



WHO ARE THE PARSEES ?

by

Sohrab K. H. Katrak

S.K., F.R.G.S., J.P., S.B., St.J.,

EX-MAYOR OF KARACHI

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By the same Author

"Through Amanullah's Afghanistan"

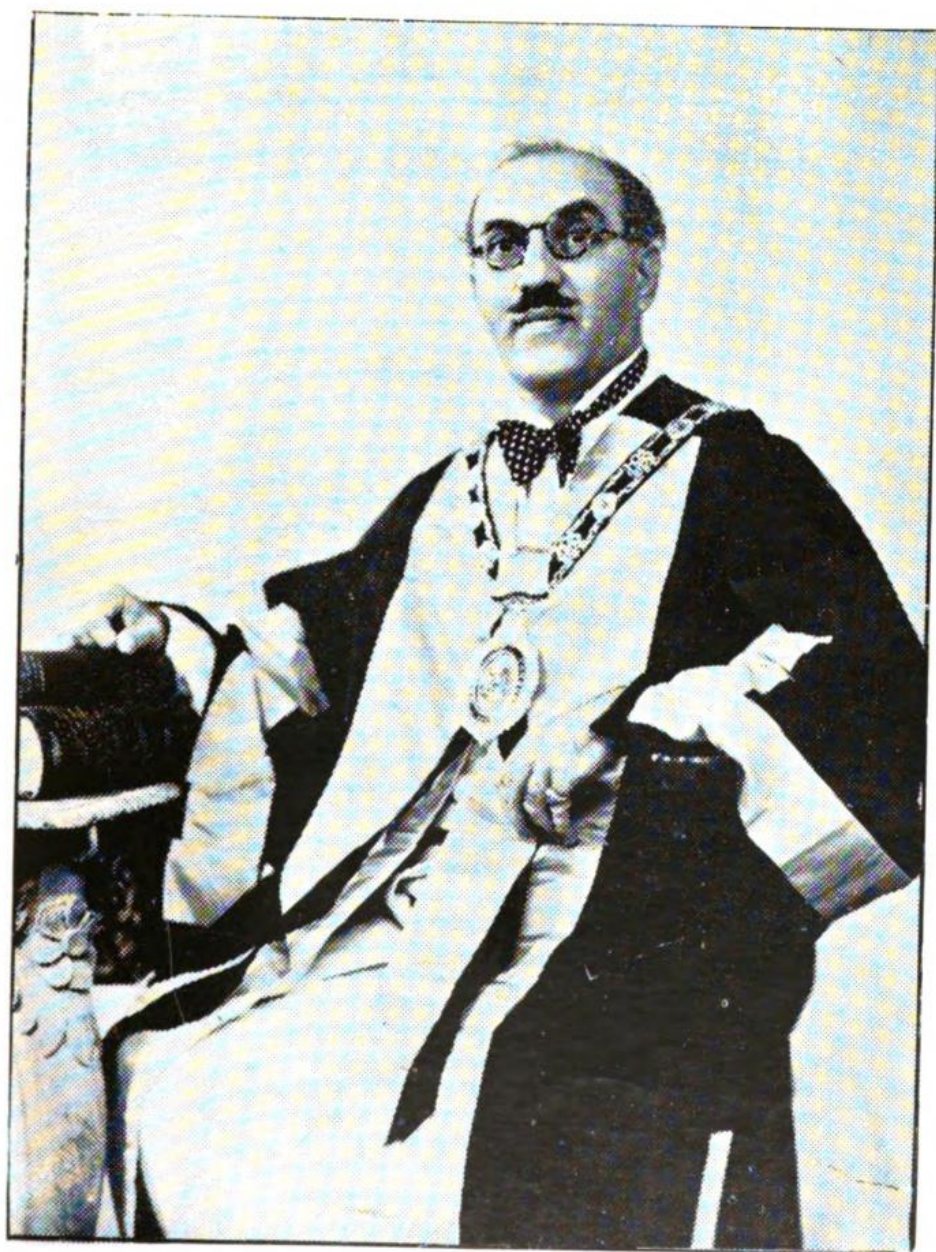
"The Message Eternal"

"KARACHI THAT WAS THE CAPITAL OF SIND",

ETC.

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The Author.

IN

The revered and loving memory of

Shams-ul-Ulema Dastur Dr. M. N. Dhalla,

M.A., PH.D., LITT.D.

High Priest

of the

Parsees in Pakistan

who

has left an imperishable name amongst

the Parsee Dasturs of Past and Present

by

his comprehensive scholarship

and

profound knowledge of

Zoroastrian Lore,

this humble effort at compiling

a History of the Parsees

is respectfully

DEDICATED.

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INTRODUCTION

Who are the Parsis? The "Encyclopaedia Britannica" (14th Edition) observes about them:- "Their religion teaches them benevolence as the first principle, and they practise it with liberality. The sagacity, activity and commercial enterprise of the Parsis are proverbial". When an address of welcome was presented to the Shah of Iran, H.I.M. Muhammad Reza Pahlavi, by the Parsis of Bombay in March 1956, he was pleased to remark about the Zoroastrians of Iran:- "They are an example always of trust worthiness, good and truth. We have never seen a Parsi betraying the country, and we have never seen a Parsi failing us in moments of danger and difficulty. Their integrity is well known everywhere". (From "Iran League Quarterly" April 1956—April 1957). These are high compliments indeed, proceeding from authentic sources and tempting one to know more about the race that, throughout its chequered career, has been found worthy of such great esteem in two different countries. Strange to say, the average Parsi is himself rather indifferent to the history of his race, and one can hardly hope to find a history of the Parsis in the book-collection of a member even of the upper classes of Zoroastrians. The late Mr. Dosa-bhai F. Karaka's "History of the Parsis" served an important purpose in the 19th century by acquainting the world with the Parsis, and the Parsis with themselves. Another classic on the subject, published in 1917, was Mr. M.M. Marzban's erudite and laborious work "The Parsis in India", being an enlarged edition of Mlle. Delphine Menant's "Les Parsis". This work showed how the Parsis thrived under British regime and did useful and pioneering work in various walks of life in India.

In the wake of these worthy predecessors we have now an able and painstaking work "Who are the Parsees?" by Mr. Sohrab K. H. Katrak, F.R.G.S., J.P. It is an ambitious work undertaken with a capacity commensurate with its magnitude, and takes the reader from Kayumars, the primeval Iranian, to contemporary times. Mr. Katrak's name is a name to conjure with in Karachi, where he has continued the splendid traditions established by his distinguished father Sir. Kavasji. Mr. Sohrab Katrak is a business magnate of repute, and as a leader of the Parsis and a former Mayor of Karachi he is held in high esteem by all classes and creeds in the capital of Pakistan. The outstanding trait noticeable in his book is his great love for his community, which however does not blind him to its defects which are frankly noted and discussed. His love is supplemented by his wide reading, balanced Judgement and impartial outlook. The first

nine Chapters deal with Iran, the remaining two-thirds of the book with the Parsis in India; all due care is taken to make the work as thorough as possible, and the author has gathered numerous and authentic details about Parsi social life, manners, customs and rituals. He dwells particularly on the historic aspects, not the cultural side, for that would have swelled the dimensions of his work and necessitated another volume for its adequate treatment. The author aims at being exhaustive rather than critical or philosophical, and is thus able to appeal to the general public rather than to a specialised class of virtuosi on the subject.

Mr. Katrak's work has been inspired by the great Dastur Dr. M.N. Dhalla, who was his spiritual godfather as of various other Parsi scholars in India, and whose inestimable writings and speeches have exercised a permanent and wholesome influence on the religious thought of his numerous admirers. Every Parsi scholar who was privileged to hear the speeches of the late Dastur or derive the lasting benefits from his great works will agree with Mr. Katrak in the eloquent tribute he has paid to his illustrious Guru at the end of his chapter on "Parsee Priesthood".

Mr. Katrak's chapter on "Parsee Pioneers" distinctly smells of the lamp and shows the vast amount of labour that he must have gone through in its preparation. This splendid record of pioneering work, accomplished in India in about 150 years by the Parsis, must thrill the heart of every Zoroastrian with pardonable pride. But the two most revealing chapters in the book are "Parsees after Partition" and "The Revolt of Youth". The circumstances, attendant upon the Partition, exceeded in their disastrous effects the gloomiest forebodings of our veteran politicians: every community in Pakistan and Bharat was hard hit by this "vivisection on the motherland", and our tiny community could not be an exception to the rule. Our author is in no sense a croaker, but he has delivered a round, unvarnished tale of how Parsis in Sindh have been cut off from their co-religionists of Bharat by the difficulty in securing permits to travel to that country, how they have sustained financial losses by having invested money in Government of India Loans in the banks of Bharat in pre-Partition days, how their charity funds have been locked up in Indian banks, and how trade between both countries has been crippled by restrictive legislation of each country against the other. Whatever the condition of Pakistani Parsis may be, they may best be advised to be as faithful to their country as we of Bharat are to ours. That is our bounden duty as subjects, though we certainly have the right of intellectual freedom to determine as we choose on matters of right and wrong. His Late Highness Aga Khan III gave the same advice, as recorded in his 'Me-

moirs", to his followers, scattered in various parts of the world—to identify their own interests with those of the country where their lot happened to be cast.

The chapter on "The Revolt of Youth" reminds one of a well-known book of the same name by the American Judge, Ben Lindsay, though, thank God, it is not so sensational as the American work. Nay, Mr. Katrak, though in his sixties, writes with understanding and sympathy for the change in the mentality of youth, and tries his best to appreciate the viewpoint of our young men and women in matters religious and social. His own views are, observed previously, influenced by the opinions of Dastur Dr. Dhalla, who combined the wisdom of age with the freshness of youth. Some well-known features of the revolt of Parsi youth, as noted by Mr. Katrak, are their denunciation of Dokhma system as a hopeless anachronism, their repugnance to consecrated bull's wine as offensive to their hygienic sense, their disapproval of the custom prohibiting non-Zoroastrians from paying their last respects to a deceased Parsi after the final obsequies have been performed, their disinclination to offer prayers in the unknown and defunct Avesta language which they wish to exchange for a known language, and the last but most disquieting of all—the readiness of Parsi youths of both sexes to seek their partners in life from other communities. The author does not raise the cheap slogan of "religion in danger", he does not even attempt a solution of these controversial subjects, he just holds out the red light and invites the attention of Parsi leaders to these burning problems of the day, which demand prompt consideration at their hands. X

"Histories make men wise": so runs the Baconian adage, but the knowledge of bygone glories has often intoxicated half-baked minds into the comfortable belief that everything worth doing has already been done by their ancestors and that nothing remained for them to do but rest on their laurels and indulge in unseasonable brag about an irrevocable past. Thus an improper use of history makes men unwise also. It is true that lack of self-confidence paralyses activity; but overconfidence, on the other hand, caused by constant doses of vain glory about the illustrious past, also tends to inertia and ultimate disillusionment, which comes too late. The past is not a cushion, soft and snug, to send us to sleep, but a tonic to stir us up to further activity and enable us to emulate and even excel the great deeds of our famous forbears. History is not a flute to lull us to lotus eating dreams, but a clarion-call to stimulate us to the discharge of duty and the performance of benevolent deeds, so dear to the heart of Zarathushtra.

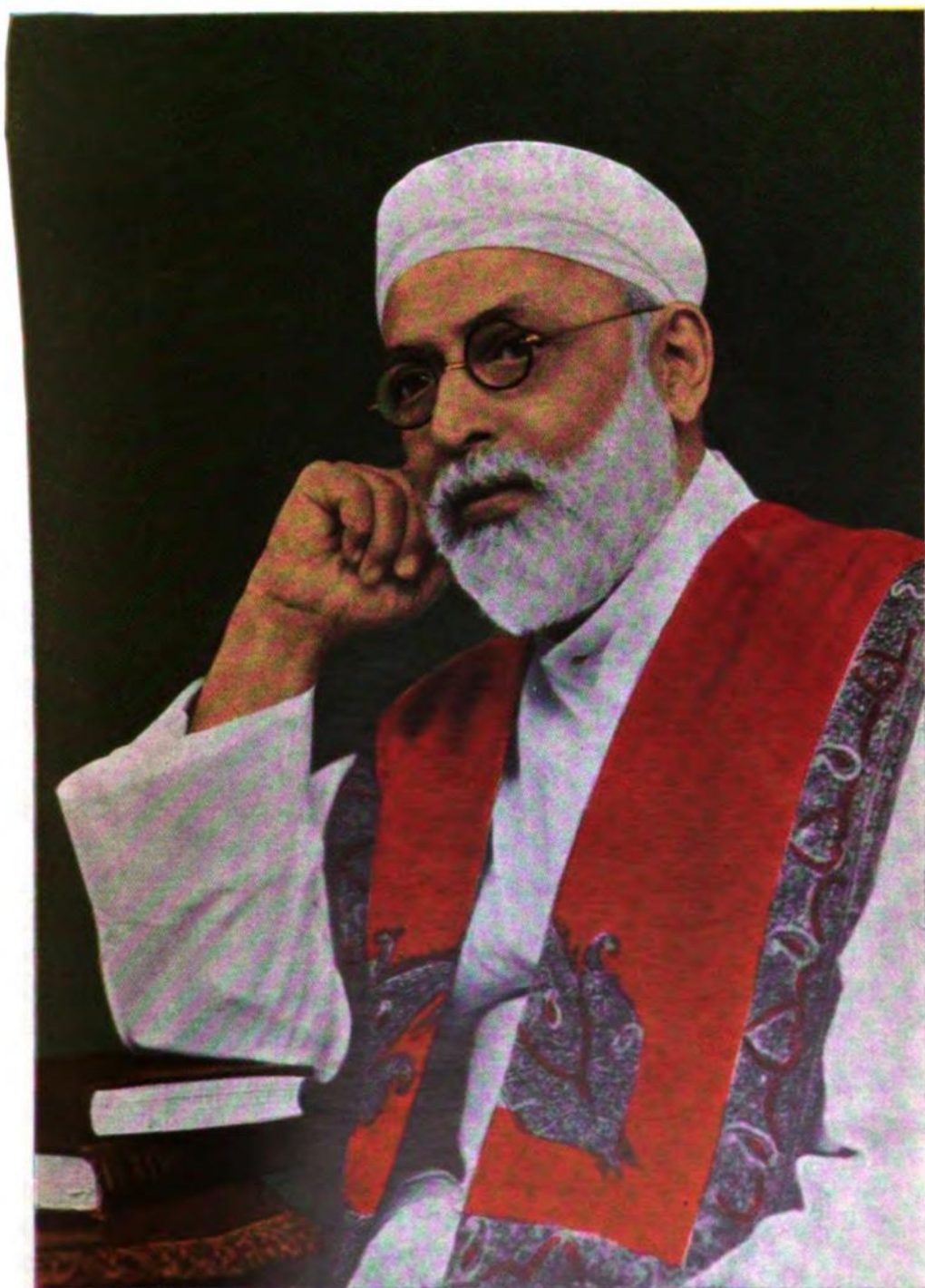
For various reasons a steady decline has been noticeable in our character, for which external circumstances cannot exclusively be blamed. The fault lies in ourselves—our increasingly materialistic outlook, our lapse into lassitude instead of devotion to hard work, our assumption of snobbish and foppish airs, our addiction to a life of luxury which slowly but surely undermines the moral fibre in our character. Traditionally and inherently we are extroverts. There is, as Dastur Dr. Dhalla said, little poetry and less philosophy in our mental make-up. We are practical people, and certainly capable of reaching ethical heights if only we steel our resolution for the achievement. The perusal of past records can only create the desired effect if it leads the Parsi reader to correctly estimate the invaluable heritage of his ancestors, and spurs him to action which may not diminish or tarnish but augment and embellish what he has the good fortune to inherit.

Righteousness and integrity constitute the backbone of the Zarathushtrian community. Love, Benevolence, Service and Charity are the vitamins A, B, C and D of the Zarathushtrian life, while adaptability is the life-belt which enables the Zarathushtrian to float over the troubled waters without danger to himself or harm to others. Adaptability without the necessary Zarathushtrian virtues will, however, enable us to float—but only as bubbles, sparkling but evenescent, destined only to amuse and not edify others, and then be extinguished in the bottomless depths of the ocean of humanity, unwept, unhonoured and unsung. Our present decline is largely of our own making: the open sesame to our upliftment must consequently be sought and applied by ourselves. It is to be hoped that Mr. Katrak's work on the history of the Parsis will enable us to make a judicious use of the knowledge of the past and of the contribution made by our forefathers to the glory that was Iran and the splendour that was Ind. Even if this aim is partially achieved, the learned author may derive satisfaction in having attempted a work which has been done well and done worthily.

F. C. Davar.

Khanpur Road,
Ahmedabad,
21st August, 1958.

*x-faults + pragmatic view. || to attract *
social*



Shams-ul-Ulema Dastur Dr. M. N. Dhalla,
M. A., Ph. D., Litt. D.

PREFACE

This book is a result of many years of reading and about two years of writing.

My first effort in writing a book was "Through Amanullah's Afghanistan"; but, that being a narrative of my peregrinations all round Afghanistan—which at that time was ruled by King Amanullah—it was a much easier task to undertake.

The present book is semi-scholarly and for that I am indebted to my "Guru" and life-long guide, philosopher and friend, Shams-ul-Ulema Dastoor Dr. M.N. Dhalla, M.A., Ph.D. Litt. D., I am wholly and solely indebted to him for the inspiration and the fondness for learning, reading, lecturing and writing, from the time that I first came in contact with him in 1909. It is my great misfortune that he suddenly passed away from this world on the 25th May, 1956, at the ripe old age of 81, before I could start writing the book. His would have been the soundest guidance and advice in the bringing out of this book as, at present, amongst the Parsee community, no better scholar exists, with so profound a knowledge of the Zoroastrian religion. I am, therefore, proud to dedicate this effort to such a profound scholar and Dastoor among the Parsee community.

