

“excuses sometimes that the swords would not cut, at others that out of pity he did not want to kill the animals. His intellect is good, and for that age he is very serious, and shows that he understands matters of government, and knows how the other princes in the world rule.

“Sultan Mustafa Mirza, and Mir Jan Mirza, and —¹ Mirza are all three 14 to 15 years old, of good dispositions, and exhibit plenty of ability. The others likewise, of 8, 10 to 11 years, are in Khurasan studying, except for a small boy of 5 who is with the king, because for that age he is alert and pleasing. The daughters are all married to relatives, to whom as dowries large governorships have been given.

“The king is 64 years old, in the 51st year of his reign, having been chosen king at the age of 13 years.² He is of medium height, well-formed bodily, in face rather dark, with large lips and a beard at present long and not very grey. In temperament he is rather melancholy, which can be known in other ways by many signs, but chiefly from his not having left his palace once in the course of ten years,³ either to go hunting, or for any kind of pleasure. This gives much dissatisfaction to the people, who according to the custom of that country, when they do not see their king, have the greatest difficulty in letting him know of their burdens, and cannot have their petitions answered in matters of justice, for which reason day and night they are crying out at the top of their voices in front of the garden of his palace, sometimes 500, at others 1,000 together, for justice to be done them. When the king hears those cries usually he orders the people to be sent away, saying that there are judges in the country appointed for the purpose, and that the people should go and get justice from them, without reflecting that the complaints are against the tyrannical judges themselves, and against the captains and soldiers who are constantly murdering people in the roads, as in many cases I have seen, or of which I have made certain by investigation when I heard of them, as Your Highness will have gathered.

“In the town of Nakhchiwan certain assassins were arrested, who had murdered some merchants and taken their property. They were taken to the tribunal, and the judge, having become aware of the crime, had the stolen property brought to him, sending away the complainants and setting at liberty the delinquents and keeping for himself part of the goods, while the rest he dispatched to Qazwin as presents for some officers and officials. The owners of these goods went to the capital and I saw them shouting and tearing their garments daily, climbing on to the walls of the palace and calling out to the king in loud voices and asking what he intended to do, and why he did not wish such injustice to be remedied, for which often they were very severely bastinadoed, and, stones being thrown at them, they were made to jump down from the walls: nor was it ever possible for them to get a hearing. Besides this in the town of Tabriz it happened that 18 thieves armed with arquebuses by night scaled the walls of the principal bazar in that city, which is called the ‘Khan of the Master’,⁴ where there were 40 merchants, and, as they knew that among the others there was one, Ahmad Chalibi, a merchant of Angora, who had a considerable quantity of money in cash, they broke open the door of his chamber and murdered him, taking from him 300 tumans (which make 6,000 scudi) in addition to some ingots of silver and some crimson: and when the merchants made a movement to defend their caravansarai⁵ they were forced to retire to their rooms. A few days later, near the house where I was, a house of an Armenian was attacked at night by the same thieves with lanterns: and 4,000(?) bales of silk were taken away from him, and it was said by him that the silk in question was seen shortly afterwards in the house of the captain (governor) of Tabriz: and I well know that complaint was made at the Court of all these affairs,

¹ Unrecognizable in manuscript.

² Shah Tahmasp I. Since according to E. G. Browne's *Catalogue of Persian Manuscripts in Cambridge University Library*, Tahmasp I was aged 10½ years in May 1524, he was born in A.D. 1513, and was, thus, 61 years old when Vincenzo degli Alessandri wrote A in 1574-5, according to the Christian calendar: the different age here given, 63, arises because he was quoting Muslim reckoning, 1513 being 919 A.H., and 1574-5 equalling 982-3.

³ An extraordinary trait for any man, neither invalid nor prisoner, between the ages of 51 and 61, and almost incomprehensible in that age for a king.

⁴ The manuscript has “del Signore”.

⁵ “Fondaco” in manuscript.