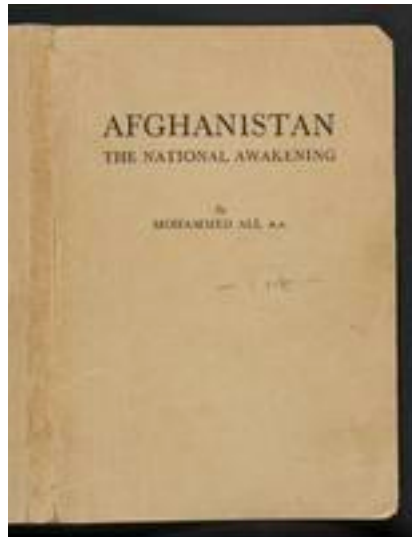


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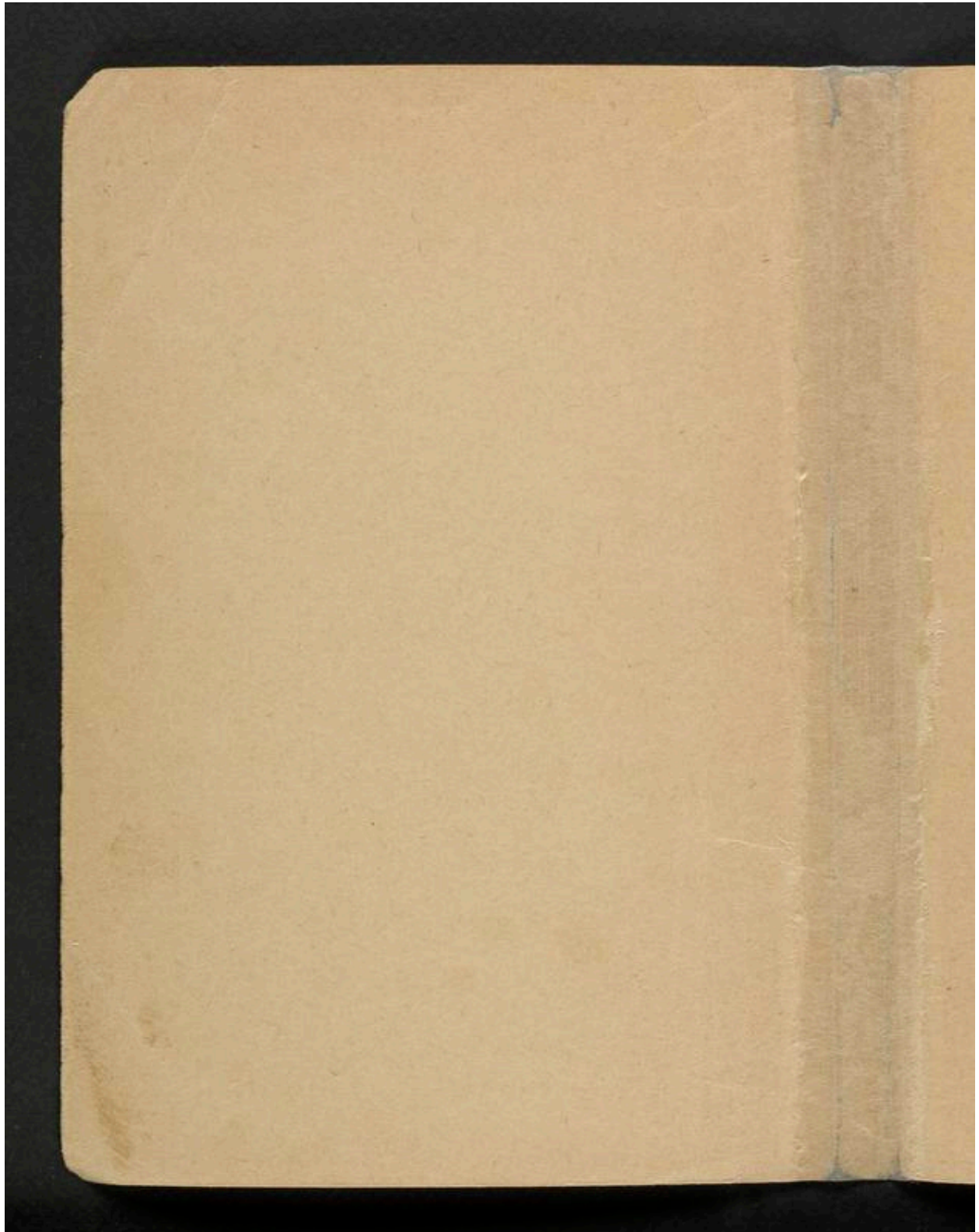
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AFGHANISTAN

THE NATIONAL AWAKENING

By
MOHAMMED ALI, M.A.

— 1014 —



AFGHANISTAN

THE NATIONAL AWAKENING

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&

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Commercial Afghanistan, A New Guide to Afghanistan,
Aryana or Ancient Afghanistan, Afghanistan—An Historical Sketch
and
Manners & Customs of the Afghans*

1958

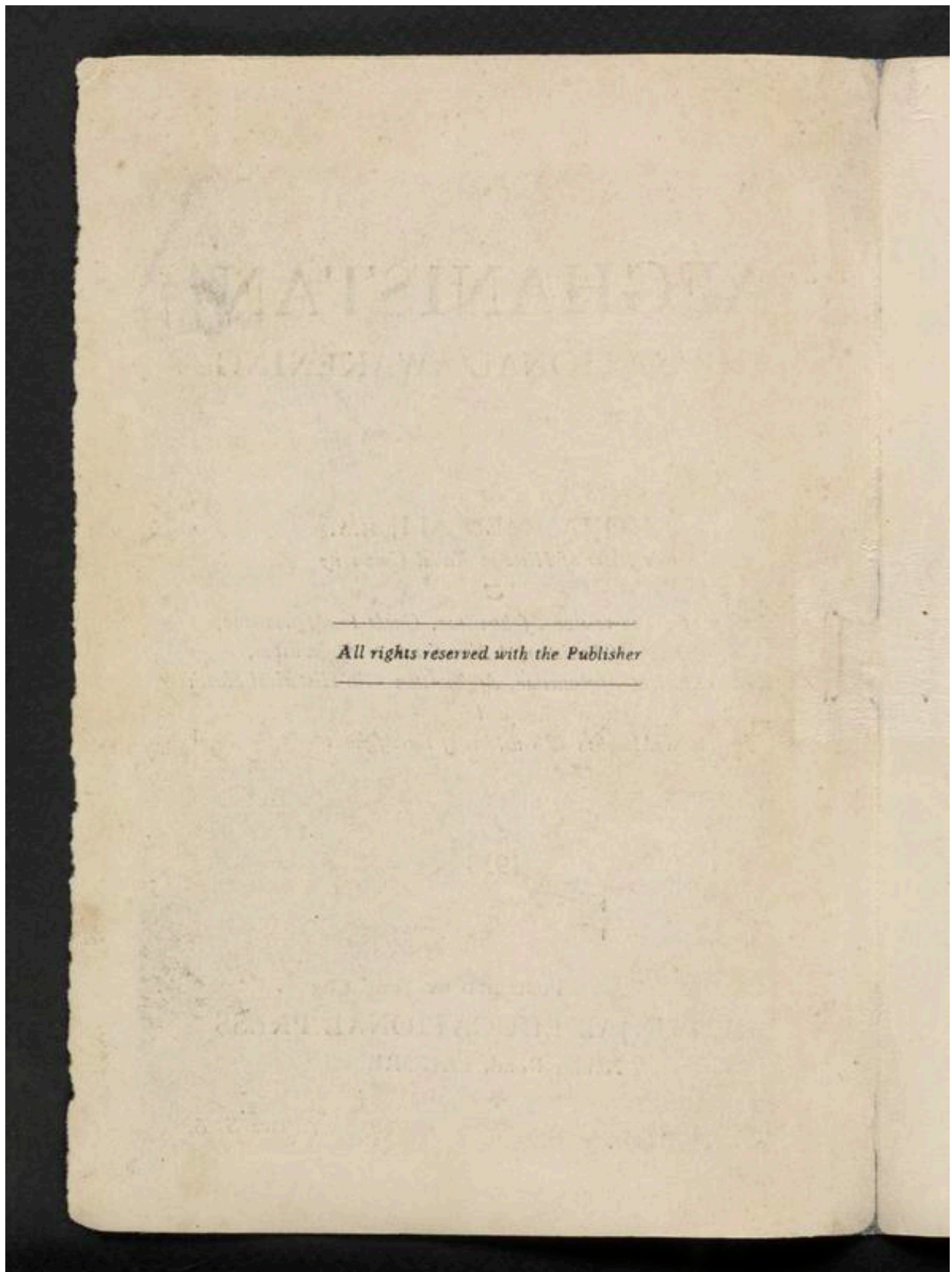
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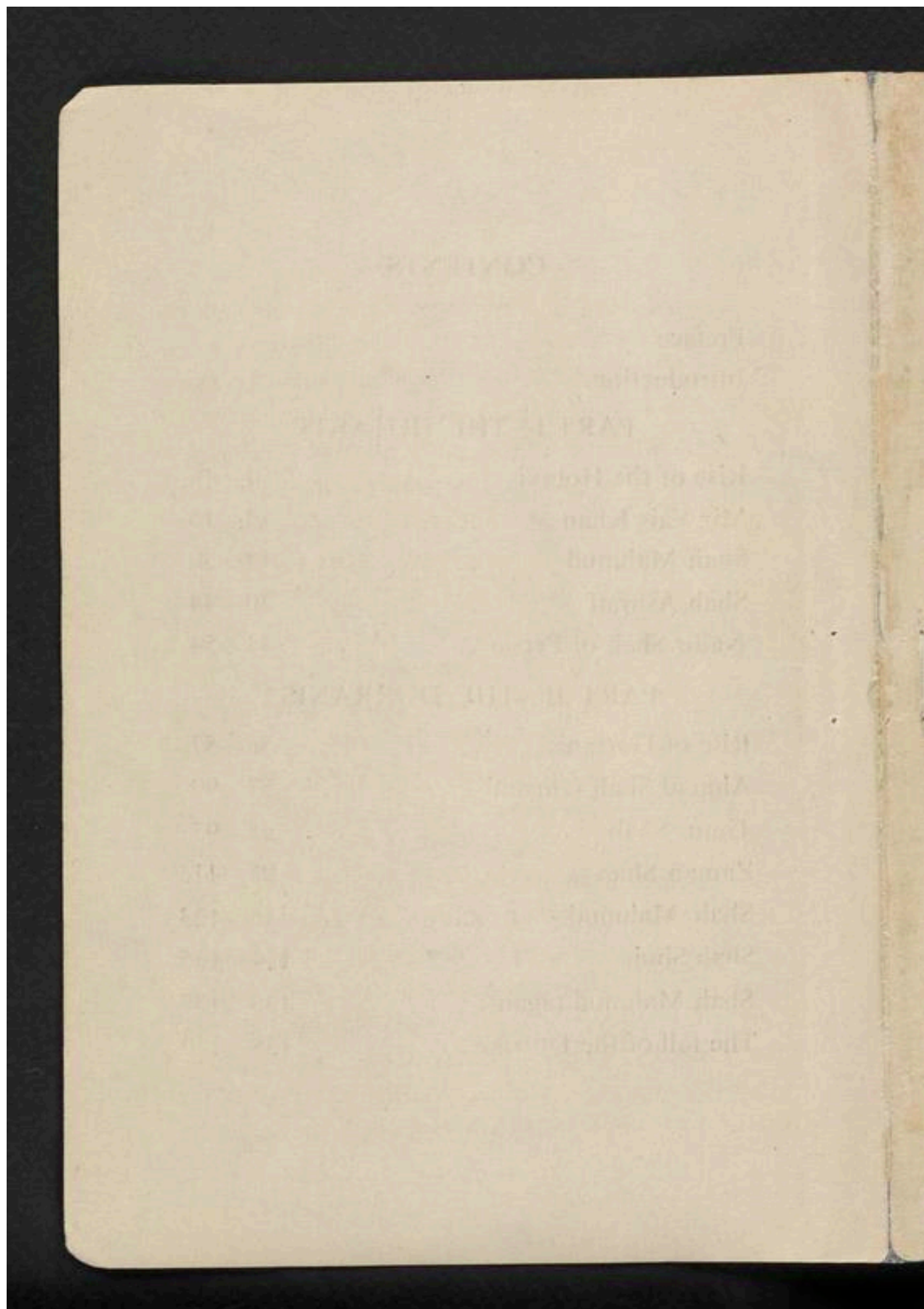
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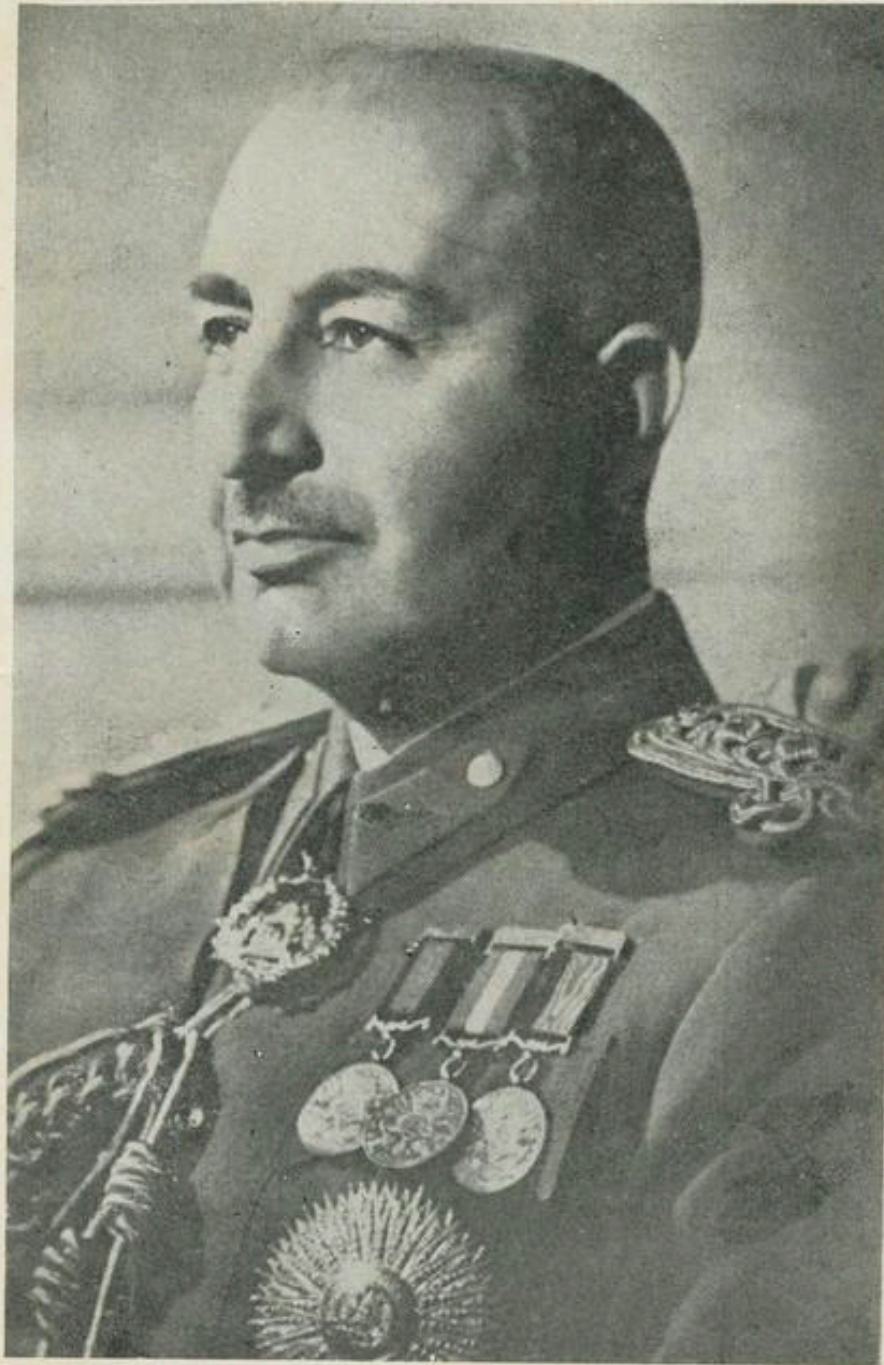
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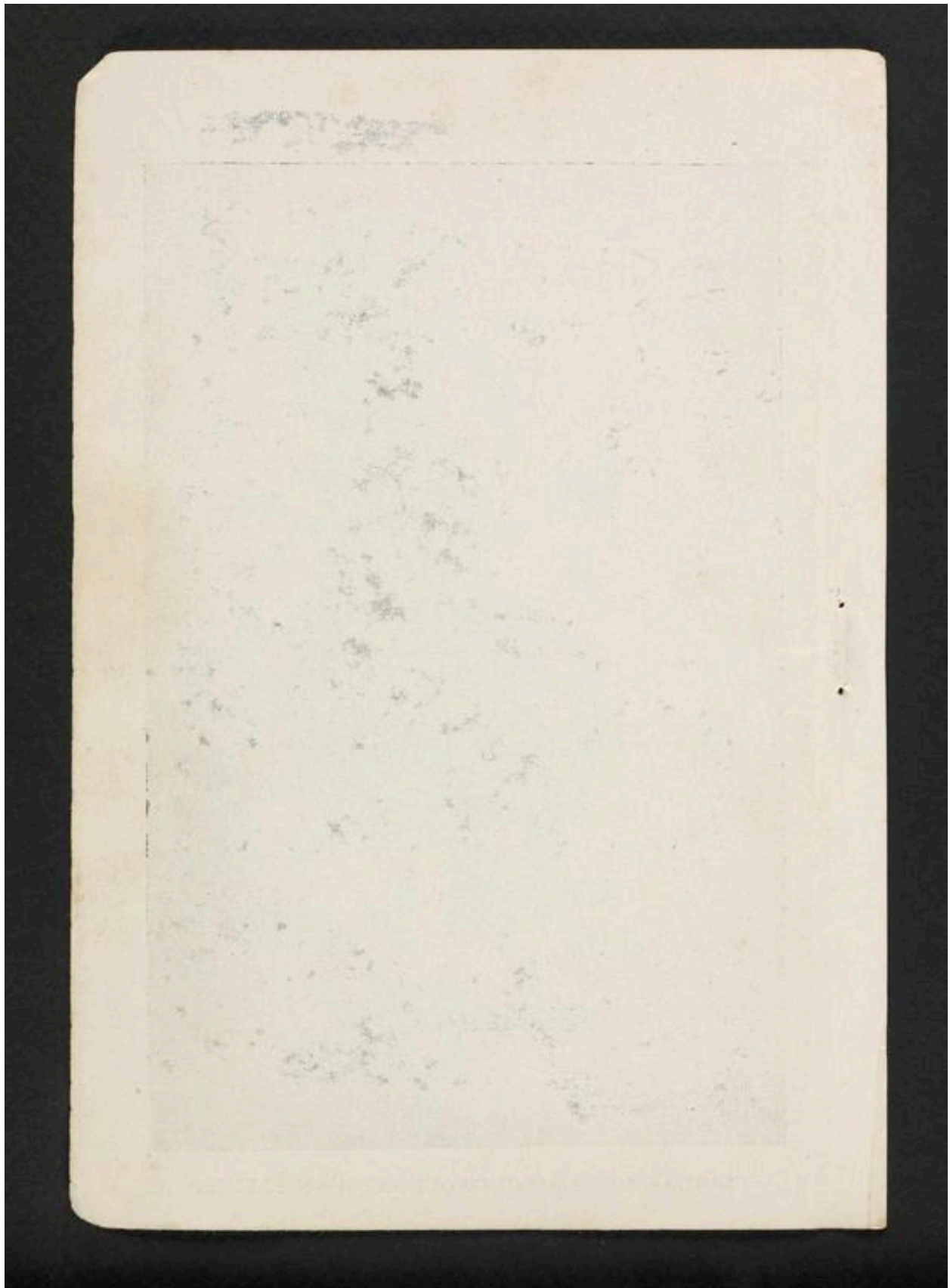
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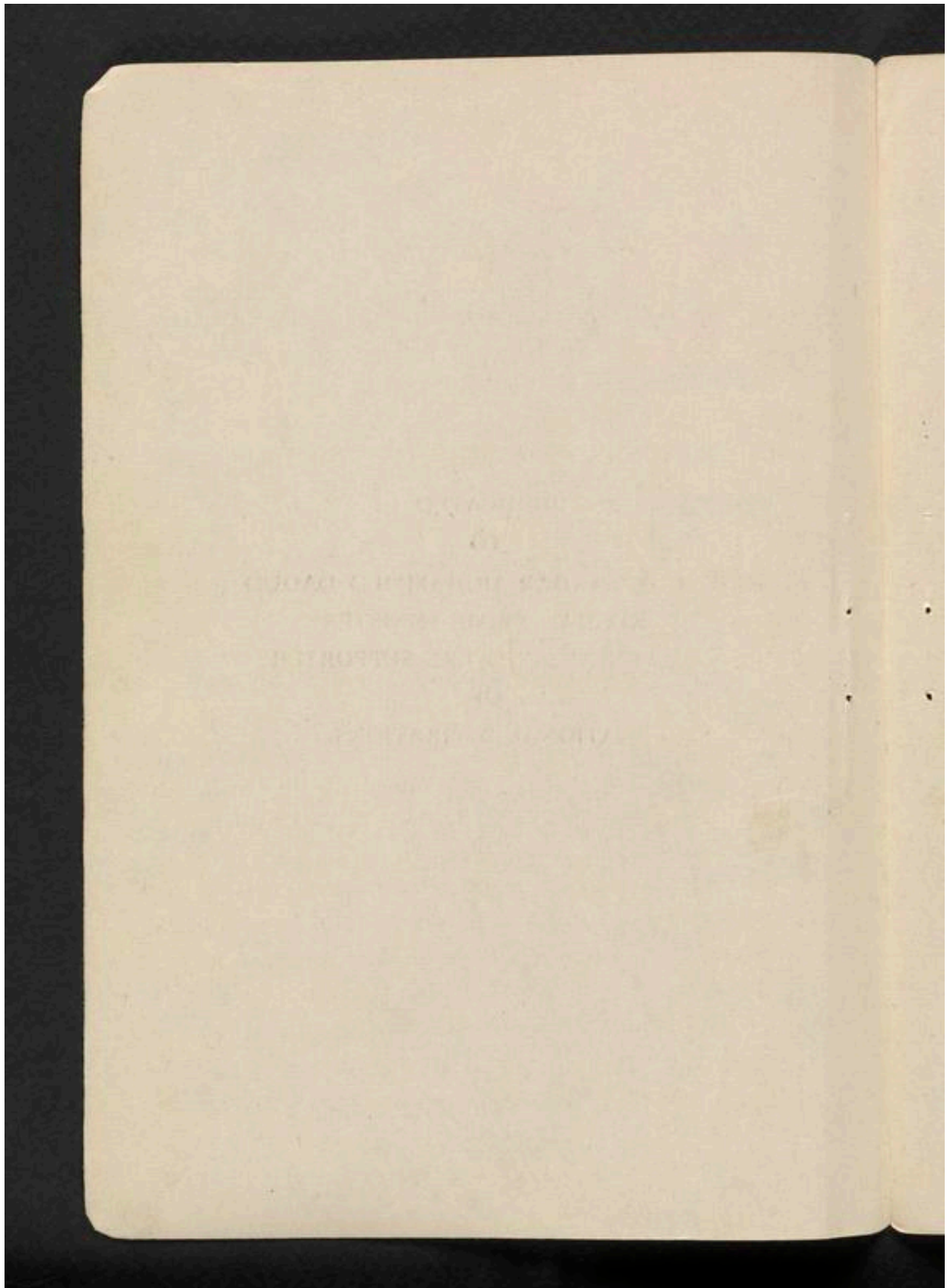




SARDAR MOHAMMED DAOUD, AFGHAN PREMIER



DEDICATED
TO
H. R. H. SARDAR MOHAMMED DAOUD
AFGHAN PRIME MINISTER
A KEEN AND SINCERE SUPPORTER
OF
NATIONAL ASPIRATIONS



PREFACE

Very little is written on the Afghans and their past history, and whatever literature is available in this connection is supplied mostly by foreigners and interested persons. This lack of adequate material has led some people believe that the country had no political entity in the past and came into existence only recently. It was, therefore, thought necessary to write a complete history of the country from the earliest times to the present age.

For the sake of convenience it is divided into four parts. The first covers the early period, from the dawn of history down to the invasion of the Arabs. The second is to deal with the mediæval period, that is from the tenth century onwards to the close of the 17th. The third is to cover mostly the eighteenth century until the collapse of the Durrani dynasty in the early part of the 19th century. The fourth and the last part is to be exclusively the history of the Mohammedzais, the present ruling family of Afghanistan.

Of these only the first part came out in the beginning of the last year under the title of

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"Aryana or Ancient Afghanistan." It was printed at Kabul and published by the Society of Historical Research. Unfortunately, no adequate arrangements could be available for printing an English book at the Capital. It is, therefore, full of mistakes, mostly of spellings, and sometimes it makes a difficult reading.

The second part is not yet fully compiled and may take a year or so for its completion. The present volume entitled "The National Awakening" is the third in the series and deals exclusively with the history of two prominent Afghan dynasties—the Hotakis and the Durranis.

I acknowledge my heart-felt gratitude to the Press Department and the Asia Foundation in this connection. But for their encouragement and help, moral as well as material, the author could have hardly thought of undertaking such an onerous task.