I am grateful also to my learned friend, Professor Firoze C. Davar, M.A., LL.B., Head of the Department of English, L.D. Arts College, Ahmedabad, for writing an able introduction to this book and for guiding me with numerous other valuable suggestions. Professor Davar has been a scholar of repute, having to his credit half a dozen scholarly books; and since he has been to Iran on a lecture tour and has written on the culture of Iran, I could not think of a better person to approach for such an introduction.

Once an Englishman, while talking to me on business, said that in "I-run" his firm was doing well! I had to make him repeat the word, as I had not heard of such a country, till I discovered that he was speaking about Iran (Persia). The idea at once occurred to me, while writing this book, that it would be advisable to guide foreigners in the way of correct pronunciation, by making the distinction between "i" and "ee". This is apparent from the word "Magi", where the "i" is pronounced like "eye", whereas in Persian "i" is pronounced as "ee", as in the word "see". Therefore, throughout, I have tried to use "ee" wherever the pronunciation sounds like "ee".

In the matter of the spelling of Persian names, particularly in the First Chapter, I have preferred to adhere to those adopted by Sir John Malcolm in "The History of Persia". It is evident that Sir John, having stayed in Persia for a long time, had adopted the exact style of pronouncing names as the Persians did—hence, he spelt in English as he spoke in Persian. The difference between the spelling adopted by Sir John and the modern writers of Persian words is tantamount to the difference between the pronunciations adopted by students at Oxford and Cambridge—though they both speak the same language, viz. English.

I must here acknowledge my indebtedness to several learned friends in Bombay and elsewhere, who have helped me from time to time by giving information and advice on sundry matters for which I was in correspondence with them.

I would particularly like to single out the name of my learned and respected friend, Mr. J.R.B. Jeejeebhoy, a scholar of History, who has guided me considerably on several points where I had made serious slips. I hereby acknowledge my indebtedness to him for his many kindnesses in bringing several historical facts in my book to greater accuracy and reliability. *

The only one, whom I cannot possibly omit mentioning in this book is my dear and devoted wife who, month after month and year after year as I was studying and writing the book, till the early hours of the morning, was a source of inspiration to me with her presence. She has sacrificed a great deal of her time, which she could have devoted to congenial-pleasure with her children, or in well deserved rest, and for this I have no words adequately to express to her my heart felt thanks.

Just as 250 pages of this book were printed, I had the misfortune to lose my Secretary, Mr. John A. D'Souza, who was so extremely helpful to me in going minutely and accurately through the proofs I cannot fail to express my gratefulness to him for the assistance he gave me and the work that he attended to so ardently. May God rest his soul in peace in Heaven !

The remaining work of this book has been most conscientiously and carefully done by my First Secretary, Mr. S. Baqar Ali Khan, to whom also I am greatly indebted.

"Katrak Villa,"

245, Bonus Road,
Karachi-4.

Sohrab K. H. Katrak.

Dated 21st March 1965

* Most unfortunately he expired on 13th October, 1960, and was not able to see this book printed and published. May Ahuramazda rest his soul in peace in Heaven.

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Mrs. Deena Sohrab Katrak.

Chapter I

PREHISTORIC AND LEGENDARY HISTORY

The Parsees pride themselves on being the progeny of a mighty race of people who occupied Iran, popularly known as Persia, centuries before the Christian era. Their ancient history melts in the mist of legends and mythology, yet we know that ancient Iran had six famous royal dynasties: (1) Peshdadian (2) Kayanian (3) Median (4) Hakhamanian (Gr. Achaemenian), (5) Parthian and (6) Sasanian.

Peshdadian: Of the first prehistoric Peshdadian dynasty, Gayomard, otherwise known as Gaya Maretan in the Avesta, the Sacred books of the Parsees, is supposed to be the first man who gave ear to the divine precepts of Ahura Mazda. He seems to have lived in Airyana Vaejah, the cradle of the Aryans, probably situated somewhere in the northern Steppes of Turkestan, which is supposed to be the primitive home of the Aryan race.

His grandson Hoshang, known in Avesta as Haoshyangha, the founder of the first Iranian dynasty, is known to have taught his subjects agriculture, irrigation and the making of iron implements for peace and war, and was called Peshdad (Av. Paradhata, or the legislator) or the first distributor of justice, and from this the dynasty came to be known as Peshdadian. Divine glory from Ahura Mazda alighted upon the Kings of this dynasty and under their rule the Iranians laid the foundation of the civilisation which later centred round the sublime personality of Zarathushtra, the Prophet of ancient Iran.

Tradition credits Hoshang with the discovery of fire. It is said that one day while out hunting, Hoshang saw a big python moving near the mountainside, where he was standing. He immediately lifted up a huge piece of rock and threw it at the head of the python. Instead of killing the python the stone struck another big piece of rock, which ignited fire. To commemorate this discovery the king founded a feast called Jashn-e-Sadeh.

His son and successor Tehmuras built several cities and having civilised barbarous tribes, received the name of Devband (conqueror of demons).

After him came Jemsheed of illustrious name and fame. This great king is further reputed to have taught the aborigines—the demons as they are usually termed by the Poet Firdausi—to temper clay with water, to make moulds for bricks and to lay foundations with stone and lime. Jemsheed thus utilised this aboriginal labour in construction of magnificent palaces, lofty halls, sanctuaries and baths. The glamour of the great King's fame has so fascinated popular imagination that the palaces of the Achaemenian kings are erroneously believed to have been built by him. For instance, the great platform of Persepolis is called "Takht-e-Jemsheed" (The Throne of Jemsheed) to this day by the native population of Iran.

Jemsheed's dynasty has been mentioned by all historians in high terms of praise. He was a wise and enlightened prince, much in advance of his time, with a halo round his head—popularly known in Avestan literature as Hvareno or Kharenangh; in modern Persian as Khoreh. He is considered to have been a great benefactor of the human race. He is also known as King Yima. He divided his subjects into four classes:

The first, Athravans, consisted of learned and pious men, devoted to the worship of God; the duty assigned to them was to make known to others what was and what was not lawful.

The second, Rathaestars, were warriors, who were directed to occupy themselves in military exercises, that they might be fitted for war.

The third, Vastryosh, were agriculturists, and the fourth class, Hutaokshas, were artificers, husbandmen and tradesmen.

He is reputed to have regulated the calendar and ordered a festival to be celebrated on the day the sun entered the vernal equinox; this festival is known as Jemsheed-i-Naoroz and is still celebrated with great pomp and eclat in Iran, as well as by the Parsees all over the world. Jemsheed-i-Naoroz or Naoroos-e-Jamsheedi as it is also called, recurs every year on the 21st of March, when the day and night are of equal duration, in as much as there are twelve hours of light and twelve hours of darkness.

Jemsheed was the first who discovered wine. He was immoderately fond of grapes, and desired to preserve some, which were placed in a large vessel, and lodged in a vault for future use. When the vessel was opened, the grapes had fermented. Their juice was so acid, that the king believed it to be poisonous. He had some bottles filled with it, and 'po-

ison' written upon each, and these were placed in his room. It happened that one of his favourite ladies was affected with nervous headaches. The pain distracted her so much, that she wanted to die. Observing a bottle with 'poison' written on it, she took it and swallowed its contents. The wine, for such it had become, overpowered the lady, who fell into a sound sleep and awoke much refreshed. Delighted with the remedy, she repeated the doses so often that the king's poison was all consumed. He soon discovered this, and forced the lady to confess what she had done. A quantity of wine was made: and Jemsheed and all his court drank of the new beverage, which, from the manner of its discovery is to this day known in Iran by the name of Zehr-e-Khoosh, or the delightful poison.*

In the auspicious reign of the illustrious Jemsheed it is said that gold and silver, rubies and precious stones were dug out from the earth, and were used for making ornaments. Among the many legends connected with Jemsheed's past, Firdausi mentions in his immortal Shahnama that the king, when he sat on his precious throne, held in his hand the Jam-e-Jehan-numa, which was evidently a powerful kind of gazing crystal, which revealed to the gazer events happening in any part of the world.

In Yasna ¹ 9-5 it is said that in the reign of King Jemsheed there was neither cold breeze, nor hot breeze, nor old age, nor jealousy, nor even death. Father and son both looked alike, and walked about with the agility of a youth of fifteen.

Thus the early part of Jemsheed's reign was prosperous beyond measure, but, immersed in luxury, he forgot at last the source whence his good fortune flowed, and proclaimed himself a deity, and directed his statues to be multiplied so that the Iranians might adore the image of their king as the dispenser of all earthly good. This act of daring impiety disgusted his subjects and encouraged the Arabian (some say Babylonian) prince, Zohak, to invade Iran. The unfortunate Jemsheed fled before a conqueror, who was deemed the instrument of divine vengeance. The wanderings of the exiled monarch are wrought into a tale, which is among the most popular in Iranian romance. His first adventure was in the neighbouring province of Seistan, where the only daughter of the ruling prince was led, by a prophecy of her nurse, to fall in love with him, and to contract a secret marriage. But the unfortunate Jemsheed was pursued through Seistan, India and China, by the agents of the implacable Zohak, and was

* Moullah Ackbar's Mss from Malcolm's History of Persia, Vol. I.

¹ Pronounced Yesna.

at last seized and carried before his cruel enemy like a common malefactor. Here his miseries ended for, after enduring all that proud scorn could inflict upon fallen greatness, he was placed between two boards, and sawn asunder with the bone of a fish.

Then came Zohak to the throne of Iran. There are various accounts of his descent. Some historians make him an Arabian, but descended from Kaiomurs. Others trace his descent to Shedad, and term him a Syrian; and it has even been conjectured that he was the Nimrod of the Bible. All agree that he was of a cruel and sanguinary temper. He is described as having had two dreadful cancers on his shoulders, which the Iranian fabulists have changed into snakes, whose hunger nothing could appease but the brains of human beings. Two of his subjects were slain daily to furnish him with the horrid meal until the indignation of Kawah, a blacksmith of Isfahan, whose last two sons were on the point of being sacrificed, relieved the empire from this tyrant, and raised Faridoon, a Paishadian prince, to the throne.

Faridoon was the son of Atbin, an immediate descendant of Tahmuras. He had escaped in an almost miraculous manner from Zohak, when that prince seized and murdered his father. At the age of sixteen he joined Kawah, who had collected a large body of his countrymen; the Iranians fought with enthusiasm under the standard of the blacksmith's apron, which continually reminded them of the just cause of their revolt; and the presence of their young prince made them invincible. Zohak, after numerous defeats, was made prisoner, and put to a slow and painful death as punishment for his crimes. In this connection a myth prevails that Zohak was seized and chained inside the crater of Mount Demavand, where he still lives; all day and night he sucks the heavy chains which he thins down almost to a thread, but with the dawn the cock crows and the chains again assume their original heavy shape and size, and to his eternal chagrin.

Faridoon then assumed the throne of Iran; he is known for his excellence in justice and benevolence. He was the first monarch of Iran to mount an elephant and equip it with military panoply. And the breeding of mules is ascribed to him.

The crimes of elder sons, which embittered the latter years of Faridoon, have given rise to one of the most affecting tales in Iranian romance; indeed it is only in that form that there remains any record of these events. This virtuous monarch had three sons, Selm, Toor and

Erij.* The first two were by one mother, the daughter of Zohak; the third by a princess of Persia. After these three princes had been united in marriage to three daughters of a king of Arabia, Faridoon determined to divide his dominions among them. To Selm he gave the countries comprehended in modern Turkey; to Toor, Tartary and part of China; and to Erij, Iran. The princes departed for their respective governments; but the two eldest were displeased that Iran, the fairest of lands and the seat of royalty, should have been given to their younger brother; and they combined to effect his ruin. They first sent a letter to their father to reproach him with his partiality and injustice, and to demand a revision of his act, threatening an immediate attack if their request was refused. The old king was greatly distressed. He represented that his days were drawing to a close, and entreated that he might be allowed to depart in peace. Erij discovered what was passing, and resolved to go to his brothers and lay his crown at their feet, rather than continue the cause of a dissension that afflicted his father. He prevailed on the old king to consent to this measure, and carried a letter from him to Selm and Toor, entreating that they should live together in peace. This appeal had no effect, and Erij was slain by his brothers, who had the barbarity to embalm his head and send it to Feridoon. The old man is said to have fainted at the sight. When he recovered, he seized with frantic grief the head of his beloved son, and, holding it in his raised hands, called upon Heaven to punish the base perpetrators of so unnatural and cruel a deed. "May they never more", he exclaimed, "enjoy one bright day! May the demon of remorse tear their savage bosoms, till they excite compassion even in the wild beasts of the forest! As for me, I only desire from God who gave me life, that He will continue it till a descendant shall arise from the race of Erij, to avenge his death; then this head will repose with joy on whatever spot is appointed to receive it."

The daughter of Erij was married to the nephew of Faridoon; and their young son, Meenucheher, proved to be the image of his grandfather. This child became the cherished hope of the aged monarch; and, when the young prince attained manhood he made every preparation to enable him to avenge the blood of Erij. Selm and Toor trembled as they saw the day of retribution approach; they sent ambassadors with rich presents to their father, and entreated that Meenucheher might be sent to them, that they might stand in his presence like slaves, and wash away the remembrance of their crime by tears of contrition. Feridoon returned their presents; and in his reply to their message expressed his indignation in glowing words:

* The modern name is Irach or Erach.

"Tell the merciless men, that they shall never see Meenucheher but attended by armies, and clothed in steel."

A war commenced. In the first battle Toor was slain by the lance of Meenucheher. Selm retired to a fortress, whence he was drawn by a challenge from the youthful hero, who was victorious in this combat also; and the event restored tranquillity to the empire. When Meenucheher returned in triumph, the venerable Faridoon advanced on foot to meet him: the prince dismounted as he approached, and, after kissing the ground, received his congratulations. Faridoon soon afterwards died; before he expired, he placed his crown on the head of the grandson of Erij, advising him to attend to the counsel of Sam, a nobleman of great wisdom and high birth, who was hereditary Prince of Seistan. Faridoon's wisdom and goodness have been universally celebrated. His testament, addressed to his descendants, contained the following admirable lesson to monarch: "Deem every day in your life a leaf in your history; take care, therefore, that nothing be written in it which is not worthy of posterity".

Meenucheher was a good and pious monarch; but the great prosperity of his reign was chiefly due to the wisdom and courage of his prime minister, Sam, whose descendants obtained a fame which has led Iranian historians and poets to speak only of the events connected with their lives.

The eldest son of Sam, we are told, was born with white hair, white eye brows and white eye lashes; this greatly distressed his father who in consequence named him Zal, or the aged. Soon after his birth, Sam was persuaded that the infant was not his own, but was the son of some deev or magician. Under that impression, he sent it to be exposed on Elburz, a lofty mountain, which the Iranian historian describes as "near the sun, and far from mankind." Here tradition relates that the young Zal was nurtured by a simurgh, or griffin. But Sam was soon induced to repent of his unnatural conduct; for he heard a divine voice exclaim, "That infant which a father abandoned, is now the care of the Universal protector." He went to Elburz where he humbled himself before God, and his son was restored him. They embraced, and Zal went with him to the Court of Meenucheher. Soon afterwards his father was appointed governor of Seistan, Kabul, and all the countries north of the Indus and there he immediately proceeded, accompanied by his son.

The first adventure which the poet records of Zal, is that which led to all his later renown; it shows him as the father of the hero of his

country, the great Rustam,* whose name occupies so large a place in eastern history, or rather romance.

One day, when hunting, Zal came to the foot of a tower, on one of the turrets of which he saw a young damsel of the most exquisite beauty. As they looked on each other they fell in love; but there appeared no way of reaching the battlement. After much embarrassment, an expedient occurred to the maiden: she loosened her dark and beautiful tresses, which fell in ringlets to the bottom of the tower, and enabled the enamoured prince to ascend. The lady proved to be Roudabah, the daughter of Mehrab, King of Kabul, a prince of the race of Zohak. The love which this extraordinary meeting gave rise to ended in a marriage, approved both by Sam and the royal father of the princess, and we are assured that all was happiness, till the parturition pains of Roudabah threatened her husband with the loss of his beloved. The griffin, who had nurtured Zal on Elburz, had given him at parting some of her feathers, and directed him to burn one whenever he was in extreme distress. He did so now, and his kind nurse appeared. She told him that it was necessary to make an incision in the side of Roudabah, and she gave him some intoxicating drugs, which when administered to the princess would make her insensible to pain.¹ Zal did as he was directed, and the giant child was cut from the side of his mother, who immediately she was delivered, exclaimed, "Ba-Rastam"—I am relieved.² From this the infant was named Rustam. In the Pahlavi books, Bundahishn, Aiyadgar-i-Zariran, and Shatroiha-i-Airan, his name is given as Rustam, which literally means "Strong Growth".³ Roudabah was soon restored to perfect health. Seven nurses were assigned for the child's support, but even they were insufficient; nearly as many sheep were soon required for his daily sustenance. Such is the fabulous account of the birth of the national hero of Iran. His deeds have been magnified into miracles by the poet who describes them: and thus his history is enveloped in romance.

Meenucheher died after a reign of one hundred and twenty years. **

Afrasiab, who came after him, ruled Iran for twelve years. Having seized all the chief nobles, he determined to put them to death; but he

* Pronounced like the word "drum". Also pronounced as Roostam.

1. Malcolm, HISTORY OF PERSIA. Vol. 1

2. Sanjana.

3. Ibid.

** Malcolm, HISTORY OF PERSIA, VOL. 1.

was diverted from this by his brother, Agreras, who persuaded him to be satisfied with confining them in the fortress of Sari, in Mazandaran.

