspian should meet at Merv and subdue that almost unknown region; but the Congress of Berlin rendered the measure unnecessary (Ney, p. 227).

year General Lazareff advanced with an expeditionary force from Chikisliar, near the mouth of the Atrak, and on his death, which took place at Chat, higher up that river, command was assumed by General Lomakin. The Kopet Dāgh Mountains were crossed by the Bendesen Pass; and on 9th September an attack was delivered on the 'Turkomans' entrenched camp at Dangil Teppe,¹ which contained 15,000 Tekke warriors, with 5000 women and children. The kikitkas, crowded within its clay ramparts, were raked by artillery fire, and the fugitives were driven back into this hell on earth by Russian cavalry. On 9th September an attempt was made to storm the stronghold, but, maddened by their losses, and inspired by their women to resist, the Tekkes fought like demons. Lomakin was defeated with a loss of 450 killed and wounded, and retreated on Chikisliar with the remains of his shattered force. The news of his reverse was carried at lightning speed through the length and breadth of Central Asia. Turkoman bands made their appearance on the Amū Daryā, proclaiming the victory with all the hyperbole which is a special gift of Asiatics. They even presented the Khān of Khiva with Russian rifles and revolvers abandoned during the abortive siege of Dangil Teppe, alleging that the spoils of war were so abundant that they had no use for them.² Their raids were carried on with greater activity than ever. At the commencement of 1880 a horde 3000 strong swept the banks of the Amū Daryā in Bokhāran territory and plundered some villages close to the fortress of Charjūy. The shock to Russian prestige can be com-

¹ Geok Teppe, which will for ever be associated with the final struggle for independence, is the name of a district; Dangil Teppe, that of the famous entrenched camp. It was originally that of a mound at the north-western angle.

² Ney, p. 240.

pared only to that suffered by ourselves when the news of the Mirat rising in 1857 was flashed by telegraph over India. Even the dauntless Skobelev began to despair of the destinies of his country. "If we consider our position during the last six years," he wrote to St. Petersburg, "we cannot avoid regarding the abyss which opens before us with terror, for it may well disorganise the economic and political condition of the empire. The English¹ have succeeded in convincing Asiatics that they have forced us to stop before Constantinople and abandon the Balkan peninsula. Thanks to their agents' zeal, a version of the Treaty of Berlin, very disadvantageous to ourselves, has been spread throughout Asia. Great God, what sacrifices of blood and honour will this peace, so painful to Russian hearts, entail!" To this illustrious soldier the Tsar turned in his perplexity. A better choice could not have been made. Michael Dmitriavitch Skobelev was, at this epoch, in the prime of life,² and at the zenith of his preternatural activity. His military career had begun at the age of twenty, and, two years later, he won his spurs during the Polish Rebellion. Between 1871-1875 he was in the thick of Central Asian affairs, one of the leaders against Khiva, and the conqueror of Kokand. The Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878 found employment for him nearer home. He commanded the left wing at the storming of Plevna, and afterwards took Adrianople; but experience and military genius are of small avail without that magnetic personal attraction which is inborn only in the greatest leaders. Skobelev

¹ Skobelev was in politics an Anglophobe, though his relations with our countrymen individually were cordial. There is not an iota of truth in his belief that Lomakin's failure was due to British intrigue. It is fully accounted for by his incapacity. The result was only what might have been expected. Russian authority in Central Asia was ill cemented, and it needed but the news of a crushing reverse to produce the wildest hopes in the Khānates.

² He was born in 1841.

possessed this heaven-sent gift. "He was the God of War personified," said his trusted lieutenant, General Kurapatkine; and his troops loved him with a passionate ardour which no general has inspired since the days of Napoleon. A conference took place in January 1880 between the Tsar Alexander II. and his brilliant subject, followed by others at the Ministry of War presided over by General Miliutine. The ways and means were fully discussed. It became clear that the failure of 1879 was due to defective transport. The camels on which General Lomakin relied perished by thousands in the desert, and he found himself, at a critical moment, without the means of continuing the siege of Geok Tepe.¹ By one of those happy inspirations which flash on the brain of men of genius, Skobelev was led to invoke the aid of steam. He knew that the desert was a dead level, without rivers to bridge, and that a scarcity of water was the only difficulty before his engineers. Nay, his eagle eye ranged far beyond the needs of the moment, and clearly foresaw the advantages which would flow from a railway connecting the Caspian and the Amū Daryā.² A special railway battalion was formed, and materials for a portable line on the Decauville system were brought to Uzun Ada, the base on the Gulf of Michaelovsk. Before the close of 1880 the section between that post and Mullā Kārī, a distance of thirteen miles, was completed. The control of the expedition was vested in the commander-in-chief of the Caucasus, but a free hand was practically given to Skobelev, who was named "Temporary Com-

¹ General Lomakin started from his base with 12,000 camels, and had lost the whole of them by the twentieth day of his march (Ney, p. 315).

² He wrote from Krasnovodsk in June: "If we wish to recoup our immense expenditure in Asia we must popularise the desert journey between the Caspian and the basin of the Amū Daryā; and, after rendering the steppes safe for transit, we must make a railway to Askabad and on to the Amū Daryā" (Ney, p. 286).

mander of Troops operating in Transcaspia." He obtained full powers to prepare and execute military operations, to negotiate with the neighbouring native states, and to organise the administration of conquered territories. Skobelev knew that Orientals attach an exaggerated importance to artillery. "To conquer," he said, "is to astonish." Nothing has so marked an effect in Asia as the thunder of great guns and the havoc wrought by shell-fire. He stipulated for ten pieces of artillery for every 10,000 of numerical strength. Lomakin's abortive attack on Dangil Teppe had demonstrated the power possessed by dense masses of felt-covered kibitkas to resist artillery fire. Skobelev asked for and obtained a large supply of shells charged with petroleum, which masters the least inflammable materials. Lastly, a plentiful supply of water is essential in a tract where the heavens are clear for many consecutive months. A complete distillery was established at Krasnovodsk, and it supplied no less than 750,000 gallons daily to the troops. But the personal equation overrides the most complete material equipment. "In war," said Napoleon, "men are nothing; a man is everything." The general be-thought him of one who had been the chief of his staff in the recent struggle with Turkey, and had shown in the darkest days of Plevna the noblest form of courage—that which stands undismayed in the presence of disaster. This was Colonel Alexis Kurapatkine, who is now Minister of War at St. Petersburg. He was resting at Samarkand from the fatigues of a recent campaign in Kulja, on the Chinese frontier, but he hastened to obey his loved master's call. Starting from Samarkand in November 1880, with a detachment 500 strong, he hurried through Bokhārā to Charjūy, barely three days' ride from the Tekke lair at Merv; then, fetching a long détour by way of Khiva to avoid the Tekke bands with

which the desert swarmed, he joined headquarters on 24th December. Well might Skobeleff say of him, "Kurapatkine is the only man capable of performing so dangerous a mission." The general's staff was strengthened by other great authorities in Central Asian warfare—Petrusevitch, unrivalled for his knowledge of the Turkomans; Grodekoff, and Leokovitch, professor at the War Academy. Meantime Skobeleff had reached Chikisliar in May, and after a general survey of the situation had pushed forward to Bami, a Turkoman post at the entrance of the Akkal oasis, which commands the route by way of Chikisliar and Krasnovodsk, and is only seventy miles from the capital, Geok Tepe. He occupied this stronghold on the 10th of June, and on the 13th of the following month advanced at the head of 1000 men to reconnoitre the enemy's central settlement. Arriving on the fourth day at Egman Batir, a Tekke village six miles from Geok Tepe, he formed an entrenched camp there and sallied forth to inspect the Tekkes' position. He found them crowded into three camps, surrounded by clay ramparts. The fort at the base of the hills was known as Yangi Kal'a; the second, or central position, Dangil Tepe, from a mound at the north-western corner; the third was an insignificant collection of huts, called Geok Tepe, which, by a process akin to that which has produced the nomenclature of Arbela and Waterloo, has given its name to the scene of the last great battle of Central Asia. Having ascertained that the hornets' nest could be taken only after a regular siege, Skobeleff's little band returned to Bami, which had been christened Fort Samursk. He was harassed during retirement by clouds of Turkomans, whose activity in checking the arrival of supplies extended far into the rear of the Russian advanced base at Kizil Arvat. The ensuing months were occupied in active preparation for

the siege. A force of 12,000 men and 100 guns had been summoned from the Caucasus, and the Russians were engaged in completing the railway and providing the vast mass of stores needed for a march through 300 miles of desert. In the beginning of December 1880 all preparations were completed, and Skobelev advanced in force, occupying all the Tekke settlements in succession between Bami and Egman Batir, or Samursk. He arrived at this point of vantage on the 16th December. A reconnaissance made on the following day showed the majority of the foe massed in Dangil Teppe, the central encampment, an irregular parallelogram with an area of a square mile. It was surrounded by a mud wall with a profile 18 feet thick, and 10 feet high on the interior side, the exterior varying with the soil, but averaging, perhaps, 15 feet; a ditch which could not have been more than 4 feet deep. At the north-west corner was the mound from which the fortress derived its name, on which was planted the only piece of artillery possessed by the Turkomans—an antiquated smooth-bore captured from the Persians. The 30,000 Tekkes massed within these rude entrenchments obtained water from a stream which flowed through the place. This the Russians intentionally refrained from diverting, lest the quarry should desert its lair under cover of the night. No forward movement was made for more than a week. The interval was probably spent in forming depôts for supplies; but it is, perhaps, more than a coincidence that the next movement took place on the 24th December—the day of Kurapatkine's arrival from Samarkand. It was a reconnaissance in force, which encountered a huge mob of Turkomans, and was hard pressed until the arrival of reinforcements. A further delay of eight days followed, and then, on 1st January 1881, a fierce attack was delivered on Yangi Kal'a, the encampment at the



VIEW FROM THE INTERIOR OF THE FORT OF GEOK TEPE

foot of the cliffs, by 8000 troops in three columns, with 52 pieces of cannon and 11 Hotchkiss machine guns. The southern column, commanded by General Kurapatkine, forced the entrenchment in the rear, and compelled the Tekkes to evacuate Yangi Kal'a under a terrific artillery fire and join the main body at Dangil Teppe. Twice did the garrison sally forth to their countrymen's help, and when night fell they made a determined attempt to recapture Yangi Kal'a, but on each occasion they were driven back by the Russian artillery. On the 3rd January the Russians removed their camp from Samursk to that abandoned by the foe at Yangi Kal'a, and the following day saw the first parallel laid against Dangil Teppe, at a distance of 800 yards south of the fortress. This movement provoked a sortie of the garrison, who had been reinforced by 5000 warriors from Merv. They fell with fury on the besiegers, and, seizing their rifles with one hand, hacked them with their razor-like blades, covering the soil in places with heads and limbs. Nothing can be conceived more terrible than their death-struggle at close quarters, from which arose the clash of steel, shrieks, oaths, and shouts of "Allah," or "Hurrah."¹

On the Russian left flank more than 300 dead bodies remained as witnesses of the Tekkes' heroic but useless courage. This encounter cost the besiegers one of their best and most valiant officers, Colonel Petrusevitch, to whom we are indebted for most of our knowledge of Turkomania at the eve of its conquest. The second parallel was laid on the 4th January, and five days later another determined sortie was made by the beleaguered Tekkes. At dusk they poured into the second parallel, which was held by 2600 men, and took possession of the outworks and trenches, destroying the artillerymen

¹ Moser, p. 315.

and capturing four mountain guns and three regimental standards. But the reserves were hurried up from the camp at Yangi Kal'a, and after a fearful struggle the trenches were reoccupied, and all but one of the lost guns were regained. On the 10th of January the Tekke outposts were seized after severe fighting; but at half-past eight the besieged made a third sortie. They stormed a redoubt on the left flank, cut to pieces the artillerymen and a company of Transcaspian rifles who defended it, and dragged the two cannon which it contained towards the trenches. The Russian reserves again deprived them of the fruit of victory; for one mountain gun only, rendered useless by the removal of the breech-piece, was carried off by the Tekkes.¹ The time chosen by the besieged for these very effective operations was always the dark hour between sunset and the rise of the young moon. They inspired such terror that it was difficult to induce the young soldiers to await the Tekkes' onslaught. The night of the 16th January was marked by the last of these mighty encounters, but experience had taught the Russians many a bitter lesson, and their tactics rendered the heroic bravery of their opponents useless.²

¹ According to the official accounts, the artillery taken by the Turkomans included six mountain guns and three mortars, two of which were actually dragged within the entrenchment. General Kurapatkine, however, has stated the number of cannon captured by the Tekkes as fourteen. All of them, save one, were recaptured by the reserves. The fourteenth remained in the enemy's hands until the final assault, when it was retaken, decked with green boughs, and paraded through the lines, accompanied by music and the frantic cheers of the troops.

² Skobelev relates that, during one of his nightly rounds, he heard a private soldier remark to another that the Russians were at a great disadvantage, for they were huddled in the trenches, while the enemy hacked and stabbed them from above. He suggested that the trenches should be left empty, and the troops be posted ten paces to the rear. The hint was acted on with brilliant results, for the Turkomans on the following night sallied out in force and leapt into the trenches, where they were shot and bayoneted with ease (Moser, p. 315).

On the 16th the sap had been pushed within twenty-four yards of the east side of the entrenchments. Breaching began on the 20th; and while a heavy fire was concentrated on a spot near the south-eastern angle, a perfect hail of petroleum shells was thrown on the dense mass of khibitkas packed into the Tekke enclosure. Fearful must have been the sufferings of the 7000 women and children who had sought refuge there. Every part of the works was searched by the fragments of shell and streams of unextinguishable flame. The traveller who visits the scene of this battle of the giants is filled with wonder that an undisciplined mob should have held out for three weeks with defences so paltry. Their stubbornness inspired respect in Skobelev himself, who was as ready as all really brave men are to render justice to a gallant foe. In a proclamation addressed to his troops on the eve of the final assault, he told them that they were face to face with a people "full of courage and honour."¹ But the end was drawing near. Not only was the breach reported to be practicable on the 23rd, but a mine had been driven under the eastern face about one hundred yards from the angle, which was charged with dynamite by a party of volunteers after nightfall. At seven on the morning of the 24th of January 1881 four columns formed for the assault, commanded respectively by General Skobelev in person, and by Colonels Kozelkoff, Kurapatkine, and Gaidaroff. The signal was given by a vast column of smoke attended by a dull roar which rose from the eastern front. It proclaimed the

¹ He was much impressed by the punctilio with which the Tekkes had observed an armistice agreed on for the purpose of burying the dead on the 19th January. Skobelev's appreciation of the really noble qualities elicited by severe trial is shared by General Kurapatkine, who humorously alludes to Tokma Sardar, the commander of the entrenchment, as *mon vaingueur*, and styles him *un magnifique soldat*. An account of a visit paid by this leader to O'Donovan shortly after the siege will be found at p. 274.

explosion of the mine, which levelled 300 feet of the rampart, and overwhelmed several hundreds of the defenders. Instantly the force under Gaidaroff sprang forward and escalated the parapet on the south-western angle. This was intended to be a feigned attack, but it soon developed into a serious one. Pushing northwards, Gaidaroff captured the mound which commanded the camp, and thus convinced the defenders of the impossibility of further resistance. In the meantime the other columns had swarmed through the breaches caused by the mine and the artillery fire, and climbed the parapet on the southern side between the two. The hand-to-hand encounter was brief, for the position was clearly untenable. O'Donovan, who watched the attack from a spur of the Kopet Dāgh twelve miles off, saw a cloud of horsemen issuing in disorder from the northern side, followed by a confused mass of fugitives.¹ The Russian flag waved on the mound which gave Dangil Teppe its name. It was planted at a cost to the assailants of 1200 men² killed and wounded, out of a total engaged of 8000. That undergone by the garrison will never be accurately known. Four thousand bodies were found in the enclosure, and Skobelev admitted that a flying column pursued and hacked the fugitives for ten miles.³ General Kurapatkine estimates that the enemy lost 9000 out of a total of 30,000. He strenuously denies the oft-repeated allegation that Tekke women and children were

¹ *The Story of Merv*, p. 155.

² The official list admits only 937 casualties during the siege, including 268 killed (Marvin, *Merv*, p. 401). An iron tablet on a white-washed mound in the little cemetery behind the site of the Russian camp substantiates these figures, but the extent of the three burial-places which lie to the east of the entrenchment, including separate ones for the Cossacks and the Stavropol Regiment, would imply a much greater sacrifice of life. General Kurapatkine states the total casualties to have been 1200, including 400 killed. The Russians in Central Asia have adopted Napoleon's system of minimising losses.

³ Telegram quoted by Marvin, p. 399.

intentionally slaughtered. The Russians, he states, did not wilfully kill a single non-combatant, though, of course, many must have perished from the hail of petroleum shells which were poured for three weeks into the doomed enclosure. So anxious, he affirms, were his countrymen to avoid shedding innocent blood, that on the eve of the assault the garrison were formally summoned to send their families to a distance. The Turkomans' reply was characteristic: "If you want our wives and children," they said, "you must step over our corpses to seize them." Fireside theorists are apt to reprobate the bloodshed of Geok Tepe and the slaughter of the wounded foe at Omdurman as unworthy of civilisation. A superficial acquaintance with the Asiatic character would convince them that an extreme application of the Virgilian *debellare superbos* is the least cruel policy which can be adopted in dealing with the forces of savagery and fanaticism. Geok Tepe was the last stronghold of Central Asian independence, and its capture must rank among the decisive battles of the world. While civilisation gained by the Russian victory, it is impossible to refuse sympathy to those who were crushed by its giant forces. With the conquest of Turkomania a national entity disappeared for ever which had been preserved intact during ages of change and retained many noble qualities. The world is the poorer by the disappearance of such types, and by the gradual reduction of all mankind to a dead level devoid of colour and charm. The news was received with dismay by the population of the Khānates, who still cherished hopes of regaining independence. Geok Tepe inspired the most bigoted of Russia's foes with a conviction of the hopelessness of battling against the decree of fate; and to the lesson thus learnt is due the unbroken tranquillity which reigned for eighteen years in Central Asia. The Shāh of Persia

hailed the extirpation of the hornets' nest with joy. He saw his northern provinces delivered from a terrible scourge, and peace restored to a rich territory which the corruption and incapacity of his own government was unable to protect. Thus he at once acceded to a suggestion made by the Russian ambassador, M. Zinovieff, that the left bank of the Atrak, which had been virtually annexed, should be ceded to Persia in return for the abandonment of her rather shadowy rights as suzerain over the Merv oasis, and for authority to push the Transcaspian Railway through territory which was still nominally subject to her sway.¹ The absorption by Russia of the whole area inhabited by the conquered race was but a matter of time. The Akkal oasis was hers by right of conquest, and it remained to add that of Merv to the long list of her conquests. The way was paved for this measure by diplomacy, the agent being an astute Mohammedan named Alikhanoff.² He was a native of Dāghistan in the Caucasus, and had won the rank of colonel by gallantry in the field. Alikhanoff found a potent ally in the person of the once beautiful Gul Jamāl, widow of the last great chieftain, Nūr Verdi Khān, who enjoyed universal respect, due alike to her own force of character and the memory of her husband's exploits. Her persuasion was seconded by a military demonstration which took place on December 1883, under Colonel Masloff; and, on the 31st January 1884, 124 delegates from the various settlements of the Merv oasis, headed by the four tribal chiefs, met at Askabad, which had been recently created the headquarters of the Transcaspian military district. Here they solemnly swore fidelity to the Tsar in the presence of the governor-general, Komaroff. A recrudescence of the old lawless spirit followed, which was prompted by an Afghan ad-

¹ Ney, p. 249.

² Moser, p. 343.

venturer, but it was stifled on the 3rd of March by military force. In the following May, Prince Dondukoff-Korsakoff, governor-general of the Caucasus, paid a formal visit to the latest and not the least valuable trophy of Russian diplomacy, and was able to report to his imperial master that the inhabitants of the oasis had willingly acknowledged his sway. Soon afterwards the Sārik tribe, numbering 65,000, who inhabited the Yolatan oasis thirty-six miles south of Merv, tendered their submission, and that of the tribes between Giaour and Sarakhs followed.

The tract over which Russia had gained mastery was a parallelogram lying between the Oxus and the Harī Rūd, which washes the walls of Herāt, and in Turkomania is known as the Tajand. The western boundary marched with that of Persia, and at its northern extremity was defined by Old Sarakhs, a Turkoman village perched on an elevation which commanded a once thickly peopled country extending northwards to Merv. Old Sarakhs was easily accessible by wheeled traffic from Puli Khatan, a village on the left bank of the Harī Rūd, thirty-three miles from the Zū-l-Fikār Pass, through which the Tekke hordes had often poured into Khorāsān. To the east of this defile lay the Paropamisus range, a double spur of the Kūh-i-Bābā Mountains, which consists of low rolling hills covered with asafoetida and thistles.¹ The northern flank of the Paropamisus gives rise to the Murghāb, which fertilises Merv, and its confluent the river Kushk. The country between these streams and the Harī Rūd was known as the Bādghīs,² and is described by Lessar as presenting the appearance of a stormy sea

¹ See Moser, p. 344. M. Paul Lessar, who was charged by the Russian authorities with the duty of surveying the debatable land in 1884, was the first to dissipate the "Paropamisus myth," which made these insignificant hills an impenetrable barrier to the passage of troops.

² The meaning of Bādghīs is "windy." It was suggested by the storms which sweep over the plateau in winter.

suddenly reduced to solidity. In 1884 it had been ruined by Tekke incursions. A few thousand Jamshidīs still clung to the rich valley of the Kushk, where they had been planted by Nādir Shāh in the eighteenth century as a bulwark against Turkoman aggression, and are described as a peaceable nomad race famed for their breed of horses.¹ On the north-west of this forlorn tract stood Bālā Murghāb, an Afghan fortress commanding the road to Maymena; and thirty-five miles farther north the village of Panjdih towered above an oasis with an area of 170 square miles, peopled by the Sārik Turkomans. Afghanistan lay to the south of the debatable land. Its natural boundary was defined by the Paropamisus, and only eighty miles beyond them lay Herāt. This city had played a great part in history. It was regarded as the key to Afghanistan; the only serious obstacle to a successful invasion of India from the north-west; and its citadel had been fortified in 1838 under the supervision of British officers. Nor was the importance of Herāt confined to its strategic position. It was the emporium of Central Asian trade, and the centre of a well-watered and fertile country. Thus the value to Russia of her latest acquisition was immense. In Merv she possessed a region which had been once the most fertile on the world's surface, and needed but settled government to resume its ancient importance. The ill-defined area which she claimed to the south of the Merv oasis commanded the richest province of Persia and the north of Afghanistan. It was inevitable that the news of its impending appropriation should excite a storm of indignation in England, where every step of the Russian advance was watched with the keenest suspicion. An attempt to propitiate public feeling had been made as far back as 1882, when

¹ Moser, p. 345.

Russia proposed a joint commission to demarcate the northern boundary of Afghanistan, and at that time she would doubtless have accepted a line drawn from Khwāja Sālih on the Oxus to Sarakhs. But the Government then in power was not inclined to raise so delicate a question, and it was not until June 1884, when the situation had been radically modified by the conquest of Turkomania, that the proposal found acceptance. A joint commission was appointed in July, charged with the duty of laying down the disputed boundary. It was headed on the British side by General Sir Peter Lumsden, who had won distinction in India; while General Zelenoi was directed to watch over the interests of Russia. Sir Peter traversed Afghanistan, with the Amīr 'Abd er-Rahmān's permission, escorted by a little army of 500 strong with twice as many camp followers. This demonstration, for such it was, excited the suspicion of Lieutenant-General Komaroff,¹ the military governor of Transcaspia, and General Zelenoi was directed to return to Tiflis. In the meantime the explorations of Lessar in the valleys of the Murghāb and Kushk had led Russia to modify her claims. It was contended at the conference which followed that she should be allotted an ethnological frontier, based on the submission rendered by the Sāriks inhabiting the Panjdih oasis. The British representative, on the other hand, declined to recognise any other boundary than one based on natural conditions which excluded from Russian sway all territory south of an imaginary line drawn from Old Sarakhs to

¹ This very distinguished officer had been educated at the Petersburg Military Academy. He had seen much service in the Caucasus, when he had been governor of Southern Dāghistan, and afterwards of Darbend. He had gained eminence in the fields of archæology and ethnology. As an administrator he was equally successful; and Askabad, the present capital of Transcaspia, owes much to his genius.

Khwāja Sālih on the Oxus. The Gordian knot was cut by the Afghans, who, encouraged by the presence on the Murghāb of the small British force attending Sir Peter Lumsden, moved northwards and occupied Bālā Murghāb and the disputed oasis of Panjdih. This aggression elicited warm protests from Russia; and, according to her wont, she brought material force to the aid of diplomacy. General Komaroff occupied Pul-i-Khatun, the Zū-l-Fikār Pass, and Ak Rabāt; and, on February 1885, he took possession of Pul-i-Kishti, at the edge of the Panjdih oasis. The alarm excited in England was intense. Engineers were despatched to place the fortifications of Herāt in a state of defence; arms and ammunition were poured into Afghan arsenals, and troops were massed under General (afterwards Lord) Roberts on the north-western boundary of India. The match was laid to the train by Lieutenant-General Komaroff. On the 30th of March 1885 his little force of 1200 men all told¹ attacked and routed an Afghan mob 46,000 strong with six guns, which latter fell into Komaroff's hands.² The discomfited Afghans at once retired to Merūchak, at the eastern extremity of the oasis. The skirmish, for such it was, aroused a storm in England, and war was considered inevitable. Parliament voted unanimously a credit of £11,000,000 sterling for military preparations; while Russia called into existence a Volunteer Fleet, with the object of preying upon our commerce. Happily for the tranquillity of Asia, the two greatest Powers were led to pause ere they appealed to the awful arbitration of arms. General

¹ It was composed of four companies of Transcaspian Chasseurs, three squadrons of Cossacks from the Kuban, one of Turkoman militia, and four guns (Ney, p. 252, note).

² Four of them now adorn a monument on the Askabad parade-ground commemorating Geok Teppe.