MOHAMMED ALI

*Shershahmena,
Kabul, Afghanistan.
1st February, 1958.*

INTRODUCTION

Afghanistan is a country of contrasts. More than half of it is a high plateau covered with lofty mountains, while the other half consists of level sandy tracts. The valleys, surrounded by hills, are extremely beautiful and appear like green emeralds set in the lap of mountains. Gushing streams, with clear blue water, add to their charms. On the other hand, the deserts are mostly desolate, where the very wind is often suffocating and even poisonous.

The climate of Afghanistan is extreme; it is cold and wet in winter, hot and dry in summer. Similar is the case with night and day, shade and sunshine; the difference of temperature may even go to forty degrees Fahrenheit. The temperament of the people could be no exception to this rule. Like the climate of his country, an Afghan knows no happy mean. He is either a loving friend or a deadly enemy. He will gladly lay down his life for the sake of his friend, or avenge his grievances though it may take him years to do. Outwardly he may appear uncouth and rough, but he conceals in his bosom a true and sincere heart—true both in love and war.

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His history, too, is a checkered one. Sometimes he is establishing vast and powerful empires, extending to thousands of miles, with great centres of trade and arts, while at others he is involved in chaos and anarchy, destroying with his own hands the towering edifice he has created.

His geographical environment has had a deep and lasting effect on his customs, character, clothes and even his way of thinking. The mountainous and the uneven terrain of the country presents a very serious problem for the construction of roads. This lack of means of transportation as well as of communications has made journeys and thereby interchange of customs and ideas a very difficult task. It has resulted in dividing the people into clans and tribes, each leading for the most part an isolated and independent life preserving its peculiar dialect, culture and customs. Under a strong ruler, who would weld them together, the Afghans have achieved marvels, while a weak one would pave the way for internal discord and feuds.

Afghanistan, since a very early time, had been on the cross-roads of world trade and a meeting ground of various nations and different culture

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and arts. It was here that the Aryans for the first time took to settled life and framed a rudimentary form of democratic government. Again it was here that Zoroaster preached his monotheistic religion and taught men the lesson of right thinking, right speaking and right acting. Later on, in the fourth century B. C., it became a part of the Macedonian Empire and came into direct touch with Greek philosophy and culture. It was about the middle of the third century B. C., during the reign of Asoka the Great, that Buddhism found its way into the country. It was on the Afghan soil that Greek realism mingled with Indian spiritualism, resulting in the Greco-Buddhist art. Again in the seventh and eighth centuries it came gradually under the influence of Islamic culture and this has remained to be the dominating factor of Afghan life to this day.

The palmy days of Islam in Afghanistan received a severe setback in the early part of the 13th century, when the ruthless Mongolian hordes, under the leadership of Changiz Khan, poured into the country, leaving death and destruction in their wake. The flourishing seats of arts and

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culture, such as Bamian, Herat and Ghazni, were either razed to the ground or burnt to ashes. Millions and millions of people, some of them scholars of world-wide fame, were mercilessly butchered. As a result of this catastrophe, unparalleled in human history, a wave of pessimism spread through the length and breadth of the country. Those, who had been fortunate enough to escape this general slaughter, took to penance and mortification. The philosophy, "this world is a hell for true believers" gained ground. Every misfortune, for which they themselves were responsible, was looked upon as punishment for their past sins and evil deeds. It was also believed that to combat these mishaps and diseases was beyond the power of human beings. This was the beginning of fatalism and pessimism in this country, which has played an important role in Afghan history.

Afghanistan had hardly recovered from the losses sustained at the hands of the Mongolian hordes, when another event happened, which crippled its trade and deprived it of its central commercial position. The country was lying on the cross-roads of world trade. Merchants from

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China, India as well as from far off western countries would come to Balkh to exchange their commodities. Balkh was then not only the entrepot of world merchandise but of ideas and culture as well. The discovery of sea-route to India around the Cape of Good Hope towards the close of the 15th century was indeed a deathblow to Afghan trade. The inflow of ideas as well as of wealth took a different turn. Poverty, ignorance and superstition crept into society. Feudalism and anarchy became the rule of the day. People, finding their lives and property in danger, could hardly devote their time to education or the pursuit of fine art. The country gradually lost its independence and became the bone of contention between two powerful neighbouring Empires—the Mughals of India and the Saffavids of Persia.

The Mughals, who had destroyed the Afghan rule in India in 1526, were making every effort to reconcile the Afghans to their rule, and to make them forget their glorious past. Great care was taken in the appointment of Viceroys at Kabul. The tribes were practically left free to look after their own domestic affairs. They were regularly

subsidized to guarantee the free passage of the Mughal troops through their territories. But all these measures proved futile, and the freedom loving Afghans were never content with their lot, nor did they forget that before the Mughals they were masters of India. From the days of Babur (1504-30) right to the death of Aurangzeb (1707), they allowed the Mughals no rest and carried on the struggle of liberation with ever-increasing zeal, inflicting many a crushing and humiliating defeat on the Imperial Forces.

In 1507 Babur took up arms against the Ghilzais, a powerful Afghan tribe, who had given him much trouble since he came to Kabul (1504). He took thousands of their sheep, and erected a minaret of human skulls to strike awe and terror of the Mughal force into the hearts of the tribesmen. But he failed in his attempts, for not long afterwards he was again forced to lead a second expedition against the Yusufzais, who had taken up arms against him. Seeing that force was of no avail, he married, for political reasons, the daughter of an influential Yusufzai chief.

Similarly, after the fall of Delhi and Agra (1526), Babur was confronted with the uprisings

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of the Afghans throughout India. He himself in his "Memoirs," bitterly complains of the opposition that he had to face in various parts of the country at the hands of the Afghans. He writes in this connection : "The Afghan governors of the provinces put their fortifications in defence and refused to submit or obey. Kanauj, with the whole country beyond the Ganges, was entirely in the possession of refractory Afghans, such as Nassar Khan, Maruf Farmuli, and a number of other Afghan chiefs, who were in a state of open rebellion. They had elected Bihar Khan (or Bahadur Khan), son of Darya Khan, as their king, and gave him the name of Sultan Mahmud."

On February 2, 1528, Babur set out to fight the Afghans, who had advanced from Bihar into Doab and had driven out the Imperial forces from Shamsabad. Though successful for a while, he could not achieve his object and the Afghans refused to pay homage to him and accept him as their over-lord.

In another part of his "Memoirs" Babur again complains in these words : "Sher Khan

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Sur, on whom I have bestowed marks of favour, to whom I have given several parganas (pieces of land), and whom I left in that quarter, has also turned against me and has joined the ranks of insurgents."

When Babur's son, Humayun came to power, he found that numerous Afghan chiefs had established independent principalities all over Northern India. Sultan Mahmud Lodi appeared in Bihar and had the support of all the old heads of the Afghan nobility, such as Biban and Bayazeed. But the most formidable rival of Humayun was Sher Khan, who looked upon the Mughals with great contempt, as appears from one of his statements: "If fortune favours me, I can drive these Mughals, the usurpers, back out of India. They are not our superiors in war or even in the art of administration, but we Afghans let slip the power that we had, simply by reason of our dissensions. Since I have been among the Mughals, I have observed their conduct, and found them lacking in order and discipline."

A third opponent of Humayun was Alaud Din Lodi, uncle of Ibrahim Lodi. He was one of

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those traitors who invited Babur to India and fought against his nephew at Panipat in the vain hope that the invader would hand him over the reins of Government and return to Kabul. Later on, he fell into disgrace and was banished to Badakhshan, where he remained in prison until the death of Babur. After that he effected his escape, returned to India and sought refuge with Bahadur Shah, ruler of Gujrat, who supplied him money. Alauddin with his help was able to collect a large force with the intention of turning out the Mughals from India. He proceeded as far as Agra, but was finally defeated and made to retire from the scene.

Out of these Afghan chiefs it was only Sher Khan, who was ultimately successful. In 1540, he was able to inflict a crushing defeat on Humayun, who quitting India fled to Persia in the hope of getting some help from Shah Tahmasap in the recovery of his Empire. On meeting the Shah, he recounted his pathetic story, how fate had deserted him, and how his enemy, Sher Shah, had deprived him of his throne and crown. The Shah, receiving him with great respect, promised help, reminding him at the same time of the

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friendly relations that existed between his family and the members of the Timur (Tamerlane) dynasty. But so long as Sher Shah was alive, neither Humayun nor the Shah of Persia, could even think of invading India.

Similarly, Akbar, Humayun's son and successor, had much trouble at the hands of the Afghans. After the fall of Kashmir, he directed his attention against the north-eastern tribes of Afghanistan, who had given him no rest since he came to power. But he met a very stiff resistance from these tribes and the Mughal army more than once was routed after sustaining innumerable losses.

At the same time Bayazid Ansar, popularly known as Pir Roshan (the Enlightened Saint) and the founder of a sect called Roshanian, took up arms against the Mughals. This was not only an armed conflict but a conflict of ideology as well. Bayazid was able to establish his authority in the hilly districts from the Khyber to the heart of the Sulaiman Range, with an influence over the neighbouring Afghan tribes as well, who looked upon him as their temporal and spiritual leader.

In 1586, Akbar finally resolved to settle this intricate Afghan question once for all. The chief command of the Imperial Forces was entrusted to Zain Khan Koka, the Emperor's foster-brother, and to Raja Bir Bal, one of the closest personal friends of Akbar. The Mughals, though far superior in number and equipment, could make little headway. At last in one of the gorges between Swat and Bajaur, they were all of a sudden surrounded by the Afghans, who overwhelmed them with showers of stones and arrows. Finally, when they saw that the Mughals had lost their morale, they, rushing down the sides of the hills, fell upon the bewildered soldiers. All attempts to preserve discipline were of no avail. The defeat turned into a rout; men, horses and elephants were huddled together in their flight. A terrible slaughter followed and most of the Mughal officers were killed. Nor was Zain Khan more fortunate. At night when an alarm was heard that the Afghans were coming, his remaining troops again took to heels and not a bullet was fired in defence. Taking cover of the night, Zain Khan escaped on foot and made his way to Attock with great difficulty. The news of this

defeat spread alarm even in the Imperial Camp, but unfortunately the Afghans let slip a golden opportunity. Content with the loot, they made no attempt to follow up the advantage.

After the death of Pir Roshan and his valiant son, Jalal Khan, the war of liberation did not come to an end. It was continued by his successors with unabated fury, and dragged on during the reign of Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb. Shah Jahan was once faced with a national rising of a very serious form and the Afghans came very near to establishing an independent kingdom in Northern India. They flocked to the standard of Khan Jahan Lodi, son of Daulat Khan, one of Akbar's trusted officers. He (Khan Jahan) held the rank of Panjhazari (Five Thousand) in the Mughal army and was a successful governor of Gujrat and the Deccan in the reign of Jahangir, Akbar's son. Like many other patriotic Afghans he too, cherished the idea of establishing an independent Afghan kingdom in India. The Imperial Forces once more suffered many reverses. But finally Khan Jahan was much depressed at the loss of his sons and followers, who were either killed in the battle or taken prisoners by the

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Mughal forces. When all hope of success was lost, Khan Jahan, in accordance with his national custom, preferred death to an ignominious escape. He made a last stand with a handful of followers. In the midst of the struggle that ensued, Madhu Singh pierced him with a spear, and before Muzaffar Khan could come to his help, the brave soldier, with his surviving son, Aziz, was cut to pieces.

Even when the religious zeal of the Rosh-nanians wore out with years, the free spirit of the Afghans was not crushed. They rejected all overtures of peace or reconciliation both from the Mughals of India or the Saffavids of Persia. It was only in the cities and towns of Afghanistan that the foreigners could maintain their own by dint of superior organisation and better equipment.

When Aurangzeb came to power (1658), he too could not cope successfully with the Afghan question and thought it advisable to subsidize the tribes to guarantee the safety of roads that passed through their territories. The annual subsidies during his reign amounted to 600,000 rupees.

Even the expenditure of this huge sum could not make the Afghans give up their struggle. In 1667, the Yusufzais took up arms against him, and under the leadership of Bhagu, who had assumed kingship, crossed the river Indus above Attock. They were soon followed by other bands, who spread over Peshawar and the adjacent districts. In 1672, the Afridees came to the forefront. They rose under their leader, Akmal Khan, a born general, who crowned himself king, struck coins in his own name and proclaimed a Jihad (religious war) against the Mughals. He invited all the Afghan tribes to join this national movement and the war of liberation. Thousands came to his help. Closing the Khyber Pass, they attacked the Mughal garrison at Ali Masjid. Mohammed Amin Khan, son of Mir Jumla, the Mughal governor of Kabul, went out with all forces at his command, to rescue the garrison. The result was the oft repeated tale of disaster of the Mughal forces. Ten thousand were killed in the battle and more than two crores (20,000,000) of rupees fell into the hands of victors. They also captured twenty thousand men and women. Even the wife of Mohammed Amin was among

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the prisoners, who had to be ransomed at a very heavy price.

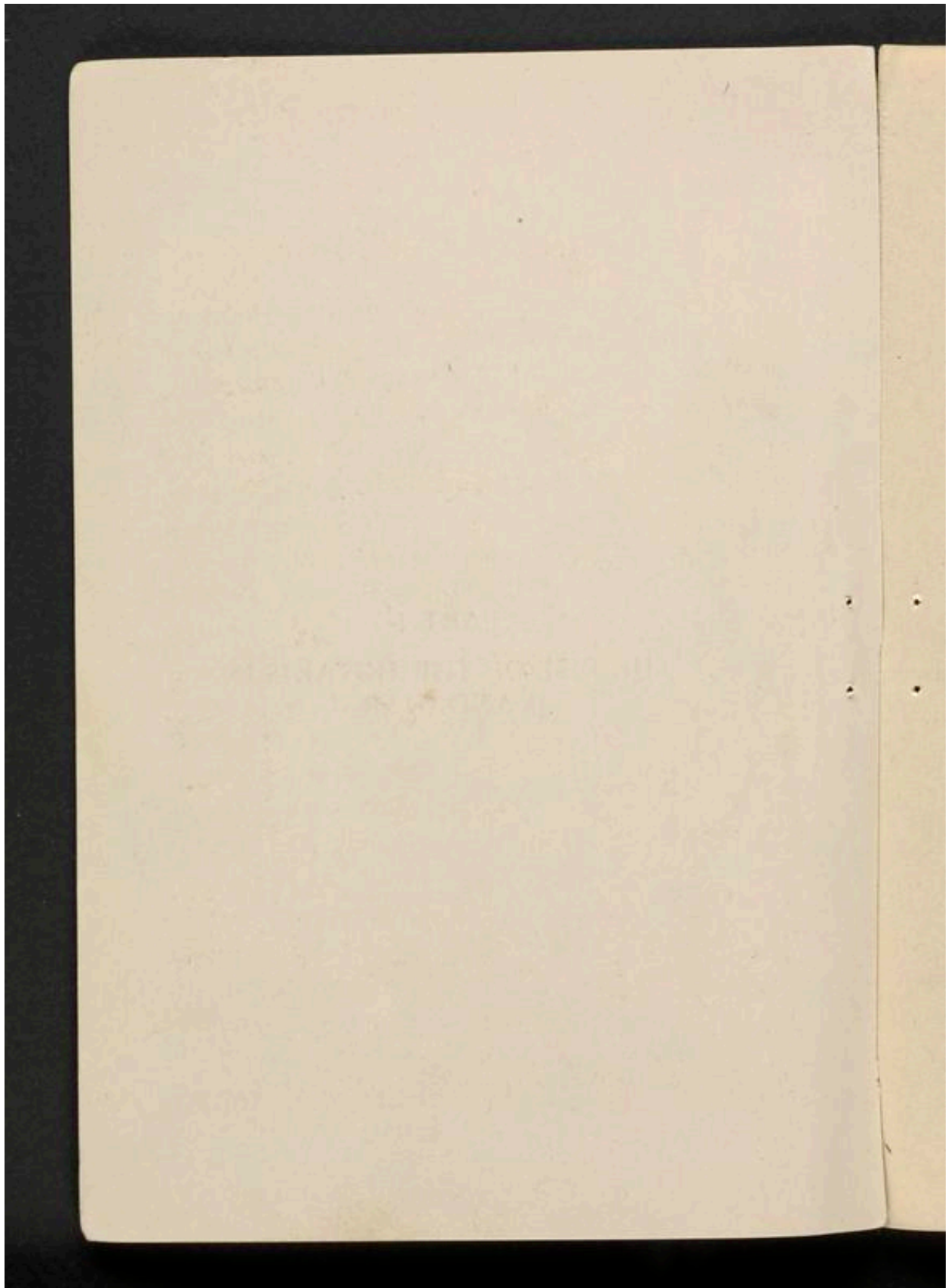
Another most formidable opponent of the foreigners was Khushal Khan Khattak, the soldier poet, who inspired the Afghans with his pen no less than his sword. Once the rising took a very serious turn and the Afghans were well nigh implementing their national programme. It affected the whole of eastern Afghanistan, from Attock to Kandahar. Moreover its leaders were not ordinary men. They had served in the Mughal army in Hindustan and the Deccan, and knew the organisation, efficiency and even the tactics of the Imperial Forces. The Mughals met disaster after disaster. At last Aurangzeb himself was forced to take the command of his army into his own hands. He came as far as Hassanabdal (June 1674) and for a year and a half he personally directed the operations. His gold in the long run proved more effective than his arms. Under its magic touch many of the leaders and clans were won over. Khushal Khan in his poems gives vent to his indignation against these traitors, who had been seduced by the prospect of advancement

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to give up the cause of their country and join the ranks of enemies.

Khushal Khan Khattak was not destined to reap the fruits of his labours. But his noble example was vigorously followed by others, and his innumerable sacrifices fired the imagination of the Afghans all over the country. Everywhere national movements took a serious form. The first to strike successfully was a Hotaki Chief of Kandahar, named Mir Vais Khan.

PART I
THE RISE OF THE HOTAKIS IN
KANDAHAR



THE HOTAKIS

Kandahar is one of the richest provinces of Afghanistan, lying in the south-east corner of the country. During the 16th and 17th centuries it was a bone of contention between the two neighbouring powers—the Saffivids of Persia and the Mughals of India. Its strategical and commercial importance was so great that both of them wanted to incorporate it within their empire. In 1522 Babur took Kandahar from Shah Beg of Urghun family and it remained a part of the Mughal Empire until the death of Humayun, when Shah Tahmasap of Persia, taking advantage of Akbar's minority, cast longing eyes on Kandahar, and finally was able to lay his hands on it. In 1595, Akbar, anxious to regain Kandahar, intrigued with Muzaffar Hussein Mirza, who held the province as a fief of Persia. The conspiracy was crowned with success and the city surrendered to the Mughals. Muzaffar Hussein Mirza, for services rendered, was given an important command in the Mughal army and a piece of land in India. In 1620, after having concluded a peace treaty with Turkey, Shah Abbas of Persia

turned his attention to Kandahar. When negotiations proved futile, he made up his mind to resort to force and wrest Kandahar. At the same time he intrigued with the rulers of the Deccan to keep the Mughal army busy. Mandu, governor of Kandahar, appealed to Jehangir for help, but no effective aid could come from any direction, and the city after a long siege opened its gates to the invaders. The Saffivids held it until 1638, when the city once more changed hands and became a part of the Mughal Empire.

Shah Safi, successor of Abbas I, was a relentless tyrant who killed most of his relatives and some of the most trusted generals of his grandfather on mere suspicion. Ali Mardan Khan, the governor of Kandahar, was summoned to Isfahan, the Persian capital. Fearing that he might share the same fate, he surrendered Kandahar to a force sent by Shah Jahan.

After Safi's death in 1642, his successor Abbas II decided to recapture Kandahar. Taking advantage of a severe winter, when the passes leading to India were blocked with heavy snow and no adequate help could be expected from that quarter, he laid siege to Kandahar.

After a few days the city surrendered. Shah Jahan, on hearing this, made strenuous attempts to recover it, but all his efforts were of no avail. Thrice the Mughal army advanced on Kandahar and laid siege to it, but due to troubles at the Mughal Court, the siege was not pursued with vigour. Kandahar thus remained in Persian possession until the beginning of the eighteenth century, when a national rising headed by Mir Vais Khan, chief of the Hotaki tribe, a branch of the Ghilzais, liberated the province and put an end to the foreign yoke.

Shah Abbas I, was indeed a great king. He had studied the Afghan character minutely and knew that he could not keep the city without the active co-operation of the Afghans themselves. With this in view, he did everything in his power to win the affection of the people. He reduced the revenue, left the people free in their internal administration and did his best to make them forget that they were under alien rule. But the cruelty and avarice of his successors, especially those of Shah Hussein, the last of the Saffivids, soon made the Afghans to take up arms against the Persians in order to assert their independence.

At this time the indolence and effeminacy of the Persian Court had passed all limits of morality. Shah Hussein spent most of his time in the company of eunuchs and concubines and was a mere tool in the hands of his favourites. Contrary to the policy of his predecessors, when he learnt that the Afghans were inclined to take up arms against him, he made up his mind to extinguish by force once for all those sparks of national awakening, which, in his opinion, might ere-long blaze into flame.

At this time there was at Isfahan, the Persian capital, a Georgian prince of Bagrathioni family, Gurgin by name. He was supposed to be an administrator of unusual ability. Having been raised to the dignity of a Wali (governor) of his province, he revolted with a view to make his people free. He made a bold stand against the Shah's army in Tiflis, the capital of the province, but being deserted by most of his adherents, who were bribed by the King, he not only submitted, but embraced Islam for political reasons. The Shah was so pleased with this that he forgave him for raising the standard of revolt and loading

him with honours confirmed the position which he had previously held.

When the Court learnt that the Afghans of Kandahar were ripe for revolt, they at once decided to send Gurgin to Kandahar "to pacify the turbulent Afghans". Gurgin, leaving his brother, Levan Khan as his lieutenant in Georgia, proceeded immediately on his new mission with an army of twenty thousand Persians and a contingent of Georgians. On reaching there he made a diligent enquiry. Being a man of cruel disposition, he made up his mind to eradicate at the bayonet the national aspirations of the Afghans.

It is hard to believe the excesses to which the violence and cruelty of his troops reached on this occasion. It is related that the tribal chiefs in their forts, and the shepherds in their tents, were equally the victim of these outrages. They saw their forts razed to the ground, their tents burnt to ashes, their property plundered and their chiefs either killed or put into prison. The heads of the tribes met secretly to discuss ways and means to cope with the situation. Before taking active steps, they decided to send a deputation to the

Persian Court asking the Shah to redress their grievances. On reaching Isfahan, the deputies found it impossible to contact the Shah. Gurgin's partisans, having discovered the motive of their journey, stood in the way and hindered their having an audience with the King.

According to ancient custom, the King of Persia appeared in public only once a year, on the day of Naoroz, the new year's day, when even the humblest subjects of the Shah had free access to him. The Afghan deputies, availing of the opportunity, laid their complaints before the King. But again Gurgin's friends intervened and prevailed upon the Shah to dismiss the deputies as malcontents, unworthy of royal favours.

Meanwhile, Gurgin was duly informed of what was passing at the Persian Court. Emboldened by his success, he made up his mind to punish those who, he thought to be at the root of this national movement. Mir Vais Khan was one of the most influential chiefs. Besides, he held the office of Kalantar (Mayor) of the city of Kandahar. His noble birth, his influence with the tribes, his generosity and evidence of an

ambitious spirit, were reasons for his being suspected as the author of the past disturbances. He was therefore arrested and sent to Isfahan under a strong escort. Gurgin, having thus removed the thorn from his side, the only person who he dreaded and in whom he found all the qualifications necessary for a great leader, could now breathe more comfortably. He put a garrison in the citadel inside the city of Kandahar, and satisfied with keeping his Georgians round his person, disbanded the rest of the army.

Mir Vais Khan, far from being disappointed by his banishment, tried to make the best of a bad bargain. He first of all endeavoured to study the Persians and get a first hand knowledge of the Court, then to utilize the opportunity for the liberation of his countrymen. The character of the Shah was too remarkable to escape his keen shrewd eyes. He was pleased to find him addicted to wine and women, which made him quite incapable of ruling his people properly. The real power was in the hands of a few favourites and eunuchs, who were the real disposers of the Government posts. All offices and dignities could be purchased and were given to those who paid

the highest price. Corruption was rampant in all Government departments ; both high and low were given to bribes. Life was not safe and robbers infested the roads even in broad daylight.

Perhaps the Shah was the only person who was not aware of what was happening in the country. Buried in the pleasures of harem, the cries of the oppressed could hardly reach his ears.

Such was the state of affairs, when Mir Vais Khan arrived at the Persian capital as a state prisoner. The shrewd Afghan, after studying the situation minutely, made up his mind to utilize it in achieving his national aim. His first object was to come into touch with the party which was opposed to Gurgin. Soon he learnt that the king's steward and Fateh Ali Khan, the Grand Vazier, were at the head of this faction. Mir Vais Khan had little difficulty in making common cause with them. He also made use of the money which his Afghan friends had placed at his disposal in bribing the courtiers and winning them over to his side.

After these necessary steps, he approached the King with the help of his friends. He justified

his conduct with such eloquence and arguments, that the King, not only acquitted him of the charges levied against him by Gurgin and his party, but was pleased to grant him his favours and protection as well.

A man of common calibre might have been satisfied with these successes. But to Mir Vais Khan this was only a stepping-stone to realize his national dreams. His eloquent speech and manly behaviour soon enabled him to have free access to the Shah. Mir Vais Khan now thought that the time was ripe to strike a blow.

He always spoke of Gurgin's ability in highest possible terms and at the same time gave his listeners time to reflect on the valour and prowess of such a resourceful general. He artfully insinuated and pointed out that the governorship of three major provinces (Georgia, Khermania and Kandahar), with which Gurgin was invested, rendered him very formidable. He also reminded them of his ability in holding out successfully against the Imperial Forces at Tiflis. Gradually he won his way and the debauched King and courtiers began to feel that Gurgin

was a dangerous person and he had removed Mir Vais from Kandahar simply to get rid of an influential chief, who could, by his fidelity to the Crown, baffle his projects.