KAYANIANS. We come to the Kayanian dynasty, famous in Iranian History for the great national heroes who fought their country's battles.

The dynasty began with Kai-Kobad, known in Avesta as Kavi Kawata: incidentally 'Kavi' means poet of royal family as also intelligent. He was followed by Kai Kaoos, whose reign at the outset was most prosperous.

During the reign of Kai Kaoos, an event occurred which involved the Iranians and Tartars in long and costly wars. The Iranian monarch had married a niece of Afrasiab and had by her a son, called Siawush, whom he entrusted to Rustam to educate. This prince is said to have been remarkable for his mental endowments and his personal beauty. The fair Sudaba, the daughter of the King of Hamaveran was not restrained by her marriage with Kai Kaoos from becoming enamoured of her stepson Siawush. She made every effort to seduce the young prince, but in vain. Resentful of the reproach which his virtue cast on her conduct she accused him before Kai Kaoos of an attempt to violate her person. The old king, judging from the contrast in their appearance, the queen being dressed in a rich and voluptuous manner, and the prince in his usual plain and unadorned attire, deemed her the tempter, and refused to listen to her complaint. The irritated Sudaba soon afterwards made another attempt to ruin the prince, saying that he had disgraced the Haram by his intimacy with one of his father's ladies. From this second charge Siawush cleared himself by passing through fire. He not only came out unhurt from this dangerous ordeal, but had the generosity to intercede with his father on behalf of his guilty accuser.

Afrasiab, who had long threatened another invasion of Iran, was at this period alarmed for his own safety. A large Iranian army had assembled; and his mind was shaken by a portentous dream, which some astrologers advised him to disregard, because they contended, such visions were always to be interpreted by contraries. But others on whom he had more reliance, told him that it foreboded evil, and earnestly entreated him not to prosecute the war. He listened to the advice of the latter, and made overtures for peace; they were accepted by Rustam and Siawush, who commanded the army appointed to act against him. However, they dictated very hard terms, compelling him to make great concessions, and to give one hundred hostages for the faithful performance of his engagement. Kai

Kaoos, who had heard of Afrasiab's dream, and expected nothing less than his head, was displeased at the peace; and after ordering Siawush to send the hostages to court, gave the command of the army to Toos whom he directed to recommence the war. Siawush was so indignant at his father's dishonourable conduct, that he sent back all the hostages to Afrasiab, and joined that prince himself, declaring that he would never be a party to so faithless and shameless a proceeding. The monarch of Tartary received the young prince with joy, called him his son, and vowed eternal war against the tyrant, Kai Kaoos. Siawush, in a letter to his father, ascribed his act to his dread of the intrigues of his mother-in-law Sudaba, whose active resentment, he said, made it impossible for him to preserve his honour and life at the Court of Iran. The self-exiled prince first married the daughter of Peran-Wisa, the vizier of Afrasiab; and afterwards, Feringees, the beautiful daughter of the monarch himself. With her he received the countries of Cheen (China) and Khoten as a dowry. There he retired to await patiently the death of his father. Siawush made Kung his capital, and employed himself in improving his dominions, but his success only excited the envy of several nobles of Tartary, and particularly of Gurseevas, the brother of Afrasiab, who incessantly endeavoured to injure Siawush, by trying to persuade his brother that the Iranian prince aimed at independence. Afrasiab was alive to the feeling of honour and hospitality, and it was long before he could be induced to lift his hand against a guest, who had sought his protection. He even desired, after he believed him guilty, to allow him to depart: but Gurseevas represented the foolishness of such clemency; and, indeed, its cruelty to the royal family of Tartary, which he urged, would be exposed to the future attacks of a powerful monarch, not only thoroughly acquainted with every part of their dominions, but popular with their subjects. These arguments at last prevailed; and the brave and generous Siawush was treacherously murdered by Afrasiab. Feringees, who was pregnant at this time, was sentenced to death by her father in order to avert that vengeance which he had such just cause to dread from her offspring. But the nobles of the court combined to prevent the execution of this horrid purpose. She was delivered over to Peran-Wisa, who was directed to destroy her child the moment it was born. But the heart of the minister revolted at such an act, and when Feringees was delivered of a son, Peran-Wisa made it over to a shepherd, informing Afrasiab that he had directed it to be exposed in a desert. He named the child Kai Khoosroo, and took care that he should have secretly an education suited to his high birth and future destiny. Rumours that his grandson was alive reached the ear of Afrasiab, who questioned Peran-Wisa on the subject. The minister said he had heard that a shepherd had found the child, and brought it up, but that it had proved to be an idiot. The

king desired to see it, and Kai Khoosroo made his appearance, after being instructed by Peran-Wisa as to his behaviour. "Conduct yourself," he said to the royal boy, "before Afrasiab as a stranger, and let folly only escape from your lips". The young prince acted his part to perfection. To every question he returned an answer, so nonsensical and ridiculous, that the court was convulsed with laughter. Even Afrasiab ceased to be alarmed. "That poor foolish child," said he, "and its mother, may hereafter live in peace at the Mausoleum of Siawush."

The murder of Siawush excited the most lively indignation in Iran. Kai Kaoos collected an army to avenge the blood of his son, and sent to solicit Rustam to take the command of his troops. The only condition on which that chief would accede to his proposal, was the death of Sudaba, to whose wicked passion he ascribed all the misfortunes of Siawush. With this demand Kai Kaoos was compelled, though reluctantly, to comply; and Rustam marched towards the enemy. Afrasiab sent his general, Soorkhe, with thirty thousand men to oppose him. This force was defeated by the advanced guard of the Persian army under Feramurz, the son of Rustam. The general of the army of Tartary was slain, and his head sent to Kai Kaoos. Afrasiab on hearing this took the field in person, and in the first battle a celebrated combat took place between Rustam and a hero called Peelsoom, who had overthrown two Iranian chiefs. This champion, to whom if victorious Afrasiab had promised half his dominion, was discomfited with disgrace, and thrown into his own ranks from the point of Rustam's spear, which had only pierced his girdle. After this combat, it was in vain that Afrasiab called upon his nobles to enter the lists against Rustam. Maddeened by their refusal, he determined on a trial of his own prowess, but was unhorsed, and his life was only preserved by the most desperate efforts of his troops. A general engagement now took place, in which the Iranians were victorious, and pursued their enemies nine or ten miles from the field of battle. Afrasiab in his retreat sent for Kai Khoosroo, and, we are told, desired to slay him: he was however prevented by the suggestions of Peran-Wisa, who represented that such an act would tarnish all the glory he had acquired, and prevailed upon him to adopt the more moderate course of sending the royal youth beyond the sea of China, to a country from where he could never expect to return. Afrasiab was compelled to flee from his own dominions, over which Rustam exercised sovereign sway for seven years. After that period, he committed the charge to his son, Feramurz, and returned to the court of Kai Kaoos.

Every effort was made to discover Kai Khoosroo; and Geev, one of the most renowned Iranian warriors, travelled all over China, defeated

numerous armies, and performed a thousand wonders before he completed this great adventure. When the young prince was at last restored to his aged grandfather, the latter overcome with joy descended from his throne, placed Kai Khoosroo upon it, and directed all to pay him their homage.

Kai Khoosroo fought many a battle with Afrasiab and eventually succeeded in killing the eternal enemy of Iran and soon after that event he resolved to devote the remainder of his life to religious retirement. He therefore resigned his throne to Lohrasp, the son-in-law of Kai Kaoos.

Kai Khoosroo lived ninety years, and reigned for sixty.*

Lohrasp, the successor of Kai Khoosroo, at first met with some opposition; but his virtues, the excellence of his civil institutions, and the discipline which he introduced into the army, soon established his authority. He obliged both the rulers of Tartary and of China (what we may now call Chinese Tartary) to do him homage.

He had a son called Gushtasp, who felt offended at his father Lohrasp for showing preference for the children of Kai Kaoos, and he connived at a plot against his father's power, and when this failed, he fled into the regions of the West, where he lived for some time in disguise.

It may be worthwhile here to quote the note by the able author Sir John Malcolm in his famous "History of Persia" on the words "in the regions of the West". "The Persian word is 'Room', a term adopted since the establishment of the eastern empire of the Romans. It may always be considered as a general and indefinite name by which Persian authors describe the provinces west of the Euphrates, to the shores of the Euxine and Mediterranean."

The Persians are too much addicted to literary embellishment to permit one of their royal race to wander without adventures; and according to popular accounts the elegant figure of Gushtasp caused the daughter of the Emperor of the West, the beautiful Katayoon to neglect all the noble youth of her own country, who had been commanded to display themselves under her balcony, in order that she might select a husband, and to throw an orange, as a mark of her selection, at the graceful stranger. The Emperor was enraged at her mean choice; and,

* Malcolm, HISTORY OF PERSIA.

though forced to comply with what had been an established usage of the empire, he abolished it from that instant, and banished his daughter to the low dwelling of her husband. The same fable states that the emperor proclaimed, that the hands of his two remaining daughters should be given to whoever slew a lion and a dragon, at that period the terror of the kingdom. Two princes who loved the princesses, but dreaded the conflict with such monsters, applied to Gushtasp, whose fame for courage had spread around, and that hero overcame both the lion and the dragon; while the lovers, assuming the merit of these actions, married their mistresses. The emperor soon afterwards discovered the truth, and showered favours upon Gushtasp, whom he appointed the leader of his forces. The fame of the young prince spread to Persia: Lohrasp, alarmed at the approach of a foreign army, headed by the heir to the throne, gave the command of his troops to his second son, Zareer; to whom he also entrusted his crown, and he directed him to place it upon the head of his brother whenever they met. Gushtasp, when the armies approached, did not hesitate to visit the camp of his countrymen; he was instantly hailed as their king, and informed by Zareer of the commands of his father. He wrote to the emperor, whom he served, to entreat his presence, and assured him that everything should be settled according to his wish. The monarch came, and found his son-in-law seated on a throne, the acknowledged sovereign of Persia. After this interview, at which peace between the two nations was concluded, Gushtasp marched with his princess to Persia, and became a faithful servant to his father, who declared him his successor, and in a short time gave over to him the charge of the empire, choosing to end his own days in pious retirement.

The reign of Gushtasp is particularly renowned because it was the period in which Zoroaster, the Prophet of Ancient Iran, was born; it was he who gave a new and true religion to the Iranians of his day. His reign is also known by tradition, as beautifully depicted by Firdausi, to have much glory due to the successes in capturing various countries by his son, Asfandiyar and converting the inhabitants to the faith of Zarathushtra, as a zealous disciple of that Prophet. But his reign also was full of tragedy, inasmuch as not only did he lose all his other sons during his lifetime in the war, but that having hesitated in surrendering the reins of his kingdom to his son, in the same way as his father had done in his own case, he lost him in the end most tragically, at the hands of the hero, Rustam, of whom detailed mention is made in the Chapter on *Shahnama*—The Great Persian Epic.

Chapter II

ZARATHUSHTRA THE PROPHET OF ANCIENT IRAN

"Should we indeed in a future world be permitted to hold high converse with the great departed, it may chance that in the Bactrian Sage who lived and taught almost before the dawn of history, we may find the spiritual patriarch, to whose lessons we have owed such a portion of our intellectual inheritance, that we might hardly conceive what human belief would be now, had Zoroaster never existed."

Miss Frances P. Cobbe

"Essays Moral and Ethical"

"Ushtano * Jato Aathrava Yo Spitaamo Zarathushtro".

(Hail-for us is born the Aathravan, Spitama Zarathushtra.)

Thus sang the priest, more than three thousand years ago to express joy of the world then, wherein humanity greatly rejoiced and offered its heartfelt thanks to The Almighty, for having given birth to the holy Prophet Zarathushtra, of the (famous and renowned) clan of Spitama.

But it is an irony of fate that scholars all over the world who have delved deep into the sacred books of the religion of the Parsees, have not yet been able to give for certain the year of the birth of this truly first messenger of God in Iran and the first monotheist of the world, neither of the exact place of his birth nor the place of his death.

Amongst those who have written about Zarathushtra are people of diverse faiths and nationalities, such as Greeks, Romans, Christians, Indians, Hebrews, Arabs, Syrians, Armenians, Manichaens and Chinese, none of whom, despite many years of research, have been able to say anything accurately on these problems.

* Pronounced as "Ooshtano".

In fact there was a time when some European scholars began to doubt even the existence of a personality like Zarathushtra, whom they described as a mythological figure. But, as time passed and writings from all abovementioned nationalities came to light, there was no doubt left as to Zarathushtra being a real personage with a claim to the first Prophethood.

** The earliest Zoroastrian documents are the Gathas * written in Gathic dialect, but whereas the pre-Gathic religion of Iran is the evolution of religious thoughts of many men and many ages, Zoroastrian religion is the creation of one man and one age.†* *→ one universe*

European writers are in doubt as to which of the six philosophers, who bore at different times the name of Zarathushtra, should be selected as the Law-Giver of the Parsees. One is described as a Chaldean or Assyrian; another as a Bactrian, a third as a Pamphylian, a fourth as an Armenian, a fifth as a Medean and a sixth as a Persian.

Of all these the one who is especially recognised as the Law-Giver of the Parsees has been given various names, such as Zaras, Zaratas, Zaratust and Zoroaster, in place of the original name Zarathushtra. The name Zoroaster given by the Greeks has remained fixed in Western history. In fact scholars differ in their derivation of the word "Zoroaster".

Of all the accounts of Zarathushtra given in Pahlavi, Pazand, Persian and Gujarati languages, the most reliable account is to be had in the Avesta. Incidentally, Avesta is not only the name of a language, but also the name of the scripture written in that language in which Zarathushtra himself recited his Gathas, the divine songs which present themselves as an autobiographical record of a great soul struggling to maintain itself in its newly won enlightenment of the true nature of Godhead as Ahura Mazda.

As to when he was born, scholars have upto now differed so widely in their opinion, that they have variously placed his birth from about 600 B. C. to 6000 B. C. 'Both the classical date 6000 B.C. and the national traditional date 600 B.C. are not acceptable', says the late reverend and learned Dastur Dr. Dhalla, the High Priest of the Parsees in Pakistan, 'one for its extravagance, the other for its unreliability.' 'The date as well as the place of the birth (and death) of Zarathushtra will probably never be established with any certainty, for no data exists to enable us to determine

* Pronounced as "Gaathaas".

† Dastoor Dr. Dhalla - Zoroastrian Theology.

them with any accuracy', says the same great Parsee savant, who adds humourously that, like the Pahlavi writers of the Zoroastrian lore, we shall have to content ourselves by repeating "Am la roshan" (I don't know). But the consensus of opinion places the probable date of Zarathushtra's birth round about 1000 B.C., that is, some three thousand years ago.

Dr. Martin Haug, a famous scholar of Zoroastrian sacred literature, says "Under no circumstances can we assign him a later date than B.C. 1000 and one may find reasons even for placing his era much earlier."

The famous Parsee oriental scholar, the late Mr. Khursedji Rustomji Cama, on the authority of Greek and Jewish writers and on that of the cuneiform inscriptions, has very clearly and convincingly shown in his book entitled, "Zarthost-Nama" (Life of Zoroaster) in Gujrati, that Zarathushtra lived at least 1300 years before Christ or nearly 3262 years ago from now.

Before the light of new scholarship fell upon this point, the time of his birth, placed by scholars, has upto now differed very widely. This mistake arose from the fact that the Kayanian King, Vistasp, commonly known to the Parsees as Gushtasp†, mentioned in the Shahnama, in whose reign the Prophet flourished, was mistaken by the Greeks for Darius Hytaspes, the well known king of the later Achaemenian dynasty, who lived about 521 B.C. Not only did the two kings belong to different dynasties, but the latest researches have shown that a period of more than eight hundred years intervened between them. This rectification affixed also the earliest possible date to the reign of Gushtasp and, in consequence, gave the birth of Zarathushtra as 1300 B.C. *

In the Vandidad, the nineteenth book out of the twenty-one supposed to have been housed in the famous Library of Ganj-i-Chapigan¹ (Royal Treasure House) in the palace of Persepolis, the house of the father of Zarathushtra is described as being on the bank of the River Darzik or Darazia, flowing from Mount Jabar, in the city of Ra-e, in Iran Vaej (Iran—Persia). Ra-e, which is known by the name of Ragha in the ancient Avesta, is some twenty miles north of modern Teheran, the capital city of Iran. While describing Iran Vaej, the Vandidad narrates that the country experienced ten months of bitter cold and two months of warm weather.

† Pronounced as "Gooshtaasp".

* See Appendix A - for different versions regarding the Age of Zarathushtra.

1. Pronounced as "Shapigan".

As to Zarathushtra's family, the Avesta says he had one wife by name HVOVI, a daughter of Frashoshtra. Three names are traceable from the Avesta of his daughters, namely, Frenee,¹ Thrilee and Pourucheestee. Regarding his sons, Bundahishn mentions three names, viz. Isat-Vastra, Urvatatnara and Khurshed-Cheher. (A.V. Hvarechithra).

Nothing is known for certain about his sons in the Avesta. The only authentic information that is available in the Gathas, is about Pourucheestee, his daughter, during whose wedding Zarathushtra showers blessings on the marrying couple and gives them sound advice as under:—

"May you two enjoy the life of good mind by following the laws of religion. Let each one of you clothe the other with righteousness. Then assuredly there will be a happy life for you."

Yasna 53.

Zarathushtra's father's name is given in the Avesta as Paurush-Aspa of the clan of Spitama or Haechat-Aspa. But strangely enough nowhere in the Avesta is mentioned the name of Zarathushtra's mother, which from later Pahlavi books is found to be Dughdo.