Lumsden and his ablest coadjutor, Captain Yates, used their influence with the Afghans to prevent a recurrence of the untoward accident of the 30th of May; while the tact of the latter prompted him to open overtures which were completely successful. Diplomacy, thus assisted, won a peaceful triumph, and a basis for the demarcation of the frontier was agreed upon. The process was completed at the close of 1886, and in the April of the following year the British and Russian representatives met at St. Petersburg. The outcome of their deliberation was, on the whole, favourable to Russia. She obtained the right bank of the Harī Rūd as far as the Zū-l-Fikār Pass, and the valleys of the Bādghīs south of and including the Panjdih oasis.

The southern boundary of her Asiatic possessions has advanced to a point within fifty-three miles of Herāt as the crow flies, and separated by no natural obstacle of importance from that great commercial and strategic centre. On the other hand, the Amīr of Bokhārā surrendered to the Afghans the rich pastures on the left bank of the Amū Daryā south of Khwāja Sālih. Russia has loyally accepted the work performed by the Boundary Commission, and has concentrated her energies during the eleven years which have intervened in developing the commerce and improving the administration of the rich possessions thus added to her empire.

The successful issue of this enterprise led, in 1895, to the appointment of a mixed commission to demarcate the spheres of English and Russian influence on the Pamirs. The boundaries of the three Asiatic empires meet in those stupendous hills, but their difficulty of access had hitherto precluded any attempt to lay them down authoritatively. The English representatives, under the direction of Sir M. G. Gerard, K.C.S.I., left India on the 30th June; and, a month later, they

met their Russian colleagues on the shore of Lake Victoria, a wild mountain tarn which gives birth to the Oxus. No time was lost in tracing the boundary prescribed in an agreement entered into between the two Powers. Starting from the eastern side of the lake, it follows the crest of the Sarikol range until the Chinese frontier is reached. "From the sixth mile," wrote Sir T. Holdich, K.C.I.E., the chief survey officer, "a rugged and inaccessible spur of the Sarikol range carried the boundary into regions of perpetual ice and snow to its junction with the main range. Here, amidst a solitary wilderness, 20,000 feet above sea-level, absolutely inaccessible to man, and within the ken of no living creature except the Pamir eagles, the three great empires actually meet. No more fitting tri-junction could possibly have been found."

The cordiality which marked the relations between the subjects of Queen and Tsar was even more marked than on the earlier occasion. On their arrival at the scene of action the travel-worn Britons were hospitably received in the Russian camp, and a feeling of good-fellowship was then and there engendered which never afterwards grew cold. The scanty leisure left the commissioners by their duty of traversing ninety miles of the most difficult country in the world was devoted to races and shooting-matches.

The Kirghiz of the Russian escort astonished our countrymen by their prowess at *ulak*, a struggle on horseback for a goat, similar to the Bokhāran game of *baigha*. The Cossacks, too, displayed their wondrous equestrian skill. August 3rd, the name-day of the Dowager-Empress of Russia, was the occasion of an outdoor service, and the sweet plaintive melody of the anthems of the Greek Church never sounded so impressively as it did on those remote mountain heights.¹

¹ The Englishmen were particularly struck by the eagerness shown by their

Every lover of his country will re-echo the hope expressed by the Russian commissioner at a farewell banquet given to his colleagues on 11th September 1895, that "the agreement just concluded would be the beginning of more cordial relations between the two countries, and of a better understanding of their national aims and desires."

rivals to support the national sports of the nomads, the liberal prizes awarded and the careful observance of ceremony in their official intercourse with Asiatics,—a policy which inspired the latter with a sense of their liberality and power. This is an attitude which would do much to consolidate our own power in India (*Report of the Pamirs Boundary Commission*).

CHAPTER VI

THE CENTRAL ASIAN RAILWAYS

THE conception of a railway between the Caspian and the heart of Asia took shape, as we have seen, during the campaign of Geok Teppe, when a little portable line between the base and a point thirteen miles inland was of good service to the transport. The new railway battalion redoubled its efforts after the fall of the Tekke stronghold, and before the close of 1885 the line had been carried as far inland as the large Turkoman village of Kizil Arvat, 135 miles from the Caspian. A mighty impulse was given to schemes for railway extension by the cession of the Merv oasis in 1884. The entire area between the Caspian and the Amū Daryā was now in Russian hands, and there were no political and few natural obstacles to delay the construction of a railway which should connect the great arteries of traffic. But the advisers of the Tsar were by no means unanimous in approving of the enterprise. A strong party favoured the canalisation of the Amū Daryā, and an attempt to divert its stream to its ancient channel, which entered the Caspian at Krasnovodsk. Another faction pointed to the vast results achieved in India by the network of railways, which enables a European military force barely 60,000 strong to dominate 250,000,000 Asiatics; and urged the necessity of providing the means of rapid transport of troops and material between the Caucasus



DIVANIS OR DERVISHES

and the new strategic bases. Foremost among the latter was General Annenkoff, who enjoyed great influence at St. Petersburg, due less to family connections than to his experience in the construction of railway lines.¹ His opinion was reinforced by events in the Merv oasis, for the collision with Afghanistan in 1884 convinced the stubbornest advocates for water-carriage that a post of vital importance could not be held without the assistance of a railway. In April 1885 an imperial ukase directed the construction of a line on the standard gauge between the Caspian and the new territories, and charged its designer with the duty of carrying it into execution and studying the question of extensions. General Annenkoff's first care was to devise a system calculated to economise time and transport, and peculiarly adapted to countries which present few obstacles to the engineer. A temporary line was to be laid with the utmost speed, over which the materials and labour for completing the task might be conveyed at leisure. The accommodation of the personnel was of equal importance. The supervising staff consisted of three engineers-in-chief and an army of subordinates, military and civil, selected for their exceptional ability and vigour. Under their orders were two battalions of railway operatives on a strictly military basis. The second of these was recruited at Moscow by the general himself; and both corps showed a devotion to their arduous duties which it would be difficult to parallel. The scarcity of water in the desert precluded the possibility of forming camps at intervals or working

¹ The late Major-General L. M. Annenkoff was then in the prime of life. He had won his spurs as a railway engineer by the rapid construction of a strategic line in Lithuania, and was afterwards appointed chief of the mobilisation department in the Ministry of War. At the outbreak of the Tekke campaign he volunteered for service under General Skobelev, and was wounded at Geok Tepe. On returning to Russia he was appointed superintendent of transport throughout the empire (Ney, *En Asie Centrale*, p. 283).

in sections. By a brilliant intuition Annenkoff conceived the idea of a camp on wheels, which would move onwards as the work progressed, and be furnished with provisions and material by construction trains. It contained everything needful for comfort and efficiency. There were carriages for the office staff; dormitories and restaurants in two-storeyed cars, a telegraph carriage, and a saloon for the director, resembling the cabin on a man-of-war in the compactness and modest luxury of its fittings. Each vehicle communicated with the others by means of covered passages; and due attention was paid to ventilation and warming. Work began on the 30th of June 1885. The rails¹ were spiked down to the sleepers without the aid of chairs, and the rolling camp moved forwards at a speed which was ultimately four miles a day. When Kizil Arvat had thus been reached the soil ahead was levelled by 22,000 Tekke labourers, whom stern necessity had compelled to exchange their long knives for spades and sacks.² The rails and sleepers, brought from the base daily by a portable railway on the Decauville system, were rapidly laid on the soil thus prepared. Water in this dry and thirsty land is of prime importance. It was provided at Uzun Ada, the Caspian terminus, by a huge distilling apparatus. At other points the streams issuing from the distant hills were diverted into reservoirs, whence the precious liquid was carried to the line in pipes. At Merv the source of

¹ The rails were steel, flat-footed, weighing 68 pounds to the yard, and cost £16 a ton. The sleepers came from the Baltic and Caucasus. The rolling stock consisted of 80 locomotives on the Siegl system, and 1400 cars and waggons. Everything was produced in Russian workshops.

² They earned rather less than £2 per mensem. They were allowed to work in their own fashion, just as if they were repairing their *ariks*, or irrigation canals. It is said that in India, when the contractors insisted on the use of wheelbarrows, the native labourers carried the vehicles and their contents on their heads.

supply was a canal connected with the Murghāb. The waterless tracts were supplied from the nearest spring in immense wooden tubs placed on trucks. To avoid the interruption in the flow of materials due to the closure of the Volga by thick-ribbed ice, great depôts were formed at Merv, Charjūy, and, later, at Bokhārā, while the minutest care was given to perfecting every portion of the complicated mechanism.

The comfort and efficiency of the directing and the subordinate staff were the subject of equal anxiety. The labourers, whether Russian soldiers or natives of the soil, worked in shifts of six hours, and were free for eighteen hours out of the twenty-four to enjoy repose in their moving barracks and kibitkas. The sleepless activity of the chief was contagious, and his behests were obeyed with a devotion which few generals on the field have commanded. But when the arduous day's work in the burning sun or the icy blast was done, the sturdy Russians were wont to break into song. Beautiful, indeed, was the effect of their melody wafted on the still desert air; and finer still the spectacle afforded by groups of the toilers, their faces glowing with the ruddy bivouac fire, while from their midst came the rhythmic strain of some chant, now breathing profound melancholy, and anon rising high in notes of fierce martial passion. General Annenkoff justly said that "one of the sources of Russian strength is that we are a singing people."¹ And thus the work of piercing these hitherto unknown steppes was pushed onwards with a rapidity which was the wonder and envy of Europe. Merv, 352 miles from Kizil Arvat, was reached in fourteen months. The arrival of the latest product of civilisation at the old robbers' lair was made the occasion of brilliant fêtes, and six weeks of rest were given to the toil-spent men.

¹ Ney, p. 321.

The works on the section between Merv and Charjūy began on August 1886. Here the engineers had to encounter an obstacle even more formidable than Chat Moss presented to George Stephenson. This was the famous sandy tract—a stretch of nearly sixty miles extending to a strip of land fertilised by the great river. It resembles nothing so closely as the mountains of the moon as seen through a powerful telescope. The eye ranges over a boundless expanse of sandhills covered in the near foreground with camels' grass. Here, when the wind blows fresh, the air becomes charged with sand, which blinds the drivers and accumulates in deep drifts on the line of rail. At such times night-running is suspended, and detentions of several days are frequent. The construction of stone galleries was at first considered inevitable, but the expense involved was prohibitive. The desired object has, to some extent, been achieved by planting the saxaul, a gnarled shrub which thrives on the desert soil and throws out spreading roots for many feet. On the Merv and Charjūy section, too, the earth-work was far heavier than had hitherto been encountered,¹ and it is highly creditable to the engineering staff that 141 miles should have been completed in little more than four months.

Hitherto the bridging operations had been of no great importance. The river Tajand, at the 434th mile, had been spanned by a wooden viaduct of 348 feet water-way; and the Murghāb, at Merv, by a similar structure with an opening of 197 feet. Charjūy is 664 miles from the Caspian, and stands on the left bank of the Oxus, or Amū Daryā, incomparably the mightiest river in Central Asia, and worthy to rank with the Ganges and the Nile. At Charjūy it is a mile and a quarter wide, and in all characteristics it resembles the Mississippi and the

¹ It cost 6½d. per cubic yard.

rivers of the Gangetic Delta. All have the same wide fringe of sand on either side, covered in portions with fertilising silt, the same islands clad with long reeds and juniper, the same tendency to shift their banks. At present the Amū Daryā's main channel has swung to the eastern bank, and its dull red stream surges with a perilous velocity. The cost of a steel viaduct at so vast a distance from the manufacturing centres was not to be faced, and nothing remained but to attempt a wooden structure. Happily for the Russian engineers, a stratum of tenacious clay underlies the sandy bed at no great depth, and afforded a secure resting-place for the timber piles. These numbered 3330, and were all brought from Russia by rail. The first was driven into the river bed in June 1887, and so intense was the energy of the working staff that on the 18th January 1888, little more than six months after its commencement, the Amū Daryā was opened for traffic.¹ In spite of its fragile construction, this work must rank with the greatest feats of modern engineering. The vast distances from which every portion of the material was brought, the rapidity and treacherous nature of the stream, and the unforeseen difficulties grappled with at every step, conspire to render the Amū Daryā bridge a conspicuous triumph of skill and energy over the blind forces of nature. The Englishman cannot view this grand work, dwindling to a mere point as its interminable length spans the broad river, without a feeling of respect for the men who carried it into execution. We have shown the world that nothing is impossible to modern science, and we can best appreciate the

¹ The moral effect produced by the spanning of the Amū Daryā was immense and far reaching. General Annenkoff told the members of the St. Petersburg Technical Society that when the first locomotive, draped with the imperial flag, crossed the river, loud cheers echoed from the hosts that lined the banks (Ney, p. 304).

noble qualities evinced by General Annenkoff and the devoted band which toiled to execute his grandiose conceptions.

The Amū Daryā bridge is 4600 yards in length, including the approaches. The water-way is 2270 yards, and a permanent way is laid 35 feet above the mean river-level. The small cost of the structure is not its least recommendation. Official statistics place it at £44,000, without, however, reckoning the cost of transport and the pay of the railway battalion engaged in erecting it. The whole is of wood; and it is impossible to look down on the rapid current swirling round the piles without a feeling of wonder that so frail a structure should have borne the strain of eleven years. But fire is a far more dangerous foe than water. The rainfall at Charjūy is insignificant, and the mass of bristling piles as dry as touchwood. It is crossed daily by trains drawn by locomotives burning petroleum fuel, and boats loaded with inflammables constantly pass beneath. There are six fire-stations, and the bridge is patrolled night and day; but all protective measures would be useless if the flames once took hold. It is this consideration which has induced the authorities to face the immense expense involved in a steel girder bridge.

A pause of three months followed the conquest of this great barrier; and, in September 1897, the engineers attacked the last portion of their task—the 216 miles between the Amū Daryā and Samarkand. They were aided by a third railway battalion 1000 strong, incorporated in 1886, and posted at Charjūy in the beginning of the following year. The final section, however, was mere child's play as compared with those already traversed. After passing through 28 miles of desert, the line enters at Kara Kūl on a cultivated zone, watered by the river Zarafshān and its affluents, which extends as

far as the terminus at Samarkand. The capital of Tamerlane was reached in May 1888, and on the 1st of the succeeding month trains began running with regularity between the Caspian and Samarkand, a distance of 879 miles.¹ General Annenkoff's achievement was rewarded with the generous appreciation meted out to every Russian servant of the state who distinguishes himself by devotion to duty. "During three years," wrote his imperial master in a rescript dated 5th July 1888, "you have worked with the energy which distinguishes you in accomplishing the task, sparing neither health nor strength in a constant struggle with natural obstacles which seemed almost insuperable. In just recompense for the service you have rendered to the state, we have granted you the insignia in diamonds of the Order of St. Alexander Nevsky, which we command you to wear according to regulations."² In thus hailing the completion of a line linking the Caspian with Samarkand the Tsar could hardly have foreseen the vast economic results of General Annenkoff's enterprise. Its inception was due to considerations of politics and strategy,—if the Central Asian Railway would rob the desert of its terrors, strengthen Russia's hold on the newly conquered territory, and give the means of overawing Persia and Afghanistan; and so it was treated as a military work and placed under the governor of Transcaspia, who was himself subordinate to the Minister of War. But trains had hardly begun to run ere merchants and passengers

¹ It is interesting to compare the cost of the Russian Asiatic railways with that of Indian lines constructed under similar conditions. It averaged £6144 per mile. The report of the Director of Indian Railways for 1872-1873 gives that of the earlier lines as £18,000 to £20,000. It is probable that the cost of the three railway battalions has not been taken into account. But, allowing for that item, we must admit that the Russian railways were far cheaper than our Indian trunk lines.

² Ney, p. 305.

flocked to the station; goods accumulated in masses which defied the slender means of transport. In 1893, 185,000 tons of merchandise and material were carried; and in 1897 the volume dealt with aggregated 249,000.¹ Trade left its old channels and poured into that which gave merchants steamer communication with the great consuming centres and the seaboard. Tea, which cheers the nomad as well as his civilised brother, no longer enters Central Asia through Afghanistan. It is transhipped at Bombay into steamers which convey it to Batum. Thence it crosses the Caucasus by rail and the Caspian by steamer, and finds the terminus of the Central Asian Railway at Krasnovodsk. This trade is of very recent growth. In 1893 none travelled by rail; in 1897 no less than 6,192,000 pounds. The commerce with Russia has been equally affected. The wool and cotton worked up in Moscow factories no longer reaches them by camel caravan; while the manufactured beet-sugar and drugs so largely in demand in the Khānates travel by the new route. That the railway should have profoundly modified the whole course of Central Asian

¹ The following statistics for 1897 have been furnished by Colonel Brunelli, the much respected commandant of the railway battalion stationed at Merv :—

		<i>Imports.</i>	
Revenue, gross . .	£751,000	Manufactures . .	15,000 tons
„ nett . .	615,000	Sugar	12,000 „
		Tea	6,192,000 lbs.
Train mileage . .	2,402,625	Metals	5,000 tons
		Kerosene oil . .	5,000 „
<i>Exports.</i>		Wool	8,000 „
Raw cotton . . .	81,000 tons	Miscellaneous, includ-	
Wool	8,000 „	ing tan, naphtha, rice,	
Dried fruit . . .	5,000 „	spices, wine, brandy,	
Barley	2,000 „	beer, and thread . .	22,000 „
Skins and hides .	5,000 „	Grand total . . .	<u>70,000 tons</u>
Salt	3,000 „		
Miscellaneous . .	5,000 „		
Grand total . .	<u>109,000 tons</u>	Intermediate traffic .	70,000 tons
		Total movement of goods	249,000 „

commerce is a natural outcome of the line selected by the Tsar's advisers. It follows the principal channel whence the silks, sugars, and stuffs of India and China poured into Europe during the ages illumined by Greek culture, and moulded by the governing instincts of Rome. Balkh in Northern Afghanistan was a rendezvous for caravans from the south and east. Thence the goods find water-way to the Oxus, and so, by its ancient course, to the Balkan Bay on the Caspian. The precious wares were carried in small vessels across that sea to the embouchure of the Cyrus, now the Kura, 90 miles south of the modern town of Baku. Here they were transhipped into canoes and dragged up stream to the foot of the Suran Pass. At this point the light vessels were carried, with their contents, 40 miles over the mountain to the river Kvirilla, a confluent of the Phasis,¹ now called the Riom, which discharges into the Black Sea near the fever-haunted port of Poti. A glance at the map will reveal the identity of this ancient highway of trade with that followed by the railway systems of the Caucasus and the regions beyond the Caspian.² The revolution has been recognised by the Russian authorities, and the Central Asian railways have now lost their exclusively military character, and have passed under the direction of the Minister of Ways and Communications. They will eventually have a central administration

¹ Phasis, *Φάσις*, a river of Colchis emptying itself into the Euxine. Its banks are clothed with forests whence pheasants were brought to delight Roman epicures (Mart. Ep. xiii. 45, 72).

² See an interesting paper read before the London Chamber of Commerce in 1866, by Colonel C. Stewart, C.B., H.B.M. Consul-General at Odessa. Sir W. W. Hunter, K.C.S.I., the brilliant historian of India, has also pointed out the striking correspondence between the former paths of trade and those mapped out by Russian engineers. It is, he explains, a question of correspondence rather than identity of work, but the section between the Black Sea and the Caspian follows the ancient ways very closely (*History of British India*, p. 32).

at Tashkent, and be managed by the governor-general at Turkestan.¹ The unlooked-for success which has attended the opening of the trunk line has given a great impetus to extensions. In 1895, works were commenced for branches connecting Samarkand with Tashkent, the Calcutta of Central Asia, and Andijān in Farghāna, a point near the Chinese frontier, and little more than 300 miles due north of Chitral. The length of these sections is 401 miles; their cost has been £2,743,000, or £6840 for each running mile, exclusive of rolling stock.

The line to Andijān follows pretty closely the old trade-route eastwards, crossing the Zarafshān by a viaduct 392 feet long, near the remains of the famous bridge attributed to Timūr, and passing the towns of Jizāk, Khojend, and Kokand. At Khavast, 110 miles west of Samarkand, a branch runs to Tashkent which traverses the Sir Daryā at Chināz by a wooden bridge, on the Oxus model, 1120 feet in length. Another bifurcation connects the main line at Khwāja Maghiz with New Marghilān. The engineers have encountered enormous difficulties in the construction of these branches, arising from the fact that they run at right angles to the watershed of the country. The innumerable torrents which pour down the mountain flanks on either side cause extensive inundations during the rainy season. The water-way on this section is greater than on any other portion of the line of equal length, and heavy protective works have been deemed necessary to divert the floods into the channels provided for them. The activity with which the construction was pushed forward may be gauged by the fact that 63,000 tons of railway material

¹ Extensive additions to the station accommodation and rolling stock are contemplated. Estimates have received sanction which place the cost at two millions sterling. The question will shortly be studied by a committee of experts.

were carried over the trunk line between July 1897 and May of the following year. The extensions will serve a rich and thickly peopled country, and open up the vast mineral wealth of the mountain system whence the Zarafshān takes its rise. An annual movement of goods to the extent of 240,000 tons is predicted, which will increase by leaps and bounds when the great irrigation works now under construction in Farghāna are completed. Another branch line has been constructed between Merv and Kushk, on the Afghan frontier, a distance of 192 miles. It follows the left bank of the Murghāb as far as Pul-i-Kishti at the embouchure of the river Kushk, and the latter up to the Russian cantonment bearing that name.¹ The economic advantages of this line, which was thrown open for through traffic in January 1899, are enormous. It passes through a tract which was once among the richest in the world, and will soon regain a share of its ancient fertility when the irrigation projects, which have received favour, become accomplished facts. Its strategic value is equally indisputable, for it will enable troops and supplies to be massed in a few days within striking distance of Herāt. For Englishmen, however, the importance of the Merv-Kushk branch lies in the fact that it is designed to serve as a link in a project which germinated in General Annenkoff's fertile brain—that of uniting England with India

¹ An officer in command of the post at Kushk told one of the writers that the friendliest relations prevailed between the Russians and Afghans. On one occasion the staff of the Amīr's Regiment, invited to a banquet by their brethren in arms, arrived in a *grande tenue* of second-hand railway uniforms. Thus the colonel's collar exhibited the magic words "Ticket collector," and a major strutted proudly with a label of "Guard." The Russians were under the impression that a portion of our ally's subsidy was taken out in cast-off accoutrements, but the fact is that His Highness, being a prince of frugal mind, is a bidder by proxy at the periodical sales of unserviceable railway stores held in Upper India.

by railway. A glance at the map of the eastern hemisphere will show that the shortest practicable line of communication between London and the Indus passes through Russia and Central Asia. The direction would be *vid* Calais, Berlin, Warsaw, Rostov-on-Don, Petrovsk, Baku, Krasnovodsk, Merv, Kushk, Girishk, and Kandahār. The whole of this distance has now been covered by railway, with the exception of the 195 miles of Caspian between Baku and Krasnovodsk, and the gap of 450 miles which still separates Kushk from Chaman. If the last-named hiatus were bridged the journey from London to the Indus would easily be performed in seven days, assuming that the present rate of speed—thirty-two miles an hour on the European and twenty-five on the Asiatic lines—were maintained. The net saving in time, if the railway were completed, would be ten days, while the horrors of the Red Sea and the monsoon would be bad dreams to the Anglo-Indian traveller. The country between Kushk and Chaman presents no obstacle to the engineer. The Paropamisus range would be crossed by the Khombau, or the Chashmi Sabz Pass, neither of which is more than 3400 feet above sea-level, or 1000 higher than that on the tableland on either side.¹ From this point, Herāt, the garden and key of Afghanistan, is only 30 miles; and thence the line would be carried by way of Sabzawār, Farrah, Girishk, and Kandahār to Chaman. India is now awaking from her long sleep, and is permeated by new and unsuspected forces. If the tie which binds her to ourselves is to be a lasting one, it must be drawn more tightly.

That the line which is being carried across Siberia will eventually be linked with the Central Asian system admits of no doubt whatever. Expert opinion, however, is by

¹ M. P. Lessar, who surveyed these hills in 1884–1885, states their height above sea-level as 3140 feet.

no means in accord as to the route by which the junction should be effected. General Kurapatkine, while governor of Transcaspia, had detailed surveys made for a line between Merv and Orenburg. A strong faction advocates one which would commence at Tashkent and run by way of Chimkent, Turkestan, Turgai, Nicholaievsk, and Troitzk to Chelyabinsk, the starting-point of the Trans-Siberian Railway. Another party urges the superior advantages of a route *via* Turkestan, Albasar, Kokchetav, and Petropavlovsk to Ishim. Prince Khilkoff, the Director of Ways and Communications, favours a railway starting from Tashkent, and traversing Verni, Semipalatinsk, and Barnaul, to end at Tomsk. The country which would thus be opened up presents no serious obstacles to the engineer. It has great fertility, and abounds in coal and other forms of mineral wealth.

CHAPTER VII

TRANSCASPIA IN 1898

THE intense activity displayed in railway construction did not imply neglect of the primary duty of a civilised state towards subject peoples—that of giving them peace and order. The problem before the Russian administration bristled with difficulties, for lawless habits were ingrained in the population of Turkomania. The lesson taught by Geok Tepe was the first step in the civilising process, for it inspired the Tekkes, who outnumber all other tribes combined, with a wholesome dread of the white man.¹ Their marauding instincts were controlled by overwhelming military forces cantoned near the Persian and Afghan frontiers in posts connected by the line of rail which traverses the heart of the conquered territory. Thus the Turkoman tribes had to choose between starvation and honest labour. They unwillingly adopted the latter alternative, and their good resolutions were strengthened by the immense demand for unskilled labour entailed by the construction of the Transcaspian Railway. The erstwhile robbers may now be seen toiling at cotton-presses, and tilling their fields as assiduously as Indian peasants. But the demeanour of

¹ Colonel Arandarenko, district chief of Merv, states that only two assassinations of Russian officials had occurred during the last thirty years. General Kurapatkine, too, gives numerous instances of kindness and respect shown to disabled Russians by Turkomans (see Appendix II.).

the elder men show that they have not been effectually tamed; and until the generation which harried Persia and defied the "Great White Tsar" has passed away, the old leaven will still prevail in Turkoman breasts. The influence of the hereditary chieftains was the great obstacle in the path of reform. The Russians resolved to suppress the tribal organisation with its general councils, and make the village the administrative unit. In other respects the Whig watchword, the "Government of the People by the People," is that of the Russian Government.