Not satisfied with these successes, Mir Vais Khan now turned his attention towards the union of the Afghan tribes, for he knew that without their co-operation the execution of his exalted designs was not possible. He had already won the affection of his countrymen by his intelligence and generosity, but to him this was not sufficient for an enterprise of such magnitude. In order to cement further the bond of union among the various tribes, he tried to give it a religious tinge. With this in view, he decided to go to Mecca on pilgrimage and obtain a decree from the learned (Ulamas), permitting him to take up arms against the Persians and raising his revolt in the form of a Jihad (religious war). He approached the King to allow him to go to Mecca. The request was granted without difficulty. Mir Vais Khan left for Mecca and after obtaining the decree, returned to Isfahan.

It was at this time that an ambassador from Peter the Great arrived at the frontier post of

Shamikie. He was attended by a large retinue and was charged with letters from the Pope and the Emperor of Germany. This ambassador, Israil Orii by name, was by birth a Persian subject and was born at Capan, in Armenia, then a part of the Persian Empire. He claimed to be the direct descendant of the ancient kings of that province and had not resigned the rights which he thought he was entitled to, due to his birth. These reports alarmed the Shah and his courtiers. Europeans of other nationalities, who had settled in Persia, also magnified these alarms in furtherance of their own interests.

The artful insinuation of Mir Vais Khan on this occasion made a very strong impression on the Shah and his courtiers. "The State," he said, "is indeed in a most perilous situation. We are being threatened from all sides. No one can be ignorant of the fact that the Czar, whose ambitions are well-known, supports the cause of his co-religionists living on Persian soil. The ambassador must be a secret emissary, who, under the guise of a diplomatic representative, has come to sow the seeds of sedition among the royal subjects, otherwise why should an Armenian of such repute

be deputed for this purpose? Was it not possible for the Czar to nominate one of his own subjects for such a responsible post? Anyway, why should this minister pretend to be descended from the line of the ancient kings of Armenia, if it is not to obtain more credit for his own cause? But this is the least part of the danger that threatens us at present. The real danger lies in the attempts of the Moscovites and the Armenians to have the warlike and brave Georgians on their side. It is an open secret that they are well disposed towards our enemies, and wait impatiently for their chance to assert their independence. It is quite obvious that they have submitted with reluctance to a people of different religion. Have we forgotten that only a few years ago these people at the instigation of Gurgin Khan rose against us? What an irony of fate, this Gurgin is now a full-fledged governor of three major provinces! Are we ignorant of the fact that his cousin, Sanazarli, is now at the Court of St. Petersburg, soliciting the Czar to assist him in the liberation of his co-religionists in Georgia? Suppose for a moment that they all join hands against us. Can

the Imperial Forces cope successfully with such dangers on various fronts?"

The speech had the desired effect on the audience. None could contradict his sound arguments. The Shah and his courtiers were so horrified as to beseech Mir Vais Khan to go to Kandahar at once and keep a vigilant watch over Gurgin, and use his influence to frustrate his schemes in case he was planning mischief.

Mir Vais Khan, availing himself of this golden opportunity, returned to Kandahar and was again appointed as the chief of his tribe. Shortly afterwards he improved his relations with Gurgin. They often met each other and even dined together. When Mir Vais Khan saw that Gurgin no longer suspected him, he invited him to a feast arranged in his fort at Kohkran, a few miles outside the city of Kandahar. Gurgin, ignorant of the conspiracy afoot, gladly accepted the invitation, and at the appointed time repaired to Mir Vais Khan's fort, accompanied by a few officers and an escort of about two hundred men. A sumptuous feast was arranged and best available liquors were provided. After lunch the Persians retired for a short rest. It was the time for Mir

Vais Khan to avenge his grievances. The Persians, caught unaware, could not offer any resistance, and were consequently killed to a man.

In the evening Mir Vais Khan, accompanied by his friends and followers, in the garb of Persians, approached Kandahar. The guards on duty, taking them for Gurgin and his retinue, opened the gate. The Afghans first of all made themselves masters of the gates, and then, sword in hand, fell upon the bewildered garrison from all sides. Few could escape from this wholesale slaughter. Kandahar was rescued from foreign yoke.

Mir Vais Khan (1708—1715).—Mir Vais Khan took the reins of Government of Kandahar in his own hands without assuming the royal title. He was content to be called the Mushar (chief) of his people. Subsequent Persian expeditions failed to recapture Kandahar, and Mir Vais was left in full possession of the whole province, which he ruled admirably for a period of seven years (from 1708 to 1715). He died in 1715, and was buried at Kohkran, not far from Kandahar, where his tomb stands to this day.

It had fallen into ruins and was rebuilt during the reign of King Mohammed Nadir Shah-i-Shahid.

Shah Mahmud (1716—1725).—Mir Vais Khan left two sons behind, Mir Mahmud and Mir Hussein, who were both of tender age. The elders of the tribe therefore elected Abdul Aziz, the deceased Khan's brother, to the throne. But he proved to be a coward. Thinking that it was impossible to hold his own against the two powerful neighbours at one and the same time, he decided to side with Persians and submit his allegiance to the Shah. Mir Mahmud, though he was only 18 at the time, could not see the efforts of his illustrious father thus thrown to the winds. He consulted some of the faithful followers of his father on this point. They all agreed with him and promised whole-hearted help. Whereupon he rose against his uncle, and entering the royal palace, killed him with his own hand and ascended the throne with the title of Shah.

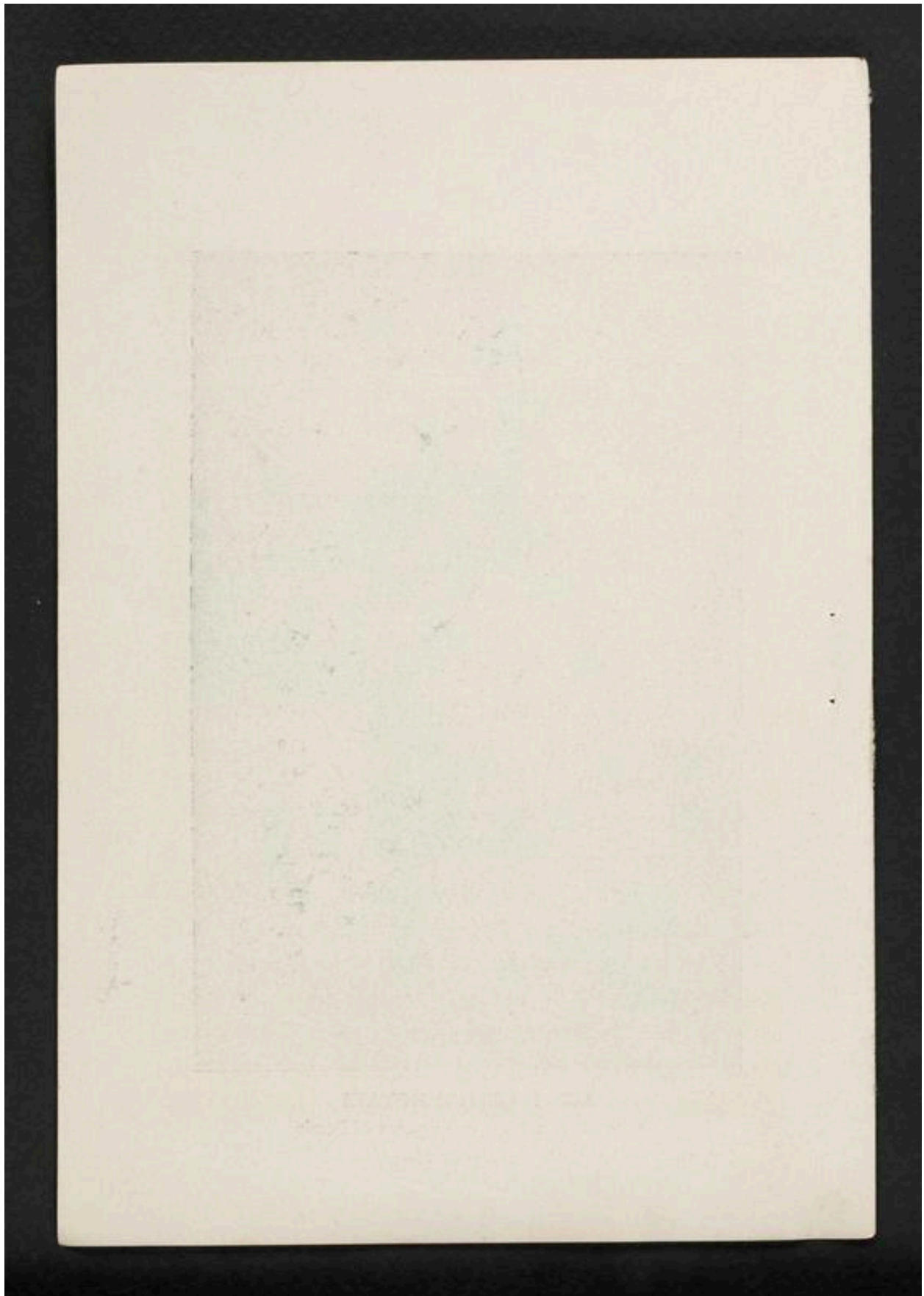
At this time the Abdalis of Herat, encouraged by the successes of the Hotakis at Kandahar, took up arms and killed the Persian Governor of Herat and declared their independence. The Persian

army suffered reverse after reverse at the hands of Assadullah Khan, the Abdalis' leader. At last a decisive battle was fought at Kafir Killa (modern Islam Killa), on the Perso-Afghan border, which resulted in the complete rout of the Persian forces and the Abdalis of Herat were left to look after their affairs themselves.

Shah Mahmud was not content with the possession of Kandahar. Being young and ambitious he aspired to be a great king. In 1720 he entered the Persian territory and advanced as far as Kerman. Encouraged by these initial successes, he resolved to plunge right into the heart of Persia and strike at once at the centre of the Government, which had oppressed his people for many years. In 1722, at the head of some 20,000 men, he made straight for Isfahan, the Persian capital. No serious resistance was offered until he reached the suburbs of that city. The degenerate Persian Government was under the impression that the Afghans, after raiding some of the frontier posts, would return to their native land. But now they were disillusioned and realized the seriousness of the situation. An army, some 60,000 in number, admirably



MIR MAHMUD HOTAKI
King of Kandahar & Emperor of Persia
1716—1725



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equipped and armed with heavy guns, marched out to meet the Afghans in the open field. On the 8th of March 1722, the two armies came face to face on the plains of Gulnabad, some twelve miles east of the capital. The Afghans were ill-equipped and their number against that of the enemy was as one to three. Moreover, the long and tiring journey through the most inhospitable part of Persia had told unfavourably on their health. But they were men of character and resolution and had come all that way with the determination to conquer or die. They knew very well that in case of defeat none would be able to reach his motherland. They, therefore, fought with unusual courage. The Persians, after an initial success, were put to rout. The Afghans, following at their heels, laid siege to the capital.

Isfahan had at this time attained the height of its magnificence and glory, and had a population of over 6,00,000. It was well-fortified, protected with a heavy wall and a deep ditch. The Afghans, equipped as they were with primitive weapons, were unable to assault it. They, therefore, resolved to intercept the supplies. It seemed a wild project to

blockade a city of such magnitude with less than 20,000 men. Yet so well did Mahmud compensate for the lack of manpower by his vigilance and activity that before long the inhabitants began to suffer all the horrors of an acute famine. At length, after repeated sallies had been beaten back with great loss in men and material, and all attempts of troops from the provinces to pierce the Afghan line and force a convoy of food into the beleaguered city had failed, the necessity of surrender became more apparent. Finally after a siege of eight months, the Shah, accompanied by his courtiers and high-ranking officers, came out of the city and surrendered himself to Mahmud at Farahabad, the headquarters of the Afghans. The Shah with his own hand placed the diadem on the head of the conqueror and gave him the keys of the city.

Shah Mahmud in the beginning of his reign in Persia showed qualities of a good statesman. The moment he became the master of the capital, he tried his best to relieve the inhabitants of the miseries of famine. His next care was to establish

confidence among his new subjects. It is to his credit that he succeeded in both of these high ideals admirably. Then he turned his attention towards the administration of the newly-acquired country. It appeared to him rather dangerous to trust the Persians blindly and to leave them in charge of all Government offices. He could not appoint his own men to stations with which they were totally unacquainted. So he adopted a middle course. He allowed the Persians to continue in their office, but nominated a supervisor from among his own people in each department to look after the work. By this arrangement he had the advantage of experience of the one and the fidelity of the other. He punished those of the Persian officers who had turned traitors to their king and failed to stand by him at the time of difficulty. Even those, who were in secret correspondence with him during the siege, were severely punished for their treachery, while the chiefs who had remained loyal and faithful to their King, were kindly treated and amply rewarded. He appointed an Afghan of singular

piety and uprightness as the Chief Judge of the city.

The same considerations, which made Mahmud endeavour to conciliate the good opinion of his new subjects, induced him to grant every encouragement to the foreigners settled in Persia. Several Europeans of different nationalities had at this period factories at Isfahan and Bandar Abbas. They were confirmed in all their privileges. Even the Christian missionaries were allowed full liberty to perform publicly the duties of their religion. But unfortunately this fair prospect was soon clouded when Mahmud found that the Persians were conspiring against him in every part of the country. This led him to rule with an iron hand. Moreover, he soon found himself face to face with innumerable difficulties at the hands of his own colleagues and trusted friends, who wanted to establish independent principalities in different parts of the conquered country. This dissension of the Afghan chiefs was one of the chief causes that contributed to the fall of the Afghan rule in Persia. It gave a chance to the Persians to join hands and make a united effort to oust the

Afghans from their soil. They gathered round Prince Tahmasap, the eldest son of Shah Hussein. Another danger which threatened the Afghan rule in Persia came from the two neighbouring powers—the Turks and the Russians, who wanted to avail themselves of the opportunity and lay their hands on a part of Persia.

Soon after taking Isfahan, Mahmud sent Amanullah Khan, one of his trusted friends, to attack Kazwin, where Prince Tahmasap was busy collecting a large force. Amanullah marched through deep snow and succeeded in dispersing the Persian contingent. On his way to Kazwin he took Kashan and Kum without much difficulty. The joy, which the news of this easy victory gave to Mahmud was, however, marred by the report, which reached him at the same moment that Mulla Musa, one of his generals, whom he had sent with a convoy of treasure amounting to 150,000 tumans to Kandahar for the purpose of raising fresh levies among the Afghan tribes, had been attacked, defeated and plundered by Mirza Ismail, the Governor of the petty fortress of Banda in Seistan. Shah Mahmud was also embarrassed at this period by a message

from Peter the Great, which demanded that he should make good the losses that the Russian nationals had suffered at the hands of some frontier tribes. By this protest and the demand of redress for the losses, which it was pretended the Russians had sustained on the Persian frontiers, the Czar wished to take advantage of the confused condition of Persia and if possible to lay his hands firmly on the Persian provinces bordering the Caspian Sea. Soon after, when he was told by Mahmud that as yet he had no control over the Uzbeks and Lazakis living in that part of the country, the Czar collected a force of 30,000 of his best soldiers, which was reinforced by some Cossacks and Kamlucks at Astracan. On 22nd July 1723, he sailed down from the Volga, reaching the coast of Daghistan on the 4th of August. His first step was to issue a declaration purporting that he had no aggressive designs of any kind but wanted to protect the rights of his subjects carrying on fair business in that part of the country. He proceeded along the coast, defeated some chiefs, by whom he was opposed, and took possession of Darband. After leaving 2,000 Russian troops

to garrison the citadel, Peter returned to Astracan with his main army to pass winter, having at the same time expressed his intention to prosecute his plans when the weather permitted.

While the Russians were threatening the north-western part of Persia, the Turks also hastened to have a share in the loot. A large army was collected on the western border, which made Hamadan its first goal. The distracting news from every quarter was most disturbing and had a deep impression on Mahmud's mind. Soon after he learned that as a result of an insurrection at Kazwin, Amanullah was forced to quit the city and retreat towards Isfahan with the remnant of his force. The army, already greatly diminished in number, suffered so heavily on the way from the severity of the weather, that not more than half of the men could reach the capital.

The Kazwinis were of Turkish origin. Hardy and robust, they were remarkable for having preserved the rude and ungovernable spirit of their ancestors. One evening the heads of the tribes met secretly and the next morning a

signal for a general resurrection was given. The Afghans, unaware of the plot afoot, were attacked in every quarter. Amanullah, on learning of the news, hastened to the Maidan, an open ground, in front of the palace where he found most of his men assembled. He made every effort that a brave soldier could, to control the situation, but he was overpowered by numbers and compelled to call a retreat and take shelter in the palace. Even there he could not maintain himself, and escaped by a private gate. The loss of the Afghans, both in men and material, was immense.

Ashraff, son of Abdul Aziz, and a cousin of Mahmud, who had accompanied Amanullah on this expedition, now finding Mahmud's star decline, separated from the army during its retreat and left for Kandahar with about 300 men. He appears to have anticipated the downfall of Mahmud. Moreover, he had a personal grudge against Mahmud. It was he who had killed his father. Ashraff now thought that the time was ripe for him to avenge his grievances.

The example of Kazwin was soon followed

by several other towns. The disheartened Afghans returned to Isfahan from every quarter. When Mahmud heard of these occurrences all over the country, he feared lest Isfahan might share the same fate. He had not sufficient troops at his command. His army was reduced to about 15,000 men, while the male population of Isfahan and its suburbs was still in proportion of more than 20 to 1 to the Afghans. The probable revolt of the capital seemed the most immediate danger, so Mahmud resolved to have recourse to strict measures in order to safeguard his position. He arrested some of the Persian nobles and put them under strong custody. He then recruited many Kurds in his army, because he could get little help from Kandahar at this critical juncture. Aided by these new levies, Mahmud now made every effort to make himself master of the principal cities of southern Persia. He had little difficulty in reducing Kelpaigan, Khwansar and Kashan. Nassarullah Gabr, who had joined Mahmud in Kirman when he first entered Persia, was now employed to conquer the province of Fars. He succeeded in subduing almost every town in that

area except the capital, Shiraz, which made a bold stand. In an attack on that city he was mortally wounded. The death of this brave general at this critical time was a great loss to the Afghans. Mahmud mourned his death deeply and was struck with a severe grief.

The command of troops in Fars was then given to Zabardast Khan, an Afghan officer of renown, who had risen by his courage and conduct to this high post in the army. Soon after his arrival before Shiraz, a younger brother of Abdullah, the Wali of Arabia, endeavoured to defend the city. But in one of the battles he lost his life, and the garrison lost heart and, finding no further prospect of relief from any quarter, capitulated (13th April 1724).

Zabardast Khan then despatched a contingent to reduce Bandar Abbas. This expedition had some initial success but in the end he was forced to return on account of the inclemency of the weather. Fortunately, at this moment a long expected batch of recruits arrived from Kandahar, but the number was small. The mother of Mahmud also came with this caravan. The

Persians, accustomed to pomp and show, were astonished to see the mother of their sovereign riding astride on a camel without a veil and passing through the streets of Isfahan.

But the situation did not improve. Rumours were afoot amongst the Afghan soldiers that Mahmud was too friendly to foreigners, was neglecting his old comrades, who had stood by him in many a battle field, and that he had not only adopted the manners and customs of the Persians, but was secretly inclined to Shiaism. These reports were on the increase in the army. To add to his embarrassment, the two principal Afghan chiefs, Ashraff and Assadullah, had turned against him and were the cause of spreading these false reports. Mahmud was ultimately forced by his soldiers to recall the former from Kandahar and nominate him his successor. The latter had also left him and returned to Kandahar. Though a reconciliation took place, but it was not sincere.

Ashraff, his cousin, never forgave Mahmud for the murder of his father. He had always been a thorn in Mahmud's side and was jealous of his success. But Ashraff was very popular

with the Afghan soldiers and Mahmud was afraid of incurring the wrath of his own people if an action was taken against him. At one time he thought that he had an opportunity to ruin his cousin. During the siege of Isfahan, Ashraf was given a post. It was through his defence line that Tahmasap Mirza, the eldest son of Sultan Hussein, had effected his escape from Isfahan. Mahmud endeavoured to fan the ill-will of his people towards him by accusing Ashraf of cowardice and treachery. But the latter defended himself in an artful manner characteristic of his nation. He proved that his authority had been so circumscribed and weakened that it was impossible for him to oppose the superior force by which he was attacked. It was established by irrefutable evidence that he had done all that he could do to prevent the prince's escape, but those were to be blamed who had sent the men under his command to another quarter. He was acquitted of the charge by the unanimous votes of the assembled chiefs, and Mahmud had the mortification to see his plan frustrated. He thus enhanced the popularity and reputation of his opponent.

Under the stress of these difficulties and worries Mahmud proved unequal to the task. He decided to retire from wordly life and seek mental consolation in seclusion. He chose a dark underground vault for his extraordinary penance, and during the fourteen or fifteen days that he remained there he took practically no food which reduced him to a mere skeleton and resulted in his mental derangement. When he at last came out into daylight, his face was shrunken and pale, his body emaciated, and the wild stare of his eyes clearly showed that he had not been able to stand the severe strain to which he had exposed his body. He became so restless and suspicious of himself that he could hardly allow any one of his loyal and trusted friends to approach him, who he thought had come to take his life. Gradually his mind became completely deranged and he went mad, tearing off his own flesh and eating it. The physicians tried in vain to restore him to health, but the malady increased daily. The Afghans, who were being threatened from all sides, were forced to elect Ashraff to be their ruler even before Mahmud expired. He died shortly afterwards.

stricken with a most dreadful insanity. Some people are of the opinion that he was smothered to death by his cousin, Ashraff. Thus passed away the conqueror of Persia in the prime of his youth, for he was hardly twenty-seven at the time of his death. He was on the throne of Persia for the brief period of three years only.

Mahmud was a brave soldier and a great conqueror. A greater conquest could not be achieved with the means at his disposal. All his weaknesses were atoned for by his energy and personal valour. He is said to have taken pride in being a strict observer of his word, when that was pledged. But from the very beginning of his reign in Persia, he was beset with innumerable difficulties. He surmounted most of them by sheer courage, but he could not withstand the jealousies and intrigues of his own kith and kin. This indeed broke his heart and turned him mad.

Shah Ashraff (1725—1730). Mahmud was succeeded by his cousin, Ashraff, a man of talent and energy. But he came to power at a very critical time, when the Afghans in Persia were being threatened on all sides. The Russians were active in the north, while the Turks were

encroaching up on the Persian soil from the west. These two powers ultimately decided to divide Persia between themselves. The western provinces, according to this understanding were to belong to the Turks, while the northern ones as far as the Araxes were to be the property of Russia.

Prince Tahmasap since a long time was negotiating with the Porte and the Czar to help him in his struggle against the Afghans. Ismail Beg, one of his envoys reached St. Petersburg for this purpose and succeeded in concluding a treaty, by which it was stipulated that the Emperor of Russia would expel the Afghans from Persia and help Tahmasap in the restoration of his throne. In return for these services the Prince agreed to cede in perpetuity to Russia the towns of Darband and Baku, with the provinces of Daghistan, Shirwan, Gilan, Mazindaran and Astarabad. While these negotiations were going on in St. Petersburg, the Turks, availing of the opportunity, were extending their conquests at the cost of Persia. Kurdistan had acknowledged their authority, and the fall of Irwan, Khui, Nakhjawan and Maragha made them masters of

the whole of Armenia and the greater part of Azarbaijan. After these conquests, the Turks advanced on Tabriz. Meanwhile, a second Turkish army, under the command of Ahmad Pasha, had reached within a few miles of Isfahan, the Persian capital. At this time a partition treaty regarding the north-western provinces of Persia was concluded between its two neighbours—the Porte and the Czar. The boundaries of the Russian provinces in Persia were fixed by a line, which gave that State the command of all the Persian provinces bordering the Caspian Sea, from the country of the Turkomans to the conflux of the rivers Kars and Araxes. The possessions of Turkey were defined by a line, which commenced from the latter point and stretching to within three miles of Ardabil, went from Tabriz to Hamadan, and from thence to Kirmanshah. These provinces were mutually guaranteed to each other by the contracting parties, and it was stipulated that, if Prince Tahmasap agreed to the terms, he would receive such aid as to enable him to re-establish his authority over the remaining provinces of Persia, and if he refused his assent, they determined to seize the whole of

Persia and provide for the future tranquillity of the country by helping some one whom they might think most deserving to the Persian throne.

Ashraff thus in the very beginning of his reign found himself confronted with powerful enemies on all sides. But he dreaded the turbulent Afghan chiefs most of all and made up his mind to get rid of them before turning his attention to foreign aggression. His first measure was to put to death Ilyas the leader of the guards and the ambitious and haughty Assadullah and several other Afghan chiefs whose influence he dreaded. But through this rash act he lost the sympathy and co-operation of some of his best friends. After feeling secure from internal trouble by these drastic measures, Ashraff turned his attention towards the Turks, who by this time had made themselves master of all the provinces assigned to them by the partition treaty. Ashraff sent an embassy to Constantinople protesting against the horrible crime of conspiring with a Christian power against their co-religionists and making war upon a Sunni monarch simply to restore a Shia dynasty to power. The Court was not a little embarrassed

by the voice of these Ulamas (the learned). The Turks tried in vain to satisfy the Ulama's that the alliance with Russia was dictated by necessity, and that Ashraff had placed himself in the position of an enemy by refusing to acknowledge the supremacy of the Turkish Emperor as the religious head of all the Muslims. They asserted that if Ashraff was a true Muslim, he should come forward and tender his allegiance to the Porte.