Scholars have tried to seek the meaning of the word Zarathushtra, though without any unanimity. The French Professor Burnouf divides the word into Zarath and Ushtra. Zarath meaning Yellow, and Ushtra meaning Camel; in other words, "Owner of Yellow Camels." Professor Lassen divides the word into Zar and Thushtra. Zar meaning Gold, and Thushtra meaning Star, and describes him as a Golden Star amongst men.

Now there is no word 'Thushtra' in the Avesta, and if we substitute the word 'Thwaresht' of the Avesta meaning 'The Maker', the name would mean 'Goldsmith'. But against this the argument is the fact that in the time of Zarathushtra there were only four trade classes in existence, as we have mentioned on page 2, namely Athravan, Ratheshtar, Vashtriosh and Hutaokshas. Thus, the meaning derived by Lassen has serious objections from the philological point of view. There is no doubt, however, as to the fact that in ancient times, particularly in the times of Zarathushtra a man's wealth was counted by the number of cows, horses, sheep or camels that he possessed, and the names of persons were derived from their trade.

1. Pronounced as "Fray-nee".

For instance, names such as A-ve-re Gao, Parot Gao, Yatush Gao, denote that these persons were possessors of, or traders in, cows from the Persian word 'Gow' meaning 'Cow'. Similarly Kersh-Aspa, Jam-Aspa, Paorush Aspa, Visht-Aspa, denote, possessors of horses, from the Persian word 'Asp' meaning horse. Similarly with the names Arv-Ushtra, Frash-Ushtra and Vahu-Ushtra, Ushtra clearly means camel, hence the names signify the possessors of camels; and so the name Zarathushtra signifies, according to Bornouf, the owner of camels.

On the other hand the ~~Greeks from the word 'Astra' meaning Star,~~
~~have given Zarathushtra the name Zoroaster implying as a Star Gazer or~~
~~Astrologer.~~ *

* But as we have seen before, scholars are not unanimous on the derivation of the word, though the Parsees think it likely that the name Zarathushtra is derived due to the Prophet or his ancestors having a number of camels in their possession as stock-in-trade.

Zarathushtra's childhood is associated with a number of miraculous events. In this connection Professor A.V. Williams Jackson, the famous scholar and author of the masterly book, "Zoroaster, the Prophet of Ancient Iran", says in the beginning of the third chapter of that book, on the early life and religious preparation of Zarathushtra:-

"The coming of a prophet or great teacher seems at times in the world's history to be looked for instinctively. We may see the truth of this statement exemplified in our own Gospels when the disciple asks of the Saviour, "Art thou He that should come, or do we look for another?". And when a blessed Master is at last recognised, the generations vie with each other in repeating how his advent was foretold. In the Zoroastrian scriptures, passages are adduced to show that the Sage's coming had been predicted ages before. In the Avestan Gathas and in Pahlavi literature the soul of the mythical primeval bull, three thousand years before the revelation of the religion, beholds a vision in heaven of the fravashi or ideal image of the Prophet Zarathushtra, Zaratusht, that is to be."

"The Master is endowed with divine sacerdotal and kingly Glory—what is mentioned in Avesta as Hvarenah. This Glory first descends from the presence of Ahuramazd, where it abides in the eternal light; it passes

* Zarthosht-Namoon (in Gujrati) by K.R. Cama.

through heaven down to earth, and it enters the house where the future Zarathusht's mother herself is about to be born. Uniting itself with her presence it abides in her until she reaches the age of fifteen, when she brings forth her own first born, the prophet of Iran. But before this event, as a girl she became so transcendent in splendour by reason of the miraculous nimbus of the Glory that resided in her, that, at the instigation of the demons, her father is convinced that she is bewitched, and he sends her away from his home to the country of the Spitamas, in the district of Alak or Arak, to the village of Patiragtaraspo, whose son Porushaspo, she marries. The Glory is there, upon earth, ready to appear in the form of man. Such at least is the scriptural account found in the Dinkart".

Further, says Professor Jackson, in every religion, the birth of its founder must be heralded by supernatural signs and omens, and accompanied by wonders and prodigies. A star appears, a comet blazes forth, or the earth is shaken, and thus, in the Avesta all nature rejoices at Zarathushtra's birth; the very trees and rivers share in the universal thrill of gladness that shoots through the world; while Ahriman and the terrorstricken demons take flight into the depth of the earth. Pliny the elder records the tradition that Zarathushtra laughed at his birth, instead of crying as ordinary children do; and he adds further that the child's brain throbbed so violently, that it repelled the hand laid upon his head: as pre-sage of future wisdom.

And then are described miraculous escapes of the child Zarathushtra: that he was carried away by the demon-worshippers and cast before a herd of cows, horses and wolves in turn. It is vividly described in Pahlavi writings, how one cow out of the herd stood over the child and covered it completely, thus letting the rest of the herd pass on, while the child remained smiling on the ground and was later picked up by his mother. Similarly the wolves, as they dashed forward to devour the child in their den, were all paralysed and could not move an inch forward, until the child was rescued.

Before Zarathushtra was seven years of age his father Porushaspo had placed him in the care of a wise and learned man by name Burzin-Kurus. Not much is to be gleaned from the extant literature on the Zoroastrian religion as to the early education that Zarathushtra was given, but it is mentioned that at the age of fifteen, which in the Avesta was regarded as an ideal age or the age of majority, when his brothers demanded a portion from their father, and their portions were allotted by him, Zarathushtra chose a girdle which signifies the sacred girdle of religion,

known by the Parsees as Kusti. Even at the early age of fifteen, Zarathushtra showed his preference for spiritual matters.

At the age of twenty, abandoning worldly desires and seeking righteousness, he leaves his father's house and wanders forth into the mountains, engaging himself in meditation, reflection and religious preparation. Often he exclaims with eyes upturned and arms outstretched, "Tell me aright, O Ahura, who created the earth and the skies above? Who made the waters and the trees in the fields? Who created the lights of good effect and the darkness? Who created morning, noon and night?"

Pliny says in his account that for twenty years Zarathushtra lived in desert places, living upon cheese. According to other Greek writers he passed his time in a mountain, in a natural cave which he had symbolically adorned in such a manner as to represent the world and the heavenly bodies.

"Zarathushtra is athirst for divine wisdom which is the only object of his quest", writes Shams-ul-Ulema Dastur Dr. M.N. Dhalla, M.A., Ph.D., Litt. D., in his "Zoroastrian Civilisation", and he continues "His one prayer is to hear the message of Mazda from His very mouth. Long does he seek, amid sweet silence, to commune with the godhead, to lift the veil of secrecy, and delve in the mysteries of being. For this purpose he leaves the company of man, and the busy world of noise and bustle, and repairs to the solitude of the mountains, unfrequented by men, yet swarming with exuberant life, and there makes himself an abode. At early dawn, while the world is still asleep, the seeker after truth is seen strolling down the silent path, whitened by the soft silvery sheen of the queen of night. At the foot of the mountain, washed by the meandering waters of the stream, Zarathushtra spends the hour of the dawn in the stillness, scanning the blue vault of heaven and watching the stars that patrol the sky, and meditating deeply. Humanity is still slumbering, regardless of the rousing cry of the cock Parodarsh, but the birds have left their nests to begin their day's work. They have come to the stream to bathe and to drink. Fishes sport themselves in water and ducks are rocking smoothly on the waves. The breeze wafts the sweet perfume of the flowers all round. The fragrance of the wild rose woos the nightingale into love, and he mingles his melody with her sweet perfume. In this sanctuary of nature, the prophet lifts up his heart to heaven, and pours out his spirit before Ahura Mazda, who fills all space. He makes unto him songs of devotion, to the murmuring music of the gently flowing waters, the carols of birds, and the whisperings of the winds moving through the thick foliage. Thus he

prays, and, praying implores that Ahura Mazda should take him to Himself, to meet one little moment and speak to him by the word of His mouth about the mystery of life. The earth now drops the silvery robe, which she had donned at night, and the high mountain is soon crested with the light of the swift-horsed Hvarekhshaeta. But Zarathushtra is still there, lost in deep thought, letting his soul fly on the wings of pious contemplation and storing inspiring thoughts that come to him in a flash. With a yearning, which is never stilled, he thirsts for the vision divine, and communion, with the All-Holy. When the longing for Ahura Mazda possesses him completely and the divine spark hiding in his heart is fanned into flame, his mind is enlightened, his soul is on fire, and he begins to see more and more of Ahura Mazda, within him and without him. Nature, he realizes, throbs with the message of Mazda, which His divine hand had written on plants and trees, on pebbles and sands, on rainbows and dew-drops, in gentle shades, on the fleecy clouds that descend upon the lofty summits of the hills, after their wanderings above, and in glorious colours of luxuriant nature. The blessed one devoutly embraces the earthly manifestation of the divine, and touches the fringe of the resplendent raiment of the creator, of whom the whole creation breathes. Long has Zarathushtra now lived in solitude, seeking to fathom the secret of existence. He has solved the great problems of life; the truth has dawned on him. On him now dwells the sweet smile of Ahura Mazda, whose message of hope he is ready to deliver to mankind. Possessed of wisdom and the knowledge of truth, so long the objects of his quest, he now turns his steps towards his father's house.

It is painful to be at variance with one's own kinsmen, over religious beliefs, and Zarathushtra soon rouses suspicion and alarm among his kinsmen, by his utterances. They join his opponents in denouncing the holy one, as a rebel, against their ancestral faith. Driven out from home and deserted by friends, with rulers and people for his opponents, without means and without support, the prophet is seen wending his weary way alone. While his wealthy fellow-tribesmen are revelling in superfluous riches and feasting to satiety, the greatest of the Iranians lacks the barest necessities of life. With anguish rending his heart, and sorrow weighing upon his soul, he battles with privation and sufferings, and labours in far lands, to persuade men and women to hear his message. Footsore with his wanderings, exhausted and broken under the fatigues of the day, he walks the silent streets in search of some hovel, or the shade of a hospitable tree, to repose, when the night throws her dark mantle over the earth. When dawn breaks again on the heights of Haraberezaiti, and the lofty mountain glows with beauty, in the light of the rising sun, whose rays

gild the dewdrops, forsaken Zarathushtra treads with weary steps a way-side path, leading to some village, praying all the way for a better reception. With clarion voice he begins to chant the holy songs to attract the people, when he reaches the outskirts of the village. The barking of the shepherd dogs disturbs the peace of the village, the farmers leave their ploughs, and the rustic women with their children hasten to the scene. A little while and they have heard enough. The elders of the village gravely shake their heads and declare the newcomer a sorcerer, whose very look, they aver, would wither their crops, and dry up the milk in their cattle and plague them with diseases. They demand that he leave the place at once. The women begin to curse him loudly, and the village urchins, emboldened by their example, pelt him with stones, and do not rest until they have seen the stranger beyond the borders of their village.

Thus, with keen sense of indignities, and humiliation rankling in his mind, and with none to lighten his sufferings upon earth, he lifts his spirit to Ahura Mazda, unburdening himself of his afflictions before Him, and beseeching Him to grant the support which one friend gives to another.

It took him ten long years of trial and tribulation, before he managed to gain one convert to his faith, the first one Madeo-Mah, his first cousin. But that was not all that Zarathushtra longed for, and so he took his weary steps to the Court of King Vishtaspa in Bactria, and in so doing crossed the River Darzik. The gates of the royal palace are zealously guarded and the lord of the land receives none, but the great. Although, after his death Zarathushtra comes to be regarded in Iran as the greatest of mortals, even as the star Tishtrya is above all stars in brightness, the people of Iran are not yet aware of his sublime pre-eminence. He is poor and a stranger, with none to recommend his name to the royal ear. It is only the portals of the abode of Ahura Mazda that are open to all comers. The poorest can approach the King of Kings, and the lowliest can kiss the robe of Divine Majesty. Not so with the human king. The crowd must linger by the wayside and hail its sovereign liege, when the royal pageant passes. The herald of Ahura lingered and waited, until on one auspicious day, he found himself ushered into the royal presence. The charming personality of Zarathushtra, the sweetness of his character and the words of wisdom, such as human ears had not heard before, most favourably impressed the king and queen and the courtiers. The royal personages and the court, forsook the religion of their fathers, for the faith of the prophet, and he was now honoured and greeted by a daily increasing number of followers.

But the growing success of Zarathushtra is not viewed with pleasure by all. There are hypocritical priests, fattening themselves by preying upon the credulity of the ignorant and wicked chiefs, revelling in their iniquity, who view the popularity of the prophet with alarm. It makes them writhe with jealousy, and with falsehood upon their lips, they conspire to encompass the fall of the holy one, when he thinks his troubles are sleeping, never to reawaken. Ultimately they succeed, by means of cunning tactics, slander and guile in having Zarathushtra imprisoned on a charge of sorcery.

The misfortune that can wring tears from the eyes of any man, is now his lot. But the solitude of the prison has no terror for him, and he utters not a sigh, nor does he weep aside. He knows that he is not alone, for Ahura Mazda now dwells with him and he is strong in Ahura Mazda. Although given up by his misguided countrymen, and with a host of enemies against him, he feels that with Mazda for him, there is none against him. *

Tradition further says that the favourite horse of the king developed an illness, whereby all his four legs became stiff as if paralysed. The King Vishtaspa searched far and wide throughout his kingdom for doctors and vets to cure the horse of its malady. But none succeeded, and the king was despondent and heart-broken. It suddenly occurred to him to test Zarathushtra's divine powers. He offered him release, on condition that he cured his favourite animal. Zarathushtra agreed, provided the king with his queen and his courtiers agreed to renounce their religion, which was mostly made up of superstition, sorcery and devil worship. Further that they accept his faith in monotheism, that is, in the worship of one God and one alone, whom he named Ahura Mazda, (the wise Lord). The king accepted the terms. Tradition has it, that the whole court rejoiced when Zarathushtra prayed to Ahura Mazda and cured the animal. From that day onwards with the conversion of the king and the queen as also the courtiers, Zarathushtra's ambition was fulfilled, and he travelled far and wide over Iran, proclaiming Mazda worship and converting large numbers of men and women to his fold. The king became zealous, and ordered his son Asfandiyar to carry the flag of Zoroastrianism to various countries surrounding Iran, and to bring the people to the fold of Zarathushtra.

The Shahnama describes many a battle that Asfandiyar fought for the newly adopted religion of Zarathushtra. We shall not go into details of those here. It would, however, be appropriate to quote here David Ammann who says:

* "Zoroastrian Civilization" Dr. M. N. Dhalla.

"Should modern science deem it worthy and be able to understand the real meaning of the spirit of the Avesta, it would soon find out that ZOROASTER knew of all the laws and operations of Nature far better than all the philosophers, scientists and astronomers of today. Galileo, Newton and Kepler would have had to learn from their master astronomer. Darwin would be put to shame if he understood the theory of evolution as taught by Zoroaster. Practically all the precepts of purity, all moral and religious exercises, all sacrifices and healing were based upon the deepest and profoundest studies of Nature's Laws in ALL domains, physical, spiritual and intellectual."

The Greek and Latin writers give a fabulous account of the passing of Zoroaster. For instance, "His is no ordinary end. He perishes by lightning or a flame from heaven, which recalls the descent of the fiery chariot and the whirlwind in the Apotheosis of Elijah", to quote Professor A.V. Wm. Jackson.

But the Parsee tradition with absolute uniformity makes his death to have occurred at the age of seventy-seven years, and ascribes it to a Turanian by name Turbaratur, in Balkh (Bactria).

Chapter III

THE CULT OF FIRE

X The Prophet of Iran found the cult of fire already established in his country, when he entered upon his divine mission on earth. Of all the elements he raised fire, or light, to a place of the highest distinction in his faith. Ahura Mazda is Eternal Light—His very nature is light—He lives in the everlasting lights of the highest heavens. No wonder then, if the Prophet of ancient Iran made fire the sacred symbol of his religion, a symbol which in point of sublimity, grandeur and purity, or in its being the nearest earthly image of the Heavenly Lord, is unequalled by any of its kinds in the world. For this the Parsees are dubbed Fire-worshippers, to counter which it will be appropriate to quote opinions of various thinkers outside the Zoroastrian faith.

First of all Firdausi, a Poet, a Mussalman by birth, who left behind him the immortal Shahnama, in the Persian language, a thousand years ago, says:

*"Ma goo ee ke atash parastan budand
Parastandeh-e-pak yazdan-budand."*

X "Say not that they are worshippers of Fire,
They worship God alone, the Almighty Sire."

In their prayers in praise of fire, which the Parsees recite every day, at least twice, they say "Athro Ahur-e-Mazdao-Puthra", that is Fire, son of Ahura Mazda.

In this connection the Parsee scholar, the late Mr. Kharsedjee Rustomji Cama says: "Without heat the world would not exist. The soul (Av. ooshtan) in the human body is due to heat, and the moment the heat is

* Mr. P.B. Vacha, M.A., LL.D., Advocate, who is a great student of Firdousi's SHAHNAMA, says the above verse is in point of fact an interpolation. What Firdousi actually wrote in a different context was this:—

*Taki haft-e-dar Pish-e Yazdan budand
Magoose ke aatash parastan budand
Ke-aatash daran gaah meheraab bood
Parastandeh-ra deed-e poraab bood.*

"For a whole week they prayed before Almighty Yazdan; do not say that they were fire-worshippers. For in that age Fire was their Mehrab, (the arch in a mosque indicating the direction of Mecca towards which the devout Muslim turns while saying his prayers) and the weeping worshipper turned towards it (The fire altar)."

gone, the soul departs." "Therefore", says he, "the best emblem is the Sun (Mithra) which is the body of Ahura Mazda, before which the Parsees stand and offer prayers to Ahura Mazda." "In fact", says he, "according to Yasna-11, Sun is compared with the eye of Ahura Mazda."

