

“was done, he had all the rights of primogeniture restored to him and was installed Prince “of Georgia.”

But that was already at the end of 1719.

‘After the disaster to this second Georgian expedition against Kandahar in 1711 the ‘Court in Isfahan was in such consternation that for two years nothing was done, and at ‘the end of every two years they made a half-hearted and mismanaged attempt: such ‘troops being fortunate which could be extricated without much loss. Georgian offers to ‘return to the attack, provided all sums stipulated for expenses were paid and only Georgian ‘troops used, were rejected: and so matters stayed until Mir Wais died a natural death at ‘Kandahar in 1717, having on his death-bed advised the notables to make peace upon ‘any terms, should the Persians persist in attacking Kandahar, but to go and attack them, ‘even up to the gates of Isfahan, should they go to sleep over these hostilities.

‘His son, Mir Mahmud, was then hardly 18 years old, but inured to fighting from ‘childhood, and popular with the Afghan soldiery: So a brother of Mir Wais—Mir Aslan ‘by name—was first recognized as their leader by the Kandaharis. He was cautious and ‘planned to send deputies to Isfahan to treat for an accommodation, semi-autonomy, and ‘a reduction of tribute. Getting to know this, Mir Mahmud murdered his uncle at night, ‘and cut off his head: he then beat the alarm from the fort, and harangued the soldiery, ‘urging them on to war, and denouncing the treachery of peace with the Persians. Accepted ‘by the soldiery as their general Mir Mahmud proceeded to raid the neighbouring Persian ‘provinces, and to win over the Shiah clans of the Hazara to joint action. The next Persian ‘expedition also failed through incompetent generalship, and finally the Court at Isfahan, ‘apprehensive at the alliance between border tribes hitherto divided by religious differences, ‘became roused to the extent that Fath ‘Ali Khan, ‘Itimad-ud-Dauleh, a Lesghian of ‘Daghistan (who had been largely responsible for the ruining of the Georgian expeditions), ‘arranged to send his relative, Lutf ‘Ali Khan as commander of a new force.

‘The latter, being ambitious, planned to begin with a spectacular exploit, viz. to seize ‘from the Arabs Masqat, but he required ships to transport his soldiers across the Persian ‘Gulf and for the purpose negotiated for Portuguese vessels on payment. Portuguese ships ‘duly arrived, but the money was not sent through intrigues of those at Court jealous of ‘him succeeding; and the fleet went away, nothing done. At this juncture in 1720 Mir ‘Mahmud made a raid on Kirman, “300 leagues from Kandahar” and took it. Before he ‘could fortify himself, Lutf ‘Ali Khan, the Persian commander, attacked and, routing the ‘Afghans, pursued them to the gates of Kandahar; but harvest was over, and a summer ‘siege was inadvisable. Marching back Lutf ‘Ali Khan proceeded to strengthen the citadel ‘at Kirman, and then to lay in provisions for a winter campaign against Kandahar. It ‘was then that, as already related in this chapter, the Persian general committed the ‘mistake of ravaging the lands of his enemies at Court, and so provoked the downfall and ‘blinding of Fath ‘Ali Khan the chief Wazir and his own arrest and confinement in ‘November 1720, and the break-up of his force.

‘Not only was Mir Mahmud the Afghan thus again free to pursue his own plans, but ‘evil councillors of Shah Sultan Husain, the Hakim-bashi and others led him to commit ‘another grave error on the northern frontier.

‘On returning at the end of 1719 to his country after his period of exile in Kirman, ‘Vaqtan (or Vakhtanga) the Georgian prince found that the Daghistani Lesghians had ‘cruelly ravaged Georgia and Guria: and he determined to crush the Daghistanis once ‘and for all: his winter campaign reduced them to such straits that they appealed to Isfahan, ‘whence the Shah by his councillors’ advice sent imperative orders for the Georgian opera- ‘tions in the field to be abandoned immediately. Vaqtan obeyed, but with such rage in ‘his heart that he made an oath never to draw his sword again for the Shah, and then shut ‘himself in Tiflis after securing the Georgian frontier against the Daghistanis. No sooner