Soon after the Afghan deputies left Constantinople, hostilities began. Ahmad Pasha, who by now had made himself master of Maragha and Kazwin, advanced towards Isfahan. When Ashraff learnt that in spite of his protests a large Turkish army was heading towards Isfahan, he laid waste the country through which the Turks were advancing. Then collecting all the forces that he could command, he moved in that direction with the avowed object of impeding their progress. A detachment of 2,000 Turks, who had lost its way, came face to face with the main Afghan force, led by Ashraff himself. The Turks were all cut to pieces before any substantial help could reach them. This success gave

immense confidence to the Afghan troops and greatly discouraged their enemies. The Turkish general, on hearing the news of this disaster, immediately called a halt and enclosed his camp with strong entrenchments. Ashraff, on approaching nearer, once more made an effort to evade the war and to persuade the Turks that he had no ill-feeling towards them and that the war between the two Muslim countries was unlawful and ruinous to both of them. At the same time his private emissaries were actively employed in disseminating these ideas in the Turkish army and in winning over to his side the Kurdish regiment, who were staunch Muslims. Not content with this, Ashraff decided to send a second deputation of Ulamas, who were venerable for their age as well as character, to the Turkish camp, who called upon them to desist from a war of aggression on a Muslim State. The speech of one of these deputies made a great impression on the Turkish soldiery, and Ahmad Pasha, seeing this, interrupted him by saying, "I have come here by the express command of my sovereign, who is not only a temporal monarch, but the true successor of the Caliphs, and con-

sequently the spiritual leader of all the orthodox Muslims. Ashraff must acknowledge him as such or he would bow to the force of arms”.

Before the conference had terminated, the call for prayers was heard, and the venerable deputies of Ashraff joined the Turks in their devotions. After this the deputies returned to their camp. As was expected the mission had the desired effect on the Turkish army. A large body of the Kurds, accompanied by some Turkish soldiers, coming out of the line, declared that they were not prepared to fight against the dictates of their conscience and the explicit laws of their religion. Ahmad Pasha saw that he had no remedy to prevent discontent from spreading in his army except by hastening an action. To this he was further encouraged by his great superiority in numbers ; his army consisted of 60,000 men, equipped with 70 pieces of heavy guns, while the Afghans had not more than half of this force and their artillery consisted of 40 Zamburaks (shivels mounted on camels). Ahmad was confident of his victory in every respect although so far he had not a chance to test the mettle of his opponents. In the engagement that followed,

the Afghans, in spite of their inferiority in number as well as in equipment, fought with such valour that the Turks were completely defeated, leaving more than 12,000 dead on the battle-field. The rout would have been complete, had Ashraff not ordered his men to desist from the pursuit of an enemy with whom he desired peace and wanted to live on the most amicable terms.

The Turkish general after his defeat was obliged to retreat hurriedly towards Kirmanshah. He was in such a haste that he left a part of his artillery and almost all his luggage on the battle-field. Ashraff did not even allow his men to plunder the stragglers. When Ahmad Pasha left Kirmanshah and fell back on Bhaghdad, the Afghan Prince sent another deputation to his camp with the message that he did not consider the spoils he had taken from his misguided co-religionists as lawful to himself or to his friends. Moreover he considered himself a prince and not a robber. Ahmad might send for his treasures and property, and that everything belonging to him and to those under his command, except arms, would be scrupulously restored. Ashraff not only performed faithfully what he had pro-

mised, but set free all the prisoners he had made during the war. By this wise moderation and a brilliant stroke of diplomacy, he won the hearts of his enemy and became so popular with them that the Court of Constantinople was compelled to conclude a treaty of peace with the Afghans, by which it was stipulated that Ashraff would acknowledge the Porte as the spiritual head of the Muslims all over, in return for which he was to be recognized as Shah of Persia. Ashraff, thus by his valour and diplomacy, won a great victory and became popular throughout the Muslim world. He now found leisure to turn his immediate attention to other pressing affairs.

He made an unsuccessful attempt to obtain possession of Kandahar, which was held by Mir Hussein, Mahmud's brother. This led to a division among the Ghilzai Afghans. Those, who were left in Persia were deprived of, in future, any reinforcement by the home tribes. Malik Mahmud, the governor of Seistan also hailing the opportunity, proclaimed himself king. Ashraff, in spite of his great victory over the Turks, found his kingdom rapidly falling to pieces. No help could come from Kandahar. He must rely on

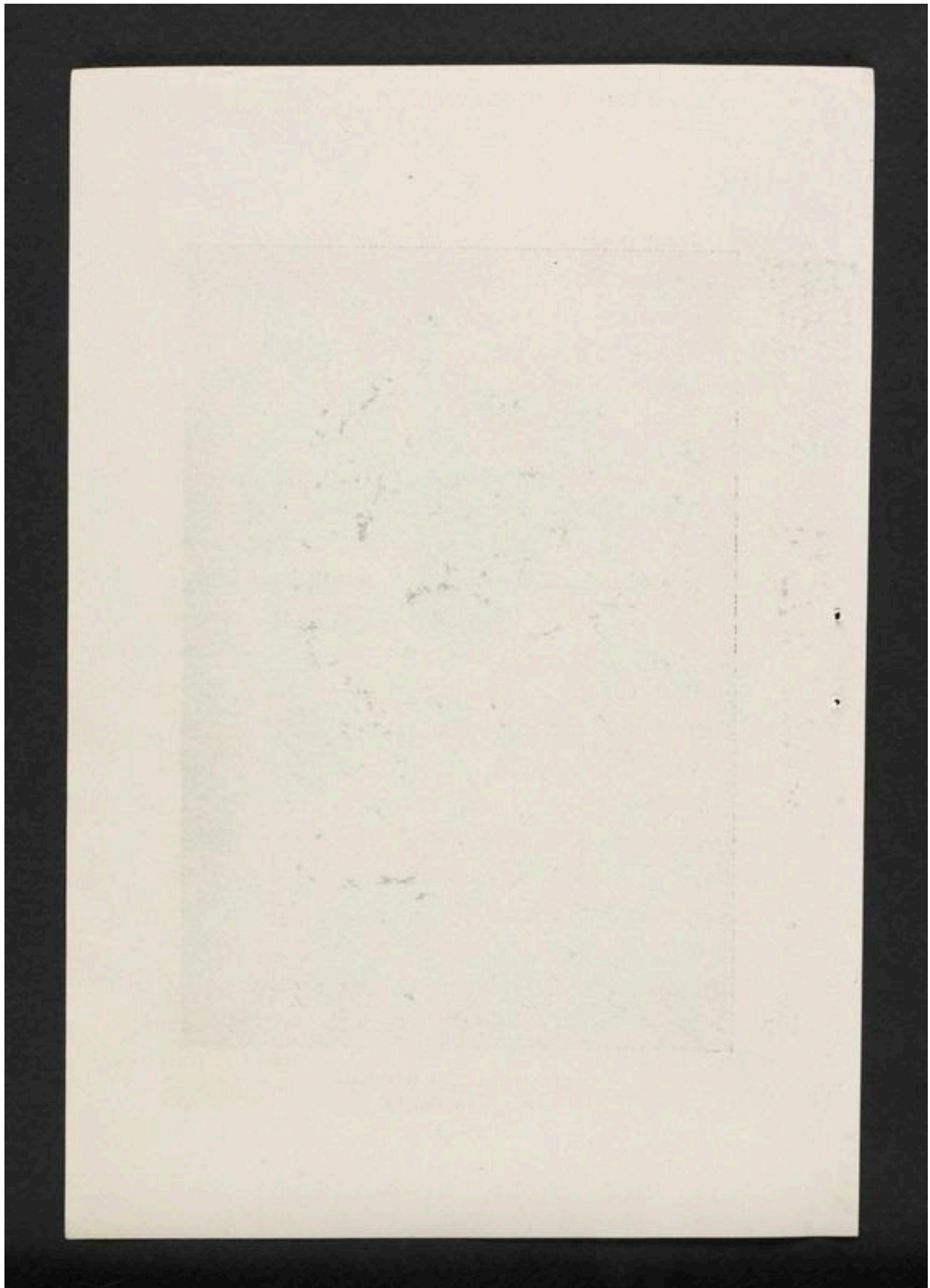
those of his own tribe who were left in Persia and whose number was fast dwindling. No doubt he possessed great personal courage and was active and vigilant too, but it so appeared that every thing was going against him. He repented his past rash actions which had deprived him of the services of some of his trusted friends.

The Saffavid Prince, Tahmasap, who after the fall of the capital, had escaped to Mazindaran fixed his headquarters at Farahabad. It was here that he was joined by Nadir Kuli, a soldier of fortune, who had been successful in wresting the district of Nishapur from the Abdali Afghans. Encouraged by these successes, Nadir now made up his mind to join hands with Tahmasap with the intention of expelling the Ghilzais from Persia. He entered into an agreement with the Prince whereby the latter undertook to grant Nadir in fief the provinces of Khurasan, Kirman and Mazindaran after the Afghans were driven out of Persia. The new force encouraged the Prince to take the offensive. Their first objective was Meshad, then in the hands of the Abdalis. Both marched that way and took Meshad without much difficulty. Ashraff was greatly alarmed on hearing this dis-

tracting news. He collected all his troops and hastened to the north to attack the Persians. Nadir and Tahmasap, who were busy in Khurasan, were forced to return to relieve Samnan besieged by Ashraff. Saidal Khan, one of the Afghan generals, advanced eastwards to meet Nadir. After an unsuccessful attempt at Bistam, Saidal fell back as far as Mihmandust, 12 miles north-east of Damaghan. It was here that he was joined by Ashraff. At this place a battle took place on the 2nd of October, 1729, that decided the fate of Persia. Ashraff found the enemy strongly entrenched. The Afghans, though exhausted by the long and tiresome journey, could not desist from the temptation of instantly attacking the Persians in their strong position. They impetuously charged the enemy's centre and then attacked the flanks. The Persians received the shock calmly; they staggered but did not give way. The Afghans made a second assault, many fell, the rest pressed on, but the main Persian army stood their ground unflinchingly. Much havoc was caused by their artillery, which destroyed the Afghan Zamburaks and inflicted heavy casualties on the soldiers.



MIR HUSSEIN HOTAKI
King of Kandahar
1725—1738



Unfortunately, at this critical moment, Ashraff's standard-bearer was accidentally killed, and the Afghans were so disheartened to see this that they fell back, hotly pursued by the enemy. The Afghan losses were estimated at 12,000 and those of the Persians at 4,000.

Ashraff made an unsuccessful attempt with a view to waylay the enemy in the narrow defile of the Khar valley. Once more his tactics failed. The Afghans were routed and leaving their cannon and baggage behind retreated towards Isfahan.

The moment Ashraff arrived at the Capital, he ordered his men to repair, with their families and household effects, to the fort which he had built outside the city. Nadir, leaving the Prince behind, advanced against Ashraff. He found the Afghans strongly entrenched at a place called Murchakhur. He did not venture to attack them in their strong position, but advanced towards the Capital, with the intention of luring the enemy out of their haunt. As he had expected, the Afghans advanced to attack them from behind. The Persians turned round to

meet the oncoming Afghans. A hand-to-hand battle ensued in which fortune once more favoured the Persians. The Afghans leaving about 4,000 dead on the battle-field, fled into the city of Isfahan. But finding their position untenable even there, they departed before day-break with all the members of their families. Nadir, marching from Murchakhur, entered the city triumphantly on the 16th of November, 1729. One of his first acts was to make a diligent search for the Afghans. All those who were found were ruthlessly massacred. The lofty mausoleum of Shah Mahmud was levelled to the ground in an instant. The Afghan's line of retreat could be easily traced by the dead horses and camels they had left on the roads, and by the slaughtered old men, women and children, who, unable to keep up the pace of the flight, had been executed by their own relatives and friends to prevent their falling into the hands of their ruthless enemy.

On the 24th of December Nadir came out of Isfahan with a view to pursue the Afghans, who were heading for Shiraz. At Zarqan, 21 miles north-east of Shiraz, he found Ashraff awaiting

him with a small number of his faithful followers. Another engagement took place, in which Ashraff displayed unusual courage. Once more Nadir won the day, and the Afghans retreated in great confusion towards Shiraz.

Ashraff did not stop long at Shiraz. With such of his followers as were left, he endeavoured to reach his native-land *via* Seistan. Nadir again started the pursuit of the fugitive monarch. A fight took place at the Pul-i-Fasa, ten miles south-east of Shiraz, in which a number of the Afghans were captured, while many others were driven into the river and drowned. Ashraff, however, made good his escape. Nadir himself followed him, but finding that he was unable to overtake him, returned to Shiraz.

Ashraff, accompanied by a few faithful friends continued his journey in an easterly direction. Their numbers dwindled rapidly. Historians differ as to how this fugitive Prince met his end. Some surmise that he was at last recognised by a Baluch chief (one of the sons of Abdullah Khan), who at once slew him in the hope of getting a reward from Nadir. Others are of the opinion

that he had been put to death by a force which Mir Hussein of Kandahar had dispatched to intercept him. Thus ended in disaster the Afghan rule in Persia. Few of the Afghans escaped death, and hardly any one reached Kandahar.

Such was the end of this tragic episode. Many are the causes which have been ascribed to the fall of the Afghans in Persia. Foremost among these being that the Afghans could not forget their mutual jealousies even in a foreign land. Moreover, they were averse to emigration, which is essential for the permanent occupation of a foreign land. During their rule in Persia, their strength lay solely in a small armed force. Removed from their home by hundreds of miles, they did not have adequate support of their brethren in the event of a misfortune.

NADIR SHAH

Nadir Kuli, or as he is better known, Nadir Shah of Persia, after occupying Isfahan, seated Mirza Tahmasap on the throne, although the real power was in his own hands. He also held four provinces of the Empire, viz., Khurasan, Mazindaran, Seistan and Kirman, directly as his

fief and was allowed to assume the title of Sultan. Then he marched against the Turks and captured Hamadan, Kirmanshah and Tabriz.

At this juncture, he got the news that the Abdalis of Herat were besieging Meshad. Nadir marched eastward at the head of a strong force. Zulfikar Khan, son of Mohammed Zaman Khan and brother of Ahmad Khan (later Ahmad Shah Abdali or Durrani) appealed to Sultan Hussein of Kandahar for help. A force of 3,000 Ghilzais under Saidal Khan came to his support. Seven miles west of Herat an action took place. Saidal, the Ghilzai Chief, made a surprise night attack on the Persian camp. Nadir, with only eight men, was cut off from the rest of his army in a small tower. This would have been the end of his military career, but no one recognized him and the golden opportunity was allowed to slip away.

Having received re-inforcements shortly afterwards, Nadir once more took the offensive and marched on Herat. The besieged fought desperately, but dissensions in their camp forced them to sue for peace. Nadir treated the

vanquished very kindly in the hope of winning them over to his side.

While Nadir was thus employed in the east, the Persian nobles of Isfahan persuaded the weak Tahmasap to place himself at the head of a large army, and march against the Turks, who were again assembling at the frontier. But he met a severe setback and lost in one month all that Nadir had gained during the previous years. He concluded a hasty treaty and ceded some of the western provinces to the Turks.

When Nadir learnt of this humiliating peace, he thought that it afforded him an excellent pretext for the realisation of projects which he had so long cherished. Repairing to Isfahan, he deposed Tehmasap and seated upon the throne his infant son, Abbas, with himself as regent. The time did not appear to be ripe for Nadir to place himself on the throne. Then at the head of a large army he marched to attack the Turks. After repeated victories over the Turks and the recovery of lost territories, he formally assumed the title of King of Persia (1736). At Moghan by the unanimous voice of the representatives of

the army, he was offered the crown of Persia, which after some feigned reluctance, he accepted on the condition that the Shia religion be replaced by the Sunni doctrine.

Soon after his elevation to the throne, Nadir marched to Isfahan, and the short time he spent there, was devoted to military preparations. From the time Nadir was able to overthrow the Afghan rule in Persia, he was thinking to conquer Kandahar. He sent orders to the Governor of Isfahan to make a levy of 18,000 tomans as a contribution towards the cost of the coming expedition. At the same time his agents were busy at different places requisitioning provisions for the troops. They carried their duties so rigorously that the inhabitants were reduced to utmost misery. In the province of Kirman people were so deprived of their supplies that there was a famine which lasted for seven long years.

After strong preparations Nadir advanced on Kandahar with an army of 80,000 men. He passed through Khurasan and Seistan, meeting no resistance on his way. But when he arrived at Kandahar, he found that its defences were too

formidable to give him hope of its early surrender. He was forced to adopt blockading methods. He ordered to build a new city in the vicinity of Kandahar and called it Nadir-Abad to quarter his army, as he was sure that the siege would last several months. One of his generals, Imam Ali Beg, advanced against Kilat-i-Ghilzai, which fell after a stubborn siege of two months. It was here that General Saidal Khan and a number of other Ghilzai leaders fell into the hands of the Persians. Nadir ordered that Saidal Khan be deprived of his sight, for he looked upon him as a dangerous foe.

Nadir gave orders to build towers all around the city of Kandahar, and connecting them with small batteries in such a way, that the intercourse of the besieged with the country outside was completely cut off. In spite of these measures, the city held out for full one year. Nadir was then forced to change his tactics. The city of Kandahar stood on the face of a hill, and a wall ran all round it, fortified by a large number of bastions. The Persians made themselves masters of some of the most commanding eminences and from there they bombarded the city. Mean-

while, the Bakhtiyaris took some of the principal towers. But the Afghans still held out in a detached fort with their leader, Mir Hussein, who made desperate efforts to drive the Persians back. But it was too late.

On learning that Nadir had brought his heavy cannon to bombard the citadel, Mir Hussein decided to surrender.

Nadir treated the Ghilzais very kindly and enlisted many of them in his army. Mir Hussein with his family and followers was sent to Mazandaran as prisoner. Nadir found imprisoned in Kandahar two Abdali brothers, Zulfikar Khan and Ahmad Khan. They had fled from Herat to seek shelter in Kandahar, but Mir Hussein threw them into prison. Nadir treated the two brothers very kindly. They were also sent to Mazandaran.

The fall of Kandahar (March, 1738) brought Nadir very near to the frontier of the Mughal Empire. The tottering Mughal Monarchy of Hindustan could not escape his keen eyes. The Court of Delhi at the time was too much engrossed in its own internal affairs, to look beyond its borders. Even when Nadir invaded their territories and took Kabul, they

still expected that the mountain tribes would be able to check his advance towards India. But the tribes had no sympathies either with the Mughals or with the Persians. They were only looking forward to the day when they would be able to throw off the foreign yoke. They therefore, decided to keep aloof and watch the course of events from a distance. The Mughals soon learnt with dismay that Nadir had crossed the passes and was successful in throwing a bridge across the Indus.

Nadir did not meet any effective resistance until he reached the Jamna. His progress was rapid, and the governors on the way tendered their submission without resistance. Mohammed Shah, the Mughal Emperor, was at last obliged to check the advance of the invading force. He came out of Delhi at the head of a large army. The two armies came face to face at Karnal, twenty miles north of Panipat, on the fateful morning of the 24th February, 1739. The Indians, torn by mutual jealousies, were no match for the hardy and experienced soldiers led by Nadir in person. It was all over within a few hours. The Mughal army were completely routed ; Khan

Dauran, the Commander-in-Chief, was mortally wounded, and his brother, son and many other notables were among the slain. It is estimated that the Indians lost no less than 10,000 men, while the losses of the Persians were 2,500 killed and 500 wounded. Mohammed Shah had no alternative but to sue for peace. He therefore, decided to send Asif Jah to the Persian camp to negotiate peace-terms. Shortly afterwards the Emperor himself repaired to the Persian camp attended by his nobles. Nadir outwardly treated him with every mark of respect, but the Emperor henceforth was in reality a prisoner of war. Nadir pressing his advantage, marched towards Delhi on the 12th of March accompanied by the Emperor.

On entering the capital, Nadir took up his headquarters in the palace built by Shah Jahan. The day after his arrival (21st of March) the Khutba was read in his name. Towards the close of the day false rumours found circulation that Nadir was dead ; other reports were that he had been imprisoned by the Emperor. The Indians carried away by excitement fell upon the Persians, who were stationed in different parts of the

town. Many of the Kizilbash troops were taken by surprise and cut to pieces. The Indian nobles, on hearing the rumour, fell upon the Persian guards who had been sent to protect their property.

Nadir at first refused to believe the report of disturbances. He ordered one of his men to go out and ascertain the true state of affairs. No sooner did he come out of the fort than he was killed by the angry mob. A second man sent after him met the same fate. The darkness of night prevented Nadir from taking immediate action. Next morning he mounted his horse and, with a strong escort, riding through the city came to the golden mosque in order to study the situation. He himself was assaulted. Someone fired at him from a window. The bullet missed Nadir, but killed one of his chief officers beside him. Enraged at this unusual audacity he gave orders of a general massacre of the inhabitants. The slaughter and loot continued to rage from sunrise till long after mid-day. The city was set on fire in several places, and it soon became a horrible scene of destruction, blood and terror. No distinction was made between the guilty and

the innocent, men and women, old and young. At last the Emperor himself was forced to intercede on behalf of his people through Asif-Jah, who with dangling sword in his neck, is said to have spoken to the tyrant in these words : "None has survived the general massacre. If still the greed of your soldiers is not satiated and they are bent on continuing their gruesome work, you have to revive the dead first so that, you may be in a position to kill them again." (Zindakuni wa baz kushi). Nadir, accepting his request, gave an order to his soldiers to refrain from further action which, to his credit, was instantly obeyed.

Nadir now began to exact his tribute of money and Jewels. The possessions of the nobles and wealthy merchants were confiscated. Out of this he richly rewarded his officers and men and dispatched a firman to Persia exempting all the provinces from taxation for three years.

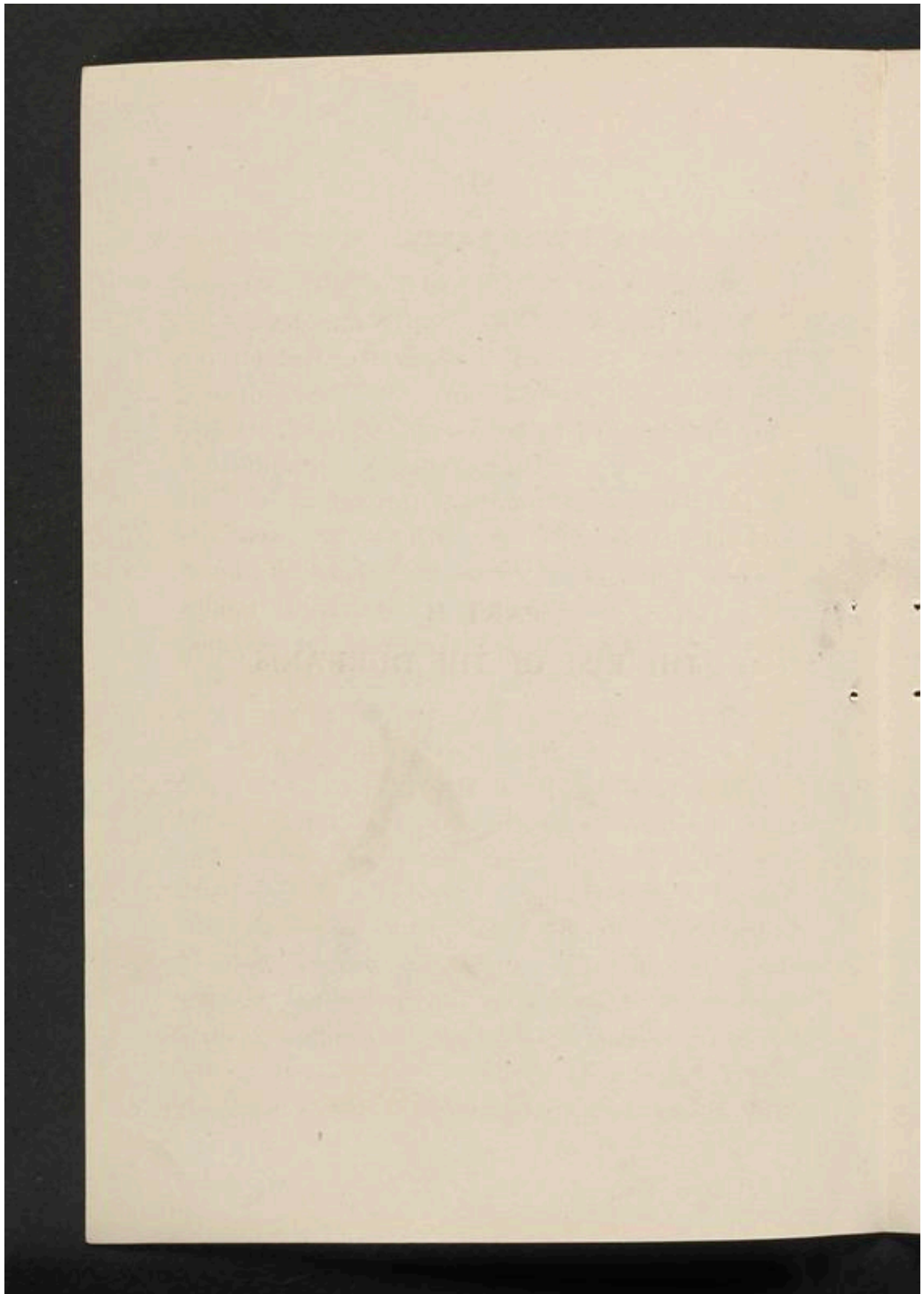
The work of collecting levy on the citizens took sometime. When all returns were complete and Nadir had taken possession of the imperial treasures and jewels, including the

famous peacock throne, the aggregate value of which is (estimated at 700,000,000, rupees) he rode through the streets of Delhi on his way to Persia (16th May). Before leaving the city he concluded a treaty with Mohammed Shah, by which all the country west of the Indus was ceded to him. The Persian troops suffered much on their return from India by the intense heat to which they were exposed. Besides, their homeward journey was intercepted by the incessant attacks of the Afghan mountaineers, who would not allow the proud conqueror to pass through their lands unless he was willing to pay them a share of the treasures he had brought with him from India.