It is not the material-object, be it fire or water or anything else, before which the Parsees worship, but they take these as symbols which help them to fix their diffused thoughts and lead them to a contemplation of God Who is being invoked or worshipped.

"Fire is the most perfect and unadulterated reflection in heaven as on earth of the One Flame", says Madame Blavatsky in her "The Secret Doctrine". "It is Life and Death, the Origin and End of every material thing. It is Divine Substance. Thus the Fire Worshippers, the Parsees, show more science in their creed than all the speculations of modern physics and learning."

In fact while the Parsees always reverence fire, they never worship it. The impression that the crowds of Parsee men, women and children, offering prayers near the seaside, facing the sun, one evening, at Bombay, made on Andrew Carnegie, the American Multi-millionaire, is worth quoting here:

"This evening we were surprised to see, as we strolled along the beach, more Parsees than ever before, and more Parsee ladies richly dressed all wending their way towards the sea. It was the first of the new moon, a period sacred to these worshippers of the elements; and here on the shore of the ocean, as the sun was sinking in the sea and the slender silver thread of the crescent Moon was faintly shining on the horizon, they congregated to perform their religious rites. Fire was there in its grandest form, the setting sun, and water in the vast expanse of the Indian ocean outstretched before them. The earth was under their feet and wafted across the sea, the air came laden with the perfumes of 'Araby the blest'. Surely, no time or place could be more fitly chosen than this for lifting up the soul to the realms beyond sense. I could not but participate with these worshippers in what was so grandly beautiful. There was no music save the solemn moan of the waves as they broke into foam on the beach. But where shall we find so mighty an organ, or so grand an anthem? How inexpressibly sublime, the scene appeared to me, and how insignificant and unworthy of the

unknown, seemed even our cathedrals 'made with human hands', when compared with this, looking up through nature unto nature's God! I stood and drank in the serene happiness which seemed to fill the air. I have seen many modes and forms of worship—some disgusting, others saddening, and a few elevating when the organ pealed forth its tones, but all poor in comparison with this. Nor do I ever expect in all my life to witness a religious ceremony which will so powerfully affect me as that of the Parsees on the beach at Bombay."

In his book "Zoroaster and Christ", Bishop Meurin of the Roman Catholic community in Bombay, says, "Zoroaster restored not only the unity of God, but also the most ancient and characteristic Aryan form of divine service, THE WORSHIP OF FIRE, as the most suitable representative of God, corresponding to their high idea of God as Eternal Light. A pure and undefiled flame is certainly the most sublime natural representation of Him who is in Himself, Eternal Light. A glance at the ritual of the Church shows, then, that the very same position which our Aryan ancestors, following the light of reason, assigned to fire and light, in their divine worship, in order to represent God's divine majesty and His Presence among His worshippers, is likewise, and largely, given to the same convenient and delightful creature, as symbol of God's sublime splendour and living presence among his beloved children." He further states: "We have before us the sanctuary of the Parsee fire-temple and the sanctuary of the Christian Church. In both we see A PERPETUAL FLAME INDICATING THE PRESENCE OF GOD: there the omnipresence of God the Creator: here the omnipresence of God the Redeemer. I am unable to express in words the deep and vehement feelings which move my heart when I kneel in the sanctuary of my chapel and think of the Parsee fire-temple a few yards off, in which a fire is burning like the flame in our sanctuary lamp. Here is one of the similarities justly said to exist between the Parsee and Christian religions."

Gibbon in his famous "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" says, "The elements and more particularly fire, light and the sun whom the Persians call Mithra, were the objects of religious reverence, because they considered them as the purest symbols and noblest productions and the most powerful agents of the Divine Power and Nature."

Dozens of European scholars of great repute have lent credence to this belief and amongst them, Sir John Malcolm, in his splendid work on the History of Persia, acknowledges that the reproachful name of Fire

Worshippers is not merited by the Parsees, because, he says, Zarathushtra taught that God existed from all eternity and was alike infinite in time and space. There were, he averred, two principles in the universe: **Good and Evil**. Light was the type of good, darkness of the evil spirits, and God had said unto Zarathushtra, 'My light is concealed under all that shines.' Hence, the disciple of that Prophet, when he prays in a temple, turns towards the sacred Fire that burns upon its altar, and when in the open air, towards the sun, as the noblest of all lights and that by which God sheds his divine influence over the whole earth and perpetuates the works of his creation."

In this connection "The Sun is Matter, and the Sun is Spirit" says Madame Blavatsky in 'The Secret Doctrine', "our ancestors, 'Heathen', like their modern successors the Parsees, were, and are, wise enough in their generation to see in the symbol of Divinity, and at the same time to sense within, concealed by the physical symbol, the bright God of Spiritual and Terrestrial Light."

In Greece, it was taught by Aristotle, that Zeus was a name given to the Fire or Light of Heaven, and in a like manner Plato taught that the same Hestia (the Greek counterpart of Vesta) illuminated the humblest hut and the highest sky. And does not then Fire, or rather the Light in it, make us realise, as nothing else can, the omnipresence of the Divine Being; that He is as near to the highest as to the lowest, to the most learned as to the most ignorant, to the most saintly as to the most satanic of His beings?

Prof. Hegel makes a remarkable statement, viz: ".....Light is the body of Ormuzd; thence the worship of fire, because Ormuzd is present in all Light." *

* "The Message of Zarathushtra" by Prof. A.S. Wadia, M.A.

Chapter IV

MITHRAISM

Of all the Indo-Iranian divinities that have found their place in the Zoroastrian theology, Mithra (Sanskrit 'Mitra', Persian 'Mehr')—is the most prominent figure. In this connection Shams-ul-Ulema Dastur Dr. Dhalla says in his "History of Zoroastrianism," "After the separation of these two groups of Aryan people, Mithra rose to great eminence and was the premier divinity in West Iran when Zarathushtra preached his religion. During the period of Syncretism, after the passing away of the Prophet, Mithra became the most conspicuous angel of the younger Avestan period."

In Zoroastrian theology Mithra is simply a Yazata, a kind of angel, a power of light who fights on the side of Ahura Mazda. This war-like characteristic which he seems always to have retained, made his cult naturally spread with the Persian conquests, and in particular he reached the Euphrates Valley, where he was so long settled that several Greek and Roman Writers speak of him as an Assyrian god.

As a result of accretion of foreign worshippers, Mithraism took on the form of a mystery with more or less definite grades of initiation and ceremonials of purification, penance and so forth, appropriate to such a worship.

Mithraism was first transmitted to the Roman world during the first century B.C. by the Cilician pirates captured by Pompey. As late as the time of Augustus it was but little known in Roman territory and gained a firm foothold in Italy only gradually, as a result of Rome's increasing hold upon Asia. From the end of the second century the emperors encouraged Mithraism because of the support which it afforded to the divine right of monarchs. The Persians believed that the legitimate sovereign reigned by the grace of Ahura Mazda, whose favour was made manifest by the sending of the Hvareno, a kind of celestial aureole of fire, resulting in the doctrine that the sun was the giver of the Hvareno. Mithra, identified with Sol Invictus, thus became the giver of the authority and victory to the imperial house.

"In fact Julian the Apostate (A.D. 361-363) who was initiated into the mysteries of Mithra in his youth, considered himself under the protec-

tion of Mithra. As God is unknowable and unapproachable, Mithra acts as the mediator between God and mankind. In fact there is the esoteric side of Mithraism in which the aspirants of the Mithraic mysteries had to practice strict self-control. The neophytes had to undergo repeated lustrations and ablutions to cleanse their souls of sin. They had to live austere lives and perform elaborate occult ceremonies most scrupulously. There were seven degrees of initiation in which the mystic successively assumed the names of Ravan, Occult, Soldier, Lion, Persian, Runner of the Sun and Father and put on sacred marks appropriate to the names. He was made to undergo seven degrees of initiation to enable him to acquire wisdom and holiness. Only those that passed through all the seven degrees became participants in the mysteries.

"The Mithraic sanctuaries were in caves and grottos. Fire burned perpetually on the altar in the deep recesses of the sub-terranean crypts. Mithra presides over the tribunal that judges the souls on the Chinvat Bridge where, according to Zoroastrian theology, the human soul is led on the dawn of the fourth day of his death and, according to his good or bad actions during life, he either passes over this symbolic bridge on to heaven, or falls beneath into the dark caves of hell. It is here that Mithra presides over the tribunal that judges the souls. As the heavenly mediator he helps the good to ascend to heaven and welcomes them as children returning from a distant journey."

"Julian the Apostate mentioned above was the last pagan to occupy the throne of the Caesars, the last who was an ardent worshipper of Mithra. Mithraism which had originated among the enemies of Rome, remained her religion for 200 years. It fell when it lost the protection of the State.

The votaries of Mithra used to celebrate the birth of the sun on December 25, because at the winter solstice light triumphed over darkness and the lengthening of the day began. The Christians chose this day as the Feast of the Nativity of Christ, which is celebrated to this day." *

Thus it will be evident that Mithra worship has nothing in common with the Cult of Fire.

* Dastur Dr. Dhalla : 'History of Zoroastrianism'.

Chapter V

TEACHINGS OF ZARATHUSHTRA

"Aevo Pathao Yo Ashahe

Vispa Anyasam Apantam." (AV.)

"The Path is one, and that is of Righteousness!

All other paths are no paths."

Yasna HAA 72.

At the time of the advent of the Prophet of Ancient Iran, the religion amongst the people was that of Nature Worship, combined with superstition and idolatry. Even his own father was not free from the influence of the time; with the result that when young Zarathushtra began to deride these ways of worship, which he described as *Daevayasni*, he was at variance even with his own family, and had, therefore, to leave home and seek fresh fields to sow the seeds of his newly revealed religion, which he called *Mazdayasni*, *Mazda* being the name of God, promulgated by Zarathushtra.

Though a form of *Mazdayasni* religion was also prevalent before the advent of Zarathushtra, the reforms that Zarathushtra instituted made his followers call the religion *Mazdayasni Zarathushtris*, by which name the religion is known to this day.

Zarathushtra undoubtedly was the first Monotheist, whom the history of the world has recorded. The Holy Scriptures now extant are called the *Avesta* or commonly, the *Zend Avesta*; *Avesta* means the original Holy Text and *Zend* means its Commentary. They are written in a language which is decidedly the most ancient, the parent of all Iranian languages, and is commonly, though erroneously, called the *Zend*. The language is very much akin to the Vedic Sanskrit.

The *Avesta* seems to be a collection of writings composed by several hands in different ages in more than one dialect of the language, and to have been arranged in its present form in later times, chiefly for liturgical purposes.

It was not long before everything written in the Avesta language was believed to have been brought down as a whole, from heaven by Zarathushtra himself. But by the light of modern research, it has become clear that only some portions of the five Gathas are the genuine compositions of Zarathushtra Spitama, while the rest of the Avesta are the composition of the High Priests, his successors in office in more or less later times, after the death of the Prophet.

The Avesta as it now stands consists of the following books:-

(1) The Yasna, including the five Gathas or Sacred Hymns, (2) The Visparad, (3) the Vendidad, and (4) the Khordeh-Avesta.

The Gathas are five in number; their names are (1) Ahunavaiti, (2) Ushtavaiti, (3) Spentamainyu, (4) Vohukhsathra, and (5) Vahishtoishiti. These names are given to them from the initial word of each collection.

The Yasna, that is the book of sacrificial or liturgical prayers to be recited with certain ceremonies, is later than the Gathas. The prayers are a collection of seventy-two Haas or chapters, and include all the chapters of the above mentioned five Gathas. Some of the non-Gathic chapters are in prose and others in the later style of poetry.

The Visparad (that is all the chiefs) consists of the invocations of the Principal objects in each kind of creation, and the principal virtues, etc., and includes twenty-three kardaas or chapters. Its language is similar to that of the Yasna.

The Vendidad is a collection of sanitary and moral laws devised to resist the influences of the Daevas or evil, impure and harmful beings and things. It consists of twenty-two Fargards or chapters, written dialogically between Hormuzd and Zarathushtra, in a later prose style. It contains many purificatory, expiatory, punitive and similar kinds of laws. The purification imposed and prescribed is not only of the corporal human body, but also of the various natural elements, Earth, Water, Fire; also of domestic animals, and all that may have been infected by coming in contact with decomposing dead bodies, putrid matter and so on.

The Khordeh-Avesta, that is the smaller or minor Avesta or prayers, consists of Yashts, Nyaeshes, Afringaans, Gaahs, and other miscellaneous laudations.

There are in all twenty-two yashts. A yasht is a composition in praise, invocation and appreciation of a yazata, that is a holy Being worthy of homage, as Khurshed (the sun), Mah (the moon), Aavaan (waters) and so on.

A nyaesh is a small composition to be recited in praise of one or other of the five great natural creations, namely Khursheed (the sun), Meher (light preceding the rising of the sun), Mahbokhtaar (the moon), Aatash (fire) and Aavanarduisur (waters).

Afringaans are certain small chapters mostly extracted from the bulk of the Avesta to be recited in certain congregations called 'Myazd'. *

Gaahs are very small pieces containing simple praises of or invocations to invisible chiefs, believed to preside over the five parts or watches into which according to the Avestic system, the time of day and night is divided.

All the parts of the non-Gaathic Avesta, some of them whole and others fragmentary, though probably written by several persons at different times after Zoroaster, are undoubtedly prior to the time of the Achæmenians (B.C. 559-329).

In the later times, probably the Sasanian, in order to make at least the important points of old Avestic recitations intelligible to the reciter, several compositions in the Pazend language were added to the old Avestic ones. They are current among the Parsees.* *

The name of God in the Avesta is simply Mazda or Ahura Mazda. His character as depicted in the Gaathaas of Zoroaster and also in most of the subsequent writings of the Avesta and Pazend, is the highest and noblest conception of spiritual sublimity. He is represented as the Creator, the Supporter, and the Absolute Ruler of the Universe; the Maker of the Sun, the Moon, the Stars, the Heaven, the Earth, the Waters, the Trees, the Winds, the Clouds, Man; the Producer of the Day and Night; without beginning, and without end; All-pervading, All-wise, All-Powerful; the Righteous, the Undeceivable; Sole-worthy of Worship, the Highest, the Greatest, the Best; the Infallible Rewarder of all good deeds, the grea-

* Myazd - My to be pronounced as in ME. Azd as in Ago.

** "Zoroastrian Religion and Customs" by Ervad Sheriarji Dadabhai Barucha (3rd edition).

test Increaser; All-seeing; the Holiest, the Mightiest the Great Consoler in distress; the Greatest Helper of the helpless; the most Beneficent; the most Merciful; the Strongest; the Giver of strength; the Protector; the Nourisher; the Giver of victory; and so on.†

Zarathushtra felt a sense of frustration in a hostile world. In Yasna 46. 1 and 2 we find a poignant note of sorrow; "To what land shall I turn, whither shall I flee? I am severed from all classes of people; Kings have become slaves of falsehood. How shall I worship Thee, O Ahura Mazda?" Like a true Prophet of God, he desires to pass on his faith to others, but he would rather have them accept his message only after due thought. In Yasna 45. 1 he says: "I shall now speak forth. Listen unto me, ye, who have come from near and far. Think deeply over all this, Never let the teacher of Untruth deceive you. Let the voice of evil be silenced." In Yasna 45. 3 the Prophet says: "I will speak of that which Mazda Ahura, the all-knowing, revealed to me, first in this life. Those of you who put not into practice this word as I think and utter it, to them shall be woe at the end of Life." These are words uttered in humility but with a full consciousness of his divine mission. We do not find in them the blazing anger of Israel's Yahweh. There is just a plain statement, that those who will not listen to his words of wisdom, will live to rue their indifference."*

AMESHA-SPENTAS. Besides many other sublime attributes, applied to Ahura Mazda, there are six peculiar appellations called the Amesha-Spentas, that is The Holy Immortals, which make, as it were, a rosary of seven holy names. These are, with their literal meanings, as under:-

- (1) Ahura Mazda: The Living Wise or The Wise Lord.
- (2) Vohu Mano: The Good Mind.
- (3) Asha Vahishta: The Best Order or The Excellent Holiness.
- (4) Kshathra Vairya: The Absolute, The Approved Power.
- (5) Spenta Aramaiti: The Beneficent Love, The Holy Obedience, Perfection.
- (6) Haurvatat: The Wholeness.
- (7) Ameretat: The Immortality.

† "Zoroastrian Religion and Customs" by Ervad Sheriarji Dadabhai Bharucha.

* "Religion as A Quest for Values" by A. R. Wadia.

It is obvious, however, that these seven names denote the seven most sublime characteristics of Mazda. In selecting these from the other innumerable divine attributes, Zarathushtra apparently intended to impress the most original and striking of these attributes on the human mind, incapable as it is of itself of comprehending all the infinite attributes of divinity. Seeing that the One Supreme First Cause of all was most wisely ruling everywhere in the invisible or visible worlds—matter, mind, or spirit—always with benevolence, perfect right order and holiness, omnipotence, benevolent love and ever-lastingness, Zarathushtra chose these seven high and philosophical religious abstractions as the fittest attributes by which to celebrate Him.

Having arrived at the conclusion that the First Great Cause over all was ruling the universe most wisely, Zarathushtra called Him by the proper name of Mazda, The Wise. To illustrate the rule of the invisible and visible worlds by His absolute power, he employed Kshathra Vairya, The Absolute Power. The exhibition by the invisible and the visible worlds in all directions of his beneficent love naturally prompted the appellation of Spenta Armaiti, the Beneficent Submissive Mind; but because the First Cause pervaded the infinite space, he chose the word Haurvatat, the Wholeness, Infinity. Seeing that the First Cause always existed and will exist forever, he employed Ameretat, the Immortality. Thus the seven names of Amesha Spentas, the Holy Immortals, are symbolical of the attributes of the One Infinite and Eternal, in Whom is centred all existence visible and invisible.