Transcaspia, for so the land of the Turkomans is officially styled, is bounded on the north by the Khivan and the Kirghiz steppes. Southwards it is separated by mountain ranges from Persia and Afghanistān; while the Amū Daryā and the Caspian define its limits on the east and west. In length it averages 600 miles, in breadth 350; the area being 230,000 square miles, or rather more than that of France. It is a land of startling contrasts. The northern portion, amounting to four-fifths of the whole, is a trackless desert; the remainder is made up of the oases of Akkal and Merv, and the highlands watered by the Atrak and Gurgan. The only minerals hitherto discovered are rock-salt, sulphur, and naphtha, and the latter alone has any commercial importance. The south-east corner of the Caspian is a region of geysers, petroleum springs, and hills of asphalt, which may in time rival the wonderful tract surrounding Baku on the western shore. At present, attempts at exploration are confined to Cheleken Island, in the Bay of Krasnovodsk, and have met with indifferent success.¹ In the absence of mineral wealth, local industries are restricted to agriculture and stock-raising. Heavy crops of barley, juwāri (*sorghum*), and cotton are produced by irrigated

¹ Messrs. Nobel have works there which produce a thick ropy petroleum. The out-turn in 1890 was nearly 3000 tons, but had fallen in 1895 to 1300.

land everywhere, and the exports of the latter to Russia are enormous.¹ The bulk of the live stock belongs to the nomad tribes, and it is rising in value. The Turkomans owned £5, 7s. worth per head of the population in 1890; £7 worth in 1896. This growth has taken place in spite of epidemics due to the terrible winters of the northern steppes. The Mangishlāk peninsula, embracing the Ust Urt Desert, so fatal to Bekovitch's expedition, lost 40 per cent. of its cattle and sheep from cold and starvation in 1890. Horses, on the other hand, are decreasing in number and quality, for the repression of raids by the strong arm of the law has destroyed the demand for them. The deterioration has engaged the serious attention of the Russian. A committee appointed to inquire into the cause recommended that the Turkoman breed should be encouraged by prize competitions and the introduction of English and Arab blood. But the law governing supply and demand cannot be long evaded, and we are within measurable distance of the extinction of this incomparable strain. Domestic industries, as in old times, are confined to the women, for their lords and masters disdain sedentary labour. The manufacture of carpets heads the list. Three-fourths of these are still made at Merv, where the variety of designs, handed down from long-past generations, and never committed to paper, is bewildering. Here, too, the Russian conquest has brought with it a blight, for the hideous aniline dyes exported from German chemical works are supplanting the beautiful and durable colours extracted from indigo and other vegetable substances. Exports have fallen considerably during the last seven

¹ The movement by rail in 1896 was upwards of 60,000 tons. Transcaspian cotton is rapidly ousting the American product, thanks to protective tariff. It is a remarkable fact that the market price of cotton is higher in Transcaspia than at Manchester.



A. Kurapatkine

GENERAL KURAPATKINE

years,¹ and the case is the same with the embroidery, shawls, and dress fabrics once produced in thousands by the deft fingers of Turkoman maidens. The nomads, who constitute the vast bulk of the population, have not yet taken kindly to commerce. The people of Merv, indeed, accompany the caravans which still ply between the oasis, Persia, and Khiva, but 3 per cent. only of the merchants and shopkeepers of Transcaspia are Turkomans.²

Until 1890 Transcaspia was a province of the Caucasus, but in that year it was constituted a government, and intrusted to the care of General Alexis Kurapatkine.

No living soldier has had a more brilliant career. It began at the storming of Samarkand in 1868, when, as a sub-lieutenant of the Turkestan Rifles, he won the Orders of St. Stanislaus and St. Anne for special gallantry. Three years later he was promoted lieutenant-captain, and entered the Military Staff College for a course of special training, which lasted till 1874. Then, having attained the rank of captain, he was posted to the Turkestan Staff. In the following year he was despatched on a special mission to Germany and France, in the course of which he took part in an expedition from Algiers into the Sahara, and became a Knight of the Legion of Honour. Returning to his old love, Turkestan, he was employed in 1876 in the reduction of Tashkent, and gained the crosses of St. George and St. Vladimir. In the same year he was sent as envoy to Ya'küb Beg, a Mohammedan chieftain who had wrested Kāshghar from the Chinese, and obtained the cession of the town and district of Karashara. In 1877 came the Russo-Turkish

¹ The value of exported carpets and rugs in 1891 was 160,000 roubles. In 1894 it had fallen to 60,000, and is now probably 25,000 only.

² The official statistics for 1896 give the following percentages :—Persians, 39.2; Armenians, 32.2; Tartars, 11.7; Russians, 6.8; Jews, 5.0; Turkomans, 3; and "others," 2.1.

War, and the Tsar needed the help of his best and bravest soldiers to hold his own against the stubborn Nizams. Kurapatkine became lieutenant-colonel and chief of the Staff under General Skobeleff, commanding the 16th Division. He covered himself with glory at Lovsha, in the expedition to the Green Mountain, and at Plevna; and gained the rank of colonel, with more of those baubles so dear to the military heart. In 1879 he exchanged the sword for the pen, and became professor of Military Statistics at the Staff College. But he pined, as all true soldiers must, for active service, and his wish was speedily gratified. He was appointed commandant of his old corps, the Turkestan Rifles, and in 1880 commanded as brigadier-general in the reduction of Kulja. Towards the close of that year he was sent in charge of reinforcements to General Skobeleff, then engaged in a death-struggle with the Tekkes of the Akkal oasis. His prowess in that memorable campaign has been already noticed. In the next eight years he was attached to the St. Petersburg Staff, and was employed in framing schemes for mobilisation and the defence of the western frontier of the empire. He also gained the Tsar's special thanks for his services on a commission for settling the system of government in Turkestan. As governor and commander-in-chief of Transcaspia he showed that he possessed a rare combination of the qualities which adorn civil life as well as win battles.

His methods were based on an intimate knowledge of native character, and a keen appreciation of its noble qualities; and on his translation, in the beginning of 1898, to the great office of Minister of War, he left behind him the reputation of a firm but sympathetic ruler.¹ The charge for which he had laboured so

¹ Mr. E. C. Ringler Thomson, late assistant agent to the Governor-General of India in Khorāsān, who knows General Kurapatkine well, wrote

strenuously then became a province of Turkestān, and was placed under the control of the governor-general residing at Tashkent.

Transcaspia is divided for administrative purposes into five districts—Mangishlāk and Krasnovodsk, on the Caspian littoral; Askabad, which includes the Akkal oasis; Tajand, watered by the river of that name; and Merv. At the head of each is a military officer, termed the district chief, who is responsible for the executive and fiscal administration. The districts are parcelled out

thus of him in the *National Review* for February 1898: "He is still in the prime of life, not yet fifty years of age, has served from the commencement of his career in Central Asia, has taken a leading part in its conquest, and has made some important contributions towards its literature. He thoroughly knows the various countries, and thoroughly understands the people inhabiting them, and their modes of diplomacy and warfare. He was chief of the Staff to the great Skobelev during the Russo-Turkish War, and greatly distinguished himself in it. Indeed there is little doubt that some of Skobelev's laurels were won by him. Skobelev was the dashing, impetuous, reckless leader; Kurapatkin the cool, patient, calculating corrective who restrained him. He is a man of indomitable will, of untiring industry, master of his profession as a soldier, a great civil administrator, deliberate of speech, exceedingly gentle and modest in manner, and with a temper always under control. He wears the first class of the Order of Saint George (equivalent to our Victoria Cross), and his courage is of the type which does not comprehend fear. He is the strictest of disciplinarians, but beloved and respected by all, and his own good qualities are perforce in a great measure reflected in those serving under him. He is, indeed, the equal in every respect of any commander we could place in the field to oppose him. General Kurapatkin has brought Transcaspia in all matters, both civil and military, to a high state of perfection. He works from sunrise till late into the night, inquires personally into the minutest details, and finds time to be constantly making long and fatiguing journeys of inspection throughout his extensive command. This man, if he took the field against us, would be hard to beat. He has told me more than once that he has seen too much of war not to hate it, that neither he nor his Government have the least desire to fight us, and to suggest that they wish to invade India is absurd. I believe him. But all the same, he is a Russian of Russians, and, if he thought there was just cause for it, would delight in trying conclusions with us. In diplomacy, of course, General Kurapatkin is a thoroughbred Russian."

into *pristavos*, or subdivisions,¹ created in order to facilitate police work, and again into groups of twenty-five villages for judicial purposes. The village, which, as we have remarked, is the administrative unit, is called, if permanent, *volost*; and if inhabited by nomads, *aiul*. It is governed by a mayor, on the old Russian model, termed *volostnoi*, or *aiulnoi*, as the case might be, but more commonly *starshina*.² The village chiefs who replaced the Khāns of old time are elected by the inhabitants, subject to the governor's veto. General Kurapatkine's attention was, at an early stage, directed to the defects of the judicial mechanism, which was wholly independent of the executive power, and directed by a professional lawyer sent out from St. Petersburg. The Supreme Court sat at Baku, and appellants had then to face a journey of 200 miles across the stormy Caspian.

In 1892 General Kurapatkine formed a Supreme Court, which sits at Askabad and disposes of appeals from the decisions of the lower tribunals. It consists of five judges, and observes the rules of procedure and evidence current in Revision Courts. In causes involving native law and custom, popular judges from the Courts below are summoned to attend as assessors; while Kāzīs, natives versed in Mohammedan law, are called in as experts when questions of marriage and inheritance are concerned. The sentences in cases of gravity, such as murder, are subject to the governor's approval. Next in order to the Judicial Commission, as that body is called, are the District Courts, consisting of the chief aided by five "popular judges" selected from the personnel of the lower Courts. These latter hold session weekly at the head-

¹ Krasnovodsk has two. They are administered by subordinate executive officers called *pristavs*.

² The Russian equivalent for mayor.

quarters of each group of twenty-five villages. They are comprised of five "candidates," judges elected by the inhabitants of every village, who sit in rotation. These Courts of first instance bear a strong resemblance to the panchayat system of ancient India, which has been so cruelly shorn of its powers for good by a mistaken policy of centralisation. Their capacity in criminal cases extends to the infliction of fines of 100 roubles and three weeks' "imprisonment." On the civil side they try, without appeal, cases in which the value of the subject-matter is less than 200 roubles. Further reforms are in contemplation. The jurisdiction of the lower Courts will be extended — Kāzīs will be excluded, and local experts summoned in cases of marriage and inheritance. But, such as it is, the Russian system has worked with remarkable smoothness. It recognises the innate capacity for self-government which every Eastern race possesses, while the village organisation remains intact; and has thus gained the entire confidence of the people. The duty of preserving order and execution of the Courts' decrees vests in the district chief, the pristavos and the starshinas in their several degrees. In the quinquennial period ending with 1895 they brought 3436 offenders to justice, a proportion of nearly 25 per cent. of the population. It is undeniable that in the eastern districts crime is far more rife than on the Caspian. Merv had 1450 offenders during the five years, as compared with 419 convicted at Krasnovodsk. The classification of crimes affords curious results. The offences against person and property nearly balanced each other in the Caspian districts, while the contrary is the case at Merv. Charges of theft constituted the great bulk of Transcaspian crime; cattle-lifting came next in order of importance, followed by wounding and

murder.¹ Capital punishment has been abolished throughout the empire, except in cases of treason. Murderers are transported by rail and steamer to the Russian penal settlements on the North-West Pacific.² As is the case in India, the volume of crime varies directly with that of population. The tract in the Caspian is sparsely inhabited, while in Merv the population is comparatively thick. Broadly speaking, the numbers rise with the distance from the barren seashore. The total population of the province was 235,600 in 1890, and 300,769 in 1895, showing an increase of 65,169, or nearly 26 per cent. The growth of the Kirghiz community during the same period was no less than 60 per cent. The Tekke Turkomans are still the most numerous class of the population;³ then, at a long interval, the Sāriks and

¹ The statistics for 1890-1895 are given below :—

District.	Crimes against		Percentage of Crime to Population.
	the Person.	Property.	
Mangishlāk	273	239	23
Krasnovodsk	147	315	14
Askabad	213	206	27
Tajand	104	416	41
Merv	537	913	22
Total	1271	2089	25

² Murderers are sometimes sent to serve their term of imprisonment at Chikisliar, a dismal place on the south-eastern Caspian shore, made to enhance the penalty and also to lessen the opportunity for vendetta, to which the Turkomans are greatly given.

³ They numbered, in 1895, 161,618 souls. It is curious to compare these figures with former calculations. Burnes, in 1832, estimated the number of Tekkes as 200,000; Vambéry, in 1863, as 180,000; and Petrusevitch, writing in 1878 on the eve of the Russian conquest, at 240,000. But these figures

the Yomuds, a large proportion of whom roam over Persian as well as Russian territory. Persistent attempts have been made of late years to encourage Russian immigration, but with indifferent success. Each family of new-comers is allowed a subsidy of 100 roubles, besides seed-corn and land rent free. But the climatic conditions are unfavourable, and the water-supply is unsuited to the European constitution. In 1892 one-fifth of the immigrants succumbed to cholera, and they suffer terribly from malarial fever.¹ As traders the Russians cannot compete successfully with the astute Armenian and Persian exploiters of Transcaspia. The Russian immigrants, who are mostly railway servants, are 3452 in number, not reckoning labourers who arrive at the beginning of winter and return home before the fearful tropical heats set in. The rest are scattered in the mountains south of Askabad on the Afghan frontier and the Caspian shore. There are ten colonies of agriculturists, and three of fishermen, with a total strength of 2174 souls. The besetting curse of these little settlements is drunkenness. General Kurapatkine, who strove during his whole term of office to foster Russian colonisation, endeavoured to check this vice by prohibiting the sale of spirits; but it is to be feared that enforced abstinence has only made the exiles' lot more forlorn, and their periodical outbursts more bestial. A semi-tropical climate and a soil either barren or saturated with malarial poison is not, and can never be, adapted to the children of the icy north.

The increase in population, large as it has been

are mere guesswork. They are based on an average of five persons to each kubitka, or tent, while experience shows that four is nearer the mark (chap. iii. Marvin's *Merv*).

¹ The families of the operatives of the Kizil Arvat Railway workshops, especially the children, are pallid, anæmic, and a prey to skin diseases.

under Russian rule, would have been still greater but for the prevalence of intermittent fever. That this scourge is connected with irrigation is beyond doubt, for the western districts, where water is scarce, are comparatively free from it; while in Tajand 30, and in Merv 85, per cent. of the applications for medical relief were due to intermittent fevers.¹ The conditions prevailing in the irrigated tracts are precisely the same as those in Central Bengal, which is in process of being slowly depopulated by malarial fevers. In both countries we have a water-logged subsoil, due in the one case to excessive rainfall and inundations from the rivers; in the other, to the presence of a network of irrigating channels. The lesson to be learnt by administrators of both provinces is the necessity of providing drainage. Smallpox was as fatal in Transcaspia as malarial fever. Epidemics recurred almost annually, and 50 per cent. of the children were slain or disfigured by the pest. One of the first steps taken by the Russians was to introduce vaccination. They encountered a vast amount of prejudice, especially among the priesthood, but the value of the boon conferred on suffering humanity by Jenner has long been recognised. Vaccination is decidedly popular, and as a consequence smallpox is almost unknown.² Enteric fever, which is increasing in an alarming ratio in Indian garrisons, is rare in Transcaspian cantonments, and unknown elsewhere in that province. Epidemics of cholera are also uncommon.

¹ The percentages in 1895 were—in Mangishlāk, 11 per cent.; Krasnovodsk, 11 per cent.; Askabad, 11 per cent.; Tajand, 30 per cent.; and Merv, 85 per cent. It is a remarkable fact that the hospitals and dispensaries maintained so generously by Russia at the administrative centres have conquered the prejudice entertained at first for European treatment. The applicants for medical and surgical relief in 1890 were only 6000. In 1895 the number had risen to 34,950.

² This would be an object-lesson for the "Conscientious objector," were it not that fanaticism is impervious to teaching or argument.

The last took place in 1892, when the infection was introduced from India by way of Herāt. It ravaged Meshed, the capital of Khorāsān, in May, and reached Askabad on the 1st June, having travelled 100 miles in eighteen days; thence it followed the line of rail, causing a mortality of 1859 out of 3471 attacks. The health of the Russian troops in Central Asia is, as might be expected, less satisfactory than that of the civil population. The annual admissions to hospital during the six years ending with 1895 were no less than 705 per mille; the deaths, 12.5; while 20.2 were discharged as unfit for further service. Thus the loss by death and incurable disease to the Russian army serving in Transcaspia exceeds 3 per cent. annually.

Readers who have followed our description of the physical conditions encountered in Transcaspia will have grasped the fact that its tillage depends wholly on the timely supply of water by artificial means. The Turkoman farmer is not, like his European comrade, at the mercy of the seasons, for he taps the rivers and streams descending from the Persian and Afghan highlands, which enjoy a fairly constant rainfall.¹ Dams erected in channels give a "head" of water which is drawn off into distributories or *ariks*, and these, again, are subdivided into tiny rills which afford to every plot of cultivated land its portion of the precious fluid. The parent stream thus gradually loses its speed and volume, and finally disappears in the arid desert sands. Where visible water is not met with, the springs on the mountain flanks are reached by a system of tunnelling. A well is sunk at a higher level than the area to be irrigated, and, when water is found, a lateral tunnel is excavated

¹ For the system of irrigation before the Russian conquest, the reader is referred to chap. xviii. of O'Donovan's *Story of Merv*, and p. 81 of Marvin's *Merv*.

which carries the subterranean water several hundred feet nearer its object. At its extremity another well is dug, and the piercing process is repeated till the thirsty tract is reached. A well-known natural law compels the water in the last of the chain of wells to rise to the level of that first sunk; and thus a head is formed which supplies a system of distributors. The method is known as the Persian, and is of extreme antiquity. So great is the skill of the older labourers practising it that the mole-like excavations in which they work are barely two feet in diameter by four in height.

On assuming the government of Transcaspia, the Russians made a special study of this all-important question, and came to the conclusion that it was impossible to improve on the methods evolved by ages of practical experience. Their policy, therefore, as regards irrigation, has been one of non-interference. Steps were taken to prevent cultivators in the Persian and Afghan territory from tampering with the sources of the water-supply. A chief engineer is posted at the provincial capital, Askabad, and subordinate ones at the district headquarters; but their functions are limited to suggesting improvements and supervising the repairs to canals and distributories. The task of allotting the water-supply was left in the hands of the *Mīrāb*,¹ a native official elected by the inhabitants of every village dependent on irrigation. His operations are guided by the average quantity of water required by individual peasants. The unit is termed *Sū*,² and is by no means a constant quantity. In some parts it implies the volume of water sufficient to irrigate a given area, varying between one and five acres. In Merv the *Sū* implies the quantity

¹ *Mīrāb*, lord of water, an old Persian title.

² *Sū* is a Turkish word for water. It is met with in the nomenclature of many streams near Constantinople.

which flows in two hours through a distributory discharging water at the rate of $1\frac{1}{4}$ quarts per second. In Tajand it is equivalent to the needs of an average garden, or to a discharge of half a gallon per second. In many parts of the Merv and Akkal oasis the process is simplified by the existence of associations of peasants, termed *Artel*, each of whom receives a *Sarkār*,¹ or head of water, consisting of 8 to 36 Sū. The ordinary irrigation channels are held in common by the villages which they supply, but wells and underground aqueducts vest in the person who excavates them and in his heirs. The Russians have shown great practical wisdom in avoiding unnecessary interference with a system so complex; for an attempt at stringent control would bring them in contact with fierce prejudices and lead to loss of prestige.

Turning from the system to its operation, we find the most important works connected with the Murghāb, that ancient source of Merv's prosperity. It rises in Afghanistan, as do its confluent, the Kāshān and Kushk, a fact which places the Merv oasis at the mercy of the Amīr. It is more than probable that the next rectification of frontier demanded by Russia will comprise the whole watershed of these streams. The course of the Murghāb in Russian territory is 530 miles long; its breadth at Merv is 84 feet, and its depth 7. The Panjdih oasis, with a cultivated area of 75,000 acres, owes its fertility to this river, whose waters are confined by a dam called the Kawshut Khān Band. Farther north we have the Yolatan oasis, inhabited by Sārik Turkomans, with another huge dam, known as the Kāzī Keui Band, affording water to 125,000 acres, at a velocity of 1500 feet per second. Near its site are the ruins of the Sultān Band, a work far vaster than any of

¹ A Persian word meaning, primarily, government; secondarily, an estate or property.

the present day. It gave a head of 28 feet, and made the fields and gardens of Old Merv the most fertile region on the globe's surface. The Sultān Band was destroyed in 1784 by the Amīr Murād of Bokhārā,¹ a piece of vandalism which ruined Merv's prosperity and made it a robbers' lair. Just a century later the Tsar, to whose private estates the site of Old Merv belongs, ordered the construction of an anicut 13 miles up stream. The work was carried out by Colonel Kashalinski, superintendent of the state domains at Bahrām 'Ali, the first railway station east of modern Merv. It includes a dam which gives a 14 feet head of water, and is connected with a series of storage basins feeding a central canal 20 miles long. This, in its turn, supplies 35 miles of secondary canals and 105 of distributories. The area thus irrigated amounts to 15,000 acres, 5000 of which are under cotton, and 3675 grow wheat and barley. The whole is let out to Turkomans and Bokhārāns, and the mountains of cotton waiting for transport by rail in the season are a standing proof of the excellence of the crops; the return is indeed said to be not far short of a hundredfold. So great is the demand for farms that the natives compete for the privilege of holding one at a rent in kind amounting to a quarter of the gross produce. In spite of prohibitions, subletting is very rife, and the same plot supports several families. The cost of these splendid operations was about £105,000, an expenditure which was declared by an eminent English authority on irrigation to be one-fifth of what a similar work would entail in India. It is in contemplation to restore the Sultān Band, at a cost estimated at £210,000. There can be few better in-

¹ Marvin's *Merv*, p. 263. The date is there given as 1787; as a matter of fact, the invasion of Murād, alias Ma'sūm, commonly styled "Begi Jān," took place three years earlier.

vestments for capital than one which will restore to the brightest jewel of Russia's Asiatic diadem a portion of her ancient splendour.

The policy of *laissez-faire* has been extended by Russian administration to popular education. Every village of importance has its Maktab,¹ or primary school, where a modicum of corrupt Persian and Arabic is combined with an inordinate amount of parrot-like repetition of passages from the Koran. In 1893 these numbered 179, with an attendance of 2629 boys and 331 girls. The teachers generally belong to the priestly class, which in old days enjoyed less authority than in any Mohammedan country. Since the Russian invasion their occult influence has increased, and it is not exerted in the invaders' favour. Throughout Islām, indeed, the mullās are irreconcilable enemies to Western progress, and a recent rebellion in Farghāna has led many experts to doubt whether tenderness to indigenous institutions has not been carried too far; for the Maktabas are forcing-grounds for the Madrasas, or colleges, which are to be found at every district headquarters, and are centres of obscure intrigue. Russian education has indeed advanced with giant strides. The first school in which the difficult tongue of the conqueror was taught dates from 1882, when this was opened at Kizil Arvat for the railway staff. Mdlle. Komaroff, daughter of the first military governor, founded one in that headquarter in 1884. It has now become the "Town School," with 184 pupils, including 62 natives. In 1890 there were but 5 schools throughout the provinces, with an attendance of 395. General Kurapatkine has spared no effort during his long term of office to promote Russian education; but, until 1894, he encountered sullen opposition. In that year the tide began to turn, and in 1896 there were no

¹ Maktab, an Arabic word meaning school.

fewer than 69 Russian schools, with an attendance of 1196. It is to be hoped, in the best interest of Transcaspia, that the mistake which has had such sinister results in India will not be repeated there. Vernacular education under close Russian supervision is far preferable to a system which encourages a mechanical study of an alien tongue by classes which can never be rendered better or happier by its acquisition.

The method of collecting revenue in Transcaspia displays the simplicity and reliance on native agency which are seen in other branches of the administration. The principal tax is one levied on each "kibitka," a term which conventionally includes fixed as well as movable dwellings. The rate in force at the present day is six roubles, or nearly thirteen shillings; and the incidence per head of the population, assuming the kibitka to shelter five persons, is only two shillings and sevenpence. The starshina is held responsible for the realisation of an amount equivalent to the number of kibitkas in the village multiplied by six, and he pays the sum directly into the district treasury. In practice the tax is treated as one on income, and a wide latitude is left to the starshina. He reduces the demand from widows and daily labourers to a few pence, and exempts paupers altogether; while wealthy families are made to pay as much as £22. As the kibitka tax amounts to no more than a twenty-fifth of the average family's earnings, there is rarely any difficulty in collecting the entire demand. Malversation is extremely rare, and, in one case at least, the villagers voluntarily subscribed a sum sufficient to cover its mayor's defalcations. In the Sarakhs district a different system is in force. There a tax is levied proportionately to the *Sū*, or unit of water, used in irrigation. Small excise duties are levied on tobacco, matches, and kerosene oil, and the owners of cattle driven from Persian

territory to Transcaspiian grazing-grounds pay a trifle on each head. The only other tax is one on trade, which has long been current in the Central Asian Khānates. Merchants who are not Russian subjects pay Government one-fortieth of the value of wares received or despatched by caravans. No budgets as we understand the term are published by the provincial governor; for the immense cost of the garrisons maintained in Central Asia should fairly be set off against the receipts from taxation. It is tolerably certain, however, that Russia finds her Asiatic possessions a source of heavy expenditure from the imperial treasury, which she is content to endure in view of indirect advantages which she reaps from them. Their strategical value is incalculable, for they place Persia, Afghanistan, and Western China at her mercy; while the benefit to Russian commerce, by the daily increasing movement of goods on the Transcaspiian railway system, is equally conspicuous.