On reaching Herat, Nadir displayed to public show the jewels and wealth he brought with him from India. He made Meshad the capital of his vast empire. But he was not destined to live long to reap the fruits of his labours. In 1747 as a result of a conspiracy he was killed in his camp near Khabushan, and within a few years after his death, the mighty empire which he had erected, fell to pieces.

PART II
THE RISE OF THE DURRANIS

دوران درانی



DURRANIS

Ahmad Khan Abdali and his 4,000 Afghans could not believe at first that Nadir Khan was dead. They hastened towards the royal quarters with a view to protect him. To their surprise, they found their way barred by a strong contingent of the Kizilbash. Though greatly outnumbered, the Afghans fought their way through their ranks and entered Nadir's tent, where they saw the headless trunk of the Shah in a pool of blood.

After helping the members of the royal family, who were attacked by the insurgents, the Afghans decided to return to their native-land. They were forced to cut their way through the enemy for a greater part of their journey homeward. On reaching Kandahar a tribal Jirga was held (October, 1747) to consider the future of the country. The chief question was as to who should be elected king. Every one of the tribal chiefs put forth his claims. So heated did the discussion and the argument become between these rival claimants to the throne that recourse to arms seemed inevitable. Fortunately, there was a respectable divine, Sabar by name, who was present at this meeting. He was keenly

watching the procedure. At last he decided to intervene and to use his influence in solving this intricate problem. Addressing the audience he said, "Gentlemen, give up this useless discussion. God has created Ahmad Khan to fill up this job. Gather round his standard to avoid His wrath." This intercession had the desired effect. All the contending chiefs immediately withdrew their claims in favour of Ahmad Khan, who was well-known for his ability and zeal. The divine was pleased to see this. He went out and brought a wreath made from the sheaves of wheat with him. This he placed on Ahmad Khan's head, pronouncing, "May this serve you as a crown". All the chiefs came forward to pay homage to him. Ahmad Khan thus became the elected king of the Afghans.

AHMAD SHAH-I-ABDALI (1747-1773). Ahmad Khan, who is henceforth called Ahmad Shah, was the chief of Sadozai clan, a branch of the Abdalis. He is, therefore, variously entitled—Abdali, Sadozai or Durrani. The last title, it is said, he took in consequence of a dream, wherein he was addressed as Dur-i-Darran (the Pearl of Age) or Dur-i-Durran (the Pearl of Pearls).

It will be remembered that when Nadir Shah took Kandahar, he released Zulfikar Khan and his brother Ahmad Khan from Mir Hussein's prison and sent them to Mazindaran. Later Ahmad Khan was appointed in command of a force of his own tribe. It was here that he distinguished himself. He owed his rapid advancement to his military ability. His mental powers were considerable, and to these he added the advantage of a noble birth and great physical energy and courage. Nadir had predicted great things of his future. Once he said, "I have found neither in Iran, Turan or Hind, a man equal to Ahmad Khan Abdali's character." This estimate of Nadir was justified by later events.

Ahmad Shah, though very young at the time of his coronation, for he was hardly twenty-five, proved himself a real military genius. His merits as a soldier secured him rapid advancement at a very early age. Now when he came to power, he tried his best to win the affection of his people and to weld them together into a strong nation. When this object was achieved, he proceeded to conduct a series of important campaigns, which

he carried out successfully with the skill of a consummate general.

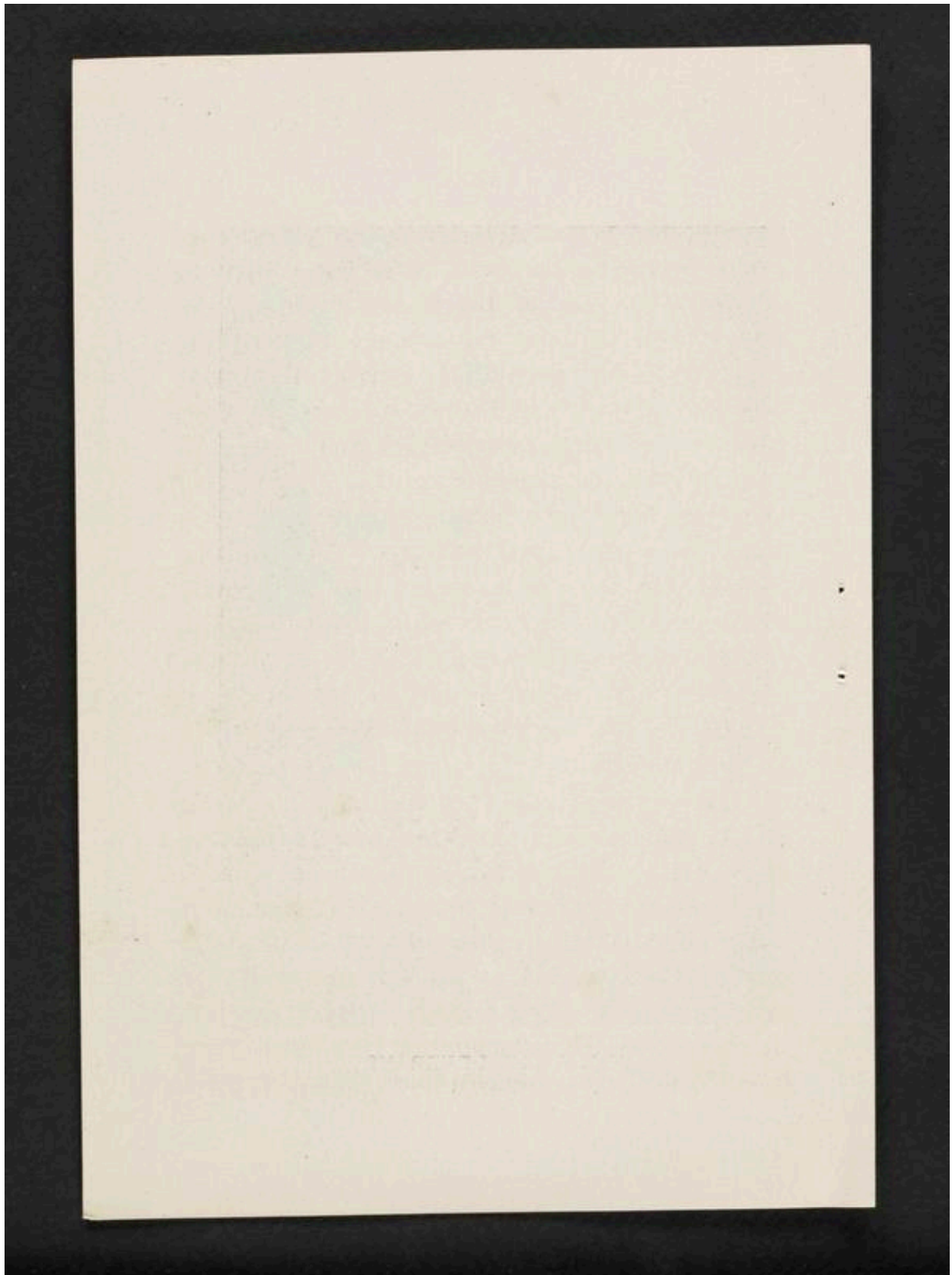
Ahmad Shah first of all, turned his attention to Kabul and Ghazni, held by Nasir Khan, who after the death of Nadir Shah had declared himself on the side of the Mughals. Nasir Khan soon found that he had made a great mistake in his estimate of Ahmad Shah's prowess. After a feeble resistance he fled to Peshawar. When he saw that even there he could not maintain his position, he tendered his submission to the Afghan King.

Ahmad Shah, following his success, crossed the Indus in 1748 at the head of 30,000 horsemen. He took Chhuch (Hazara) and Attock without much difficulty. He then marched to meet Hayatullah Khan, the Mughal governor of the Punjab. The Viceroy offered but a feeble opposition. He fell back precipitately and in great disorder towards the Mughal capital. Ahmad Shah, after taking possession of Lahore and other important cities of the Punjab, pursued the governor towards Delhi.

Mohammed Shah, the Mughal Emperor, on



AHMAD SHAH DURRANI
1747—1773



hearing the news, dispatched his eldest son, Prince Ahmad, at the head of a large force to oppose the advance of the invading army. The Prince, who had not the courage to meet the Afghans in the open-field, entrenched himself near Sirhind. Ahmad Shah on reaching the river Satluj, found that a powerful Mughal army had occupied all the available fords. With a contingent of 12,000 men, he crossed the river at a place where there was no ford. Leaving the Indians in the rear, he made straight for Sirhind, where the Indians had left their heavy baggage, treasures and surplus stores. Ahmad Shah took possession of these, sent a part of the booty to Lahore, but kept the heavy guns with him, which he needed badly.

The Imperial Army, on receiving the news, immediately retraced its step with a view to intercept the Afghans, but on reaching Sirhind, lost courage and decided to entrench itself at a village called Manupur. A small body of horsemen that Ahmad Shah had at his disposal could do little in face of such a formidable force, numbering at least 60,000 and supported by a much more powerful artillery. Ahmad Shah, like the great

commanders, led an attack in person. The Afghans were able to inflict heavy losses on the Mughals, but they too suffered severely. Qamar-ud-din Khan, the Vazier, was killed in the engagement, while his son, Mir Mannu, next in command stood the ground without flinching. At this critical moment, when the fate of battle hung in the balance, some carts loaded with rockets exploded near the Afghan gun-powder magazine, burning to death some 1,000 gunners. This obliged the Afghans to stand on the defensive, and when night came, they marched off homewards. The Mughals had not the heart to pursue them.

Mohammed Shah, the Mughal, was at this time seriously ill and expired at Delhi about a month after the battle of Sirhind. He was succeeded by his son Ahmad, under the title of Ahmad Shah. The Afghan King, on learning this, again appeared in the Panjab. Mir Mannu, who was left in charge of the Province, finding himself unable to cope with the situation, made his submission. Ahmad Shah Durrani allowed him to retain the governorship of the province on payment of 1,400,000 rupees annually as tribute.

This agreement was later on ratified by the Mughal Emperor as well. After this satisfactory arrangement, Ahmad Shah Durrani decided to return to Kandahar. On his way back he took the cities of Dera Ghazi Khan, Dera Ismail Khan and Shikarpur.

Early in 1749, Ahmad Shah Durrani marched on Herat at the head of a force numbering about 25,000. The city was then in possession of Shah Rukh, grandson of Nadir Shah. The place surrendering after a short siege, Ahmad Shah was able to advance on Meshad. Shah Rukh, a boy of 14, was merely a puppet in the hands of Mir Alam of Seistan. This ambitious chief, learning of the siege of Herat, had hastened to its relief. But at Turbat-i-Jam he was surprised by a force sent by Ahmad Shah with a view to intercept his advance. Mir Alam fought bravely, but in the end he sustained a crushing defeat and a large number of his men were either killed or taken prisoners. Ahmad Shah was therefore able to continue his march towards Meshad. He did not meet any further opposition on the way. He laid siege to Meshad. Shah Rukh, seeing that he was unable to keep up his position,

came out of the citadel and tendered his submission. Ahmad Shah, receiving him kindly, left him in possession of his territories on condition that the Prince would acknowledge his suzerainty.

Ahmad Shah continuing his march came to Nishapur. A severe winter with heavy snowfall forced him to fall back. In the spring of the following year Ahmad Shah once more marched against Nishapur. The city surrendered after a short siege. On his return homewards he sent an expedition to the north of the Hindu Kush, which secured him the possession of Balkh, Khanabad, Maimana and Badakhshan.

In the spring of 1751, Ahmad Shah was once more compelled to advance on Meshad to chastise Mir Alam, who taking advantage of his absence, had raided the city, blinded and dethroned Shah Rukh Mirza. Ahmad Shah had little difficulty in restoring order. Placing Shah Rukh once more on the throne, he advanced as far as Astarabad. This was the extreme limit of his conquests in the west.

It will be remembered that on his second expedition to India, Ahmad Shah had reinstated

Mir Mannu as the governor of the Panjab on condition that he would pay annual tribute to him. This treaty was ratified by the Mughal Emperor too. Now Ahmad Shah learnt that the Emperor and Mir Mannu had failed to comply with the terms of this agreement. He, therefore, decided to invade India for the third time. On his approach, Mir Mannu, finding that no help could come to him from any quarter, made his submission a second time. He was not only forgiven but reinstated in his office. The terrified Emperor, too, sued for peace. According to a new agreement, he formally ceded the Panjab and Multan to the Afghan King. After a stay of a few days, Ahmad Shah returned to his country. On his way back he annexed Kashmir to his kingdom.

Mir Mannu, the governor of the Panjab, died in 1753. His son was appointed in his stead as the governor. As he was a minor, his mother, Mughlani Begum, became regent. This once more gave a chance for intrigues and rebellions. Shahab-ud-din, son of Ghazi-ud-din, who had succeeded to the office of Vazier at Mughal Court, availing himself of the opportunity, entered into

a most amicable correspondence with the widow, desiring to marry her daughter. Having completely lulled her suspicions, he advanced on Lahore with a large force as if to celebrate the marriage. On reaching Lahore, he surprised the town and carried the governess off to his camp. Adina Beg, a notorious intriguer, was appointed in his place as the governor of the province. This insult to Ahmad Shah's authority, brought him to India a fourth time (1756).

Marching rapidly from Kandahar and crossing the Indus, he entered the Panjab with a view to punish Adina Beg. The latter, finding himself unable to check his advance, retreated towards Delhi with the Afghan king at his heels. Ahmad Shah reached the vicinity of Delhi without opposition. Shahab-ud-din, finding himself too weak to check the advance of Ahmad Shah, contrived to pacify Mughlani Begum. Through her intercession he went to the Durrani camp. The Afghan king received him kindly, but continued his march into Delhi which he entered triumphantly. Alamgir II, the Mughal Emperor, was deposed and the Khutba was read in the name of Ahmad Shah Durrani.

After a short rest at the Mughal capital, Ahmad Shah sent Jahan Khan, one of his generals, against the Jats. This expedition was completely successful. The Afghans, driving back the Jats, took Bulamgar and proceeded as far as Muttra, which surrendered without much opposition.

Ahmad Shah, then finding it impossible to stay longer in India in consequence of the heat, made up his mind to return. He was about to leave, when the Emperor appealed to him for protection against his treacherous Vazier, who was in league with the Marhattas and Jats. Ahmad Shah, therefore, appointed Najib-ud-daula, a Rohilla noble of ability and good repute, to be the commander of the army, in the hope that he being an Afghan by origin, would work for the interests of his race.

After these precautionary measures and arranging a marriage between Timur Mirza, his son, and a daughter of Alamgir II, the Afghan monarch decided to return home. He left Timur and Sardar Jahan Khan to look after his newly-acquired dominions east of the Indus. Hardly had Ahmad Shah turned his back on India,

when Shahab-ud-din who had fled to Farrukhabad and taken shelter with the Marhattas, returned to Delhi and laid siege to it. Najib-ud-daula was forced to retire towards Saharanpur. The Vazier immediately made Ahmad Khan Bangash the Commander-in-Chief of the Mughal Army. Not content with this, he invited the Marhattas to his help, for he knew that without their support he could not keep up his position at Delhi.

Meanwhile Ahmad Shah was busy in other quarters and could not pay his attention to what was going on at the Mughal capital. A serious disturbance had broken out in the Panjab. Adina Beg, who had fled from Lahore on the approach of the Afghan king, now reappeared on the scene and instigated the Sikhs to rebel. He also invited the Marhattas to assist him in the recovery of the Panjab.

Ragunath, the brother of Peshwa, availing of the opportunity, advanced on the Panjab at the head of a formidable force. Timur Mirza was forced to fall back. After appointing Adina Beg to his former position, the Marhatta chief retired to the Deccan.

Meanwhile Ahmad Shah's hands were too full with the affairs in Baluchistan, where Nasir Khan, the chief of the Bruhi tribe, had revolted. The Baluch Sardar had rendered much assistance to Ahmad Shah in his numerous expeditions both in India and Persia. He was adequately rewarded for his services. But on hearing that the Marhattas had conquered the whole of the Panjab and had ousted the Afghans from that province, he wavered in his allegiance to the Afghan Crown and declared his independence. Ahmad Shah was, therefore, forced to march against him immediately. This operation delayed the Shah for a considerable time. Ultimately, the gloomy state of Indian affairs made Ahmad Shah to conclude a hasty peace, by which Nasir Khan was allowed to retain his dominions on condition that he would acknowledge Shah's suzerainty and furnish contingents whenever the Afghan king made wars beyond the boundaries of Afghanistan. It was also stipulated that the Baluch Chief would in no way help or grant asylum to anyone of the Sadozai princes and would not interfere in Afghans' internal quarrels. To cement this alliance, Ahmad Shah married his son Timur

to Nasir Khan's niece. Nasir Khan was also exempted from the tribute which he paid annually to Ahmad Shah and got the districts of Quetta and Mastung as reward for his past services.

After settling the affairs in this part of the country, Ahmad Shah was able to turn his attention towards India. On his approach, Emperor Alamgir II was murdered by his Vazier and the young prince, Ali Gauhar, afterwards Shah Alam II, had to flee for his life, and took shelter with the British. Passing through the Bolan Pass, Ahmad Shah came to Sukkur. Then continuing his march along the Indus, he advanced on Peshawar. He crossed the river near Attock. From there he continued his march through the northern part of the Panjab, avoiding the swollen rivers by keeping near the base of the northern hills. He crossed the river Jamna opposite Saharanpur.

Driving the main Marhatta army towards the south, Ahmad Shah came suddenly face to face with a strong force led by Dataji Sindhia at a point some ten miles north of Delhi. In the engagement that followed the Marhatta Chief with two-thirds of his force was cut to pieces.

A second detachment under the leadership of Mulhar Rao Hulkar was also surprised and completely annihilated. The third Marhatta division falling back continued its flight south of the Chambal. It was at last overtaken by a Durrani detachment and totally destroyed. As a consequence of these victories, the Afghans entered Delhi. The Vazier flying for his life entered the Jat country, where Mulhar Rao Hulkar and the remnants of his force had sought shelter.

The Marhattas, one of the warlike races of India, dwelling along the south-western coast of India, were at this time at the zenith of their power. They had overrun greater part of India and their frontiers extended to the Indus and the Himalayas in the north, while on the south they stretched nearly to the extremity of the Deccan peninsula. With conquests their military power also increased considerably. The force was no longer composed of predatory bands, but had a nucleus of troops drilled in the European fashion. The army was well-paid and properly equipped and, was trained by Europeans, mostly French.

Their artillery, too, was far superior to any previously known in India.

The news of misfortune that had befallen Holkar and Sindhia did in no way discourage them. On the contrary it was only a fresh stimulus to exertion. They decided to stake their all in the forth-coming struggle with the Afghans. Great preparations were made and within a short time a very powerful army was placed under the command of Sadesho Bhao (or Sadashir Rao as he is variously called) with Viswas Rao, Peshwa's son, next in command. All the great Marhatta Chiefs had joined the force with their contingents and followers. Besides, many Rajput princes sent their quotas of troops and money, while Suraj Mal, a Jat leader, is said to have brought a body of 30,000 men of his tribe. Ahmad Shah had pursued the flying enemy as far as Anoopshehr. He could not proceed further due to the rainy season. When the Marhatta force reached Bharatpur, Suraj Mal and Holkar, who were quite aware of the Afghan's war tactics, advised Bhao to leave the infantry and heavy guns with baggage behind in the Jat country and advancing with

cavalry alone harass the Afghans, who, in their opinion, could not stand the intense heat of India. The rainy season of the country, they argued, would soon compel the Afghans to retire to their homeland. But the haughty Marhatta chief, puffed up by his recent successes in other parts of India, rejected this counsel and looked down on victory thus achieved as below his dignity. He boldly marched on Delhi, then held by a small detachment of the Afghans. The Marhattas had no difficulty in besieging the city, which surrendered after a stubborn resistance. The Marhattas on entering the Mughal capital put the entire garrison to the sword.

Ahmad Shah, who had encamped on the left bank of the Jamna with a view to pass the rainy season could not come to the assistance of his men ; the swollen river made crossing impossible. The Marhattas looted the city to their heart's content. They defaced palaces, tombs and shrines for the sake of the ornaments with which they had been decorated. Bhao even proposed to proclaim Viswas Rao emperor of India, but others advised him to postpone it until the Durrani were driven across the Indus.

In October, 1760, the Marhattas marched north to Sarhind, with a view to cut off Ahmad Shah's line of communication. On their way to that city, they attacked and stormed the fortress of Kunjpura, sixty miles north of Delhi, putting to sword the entire garrison, numbering no less than 10,000 men. This wholesale massacre took place almost in sight of the Afghan army, encamped on the other side of the river. Once more the flooded Jamna and the violence of the periodical rains stood in the way of rendering any help to the besieged. Ahmad Shah concluded that further delay was suicidal ; something must be done at once.

With this intention he broke up his cantonment and ordered his men to cross the river against all odds. On reaching the Jamna, he found it swollen and in full flood. He proceeded along it to find a ford. But he could see none. He resolved to cross it at all cost. The disgrace must be wiped out. The passage across the river was conducted admirably and effected in face of resolute resistance and volleys of bullets from the other side. The Marhattas were so disheartened to see this unusual bravery, that they fell back

with great speed in face of the surging waves of the Afghans, and on reaching Panipat they dug trenches and took shelter behind them.

The THIRD BATTLE OF PANIPAT (7th January 1761). Ahmad Shah following at the heels of the enemy caught them in the vicinity of Panipat. Here he found the Marhattas strongly entrenched. They had thrown up works round their camps, encompassed by a broad and deep ditch, and protected on all sides by a fine artillery. The total strength of the Marhatta force is estimated between 300,000 and 500,000. Besides, they had 200 guns, with numerous wall pieces, and a great supply of rockets, (a favourable Marhatta weapon). A deserted Muslim officer from the French army, Ibrahim Gardi by name, had also with 9,000 disciplined sepoy come to their aid. Against this formidable force, Ahmad Shah had no more than 40,000 Afghans, mostly horsemen. A force of Indian Muslims, estimated at 38,000 foot and some 13,000, horse had also come to his help. Of these the Rohilla Afghans were efficient to some extent, while the rest was a rabble of Indian foot soldiers, who had come to loot either side that lost the war. The Afghans

had no artillery ; their Indian allies had brought with them about thirty pieces of cannon of different calibres.

Such was the numerical strength and equipment of these two forces that now lay face to face on the famous battle-field, which had previously twice decided the fate of India. But the inadequacy of number and equipment of the Afghan force was duly compensated by the generalship of its leader and the bravery of its soldiers. Ahmad Shah with the small number of his men did not think it advisable to attack the enemy in their strong position. He was, therefore, obliged to adopt similar precautionary measures and to throw lines of trenches round his camp.

Bhao, who had fine Marhatta cavalry at his disposal, dispatched raiding parties to harry the country around in order to prevent supplies from reaching the Afghan camp. Govind Rao Bodela with his 12,000 horses, was ordered to carry this plan out. He harassed the Afghans in the rear of their camp, intercepting all supplies. Bhao also employed his light cavalry for this very end. As a result of this blockade the Afghans began to

suffer heavily. This roused them to immediate action. They resolved to adopt reciprocal measures, and to make up the deficiency in number by bold and rapid movements of their detachments. A body of their horse under Attai Khan marched more than sixty miles, then detouring surprised Govind Rao's camp before daybreak. The enemy, not prepared for such a move, retreated pell-mell, Govind himself was among the slain. This single action so demoralized the Marhattas that henceforth they had not the courage to meet the Afghans in the open field. The Afghans, posting strong pickets around Marhattas' camp, tried hard to cut off all supplies from reaching them. This state of affairs dragged on for three months and no serious effort was made by the Marhattas to pierce through the Afghan line and force a convoy of food into the camp. With their numerous attendants and innumerable camp followers, their stock of provisions soon ran short. Bhao bore his difficulties with dignity and patience. The Afghans, too, suffered for want of supplies and had to bring them from long distances. But the patience, vigilance and activity of their leader enabled them to face these difficulties cheerfully.

Ahmad Shah, having supreme faith in himself, had also the gift of inspiring in others implicit confidence in his leadership and in their final victory. On the contrary, the enemy was daily losing patience and morale. The Indians, who had flocked to Ahmad Shah's standard, were also anxious to put an end to this protracted siege by an immediate action. When they insisted in their demand, Ahmad Shah coldly answered, "This is a matter of war with which you are not well-acquainted. In other affairs do as you please, but leave this to me and follow my advice implicitly."

The Marhattas at last clearly saw that if this state of affairs were to continue a little longer, they were sure to lose the contest. An immediate action, they thought, might relieve them of the impending danger. They therefore decided to come out of their fortifications and attack the Afghan camp.