Ignorance or oversight of the real meaning and connotation of these highly abstract philosophical notions gave rise in later times to the idea that these seven constructed a sort of a council of seven heavenly beings, six of them being archangels, with Ahura Mazda as their head.

A peculiarity of Zarathushtra's teaching is his earnest exhortation to his followers, not to take any dogma or doctrine on trust, or yield a blind and unreasoning submission thereto, but to derive personal conviction by careful and calm examination of everything by the light of the well ordered good, earnest and sincere mind and then accept or reject it as it directs. And so we read in the Gathas, Zarathushtra saying:

"Hear with your ears the best (sayings), see with your clear mind the beliefs of (your) choice, every man or woman to think for him or herself."

He emphatically denounces the worship of many gods and advocates unflinching adherence and submission to the worship of the one Ahura Mazda, the Wise Lord.

MAN—THE ARCHITECT OF HIS OWN SALVATION. A still more striking feature of the essentially practical and ennobling character of Zarathushtra's religion is its doctrine of Rewards and Punishments in the next world. He lays down in the clearest and most unequivocal terms that everyone has to be the architect of his own salvation, and will have to be judged rewarded or punished, solely according to his own deeds in this world, irrespective and independent of the merits of any intervening medium or saviour.

TIME. Time in the Avesta is mentioned as "Zravan Akarana" and 'Zravan Daregho-Khwadhata'. The first word means Time without bound, that is Eternity, and the second signifies 'Time with long periods', that is a portion of time carved out of Eternity.

The efficient cause of the world was evidently Ahura Mazda, and He is therefore called Datar, or Dadar, the Maker, the Producer, the Creator. He produced and gave form to every creation. What He first brought forth must have been the Atom, the particles which he put into the shape of creation. From this we infer that Zoroastrianism does not support the belief or doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*, but it teaches us that the material *impetrative* cause of the world was likewise supplied by the efficient original cause Himself.

THE DOCTRINE OF DUALITY. The most bewildering problem of life is that of the existence of evil. There is a bright as well as a dark side to creation. Man too has his noble as well as his ignoble side and inescapable dualism besets nature. All is not right with the universe, nor is it all wrong. With much that is good in it there is a good deal of evil, which cannot be ignored, or sophistically explained away as Maya or illusion; nor can it be tolerated in the spirit of a fatalist as an inscrutable decree of Providence.

The Prophet of Iran induced in his followers a militant instinct, a fervent longing to combat the evil spirit. Life thus becomes an interminable crusade against the forces of evil and imperfection. Not only man but the entire creation has to rise from the abyss of imperfection to the summit of perfection.

Zarathushtra found himself confronted by the problem of eternal conflict going on in the world, between good and evil, from the dawn of creation.

Says he in the Gathas:

"Now shall (I) speak of the Spirits twain at the first beginning of life, of whom the holier thus addressed the evil one. 'Never shall our minds harmonize, nor our doctrines, neither our aspirations, nor yet our beliefs. Neither our words nor yet our deeds, neither our hearts nor yet our souls'"

Yasna 45. 22

For the first time in the history of religion we see the philosophic doctrine of eternal polarism propounded by the Prophet of Ancient Iran, a doctrine, which far from inducing a belief in cosmic dualism served to reinforce the belief in uncompromising monotheism which was the keynote of his creed. Our sublunary world is, so to say, a battleground for the forces of good and evil. Both the principles are constantly at war in man as well as in creation. It is man's duty and highest wish on earth to rally to the banner of the King of Righteousness and to rout the forces of wickedness.

Unfortunately in the later Avesta, long after the death of Zarathushtra, Spenta Mainyu was confused with Ahura Mazda, the Creator, because Ahura Mazda, who is also known as Spentotemo Mainyu, was mixed up with His own divine Spirit that He had created, and which is known as Spento Mainyu. Therefore, in the later Avesta the idea prevailed as if Ahura Mazda, whom they took for Spento Mainyu was in eternal conflict with Angra Mainyu (Satan). Thus an idea was created that Ahura Mazda had an eternal rival, Angra Mainyu, and that the Zoroastrian religion admitted of two rival Gods fighting each other eternally.

This is a gross misconception of Zarathushtra's original idea, which distinctly clarifies that Ahura Mazda is the supreme Lord and He has created Spenta Mainyu, the Good Spirit, and Angra Mainyu, the Evil Spirit, and it is these two spirits who are eternally at variance with each other.

This misconception in the later Avesta, which has ever been the chief point assailed by the non-Zoroastrians, both in ancient and modern times, whenever they have entered into religious disputations with

the followers of the Prophet, was first brought to the notice of the Parsees by Dr. Martin Haug, and we hardly ever find even at this day any learned Parsee priest or layman marshalling arguments in vindication of the doctrine.*

Thus there is no room for Satan or Devil in Zoroastrian theology.

FATE OR FREE WILL. While many Asiatic religious and philosophical systems inspire and encourage a belief in the power of destiny and fate, and represent these as having been instrumental in producing the universe and governing the affairs not only of man but also of gods, and teach man to believe in the influence of stars and planets on human affairs, Zoroastrianism is wholly free from such delusive teaching. But in the later Sasanian times the influence of the baneful idea they derived from the close contact with the neighbouring religions, seems to have made itself felt among the followers of Zarathushtra, and to have interfered with the orthodox belief in the doctrine of free will.

To counteract the mischievous tendency of these influences, the thoughtful leaders of Mazdayasnian religion seem to have favoured a policy of practical compromise and to have taught that steady industry and strong will and determination will enable men to ward off and escape dangers which otherwise would befall, and that a life of sin and unrighteousness will bring about evils from which he would otherwise have been free, in no less degree than the intervention of the Almighty Being.

MAN, A COMPOUND OF MATERIAL AND SPIRITUAL PARTS. According to Zoroastrian Theology, man is represented as a compound of several physical and psychological parts, such as body, life and soul. His spiritual parts are immortal. They were created before his material and vital parts; they combine with his physical parts at his birth and separate at his death. His physical and vital parts are known as "Tanu" (Pers. Tan)—The Body, Gaya and Ushtana (Pers. Jan) life with their several sub-divisions. Of his spiritual parts, the principal are Urvan (Pers. Ruvan) the soul and Fravashi, the spirit, with their several faculties, such as "Manas", the mind: "Baodhas", consciousness; and so on.

The living body (Tanu) is to Urvan, the soul, and to Fravashi, the spirit, what an instrument is to the worker, or the horse to the rider, or the house to its master.

* "HISTORY OF ZOROASTRIANISM" by Dastur Dr. Dhalla.

The soul can best perform its duties, if the body be in full health. And as the health of the body is affected by its physical and vital surroundings, Zoroastrianism enjoins the duty of preserving and maintaining the health of the body. The maxim, "*Mens Sana in Corpore Sano*," may truly be said to be a distinctive feature of this religion.

Of the spiritual parts of man the most important are two: (1) *Urvan*, and (2) *The Fravashi*. The *Urvan* or soul is responsible for deeds done in the flesh. It is the soul which according to a man's deed, receives rewards or punishment after death. *

DEATH AND AFTER. The Parsees believe that at the dissolution of the body the soul is freed from its bodily prison. The journey towards the next world does not, however, begin immediately after death, for the separation of the soul from the body takes place by slow degrees. It requires a full three days and nights, before the last vestige of the earthly bondage perishes. During this period, the soul stays on earth and recounts the acts done during its life. It takes its seat near the spot where the head of the deceased rested before the corpse was removed to the Tower of Silence.

At dawn on the fourth day after death, the romantic journey of the soul begins and its voyage into the hereafter is described in allegorical and picturesque words.

The soul of the righteous one makes its triumphant ascent to heaven, wends its way among fragrant perfumes and in a wind that blows from the regions of the South; a sweet scented wind, sweeter scented by far than any which the soul ever inhaled on earth. There appears then to the soul its own *Daena*, or religious conscience, in the shape of a damsel of unsurpassed beauty, the fairest of the fair in the world. Dazzled by her matchless beauty, the soul halts and inquires who this image may be, the like of which it had neither seen nor heard of, in the material world. The apparition replies that she is the impersonation of the soul's own good thoughts, good words and good deeds in life. She is nothing more than the true reflex of its own character. For, when his friends and neighbours in the corporeal world indulged in wickedness, the spirit abiding in the true believer always embraced good thoughts, good words and good deeds. It was this righteousness of the soul that had made the *Daena* so lovely and so fair.

* "*Zoroastrian Religion and Customs*" by Ervad Sheriarji Dadabhai Bharucha.

This is a part of an allegorical soliloquy on the part of the soul in which the consciousness of its having led a virtuous life on earth, brings it inner joy in the future, and the sweet voice of conscience comforts. In its flight to heaven, which proves to be an eternal comfort, such a soul, redeemed by its piety on earth, is helped by Sraosha, Rashnu, Mithra, and the Fravashis of the righteous in its advance to the realms of final beatitude.

On the other hand, the soul of the wicked person is harassed by the thought of its wicked life, and marches at the end of the third night on the dreary and dreadful path through the most foul-scented wind, blowing from the northern regions. The full Avestan text is missing here, but we gather from a similar account of the wicked soul's journey, preserved in the Pahlavi scriptures, that the soul of the sinner is confronted by the personification of its own conscience in the shape of an ugly old woman who mercilessly taunts it for the wicked life it has led.*

FROM CHINVAT BRIDGE TO HEAVEN AND HELL. On the dawn of the fourth day after death, according to the Parsee belief, the soul must needs go to the bridge of judgment, known as Chinvat Bridge, before it can be admitted to the realm of the hereafter. Here, according to the deeds of the soul, good or bad, it is awarded heaven or hell. In the Gathas of Zarathushtra, a single heaven is referred to, but in the later Avestan period, four-fold divisions of heaven are mentioned, the last one being called Anaghra Raochah, or endless light. The generic name, however, for all the four heavens, is Vahishta Ahu, or Best Existence. This heavenly region is the shining and all happy abode of the righteous, and in Garonmana dwell Ahura Mazda and His heavenly retinue together with those human souls that have reached perfection through righteousness.

Vohumanah, the premier Archangel of Mazda, hails the pious souls on their arrival into paradise, and he, as the leader of the heavenly host, introduces them to Ahura Mazda and the other heavenly beings. The souls of the righteous persons that have departed from this world in earlier times, join furthermore in welcoming the newcomers in their midst. Simultaneously with the increase in the number of heavens, there is a corresponding increase in the list of hells. The Gathas knew but one hell. Incidentally, the Prophet's own idea, as expressed by him in the Gathas, of heaven and hell, is the mental aspect of the soul and not a concrete place marked out in the firmament or below it as heaven or hell.

* "ZOROASTRIAN THEOLOGY" by Dr. M. N. Dhalla.

SAOSHYANTS. Zarathushtra in his religion postulated a renovation of the universe, a new dispensation, in which the world will become perfect at the last day. The world progresses towards perfection. Iniquity and wrong are to be ultimately supplanted by equity and right. The world is to be restored to a veritable heaven on earth. The goodness of Ahura Mazda makes it imperative that the entire creation shall finally be saved. The texts speak of certain good souls three in number, including the Saviour paramount, that will usher in this period. These are called the Saoshyants in the Zoroastrian scriptures.

RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD. The preliminary work of the renovators is to raise again to life all those who have died from the time of Gayomard, the primeval man, down to the last man Soshyos and then give them their respective bodies. The dead will be made to rise from the places where they had yielded up their lives in the world.

When the Prophet asked Him how the bodies of the dead could be remoulded, when the material frames of the dead have perished and have been reduced to dust, Ahura Mazda replied that even as it was possible for him to have created something from nothing, when nothing at all existed, and as he was able to create the sky and the earth, the sun and moon, the stars, fire and water, clouds and wind, grain and mankind, and in fact everything that formerly had no existence, it would not be difficult for him at the Resurrection, known as Rastakhiz in the Zoroastrian terminology, to form a new something from what had already existed.

A further arraignment at the judgment seat now takes place. The righteous and wicked souls are now gathered together in one place, and are subject to a collective and universal judgment. The souls called together in this great and last judicial assembly, recognise each other, after the long separation. The father sees his son, and the brother greets his sister; the husband meets his wife and the relative welcomes his kinsman, and the friend inquires after the experiences of his friend. Everyone eagerly narrates his or her account of the joys and sorrows during the long period of separation from their comrades of the material world.

The entire creation of Ahura Mazda thus becomes virtuous. The wicked no longer remain wicked, but become righteous. All men now become of one will and remain of one accord, in the faith of Ahura Mazda, giving voice in song to the glory of their Lord. On no

account will their will, be in conflict with the divine will, but will ever coincide with it. They now live in the blessed company of Ahura Mazda and work to exalt His glory.*

FRAVASHIS. The Gathas do not mention the Fravashis. The later Avesta considers Fravashis as a class of higher intelligences, playing a most prominent part in the Mazdayasnian Pantheon, and receiving sacrifices and adorations from the world of humanity. They are known as guardian spirits and prototypes of mankind in its purest creation.

When a child is born, its Fravashi that has existed from all eternity, now comes down to this earth, as the higher double of the child's soul. The soul is the Ego proper, the real "I-ness". This Fravashi acts as a guardian spirit, a true friend and the unerring guide of the soul. Here is the divine voice of an infallible monitor who now advises and now admonishes the soul, now applauds its action and now raises its voice of warning at a threatening spiritual danger.

This divine agent in man, we may infer, sits enthroned by the side of the soul, as an ideal, ever-attracting the soul towards herself. Though living in the tabernacle of clay on earth with the soul and in the midst of the storms of passion and vice, the Fravashi remains unaffected and untouched, ever pure and ever sinless. From the time that the soul embarks on its unknown voyage to this world, as we can judge from Zoroastrian teachings, this Fravashi leads it day and night to the path of safety, and warns it of the rocks and storms and cyclones. If the soul is off the track of righteousness, the Fravashi warns it.

At the death of the individual, its guardian Fravashi returns to the celestial realm, but lives now an individualised life, as the Fravashi of a certain person who has lived his short span of life on earth.**

Unfortunately, due to misconception that took place in the later Avestan times, the Parsees believe that the departed souls come to this earth once a year, instead of their Fravashis, and the Parsee scholars are trying in vain to dissuade them from this wrong notion.

These ten days are solemnised in houses, where possible in separate rooms, which are white-washed and cleaned and where tables are laid, on

* "Zoroastrian Theology" by Dastur Dr. Dhalla.

** Ibid

which fragrant and beautiful flowers are put in silver or glass vases and a fire urn is kept, where sandal wood and frank-incense are offered and the whole atmosphere is permeated with pious thoughts, words and deeds.

"Such is a brief outline of the remanet—still magnificent in its ruins—of the ancient and venerable religion, which has survived the vicissitudes of time and the ravages of persecution, intolerance and fanaticism. The hoary antiquity of the religion of Zarathushtra, is now accepted as an acknowledged historical fact,....."†

The fact that the Jewish, the Christian and the Mohammedan religions have borrowed greatly from it, in one way or another, is also accepted.

† "Zoroastrian Religion and Customs" by Ervad Sheriarji Dadabhoy Bharucha (3rd Edition)

Chapter VI

THE ACHAEMENIAN DYNASTY

The Medes have left no records of their achievements, but these people were for the most part like the Persians, Indo-European in speech and Aryan in descent. They first appeared on the Assyrian inscription of Shalmaneser II about the year 840 B.C. on which they are called Amada and Matai. In an inscription of Rimmon-Nirari III (B.C. 810-781), they are named Mada (S.H.C.V. 26). From southern Russia they had migrated into Persia. They gradually established themselves in the country lying between Rhages and Ekbatana on the North-West of Perses. (1)

It is said that Mandan-e, the mother of Cyrus, was the daughter of the Median King Astyages. The Medians were cousins of the Persians, and they had a good deal of intimate connections. They had played a prominent part in conquering the Assyrian Kingdom, and became masters of a great dynasty.

The princess Mandan-e was married to the King Cambogiae. While she was pregnant Astyages called her away to his palace by some stratagem and in due course of time a healthy son was born to her. Astyages ordered his Premier Herpegas to put the child to death. The Prime Minister, not wishing to take the odium on himself, handed over the child to an officer by name Mithradatis, who was in charge of the zoo. Mithradatis also was most unwilling to do away with such a beautiful and healthy-looking child; and when on reaching his house, he found that his wife had just given birth to a still-born child, he substituted the child for his own and presented his still-born child before the Prime Minister.

The name of this healthy and good looking child of Mandan-e was Ka-Hurosh or Kurush; that name eventually became Kyrus and remained fixed in history as Cyrus.

Mithradatis kept the child secretly with him and brought him up. When Cyrus grew up, he showed his preference for the art of war, with the result that when for some reason or other, the Median King brought

(1) "Ancient Persia & The Parsees", by Jehangir B. Sanjana.

an invasion on Perses, Cyrus with his father, went out to meet the Medians and defeated them.

Though the old king of the Medians was made a prisoner, Cyrus treated him with respect, and gave him liberty on condition that he agreed not to treat the Persians as his enemies.

Thus Cyrus became the master of a new dynasty, which was named after his ancestors the Hakhaminish (Achaemenian).

But the Bactrians, who were amongst the bravest of the nations of the East, offered vigorous resistance to Cyrus. On learning, however, that he had married the daughter of Astyages, they abandoned resistance and accepted him as a legitimate successor of the last Median sovereign.