The proceeds of taxation are allotted to local as well as imperial purposes. Among the former, roads are of the greatest importance. The province possesses 458 miles of metalled roads, exclusive of one constructed in 1888 between Askabad and Meshed, the capital of Khorāsān. On this a waggon service plies daily, and every high-road has its line of telegraph wires. The latter are connected with 17 offices, which dealt in 1896 with 113,434 messages. There are 25 postal stations, connected by a series of hand vehicles, which in the same year cost nearly £50,000 sterling.¹

The entire system of transport, however, is in a transition state, for the railway has already revolutionised the mechanism of commerce. Its length in Transcaspiian

¹ The income from posts and telegraphs is increasing, though the statistics are still insignificant. It was 82,832 roubles in 1890, and 133,005 roubles in 1895.

territory is 663 miles, and an extension from Merv to Kushk, on the Afghan frontier, a distance of 192 miles, will be completed before the 1st June 1899. The old caravan roads southward lay through Persia and Afghanistan; but the insecurity which reigns there, and the transit duties levied, have driven merchants to adopt the longer but safer route by steamer and railway. Thus goods for China and India travel by way of Bombay, Batum, and Baku. The Caspian is traversed by steamer,¹ and at Krasnovodsk the railway is met with. The whole line was placed under the charge of General Kurapatkine in 1892; but on his transfer in the beginning of 1898 to the Ministry of War it passed under the control of the Minister of Ways and Communications.

This necessarily brief sketch of Transcaspian administration reveals an honest attempt on the part of the Russians to promote the material welfare of her former foes. It is too often repeated by writers who are blinded by political passion, or have no personal knowledge of Central Asia, that the subject peoples there are groaning under the heel of a ruthless military oppression. Englishmen who have visited the heart of the great continent, and mixed freely with every class of the population, agree in denying the truth of these charges. General Kurapatkine, when on the eve of laying down his high office, declared that Russian policy might be defined as the maintenance of peace, order, and prosperity in every class of the population. Those, he went on to say, who fill responsible positions are expressly informed by Government that the assumption of sovereignty over other nationalities must not be attempted

¹ Three steamer companies ply on the Caspian; the oldest is the "Caucasus Mercury," and the others are termed the "Caspian" and "Eastern." The steamers are better suited for goods than passengers.

without very serious deliberation, inasmuch as such become, on annexation, Russian subjects, children of the Tsar, and invested with every privilege enjoyed by citizens of the empire.¹ These noble words reflect the attitude of General Kurapatkine and his lieutenants. Many of the latter had a lifelong experience of native manners and mode of thought; and one at least, Colonel Arandarenko, district officer of Merv, is adored by the inhabitants of the oasis. That the forces of disorder have been rendered impotent is certainly not the case. The contrast between the prosaic present and the wild romance of that past which is fast fading into legend must be bitter indeed to the half-tamed Turkomans. Nature, we know, *nihil facit per saltum*; and governments, however despotic, are incapable of suddenly changing the trend of a nation's instincts, the legacy of unnumbered generations. It may, however, be said with perfect truth that the Russians in Central Asia strive earnestly, and with a great measure of success, to promote the greatest good of the greatest number.

¹ A verbatim reproduction of this remarkable utterance is to be found in the Appendix. General Kurapatkine's great master, Skobelev, was equally explicit in a proclamation issued to his troops on the day after his victory at Geok Tepe. "A new era," he said, "has opened for the Tekkes—an era of equality and of a guaranteed possession of property for all, without distinction. Our Central Asian policy recognises no pariahs. Herein lies our superiority over the English" (Ney, *En Asie Centrale*, p. 248).

CHAPTER VIII

ASKABAD AND MERV

KRASNOVODSK, the western terminus of the Transcaspian Railway, stands on the northern side of the Balkan Bay, through which the Oxus once discharged into the Caspian. It is protected from the groundswell by a natural breakwater of jagged rock which stretches nearly twenty-five miles southwards; and from icy Siberian blasts by a range of barren limestone hills.

The little town which nestles in this bleak amphitheatre is of recent origin, for it was only in 1897 that it superseded Uzun Ada, a shallow and insecure port on the south of the bay. The Government offices, substantially built of a warm brown freestone, surround a central square, where a patch of grass and a few scraggy trees strive in vain to relieve the desolation which recalls the surroundings of Aden to the Eastern traveller. Nor is the parallel confined to externals, for Krasnovodsk is dependent on distillation for its water-supply. The building where the precious fluid is manufactured from the briny Caspian is well worth a visit, inasmuch as its designer, M. Yagen, has solved the problem how to extract a maximum of fresh water at a minimum expenditure of fuel. The steam, generated in tubular boilers heated by a roaring fire of petroleum refuse,¹ passes through a series of iron vats

¹ This is a by-product of petroleum distillation, and termed, in Russian, *astatki*. After the more volatile illuminants have passed over, a residue

sheathed with felt, losing some of its heat and aqueous particles in each. But the chief ornament of Krasnovodsk is, strange to say, the railway terminus. Unlike those which disgrace so many English towns, it is a highly successful effort to blend the ornamental with the useful. The trains which leave Krasnovodsk for the heart of Central Asia twice a week are made up of second and third-class carriages on the corridor system. They are warmed in the abominable fashion peculiar to Russia, by air heated in a roaring stove, and their lavatories are on the most primitive model. The stuffy compartments contain narrow wooden benches; and upper berths, which let down at night, form very indifferent beds. In one of these little purgatories the traveller bound for Samarkand ensconces himself at 4.30 p.m., after a substantial meal at the railway buffet, which differs in no wise from those met with on the Caucasian railways. But the jolting and discomfort are soon forgotten in the novelty of the surroundings. For seventy miles the line skirts the deep blue Caspian, which is covered in winter with wild fowl, a living contradiction to the travellers' tales which represent the great lake as nearly destitute of animal life. The northern horizon is hemmed in by the rugged outlines of the Great Balkans, a range as desolate and forbidding as the mountains of the moon. Then the train plunges into a boundless plain covered with sparse tufts of wiry grass. This is the great Turkoman Desert, the habitat of that splendid race which inspired terror in the Roman legionaries and defied the greatest military power of modern Europe. But soon the rugged outlines of the Kopet Dāgh Mountains open southward, and at remains in the shape of a rosy greenish-brown fluid, which in former days was considered valueless. It is now rapidly superseding coal as a steam raiser, and the recent rise in the market price of crude petroleum is in great measure due to the constantly extending use of *astatki* on steamers and railways.

6.22 on the following morning the train halts at Kizil Arvat, the workshops of the Transcaspian Railway, which break the wild poetry of hill and desert by their prose of Western industry. They were founded ten years ago by General Annenkoff, whose modest bungalow is still pointed out with the respect instinctively rendered to genius everywhere. The works on the south side of the railway are as complete in their degree as those at Crewe. The forges and fitting shops come first in order. They occupy two masonry sheds, exhibiting lines of blacksmiths' forges, in each of which an astatki fire burns without the smallest attention from the operatives. The installation in the turning-shop, with its lathes and steam hammers, would interest an Englishman more if it was not too evident that the appliances were of German origin. It is a relief to pass into the engine-room and find one of the five machines, with a horse-power of 52 nominal, bearing the honoured name of Tangye. The foundry will be next visited. It can furnish castings up to a maximum of two tons. In point of fact, locomotives of the latest pattern may be turned out at Kizil Arvat; though in practice it is found expedient to import them from Moscow. The carpenters' shops are lofty structures, with a floor area of 36,000 feet, where cars and waggons are turned out with great rapidity. The inspecting carriages are marvels of compactness, containing a saloon upholstered with luxurious settees, a bedroom, bath, and kitchen. The storehouses are specially worth visiting. Their sides are lined with masonry compartments, containing tools, with "plus and minus" slips enabling stock to be taken in in a few hours. With the exception of a few files which bear Sheffield trade-marks, the tools are all the products of Russian and German workshops. Nor has our declining metallurgic industry any share in the supply of raw material, for the tariff practically

excludes its products from the empire in the absence of a special authorisation of the Ministry of Commerce. Some attention is paid to the comfort of the workmen employed at Kizil Arvat. There is an institute, styled a Casino, containing a restaurant, where meals can be had at an absurdly low tariff, and a ballroom large enough to accommodate the 700 workmen and their wives. Some distraction is a sheer necessity, for the surroundings of Kizil Arvat are calculated to drive a European to despair. The town stands in a dreary plain two miles from the mountains, which supply an abundance of water. Nothing would be easier than to produce vegetation of surpassing beauty, for the desert soil needs but irrigation to furnish everything that could delight the eye. The People's Park only serves to make the aspect of the town more forbidding; and the ugly square boxes serving as married quarters are entirely destitute of a garden. The place is said to be healthy, in spite of a summer heat rising to 110 degrees; but another tale is told by the crowd which are attracted by the band of the 2nd Railway Battalion, stationed here. The adults are generally ill-favoured and stunted, and the repulsive sores on their faces are evidence of bad water and insufficient nutrition. The working population is Russian, with the exception of a few Turkomans, who are admitted as apprentices, and exhibit a mechanical bias which ought to be more encouraged. Wages and working hours would hardly be approved of by the pampered British artisan. Foremen draw a salary of £110 to £130 annually, but the rank and file are paid on the piece-work system. A carpenter of average industry can earn 5s. 6d.; a fitter, 4s. 4d. per diem. The hours of work are from 6 p.m. till noon, with a break at 7.30 for breakfast; and again from 1.30 till 7 p.m.—an eleven hours' day.

Geok Tepe, the scene of the crowning mercy of 1881,

is the next halting-place. In this dry atmosphere the vestiges of the Tekkes' last refuge enables the traveller to conjure up the fearful scenes enacted there eighteen years ago. A hundred yards north of the railway stretches a long earthen rampart 12 or 15 feet high, broken near its south-east angle and on the eastern face by huge gaps, through which the infuriated Russian soldiers pressed on the memorable 24th of January 1881. The interior of the rude fortress is still scored with funnel-shaped holes, and strewn with fragments of iron left by the exploding shells. The whole scene comes vividly before him who ascends Dangil Teppe, a mound at the north-west corner whence the Turkomans plied their only gun during the siege.¹ He seems to see beneath, the dense mass of dark felt kibitkas lit up by the explosion of missiles charged with petroleum. His ears are stunned by the shrieks of the agonised women and children who seek shelter in vain from these messengers of death, the hoarse cries of the combatants locked in a death-struggle, the roar of musketry and the clash of steel. While he is fain to admit that civilisation has gained by the issue of the tremendous struggle, the Englishman bares his head in honour of the brave men who bled for freedom here. The Russian lines can still be distinguished to the east of the crumbling ramparts; and, as if to point Gray's sad moral, "the paths of glory lead but to the grave," three graveyards alone remain where the pulse of war

¹ This ancient piece, a prize taken from the cowardly Persians, very nearly cost Skobelev his life. Moser relates that the general, while reconnoitring the defences, became a mark for a brisk fusillade which wounded several of his staff. He was implored not to expose himself unnecessarily; but his only reply was to call for a chair and a glass of tea. There he sat indulging calmly in a cigarette while the bullets whistled round him. When, however, the cannon spoke, and its projectile plunged deeply into the soil close to his chair, Skobelev adopted the "best part of valour." He rose, saluted the Tekke gunners, and walked slowly back to his quarters (*A Travers l'Asie Centrale*, p. 315).



A GROUP OF TURKOMANS AT ASKAPAD STATION

once beat highest, tenanted by the bones of those who died at their Tsar's behest. The Cossack and the Stavropol Regiments have their own God's acre, and in a third, which stands near the site of Skobeleff's camp, is a white-washed mound with an iron plate recording the number of the slain. A little museum of relics of the siege has lately been opened between the rugged earthen wall and the railway line. The contrast between past and present is placed in a startling light by a large cotton-pressing factory which has been established by a Jew near the western face of Geok Tepe. Here gangs of Turkomans, some of whom were doubtless once eager in war and foray, may be seen toiling at the screw-presses under the sharp spur of necessity.

Askabad, the capital of Transcaspia, is 322½ miles from Krasnovodsk, and is reached in twenty hours. The town dates only from 1883, and now has a population of about 16,000, including a garrison of 10,000. It stands on the broadest part of the Akkal oasis, at the foot of the Kopet Dāgh range, which affords a refuge to the European in the fierce summer heats. There are two sanitarium, —Fīrūza, in a pleasant valley 2800 feet above sea-level, and Khayrābād, 3000 higher, a Transcaspian Simla sacred to the Di Majores of the official Pantheon. The broad streets are lined with vigorous young trees, and cut each other at right angles. The Anglo-Indian traveller is forcibly reminded of the cantonments, which are believed to have furnished the founder, General Komaroff, with a model for his headquarters. In the matter of roads, the Russian stations of Central Asia would give points to any town in the European dominions of the Tsar. They show no break-neck holes, no boulders which only a droshky can negotiate; and their excellence at Askabad is vouched for by the existence of a flourishing bicycle club, which is the centre of social

life for the non-military population. On leaving the station the tourist passes, on the left, the offices of the railway staff, with Oriental arcades surrounding a pretty garden, a technical school, which has recently been enlarged, and a pro-gymnasium, and thus reaches the barracks, which stand at the north-east corner of the town, and accommodate four active and one reserve battalion of Transcaspian Rifles, a regiment of Cossacks from Terek in the Caucasus, three batteries of field and one of mountain guns, and a squadron of 200 Turkoman militia. Their quarters have been arranged on purely Indian lines. Every company or squadron has a lofty one-storeyed building allotted to it, containing a dormitory with a double row of beds, a chapel, and a hall for recreation and military instruction. The latter contains two rifles on stands with targets for aiming-drill, which is illustrated by books containing photogravures of the different positions. Here, too, are always seen oleograph portraits of the reigning Tsar and his consort. So vast is his empire, that unless the personality of the sovereign were not brought home to the people by these perpetual reminders there would be some risk of its becoming a mere abstraction.

Every care is taken to keep alive the traditions of the army by coloured prints portraying acts of bravery and self-devotion in past campaigns. Thus the story of the soldier Ossipoff is told in nearly every barrack-room. He belonged to a garrison which defended a redoubt in the Caucasus during Schamyl's insurrection. Besieged by an overwhelming force, the little band held out to the last extremity; and when the position was taken by storm, Ossipoff exploded the magazine, blowing himself and hundreds of the enemy into the air. To this day his name is borne on the muster-roll of his battalion, and when it is called the man next on the

list replies : " He has died for the honour of the Russian army ! " In the company kitchens the soldiers' cabbage soup may be tasted. It is made with stock provided by the half-pound of fresh meat which, with three pounds of rye bread, constitutes the daily ration. On gala days the men have a mess of rice boiled with butter and raisins. The fare would probably excite loathing in the British private, but the physique of the troops is a sufficient proof that it is abundant and nutritious. The means of developing muscle are not wanting ; for every barrack-ground has a gymnasium as well as a miniature fort, which is formed by competing companies at the word of command. The parade-ground adjoins the barracks. It is overshadowed by the cathedral, a splendid structure built three years ago in an ornate Byzantine style, which contains, on the left of the altar, a beautiful *eikon* in enamel of the soldier's saint, Alexander Nevsky, in full panoply, placed there in memory of the late Tsar. In the centre of the Champ de Mars is a pillar commemorating Geok Teppe, flanked at each corner by an Afghan cannon captured at Dāsh Keupri in 1885. Manœuvres take place weekly on the broken ground between the town and the lower spur of the Kopet Dāgh Mountains. British officers who have witnessed one of these field-days are unanimous in praising the workmanlike appearance of the troops. The riflemen in their tunics, knickerbockers, and long Russian boots are sturdy, if rather undersized ; and the Cossacks are picturesquely clad in long castans and closely fitting astrakhan shakoes. The artillery come into action at 3500 yards, and show a fair amount of dash ; but the Cossacks' performance is disappointing. A water-course encountered during a charge will reduce a regiment to a disorderly mob, and the ponies are blown long before the objective is reached. It is the

and by O'Donovan from bitter personal experience. A broad metalled road, parallel with the line of railway, leads to the Murghāb, a canal-like stream crossed by a bridge with ninety-six feet water-way. On the right bank of this ancient source of Merv's prosperity are the remains of a stupendous line of ramparts, which, O'Donovan tells us,¹ were commenced in hot haste by the Tekkes in the vain hope that they might serve as a bulwark against the Russian advance. From their crest, thirty feet above the plain, the barracks of the garrison are seen embowered in stately trees. Merv has immense strategic value, and is therefore the headquarters of a force far larger than would be necessary to overawe the scanty population of the oasis. There are four battalions of Transcaspian Rifles, one of sappers, a railway battalion, and two batteries of field artillery. On the east of the Murghāb, too, is the Russian town, laid out with the same depressing regularity as Askabad. But the bungalows which line the dusty streets are redeemed by no wealth of tropical foliage. The humanising effects of gardening are not appreciated by Russians, and the jealously watered compounds of the officials enclose only scraggy trees and stuccoed buildings. The interiors are less forbidding. The rooms have polished floors, but little in the way of furniture save low divans spread with Turkoman carpets and tiger skins.²

¹ *The Story of Merv*, p. 194.

² The Central Asian tiger has a shaggier coat than his Bengal relative, and his disposition is less truculent. He never molests human beings or shows fight unless attacked. About a year ago one strayed during the noon-day heat into a kibitka near the Sir Daryā, pushed aside the occupant, a woman who was spinning at the door, and coiled himself up in a dark corner for a nap. Alas for outraged hospitality! Information was given at the nearest post, and a party of riflemen soon arrived and did the poor beast to death.

The climate of Merv is detestable. In summer the temperature rises to 100 degrees, and the houses must be sealed hermetically between 8 a.m. and sunset. No punkahs mitigate the sweltering heat, and ice is tabooed on the ground that it increases the liability to fever. This latter is the bane of Merv, as it is of all irrigated tracts without subsoil drainage. In 1896 nearly 5000 of the population perished; and so high was the death-rate in the Russian garrison that it was in contemplation to remove the troops temporarily to healthier quarters. In no place are health-giving diversions more necessary, but such are unknown even to the younger officers. A respectable bag of the brilliant Central Asian pheasant may be made in the brushwood cover three miles from Merv. In India the environs of a military station are swept as bare of game as the Plaine de St. Denis by Parisian gunners. Polo is unknown, though the ground in all directions is suited to the noble pastime, and ponies can be picked up for £10 or £12. The scanty leisure left the young fellows by the absorbing round of duty is given up to billiards and dancing. Balls take place on Sundays at the Casino, an institution which takes the place of our messroom and club. It belongs to Government, and is maintained by subscriptions levied from all civil and military officers. At the entrance is a buffet covered with bottles and the usual components of the zakouska. Adjoining it is a restaurant, which offers an extensive menu at prices much below those of the railway refreshment-rooms and the miserable hotels. This opens on to a fine ballroom adorned with portraits of Tsars and Tsarinas past and present. Guests are received on their arrival by two members of the Casino committee, and make their way through a hall crowded with officers in undress uniform to the ball-

room, at the upper end of which the great ladies of the place sit in state round a table covered with dishes of apples and bonbons. After making his obeisance, the visitor is free to enjoy himself—if haply he can secure a partner, for the dearth of the fair sex at Central Asian balls is more marked than in India. Mazurkas and cotillons are practised with a zeal which would perhaps be considered “bad form” at Simla; while the majority unable to participate in their ardent pleasures block the doorways and find solace in frequent adjournments to the buffet, which is always thronged with hosts only too willing to pledge their friends in rassades of vodka and fiery liqueurs. The close resemblance between Central Asian and Indian cantonments extends to the bazaars. The lines of small open shops, the dusty trees, the open drains, even the indescribable but never-to-be-forgotten odour, all are common to British and Russian possessions in the East. The trade of Merv is not confined to the permanent bazaar. A weekly market is held on a plain to the east of the town. The roads converging thither are thronged on Mondays with Turkomans riding double on their ill-fed ponies and two-wheeled Persian carts piled high with goods. The latter are exposed for sale in long lines of covered booths, where Hebrew, Persian, and Armenian vendors squat, surrounded by dried fruits, rice from Meshed, coarse beet-sugar from Russia, and rocky almond paste. The fruit would win a first prize at any English show. Nowhere are melons cheaper or more fragrant, apricots and grapes nowhere more choice. The cheap cutlery, trinkets, leather goods, and samovars are much the same as one sees in Russian markets west of the Caspian, but the prices are at least 100 per cent. dearer. The embroidery, shawls, and carpets for which Merv was famed have



RUINS OF OLD MERV

lost in value and quality since the Russian conquest. Vast is the concourse of Turkomans from all parts of the oasis at these weekly gatherings; but there is far less of the babel of sounds and the eager bargaining than is seen at Indian bazaars. It is in vast crowds that national spirit is unconsciously displayed. If that of Merv be reflected in the thousands of big-boned, slouching Turkomans in sheep-skin hats and flowing garments who flock hither to lay in their weekly supplies, then it is evident that their spirit has been crushed by conquest.

The ruins of the ancient cities which successively bore the name of Merv stand in a dismal plain covered with tamarisk and camels' thorn ten miles from the modern cantonments. The railway station whence they may be visited is called Bahrām 'Alī, after an eighteenth century chieftain who held the neighbouring robber tribes under stern control, until his overthrow by Amīr Murād, the founder of the Bokhāran dynasty. Trim orchards and broad roads surround the halting-place, and on all sides may be seen huge piles of cotton awaiting transport. For Bahrām 'Alī is the centre of the Tsar's private domains, which have of late years received a plentiful supply of water from one of the old irrigation works now restored by imperial enterprise. Leaving this smiling oasis, one enters on a scene of desolation which can be matched only by the environs of Delhi. Like that vast tomb of empires, Old Merv is a series of ruined cities, each built of its predecessors' materials.¹ The most recent is the citadel so stoutly defended by

¹ Three have been identified—Giaur Kal'a, Sultan Sanjar, and Bahrām 'Alī. Some entrenchments are fabled to represent a fourth, older than the rest, built by Alexander the Great. But, as is well known, Iskandar Zū-l-Karnayn, "Alexander the Two-horned," shares with Timūr and the Amīr 'Abdullah the credit of having built nearly everything worth seeing in Central Asia.

Bahrām 'Alī in 1784. It is an irregular quadrangle of about 250 yards square, surrounded by a wall with circular towers of brick. Within, amid a mass of ruins, is a mosque with a cupola still standing, and in the courtyard of the citadel, at the north-east corner, are the remains of the founder's palace, a quadrangle of three-storeyed buildings in fair preservation. Passing out of Bahrām 'Alī by the eastern portal, one sees, a mile off, two arched recesses standing side by side, conspicuous by their ornamentation of blue enamelled bricks. In front of each is a tombstone of grey marble, showing extracts from the Koran in raised Arabic lettering. According to tradition, they cover the remains of two standard-bearers of the Prophet. Hard by is a fine vaulted well; and the group are the sole exceptions to the tale of ruin told by the heaps of crumbling bricks which stretch as far as the eye can see. The oldest of the ruined cities of the plain, called Giaur Kal'a, stood eastwards of these monuments. It was destroyed in the seventh century, when the Caliph 'Omar's lieutenants carried their creed through Central Asia by fire and sword. Giaur Kal'a is identified by its vast earthen ramparts, which have proved more durable than the bricks and mortar of a much later age. As in the case with Bahrām 'Alī, there are the remains of a citadel at its north-eastern angle, from which an extended view can be had of the poor relics of vanished splendour. North-west of Giaur Kal'a are the only buildings of ancient Merv which continue to serve the purposes of man. They are a serai and mosque, which have clustered round the ugly tomb of a saint named Yūsuf Hamadāni. It contains the usual vaulted chambers for the accommodation of travellers, ranged in a square in which their goods and camels find standing room. Beyond it is the tomb of Sultan Sanjar, exactly in the centre of the site of the

second of the towns which successively bore the name of Merv. It is said to have been modelled on that of Firdawsi near Meshed, but it closely resembles the great mausolea of Upper India. All are alike, quadrangular buildings topped with an echoing dome, which gives a sense of vastness and solemnity beyond anything that the "long-drawn aisle and fretted vault" can compass. Even in its ruin the splendid edifice shows feats of workmanship in brick and mortar which it would be difficult to imitate with all the appliances of modern science. The Sultan who sleeps below was the best of the Seljūk Turks; and, to judge from the abundance of offerings piled on the rude clay mound which covers his remains, he still lives in the hearts of the people. The noble work was seen in all its majesty by only two generations; for in 1221 the city of the good Sultan Sanjar was razed to the ground, with a fearful slaughter of the inhabitants, by Tulūy Khān, a worthy son of the ferocious Chingiz. Here the ground is strewn with fragments of pottery exhibiting strangely beautiful designs, iridescent glass and enamelled tiles; and no one can doubt that systematic researches would yield more substantial tokens of a buried civilisation. The source of the fabulous wealth of Old Merv stands revealed in the numerous irrigating channels with which the site is scored. This is the land where—

"—— fairest of all streams, the Murga roves,
Amongst Merou's bright palaces and groves."¹

The source of supply was an immense dam erected across the stream thirty-five miles southwards, called Sultān Band, the destruction of which 114 years ago by the Amīr Murād brought utter ruin on the oasis. The mischief wrought by that fanatic has already been, in

¹ Moore's *Veiled Prophet of Khorasan*.

part, repaired by the Russians ; and the charming house of Colonel Kashtalinski, superintendent of the state domains, is embowered in gardens and orchards which will soon restore to this much harassed spot some share of its ancient prosperity.