From the day of his arrival in Panipat, Ahmad Shah had pitched a small tent for himself in front of the camp, to which he repaired every morning before sunrise for prayers. Then mounting his horse he would visit the various posts and recon-

noiter the enemy's position. Thus after covering a distance of forty to fifty miles, he would return to his tent. At night he placed a picket of 5,000 horses as near as he could to the enemy's camp, where they remained under arms all the night, while other parties went round the whole cantonment. Ahmad Shah himself would often take part in these rounds. He used to say to his Indian friends, "You better sleep ; I will take care that no harm befalls you." Personal bravery of a leader is of vital importance in an Afghan army. The soldiers will gladly follow such a commander anywhere and against any odds ; but if he throws them into danger, while he himself remains at a distance, they lose their enthusiasm directly, and are half thrashed before the battle begins. They want a man, who would rush forward sword in hand at their head, call upon them to follow, and then dash into the middle of the foe. Unstinted praise must be accorded to Ahmad Shah not only for his generalship and bravery, but also for his careful training of the troops and his strict enforcement of discipline. His appearance in the midst of his soldiers had an inspiring effect on them, who would gladly follow him through thick

and thin of the battle. Far from this, on the approach of impending danger, Bhao's vanity vanished and his embarrassment increased with the passing of time which had a most demoralizing effect on his comrades and followers. At last Bhao was forced to ask Shujaud-daula to mediate for peace between him and the Afghan King. "The cup is full to the brim", he wrote in his distress, "and cannot hold another drop. If anything could be done, do it at once, or else answer me plainly ; hereafter there will be no time for writing or speaking".

It appears that Ahmad Shah was not ready to negotiate a peace with his entrapped adversaries. The Marhattas, receiving no reply decided to lead an attack next morning.

On the seventh of January, 1761, at about three in the morning, Ahmad Shah received the news that the whole of the Marhatta army had marched out of their camp with the intention of attacking the Afghans. Shuja-ud-daula, the first to get this information, came directly to the Shah's camp and desired an immediate audience. Ahmad Shah soon appeared fully

dressed. On hearing the news, he was not perturbed in the least. Mounting his horse, which always stood ready by his door, he rode in the direction of the enemy, ordering his troops to follow.

The King's centre was composed of the Rohillas, Poupalzais and a body of the royal guards. The Marhattas first of all made much use of their guns. A heavy cannonade broke out. Shells and rockets whizzed over the Afghan lines. The centre of the Afghans was thrown into confusion. Ibrahim Girdi, seeing this, rode up to Bhao and said proudly, "You have often blamed me for keeping a regular army. You will now see that they have earned their wages not in vain." Seizing a colour with his own hand, he ordered his battalions to cease fire and charge with their bayonets. The Rohillas, unable to stand the assault, reeled back, while their retreat laid open the right wing of Shah Wali Khan, the Grand Vazier, who commanded the centre of the army. Bhao and Viswas, flushed with these initial successes, attacked him with the flower of Marhatta force. A hand-to-hand battle ensued. Attai Khan was killed in the action and

the Afghans, who were greatly outnumbered, were forced to give ground. Everything seemed to go against them. Shah Wali, seeing this miserable plight of his friends, dismounted, and sword in hand, went forward to meet the enemy, determined to lay his life at the post. Nawab Shujaud-daula was not far from the Grand Vazier, but could not see his plight due to thick dust intervening between him and the Vazier. Shortly afterwards he sent some one in that direction to find out the cause of the suddenly diminishing sounds of men and horses. To his great surprise, he learnt that the Grand Vazier was fighting on foot, reproaching his men for cowardice, and endeavouring to bring them back to their posts. "Tell Shuja", he said to the messenger, "if he does not come at once to my assistance, I must perish." But Shuja would not move.

Seeing this, the King came in person with his reserve to the assistance of his Vazier. The battle now became stationary, though the advantage was still with the Marhattas, who came forward like the surging waves, confident of their victory. Ahmad Shah, rallying the fugitives and ordering all those who refused to obey to be

cut to pieces, gave instructions for advance, at the same time directing a division on his left to wheel up and take the enemy in the rear and flank. This skilful manoeuvre at the opportune time decided the fate of the battle. All at once, as if by miracle, the whole Marahatta army turned back and fled at full speed, leaving the battle-field covered with the dying and dead. The Commander-in-Chief of the Marhatta forces, the heir-apparent to the throne, and almost all the chief officers and the greater part of the army perished in battle or in flight. The pursuit by moonlight cost the fleeing multitude tens of thousands of their precious lives ; their ponies were easily overtaken by the swift-footed Afghan horses. Later a glimpse of the tragedy was given by a banker's letter to one of his correspondents, which ran : "Two invaluable pearls have been dissolved, twenty-seven gold Mohurs have been lost, and of the silver and copper coins the total cannot be easily estimated." By the pearls he means the commander and the next in command of the Marhatta forces, while gold Mohurs refer to officers that had fallen in the battle. Almost all the Marhatta chiefs were either killed or

wounded, except Holkar, who had left the field very early, when he found that balance had changed in favour of the Afghans and that the Marhatta army was heading towards disaster.

Never a victory could be more complete. The Third Battle of Panipat was more decisive than the previous ones. The whole of Hindustan lay at the feet of the conqueror. The greatest power that could oppose Ahmad Shah was smashed to pieces and their towering edifice crumbled to the ground. The British at this time had not yet fully consolidated their position even in Bengal. As such they were no match to the Afghans, the victors of Panipat. To the Marhattas the day of the Third Battle of Panipat was one of mourning and calamity, and with it their hope of an Empire vanished for ever. Grief spread over the whole Marhatta people ; every one mourned the loss of relatives or friends. The Peshwa, the head of Marhatta Confederacy, could not survive this shock. He was so overtaken with grief and sorrow that, retreating towards Poona, he passed away. The confederacy itself sustained an irreparable loss. Before it could recover from this shock and assume offensive once more, it

found itself confronted with another power, which was more than a match for it. This new power that appeared on the Indian horizon shortly afterwards was the British, who taking advantage of the confused situation of India after the death of Ahmad Shah the Great, had taken his place. Some of the historians are of the opinion that the battle of Panipat facilitated indirectly the British conquest of India.

Why Ahmad Shah Durrani did not avail himself of this golden opportunity is a mystery to most of the historians. It is alleged by some that the climate of India did not suit him. Others contend that he did not like to extend the boundaries of his empire too much, for it was not easy to control it from the distant base of Kandahar and Ahmad Shah was too patriotic to shift his capital to Delhi. Another group of historians thinks that Ahmad Shah did not like to pay his attention too much to Indian affairs, as there were more pressing questions to be solved on other fronts, especially in the north and north-west of his kingdom.

The victory was illustrated numismatically by coins struck at Delhi, Bareilly, Muradabad and

Sirhind. Ahmad Shah, content with the keeping of the Punjab as far as Satluj, nominated Ali Gauhar, who afterwards assumed the title of Shah Alam II, to the throne of Delhi, and he himself returned to Afghanistan in the spring of 1761. Immediately on the return, a fresh enemy appeared on the scene. The Sikhs, taking advantage of the confused condition of northern India, began to show more activity in the Panjab. The inroads of these people compelled Ahmad Shah to return to India once more (1762). It is related that he rose one night suddenly from his sleep, picking a body of horsemen, rode off to India. On reaching Jandiala, where a large number of Sikhs had assembled, he led a surprise attack. Ahmad Shah had hardly ten to twelve followers with him at this time, yet such was the terror inspired by his name that the entire Sikh army fled on his approach. Collecting his troops, he pursued and defeated them near Gujarwal, south of Ludhiana with enormous slaughter. The fight has come to be known in Indian history as the Gullughara, which means the Great Overthrow.

Ahmad Shah, leaving a governor at Sirhind, returned to his homeland. Upon his departure

from India, the Sikhs once more became restive. They readily recovered what they had lost. The town of Sirhind was destroyed and the Afghan governor was forced to flee.

These events brought Ahmad Shah into India again. He traversed the Panjab without much opposition, but was soon compelled to retrace his steps towards Afghanistan to quell an uprising. His army suffered heavily from the heat during the first part of the journey. He had no difficulty in crushing the rebellion, but henceforth Ahmad Shah's health began to decline. A cancer appeared in his face, which became incurable. This affected greatly his activities. He was, however, compelled to exert himself in spite of his declining health, due to the increasing power of the Sikhs in the Panjab.

In 1767 the Afghan King re-entered India with the intention of rooting out once for all the growing power of these warlike people. He went in person against them and after inflicting heavy casualties drove them into the mountains. The moment he turned his back on India, the Sikhs reappeared in greater force. Ahmad Shah on account of his fast declining health was forced to adopt conciliatory measures and tried to win

the Sikhs over to his side. With this intention he granted the Sirhind-Patiala State to an influential Sikh chief. This measure, too, proved futile, for hardly had Ahmad Shah left the country, when the Sikhs, overrunning the greater part of the Punjab, took the powerful fortress of Rohtas, near Jhelum, built by Sher Shah Sur. The Shah was about to wipe out this disgrace when a fresh rebellion in Khurasan diverted his attention in that direction. Henceforth, the Panjab ceased to be the base of operations of the Afghans for their advance on Delhi.

Nasirullah Khan, son of Shah Rukh, had taken up arms against Ahmad Shah with the full support of the Persian nobles. The Afghan King sent forward Timur, his son, in that direction. The Prince, after a well-contested battle in the neighbourhood of Meshad, inflicted a severe defeat on the Persians. Fleeing from the field they took refuge with the blinded Shah Rukh inside the sacred city. Ahmad Shah, who had come to the help of his son, now laid siege to it, intending to reduce the city by a prolonged blockade. The Persians, once more finding their position untenable, surrendered. Ahmad Shah, however, treated Shah Rukh with every mark of

consideration and again left him in full possession of the holy city. Shah Rukh, repenting his ingratitude, promised to remain loyal to the Afghan crown and to supply a contingent of troops to serve the King. Besides, he gave his daughter in marriage to Timur. Meanwhile, a detachment of Afghan troops under Sardar Jahan Khan had succeeded in taking Tabbus, held by Ali Mardan Khan, an Arab chief.

The failing energy at last forced Ahmad Shah to quit Persia. He returned to Kandahar for a much needed rest. In the spring of 1773, he retired to the milder climate of the Toba Hills, in Achakzai country. But the malady grew worse, and in the beginning of June, 1773, the great conqueror and military genius passed away peacefully at Murgha, in the fiftieth year of his age and after a glorious reign of twenty-six.

Ahmad Shah was first and foremost a brave and intrepid general and a great military leader. Always first in the battle-field, his personality inspired respect among his friends and followers, and struck awe and terror among his enemy. Within a quarter of a century he was not only

able to wrest Afghanistan from foreign hands, but was also able to carry his successful arms into foreign lands and cast down the proud Marhattas, who were dreaming of an Indian Empire. The change which he wrought in the fortunes of his country in the course of these few years was little short of miraculous. He succeeded admirably in bringing the contending Afghan tribes closer to one another and welding them together into a strong nation. He had full confidence in himself and inspired his people with the same spirit. He may safely be called the creator of modern Afghanistan and the father of the nation.

Ahmad Shah was also a man of literary taste. He was a poet, composing verses in Pashto as well as Persian. These poems, like those of Khush-Hal Khan Khattak, are all imbued with the noblest of patriotic sentiments.

In one of them he says :

I forget the throne of Delhi,

The moment I remember the sublime sum-
mits of my native mountains.

Ahmad Shah will never forget thee

Even if he were to conquer the whole world.

Timur Shah (1773—1793).—Ahmad Shah had nominated Timur Mirza, his second son as his successor. The Prince in his childhood had exhibited many signs of intelligence and sound judgment and it was hoped that he would follow in the brilliant footsteps of his father. He was ruling at Herat when the news came to him that his father was confined to bed at the Toba Hills. He immediately left for that place with the intention of attending to his father during his illness and at the same time safeguarding his interests in case of his death. Before he could reach his destination, the Shah, probably at the instigation of Shah Wali Khan, the Grand Vazier, ordered the Prince to return to Herat and to look after the administration of that province. Timur knew the plot afoot but he had to obey his father. So he was at Herat when he learned that his father had passed away and that Sulaiman, his brother, availing himself of the opportunity and supported by Shah Wali Khan, his father-in-law, had declared himself king at Kandahar. But he failed to obtain the active support of some of the influential chiefs, who openly declared themselves for Timur. This encouraged the latter to advance on Kandahar.

At his approach Sulaiman found himself nearly deserted. He had no choice but to run away. Fleeing for his life he was never heard of again, while Shah Wali Khan with two of his sons and a few prominent chiefs decided to repair to Timur's camp and pay homage. Unfortunately, none of them was even allowed to meet the victorious Prince. Orders were issued to put them immediately under custody. They were later tried on a charge of treason and done away with. This cold-blooded murder of persons who had served the country on many a battle field and had won laurels lowered Timur's prestige in the public eye. Every one began to look on him with hatred. Timur soon found that his previous popularity with the masses was fast dwindling. This very fact, it is said, led him to change his capital from Kandahar to Kabul, which has remained so even to this day.

Timur lacked the energy and far-sightedness of his illustrious father. He was content with what he got from him and made no serious effort to consolidate his position. It is obvious that it is not possible for a successor of a great king to rest upon his father's laurels without exerting

for it. As was expected, no sooner the grip of the master hand was felt no more, than numerous sources of dangers, both from within and outside, appeared, menacing his authority. Timur was neither a general nor a statesman to cope successfully with the situation. On the contrary his policy was shifty and temporising. He alternately used force and conciliation, with the usual consequence that both policies failed and the situation deteriorated from bad to worse. The chiefs taking advantage of his vacillating policy paid him but nominal homage. The result was chaos and anarchy and the better part of Timur's reign was spent in quelling these uprisings. With a view to curb the influence of these refractory nobles, he recruited most of his army from the Kizilbash and Tajiks. A division of 12,000 Kizilbash cavalry was raised, who were regularly paid and properly looked after. Timur hoped that by this measure he would be able to secure himself against the rebels and obtain prompt obedience to his orders. The first important event of his reign was an uprising headed by Abdul Khaliq Khan, an influential chief. This rebellion was easily put down ; Abdul Khaliq was taken prisoner and

deprived of his eyesight. From 1775 to 1781 Timur was confronted with major uprisings on various fronts, including Balkh, Seistan, Khurasan and Kashmir. Of these the insurrection of Sahibzada of Chamkani, which took place in 1779, deserves special notice. The conspirators aimed at dethroning Timur Shah and placing Iskandar, Sulaiman's son, on the throne. Some prominent chiefs of the Mohmands and Khyber Afridis also took part in this conspiracy. Collecting a large force, the conspirators suddenly entered the royal citadel (Bala Hissar) at Peshawar through the connivance of the Commander of the Guard. The Shah took shelter in one of the towers. All would have been over, had not the Kizilbash Regiment come to his assistance. The conspirators were soon overpowered and made to flee. A large number of them were killed in the action. Faizullah Khan, one of the ring-leaders, was taken prisoner and put to death. The Mohmand Chief, who had escaped this general slaughter, was prevailed upon by an oath, sworn on the Kuran, to submit. No sooner did he make his submission and surrender himself to the Shah than he was tortured to death. This breach of faith was very

much detested by the people, who would not trust the Shah's word any more. This was the second cause which led to Timur Shah's unpopularity.

About this time the news was brought that the Sikhs had taken possession of Multan through the treachery of its governor. Timur Shah went in person to punish the invaders. A small force was sent in advance, which was able to lead a surprise attack and turn the Sikhs out of their newly acquired possessions.

The Talpuris of Sindh now began to give trouble. They rose against the Afghan governor of the district and turned him out. Madad Khan was dispatched to punish the insurgents. Breaking the resistance of the rebels he overran the whole province. But soon after his return to Kandahar, the Talpuris once more rose in arms and expelled the governor. A second army commanded by Ahmad Khan Nurzai, a raw inexperienced officer, was sent that way. But he was defeated with great loss and the Afghan army had to fall back on Shikarpur. The Talpuri sent their representatives to the Shah to discuss the terms of peace. As a result of these negotiations

Mir Fateh Ali Khan Talpuri was confirmed as the ruler on payment of an annual tribute to the Afghan King. From this time onwards, Sindh became almost independent and paid but a nominal homage to the Afghan Crown.

Next the Shah was confronted with another rebellion in Kashmir. Hardly was this revolt put down, when a new one broke out in Balkh, instigated by Shah Murad Beg of Bukhara. At the same time another insurrection broke out at Bahawalpur. The Shah, collecting a large force, marched first to the north. At Aqchah some indecisive actions took place, the balance on the whole being in favour of the Afghans. Had they then forced the enemy to a general engagement, their success would have been inevitable. But Timur, content with small skirmishes, gave the enemy sufficient time to reorganize his army and to make use of gold in bribing some of the Afghan officers, who persuaded the Shah to come to terms with the King of Bukhara. By the treaty which was finally agreed upon, the ruler of Bukhara recognised the authority of Timur over Balkh and the adjoining districts lying south of the Oxus. What made the Shah con-

clude this hasty treaty was the rebellion of Arsala Khan, an influential Mohmand Chief, who, taking advantage of Shah's absence in the north, declared his independence and successfully blocked the road between Kabul and Peshawar. The Shah left Balkh in the middle of winter when the Hindu Kush passes were all blocked with snow. He thereby experienced much hardship on the way. But the moment the Mohmand Chief got this news, he was so disheartened that he surrendered himself without striking a blow. Timur ordered him to be delivered to the tribesmen, with whom the chief was not on good terms. They instantly put him to death. This fact further alienated the people from the Shah.

In the spring of 1793, Timur fell ill on a journey from Peshawar to Kabul. He died before reaching his destination. His coffin was taken to Kabul and buried in the Bagh-i-Umumi (Public Garden), where his mausoleum stands to this day.

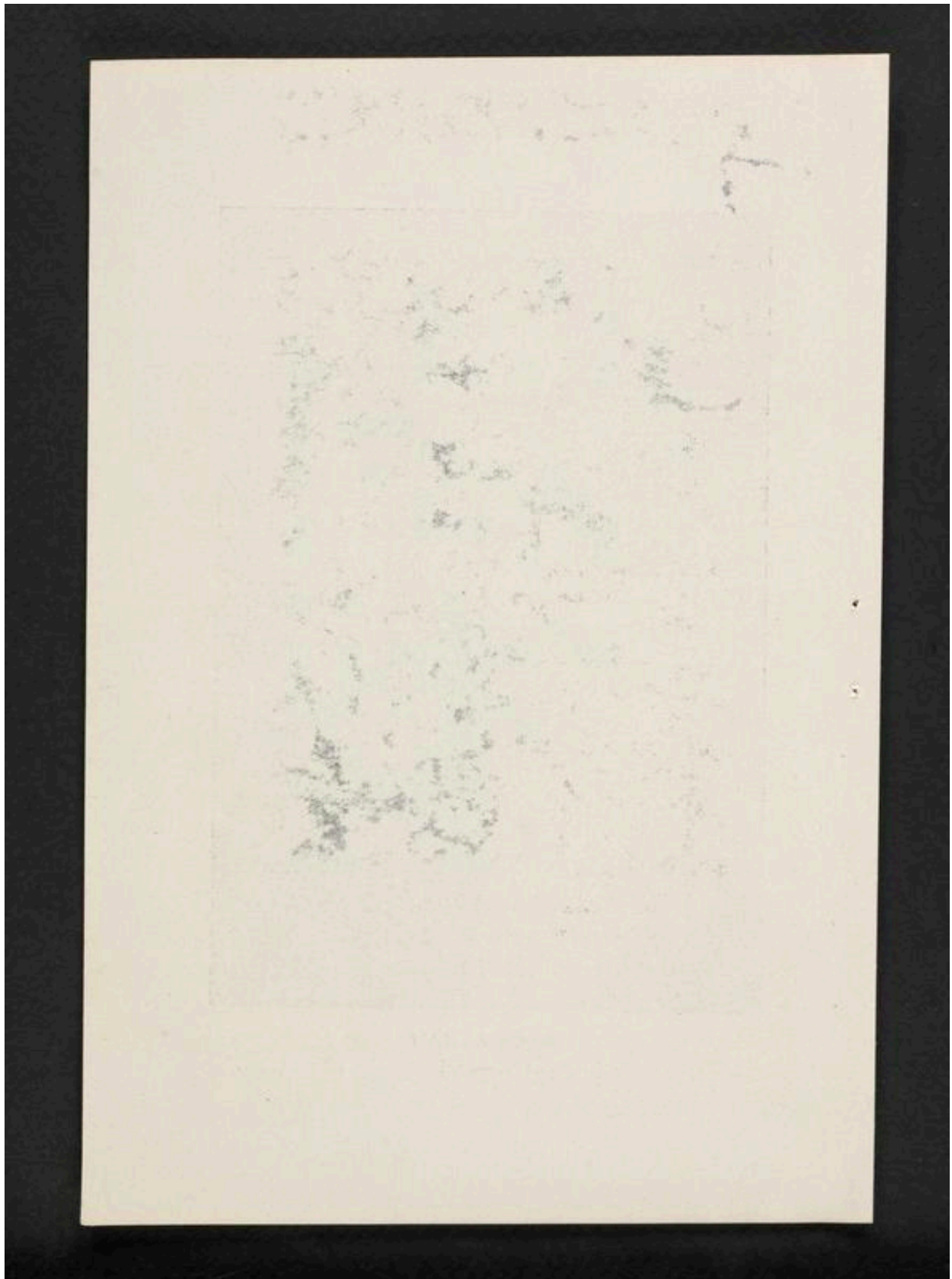
Timur was a weak ruler, not even the shadow of his illustrious father. His easy-going temperament was responsible for the beginning of the disintegration of the vast Empire founded by Ahmad Shah the Great.

Zaman Shah (1793—1801).—Timur had left behind him no less than three dozen children, of whom twenty-three were sons, several of them being governors of the outlying provinces. Of these Zaman Mirza, his fifth son, who happened to be at that time Governor of Kabul, occupied the throne with the help of Sardar Payanda Khan, the head of the Barakzai clan. But Zaman's position was far from secure. From the very beginning he was beset with innumerable difficulties; the more serious danger that threatened him throughout his reign came from his half brothers. Zaman had little difficulty in coping with the situation at Kabul. The Princes, who happened to be there at the time of his coronation, were forced to submit, and were then removed to the Bala Hissar for confinement.

Zaman Shah then turned his attention to the provinces held by his brothers who had not tendered their submission. Humayun, the eldest, raised the standard of revolt in Kandahar. Zaman lost no time in dealing with the situation. At the head of a large army, he marched on Kandahar. Humayun came out to meet him. The two armies, marching from opposite direc-



SHAH ZAMAN
1793—1801



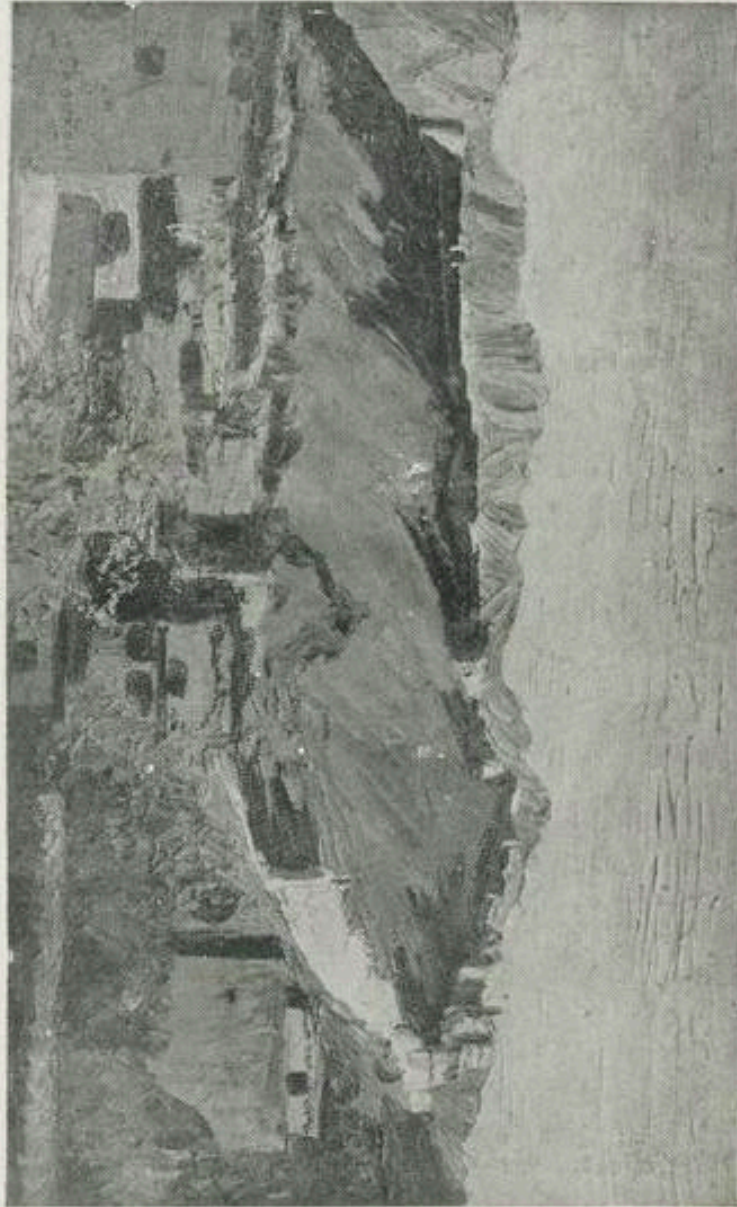
tions, came face to face near Kilat-i-Ghilzai. After a short engagement Humayun, who was not popular, was deserted by his adherents and compelled to take refuge with Nasir Khan, ruler of Kalat. Zaman Shah entered Kandahar triumphantly.

After a few days' rest, Zaman Shah marched against his second brother, Mahmud, who was holding Herat. However, the two brothers negotiated an agreement, by which Mahmud was allowed to retain the governorship of that province.