There was a custom among the ancient Assyrians and Babylonians forcefully to sweep away into slavery a portion of the conquered race, with a view to keeping them before their own eyes, and thus preventing them from breaking out into rebellion, says Prof. Firoz C. Davar in his "Iran and Its Culture", and continues, "The Jews had the misfortune to fall into captivity several times under the great King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, who conquered Jerusalem in 606 B.C. He carried away to the Capital many Jews in captivity."

The next captivity was on a large scale when 10,000 Jews including Princes, Lords and artisans were swept into slavery by the conquerors and removed to Babylon in 599 B.C. And it was only in 538 B.C. that Cyrus the Great of Iran liberated the Jews and restored them to Jerusalem. This bondage of the Jews which lasted for nearly 70 years, from 606 to 538 B.C. is known in history by the name of the Babylonian captivity.

The area of Babylon was 12 miles square, and all round there were ditches full of water. There were walls about 50 miles long, 150 feet high and 50 feet thick all round the City. The River Euphrates was passing through the City of Babylon, but even there a number of strong gates of brass were erected. Similarly, inside there was another protection of a strong wall to make the city invincible. The whole city of Babylon was beautiful with high and shapely temples, palaces, and hanging gardens. It is said that in that City food was preserved to last for twenty years.

To conquer the city Cyrus had to divert the Euphrates and march into it across the bed of the river.

One night when Balshazar, the King of Babylon, and his courtiers were holding high festivity, and when wine flowed freely to saturate the senses into oblivion, Cyrus took Babylon by a sudden assault and liberated the Jews, who had been compelled to settle there for nearly seven decades.

“The elders from the Jews said to Cyrus, “For those of us of the Law of Moses that came to Joshua and to the prophets, our temple is that of Jerusalem, and it lies empty.”

They further informed him that the vessels of the temple had been taken by Nebuchadnezzar many years before and held captive in Babylon, with the gods of stone and wood and silver and gold. They, the captives of Judah, possessed no such image of a god—such as Cyrus had restored to the shrines of Akkad, but had only the vessels, taken by the prince, Belshazzar, to adorn his feast. Therefore they besought the Great King to restore the sacred vessels to their keeping.

“Let it be done”, Cyrus commanded.

The elders exclaimed and cried out together. Let the Great King grant an end to their captivity—to all Jews in Babylon—to seek their land of Judah across the western desert and their temple. For Jehovah had departed from that ruined temple at its destruction.

Cyrus heard them out and said: “It is ordered that all the people who are captive in Babylon shall return to their homes. Are the Jews different from the others? My word covers you. Set out when you will. Rebuild your temple.” ” 1

In return for this favour bestowed by him on the Jews, an extraordinary honour, which has rarely been paid in any Scripture of the world to a foreign king, was conferred on Cyrus, by the grateful Jewish race—a distinction for which the Zoroastrians might well be proud. In Isaiah 44.28 the Lord is made to say of Cyrus, “He is my shepherd and shall perform all my pleasure”, even saying to Jerusalem, “thou shall be built”, and to the temple, “thy foundation shall be laid”. In Isaiah 54.1 the Lord calls Cyrus “His anointed whose right hand I have holden to subdue nations before him”. Thus Cyrus has been designated here as the duly consecrated representative of the Lord.

1 “CYRUS THE GREAT”, by Harold Lamb.

Usually Kings were honoured with the ceremony of anointment but, according to the Bible, prophets only have been considered entitled to this distinction. Jesus has been called "The Lord Anointed", and Cyrus has been called not merely "the anointed", but the Lord Himself refers to him as "His Anointed", which honour bestowed in a scripture on a foreign king (a Parsee) must be considered unique in History. ¹

Even at an advanced age Cyrus was fighting the Goths who were living in the South of Siberia, and while fighting them, he died.

Ctesias (B.C. 400), who knew Persian traditions, states that Cyrus was mortally wounded in battle against the foreign hosts of Derbicae (apparently somewhere in the East of Iran) and died three days afterwards.

His body was conveyed to Persia by his son Cambyses.² Cyrus' body was coated with wax according to the custom of the Persians of those days, or perhaps embalmed after the manner of the Egyptians, and was laid to rest at Pasargadae.

Iristobulus, who accompanied Alexander in his Eastern campaign, describes the mausoleum of Cyrus as standing in the midst of a park surrounded by groves and rich meadows of grass. The tomb itself stood on a rectangular base of stone and the sepulchre is described as a stone-house, roofed over, and having a door so small as to be difficult to enter even for a man of no large stature.

"In this house", continues Professor Jackson, "the body of Cyrus was laid in a golden coffin though raised upon (or beside) a couch, the feet of which were of hammered gold. Under this catafalque, carpets of royal purple were spread; and over it was laid a covering of Babylonian tapestry, while around it were lying rich vestments of purple and other colours, costly jewels and precious stones, placed doubtless on the table."

When Alexander visited the tomb he found that it had been rifled of its treasure; the body had been thrown out of the coffin, which was broken and battered, for the plunderers found it too heavy to drag with them, and only the casket and catafalque remained.

1 "Iran & Its Culture" by Prof. Firoze C. Davar.

2 Prof. A. V. Williams Jackson in "Persia Past and Present".

On discovering the outrage, Alexander gave orders that the body be placed in the coffin, and that everything be restored to its former condition. He obliterated the doorway, closed up the entrance with a stone, cemented it with mortar, and sealed it with his own signet.

It is further found from Plutarch's description of the tomb that the name of the ghoulish who had desecrated the vault was Polymachus. Pliny, the elder, is quoted by Prof. Jackson in this connection as saying:

"The magi hold the fortress of Pasargadae in which is the tomb of Cyrus and that the Magians were hereditary guardians of the tomb, dwelling near it, and offering a sheep every day, and a horse each month, as sacrifice."

The same erudite American scholar, who had personally visited Pasargadae, and seen the tomb of Cyrus, further states:

"This structure, which in the distance might be spoken of as a Purgos, now looks like 'a house of stone roofed over' as Arrian says, and the terraced steps (though seven, not ten, in number) answer to the statements of Onesicritus in Strabo's account. The door, which faced west, or rather North West, is strikingly small and round the tomb there are the marks of what was once a colonnade that formed a rectangular enclosure round the tomb. With the exception of a few pillars, which though broken, show, where the entrances must have been, most of the columns have disappeared or lie tumbled about in confusion upon the ground."*

A score of Mohammedan graves have been crowded within the area next to the tomb, so as to be as close as possible to the shrine of Solomon's mother. About a hundred yards north of the mausoleum is to be found the foundation of a building which may have been at the same time a sanctuary and a residence for the priests, but practically nothing remains of the structure, except the base upon which it stood, and this is now partly buried by a mass of wretched hovels.

From a distance the tomb of Cyrus looks dwarfed by the vastness of the surrounding plain, but when viewed nearby, its true size becomes

* Ker Porter Travels 1.499 reported 17 columns as still erect, but heaped round with rubbish and barbarously connected with a wall of mud. Prof. A. V. Wm. Jackson, "Persia Past & Present."

apparent, and the nobility of its lines and the symmetry of its proportions and the striking whiteness of the marble-like stone of which it is constructed, come out in full effect. It stands high upon a terraced base, seven steps of which are now visible and the stones which compose both the structures and the tomb are very massive. The lowest stage of the seven terraced steps is a plinth over two feet high, nearly 50 feet long and more than 40 feet broad. Each of the other stages above this flooring is proportionately smaller in area but not in height and the combined elevation of the pedestal thus formed is more than 16 feet. The mausoleum itself is about 18 feet high, the point of its roof being nearly 35 feet from the ground. The length of the building is about 20 feet and its width 17 feet.

The mammoth blocks which make up the tomb and the base alike, are set together with the utmost precision. There is no evidence of the use of mortar, but iron clamps were used in uniting the masonry. Nature has added to her destructive forces an extra one; several bushes of evergreen type have taken root in the interstices between the great stones of the terraced steps, and a small tree has sprouted out from the roof. Both of these agents as time goes on will take part in bringing about the general ruin of the monument.

When Alexander visited Cyrus' tomb he read an inscription to the effect:

"O man, I am Cyrus, the son of Cambyzes, who founded the Persian Empire and was king of Asia. Grudge me not therefore this monument."

He was so deeply affected, being convinced in a moment of the evanescence of human life, with all its boast of heraldry and pomp of power, that he took off the crown from his head and put it on the ossuary of Cyrus to show his very high respect for him. He ordered the violated tomb to be repaired and ordered the inscription to be engraved in Greek letters underneath. It read as follows:

"O man, whoever thou art, and whencesoever thou comest (for I know thou will come) I am Cyrus, who founded the Empire of the Persians. Grudge me not, therefore, the little earth that covers my body."

The entrance to the tomb is low and narrow as the Greek authorities state. The height of the doorway is only 4 feet 2 inches and its width 2



Tomb of Cyrus the Great at Pasargadae.

feet $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches, and it is necessary to crouch, in order to pass through, as Arrian affirmed. The original door to the vault was probably a heavy stone swinging on pivots, such as may be seen at the supposed tomb of Esther and Mordecai at Hamadan and also in the square monument of Naksh-i-Rustam, but I do not recall seeing the socket holes as in those cases.

Crawling through the low entrance, without having the slightest objection raised by the bystanders, who I thought might prevent me, I found myself within a chamber where death had held his court. The room is 10 feet $5\frac{5}{8}$ inches long and 7 feet 7 inches wide and 7 feet 11 inches high. Two enormous blocks that look like marble, form the floor, and the side walls and flat ceiling are composed of stones equally large. In one part of the eastern wall, facing the doorway, there is a great gaping chink and the block of the floor of the same end, shows a rough sort of depression, which suggests the idea that something had been scooped out or forcibly wrenched, perhaps by robber hands.

A worn copy of the Quran lay upon the floor, and the wind sweeping through the vault turned its pages. A manuscript of the Avesta would have been more appropriate in this chamber. But the most inharmonious of all, for it hung over the place where the body must have lain, was a cord with an incongruous collection of worthless trash in the way of votive offerings; a piece of rag, a bit of brass, a fragment of lamp, a bell, a copper ring and what not, made up the motley string. They were the customary donations of pilgrims as mementos of the journey or as talismans, for a safe return. *

Thus the great American scholar, a Professor of Indo-Iranian languages in Columbia University, describes the tomb of Cyrus, the once mighty emperor, who founded the Achamenian dynasty, a dynasty of the Parsee Kings of the past, who have left their stamp on the history of the world. And yet, rightly has Thomas Gray, the English poet sung:

"The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth ev'r gave,
Await alike the inevitable hour,
The paths of glory lead but to the grave."

The present Iranian Government have resolved to celebrate the 2500th anniversary of Cyrus the Great with great pomp and eclat. They

* Prof. A. V. Wm. Jackson, "Persia Past and Present".

have decided to take a cinematographical film of his reign, which will immortalise his name throughout the countries of the world which know very little of the history of ancient Iran. The year fixed for the celebrations, along with the Coronation of the Shahinshah of Iran, is 1965.

Suggestions have been invited as to how best to keep up the memory of this great ancient King of Iran, and the writer has suggested that the present site of his tomb be improved and a dignified structure raised on and around it, and a new road joining Teheran with Cyrus' tomb be constructed so as to enable travellers from all over the world to have easy access by motor transport to his tomb. The writer has further suggested that a statue of this ancient mighty Persian monarch be installed somewhere on this new road.

After Cyrus, his son Kabujiya (Cambyses) occupied the throne. In the first four years the subjugation of the Phnoecia, Silecia and Cyprus occupied Cambyses fully. Cyprus was a dependency of Egypt and possessed considerable naval strength. Its conquest was a well thought out preliminary step to the conquest of Egypt itself. Cambyses undertook in the fifth year of his reign to carry out his father's design to conquer Egypt.

The Egyptians awaited the Persian attack at Pelisium, which was known as the key of Egypt. When Cambyses arrived at Pelisium, a horribly tragic incident took place. The Greek mercenaries seized the sons of their former comrade Phanes, and slew them over a bowl, in the sight of their father and of the Persians, one after the other. Wine and water were poured over the bowl which had caught their blood, and the mixture was passed round for the mercenaries to drink.

The battle which followed was fought by both parties with great bravery. It ended in the complete defeat of the Egyptian Army. Psammaticus fled to his capital Memphis and shut himself up with his troops in the fortress called "The White Wall".

In May of the year 525 B.C. Cambyses seated himself on the throne of the Pharaohs and received the title of Pharaoh with the Egyptian throne, named Ra-Mesuth (Born of the Sun).

Cambyses treated his royal captive Psammaticus with kindness and due regard to his former exalted rank and even installed him on the throne as his viceroy. Later, when Psammaticus attempted a rising he was

condemned as a rebel and put to death. One of the brothers of Cambyses by name Bardis or Smirdis was murdered on some suspicion, probably with the connivance of Cambyses.

A Magian by name Gaumata (Sansk; Gomat; Zend: Gaomat, meaning possessing herds), who bore a remarkable resemblance to the murdered Prince Smirdis, audaciously declared himself to be the latter, and usurped the Persian throne with the help of his brother. The populace did not know that the real Smirdis had been slain, and that this man was an impostor, and therefore, for the time being, Gaumat made himself popular by remitting tribute as also taxes and military service for a period of three years.

Soon, however, his evil actions raised suspicion amongst the nobles of the court, and they made secret inquiries and came to the conclusion that Gaumata was an impostor with no right to the throne. The cousin of Cyrus the Great, by name Darius Hystaspes, along with the members of six other illustrious families, who enjoyed the privilege of entering into the King's presence at all times, entered into a confederacy. Taking advantage of their privilege, they approached Gaumata in the Fortress of Sikayauvatish, near Ekbatana, and slew him and his guards.

Darius who belonged to the royal Hakhamani family, and was the ablest of the seven Confederates, was chosen as King on 1st January B.C. 521.

Darius is the Greek form of the old Persian Daraya-Va(h)ush. He came to the throne, in 521 B.C. Somehow the magic effect of the name of Cyrus the Great had disappeared, and Darius' accession to the imperial throne was the signal for the outbreak of formidable revolts in various parts of the empire. In Susiana, Babylon, Media, Sagatia and Margiana, pretenders arose, claiming to be members of the former ruling families. In the first two Provinces rebellions broke out within a fortnight of the assassination of Gaumata.

For seven years Darius had to employ all his energy to stamp out such widespread and formidable rebellions. The fortitude, activity, skill and judgment displayed by him in quelling them, mark him out as a born leader of men. He fought nineteen battles and seized nine pretenders who aimed at being kings.

Darius extended his dominions right up to India, including the Punjab and Sind and then diverted his attention to Europe. The Scythians who had established their empire firmly on the North of the Black Sea, drew Darius' attention, and he crossed the Bosphorous by a bridge of boats, constructed by a Samian Engineer, Mandrocles, who was very liberally rewarded.

The Ionians, Aeolians and Helespontians supplied the fleet which according to Herodotus consisted of 600 ships. He conquered the Scythians, and erected upon the shores of the Bosphorous a couple of pillars of white marble, whereon were engraved in Greek and Persian characters, the names of all the nations which comprised his army.

The Danube was passed by a bridge of boats, built by the tyrants of the Ionian cities.*

Darius then turned his attention to Macedonia. Aristagoras the tyrant of Mytilus instigated Mytilus and other Ionian cities to throw off the Persian yoke and declare themselves independent. The Aeolian and Ionian settlement, as well as Cyprus, joined the movement, and Aristagoras also sought aid from European Greece.

In the Spring of B.C. 599 the Confederates made a sudden attack on Sardis, captured and pillaged it. In the melee the town was accidentally burnt. The insurgents could not take the citadel and had to retreat. They were overtaken at Ephesus by the Persian troops under Artabanus and were routed and destroyed.

When Darius received the news of the burning of his western capital, Sardis, by the Ionians, aided principally by the Athenians, he was greatly incensed and asked 'Who are the Athenians?' On being told, he called for his bow and placing an arrow on the string, shot it high into the air and exclaimed, "Oh Supreme God, grant me that I avenge myself on the Athenians". He commanded an attendant that three times every day, as he sat at his meals, he should tell him, "Sire, remember the Athenians". Some scholars consider this as fiction, introduced by Herodotus for the delectation of his audience.

* The name Danube is a corruption of the word "Danooab", which means "The River of Danoo" (Vedic: Danavas). Fravardin and Aban Yashts (in the Zoroastrian lore) allude to a Turanian tribe of the name of Danoo. These people in their migrations settled finally in Denmark, which country is named after them. So also are the River Dnieper, Dniester and Don. ("Ancient Persia and the Parsees" by Jehangir Burjorji Sanjana, B.A., J.P., Bombay).

Two years later an expedition was sent out. Its declared object was to punish Athens and Eritrea, for their part in the Ionian revolt. Before launching the expedition, Darius sent out heralds to the Grecian cities, demanding in the king's name, tribute of a little earth and a little water, as symbols of submission. Many submitted and delivered this token, but Athens and Sparta not only returned an indignant refusal, but used violence against the persons of the heralds, contrary to the law of nations,

In the former city these men were thrown into the Barathum, in the latter into a well, and bidden to get there the earth and water they wished to carry to the king. This naturally enraged Darius and his fleet sailed from Samos and his troops landed at Marathon.

Various historians have narrated the battle of Marathon and various opinions are prevailing as to what might have been if Darius had not lost the battle. We are not concerned with what might have been; nor with the various opinions of historians of this world famous battle; suffice it to say that the Generals of Darius the Great lost the battle. And before he could invade Greece again he unfortunately died. But before he died he had made tremendous conquests in Asia and conquered eighteen tribes below the Danube and compelled Amantas, King of Macedonia, to give tribute to Persia.

Another General of Darius, by name Otanis, had conquered for him Byzantine, Chalsidon, Antendrus and Lamporium. Also the modern Roumania, Bulgaria and countries of the former Turkish Kingdom had all come under the sway of Darius. In fact, Asia, Africa and Europe were under the sway of this mighty Parsee King, whose death at the age of 64 prevented him probably from making many more conquests, and spreading the might of Persia all over the world.

