

that revolt from the prevailing Sunni form of Islam, which gives the Persians a nationalist, as well as a distinctive, creed in the Shiah tenets. Shaikh Haidar had married a daughter of Uzun Hasan, the "White Sheep" Turkman sovereign (who had taken to wife a daughter of the Komnene "emperor" of Trebizond), and eventually was killed in battle or murdered by a Turkman prince, relative of his wife.

Isma'il, third son of Shaikh Haidar, was not a mystic, but a born warrior and commander of troops. When still a boy from his place of refuge, with a small number of men, he made a raid and captured Baku on the Caspian Sea and Shamakha in the Shirwan district of the Caucasus. Then he collected a larger force, marched on neighbouring Tabriz and was acclaimed Shah in 1499: that year he defeated and suppressed his "White Sheep" opponents, who had received Turkish aid. Sultan Selim I of Turkey, surnamed the "Grim" or "Cruel", was a fanatical Sunni and shortly after his accession in 1512 ordered the slaughter of all Turks suspected of having lapsed into heterodoxy, and the number killed is said to have exceeded 40,000. That action brought forth from Isma'il of Persia, who was hereditarily the religious leader of the 'liberal and lax' school in Persia, as well as Shah, a protest, which in turn was countered by a declaration of war from the Ottoman Sultan: the latter had the additional grievance that in 1503 Shah Isma'il had captured Baghdad and Mausil. Selim's army advanced into Azarbaijan and western Persia, and, though Shah Isma'il followed the typical Persian practice of devastating the border country simultaneously as he retreated, near Khui on the western frontier of Azarbaijan a battle was fought in 1514 (at Kaldaran), resulting in the rout of the Persians and taking of Tabriz by Selim I who, however, almost immediately returned to Constantinople, having annexed the provinces of Diarbakr and Kurdistan. (It was at that juncture that Shah Isma'il made his spontaneous overtures to the Grand Master of Rhodes, cited previously.) After the death of Selim I in September 1520 Shah Isma'il overran and subdued Christian Georgia, but on Sunday, 18th Rajab 930 A.H. = May 22nd 1524¹ he died at Ardabil at the age of 45—according to Krusinski's *Memoirs*, on a pilgrimage to his father's tomb. According to Purchas,² his subjects deemed him a saint—so enthusiastic were his soldiers in their faith that they used to bare their breasts to their enemies and court death, exclaiming "Shiah, Shiah".

The eldest of his four sons, Tahmasp, then aged 10 years 6 months, 20 days,³ succeeded as Shah, being crowned 23rd May 1524, the day following his father's death; and in his reign in 1528 Baghdad was recovered from a Kurdish usurper, only to be wrested from Persia by Sultan Sulaiman the "Magnificent" or "Lawgiver" in 1534, after a new invasion of Persia by the Ottoman armies. (In 1537 Kandahar, nowadays part of Afghanistan, was lost for a time, and occupied by the garrison of the Emperor of Delhi.) Professor Creasy is the authority for the statement that Sultan Sulaiman led his armies against Persia in several campaigns, e.g. in the years 1533-4-5. Fr. Krusinski, in the edition by Fr. du Cerceau of his *Memoirs* (1740), confirms this with the details:

"In 1534 Sulaiman . . . advanced as far as Tabriz, which he took without committing any disorder in it. Thence he advanced to Sultanieh, a city which formerly was the residence of the kings of Persia. . . . Halting for some time in the neighbourhood of that town, Sulaiman was dislodged by one of the most furious storms of which history makes mention. He returned towards Assyria, where he made himself master of Baghdad, and caused himself to be crowned king of Persia by the Khalif of that city. . . . After this conquest all the cities of Assyria and Mesopotamia opened their gates to Sulaiman, who also reduced Kurdistan and Diarbakr. He spent the winter in Baghdad, and with the reinforcements of the troops that came to him from Egypt and Syria he returned towards Tabriz. As he left Tabriz this year, 1535, Tahmasp made such great spoil in all the neighbouring provinces that the enemy's army being almost starved was obliged to

¹ and ³ See E. G. Browne's *Catalogue of Persian Manuscripts in Cambridge University Library*, 1896.

² Quoted by *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 10th ed., 1893, from which the facts and dates in this summary have been taken