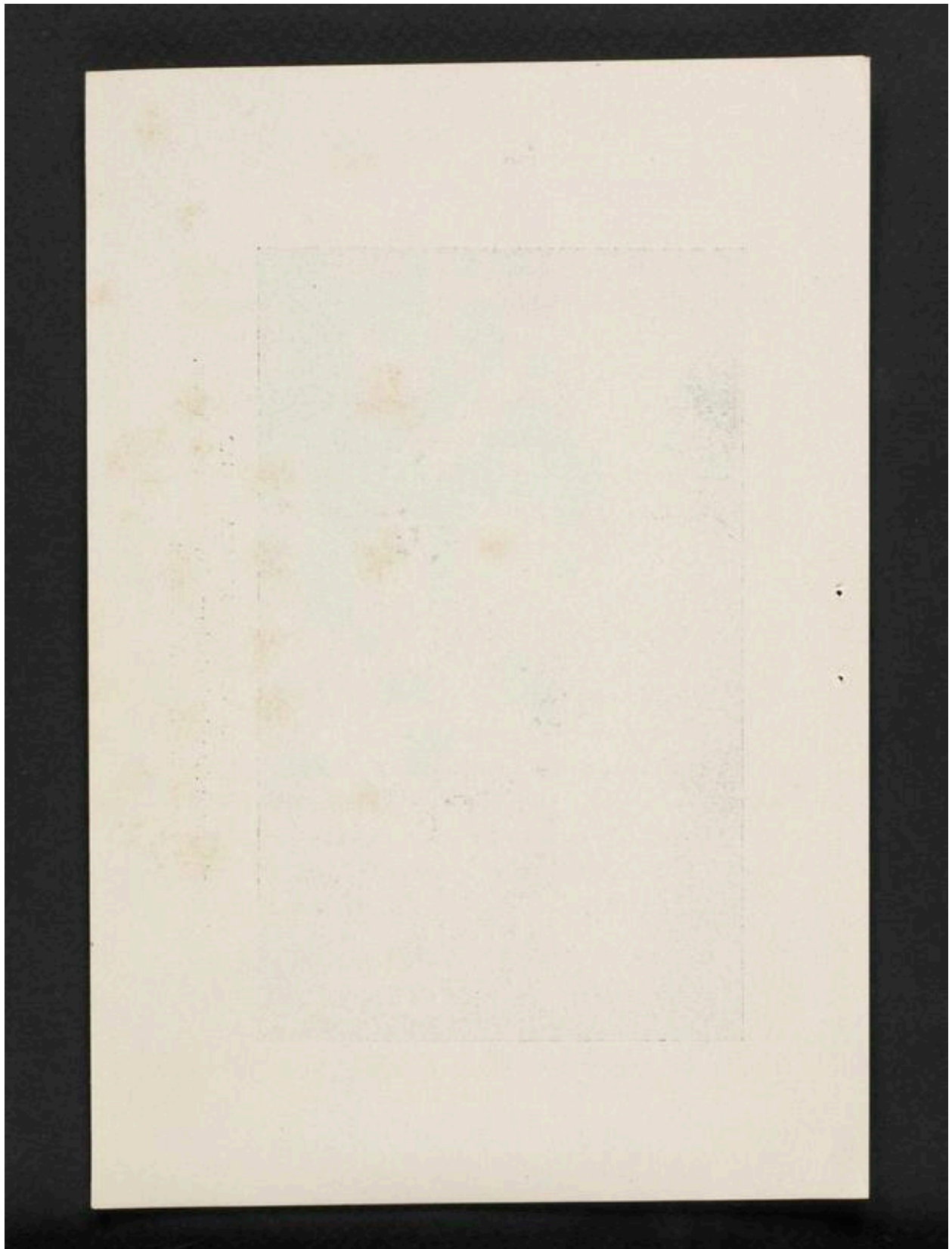
Having thus secured his position within the country, Zaman then had time to turn his attention to foreign affairs. He thought of repeating the career of his grandfather, Ahmad Shah, and contemplated an invasion of India with the sole object of turning out the British, who by now had greatly consolidated their position. He was encouraged in his mission by some of the Indian Princes, foremost among these were Mirza Ahsan Bakht, a Mughal fugitive at the Afghan Court, Sultan Tipu of Mysore, and the ruler of Junagarh, who promised to pay a lakh (1,00,000) of Rupees

a day towards the expenses of the Afghan army during its stay in India. The news spreading like wild fire aroused for a short time great hopes and fears throughout Hindustan. But there was too little security at home to ensure prosperity abroad. It so happened that more than once Zaman Shah marched upon India to fight the British, but each time he was compelled to relinquish the idea and retrace his steps towards his motherland in order to quell an uprising, probably instigated by the secret agents of interested parties. In spite of this, for many years Zaman Shah's descent upon India kept the British in a constant state of alarm. But he was never able to advance beyond Lahore because of intense unrest in Afghanistan. The chief trouble came from Mahmud who gave him no rest, and Zaman had to hasten back lest he should find the Prince reigning at Kabul in his stead.

The new century had scarcely dawned when the British found themselves confronted with innumerable perils both in Europe and Asia. Secret agents of Napoleon were busy cementing alliances hostile to British in every part of the two continents. Great Britain was much alarmed



THE HISTORICAL FORT OF BALA HISSAR
Scene of many battles and episodes impression of Madame Chakour,
the famous Afghan Artist



by the hostile attitude of some of the Princes in the East. An offensive alliance between France, Persia and Afghanistan might render the danger at once real and imminent. It was therefore thought expedient to dispatch a mission to Persia and to instigate that power to keep Zaman Shah busy on his western frontier. It was obvious that, threatened with invasion from the west, Zaman could never think of leading an expedition against the British in India.

Persia was at this time ruled by Fateh Ali Shah, a member of the Kajar dynasty. After the death of Nadir Shah in 1747, the mighty Empire which he had erected fell to pieces. In Afghanistan, Ahmad Shah Durrani was elected King. The southern and western provinces of Persia fell to the lot of Karim Khan of the Zend tribe. All that was left to Shah Rukh, the grandson of Nadir Shah, was the province of Khurasan, and he was protected in this possession by the Afghan King.

Karim Khan Zend, a just and enlightened ruler, died in 1779. His death was a signal for fresh uprisings marked by atrocious cruelties, in course of which his four surviving sons were

savagely butchered. At length, in 1795 Agha Mohammed Khan of the Kajar tribe ascended the throne. In 1796 he sent an envoy to Kabul demanding Zaman Shah to agree to the cession of Balkh to Persia, since the possession of that city, he contested, was necessary to him to check the advance of the Amir of Bukhara in that direction.

Agha Mohammed, however, had soon to relinquish the idea of attacking Balkh for he found himself involved in a war with Russia over Georgia. The Shah of Bukhara was also forced to come to terms with Zaman Shah, and retired precipitately beyond the Oxus, renewing the treaty made with Timur Shah.

In 1797 Agha Mohammed was murdered and was succeeded by his nephew, Fateh Ali Khan. During his reign began that closer connection between the British and Persia which had its origin in the fear of an Afghan invasion of India.

In 1797 Zaman Shah advanced to Lahore with the professed purpose of rescuing the house of Timur from the domination of the Sikhs and the Marhattas. His appearance at the head of a

powerful army at such a juncture created a very strong sensation throughout India. The British were greatly alarmed by his descent on India and his vast preparations to march on Delhi. But they were soon relieved of their anxieties to learn that Mahmud, the deposed ruler of Herat, had appeared at Farah with a large number of adherents and with the active support of the Shah of Persia. This unexpected manoeuvre forced Zaman Shah to return to his homeland. Soon after, rumours of his renewed preparations, coupled with the apprehension of an invasion of India by the French and a deputation of a secret embassy by Napoleon to establish his influence in Tehran, aroused the British to take prompt measures for the security of their Indian Empire. Captain Malcolm was accordingly deputed as Envoy to Persia to induce Fateh Ali Khan Kajar to bring pressure upon Zaman Shah by attacking Khurasan and Herat and thus preventing him from his threatened invasion of India. The mission was completely successful. A treaty of friendship was signed. The Shah of Persia engaged to lay waste the western part of Afghanistan if Zaman Shah attempted to invade

India, and to prevent the French from settling or residing in Persia. In the event of war between the Afghans and the Persians or the Persians and the French, the British were to support Persia.

The British gold and intrigues made great headway. As they themselves have admitted "Every difficulty melted away beneath the magic touch of English gold". Malcolm was so confident of his success that he wrote proudly from Isfahan, "Zaman Shah can do nothing in India before the setting of rains of 1801. He has no time, even if he had the power for such an attempt, and by the blessing of God he will for some years to come be too much engaged in this quarter to think of attacking India." What an irony of fate ! The letter had not yet reached India when the days of the Afghan sovereign were numbered. The nightmare of British dreams was deprived of his eyesight by Mahmud and imprisoned in Bala Hissar.

Zaman Shah committed a blunder by appointing Wafadar Khan, a base and designing man, to be his minister. The conspiring nature of this man rendered Zaman Shah, in spite of his amiable disposition, unbearable to the other chiefs. Every-

body complained that the King was taking no active part in the management of public affairs and was only a mouthpiece of his crafty Vazier. The Minister could make a puppet of the King but he could not wipe out the free spirit of the chiefs by his oppressions or intrigues. Alarmed at their growing influence, Wafadar Khan resolved to destroy them all, but his efforts in this direction finally proved his ruin, as well as that of the Sovereign himself. A number of these disgusted Sardars conspired to assassinate the Vazier, depose Zaman Shah, and place his brother, Shujaul-Mulk, on the throne. They were also aiming at a constitutional monarchy. The plot was, however, discovered by the treachery of Mirza Sharif Khan, one of the conspirators. Whereupon the ring-leaders, including Sardar Payanda Khan, head of the Barakzais, Mohammed Azim Khan, chief of the Alokozais and Amir Arsalan Khan of the Jewansher clan, were arrested and executed. Besides, a large number of other influential nobles, who had absolutely no share in the plot, fell victim to the envy and fear of Wafadar Khan.

This cold-blooded wholesale massacre of the

heads of different clans increased the general hatred of the people for the Shah and his Minister.

Sardar Payanda Khan had left twenty-one resourceful sons behind. Of these Fateh Khan, the eldest, was a gallant soldier and an able statesman. Now the sons of Payanda Khan gathered together to avenge the death of their father. As will be seen presently they did not rest for a moment until the bloody obligation had been faithfully carried out. After the death of his father, Fateh Khan fled to Persia to join Prince Mahmud, who after his repeated failures, had at last taken shelter in that country and was intriguing with the King of Persia to help him in his cause.

Mahmud, who in the beginning of Zaman Shah's reign, had submitted out of necessity, was never content with the governorship of Herat. He aspired to be a king and was only on the look-out for an opportunity to realise his dreams. In 1794, when Zaman Shah was busy with Kashmir affairs, he rebelled and declared his independence. The King at the head of fifteen thousand men met him at the banks of the

Helmand. A well-contested battle took place, in which Zaman Shah, after narrowly escaping a defeat, obtained a complete victory over his adversary, who fleeing from the battle-field, reached Herat in safety. Unfortunately, the Shah did not follow his success, and turned his attention towards India. His design against that country was, however, frustrated this time by the activities of his eldest brother, who, after his defeat at Kilat-i-Ghilzai, had taken shelter in Baluchistan. In the battle that ensued, Humayun was again defeated and forced to flee. He was caught at Leiya, on the eastern bank of the Indus and deprived of his eye-sight by the orders of the Shah. Humayun passed the rest of his life in confinement.

Being relieved of pressing anxiety, Zaman Shah left for Sindh, where things were not going on well. He had hardly reached the Bolan Pass when the news was brought to him that Mahmud was planning to attack him in the rear with the object of taking Kandahar. The King, concluding a hasty peace with Fatehulla Khan Talpuri, returned to Kandahar. A severe battle was fought at Girishk, on the Helmand. Mahmud

was once more defeated and had to flee for his life. This time Zaman Shah, pursuing him, laid siege to Herat. Through the intercession and solicitation of Mahmud's mother, the two brothers for the third time came to terms. Mahmud was reinstated in his office. The Shah had hardly left the city when he was pursued by Mahmud's sons, who pretended to be ignorant of the decisions arrived at. Zaman Shah, enraged at this apparent treachery, returned and entered Herat triumphantly. After appointing Kaisar, his son, the governor of the province, he returned to his capital.

Mahmud, reduced to despair, fled to Persia with his sons (1797). He approached the Persian king to help him in the capture of Herat. Mahmud receiving no encouraging reply, endeavoured to win some of the influential chiefs to his side. Failing in his attempt to stir an uprising, he approached Mehr Ali Khan the ruler of Kauin and Berjend. With the help of this chief he advanced on Herat and laid siege to it. Once more he met disaster and was forced to leave for Bukhara, where he was warmly received by the ruler of the country. Soon after, Zaman Shah

sent an envoy to Shah Murad of Bukhara, protesting against his giving asylum to Mahmud and asking him to deliver him up to the Afghan King. Shah Murad, unwilling to offend Shah Zaman, ordered the fugitive to leave his country. The Prince took shelter in Gurganj in Khwarizm. He did not stay there for long and entered Persia a second time. It was here that he was joined by Fateh Khan Barakzai, the eldest son of Sardar Payanda Khan. The arrival of this Sardar inspired Mahmud with fresh courage. Supported by the strong arm of the King-maker, he determined to try his luck once more.

He entered Afghanistan with no more than fifty horsemen. With the exception of the Barakzai Sardars, no other chief of influence espoused his cause. But fortune favoured him this time and about two to three thousand men came to his help. With the small force he advanced on Kandahar and besieged the town. On the forty-second day of the siege, Fateh Khan was able to win over Abdullah Khan, a powerful chief of the garrison, to his side. Mir Akhor, the chief of the defenders, fled for his life,

while Prince Haidar, the governor, sought sanctuary at the tomb of Ahmad Shah Durrani.

Encouraged by these successes, Mahmud and Fateh Khan pushed on towards the capital. At this time Zaman Shah was busy with his preparations for another invasion of India. Hearing the sad plight of his garrison at Kandahar, he gave up these plans and decided to turn his immediate attention to this side.

Before leaving Peshawar, Zaman Shah committed a serious mistake, which precipitated his fall. Abdullah Khan Alokozai, the governor of Kashmir, who had come to meet him, was imprisoned and tortured. Saidal Khan, the victim's brother, who was then at Kandahar, with a view to avenge his brother's torture, went over to Mahmud with all the members of his clan. Zaman, attaching little importance to the fate of Kanadhar and subsequent events, sent fifteen thousand of his soldiers to Kashmir, which had taken up arms against him. Then leaving the major portion of his army at Peshawar, under his full-brother, Shujaul Mulk, Zaman Shah left for Kabul with a small contingent. On reaching

the capital, the real state of affairs was revealed to him. He found that the strength of his opponent was far beyond his expectations and that all the influential Durrani Chiefs had joined him. He, as well as his minister, was panic-stricken.

After some hesitation, the King marched against Mahmud at the head of such troops that he could muster. The main body of the army was under the command of Ahmad Khan Nurzai, who had innumerable grievances against the King and his Minister. Fateh Khan was not ignorant of the fact and he utilised it to his full advantage. When the two armies came face to face, Fateh Khan, seizing Abdullah Khan, Ahmad Khan Nurzai's brother, threatened to kill him if the Chief refused to come over to his side with all his troops. Ahmad Khan, who was already wavering in his loyalty and wanted but a pretext, decided to join the ranks of the insurgents. With desertion in his camp the cause of Zaman Shah became almost hopeless. The King was so disheartened, that leaving the battle-field, he fled quickly towards Kabul, with Fateh Khan at his heels. Zaman, therefore, could not stay long in Kabul,

and fled towards Peshawar with a handful of loyal followers. Travelling at breakneck speed he reached the fort of Ashik Khan Shinwari, one of his staunch adherents, on the way. The King, in spite of the advice and entreaties of his followers, decided to pass a night there. But this Ashik turned out to be a traitor. He received the King and his retinue with outward courtesy, but contrary to the Afghan principles of hospitality and "ninawatay" (asylum), detained the honourable guests and sent a swift messenger to Mahmud informing him of Shah's confinement.

Fateh Khan, without losing time, sent Asad Khan, one of his younger brothers, to secure Zaman Shah and his party. The Minister and his master fell prisoners into the hand of their enemy. Wafadar Khan, with his brothers, were put to death, while the poor King was deprived of his eye-sight. The blinded Zaman was taken to Kabul and cast into prison at Bala Hissar, where he remained until the end of Mahmud's reign.

Thus fell one of the greatest of Afghan kings, who for many years had been a "ghastly

phantom" haunting the British rulers of India. With him vanished the glorious days of the Durrani Dynasty. The country soon after was involved in anarchy and chaos which lasted for a quarter of a century, reducing Afghanistan from a vast empire to a small kingdom.

The unlucky King survived the loss of his sight for nearly half a century, and died at last full of years, but devoid of honours, as a pensioner of the British Government, at Ludhiana.

During the latter part of his reign Zaman Shah was confronted with the uprisings of the Sikhs several times, and he was forced to take up arms against them.

The Sikhs, for the most part of Jat origin, dwell in the East Panjab. They are, properly speaking, not a race but a religious sect; the name itself means "disciples." The religion was founded by Nanak (1469—1539), a native of the Punjab. Later it developed in the hands of ten successive leaders, called Gurus. Guru Nanak, who was largely inspired by the teachings of Islam, was held in great esteem by the Lodhi

Kings of Delhi. Even to this day his name is held in great reverence by the Afghans, who call him Baba (Father) Nanak. Sikhism, like Islam, inculcates belief in one God. It denounces idolatory, caste distinctions, and the claims of Brahmanism.

In the beginning the followers of Baba Nanak or the Sikhs as they were called, led the peaceful life of ascetics, but later on they aspired to temporal power and taking advantage of the anarchy in Northern India, they took to arms in the hope of extending their hold over the Panjab. This brought them into conflict with the Afghans. Ahmad Shah Durrani and his son Timur Shah were able to keep them in check, but during the reign of Zaman Shah, the Sikhs, encouraged by his manifold occupations at home, redoubled their efforts, and this brought the Afghan King to India several times. The Sikhs seldom met him in the open field. On his approach they, leaving the plains, took to the hills, where they felt themselves safer from attack. As soon as Shah Zaman quitted the country, they returned from their hiding places and began to oppress the Muslim population of the Province.

Finally in 1798, when Zaman Shah came to Lahore, he tried to conciliate the Sikhs and to win them over to his side. This measure was successful to some extent, and many of the Sikh Chiefs, including Ranjit Singh, coming to him tendered their homage. Zaman Shah, in pursuit of his new policy, appointed Ranjit Singh as the governor of Lahore. Having thus installed the influential Sikh to power, he hastened towards Khorasan, which was then threatened by Fateh Ali Shah Kajar (1799). This, indeed, was the beginning of the Sikh rule in the Punjab, which lasted till the middle of the nineteenth century (1849).

Ranjit Singh, availing of the civil war taking place in Afghanistan, gradually subdued all the chiefs living along the Satluj. Then turning his attention to the west, he occupied the whole of the Panjab, Kashmir, and the trans-Indus districts from Peshawar to Dera Ghazi Khan.

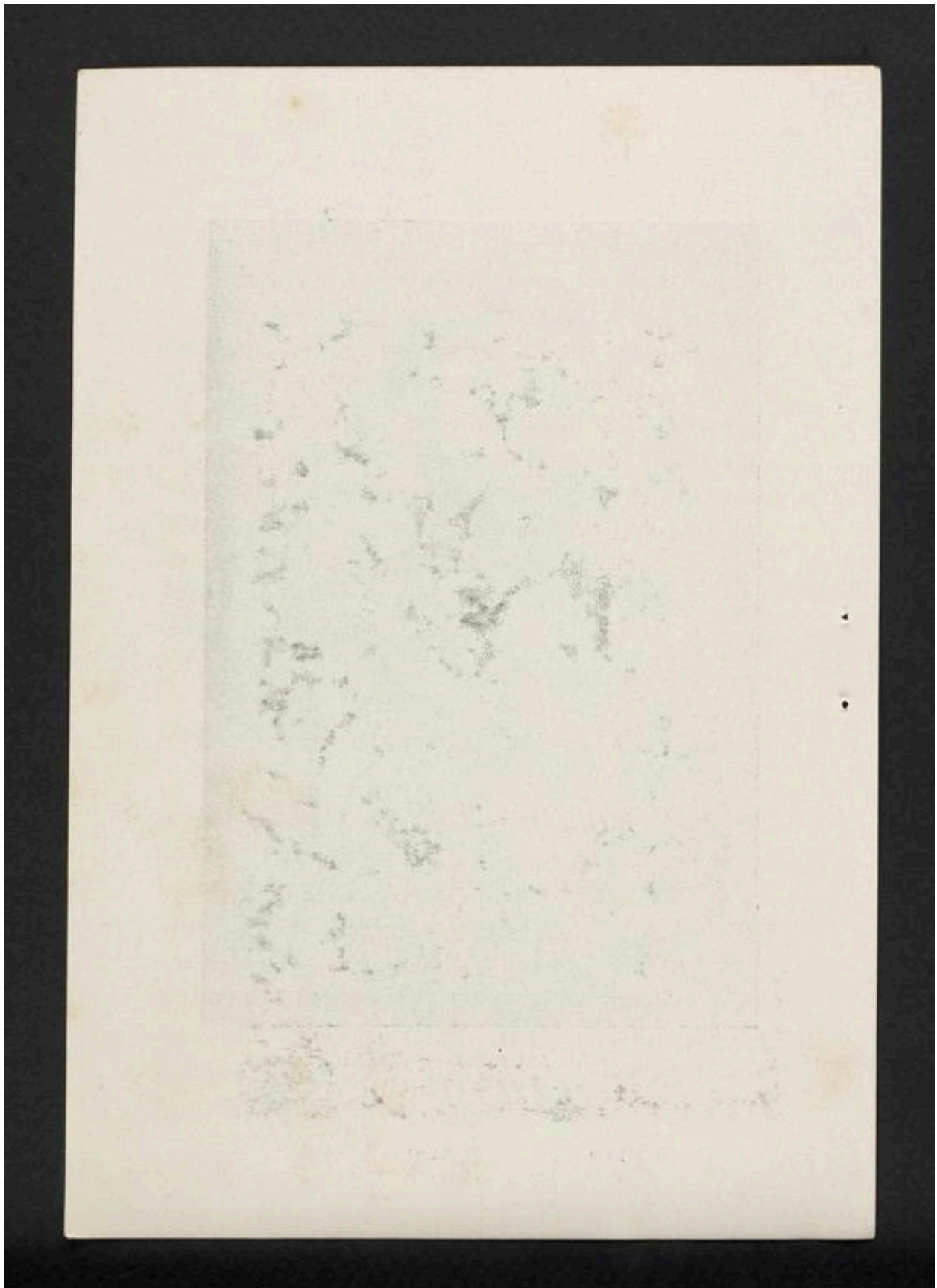
On Ranjit Singh's death in 1839, there was all confusion, and his capital, Lahore, became the theatre of internecine quarrels, court intrigues and assassinations. In 1845, a war broke out between

the Sikhs and the British, the latter being victorious. By the terms of treaty concluded on March 9, 1846, the Sikhs agreed to cede the territory lying between the Satluj and the Bias and to receive a British garrison at their capital for eight years. Dalip Singh, Ranjit Sing's son, was recognized as Raja, but the administration of the country was virtually in the hands of Major Henry Lawrence, the British Resident at Lahore. According to the terms of this treaty, an indemnity of one and a half million pounds was to be paid to the British, or Kashmir ceded with half a million pounds. The Sikhs accepted the latter alternative. The British then handed over Kashmir for one million sterling to Golab Singh, the Hindu Raja of Jammu. But the peace could not be maintained for a long time, and in 1848 the Second Sikh War broke out. The Sikhs were once more defeated and on March 12, 1849, Sher Singh and the remnant of the Sikh army laid down their arms. The whole of the Punjab together with the Sikh possessions beyond the Indus became part of the British Empire.

Shah Mahmud (1801—1803).—Mahmud's accession to the throne was at first hailed by all



SHAH MAHMUD SADOZAI
1801—1803 & 1809—1818



the Afghans, who vainly hoped that this would be the end of civil wars, and that a bright future awaited them. But they were soon disillusioned when they saw that Mahmud was not interested in the welfare of his people and that the entire affairs of the State were entrusted to two of his ministers, Akram Khan and Fateh Khan, who were not on good terms with each other. The first was haughty and the other, though a man of great talents and courage, was very ambitious. The destinies of the country were henceforth in the hands of these two rival chiefs. Fateh Khan, who had helped Mahmud so much in the restoration of his kingdom, now did his best to keep him as a puppet on his tottering throne.

Fateh Khan first of all made up his mind to wrench Peshawar held by Shujaul Mulk, Zaman's full-brother. The Prince, though young (he was hardly twenty) was full of energy, and was highly esteemed for his courage and manliness. Fateh Khan at the head of three thousand men went out to meet Shuja, who had declared himself King on learning the sad plight of his brother. He had no less than ten thousand men at

his command, mostly recruited from the tribesmen, who were lacking cohesion and discipline. The two armies came face to face midway between Kabul and Jalalabad on the banks of the Surkhrud. A severe contest took place. At first Shuja was victorious, but his followers, seeing the enemy in full flight, gave up the chase and fell upon the treasures, which Shuja had brought with him from Peshawar. Fateh Khan, availing himself of this golden opportunity, turned back and led a general assault, which decided the day in his favour. Shuja's forces were utterly routed, and he himself escaped with hardly fifty horsemen to the skirts of the Speen Ghar. For some time he could not find an asylum and was wandering from place to place. At last Amir Khan, an Afridi Chief of the Khyber Pass, came to his help and allowed him to rest in his hill-fortress for a while. Meanwhile, Kamran, Mahmud's eldest son, took possession of Peshawar and the neighbouring country. After installing Abdul Wahid Khan as Governor of the province, Kamran returned to Kabul. It was time for Shuja to come out of his hiding place. Collecting a force of 5,000 tribesmen, he led an attack on Peshawar. He was again defeated and

had to take refuge in Chora among the hill-tribes. Even in these hours of distress and poverty Shuja never lost hope of his final victory.