CHAPTER IX

BOKHĀRĀ, A PROTECTED NATIVE STATE

THE 141 miles which separate Merv from the Bokhāran frontier were the costliest and the most depressing section of the Transcaspian Railway. It includes that terror of Russian engineers known as the Sandy Tract,¹ and no trace of cultivation is met with until the weary eye finds solace in the restful green which marks the course of the mighty Oxus. The border stronghold, Charjūy, crowns a hill to the south of the railway line, and bears in its rugged outlines a faint resemblance to Edinburgh Castle. The little town which nestles at its foot is garrisoned by a Russian force consisting of a battalion of Turkestan Rifles and a squadron of Cossacks. At Kerki, 110 miles up stream, three more rifle battalions and a regiment of Cossacks serve as a reminder of the power of Russia. The source of the Amū Daryā is Lake Victoria, a beautiful sheet of water embosomed in the Pamirs 15,600 feet above sea-level, which was visited by Marco Polo, and rediscovered in 1838 by Captain Wood of the Indian Marine.² The bed of the great river is 350 yards wide at the point where it leaves the hills at Khwāja Sālih, 90 miles north-west of Balkh; and 200 miles down stream it swells to 650 yards. The

¹ A description of the difficulties encountered has already been given.

² Khanikoff's *Bokhara*, p. 18; *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, 8th June 1840.

mean velocity is $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles an hour, the average depth 9 feet, increasing to a maximum of 29 in August after the annual rains. The course of the Oxus in our day is north-westerly, and it discharges into the Sea of Aral above Khiva. The stream once before bifurcated at Kohna Urganj, 70 miles south of the great inland lake; and one branch flowed south-westwards, entering the Caspian by the Balkhan Bay. At some period in the fifteenth or sixteenth century the Khivans attempted to restrain the course by a dam, and so caused a diversion of the western channel, which can still be traced through the Turkoman Desert.¹ To restore it has been the dream of the Russians since the days of Peter the Great. Elaborate surveys have demonstrated that the operation is perfectly practicable; and those who advocated it urged with truth that the canalisation of the river would turn many thousands of square miles of desert into a garden. The railway has, however, won the day; and the only use made of the Amū Daryā by the Russian authorities is to support a steam flotilla. This service was inaugurated in 1887,² and is now carried on by steel-built steamers drawing 2 feet of water, and carrying 200 tons of cargo. Its chief value lies in the means it gives for the transport of troops and munitions of war, for the river is navigable up to the Afghan frontier, 700 miles from its mouth. The Amū Daryā, however, cannot be made to serve the needs of commerce, for the channel is constantly shifting, sand-banks are thrown up and disappear in a few hours, and the navigating officers are in the hands of native pilots, who divine obstructions by observing the colour of the water. We have already described the great viaduct which

¹ "Mémoire sur l'ancien cours de l'Oxus," par M. Jaubert, *Nouveau Journal Asiatique*, Dec. 1833.

² Ney, *En Asie Centrale*, p. 300.

spans the Amū Daryā near Charjūy. It is admittedly but a make-shift, and will soon be replaced by a girder bridge. The traveller glances uneasily at the current swirling round the slender piers, and feels inwardly relieved when his train has crept safely to the opposite bank. On either side of the line there now stretches a dead level of parched-up loam, broken here and there by hillocks covered with the outlines of some ancient citadel. There are many of these Central Asian Pompeiis, deserted owing to the failure of the water-supply, or overwhelmed by the ever-encroaching sand. Mosques, market-places, and palaces stand as they did centuries back, but the narrow streets show no signs of human life. But the desert yields again to cultivation, and the train speeds through fields of cotton and millet, overshadowed by splendid trees. The fair domains irrigated from the river Zarafshān have been reached, and its centre, Bokhārā the Noble, comes into view. A canon of Russian policy ordains that the European quarters shall be placed at a considerable distance from the great cities. Thus the effect of sudden waves of fanaticism, which are always to be feared in Mohammedan countries, is lessened, and time is given to organise defence. The railway station is eight miles by road from the capital, and is the centre of a Russian town called New Bokhārā. Its broad thoroughfares are destitute of trees and flowers, for nothing will grow in this ill-chosen site. Among many mean buildings of the bungalow type are some with architectural pretensions—a handsome residency, built by M. P. Lessar during his term of office as representative at the Bokhāran Court, a palace in a hybrid Byzantine style lately erected for the Amīr, the new buildings of the Imperial Bank, and the offices of the 3rd Railway Battalion. The Russian quarter already numbers 6000 inhabitants, and is daily

growing in importance at the expense of its older rival. The highway leading to the latter passes through a country which is evidently much subdivided, and cultivated with extreme care. The fertile belt is watered by distributories from the Zarafshān,¹ which passes Samarkand and pours a flood of wealth into Bokhārā's lap. These canals are popularly attributed to Alexander the Great and Tīmūr, heroic figures which serve as a spur to the imagination of poets and professional storytellers throughout Central Asia. They are, in point of fact, the inevitable result of the natural conditions encountered. The soil in Bokhārā is either a rich yellow loam or sandy waste, and the latter is ever encroaching. The rainfall is scanty; and, but for the help of irrigation, mankind would long since have given up the incessant struggle for existence. Nowhere in the world are the contrasts between desolation and plenty more startling. A caravan approaching the capital finds itself, after weary months spent in the sands, suddenly surrounded by waving crops, and trees laden with luscious fruit, while its ears are greeted by the ripple of water. The mechanism by which this wondrous change is effected would excite the derision of a European engineer. The surveyor lies prone upon his back in the direction from which he wishes to bring water, looks over his forehead, and notes the point when ground is last seen. This rude substitute for the theodolite in-

¹ The Zarafshān, called by the ancients Polytimætus, takes its rise in a tremendous glacier of the Kharlatau Mountains, 270 miles due east of Samarkand. Its upper reaches are little but a succession of cataracts, and it is too rapid and shallow for navigation. The average width is 210 feet. More than 100 canals are supplied by this source of Bokhārā's prosperity, some of which are 140 feet broad. The capital is watered by one of them, called the Shari Rūd, which is 35 feet wide, and supplies innumerable smaller distributories (Khanikoff's *Bokhara*, p. 39; Meyendorff's *Bokhara* (Paris, 1820), p. 148).

volves a great deal of misplaced labour, but its results are as marvellous as those of the Egyptian irrigation department. The precious fluid is brought from the mountains in canals, carried round spurs, and crossing ravines in pipes, which, like those of our old London water companies, are often mere hollow trees. When the plain is reached the gradient is very slight; and so tenacious is the soil that streams 30 feet in breadth are restrained by banks $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet high and 3 feet broad at the base. The whole adult village population are the labourers, their only implements being a clumsy hoe, the lap of their long flowing robe, and a hurdle of plaited branches. The administration of the canals is on a popular basis. The superintendents, called "aksakāls," are elected by the cultivators; and every village has its own "mīrāb," who watches over the repairs and distributories, and is remunerated by a fixed proportion of the harvests. In years of plenty the task is an easy one; but it is far otherwise at the critical weeks which precede the spring melting of the snows. Every drop of water is then worth its weight in gold, and it must be so divided that each plot may get its just proportion. Complications, too, occur owing to the privileges which certain villages enjoy by royal grant or immemorial prescription, and by the absence of any satisfactory method of measuring discharges.¹ The Russians have shown wisdom in leaving the canals in native hands in the territory administered by them. In Bokhārā, of course, there has never been any question of introducing reform. The Bokhāran cultivator manures his fields heavily after harvest, and until they receive the life-giving water. In the city streets, old men and boys may be seen gathering every particle of refuse; and, in spite of the constant supply,

¹ Moser, *A Travers l'Asie Centrale*, p. 120.

the hungry soil is still unequal to the incessant demands upon it. Then the task of preparation begins. The fields are turned up lengthways and again transversely by a plough clumsily built of wood, its share only being tipped with iron. A pair of oxen can plough rather more than one acre during the cool hours between midnight and 9 a.m.¹ The soil is then manured and drenched with water. Spots which show effervescence, that curse of irrigated soil,² are dug up by hand and dressed with lime picked out of the ruins which abound in these ancient seats of population. The harrow, a plank two feet wide studded with iron nails, is next passed over the sodden soil in two directions. The enumeration of the crops thus raised would be as tedious as Homer's catalogue of men of war. The stand-by of the poor is juwārī (*holcus sorghum vel saccharatum*), a species of millet which yields two hundredfold of coarse grain. Cotton is amongst the most lucrative; and a vast impetus has been given to its growth by the railway, which carries the raw material to Russian mills. Wheat, barley, and pulse are also staples, and the vine is made to produce a heady fluid, like immature sherry, by Armenians and Jews, who have the monopoly of a manufacture forbidden to true believers. The entire cultivated area of Bokhārā is not much in excess of 8000 square miles, and the population which it maintains is at least 2½ millions. Thus the price of land is high, and it is much subdivided.³

¹ Khanikoff, p. 188.

² Throughout Central Asia the unit of surface measure is the tanap, which is equivalent to 44,100 square feet. This pest is termed reh in India, and is fought in a very half-hearted way by the ryots.

³ Khanikoff, *Bokhara*, p. 9. This author, who wrote in 1845, gives as the average price of good land a sum equivalent to £20 of our currency (p. 154). Forty years later the Russians paid £16 per acre for land required for their railway (Ney, *En Asie Centrale*, p. 311).

When viewed from a height the country resembles a huge shawl of a specially intricate pattern. The eight miles of dusty road which separate the capital from the Russian quarter run through fields which are exact replicas of those of Upper India, and the parallel extends to the villages of flat-roofed houses with wooden verandahs, and the shops displaying piles of sticky sweetmeats. The traveller's progress is impeded by rows of ponies tethered in the narrow streets. In Bokhārā everyone rides. The poorest can afford the hire of a moiety of a donkey, and beggars on horseback excite no remark. The approach to the city is lined with the gardens in which Bokhāran citizens delight. They are walled in or sheltered from the wintry blast by rows of silver poplars. A quadrangular pond marks the centre of four paths at right angles connected by smaller ones, and overshadowed by fruit trees which are a mass of tender hues when spring showers bring out the blossom. Flowers are few: the rose, the blue iris, sunflower, and poppy well-nigh exhaust the list. The cultivation of fruit is well understood. The melons have a more delicate aroma than those of any Eastern country. Dried apricots are known in India as the "Ālū-i-Bokhārā"; and every variety of fruit familiar to the European palate is to be had in a perfection and at prices which would excite wonder in Covent Garden.

This setting of brilliant vegetation adds dignity to the crumbling ramparts of Bokhārā. The town-wall, 28 feet high and $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles in circuit, encloses an area of 1760 acres, which seems disproportionate to the dwindling population, now amounting to no more than 65,000 souls.¹ Entering one of the eleven gates,² unchallenged

¹ According to Wolff, it numbered 180,000 in 1843 (*Bokhara*, p. 163).

² They are named Imām, Samarkand, Mazār, Kārshi, Salahkhānā, Namā-ziyya, Shaykh Jalāl, Kārākul, Shīr-Girān, Talipash, and Oghlān.

by the slouching sentry, the traveller finds himself in a *dædalus* of narrow lanes, swarming with human beings more suggestive of the unadulterated East than any other city in Asia can show. Sart is the Russian term for the sedentary population throughout Central Asia; but the variety of types which it includes is immense. The Tājiks are a tall well-favoured race, with clear olive complexions and black eyes and hair.¹ Their origin is the subject of much controversy; but, according to a tradition among them, they migrated to Bokhārā from the west, and reclaimed a reedy swamp which became the city's site.² They were subdued by the fierce Arabs in the eighth century, and adopted the Mohammedan religion. As each tide of conquest swept the country the Tājiks bent their necks, and acquired all the vices of a race inured to foreign dominion. They are polished, laborious, and intelligent, with a genius for commerce, but their greed and faithlessness are as notorious as their cowardice.³ Thus the Tājik is regarded with supreme contempt by the Uzbeks, who for three centuries have

¹ For the ethnology of Bokhārā the reader should consult Meyendorff, p. 189; Khanikoff, chaps. vii., viii., and ix.; and Moser, *A Travers l'Asie Centrale*, p. 68.

² The etymology of Bokhārā is also a moot point. There can be little doubt, however, that the word is derived from the Sanskrit *vihāra*, or hermit-cell, which was adopted by the Buddhists and became *bukhāra* in Mongolian. The city clustered round the retreat of an early ascetic.

³ Ujfalvy states that the Tājiks of the plains, as distinguished from their brethren of the hills, and the branch called Galchas inhabiting the Pamirs, have a triple origin. They are (a) descendants from the Iranian aborigines of Bactriana and Soghdiana, who remained in the level country throughout the successive invasions of Turko-Tartars, Mongols, and Arabs; they accepted the domination of each new-comer, and were compelled to give their daughters in marriage to the conquerors; (b) immigrants who from time to time arrived in Bokhārā from Khorāsān; (c) mixed alliances between the wealthier inhabitants of the Khānate and Persian slaves brought thither during many centuries by Turkoman freebooters. This author adds that many Tājiks show signs of Arab blood in their aquiline noses and brilliant eyes (*Les Aryens*, Paris, 1896).

been the dominant race.¹ They are a stem of the great Turkish family which, starting from the steppes north of the Gobi Desert, brought half the world under their sway. They are middle-sized but sturdy, with high cheek-bones, ruddy complexions, and dark auburn hair. In character they resemble the Osmānlīs—not the scum of the Levant now encountered at Constantinople, but the rude warriors who supplanted the Cross by the Crescent there in the fifteenth century. They are brave and independent, with the grossness of manners and something of the inborn dignity of the unadulterated Turk. Like the Kirghiz, who are also met with in Bokhārā,² and the Turkomans, Uzbegs are either sedentary or nomads. The first class resemble the Tājiks in their greed for gain, but they are not so civilised; the second tend their flocks and herds, dwelling in tents of dark grey felt hung with bright carpets. The reigning dynasty is of this race, and belongs to a division of the Mangit, the chief of the 97 clans³ into which Uzbegs are divided. At the opposite pole stand the Jewish community, which is traditionally believed to have migrated hither from Baghdād. Half a century ago they numbered 10,000,⁴ but they have dwindled to perhaps half as many under the grinding persecution to

¹ An Uzbek proverb has it: "When a Tājik tells the truth he has a fit of colic!"

² The Kirghiz style themselves *Kazāk*, "warriors." They roam over the Khānates, and love to shelter themselves from the icy blasts in the long reeds lining the banks of the Sir Daryā. They are cruel, treacherous, and given to rapine. Government is exercised by hereditary Khāns, but the personal equation is everything, and the Khān who derogates is lost. Fighting men are called *Bahādurs*; the relatives of the tribal Khān, *Sultāns*.

³ A native chronicle called "Nassed Nameti Uzbekia," giving a catalogue of these clans, is quoted by Khanikoff, *Bokhara*, p. 74.

⁴ Wolff's *Bokhara*, p. 163. The doctor states that their synagogue possesses an ancient version of the Prophet Daniel, giving the variant "2400" in the place of "2300" in chap. viii. ver. 14.

which they have been subjected. Bokhārā is not a whit in advance of mediæval Europe in its treatment of this forlorn colony. The time, indeed, has gone by when Jews might be savagely assaulted by a true believer, and even killed with impunity. But they are still relegated to a filthy and crowded Ghetto. They are forbidden to ride in the streets, and must wear a distinctive costume, a small black cap edged with two fingers' breadth of sheep-skin, a dark dressing-gown of camels' hair, and a rope girdle, a survival of a time when it might at any moment be required for its wearer's execution. This tyranny, tenfold worse than that endured by the Tājiks, has ranged the Jew on the side of the white man.

In the earlier days of their empire in Central Asia the Russians received a good deal of valuable information as to popular feeling from these despised auxiliaries. The blind hatred which superiority excites in minds of the lower type is universal in Bokhārā, and the Jews of the Khānate still groan under disabilities which are more degrading to their oppressors than to themselves. The Persian element is a strong one, and the slim figures, dark eyes, and regular features of the children of poor worn-out Irān are conspicuous in the motley crowd that fills the streets. They are descended from slaves sold by Turkoman raiders, or from 40,000 Persian families transplanted from Merv by Amīr Murād in 1784. Being Shī'as, they cordially detest the Uzbegs and Tājiks, who belong to the rival Sunni sect.¹ Under former Amīrs, notably the treacherous Nasrullah, who murdered

¹ As is well known, the Mohammedans everywhere are ranged into two sections. The Sunnis are the orthodox, and owe their name to their adhesion to the traditionary teaching, *Sunna*, of the Prophet. The Shī'as reject it; and are also champions of the claim to succeed Mohammed of 'Alī, his cousin and son-in-law, and of his sons in their turn, Hasan and Husayn. With the exception of the Persians, who are Shī'as, almost the whole of the Mohammedan world is Sunni. The two sects hate each other with the true *odium theologicum*.



HINDUS OF BOKHARA

our countrymen Stoddart and Conolly, the Persians gained commanding influence.¹ They are now peaceable traders, whose patriotism stops at day-dreams of reviving the glories of the greatest and most ruthless of their royal line, Nādir Shāh. Broad-shouldered Afghans, lithe bright-eyed Arabs, who have the secret of dressing the real Astrakhan lamb-skin, and Indian subjects of Her Majesty, are common in Bokhārā. The latter are styled by the natives Multānis, though most of them hail from Haydarābād in Sindh. They are betrayed by their dark complexion and the flame-shaped caste-marks on their swarthy brows. The Hindu shares with the Jew the immense profits derived from money-lending, which is forbidden to true believers, and they are eager and rapacious traders. The large commerce in tea is in the hands of some wealthy Peshawar Mohammedans. The Indian colony devote a few years to money-grabbing, living the while in serais of their own, consisting of a courtyard surrounded with unfurnished cells, in which the traveller spreads his bedding, while his goods and camels occupy the centre of the square. They profess to be well satisfied with the existing order of things at Bokhārā, but have some reason to complain of the absence of any British consular agency.²

The variety of features shown by a Bokhāran crowd hardly extends to the costumes. The wealthier wear gorgeous khal'ats, or long dressing-gowns of cashmere or cloth of gold. In the middle class the universal garment

¹ These unhappy victims were British officers sent to Bokhārā on diplomatic service. After a long imprisonment they were cruelly beheaded by order of the Amīr Nasrullah in 1843. See Wolff's *Bokhara*, *passim*.

² This neglect of one of the chief duties of government—the protection of its subjects abroad—is universal in Central Asia. We have no consul farther east than Baku. The Russians excuse their persistent refusal to grant an exequatur to a consul at Tiflis by the allegation that we would not permit them to establish such agencies on our Indian frontiers,

is of coloured silk, with a curious pattern of concentric lines; while the populace is content with blue or striped cotton. All have huge turbans of white muslin, the size of which is an evidence of their wearers' rank. Sometimes as many as twenty yards are used. It is a curious fact that, in spite of crushing protective duties, the produce of Manchester looms is preferred by all who can afford the luxury.¹ The feminine element, which gives the greatest charm to the crowds of Western cities, is entirely absent in Bokhārā. Such women as venture into the streets are muffled in a hideous smock² and a thick horse-hair veil. It must be admitted that the beauties thus concealed lie chiefly in splendid dark eyes, the lustre of which owes much to the aid of henna, and arched eyebrows which are deemed indicators of passion, and therefore heightened by artificial means. The emancipation of women has not begun in Bokhārā. Marriage is a sale conducted with as little delicacy as the cattle-dealer imports into his transactions. The child-wife never gains her husband's love or confidence, and is deserted while her charms are at their zenith. Custom, in fact, moulds the Bokhāran's inmost being, and the degraded position assigned to women by its teaching places him beyond the pale of civilisation. Home-life in the Central Asian Khānates exists no more than it did in ancient Rome. The citizens' houses are ranges of dark and cheerless cells surrounding a central courtyard, and presenting blind walls to the street. The intense cold of the winter months is mocked rather than mitigated by charcoal braziers.³ Music is unknown in the cheerless interior,

¹ The local phrase for turban is "salla." A Russian-made one costs 1½ roubles; the cheapest Manchester turban being 3½, and the dearest 15 roubles.

² Called "paranji." It has balloon sleeves meeting at the shoulders.

³ Bokhārā stands in lat. 39° 46' N., in the same parallel as Northern Spain, Naples, and Philadelphia. It is 1200 feet above sea-level, and exposed to

and tobacco was till lately tabooed by the arrogant priests. When an envoy of the Sultan of Turkey made his state entry into the city his use of a long amber-tipped pipe caused universal consternation. Nor do the pleasures of a refined table solace the tedium of life. After attending morning prayers at his mosque the citizen swallows a mess of tea boiled into the consistency of thick soup, with salt and milk, and at his second meal, taken at 5 p.m., the standing dish is the pillau of mutton, rice, and vegetables. The craving for amusement so deeply implanted in human nature finds an outlet in the performances of *bachas*,¹—lads of between eight and fifteen with long flowing locks, who dance, posture, and sing with a *brio* which excites frenzy in Bokhāran spectators. They supply the place of our opera-singers, ballet-girls, and actresses. The names of *bachas* pre-eminent for beauty and languishing graces are as often pronounced as those of the extinct race of Divas were by Englishmen of the last generation. They sometimes rise to high positions in the state, and oftener amass great wealth after a few years' practice of their degrading trade. The Amīr maintains a troupe of *bachas*; and without their aid an entertainment of any description would be as a performance of Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark. The European who attends one of these ceremonies feels instinctively how wide is the gulf between East and West, when he remarks the enthusiasm excited by the phases of passion depicted by these children.

To Englishmen an exhibition of the national game of

Siberian blasts which make the winter climate very severe. The average winter temperature of London is nearly twice that of Bokhārā. In February heavy rains usher in a springtime as glorious as that which clothes our English woods, but suffocating summer heats follow which are broken by a fortnight's rain in October. The climate is one of extremes (Khanikoff, *Bokhara*, chap. v).

¹ *Bacha*, a Persian word signifying the young of any animal.

baigha is more interesting. It is a scramble by mounted players for the carcass of a goat. When all are ready for the fray, the umpire beheads the creature and throws its bleeding body into the arena. Then follows a scrimmage which reminds one of Rugby football. The goat's remains become the centre of a dense mass of men and horses locked in a desperate struggle, in which, wonderful to relate, players are rarely unseated, and still more seldom do the animals injure each other. The object of each is to monopolise the Bokhāran substitute for a ball, and carry it far from the scene of action, outstripping all competitors.

The great bazaar of Bokhārā makes some amends for the dulness long drawn out of domestic life. It is, indeed, a relief to pass from the garish sunshine into the cool gloom of these lofty arcades, which extend for at least seven miles in all their ramifications. The roof is generally of beaten clay, laid upon undressed timber; and on either side is an endless vista of booths, displaying every article of luxury and use in demand among Asiatic people. Carpets and rugs of harmonious tone, piles of gaudy shawls and dress pieces, snuff-boxes of polished gourd to hold the pungent green powder affected by the Bokhārāns, and cutlery and trinkets of every description. Europe here struggles with Asia for mastery, and seems about to gain the battle; for though all the European goods bear Russian labels, the great bulk is the produce of German workshops. The stimulus given to the trade of the Fatherland by the payment of the French indemnity in 1871 has led to a constant movement of Teutons across the Russian frontier. They retain their German citizenship, while they turn out cheap and nasty wares under the ægis of a protective fiscal system. One section of the vast bazaar, roofed by a dome of ancient brickwork, is sacred to literature, and the counters of its shops are piled high with standard works in lithograph editions,

and here and there a manuscript. Great bargains may sometimes be obtained by connoisseurs, though there are still enough native bibliophiles in Bokhārā to render good finds by Europeans exceptional. Money-changers' stalls are frequent, with tempting heaps of silver and copper discs for exchange against Russian money. The state has been allowed to retain its own coinage, a prerogative more valued than any other by Eastern sovereigns. The unit is the tanga, a silver piece which fluctuates as violently as did the Indian rupee before Sir David Barbour closed the mints. It is at present worth 15 kopeks, but sudden oscillations of a kopek and even more are common.¹ The gold coin in circulation is styled tilā, and is of unusual purity. It is worth 21 tangas. For the needs of the proletariat there are tiny brass dumps, 44 of which go to the tanga. Another quarter of the bazaar displays the silks and velvets for which Bokhārā was once so famous. The trade is a dwindling one, owing to the prevalence of disease among the worms; and the chief beauty of the fabrics lies in their faintly stamped, flowered patterns.² The vast

¹ It is a curious fact that M. P. Lessar, while Resident at Bokhārā, anticipated Sir D. Barbour's financial policy in India by inducing the Amīr to close his mint. The stiffening effect which might have been expected was not attained. Before the great recoinage of 1834 Indian silver underwent similar oscillations. The difference in weight and intrinsic value between rupees of different descriptions gave native brokers an opportunity of feathering their nests. They met in secret conclave periodically, and decided how many copper coins should be exchanged against each species of rupee. A recoinage, or adoption of the Russian monetary system, is the only possible remedy.

² In 1872 M. Petrofsky, agent of the Minister of Finance, visited Bokhārā in order to study the commercial system. He stated, in the *European Messenger* for March 1873, that the city was then an entrepôt for English and Afghan wares. Green tea in those days arrived by way of Afghanistan, and was distributed throughout the Khānates from Bokhārā. "Who can guarantee," he asks plaintively, "that with our carelessness with regard to the Bokhāran market, all the trade with Central Asia will not pass into the hands of the English and Afghans?" This fearful contingency has been obviated by protective tariffs and the Transcaspian Railway.

crowd of loungers in these arcades shows none of the loathing for the Giaur which the appearance of one in this hotbed of fanaticism once excited. They civilly make way for the European's droshky, and his eyes rarely encounter an unfriendly glance in those of the shopkeepers squatting impassively in a setting of rich carpets and dazzling weapons, or the throng of customers who watch every phase of the bargaining. But the old spirit has been scotched, not killed, by Russification. The European who allows his shadow to flit on a mullā lolling on his pile of cushions will be roundly cursed for his impudence. The crowd intent on buying and selling find the wherewithal to assuage their hunger in the eating-houses, which exhibit huge caldrons of bubbling pillau, flat cakes of unleavened bread, and heaps of coarse sweetmeats made from Russian beet-sugar. The samovar, which hisses in every eating-house, reveals the Bokhāran's predilection for tea. The green variety is alone consumed, and it retails at 2s. 10d. per pound, in spite of a Russian import duty of 1s. 10d. In pre-railway days it was imported through Afghanistān, but the line connecting Bokhārā with the Caspian has superseded the old camel caravans, with their leisurely movements and liability to pillage and exactions. Tea now comes into Bokhārā by way of Bombay and Batum. China still supplies the great bulk of the demand; but Indian and Ceylon teas are slowly making their way even in remote Bokhārā. Their progress would be far more rapid but for the crushing import duty levied by the Russian Government. The Transcaspian Railway has, in point of fact, robbed Peter to pay Paul. Russians and Russo-Germans find a ready sale in Central Asia for their wares, but Bokhārā is no longer a great centre for the distribution of English and Indian goods, as it was a quarter of a century back. They will live in the memory of the denizen of the

prosaic West, those Bokhārā bazaars, with their long lines of shops rich in dazzling colours, the blue sky peeping through rents in the time-worn vaulting, and the sunshine flecking the kaleidoscopic crowd in the galleries below. Though the chief interest of Bokhārā centres in its bazaars, it has many public buildings which repay examination. In the north-west quarter is the Rīgistān, a market-place surrounded by shops which are cleared of their contents at nightfall. On its west side is a tank overshadowed by trees, which are as rare in Bokhārā as in the city of London, and surrounded by tea and barbers' shops, the resort of a host of idlers during the daylight hours. One side of the Rīgistān is occupied by the Ark, or citadel, which stands on a vast artificial mound, and is walled by crenellated ramparts forming a square of 450 yards. It dates from the era of the Sāmānides. The great gate, built by Rahīm Khān in 1742, is flanked by towers 100 feet high showing traces of faience; and opens on a vaulted corridor leading to the Amīr's palace, treasury, and state prison. In old days this was a loathsome dungeon full of ticks and other vermin; but the story so oft repeated, that the insects received rations of raw meat in the absence of human victims, is probably untrue.¹ Here dwells the Kushbegi, or prime minister, of whom more anon; but the buildings of the citadel are by no means imposing in size or architectural merit. In a shed on the right of the gateway is the Artillery Park, containing about fifty pieces, all of antiquated make. A smaller market-place, which serves for dealings in raw cotton, is surrounded by the most imposing of Bokhārā's public edifices.

On one side is the great mosque, called the Masjid-i-Jāmi', as are those of Delhi and Agra, because it was built to hold the immense crowd attending a Jum'a, or

¹ Schuyler, *Turkestan*, vol. ii. p. 90.

Friday service. The front is a vast recessed portal covered with arabesques in faience; its gates give access to a courtyard spacious enough to contain 10,000 worshippers,¹ surrounded by a vaulted cloister. Near it is the Minār Kalān, or Great Minār, a round tower 36 feet at the base, and tapering upwards to a height of 210. The whole surface is covered with beautiful designs in carved brick, which show that it dates from Bokhārā's golden age. From the summit criminals were precipitated into the market-place beneath; but access to it is now forbidden, lest curious visitors should pry into the scores of courtyards which it commands. Opposite to the city mosque is the Madrasa Mīr-i-'Arab, a stately college with a tall recessed gateway, which ranks first among the 103 of which Bokhārā boasts. The entrance is through a door on the left, which opens on a vaulted corridor leading to a quadrangle surrounded by a double tier of cells, called *hujrats*, in which the pupils reside. Each has its bed-place on a dais spread with carpets and pillows, and niches in the wall for his books and clothes. Here the more promising lads from the elementary schools spend fifteen or twenty years in mastering the legal and religious system of Islām. This education is so alien to all that is associated with the process in Western countries, and its results are so far-reaching, that a description of its mysteries will interest those who aim at reading aright the signs of the times in Central Asia. Primary schools are to be found in every Bokhāran village, and they abound in the capital. They may be known from afar by the hum of childish voices, which resounds from morn till dewy eve in the narrow sunless streets. The course of teaching embraces the Koran, the *Farz-i-'Ayn*, and other books of a religious tendency, written in Tājikī, a dialect of Persian, and Turkī, the

¹ Schuyler, p. 92.



THE MINAR KATAN AT BOKHARA

language of the Uzbeks. Those who wish to pursue their studies further pass into the Madrasas, which are maintained from the rents of great landed estates assigned to them by rulers of past ages. The curriculum here embraces theology, Arabic, law, and "worldly wisdom."¹

Students who are conscious of a vocation for the priesthood are subjected to a probation severer than that which is prescribed to candidates for admission to La Trappe or Chartreuse. They must obey all the precepts of Mohammed's code, and learn by long and painful practice to pronounce the shibboleth, *Lā Allāh ill Allāh*, thousands of times without drawing breath. Thus they attain to the coveted degree of Ishān, are qualified to instruct others, and receive the blindest devotion from the lower orders. No training can be conceived which is more calculated to inspire self-conceit and fanaticism. Now the priesthood of Bokhārā and the other cities of Central Asia have all been subjected to these sinister influences at a period of their lives when the plastic mind receives impressions which can never be effaced; and the schools and colleges are officered exclusively from the sacerdotal caste. Before the advent of the Russians to power, the mullās directed the whole mechanism of government. The most cruel and treacherous of the old Amīrs respected their lives and liberties and shaped his conduct on their counsels. The mullās' political influence has been destroyed by the Russians' advent to power, for the theory on which Mohammedan states are ruled is utterly at variance with Western conceptions; and the insidious energies of the priesthood are restricted to education and religious observances. There can be little doubt that the wave of sedition which is sweeping

¹ For a detailed account of the curriculum the reader is referred to Khanikoff, chap. xxix,

over Central Asia¹ is due to the teachings of men who desire the restoration of Islām as a predominant factor in government. The Russian masters of Central Asia, like we ourselves in India, are stepping *per ignes suppositos cineri doloso*, and a mistaken educational policy is, in both cases, at the bottom of the mischief that is brewing. The other Madrasas of Bokhārā are more remarkable for size than architectural merit. One of them was erected at the end of last century, at the cost of the Empress Catherine of Russia, who came under Voltaire's influence and displayed a catholicism which outran that of the philosopher of Ferney.² Adjoining the Great Minār is the only public building in Bokhārā which has not seen the march of centuries—the Baths of the Chief Justice, thrown open to the public in 1897 by the generosity of the official who held that rank. The innermost chamber is a huge oven surrounded by marble divans, on which the bather reclines while an attendant cracks every joint in his body, scours him with a piece of hair-cloth, and sluices him with cold water. Thence he passes to a room heated to a temperature of about 80 degrees, where he dresses and proceeds to a spacious hall opening on the street. Here, reclining on a dais spread with carpets and pillows, he sips his tea in the blissful lassitude which follows the Turkish bath. The Zindān, or state jail, is a dilapidated structure of brick, perched on a mound to the east of the citadel. The entrance is through a dirty guardroom which gives on a courtyard. A door to the left leads to the abode of petty offenders—a smoke-stained shed, tapestried with bundles containing the

¹ The leader in the serious rising in Farghāna last spring was named Ishān Mohammed 'Alī Khalifa. In July 1898 a Russian was murdered at New Bokhārā, and the life of another was attempted by one of these fanatics.

² Schuyler retails an old scandal to the effect that the 40,000 roubles which the Madrasas cost were bestowed by the empress on a Bokhāran envoy at her Court after a *liaison* with him (*Turkestan*, ii. p. 93).



PRISONERS OF THE AMIR OF BOKHARA



property of the inmates. The latter squat on the floor apparently in good health and spirits, albeit that their rations would not be approved of at Wormwood Scrubs. They receive from Government $1\frac{1}{2}$ pounds of bread every other day, but visitors are allowed to distribute as much food as they please. On the right of the courtyard is a vaulted room lit by a barred opening in the ceiling, which serves as a ward for heinous offenders. Here will generally be found twenty or thirty wretches fastened together by a heavy chain attached to an iron ring on the neck of each. They are all murderers or banditti under trial or awaiting the Amīr's confirmation of the death sentence; and their sullen despair is but too evident. Punishments were terribly severe in pre-Russian days. Prisoners were riveted to the wall by iron collars for years together, and shrunk under the torture to living skeletons. Twice a week they were dragged to the Rīgistān, where the Amīr in person pronounced sentence; and the spectacle of the poor half-naked wretches shivering in the snow was piteous indeed.¹ Happy were those condemned to decapitation, which was always performed with the knife, to the gratification of the market crowd. Empalement and flinging from the summit of the Great Minār were usual forms of destruction, and women taken in adultery were stoned. The prison, bad as it is when judged by European standards, is an abode of bliss when compared with those of the native régime. Beneath the Zindān is a deep vault, now filled up, which hardly a decade back served as an *oubliette* for human beings condemned to a lingering death, attended by horrors which no pen can describe. Truly, these dark places of the earth owe much to the softening influence of a higher civilisation.

Slavery is another practice which has lost its terrors

¹ Moser, p. 151; Khanikoff, pp. 101-2.

since the advent of the Russians. Bokhārā was once the greatest market in Asia for the produce of Turkoman and Kirghiz raids. Eighty years ago 40,000 Persians and more than 500 subjects of the Tsar were detained there in bondage. There was a regular tariff for these human cattle. A labourer fetched £29, a skilled artisan £64, and a pretty girl nearly £100. The treatment meted out to them by Bokhāran taskmasters was more atrocious than anything recorded by Mrs. Beecher Stowe. Meyendorff met a Russian who had endured unheard-of tortures, inflicted in order to make him reveal the route by which a comrade in affliction had escaped.¹ Half a century later the effect of European precept and example was already evident. Mr. Schuyler found the traffic in human flesh conducted with some approach to secrecy, but, after much bargaining and intrigue, he was able to purchase the freedom of a Persian lad for a sum equivalent to £25. It would be saying too much to aver that the "peculiar institution" is extinct in Bokhārā. The needs of the harem and the profound mystery with which wealthy families enshroud their domestic life render it impossible that slavery should be stamped out in any Mohammedan country. India itself is not free from the canker-spot, though every possible means have been taken to eradicate it. But the great source of supply was cut off when the Turkomans were forbidden to raid into Persia, and the lot of those who have been held in slavery is rendered endurable by the vigilance of the Russian Resident. His influence has been limited to the correction of flagrant abuses, and Bokhārā is the only Mohammedan state in Russian Asia which has

¹ Meyendorff writes: "The lot of slaves in Bokhārā is terrible. Nearly all the Russians complain of being badly fed and severely beaten. I met one whose master had cut off his ears, driven nails through his palms, flayed his back, and poured boiling oil on his arms" (p. 286).

been permitted to retain intact its own system of administration.

The sovereign, whose official style and title is Khān of Bokhārā and Commander of the Faithful,¹ is nominally absolute master of his realm and of the lives and fortunes of his subjects. In practice his power is subject to considerable limitations. As a Mohammedan prince he is bound to obey the injunctions of the Koran and the canonical law of Islām.² The clergy were all-powerful under the last independent Amīr, and their influence is still widely felt, the more so in that it is occult. The ruler is surrounded by greedy and venal followers, and his Court is a centre of intrigues. His prime minister, answering to the vezīr of the Turkish monarchy, is here styled Kushbegi, and stands next in rank to the sovereign. He is official guardian of the state jewels, which, to judge by the display made by the Amīr on state occasions, must rival the figments of the Arabian Nights.³ He is responsible for the collection of taxes and customs duties, and is master of the palace, where he always resides, and keeps the keys of the city gates. Beneath him is a vast hierarchy of executive and Court officials, whose rank is bestowed by patents under the Amīr's seal, or symbols such as horse-tails, hatchets, flags, and maces.⁴ The struggle for these baubles amongst the crowd of courtiers versed in all the arts of fawning and flattery would arouse our pity and contempt, were we not conscious that such sordid aims are still the levers of human action nearer home.

¹ "Amīr ul Mu'minīn," the title adopted by the Caliphs.

² Fath 'Alī, Shāh of Persia, asked a European, who told him that his sovereign's acts were subject to public approbation: "Wherein lies the pleasure of ruling if one can't do exactly as one pleases?"

³ Moser, p. 160.

⁴ A very elaborate description of the old Court régime is given in chaps. xxiv. and xxv. of Khanikoff's *Bokhara*.

For administrative purposes the Khānate is divided into thirty-six provinces, each under its governor, called Beg, who is intrusted with the collection of revenue and the execution of judicial decrees. He reports as to the state of his charge weekly, and submits death sentences for the Amīr's confirmation. Below the Beg are the Amlākdārs; who exercise similar functions in the amlāks, or districts. The state is, in theory, the owner of the soil, and the bulk of its revenue is derived from the land tax, an impost which has many features common with feudalism. Estates belong to four categories. *Milk* lands are free of rent, because they were originally bestowed by the sovereign in fee simple on successful generals. *Milk-i-Khārāj* are tenures which, at the period of conquest, were owned by non-Mohammedans, and remained in their possession subject to the payment of a land tax. This, in the case of irrigated soil, amounts to one-fifth, and in that of dry fields to one-tenth of the gross produce. The third description is *Dash Yak*, so styled because one-tenth of the produce is set apart for the support of a mosque; and the fourth *Vakf*, which is an endowment wholly devoted to religious uses. The Amīr's proportion of the fruits of the soil is assessed by the Amlākdārs and their underlings, after actual inspection of each field just before the harvest is gathered in. If the cultivator objects to the Government estimate he may demand a re-measurement. The other sources of revenue are one-fortieth of the value of goods exposed for sale; and the jazya, or infidel tax, from which Russian subjects are exempt, ranging, according to the assessee's wealth, between one and four tangas. The administration of justice is in the hands of Kāzis—native judges appointed by the Amīr after an examination in the laws of Islām, who are assisted by Muftis, or registrars in charge of the Court's seal. The Kāzi

posted at Bokhārā has two of these subordinates, and is styled *Kalān*, or chief, though he has no power to revise his colleagues' decisions. Legal procedure is cumbrous and ineffectual, and litigants in Bokhārā learn by sad experience what "hell it is in suing long to bide." Public morals and the due observance of religious rites are supposed to be safeguarded by an official styled *Rā'īs*. This censor's insignia of office are a scimetar-shaped strip of leather, with which he is legally empowered to administer "forty stripes save one" to evil-doers, without, however, raising his arm above the shoulder. He drives the faithful to public prayers like a flock of sheep, meddles in family affairs, levies blackmail, and has elevated delation to the rank of a science. With the *Kāzī* he serves as a spy on the executive officers, and is an object of universal dread. These social pests have been abolished by the Russians in the districts under their administration, and they have won more gratitude by this obvious measure than by any of their reforms. It has been often said that an Eastern prince's rule is tempered by the fear of assassination. In Bokhārā the permanent army was once the skeleton at the Amīr's banquet. In order to maintain his authority and overawe turbulent neighbours he was compelled to pay a large standing force, of which he stood in as much dread as the Cæsars did of their Pretorian Guard. In the days of independence the regulars mustered 10,000 men, armed with matchlocks, and there were about 40,000 men on an irregular footing, of whom perhaps a third carried serviceable weapons.¹ At the present time the army is little more than a plaything, for the "Great White Tsar" has garrisons at the principal strategic points, and Bokhārā under his ægis is secure from foreign aggression. The troops now number only 10,000 men,

¹ Khanikoff, p. 233.

of whom 1000 are armed with Berdan rifles, presented to the Amīr some years ago by the Russians, and the rest with percussion muskets. They are drilled and clad on European models, but here the parallel ceases. Inefficient as is the Bokhāran army, the paramount power is anxious to effect a deduction in its strength, which will ultimately not exceed 3000 men. It is a significant fact that while the civil officers, from the Kushbegi down to the Amīn who measures the crops, receive no remuneration beyond what they can squeeze from the people, the Amīr's forces are well and regularly paid. The company officers draw about £5 per mensem; the private soldiers, 6s. 6d. in our money. In the official intercourse between the Amīr and his suzerain we detect the influence of Anglo-Indian example. For many years the Khānates were represented at Tashkent, the administrative capital of Turkestān, by envoys selected from their own subjects; but the growth of commerce with Russia, and the necessity of drawing closer the bonds uniting the protected state with its master, led to the appointment of a Russian officer of rank as Resident with the Amīr. His political relations with the latter are nominally confined to tendering advice in administrative matters. When, some years back, frauds were prevalent in the packing of cotton for export to Russia,¹ the Resident approached the Amīr through an unofficial channel as to the means of checking practices ruinous to trade. The outcome of these negotiations was the appointment of three cotton inspectors, whose function it is to visit the markets and report to the Kāzī all cases in which they suspect that rubbish is inserted in bales exposed for sale. Again, the Russians have deemed it to be their duty to foster the

¹ Since the opening of the Transcaspian Railway this has become a staple export, and it has ousted the produce of the United States. The term for unripe cotton is *gūsa*; that for pods ready for export is *pakhta*.



A BOKHARAN BEAUTY AND HER TWO CHILDREN



production of wine. The grapes of Bokhārā are as fine as her peaches and apricots—which is saying a good deal—and a potent fluid resembling Amontillado, with a pleasant sub-acid after-taste, is retailed at fourpence a bottle. But intoxicants are denounced in the Koran as things accursed, and the prohibition has much worldly wisdom, because Asiatics drink, not in order to cheer the heart of man, but to drown the senses in brutish oblivion. A compromise between religious duty and worldly interest has been arrived at. Bokhārāns may not make wine themselves, but they are at liberty to sell the grapes to Armenians and Jews, who have a monopoly of the manufacture. A dealer vending wine or spirits to a Mohammedan is punished with a fine of 1000 roubles. The Resident has a court of his own for the decision of civil and criminal cases in which the injured party is a foreigner. His jurisdiction is unlimited, and his sentences without appeal. Documentary evidence is insisted on as a basis of money claims. The Russian law is administered, as modified by local custom, and no advocate is allowed to intervene between the tribunal and the parties. Where the defendant belongs to that category, the case comes before a judge of the peace, who is independent of the Resident and a subordinate of the Ministry of Justice at St. Petersburg. His sentences run through a gamut of appeals, precisely as those tried by the courts of the mother country. This alien jurisdiction is highly popular, and subterfuges are adopted in order to bring cases triable by the native judges within its purview. The post and telegraph services are in Russian hands; and a hospital is maintained, under European management, which costs the Amīr £2000 annually. Those who are cognisant of the perennial friction between Chief and Resident at many Indian courts will be surprised to learn that the relations between suzerain and vassal in

Bokhārā have invariably been cordial. The Amīr, Sayyid 'Abd ul-Ahad, is now in his thirty-seventh year.¹ He is tall and muscular, and would be handsome but for growing corpulence, that curse of Eastern princes. He is still devoted to hawking and other forms of sport, affable and dignified. Every year he visits one of the hot springs in the Caucasus, and often winters in the Crimea. The heir-apparent, Sayyid Mīr 'Alīm, has been educated in St. Petersburg, and holds the rank of lieutenant in a Cossack regiment. In early youth the Amīr had convincing proof of the resistless power of Russia. He saw his haughty father die broken-hearted of the humiliation entailed by his abortive effort to roll back the tide of European aggression. He knows, too, that the capital is at the Russians' mercy, for they own the rich province of Samarkand, through which the Zarafshān flows to fertilise his thirsty fields, and that it would be an easy matter to divert its course; and so he is always ready to anticipate his master's wishes. There was a spice of truth in the late governor-general's remark, "the Amīr of Bokhārā is the most zealous of my lieutenants." While a ruler so pliant continues to sit on the throne of Bokhārā he need not fear annexation.

¹ The genealogy of the reigning house is not quite so clear as such matters usually are in Eastern countries. The founder was an Uzbek general of the tribe of Mangit, named Mahammad Rahīm Bī. He was succeeded by his nephew, Dāniyāl Bī, whose son, Shāh Murād, alias Ma'sūm, commonly styled "Bēgi Jān," was a soldier of the type of Chingiz Khān. He conquered Merv in 1784, and raised Bokhārā to a pinnacle of glory to which it had never attained since the spacious days of the Amīr 'Abdullah, a contemporary of our own Elizabeth. Murād attained sovereignty in 1796, and died about 1801. His successor, Mīr Haydar, was a capable soldier, and the military caste had things entirely their own way during his reign, which ended in 1826. His successor was Nasrullah, a moody and treacherous tyrant, who gained an infamous reputation in England by the cruel slaughter of our envoys Stoddart and Conolly. His son Muzaffar resembled his father in cruelty and fanaticism. The story of his overthrow by the Russians has already been told.

The Russians are well aware that the people of the Khānate prize the measure of national life allowed them, and prefer the rough-and-ready methods of an Amīr of their own race to the highly developed mechanism imported from the West. They dread the responsibility of granting citizenship to two and a half millions of Asiatics, spread over an area of 80,000 square miles, which costs them nothing to administer, while its products swell the growing volume of the empire's commerce.

CHAPTER X

SAMARKAND

SAMARKAND is 150 miles by rail from Bokhārā. The line follows the course of the Zarafshān, and passes through a carefully tilled country, a large proportion of which is under cotton.¹ Rather less than two-thirds is grown from acclimatised American seed (*Gossypium hirsutum*) introduced by the Russians, whose persistent aim it has been to render their mills independent of the United States. The seed is sown in April, on soil which has been well ploughed and harrowed, the proportion allowed being 21 pounds per acre. The fields are irrigated thrice and kept scrupulously free from weeds. Towards the end of September the ripe pods are picked and exposed in heaps for sale. In average years an acre yields 1400 pounds, and gives a net return of £5, 10s., considerably more than other crops. But the culti-

¹ The official figures for each district in 1896 were—

District.	Dessiatines of $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres under cotton.
Samarkand	5,252
Katta Kurgan	8,920
Jizāk	1,188
Khojend	2,784
Total	18,144

In round figures, 45,000 acres. This is about 5 per cent. of the entire cultivated area of the province of Samarkand, which is officially stated as 364,200 dessiatines.

vator has to face extraordinary fluctuations in market prices. In 1895, though the harvest was exceptional in bulk and quality, the price advanced to 4d. per pound, and the acre yielded £8. This flood of wealth thus poured into the cultivator's lap was the better appreciated because the lowering of railway rates has rendered the production of bread stuffs unremunerative. In point of fact, the Central Asian farmer is suffering, like his comrade of the West, from the effect of free-trade dogmas. The Russian Empire is a world within itself, blessed with every variety of soil and climate, and gives ample scope for Cobden's theories. But cotton is essentially an object for *petite culture*. Plantations have been tried without success, and few who raise this lucrative crop devote to it more than one-eighth of their farm ; in other words, a plot of three-fourths of an acre. The intense pressure of population on the soil causes a keen demand for cotton lands, and speculators take advantage of the limited supply to engross large areas, and sublet them in plots to tenants who agree to bring them the whole produce. The profits are supposed to be divided equally, but the landlord of course retains the lion's share. The raw cotton is sold in open market, and is either exported in the pod or purchased by capitalists owning cotton-cleaning mills.¹ Speaking generally, the prospects of the cultivator in the rich valley of the Zarafshān are not very promising. The soil is a yellow loam of great natural richness, but the incessant demands of a teeming population, continued for hundreds, nay thousands, of years, have brought it within measurable distance of exhaustion. Manuring is an imperative necessity, but cattle are few owing to the absence of grazing grounds and fodder ;

¹ There were, in 1896, twenty, nine of which were worked by steam or oil engines, ten by water, and one by horse-power. Three hydraulic and seventeen hand-screw presses were at work.

and the process can be repeated only once in three, or even six years. Thus corn shows an ominous decrease in weight; a pound now contains only 16,800 grains, compared with nearly 20,000 a couple of decades back. The Russians have to face a problem as difficult in its degree as that which will one day cause a cataclysm in British India, the ever-growing tendency of population to outstrip the means of subsistence.

Soon after passing the spick-and-span Russian town of Katta Kurgān, the growing freshness of the air proclaims a higher level; and, in point of fact, Samarkand is more than 2000 feet above the sea. At last the eye, which so eagerly scanned the eastern horizon, lights upon a sea of verdure, from which a fluted dome rises just as St. Paul's seems to float like a vast balloon over London fogs. There are a few cities which touch a chord in him who sees them for the first time. The glamour of their fallen majesty is heightened rather than destroyed by the railway; for it brings before us, as if by magic, a panorama often seen in spirit, and its prosaic surroundings serve as a foil to the halo of romance which still lingers over the seat of a vanquished empire. Who will ever forget the flood of associations that overpowered him when he first heard "Roma" shouted by a railway porter, or when he exchanged the roar of the train for the peace which broods over the vista of palaces on the Grand Canal? The famous city is, as in other cases, at a distance of several miles from the railway station, the environs of which are crowded with the mean shops and drinking-dens usually found in such places. The road thither, as all the chief thoroughfares, is of great width, and overshadowed by splendid trees. It is this feature of Samarkand landscapes, not less than the innumerable gardens and vineyards in which one treads knee-deep in luscious grapes, that stirred the imagination of Eastern

poets. In melodious strains the eternal city is styled the "Mirror of the World," "the Garden of Souls," "the Fourth Paradise." But Samarkand was great and glorious ages before the good Hārūn er-Rashīd reigned in Baghdād, or Sa'adi planted flowers of poesy in his Garden of Roses. At Maracanda, in Transoxiana, Alexander of Macedon paused in his mad career, and there he slew his faithful Clitus. Centuries glided by, and it became Sa-mo-kien, the most western province of the Celestial Empire. Then the tide of Mohammedan conquest rolled over Samarkand; followed by the rule of the Seljūk Turks, destined five centuries later to extend their sway from Mongolia to Constantinople. The old city now became what Moorish Spain was—a chosen abode of all the arts that adorn and sweeten life. The whole fabric of civilisation was drowned in blood by the ruthless Chingiz Khān, and the ruin of Samarkand seemed irretrievable. It was lifted from the dust by a greater genius than Chingiz. Tīmūr made Samarkand the "eye and star" of an empire which extended over a third of the known world; and to his loving care belong the works of art which, in hopeless ruin, still excite the admiration of mankind. Their glories were soon obliterated by the uncouth Uzbegs; and 150 years ago the city site was a waste scored with mounds and caverns from which the ruined churches and colleges of a happier age soared heavenwards in desecrated majesty. It became a province of Bokhārā and the residence of the Amīrs during the summer heats, and commerce slowly revived. The story of the last wave of invasion which swept over Samarkand has already been told in these pages.