Meanwhile, Mahmud found himself confronted with a serious uprising of the Ghilzais. Gathering a large force, they stationed a small guard behind to check the royal forces of Kandahar from attacking them in the rear, while the main body of Ghilzai's advanced on Kabul. On their way they beseiged Ghazni, but finding it impregnable, they left a small force to hold the beleaguered army, and marched on Kabul *via* the Lohgar Valley (1802).

Shah Mahmud was in no way prepared to meet the insurgents. The major portion of his army had gone to Peshawar to fight Shuja. Hurriedly a force of three to four thousand men was collected and entrusted to Sher Muhammad Khan (Mukhtarud-daula), who was at time undergoing rigorous imprisonment on a charge of high treason. At Sijawand, not far from Baraki Rajan in the Lohgar Valley, Sher Muhammad Khan attacked the Ghilzais, who were at least twenty thousand in number. Ill-armed and undisciplined

as they were, they charged the royal batteries in a confused mass. Failing in their attempt, they made a furious assault on the entrenched army. The first line was taken, and the Ghilzais, flushed at their initial success, came forward like surging waves. At this critical juncture, when all was considered lost, a body of Royal-Guard (Ghulam-Bachaha) attacked them from the flanks. This checked their progress, and the Ghilzai were forced to stand on the defensive. But gradually losing ground, they retreated towards Kala-i-Zirrin, six miles from the scene of action. At night the Ghilzais were reinforced, and next morning they marched straight on Kabul, avoiding a second skirmish with the royal army, which was stationed at some distance to the left. It was not until the next day that the news leaked out. The Royal Force, quitting their trenches, hotly pursued the insurgents. The Ghilzais, instead of marching straight on Kabul and seizing the undefended capital, lingered on the way, plundering the villages enroute. This gave time to the forces to overtake them and inflict on them a crushing defeat.

Next year the Ghilzais were again on the

move. This time their number exceeded fifty thousand. Fateh Khan was sent to crush the revolt. Within a few months, the Vazier was able to defeat the Ghilzais with great slaughter, and the storm melted away as it had gathered.

Meanwhile Shuja was not idle. He was carefully watching the course of events. With a force of 12,000 men he attacked Peshawar. Once more he was defeated, and had to seek safety in flight.

Shortly afterwards he learned that the people of Kabul itself had taken up arms against the King. A deadly feud had ensued between the Shias and the Sunnis, the King favouring the former, while most of the influential chiefs were sympathetic with the latter. These disorders were further aggravated by the absence of Vazier Fateh Khan from the capital and the untimely death of Akram Khan. Mahmud, therefore, was forced to shut himself up in the citadel (Bala Hissar), where he thought he would be able to hold his own with the help of the Kizilbash regiments. People from the neighbouring villages also flocked to the city to take part in the riots

that ensued. The most prominent of the insurgents were Ahmad Khan Nurzai, Nawab Khan, the Lama, Mukhtarud-daula and Sayyid Ahmad, a man of great learning and sanctity commonly called Mir Waiz. This Sayyid was held in great esteem among the people of Kabul. He always preached against the manifold corruptions and vices of the Court and the royal favours shown to the Shias. A formal complaint to the effect was disregarded by the Shah lest he might incur the displeasure of the sect, which he considered to be the best supporters of his cause.

The communal tension was intensified by the sudden murder of a young Sunni boy, who had picked up a quarrel with the Kizilbash. It was rumoured that his execution was at the instigation of the King himself. At the time when the body of this young man was being taken to the cemetery, the funeral procession was fired upon in the streets mostly occupied by the Shias. This was a signal for a general rising against the Shah. Mukhtarud-daula was now openly taking part in the conflict, exciting the people to rise against the King. The Shah did not like to come to terms with the insurgents, but waited impatiently for the return

of Vazier Fateh Khan, who was now on his way with an army from Kandahar. The malcontents sent a message to Shuja to come to their help. Mukhtar-ud-daula, the ring-leader, privately left the city to join Shujaul Mulk. On the 12th July he returned to Kabul with the ex-King, who was warmly received by the people. But Shuja did not enter the city itself. Encamping near Babur's tomb, in the Chardeh Valley, he busied himself with collecting troops to meet Fateh Khan, who was marching on Kabul at the head of a large force. Next day an engagement took place at Kala-i-Kazi, six miles west of Kabul. Fateh Khan was at first victorious, but when he was advancing on Kabul, one of his influential Sardars went over to Shuja with his party. This decided the day in favour of Shujaul Mulk. Fateh Khan, finding himself almost deserted, sought safety in flight. Thereupon Shuja rode triumphantly into the city with Mukhtarud-daula walking by his side. Mahmud was so disheartened by this news that he sued for peace. Though the eyes of the fallen Prince were spared, he was imprisoned in the Bala Hissar. Zaman Shah was

now released from confinement and restored to his family (1803).

Shujaul Mulk (1803 to 1809).—The new King, though young and energetic, had not the ability of restoring order in a country torn by internal dissensions and anarchy for more than a decade. The Chiefs all over the country had become powerful and unruly, and the outlying provinces were trying to assert their independence. These internecine wars had nearly sapped the resources of the country. Shuja's first act on ascending the throne was to raise funds to equip an army as well as to gratify those who had helped him in gaining the throne. The exhausted resources of the country could hardly meet these demands. The Shah was, therefore, obliged to give large portions of his revenue in grants to the Sardars, who became all the more powerful. Mukhtarud-daula was appointed Vazier, though the Shah could hardly trust his loyalty. Lack of trust between the Shah and the Vazier further deteriorated the situation. The slightest provocation from the Court would drive a noble into open rebellion.

Shah Shuja, after raising funds and equipping an army, marched on Kandahar, held by Prince

Kamran and Vazier Fateh Khan. The city was taken without much opposition. Kamran was forced to seek safety in flight, while Fateh Khan decided to submit to Shah Shuja. The King, failed to avail himself of this opportunity and made no serious attempt to win over the powerful Sardar to his side. On the contrary, perhaps at the instigation of Mukhtarud-daula, he received Fateh Khan very coldly. Disappointed at the treatment meted out to him, the Vazier decided to make good his escape and avenge his insult. Shuja, after restoring order at Kandahar and appointing Kaiser, son of Zaman Shah, as the governor of the place, returned to the capital. Shortly afterwards he again set out with an army 30,000 strong to assert his suzerainty over Kashmir and Sind. Fateh Khan, who had accompanied the Shah as far as Tezin, excused himself on the plea of a physical infirmity, which had stood in his way to keep pace with the royal cortege, promising at the same time that he would follow by easy stages. The request was granted, but soon after that the royal party left for Peshawar, Fateh Khan returned to Kandahar to foment a rebellion. He instigated Kaiser to raise the standard of revolt,

claiming the throne as the legacy of his father. The news brought the Shah back to his capital. He then marched to Kandahar to meet his nephew. Kaiser was defeated and ran away for his life. The King, however, did not follow his success, but marched back to Peshawar. The insurgent Prince, with the help of his resourceful Vazier, was again able to raise an army and take possession of Kandahar. This brought Shah Shuja there once more. Kaiser fled at his approach, while Fateh Khan took refuge in Herat. Kaiser, shortly afterwards, repenting his folly, promised to remain loyal. The Shah received him kindly and reinstated him in his office.

Firoz-ud-din, the ruler of Herat and a full-brother of Mahmud, was now instigated by Vazier Fateh Khan to take up arms against the Shah. But he wisely rejected the proposal and settled his differences amicably with Shujaul Mulk. The affairs of Kandahar and Herat thus favourably settled, Shuja had now time to turn his attention to the outlying provinces. He marched into Sindh to recover the arrears of revenue. The Chiefs, acknowledging his suzerainty, paid him a sum of

17,00,000 rupees. He then left for Peshawar, reaching there in April, 1805.

Shah Shuja then prepared an expedition to reduce Kashmir, where Abdulla Khan had declared his independence. The force encountered innumerable hazards on its way due to the difficult nature of the country and the shortage of food. A second attempt was, however, successful. The greater part of Abdullah's army was either killed or washed away by the Jhelum, and he himself escaped by swimming across the river.

Meanwhile, Vazier Fateh Khan was active in Kandahar. He once again incited Kamran, Mahmud's son, to bid for the throne. Kamran had no hesitation in following his advice. Joining the Vazier, he marched on Kandahar. Kaisar, taking to his heels, sought refuge in Baluchistan. This news brought Shujaul Mulk once more to Kandahar. He had no difficulty in entering the city, as Kamran's forces melted away on his approach.

The tension between the King and Mukhtar-ud-daula had increased by this time and each was

suspicious of the other. Earlier the King had listened to his advice, but Shah's success on the various fronts led him to attach too much importance to his own valour and prowess. Henceforth he treated the Vazier with contempt and would attach no importance to his counsels.

The Vazier was, therefore, on the lookout for a chance to avenge his grievances against the Shah. An attempt was made to raise Prince Abbas to the throne at Kabul. The plan did not succeed, but it gave a chance to the ex-King, Mahmud, to make good his escape from the Bala Hissar. Reaching Girishk, he joined hands with Fateh Khan.

The Shah, attaching little importance to this, resolved to proceed to Sindh. In his absence from the capital, Mukhtarud-daula proclaimed Kaiser King of Kabul. The two then marched on Peshawar, which they occupied without much resistance. The Shah set out for Peshawar and met the rebels at Tahkal, in the suburbs of the city. The death of the Vazier in the struggle decided the battle in favour of the Shah. Kaiser was imprisoned and brought before the Shah

who, with his usual unwise leniency, pardoned him again.

The Shah then marched on Kandahar where Vazier Fateh Khan and Mahmud were active. He met the insurgents in the eastern part of the city where Mahmud and his Vazier were defeated and forced to take shelter in the desert of Seistan 1808. The Shah then returned to Peshawar, reaching his destination on the 10th of January, 1809. It was here that he received a British mission headed by Stuart Elphinstone.

The internecine wars, which rent and convulsed the Afghan Empire, were a source of acknowledged security to the British power in the East. Captain Malcolm's mission to Persia was entirely successful. Persia prevented the Afghans from invading India. But British influence at the Court of Persia had by now waned to a great extent. Every year increased the difficulties of the Shah of Persia, and weakened his reliance on the British, who failed to carry out faithfully the terms of the agreement signed with Malcolm. The Shah was beset with danger and needed help. The British were not in a mood to aid him

at this critical moment. The Shah (Fateh Ali) was, therefore, obliged to address a letter to Napoleon, then at the zenith of his triumphant career, seeking the aid of the great conqueror to stem the tide of Russian encroachment in Georgia. Napoleon seized the opportunity with vigour and in 1805 sent Monsieur Jaubert to Persia to conclude a commercial treaty. The French envoy was received with great respect. This paved the way for a splendid embassy, which Napoleon proposed to dispatch to the Persian Court. The Shah was very pleased to get this news and threw himself entirely in the support of the French. He was prepared to listen to any proposal of theirs, not excluding an invasion of India if the French were prepared for that.

This aroused the British to action and they saw the necessity of sending a similar mission to the Court of Tehran. To their embarrassment they found that a French embassy, under General Gardanne, an officer of high reputation, was already there to secure an offensive and defensive alliance. The embassy also brought a large number of French officers, both civil and military, to instruct and drill the Persian troops

on European models. French engineers and artificers were busy in casting cannon and strengthening the defences of Persia. Napoleon's agents were found visiting Persian ports in the south, and intriguing and negotiating with the ambassadors of the Mirs of Sindh, preparations preliminary to a French invasion of India.

It was in July, 1807, that the two Emperors, Napoleon of France and Alexander I of Russia, signed the treaty of Tilsit. After a brief but bloody war, they embraced each other like brothers. In a few days the scene had changed. In an atmosphere of cordiality the two monarchs decided upon a combined invasion of India. Lucien Bonaparte, the brother of Napoleon, was destined for Tehran Mission, and no secret was made of the intention of the two great potentates.

These negotiations and war preparations had the effect of rousing the British Government to try to recover their lost ascendancy at the Persian Court and to protect their Indian Empire by binding the Western Frontier States in a chain of friendly alliances. Missions were, therefore,

sent by the British Indian Government to the Mirs of Sindh (under Captain Seton), Ranjit Singh (under Metcalfe), the Court of Kabul (under Elphinstone), and the Court of Tehran (under Sir John Malcolm).

The mission under Elphinstone was sent for the purpose of concerting with Shah Shuja the means of mutual defence against the threatened invasion of Afghanistan and India by the combined forces of France and Russia. The Mission was warmly received by Shah Shuja, who was at this time at Peshawar, and the negotiations resulted in the conclusion of a friendly treaty (June 7, 1809). The Shah promised to prevent the passage of the French and the Persians through his dominions and to exert himself to the extent of his power in making war on them and repelling them. He was not to permit them to cross into British India. The British on their part promised to help Shah Shuja in case the French and the Persians in pursuance of their confederacy advanced towards Afghanistan, and would hold themselves liable to afford the expenses necessary for the above-mentioned service to the extent of their ability. But Shah Shuja's fortune

was then at a low ebb; his country was in a most unsettled condition, and his throne seemed to be tottering under him. He made himself busy collecting an army, and was projecting a great military expedition. On the 14th of June the Mission turned its back on Peshawar and left for India.

Elphinstone had scarcely left Peshawar when news was received that Kabul had been occupied by Mahmud with the aid of Fateh Khan. Before the Mission had cleared the limits of the Durrani Empire, Shah Shuja had given battle to his enemies, and had been disastrously defeated. The month of June had not worn to a close before it was evident that his cause was almost lost. Still, he did not abandon the contest. It was now rumoured that Mahmud had reached Jigdalik with the object of making an advance upon Peshawar. There was no time to lose. The Shah, taking precautionary measures, sent his family towards Rawalpindi for safety, accompanied by his blinded brother, Zaman Shah.

After making necessary preparations, Shah Shuja left Peshawar for Kabul. He first encamped

at Dakka, in the western extremity of the Khyber Pass, sending Azeem Khan and Maddad Khan in advance with 4,000 horses. The Shah soon learned that Maddad Khan had turned traitor and was in secret communication with the enemy. Whereupon Shah Shuja directed Azeem Khan not to proceed further until he came up with his guns and the rest of the army. Meanwhile, Maddad Khan, with all the forces at his command, left for Nimla, and informed Mahmud accordingly. Mahmud, who had been afraid to advance further from Jigdalik due to lack of means, was encouraged by this news and pushed on with confidence to Gandomak. It was here that Maddad Khan came to see him. Having arranged and matured their plans, he was allowed to return to Nimla. Shah Shuja learning of this treachery ordered Akram Khan and Ghafoor Khan to lose no time in punishing the traitor. When they reached Nimla, they found Maddad Khan with his rebel force ready to meet them (June 29, 1809). The moment Akram Khan beheld the foul treachery, he rushed impetuously forward upon the enemy and fought with such bravery that numbers fell beneath his sword.

Unfortunately, in the midst of battle, a bullet struck him through the chest and the brave and faithful general fell dead on the ground.

The death of Akram Khan had a demoralizing effect on the King, who deemed it decisive and thought fit that further resistance was useless. Submitting, therefore, to what he called his fate, he turned off and made for the skirts of the Speen Ghar.

Still he did not give up the contest and was hopeful of his ultimate victory. He withdrew beyond the Frontier and waited for favourable opportunity. After a short time he marched on Peshawar and took the Bala Hissar without much resistance. But his good luck was of a very short duration. The chiefs, on whom he relied most, were bribed by Atta Muhammad Khan, the Governor of Kashmir, to seize the person of the Shah. They accordingly escalated the Bala Hissar, seized the royal person and carried him off to Kashmir. The Governor would offer him release only if he gave up the famous Koh-i-Noor diamond. But the Shah refused to surrender this precious jewel. So he remained in captivity for full one year.

SHAH MAHMUD

(AGAIN FROM 1809—1818)

At this time Mahmud sent a force to Kashmir under Vazier Fateh Khan. Atta Mohammed Khan advanced to give battle, but being deserted by most of his followers, he fell back on Srinagar. Ultimately, seeing resistance useless, he made his submission to Fateh Khan. Shah Shuja, released from captivity, left for Lahore. Ranjit Singh received him warmly, but it soon became clear that he too coveted the famous Diamond.

Shortly after his arrival, the Maharaja sent Ram Singh to him demanding the Koh-i-noor. Shah Shuja replied that when real friendship was established he would give it to him. Ranjit Singh was in no mood to brook delay. He resorted to other means to extort it from the luckless King. He offered assistance in troops and treasure if the Shah wanted to recover his throne. Then an exchange of turbans took place and the Shah gave him the coveted precious stone.

Ranjit Singh did not fulfil his part of the contract. On the contrary, as time advanced, the condition of the King became still more hopeless. At last he decided to fly away and find

a peaceful asylum somewhere else. He remembered the friendly overtures of the British and made up his mind to go to them. Ranjit Singh would not let him go. Eight soldiers guarded his residence at night. However, a hole through the ceiling was made, and the ex-King, leaving a faithful servant to sleep on his bed, escaped through the hole in the guise of a mendicant, attended by two of his faithful servants. Instead of making for the British territories, Shah Shuja turned his face toward Jammu, where he was warmly received by the Raja of Kishtwar. After an ineffective attempt to recover Kashmir with the assistance of the Raja, the Shah finally left for Ludhiana, and placed himself under British protection (September, 1816).

THE FALL OF THE DURRANIS

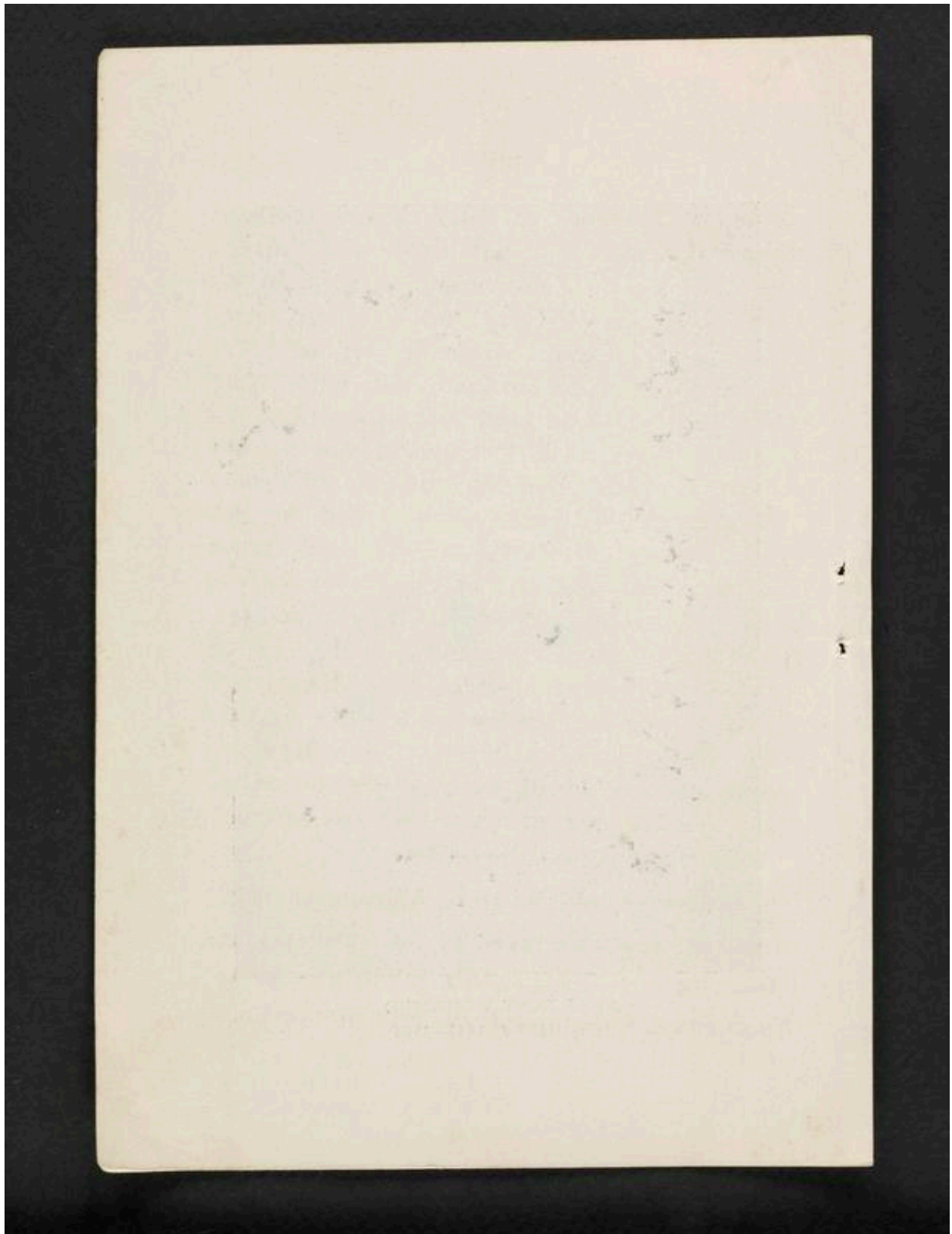
Mahmud ascended the throne a second time in 1809. The Barakzais were now dominant throughout the country, while Mahmud was content with the pomp and show of royalty.

Fateh Khan, after placing Mahmud on the throne and establishing order in the country, turned his attention towards the outlying provinces that had asserted their independence during the turmoil. After compelling the rulers of Sindh and Baluchistan to tender their allegiance to the Afghan King, he resolved to recover Kashmir as well. Atta Mohammed Khan, the Governor of that place, after a short resistance, was forced to surrender unconditionally with his brother, Ghulam Mohammad. Whereupon Jahandar Khan, Commandant of Attock Fort and a younger brother of Atta Mohammed, was so enraged that he handed over the Fort to the Sikhs on payment of 100,000 rupees. This treachery enabled the Maharaja to occupy a place of great strategic and commercial importance on the routes leading to Kashmir, Peshawar and the Panjab.

Fateh Khan after appointing Azim Khan, one of his brothers, as Governor of Kashmir,



AMIR DOST MOHAMED
1826—1839 & 1843—1863



left for Afghanistan. On reaching Attock, he found it held by a powerful Sikh Army. Dost Mohammad, in command of the advance-guard, led the assault in person, driving the Sikhs on all sides. He fought so bravely that he was given the name of Rustam by the Sikh General commanding the Fort. Dost Mohammed, at the head of his small contingent, rushed into the main defences of the enemy, captured some of the guns and forced the Sikhs to retreat. Unfortunately, at this juncture, some of the Afghans, overpowered with thirst, were forced to fall back, and this was a signal for general retreat. Dost Mohammad, who could get no help from the rear, was also obliged to give up the fight and join his brother, who was under the wrong impression that he had been killed in the action.

Fateh Khan, on reaching the capital, learned that the Persians were threatening Herat. The ruler of the place, a younger brother of Mahmud, Haji Firozud-din, appealed to Mahmud for help. In order to stem the tide of the Kajar invasion, Vazier Fateh Khan was asked to repair to Herat. Haji Firozud-din outwardly received him warmly, but in his heart of hearts he hated the Vazier and

did not allow him to enter the Fort. Fateh Khan, perhaps under instructions from Mahmud, arrested the ruler and sent him to Kabul under an escort, while he directed Dost Mohammed to enter Herat and take possession of the Citadel and the treasury. One of the princesses, sister of Kamran and wife of Prince Mohammed Kasim, son of Firozud-din, called upon her brother, to avenge her grievances. Kamran, governor of Kandahar, who had an old grudge against the Vazier, hailed the opportunity. Repairing to Herat, he caught hold of Fateh Khan, who had by now won a decisive victory over the Persians at Kafir Killa, and immediately deprived him of his eyesight, while Dost Mohammed Khan escaped to Kashmir with the treasures.

Retribution immediately followed this outrage. Fateh Khan's brothers, twenty in number, raised the standard of revolt in every part of the country. The blinded Minister was taken to the Shah, who asked him to write to his rebellious brothers to submit. The Vazier replied courageously that he was a poor blind prisoner having no control over his brothers. In the meantime the Royal Forces sustained crushing defeats on

all sides at the hands of Fateh Khan's brothers. Shah Mahmud made a last stand near Ghazni. The Vazier was once more asked to write to his brothers to stop fighting and surrender themselves to the Shah. Again he refused. The enraged Shah then ordered the unfortunate Minister, to whom he owed his crown twice, to be put to death. The King-maker was literally hacked to pieces, but he bore his misfortune with courage. He raised no cry, and did not pray for mercy. He died as he had lived—brave and dauntless. The end of the Vazier was in reality the death-knell of the Durrani dynasty. It roused the feelings of vengeance on the part of the powerful Barakzai brothers. Dost Mohammed, one of the youngest, was the first to strike successfully. Shah Mahmud, together with Kamran, were driven out of all their possessions except Herat, and the whole of Afghanistan was parcelled out among the Barakzai brothers.

In the confusion that arose, Afghanistan suffered heavily. Balkh was seized by the ruler of Bukhara, the trans-Indus districts fell to the lot of Ranjit Singh, while the outlying provinces of Sindh

and Baluchistan assumed complete independence. In this partition of Afghanistan, Ghazni fell into the hands of Dost Mohammad, who soon established his supremacy at Kabul and Jalalabad and thus he became the most powerful of the Barakzai Sardars.