Chief among the monuments of this war-worn city is the tomb of Tīmūr, spoken of throughout Central Asia as *Gūr Amīr*—the Amīr's sepulchre, just as our

fathers styled Wellington "the Duke." It is approached through a double avenue of poplars, which terminates at a gateway ornamented with faience and flanked by ruined minarets. Behind these stands an octagonal structure with a deeply fluted dome. The entrance on the left of the tomb leads to a vaulted corridor, and then to a chamber 35 feet square, with a cupola 115 feet from the floor. On each side there is an arched recess with Alhambresque mouldings, and the walls are covered with six-sided plates of transparent gypsum. The interior is severely simple, as becomes the last resting-place of so great a man. "Only a stone," whispered the dying emperor; "and my name upon it!" And so he rests beneath a block of dark-green jade—the largest in the world.¹ On the right of the conqueror's memorial stone is one of grey marble commemorating his grandson Ulugh Beg, a distinguished astronomer, who compiled tables showing the position of the fixed stars, admitted to be the best which have come down to us from Mohammedan times. In the recess facing Mekka there hangs a large standard with a pendant of horse-hair, emblem of a militant faith; and between it and Tīmūr's tomb is a grey marble slab dedicated to his friend and tutor, Mir Sayyid Barākā, for whom he built this mausoleum in 1386.² The recess in the east contains a slab of granite erected to a descendant of the Prophet, named Hājji Imām 'Umr. The central group of cenotaphs, numbering eight in all, is surrounded by a balustrade in fretwork of transparent gypsum. The actual tombs are in a crypt of exquisite proportions, which is

¹ The exact measurements of this stone are 6' 4½" × 1' 3½" × 1' 5½" deep. Round the edge is an Arabic inscription giving Tīmūr's style and title, his genealogy, and the date of his death,—807 A.H., or 1405 of our era.

² M. Schuyler states this man's name as Mir Seid Belki Shaikh, and the date of his death as two years after Tīmūr's, i.e. 1407 (ii. p. 253).



THE SHIR DAR MADRASA, SAMARKAND



reached by a flight of steps. Here lies all that is mortal of one whose empire extended from the Vistula to the China Seas, who in the brief intervals between his conquering expeditions found time to embellish his capital with structures which, even in their decay, rank among the wonders of the world.

The centre of Samarkand life is the great open market-square called the Rīgīstān. Its southern side is open to the street, and the other three are occupied by as many great colleges, or madrasas. That which stands on the east side was built in the time of Imām Kulī Khān (1648), and is known as the Shīr Dār (or the Lion-bearing), from uncouth representations of the Lion and Sun of Persia on the four corners above its gigantic recessed portal. At either extremity of the façade rise melon-shaped domes and tall minarets leaning outwards. That nearest the street exhibits a frieze of dog's-tooth mouldings, resembling those which occur in our oldest Norman churches. A cloister-like passage gives access to an immense courtyard surrounded by cubicles and classrooms in two storeys, each pair under an enamelled arch. A flight of brickwork stairs leads to the summit of the lofty gateway, whence one has a view which is second to none in Asia. The eye ranges over a leafy sea, from which vast raised arches and domes emerge, and rests on snow-clad mountains which close the horizon on the north and east. The madrasa of Tilā Kārī, on the north side, is so styled from a plating of gold-foil under translucent enamel which covers the holy place of a mosque on the left of its courtyard.¹ That founded by Timūr's astronomer grandson, Ulugh Beg, is opposite Shīr Dār, and is the smallest but most beautiful of the group. Unhappily, it has suffered even more than the others from

¹ Schuyler, ii. p. 252. Tilā = gold.

earthquakes. Of the five minarets which once adorned its angles, that on the south-east has fallen, and the rest are much out of the perpendicular. This universal tendency of Samarkand minarets is a standing enigma to visitors. That these minarets are out of the perpendicular may be easily proved by ascending one of them and lowering a plumb-line; but it will probably continue to excite controversy till these forlorn towers have crumbled into ruins. Such has already been the fate of the grandest of Samarkand's monuments, the Bibi Khānūm, which stands on rising ground north-east of the Rīgīstān. Like the Taj Mahāl of Agra, it records a widowed husband's passionate sorrow; for she who sleeps below was Tīmūr's most loved wife, the daughter of the emperor of China. The actual tomb is a mass of shapeless ruins, for centuries of gross neglect have done their work, and a climax was given to the work of Time's destroying hand by an earthquake which shook Samarkand on the 5th November 1897. The approach lies through a gateway which scarcely retains a trace of the original design. This opens on a garden with a mosque on either side, while the front is occupied by a building which still inspires awe by its grandeur and perfect proportions. The front exhibits a recessed portal, sixty feet wide and higher than that of Peterborough Cathedral, and an octagonal minaret at either extremity. Between them rises a stupendous dome, with a double frieze of blue, green, and yellow enamel, on which texts from the Koran gleam brightly in gold lettering. The interior is a square of fifty feet, adorned with arabesques. In the centre once stood a colossal *rahla*, or lectern of white marble, which once held a Koran, spreading over fifty-four square feet when open. A tradition has it that Bibi Khānūm, who founded this noble mosque, was wont to read it from a window set high in the



THE BIBI-KHANUM, SAMARKAND



wall.¹ The *rahla* is supported by nine pillars just high enough to admit of a man crawling under it—a painful process often undergone as a cure for lumbago and sciatica. It has now been removed to the courtyard, to avert the destruction which would result from a collapse of the entire structure. For the blue sky is seen through a rent extending over a third of the surface of the mighty dome; and a side view reveals an outer and an inner skin, like those of St. Paul's, with the staircase leading to the summit. The portal is in worse plight; but so solid was the old builders' handiwork that the arch is still intact though the brickwork is a mere shell. The Russians must be held responsible for the forlorn state of the Bibi Khānūm. When they entered on their glorious inheritance the power of disintegration might have been arrested. But they were content to see the stately mosque degraded to the base uses of a cotton-market and a stable,² and the vast revenues bequeathed by the piety of another age diverted from their proper uses by a horde of greedy and callous priests. They may, however, plead in mitigation of the world's censure, that lack of funds has impeded their efforts to preserve these relics of a mighty past.³ If Generals Kauffman or Abramoff had been asked to vouchsafe a grant for archæological purposes they would doubtless have replied, as William Pitt did to Benjamin Haydon's suggestion that a national gallery of paintings should be established: "We want all the money we can scrape together to buy powder and shot with."

¹ Khanikoff, p. 134. In a note he adds that a Russian named Efremoff, who visited Samarkand in 1770, saw this gigantic book.

² Schuyler's *Turkestan*, i. p. 250.

³ This Philistinism has its parallel in India. We believe it to be a fact that a Viceroy proposed the sale of the Tāj Mahāl at Agra to serve as a quarry for marble. The same Vandal had a vast number of seventeenth-century cannon at Allahabad broken up and disposed of as old metal.

In a suburb half a mile north-east of the Bībi Khānūm stands a sepulchre of a different type. It is that of Kāsim ibn 'Abbās, a saint who endured martyrdom in an attempt to convert the fire-worshippers of Samarkand. Tradition adds that he picked up his severed head, like St. Denis, and retired with it to a well, whence he is destined to emerge in the hour of Islām's triumph. The Shāh Zindah, "Living Saint," has a tomb erected by Tīmūr,¹ which is entered by a brick gateway rich in blue and white faience, opening on a street of tombs with some resemblance to the Appian Way. On either side of a flight of steps, which once were of marble, ascending the side of a ravine, are a series of mausolea erected in honour of members of Tīmūr's family, his generals, and trusted servants. The gates and façades are encrusted with glorious faience. A photograph might convey a faint impression of the exquisite form of pillars shaped like palm-trees, the artistic design of the scrollwork and tracery. A consummate master of colouring alone could reproduce the harmony in dark blue, turquoise, yellow, and green of this unrivalled panelling. The common belief is that the porcelain which is seen in such perfection at the Shāh Zindah was evolved in ancient Persia. It was undoubtedly brought by the Mongols from China.² The decoration of the Constantinople mosques, especially those dating from the golden age of Sulaymān the Magnificent, is similar to the specimens so much admired at Samarkand. The vista closes with the

¹ Not, however, in 1323, as Schuyler asserts (i. p. 247), for he was not born till fourteen years afterwards.

² M. Simakoff, a distinguished Russian archæologist, and the author of *Central Asian Art*, has arrived at the conclusion that the Persian ornamentation, which has hitherto been considered original, is but an imitation of that introduced by the Mongols into Central Asia. Moser, *A Travers l'Asie Centrale*, p. 118.

holy man's tomb, which is approached by a suite of halls adorned with arabesques and beautifully carved wooden pillars. It is a mosque hung with offerings from the faithful. Visitors are allowed by the attendant priests to peer through a carved screen into a sombre vault, in which the faint outline of a funeral stone is seen, covered with costly shawls. Shāh Zindah has suffered less than its unfortunate neighbours owing to its smaller dimensions; but systematic repairs carried out by experts are urgently needed. All that has been done by the present masters of Samarkand is to prevent the wholesale pilfering of coloured tiles.

The ancient citadel of Samarkand is still called by the people Uṛda. This "encampment" occupies a commanding position, and is secured on three sides by scarped ravines. Its walls are upwards of two miles in circumference,¹ and have been adapted to suit the exigencies of modern warfare. In Russian eyes it is as sacred as the theatre of a defence as glorious as that of our Lucknow Residency in 1857.² In those of the antiquarian it is precious as the repository of the Kok Tāsh, a coronation stone of the Bokhāran sovereigns, and of an old Arabic inscription. The former is in the courtyard of a mean building which once served as the Amīr's residence. It is an oblong block of grey marble, with arabesques at the sides, measuring 10' 4" by 4' 9" by 2' in height. According to tradition, it fell on this spot from heaven, and for ages past it was venerated as the ægis of Bokhāran royalty. No Amīr was considered worthy of his subjects' homage till he had sat on this rude

¹ Three versts and 100 sajenes in circuit (Khanikoff, *Bokhara*, p. 131).

² For a detailed account of this splendid feat of arms the reader is referred to Schuyler's *Turkestan*, i. p. 224.

throne. Behind it is an oval metal plaque bearing a funeral inscription dating as far back as A.H. 550, or 1155 of our era.

The Russians' quarter of Samarkand lies to the south of the native city. Their occupation has lasted for thirty years, and their dwellings have lost the garish newness which strikes a jarring note at Askabad and Merv. Broad avenues, at right angles to each other, a leafy park, and a splendid Boulevard, which Samarkand owes to its good genius, General Abramoff, who was governor in 1874,¹ such are the pleasant, if somewhat prosaic, features of Russian Samarkand. Government House has the vast reception-rooms met with in such places throughout the empire, and it has a large garden, which has trees, water, statues—everything except flowers. The officials' bungalows mostly face the Abramovsky Boulevard, and are planned on the familiar Anglo-Indian lines. Then there is the obligatory military casino, which eclipses the finest of our mess-houses and has a splendid ballroom. Hard by is the garrison church, a clumsy erection, which seems the more insignificant by reason of its juxtaposition with the glorious remains of Mohammedan days. The museum is still more unworthy of a provincial capital. It contains the dreary array of stuffed beasts and wide-mouthed bottles familiar nearer home. No region in the world is richer in memorials of past ages than the valley of the Zarafshān. Heaps of small clay figures,

¹ Schuyler gives a very brief biography of this excellent man at p. 267 of his *Turkestan*. Like Kurapatkine, he was equally great in war and in civil life, and of that very high type of officials produced only in the Panjāb and Turkestan. The earnestness and keen sympathy with the people which characterised Henry Lawrence, Montgomery, and Herbert Edwardes shine conspicuous in the "Chernaieff school," so called from an illustrious soldier and statesman who inspired his lieutenants with his own devotion. His unmerited disgrace, which followed a display of splendid moral courage, and his old age spent in the cold shade of imperial neglect, are not the most creditable episodes in Central Asian annals.

supposed to represent the horse, show that Hinduism prevailed there at some remote period, for they are identical in shape with those deposited as *ex votos* at many Indian shrines. Crosses figuring on rude bas-reliefs serve as a reminder of another vanished faith. The Nestorians, hounded as heretics from Europe in the fifth century, spread over the Asiatic Continent, and established bishoprics in Samarkand, Merv, and Herāt.¹ With a degree of moderation which belied their uncompromising tenets, the Caliphs protected the professors of this rival faith. Its golden age was the twelfth century; but Tīmūr was not a man to tolerate any dissidence in his empire. His ruthless persecution stamped out Christianity in Central Asia. The museum also exhibits vessels of beautiful iridescent glass and pottery, the spoils of Afrāsiyāb, a city of immemorial antiquity, which covered the hills and ravines between Samarkand and the Zarafshān. The semi-mythical king whose name it bears² lived, according to tradition, in the eleventh century before Christ. That a high degree of civilisation was attained by the people of his long buried realm is proved by the exquisite designs of the lamps, urns, and pottery exhumed there. A rich harvest awaits systematic exploration.³ The collection of mineral specimens is equally unworthy of Samarkand, for the mountains to the east of the city

¹ Nestorius, a Syrian priest, became Patriarch of Constantinople in the fifth century; but his views as to Christ's personality were declared heretical by a General Council held at Ephesus in 431. He was deposed from his high office, and his followers were driven from Europe.

² Afrāsiyāb is synonymous in Persian legend for anything of extreme antiquity.

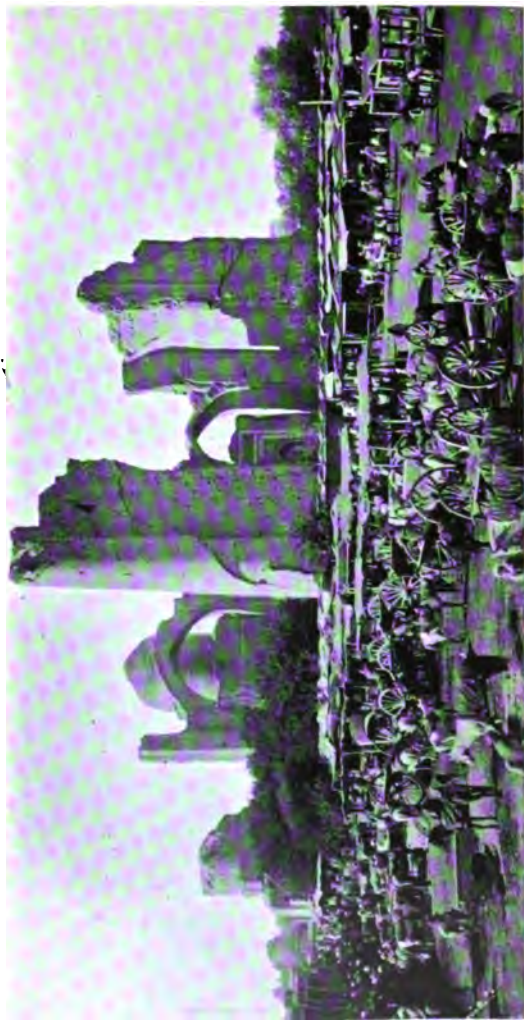
³ Moser was present when the Russian researches began. Every stroke of the spade, he says, revealed new treasures. Enamelled bricks of the finest designs, coins, a lamp like those exhumed at Pompeii, but covered with brilliant enamel, an urn splendidly adorned, and many other discoveries worthy to occupy a *savant*, were made in twenty-four hours (p. 116).

contain the potentialities of wealth beyond the dreams of avarice. There is a mountain of fine coal not twenty-five miles from the walls; and metals of all kinds abound.¹ The other modern institutions at Samarkand are more creditable to Russian enterprise. The jail, a large castellated structure resembling our own prison at Holloway, is scrupulously clean, and has most modern appliances for enforcing labour. The convicts are employed in weaving cotton, and all are healthy and well nourished. But the jail population in Central Asia is a fluctuating one; for criminals sentenced to long terms of imprisonment are deported by rail and steamer to Saghaleen, in the North-West Pacific.² Two orphanages for Russian children flourish; and the little inmates are happy, clean, and not depressed by that badge of servitude, a uniform.

Samarkand is still a great emporium of trade, though it no longer serves as a *dépôt* for the produce of British India and Afghanistan. The roads are thronged with shaggy camels, and carts perched on two gigantic wheels, which preserve their contents from the thorough wetting which an ordinary vehicle would give them

¹ No attempt has yet been made to exploit these regions; but the Russian Government is ready and willing to encourage prospectors. An Englishman is now engaged in searching for the precious metals, and has met with every possible assistance from the authorities.

² During Mr. Skrine's stay at Samarkand a large gang started for this remote destination. Most of them were native bandits, who regarded their expatriation with true Oriental phlegm. But among the group who squatted on the station platform in their sheep-skin cloaks, from which their heavy manacles protruded, were several who inspired more sympathy: a young European girl, who clung piteously to her only treasure—a China teapot; a middle-aged man, evidently belonging to a higher social stratum than the rest, was deeply moved by the prospect of exile. The cause was but too apparent, for a little son clung to him, a sharer in his grief; while among the silent crowd, which was kept at a distance by a ring of soldiers with fixed bayonets, was his unhappy wife, come with her three young daughters to bid him a long farewell.



THE MARKET NEAR BIBI KHANUM, SAMARKAND

while traversing the innumerable streams. The bazaars are not under cover as are those of Bokhārā, but the contents are quite as varied. Hides are a speciality of those parts—Astrakhans, prepared from the covering of the unborn lamb by Arabs, beautiful silky goats' skin, and nearly every kind of furs are to be purchased at very moderate prices. An English merchant, who has been engaged for three years in this trade, avers that the profits exceed 40 per cent. The manufactures of silk and cotton are still important, in spite of the competition of Russian looms.

According to local tradition, the art of weaving dates back to the expulsion of our first parents from Paradise. The Archangel Michael, in pity for their forlorn state, brought Adam a supply of cotton, and taught Eve how to fashion the fibre into cloth. Russian yarn has now entirely banished this native product. Before use it is boiled with soda, dyed, generally with aniline, and sized with wheaten starch. The looms are worked by hand, and the largest can turn out muslin nearly 4 yards wide. The wholesale price is 13s. 6d. for ten pieces with an aggregate length of 90 yards. Silk velvets and mixed fabrics are also produced in small factories with very inadequate light and ventilation. Each loom produces 16,000 yards annually, worth about £60, and giving a net profit of £32. Capital fares better than labour; for the journeyman weaver works ten hours a day for a weekly pittance of 4s. 6d. Viticulture is a far more lucrative industry; for Samarkand vineyards are three times as productive as those of any other part of the empire. The out-turn per acre is 134 cwt., as compared with 40 cwt. yielded in the Caucasus and the Crimea. The cost of cultivation is proportionately less, and hardly exceeds £22, as compared with £60 in the western provinces. Thus the area under vines has

trebled since the Russians gave Samarkand a just and settled government. In 1895 it had reached 15,000 acres, and is now probably 20 per cent. greater. Attempts have been made of late years to introduce foreign stock; but the native varieties, of which 24 are grown, are more prolific and give produce of greater body.¹ The soil selected for vineyards is composed of equal parts of sand and loam. Three hundred and seventy vines are planted to the acre. They begin to yield in their fourth year, and are at their best between the 8th and 25th. The tops are laid in trenches, and covered with earth at the beginning of winter; and when spring comes round they are uncovered and allowed to trail on the ground without the support of poles or trellis-work. The vine requires higher cultivation than any other plant which ministers to our needs or luxury. In Samarkand manure is applied in the proportion of 4 cwt. an acre, and the vineyards are thrice drenched with water. At the end of October the grapes are fit to gather. The return is enormous, and in one district it reaches 26 tons an acre. The bulk of the fruit is dried and exported as *kishmish*, or raisins. Though the cost of transport by rail makes this delicacy dearer than the Persian product, it commands a higher price; no less than 7300 tons were sent to Russia by rail in 1896.

The manufacture of brandy is a new industry at Samarkand. About 155,000 gallons are made annually for local consumption. The out-turn of wine is on nearly the same scale. In the opinion of French experts, the produce of a Central Asian grape is at least as good as that of the Medoc and Burgundy districts. The wine is of high alcoholic strength, and mellows rapidly. In this costly process, however, large capital is required, and

¹ Khanikoff enumerates 13 as grown in his time (*Bokhara*, p. 156).

the manufacture languishes in its absence. Casks, bottles, and corks are imported at great expense from Russia; and a reduction of railway rates is urgently called for. We have not yet exhausted the uses of Central Asian grapes. Those which are fit for nothing else are boiled into a syrup which serves to sweeten green tea, ices, and confectionery.¹

Samarkand resembles Bokhārā in the character of its population, which does not exceed 50,000. The RĠgis-tān is a happy hunting-ground for the ethnologist. Here one may listen unmolested to the professional story-teller, who holds his audience enthralled by oft-repeated tales of ancient chivalry.

There are two classes of public reciters: the *maddāh*, who stands while he relates edifying or amusing anecdotes; and the *risālachi*, who, seated on the ground, recites tales and legends in verse to a monotonous accompaniment on the two-stringed lute. Among these public entertainers there exists a system of organised applause. Two or three men or boys (very often themselves entertainers taking an interval) sit down at a distance of some ten yards facing the story-teller, and, throughout the entertainment, ejaculate at fixed intervals (as it were punctuating the commas and full stops in the story) such words as *hakkan*, "of a truth," and *khūsh*, "bravo," etc.

At the close of every recitation they are warned that "Amin" must be said, and in pronouncing it they place their hands with fingers clasped beneath the chin. Then follows a collection, and as the tiny brass coin rain into the performer's cap he acknowledges the generosity of each giver by a nicely graduated meed of thanks.

¹ The local term is Chāy Kābūd, or blue tea, a more faithful rendering of the colour. Like that drunk in Bokhārā, it is imported from China by steamer and rail; and absorbed from porcelain bowls, whence the spent leaves are deftly thrown on the floor by a practised jerk.

The legends of Samarkand which these performers have at their finger-ends are very curious. The popular hero is a Bokhāran Amīr named 'Abdullah, who is credited with most of the ancient buildings of the provinces. Once, so the story goes, he marched against this city with a great army, to crush a rebellious governor, but was foiled by its triple ramparts. He sat down before it and waited in vain for the surrender. At last his troops began to suffer the pangs of hunger ; and the Amīr himself found provisions running short. One evening, while wandering *incognito* in the suburbs, he came upon an old woman preparing her evening porridge, which smelt so good that the Amīr cast his dignity to the winds and begged permission to share the repast. It was granted, but his impatience did not permit him to wait till the smoking mess was properly served. He thrust a spoon into the pot and conveyed the contents to his mouth, burning that sensitive organ severely. His hostess roared with laughter at his grimaces, and said : " Now thou resemblest 'Abdullah ! Hadst thou taken the porridge from the edge of the dish, thou wouldst not have suffered thus. So, if our Amīr had begun by closely investing Samarkand, and allowed the citizens' passions to be cooled by hunger, he would not have burnt his fingers as he has done." The sovereign took the jest to heart, and starved out the rebels. In gratitude to his monitress, he bestowed on her a strip of land on either bank of the Ak Daryā in fee simple.

A lofty hill called Chūpān Ātā, which commands Samarkand on the east, is the subject of another legend. According to tradition, a cruel king invaded Samarkand and pitched his tents on a plain where Chūpān Ātā now rears its head. Here he waited for three days in order to give the people time to concentrate with their treasures within the city walls. The Samarkandis were then

heathen, but the imminence of peril made them turn to the true God. From the ruler downwards all ascended the flat house-roofs and wrestled in earnest prayer for deliverance. Their sight fell on the camp of the enemy, glittering with lights and resounding with martial music. The besieged trembled, for they knew that the morrow was the day fixed for the assault. When the sun rose all was still, and instead of a plain covered, as far as the eye could range, with tents, a mountain raised its head heavenwards. They timidly ventured beyond the walls, but the only trace of life was a husbandman in strange attire sleeping with a spade for his pillow. On being waked he rubbed his eyes, stared around him with astonishment, and asked where he was. Learning that he was in the heart of Asia, he told his interlocutors that he was a Syrian. On the previous evening he had betaken himself to the mountain-side with his spade, for on the morrow his turn for irrigation would come round. Spent with fatigue he had fallen asleep and been wafted 1500 miles, with his farm and the mountain on which it stood! Then the Samarkandis saw that God had hearkened to their prayer, and that their foes lay buried in the bowels of the mountain. Confirmation is found in the fact¹ that the conformation of Chūpān Ātā is the same as that of Syrian hills, and that lethal weapons are often turned up there by the plough. A variation of the legend has it that the Syrian waif belonged to that calling, and was discovered sleeping peacefully among his flock. The hill once bore a three-storeyed observatory, built by the astronomer Ulugh Beg, which has been replaced by a shrine with faience decorations of the patron saint of shepherds. It stands at the edge of the valley of the Zarafshān, which is here crossed by a timber viaduct on

¹ See the description of ancient Samarkand by the Emperor Bāber in Schuyler's *Turkestan*, p. 239.

the line connecting Samarkand with Andijān and Tashkent. At this point stands a much more curious piece of engineering, which dates back to the time of Timūr. At right angles to the new railway line a gigantic brick arch juts into the shallow spreading stream. It is 100 feet in height, and at least as broad; and traces of two similar arches are to be seen in the river-bed beyond. The intention of the designer is not by any means clear. It could hardly have been to throw a roadway over the Zarafshān, which is not navigable, and would not require a bridge more than twenty feet in height. In the opinion of *savants*, this huge work was built to serve as a regulation of the current, forcing a certain proportion of the water into a channel reserved for the exclusive use of Bokhārā, which is entirely at the mercy of Samarkand in the matter of irrigation.

The administration of Samarkand offers much interesting material for study. We see in Transcaspia a system of local government imposed on the unsophisticated Turkomans. At Bokhārā we observe the rules on which the paramount Power conducts its relations to the ruler and people of a protected state. It remains to sketch the means taken by our rivals in Asia to improve a mechanism evolved in a comparatively civilised community.

Samarkand is a province of Turkestan, and under the control of the governor-general at Tashkent. It embraces the four districts of Samarkand proper, Katta Kurgān, Jizāk, and Khojend. The first-named has an area of 12,300 square miles, with a population of rather more than 300,000. It is administered by a chief who is a military officer of field rank, aided by a personal assistant.¹ Under him are officers styled *pristas*, in

¹ Colonel Kulchanoff now holds these functions. He is a Tartar from Orenburg, and is a perfect mine of information on the history and usages of the province. Though a Mohammedan, he lives in European style, and

charge of subdivisions, which are again split up into volosts, or groups of 2000 to 2500 houses, governed by officers termed volostnois. Every village in the volost has its mayor (starshina). The duties of this class of officials are purely executive, and confined to the repression of crime, the execution of judicial decrees, and the collection of revenue. They form, too, the police force. On the occurrence of an offence it is reported to the starshina, who sends information to the volostnoi. An investigation follows, and, should the charge be considered *prima facie* true, it is reported to one of the two judges of instruction stationed at Samarkand. These officers are subordinate to the Ministry of Justice at St. Petersburg, and have charge of all steps in criminal inquiries up to the actual trial. When their work is complete the case comes before the judge of the peace, who is also an officer of the Ministry of Justice, and is disposed of under the Russian criminal code. Civil causes in which either party is a foreigner are tried by this functionary, whose tribunal is also that for suits referred to him by both litigants, though both may be natives of Turkestan. The ordinary tribunals for this latter are those of the Kāzīs — native judges stationed at the volost headquarters, who are guided in their decisions by the Mohammedan law. The executive officials are also responsible for the collection of revenue. Its chief source is the land tax, for Samarkand was, before its conquest, a province of Bokhārā, and the state in all Mohammedan countries is theoretically the owner of the soil. In this department things are not yet on a sound footing. When the Russians assumed the administration of the country they were compelled to trust to the information as to the demand from each villager furnished by the officers

associates freely with his colleagues. Madame Kulchanoff presides at table, and converses with a charming grace with strangers who know Russian.

of the late Government. The statistics thus obtained were, of course, vitiated by the corruption of public servants universal throughout the East;¹ but they still form the basis of the annual demand which is assessed collectively on each village by the district chief, and paid into the treasury by the starshinas. The rate ranges, with the nature of the soil and the facilities for irrigation, between 2s. and 3s. 4d. per acre. The Russians are therefore in much the same predicament as were the English masters of Bengal in 1793, when the annual demand was crystallised for ever by that gigantic fiscal blunder, the Permanent Settlement. They possess the advantage of having a free hand; and for several years past a commission has been incubating a scheme adjusting the burdens on land with some regard to its actual produce.² The imposts on merchandise and the poll-tax levied on non-Musulmans under the old régime have been abolished, and traders are classified in guilds according to the scale of their operations, and pay a licence tax on a graduated scale. Irrigation has been left in native hands, and every village has its *ak-sakāl* (white-beard), or superintendent, who has the power to demand the service of the entire male population for work on the canals.³ Vernacular education has not made much progress since the conquest; and the system is subject

¹ Lord Cornwallis encountered similar difficulties in fixing the demand on which the Permanent Settlement in Bengal was based. An eminent Hindu reformer, who at that period (1793) was head native officer in the district of Rangpur, is said to have received a bribe of a lakh of rupees (£10,000) for omitting a cipher in the reported gross revenue of a single estate.

² By far the best work done by the Civil Service of India is that which is known as Settlement, *i.e.* the land valuation on a vast scale. The Russians would gain enormously could they obtain the service of a few of the younger men who have taken up this branch of executive duty.

³ The dimensions of some of the ancient works in Samarkand are stupendous. In one case the wells attain a maximum depth of 420 feet, and are connected by a tunnel in which a man can walk upright.

to the same defects as those which render Bokhārā a hot-bed of fanaticism. Many years ago an attempt was made by Government to introduce the study of Russian; but priestly influence ran counter to the reform, and the classes were poorly attended. An administrative order was, however, issued in 1897 which made a knowledge of the conqueror's tongue obligatory on candidates for the posts of volostnoi and kāzī; and self-interest has already modified the popular attitude towards the innovation. Those who wish well to Russian rule must see to it that the pendulum is not allowed to swing in the opposite direction. No greater mistake could be made than to force a superficial study of Russian on classes rendered unfit to profit by it by social status or inherited defect.

CHAPTER XI

FRIENDS OR FOES?

It has been acutely observed that we bring back from foreign countries no more than we take thither. In other words, we view them through the medium of our own personality, which is the growth of heredity, education, and environment. It is almost impossible for an Englishman to judge the subjects of the Tsar dispassionately. Forty-five years ago a friendship which had lasted for centuries was shattered by that greatest blunder of the century, our Crimean campaign; and the fierce passions which it engendered have not yet spent their force. The Russian advance in Asia, which we have described as a movement automatic and uncontrollable, has been interpreted by an influential school of writers as a menace to our position in India. Twice of late years have we been landed on the very brink of war by a public opinion goaded to frenzy by such baseless fears. For it may be affirmed with perfect truth that the absorption of India is a dream too wild for the most aggressive adviser of the Tsar. Such is the geographical position of the peninsula, that it can be held by no European Power which is not Mistress of the Seas. How, it may well be asked, would it profit Russia to assume the responsibility of governing three hundred million of Asiatics whose ignorance of Malthusian doctrines renders them a prey

to perennial pestilence and famine? Our prestige, indeed, is vitally concerned in upholding an empire which is the wonder and the envy of the world, and we reap solid advantage from owning so considerable an outlet for our manufactures and the redundant energies of our middle class. In Russia social and economic conditions differ widely from our own; and her conquests in Eastern Asia will absorb her surplus activity for many years to come. It is true that the path opened by nature for her expansion leads southwards. Peter the 'Great's famous will is a forgery,¹ but no one can doubt that its promptings have sunk deeply into the hearts of the Russian people. In their eyes the Tsar is the heir of the Byzantine Empire which gave them laws and religion, and they are firmly convinced that a day will come when the Greek Cross will replace the Crescent which desecrates the summit of St. Sophia.

Twice has the road to Constantinople been blocked by England. In 1854 she drew the sword in order to keep the Key of the World in Turkish hands; and a quarter of a century later she turned back the Tsar's victorious legions when the splendid quarry was within their grasp. Baffled in an ambition which educated Russians deem legitimate, their eyes are turned to the Far East; and here, again, England has set limits to their expansion. It is this latent antagonism, ever ready to burst into uncontrollable fury, which constitutes the chief danger to the stability of our rule in India. The latter is our one vulnerable point, and, when national interests are become divergent, it is in Russia's power to create a diversion by fomenting trouble in Afghanistān, in the highlands which separate the two empires, and within the limits of

¹ See a very interesting note at pp. 258-9, vol. ii. of Schuyler's *Turkestan*.

India itself. Every friend of humanity must deplore the existence of a gulf between two forces which, if united, would give civilisation to Asia and assure the peace of the world. When we pass from the tendency of Russian policy in the heart of Asia to the results achieved there, we are on firmer ground—in politics nothing happens but the unexpected, while ocular evidence can hardly be impeached. We left home full of prejudices, the result of a course of Central Asian literature. The Cassandra notes of Vambéry were ringing in our ears, and the latent chauvinism of Lord Curzon of Kedleston¹ had prejudiced the Russians in our eyes. But unfavourable prepossessions vanished when we had seen the results of their rule in Central Asia, and had gathered estimates of its character in every class of the population. We are convinced that the Tsar's explicit instructions to his lieutenants to exercise a fatherly care over his Asiatic subjects are scrupulously obeyed.² The peoples of Asia, from the Caspian to China, from Siberia to the borders of Persia and Afghanistān, enjoy as large a measure of happiness and freedom as those of any part of our Indian dominions. The fiscal policy of the conquering race is one of extreme moderation. Imperial and local taxation are indeed too light; and, in Samarkand at least, a turn might be given to the screw with great advantage to an exchequer which finds these Asiatic possessions a serious drain on its resources. The problem of local self-government has been solved, and indigenous institutions have not been ruthlessly trampled upon. Respect for the dominant race has been inculcated by prompt

¹ Lord Curzon's great work on Central Asia is considered by the Russians themselves as a text-book, though they vigorously combat his views on their policy.

² See Appendix, p. 425.

and severe punishment meted out for revolt or outrage on a European's person or property. Every picture has its shadows, and it is not difficult to point to defects in the administrative machine. Russia has carried an attitude of *laissez-faire* to an extreme limit in dealing with education, and it has been left in the hands of a class which must always be bitterly hostile to infidel rule. The process of Russification has been pushed with excessive zeal. Local colour and racial characteristics have been swept away, which were precious indeed in times when mankind was oppressed by a deluge of commonplace throughout the Eastern world. Structures which made the cities of Central Asia the theme of Eastern poets have been suffered to lapse into hopeless ruin. And what shall be said of a commercial policy framed on principles exploded a century ago by Adam Smith, and proved by the history of our own East India Company to be positively injurious to the Government which cherishes them? That policy aims at nothing less than the maintenance of a Chinese Wall round the Russian Empire, albeit that railways and steam navigation have made the whole world kin and brought about a solidarity between nations which renders each unit sensitive to the injuries inflicted on the commerce and manufactures of the rest. The heavy protective tariff, the unwillingness to admit consular agents for the protection of English trade, and the jealous restrictions on the movements of Europeans are strangely out of date at the dawn of the twentieth century. An Anglo-Indian official travelling in Central Asia would find it difficult to avoid instituting comparisons between our own methods of dealing with Orientals and those employed by the Russians. The dissimilarity of the conditions encountered deprives the process of half its value. We have in India a swarming

was calmed by a hint from a high quarter that it was puerile and displeasing. Nowhere is discipline, both in the army and civil service, maintained so sternly as in the Russian Empire. The relations between the executive and the judicial branches are now as cordial as can be expected, and the system in force gives the utmost satisfaction to the people. It would carry us too far from our subject to discuss the merits and defects of the respective methods. One thing is certain, that a compliance with the demand of the Indian Congress, that our district officers should be relegated to the station of mere rakers-in of revenue, would involve a fatal weakening of the principle of authority. But imitation is the sincerest flattery, and that so much of the Russian edifice is built on Anglo-Indian models is the strongest proof of their intrinsic excellence. We were pioneers, and had difficulties to encounter with which our neighbours were never perplexed; and they have profited by our experience and mistakes. The last word of the memorable seventeenth-century controversy, Ancients against Moderns, was said when someone remarked that a dwarf could see farther than a giant if perched upon his shoulders. We believe that the cause of civilisation would be furthered by a frank understanding between the two great Asiatic Powers. The Russians have their faults, which are often a little exasperating to the perfervid Briton. The Oriental strain renders them, to say the least of it, leisurely in business transactions. Their standard of comfort is not exalted; social etiquette is not without a tinge of barbarism. But they are a young and vigorous race, imbued with a passionate love of their country, a steadfast belief in its high destinies, both rare and precious in these days of flabby cosmopolitanism. And there is a great deal in their work in Central Asia



BAZAAR POLITICS

which should inspire our admiration and sympathy. Their railways are the fruit of a dogged perseverance, and appeal forcibly to the fellow-countrymen of George Stephenson and Brunel. The broad realm which they govern consists of little but deserts and swamps, and the isolation of those who administer it, their banishment from the sweets of home, give them a special claim on our regard. When we come to the individuals we find still more in common. That Englishmen and Russians are made to understand and appreciate each other was proved during the operations of Boundary Commissions of 1885 and 1895, for the personnel on both sides parted on terms of cordial friendship. Once given a union of hearts between the two greatest Powers, how much anxiety would not our statesmen be saved!

But the Russians must set their own house in order ere a consummation be reached which will give tranquillity to this distracted world of ours. Autocracy has some advantages over any system of popular government; but it has a drawback equally obvious. It gives a preponderance to the personal equation which sometimes menaces the peace of the world. The dynasty of the Romanoffs during the last century has produced more men of talent and public spirit than any other royal house in Europe; but Russians should remember that a Catherine the Great was followed by a Paul. What if a Tsar should arise inspired by dreams of military glory and longing to use the immense forces at his disposal in a career of universal conquest? England, the august mother of self-governing nations, the chosen home of freedom, may well pause ere she throws in her lot with a state whose political future is in the hands of a single human being. The radical difference between our commercial

policies is another obstacle to a close Anglo-Russian alliance. We English are essentially a manufacturing people, dependent on our foreign commerce for the wherewithal to feed a redundant population and support the burden of world-wide empire. Having found by centuries of experience that perfect freedom of trade and travel are as essential to a people's healthy development as the air we breathe, we so govern that empire that the human race profits by its existence. Nations are subject to the same laws as those which govern the growth and well-being of individuals; and true progress is impossible unless their policy be swayed by a scrupulous regard for the interests of others.

APPENDIX I

TRANSLATION of Prince Gortschakoff's Circular to the Great Powers, dated St. Petersburg, 21st November 1864.

"The Russian newspapers have described the military operations which have been carried out by a detachment of our troops in the regions of Central Asia, with remarkable success and vast results. It was inevitable that these events should excite attention in foreign countries, and the more so because their theatre lies in regions which are hardly known.

"Our august Master has directed me to explain succinctly, but with clearness and precision, our position in Central Asia, the interests which prompt our action in that part of the world, and the aims which we pursue. The position of Russia in Central Asia is that of all civilised states which come into contact with half-savage, wandering tribes possessing no fixed social organisation.

"It invariably happens in such cases that the interests of security on the frontier, and of commercial relations, compel the more civilised state to exercise a certain ascendancy over neighbours whose turbulence and nomad instincts render them difficult to live with. First, we have incursions and pillage to repress. In order to stop these we are compelled to reduce the tribes on our frontier to a more or less complete submission. Once this result is attained they become less troublesome, but in their turn they are exposed to the aggression of more distant

tribes. The state is obliged to defend them against these depredations, and chastise those who commit them. Hence the necessity of distant and costly expeditions, repeated at frequent intervals, against an enemy whose social organisation enables him to elude pursuit. If we content ourselves with chastising the freebooters and then retire, the lesson is soon forgotten. Retreat is ascribed to weakness, for Asiatics respect only visible and palpable force; that arising from the exercise of reason and a regard for the interests of civilisation has as yet no hold on them. The task has therefore to be performed over again.

"In order to cut short these perpetual disorders we established strong places in the midst of a hostile population, and thus we obtained an ascendancy which shortly but surely reduced them to a more or less willing submission. But beyond this line there are other tribes which soon provoke the same dangers, the same repression. The state then finds itself on the horns of a dilemma. It must abandon the incessant struggle and deliver its frontier over to disorder, which renders property, security, and civilisation impossible; or it must plunge into the depths of savage countries, where the difficulties and sacrifices to which it is exposed increase with each step in advance. Such has been the lot of all countries placed in the same conditions. The United States in America, France in Algiers, Holland in her colonies, England in India,—all have been inevitably drawn into a course wherein ambition plays a smaller part than imperious necessity, and where the greatest difficulty is in knowing where to stop.

"Such are the reasons which have induced the Imperial Government to establish itself, on the one side, on the Sir Daryā, and, on the other, on the Lake of Issik-Kul, and to consolidate the two lines by advanced

forts which, little by little, have penetrated the heart of these distant regions, but have not sufficed to secure tranquillity on the frontier. The cause of this instability lies, firstly, in the existence between the extremities of this double line of forts, of a vast unoccupied tract where the incursions of robber tribes continue to neutralise our attempts at colonisation and our caravan traffic. It is, in the second place, due to perpetual changes in the political aspect of the countries to the south of our border. Turkestan and Kokand are sometimes united, sometimes separated, but are always at war, either with each other or with Bokhara, and offer no probability of settled relations or regular transactions with them.

"Thus, in its own despite, the Imperial Government finds itself reduced to the dilemma already stated : it must allow an anarchy to become chronic which paralyses all security and all progress, and involve distant and expensive expeditions at frequent intervals ; or, on the other hand, it must enter on a career of conquest and annexation such as gave England her Indian Empire, in view of dominating in succession the petty independent states whose turbulent habits and perpetual revolts leave their neighbour neither truce nor repose. Neither of these alternatives is in consonance with the object of my august Master's policy, which aims at restricting the extent of the countries subject to his sceptre within reasonable limits, while it places his rule thereon on firm foundations, guarantees their security, and develops their social organisation, their commerce, well-being, and civilisation.

"Our task, therefore, has been to seek a system fitted to attain the triple object. In this view the following principles have been formulated :—

"(1.) It has been considered indispensable that the two fortified frontier lines, the one stretching from China to Lake Issik-Kul, the other from the Sea of Aral along

the lower course of the Sir Daryā, should be linked together by a chain of strongholds, so that each fort should be in a position to afford mutual support and leave no space open to the incursions of nomad tribes.

"(2.) It was essential that the line of forts thus completed should be placed in a fertile country, not only in order to assure supplies, but to facilitate regular colonisation, which alone can give an occupied country a future of stability and prosperity, or attract neighbouring tribes to civilised life.

"(3.) It was a matter of urgency to fix this line in a definite manner, in order to escape the danger of being drawn on from repression to reprisals, which might end in a limitless extension of our empire.

"With this object it was necessary to lay the foundations of a system founded not merely on considerations of expediency, but on geographical and political data which are fixed and permanent.

"This system was disclosed to us by a very simple fact, the result of long experience, namely, that nomad tribes which cannot be overtaken, punished, or kept in hand are the worst neighbours possible; while agricultural and commercial populations, wedded to the soil, and given a more highly developed social organisation, afford for us a basis for friendly relations which may become all that can be wished.

"Our frontier-line then should include the first, and † stop at the boundaries of the second.

"These three principles afford a clear, natural, and logical explanation of the recent military operations accomplished in Central Asia.

"Moreover, our old frontier, stretching along the Sir Daryā to Fort Perovski on one side; and, on the other, as far as Lake Issik-Kul, had the disadvantage of being almost at the edge of the desert. It was interrupted by

an immense gap between the farthest points on the east and west. It offered very insufficient supplies to our troops, and left beyond it unsettled tribes with which we could not maintain stable relations.

“ In spite of our repugnance to give a wider scope to our dominion, these conditions were powerful enough to induce the Imperial Government to establish a frontier between Lake Issik-Kul and the Sir Daryā by fortifying the town of Chimkent, recently occupied by us. In adopting this line we obtain a twofold result. First, the country which it includes is fertile, well-wooded, and watered by numerous streams; it is inhabited in part by Kirghiz tribes which have already acknowledged our supremacy, and therefore offers conditions favourable to colonisation and the supply of our garrisons. Then, it gives us the agricultural and commercial population of Kokand as our neighbours.

“ Thus we find ourselves confronted by a more solid and compact social organisation,—one less shifting and better arranged. This consideration marks with geographical precision the limit where interest and reason command us to stop. On the one hand, attempts to extend our rule will no longer encounter such unstable entities as nomad tribes, but more regularly organised states, and will therefore be carried out at the cost of great effort, leading us from annexation to annexation into difficulties the end of which can not be foreseen. On the other hand, as we have as our neighbours states of that description, in spite of their low civilisation and nebulous political development, we hope that regular relations may one day, in our common interest, replace the chronic disorders which have hitherto hampered their progress.

“ Such are the principles which are the mainspring of our august Master's policy in Central Asia; such the

final goal which His Imperial Majesty has prescribed as that of his Cabinet's action.

"There is no necessity to insist on the palpable interest of Russia in restricting the growth of her territory and preventing the advent of complications in distant provinces which may retard and paralyse our domestic development.

"The programme which I have just traced is in strict accord with this policy.

"People of late years have been pleased to credit us with a mission to civilise neighbouring countries on the continent of Asia. The progress of civilisation has no more efficacious ally than commercial relations. These require, in all countries, order and stability as conditions essential to their growth; but in Asia their existence implies a revolution in the manners of the people. Asiatics must, before all things, be made to understand that it is more advantageous to favour and assure trade by caravans than to pillage them. These elementary principles can penetrate the public conscience only when there is a public; that is to say, a social organisation and a government which directs and represents it. We are accomplishing the first portion of this task in extending our frontier to points where these indispensable conditions are to be met with. We accomplish the second when we undertake the duty of proving to neighbouring states, by a policy of firmness as regards the repression of their misdeeds, but of moderation and justice in the employment of armed strength and of respect for their independence, that Russia is not their foe, that she cherishes no designs of conquest, and that peaceful and commercial relations with her are more profitable than disorder, pillage, reprisals, and chronic warfare. In devoting itself to this task the Russian Cabinet has the

interests of the empire in view ; but we believe that its accomplishment will also serve those of civilisation and humanity at large. We have a right to count upon an equitable and loyal appreciation of the policy which we follow, and the principles on which it is framed.

“ GORTSCHAKOFF.”

APPENDIX II

THE present Minister of War, General Kurapatkine, delivered an address at Askabad, on the 25th November 1897, to some members of a party of English tourists, which is really a remarkably frank enunciation of the policy of his Government in Central Asia. The full text runs as follows :—

“The policy of our Government in Central Asia, since the accession of the late Tsar, has been eminently one of peace; and recourse has never been had to arms until every other means of gaining a given object had failed. Before the extension of the railway and telegraph to these remote regions, a considerable measure of initiative was necessarily left in the hands of local officers. Generals Chernaieff, Skobelev, and Kauffman were repeatedly compelled by circumstances to undertake expeditions without sanction; and their action was sometimes in opposition to the views of the Central Government. There has been a radical change in our administrative system since the Transcaspian provinces were united to Europe by these powerful civilising influences. Every case of friction on the frontier is reported to St. Petersburg, and instructions are obtained before active measures are adopted. It is now impossible that there could be a repetition of the events of 1865, when General Chernaieff took Tashkent, and then reported having done so to his Imperial Master. No operations likely to produce serious consequences can

now be undertaken without the previous sanction of His Majesty. I wish to be particularly explicit on this point, because my nomination as governor of Transcaspia was regarded by many journals, both in England and India, as a presage of what is called a "forward policy." It is the custom of the present Tsar, as it was of his lamented father, to furnish detailed instructions on questions of internal organisations as well as those which concern foreign affairs. The principles which govern the policy of Russia are very simple. They are the maintenance of peace, of order, and of prosperity in all classes of the population. The means employed to compass these ends are equally free from complexity. Those who fill responsible positions are expressly informed by our Government that the assumption of sovereignty over alien nationalities must not be attempted without very serious deliberation, inasmuch as such become, on annexation, Russian subjects, children of the Tsar, and invested with every privilege enjoyed by citizens of the empire. His Majesty has enjoined on his representatives, as their first duty, the fatherly care of his Asiatic subjects. In order to prevent the possibility of internal discord, we have disarmed the natives, and no pains have been spared to induce them to adopt peaceful pursuits. The fruits of this action are already visible. A solitary traveller can now cross Central Asia, from the Caspian to the Siberian frontier, without incurring the smallest risk of attack. A few years ago I furnished weapons for purposes of defence to the Russian colonists in seventeen villages established by me, and I warned them that it might be unsafe to undertake journeys without arms. They have, however, disregarded this advice, and never carry arms when at a distance from their homes. Last winter a Russian peasant fell on the roadside in a state of helpless intoxication near the Afghan frontier south of

Merv; but the Turkomans, so far from molesting him, covered him with carpets and brought him on a camel before the district chief. Similar occurrences are reported from Askabad.

"We may boast with perfect truth that the thirty-five years during which Central Asia has enjoyed the blessings of a firm and civilised rule have been years of sustained progress, of daily-increasing strength in the bonds of attachment and goodwill which unite these subject peoples to the inhabitants of other Russian provinces. As compared with India, our territories in that part of the world are still poor and sparsely populated; but there has been a considerable increase in the country's wealth since the conquest of Turkeṣtān in 1863. The trading classes are now the staunchest supporters of our authority; next, the cultivators; lastly, the women. Should any mischief arise, it will be due to the intrigues of the mullās, whose powers for evil are great, owing to the ignorance rather than the fanaticism of the population.

"The large measure of progress attained could not have been hoped for did we not possess settled frontiers with which we are perfectly content. Every country in Central Asia has had its period of war; but it is the fixed policy of our Tsar to prevent a recurrence of its horrors arising from our initiative. In the case of the territory most recently acquired, the disturbances lasted for seven years—from 1878 to 1885. Between the latter year and 1888 we established a stable and logical frontier with the aid of Great Britain; and in the twelve years which have since elapsed there have been no expeditions throughout its length of 600 miles bordering on Persia, and 400 on Afghaniṣtān. The latter country contains much inflammable material, but we have taken every means in our power to ensure that the internal disorders of that state shall not react

on our frontier. So scrupulous is our regard for the *status quo*, that whole tribes have cast themselves on our protection in vain. The Piruzkuhis, Khezaris, and Jamshidis have crossed our borders in troops of as many as 1000 families, but we have always repatriated such refugees. There have been similar cases in our dealings with Persian subjects. The whole population of Khelat, in Khorāsān, came to us with entreaties to protect them against the oppression of the Shāh's officers. Our reply was the despatch of troops who conducted them across the frontier, but we took diplomatic steps to assure a pardon for those to whom we had been obliged to refuse our protection. Turkestan proper has been free from war since the occupation of Farghāna—twenty-one years ago. The Bokhārā frontier has remained intact since the capture of Samarkand in 1868. It is true that within the last few years the Pamirs Question has been reopened, and slight modifications have been made in our boundaries towards Afghanistan; but, as far as we are concerned, the operations have been carried out against our wishes—I may almost say, under compulsion. For the Amīr 'Abd er-Rahmān infringed the terms of the arrangement entered into between England and ourselves in 1873, when it was agreed that the Afghans should not cross the Oxūs, by pushing his boundary beyond that river and occupying Shugnān and Roshān on its right bank. The last complication on the Persian frontier dates from 1829—nearly seventy years ago. Throughout our frontier conterminous with China we have had no disturbance for more than a century. I am led to mention these significant facts in order to show that our policy in Asia is essentially a peaceful one, and that we are perfectly satisfied with our present boundaries. And I may claim to speak with authority, apart from my official position, for I have been personally concerned in

all our important military and political movements in Central Asia for many years past. In 1868, when only twenty, I took part in the storming of Samarkand. In 1875 I was employed in the reduction of the Khānate of Kokand. In 1880 I led the advance guard in the conquest of Farghāna; and in 1881 I commanded the reinforcements sent to General Skobeleff from Turkestan, in his struggle with the Tekke tribes, and led one of the assaulting columns at the capture of Geok Tepe."