Apart from being a first class soldier, Darius was an excellent administrator. He divided his mighty empire into thirty Satrapys or provinces, and in each Satrapy three first class officers were appointed for its government and control. Of the three, the first was known as Khshthra-Pavan; Satrup meant a Viceroy. The Satrup directly represented the king, but he had no control over the Army. Amongst his multifarious duties he had to control the expenses of the province from the income, and he had to supply to the army all its expenditure, as also the necessary equipment, such as armaments. Besides, he had to send to the royal treasury in the capital city, a fixed amount which the king expected the province to pay annually, besides sending the best of the produce from

the province to the king. All this was so thoughtfully arranged by Darius, that no burden was imposed on the people of the province.

The second highest officer in the Satrapy or province was the commander-in-chief, whose duty it was, apart from controlling the entire army of the province, to put down any riots or rebellions. But he was strictly forbidden to come in the way of the duties of the Satrap.

The third officer of the province was the Imperial Secretary. His duty was to keep a very keen watch on the working of the province and continually to send his private reports direct to the king.

Besides these officers there were people kept in the secret service, who were known as the "Eyes and Ears of the King". The modern equivalent word would be "the secret criminal investigation department" through which, the king kept himself accurately informed of all the great and small events that took place in his kingdom throughout the year.

Another officer was a Prince from the royal family, who was secretly sent to any Satrapy or province at the King's pleasure, to find out how a Satrap conducted himself, and whether there were any complaints from the people of any particular province against him or against any of the officers of the province.

Darius above everything was very particular about the judges of his kingdom meting out justice impartially, fairly and justly, and the punishment for any judge, no matter how highly placed, if he was found guilty of corruption, was death.

Due to the very extensive area of Darius' empire, he had made three capitals; one at Persepolis, another at Susa and the third at Sardis. With a view to linking all these three capitals and the cities surrounding them, Darius had constructed long straight roads with bridges over rivers or streams; even boats were used for internal traffic on the rivers. Thus all the three capitals were connected with one another by broad and vast roads which even modern engineers might envy.

A postal service was inaugurated, postal stations being established at intervals of about four pharsangs (1 pharsang equals $3 \frac{2}{5}$ miles.) There were one hundred and eleven such stations between Susa and Sardis, and they were held by troops. Disregarding storm, cold or heat, the king's courier rode night and day without stopping from one stage to the next,

where he delivered his post to another courier, who was ready with his horse saddled and bridled, to take it on to another stage. Rivers and streams were crossed by means of bridges or swift boats. The couriers rode 'swifter than the Crane', so that a despatch from Susa could be delivered at Sardis within five or six days. This system of mounted posts, the first in the world, was known as 'angareion'. Such a system was introduced into France by Louis XI in 1470, and by Edward IV into England in 1481, so that Europe was twenty centuries behind Persia in this matter. The orders to the provincial heads were inscribed on skins (diphtherai) and sealed with the royal seal. The court journals and records were also written on skins. For literary and commercial purposes a cursive style of writing was employed, cuneiform characters being suitable only for inscriptions.

Darius had also arranged, for the better facility of trade between the towns and cities of his great empire, the minting of silver and gold coins. The gold coins of Darius' time were known as Daric, and were made in the shape of an egg. The gold used was so pure and of such fineness that throughout the bazaars of the kingdoms of other kings, these were universally and spontaneously accepted.

He had so regularised the system of trade throughout his vast empire, that every year his treasury was overflowing with money which was spent for the betterment of the army, as also of the civil population. The king used to have every year, gold and jewellery, ivory, perfumes, horses, and innumerable other such gifts, sent to this capital city, as presents, from his thirty Satrapys.

With a view to promoting commerce, Darius founded a number of harbours on the coast of Iran. He constructed and much enlarged a great canal, which in the seventh century before Christ had been attempted by Necho of Egypt, to link up the Mediterranean and Red Seas, and thereby, his ships sailed from the Nile to the Suez. This canal led to a considerable increase in the development of trade between Egypt and Persia and greatly augmented the prosperity of the former country. Columns were erected by Darius at different places in Egypt, to commemorate his achievement in cutting this canal, several of these were near the modern Suez by Charles son of Ferdinand de Lesseps. On one of them, found near the village of Chalouf, Darius says:

"Ahurmazd is a great God; he has created the heavens; he has created this earth; he has created man; he has given to man good principles (Siatish); he has made Darius king; he has given to King Darius a great empire. I am Darius, great King,

king of kings, king of these countries; king of this vast land, who commands far and near. Son of Hystaspes of the Achimeneses. Darius the King says I am a Parsee. (As a) Persian I govern Egypt. I have commanded the digging of this canal, starting from the Nile. It is the name of the river which runs through Egypt up to the sea which starts from Persia. Thus the canal has been dug here". (M. As. P., pt II, 192). *

This canal was open up to the time of the Roman occupation of Egypt, but later silted up. It is also found from an inscription on an Egyptian statue of a learned priest installed in the Vatican at Rome, that in a former city, known as Sais, which was near the modern city of Cairo, Darius the Great had established a big Medical Academy, and had undoubtedly done so in other big cities as well.

As we have seen, Darius was a valiant general in war, and a qualified administrator in peace. But Darius has really become famous for his inscriptions on the Behistun rock, which is 1700 feet in height and the inscriptions are 500 feet above ground level. At first the space required for the inscriptions was levelled and smoothed and then carved upon. There are still several such uninscribed tablets which prove that Darius possibly wanted to have other records incised on the rock, but premature death prevented him from doing so. In a cleft on Mt. Behistun, on the great caravan route between Baghdad and Teheran, about 165 miles from Hamadan, these inscriptions are engraved on the steepest surface of the rock, covering a surface of about 150 feet in length by about 100 feet in height.

These inscriptions are in three languages, namely, old Persian, Babylonian and Scythian. They record the mighty achievements of Darius the Great. These carvings are in excellent condition and owing to their inaccessibility have escaped the destructive hands of the Arab conquerors. Professor Huart infers that these inscriptions cannot be later than B.C. 510. Professor A.V. Williams Jackson of Columbia University assigns them to a period between the years 520 and 518 B.C. with the exception of the fifth column, which was added later.

The Venetian Envoy, Josephat Barbatu, was one of the first Europeans to discover the Achaemenian inscriptions of Behistun at the end of the fifteenth century.

* "Ancient Persia and the Parsees," by Jehangir B. Sanjana.

The first real attempt to decipher the cuneiform text was made by George F. Grotenfend, a German Schoolmaster, who described his first discovery in the Library Gazette of Gothingen in the year 1802. By picking out three royal names he discovered nearly one third of the old Persian Alphabet.⁽¹⁾ This pioneer in the field of cuneiform decipherment was followed by Rask, Bournof, Lassen, Beer and Jacquet who identified other characters. Sir Robert Kerr Porter, drawn up the face of the cliff by means of ropes, climbed half way up and sketched the central picture. But he mistook the base relief for a portrait of King Shalmeneser and two of his leaders, together with the ten captive tribes of Israel.

Major General Sir Henry Rawlinson, formerly British Ambassador in Iran, scaled the rock in the autumn of 1835 and between that period and 1848 inscribed on cotton cloth at the risk of his life facsimile copies of all the Behistun inscriptions and tablets. The Behistun inscriptions proved the key for the decipherment of all cuneiform writings, and thanks to the combined and indefatigable labour of archaeologists and philologists, these long hidden priceless treasures have been unlocked.⁽²⁾

To understand how hazardous it is to climb these rocks, the following description from Prof. Jackson's "Persia Past and Present" is worth quoting:

"Having heard from a Persian friend that it would probably be best to let down from above, I had previously studied some of the methods employed by the bird nesters in the Hebrides, in being lowered by ropes over craggy cliffs. A brief examination of the situation, however, showed that the only feasible approach was by climbing and being drawn up by cords. The position with ropes and a ladder was soon under way, towards the beetling precipice. Whatever may be said against the ladder, which proved of little use, nothing can be maintained against the Persian goat hair ropes, for their quality is excellent. The cords that bound the luggage on the caravan pack horse, supplemented by ropes furnished by the Behistun guides, and firmly fastened about my chest, with knots that only a Persian knows how to tie, were a precaution against the danger of slipping and gave confidence for the climb. The stout protest of the guides against my riding boots was well founded, as the risks of the first

(1) "Ancient Persia and the Parsees" by Jehangir Burjorji Sanjana. The same author further states "It is remarkable that the first unravelling of cuneiform should have begun in the same year as the Egyptian Hieroglyphics".

(2) For further interesting details of the decipherment and early struggles of Darius' cuneiform inscriptions, see Appendix B.

day proved, but a happy substitute for these was later found in the native *geevahs*, resembling rough tennis shoes, which were loaned by one of the Persian bystanders and firmly sewed upon the feet with a heavy pack-thread needle.

The ascent of the first huge fissure in the side of the Couloir, the clamber with torn hands and clothes, along the brink of a precipitous crag, the tugging ropes that help us, the steep incline of the second rock, the scramble past the thorn bush that barred the way further up, and the final tag and sprint that brought us to the edge of the ledge, together with a 'khaili khoob' (very good) and the encouraging word of the guides, 'no fear now, the danger is over'—will not readily be forgotten. Only when one has stood on the narrow ledge on the side of the inscriptions and looked out over the magnificent plain far beneath, and listened to the dull murmur of the stream below, as it bursts from the mountain base, does one know how to appreciate Rawlinson's work. It may interest others, as it did me, to learn that he has carved his name in the stone a few inches below the very inscriptions which he first made known to the modern world. This he was entitled to do, and one is almost inclined to append after his simple "G. Rawlinson 1844" the words of the ancient India's homage—"Namo Namah."

In one of the huge rock tablets Darius tells about his rule that was based on righteousness:-

"For this reason Ahura Mazda brought me aid and the other celestial powers which are, because I was not wicked, or a liar, nor a wrong-doer. Neither I nor my family. I ruled in accordance with law, nor made my power an oppression to those who were just and righteous. The man who helped my house, him who should be well esteemed, I esteemed. The man who would destroy it, him who should deserve punishment, I punished".

To his successor Darius gives the following advice:

"O thou who mayest be king in the future, protect thyself strongly from the Lie. Whatever man shall be a liar and deceiver, him who deserved to be punished, punish. If thus thou shalt think, may my country be secure. Oh thou who shall be king in the future, whatever man shall be a deceiver, or a wrong-doer, be not a friend to these. Punish them with severe punishment."



Steps leading to the Palace of Darius the Great at Persepolis,
on each of which ten horses abreast could climb up together.

In column three of the same inscription Darius avers:

"May I die a Mazdaean, as this is true. I never uttered a lie in all my life. Oh man, what is the commandment of Ahura Mazda? May it not seem to thee repugnant. Forsake not the right path. Do not sin."

Thus this great king of kings of the Achaemenian dynasty attributed his sovereignty and power to Ahura Mazda and says:

"By the grace of Ahura Mazda I am king. Ahura Mazda gave me the kingdom."

In a baked clay tablet inscription concerning the foundation of the palace of Susa in about B.C. 517-16 he says:

"Ahura Mazda who is the great God over gods; it is He who has created me; it is He who has made me king; it is He who has given me this great kingdom with handsome men and good horses. With the protection of Ahura Mazda when my father Hystaspes and my grandfather Arsama were still living, Ahura Mazda made me king in this earth, Ahura Mazda granted me on this whole earth horses and excellent men and established me as king on this earth. From that time up to date I have accomplished the service of Ahura Mazda. Ahura Mazda is my powerful support, and what He orders me to do is to perform and realise by my hand. All that I do, I do with the protection of Ahura Mazda."

Thus Darius thanks Ahura Mazda for all that he has been able to do throughout his life, and in one inscription he uses the name of Ahura Mazda sixtyseven times.

And yet scholars wonder whether Darius was a Zoroastrian; if so, why has he not mentioned the name of Zoroaster even once in so many of his renowned inscriptions, on the rocks of Behistun at Susa, at Egypt and elsewhere. This is an enigma that no scholar has yet been able to solve, and yet Darius evidently was a monotheist, a Mazdaean as he called himself in one of the inscriptions, that is a believer in Ahura Mazda.

It must have been premonition that made Darius inscribe on the Behistun rock the following:

"Says Darius the king, 'let that which I have done appear unto thee as true, as it is; therefore conceal it not. If thou does not conceal this edict, but will publish it to the people, may Ahura Mazda be a friend unto thee, and may thy seed be multiplied and mayst thou live long!

Darius made a new capital deeper in the centre of the country away from Pasargadae and named it Parsa (Persepolis).*

But as the district of Perses was too remote to be the administrative seat of a world empire, Susa, situated some 200 miles South of Eckbatana, 225 miles East of Babylon, and nearly 300 miles North of Persepolis, was made the political metropolis. The other capital towns were Babylon and Eckbatana. The king chiefly spent the winter in Babylon and the summer in Eckbatana.

The King's bodyguard consisted of 2000 horsemen and 2000 foot soldiers recruited from the Persians and Medes, and probably from the Susians also. Their lances were about 7 feet long and were ornamented below with gold and silver apples; whence they were known to the Greeks as Melophorai. They also carried bows and arrows.

Next to them were the 10,000 "Immortals", formed into ten battalions of a thousand each, the first of which bore lances adorned with pomegranates. The Persian name for them was Amartyanam Sapada, meaning 'immortal soldiers'. The probable reason for their being so named is that as soon as one of them died, he was replaced so that the number of 10,000 remained constant. Their commandant was known to the Greeks as Chiliarch.

The standing army consisted of these royal guards and the garrisons of forts and strongholds. The chief of the citadels of the cities were called *argapats*. In the time of war levies were raised, the subject races as well as the ruling people being bound to military service. The army commanders were selected principally, though not exclusively, from Iranians. Of the

* (The Greeks called the Persians Perses—whom Darius called Parsa. From that the Greeks coined the name Persepolis: from polis equivalent of a city. Persepolis meant the city of the Parsees).

eight generals named in the Behistun inscriptions, six are Persians, one a Mede and one an Armenian. Medes, Babylonians, Lydians, Jews and Greeks were frequently appointed to the highest military administrative posts. A general review of the troops took place throughout the empire every year. The king personally conducted the review of the troops in the neighbourhood of the capitals. In remote provinces the review was held in the king's name by persons deputed by him.

The king was always attended by a number of wise men, principal among whom were the Head Priests, and he frequently consulted them.

Xenophon (*Cyropaedia*, VII, 5) refers to ancient Persian bravery as proverbial. Darius himself has immortalised the achievements of his soldiery in the inscription at Naksh-i-Rustam in the following eloquent terms:-

"Look well at those statues which support my throne, and if thou dost recognise them, then it will be known to thee that the spear of the Persian reaches far. Then it will be known to thee that the men of Persia, far beyond their own country, wars are wont to wage." (H. F. Talbot's translation, *R.P.*, Vol. V).

At the age of 15 the Persian boy was considered to have attained majority, and became liable to military service from that time till he reached the age of 50. The most distinguished youth were educated under the monarch's eye, practised their exercises at the gate of his palace, and were severely trained up to the habits of temperance and obedience in long and laborious hunting expeditions. The training which they received was an object of admiration to the Greeks. Similar institutions were set up by the Satraps in their districts.

The boys were made to rise early and were drilled in batches of fifty. They were inured to heat, cold and rain, and taught to cross rivers without getting their arms wet. In the morning they learnt the art of defending their country, and in the evening they studied agriculture. While in these ways they became hardy in body, their moral and religious education was at the same time well cared for.

The military training of the royal princes commenced at the age of seven. At the age of fourteen they were put under four instructors, one a wise priest to train them in religious and political matters, one to impart moral instruction, one to advise them to abstain from lust, avarice and

other evil passions, and one to instruct them in bravery.

In the matter of the education and the training of their children the first aim of the Iranian parents was to make them worthy and useful members of Society, and to implant in their souls the highest principles of conducting life. "The Persian youth", writes Xenophon in the *Cyropaedia*, "go to school to learn righteousness, as ours go to school to learn the rudiments of reading, writing and reckoning".

Mr. Carter points out that a study of two writers, Herodotus and Xenophon, reveals that two Greeks, two of the wisest and most travelled men of the ancient world, from a real experience of contemporary conditions, approved of the Persian ethics, and what cannot be doubted is that to the ancient Persians, 'Trust and Religion' were one.

But with all the narration about Darius' soldiery, statemanship, wide outlook on religion and so forth, mention must be made of the greatest of the structures erected by him at Persepolis. He has chosen, according to Prof. Rogers, a site splendidly suitable for a notable and majestic building, but so vast, as to dwarf into insignificance anything less grand than man's greatest efforts. The platform stretches from northwest to southwest 1523 feet and has a breadth of 920 feet. On it Darius built two structures, his winter palace, and an audience room, known as the Hall of a Hundred Columns.

Huge pieces of stone were hewn and fastened together with metal clamps without any cement. The lofty height of the platform could be scaled by mounting very broad and grand staircases in black marble. The height of every step in those staircases was only three to four inches. The width of the staircase being 22 feet, ten horsemen could simultaneously and with ease climb a hundred steps and reach the platform. Such grand staircases are unique in history, ancient or modern.

The expanse of the largest Persepolitan palace was 100,000 sq. feet. The special merit of the palace consisted in its vast and columned halls. There was a huge 100 columned hall, known as the Sad Minar, which alone occupied a space of 51,000 feet. Every pillar was 35 feet high and there was a space of 20 feet between the pillars. Only 8 columns are now extant to record the architectural magnificence of the Achaemenians.

On climbing the staircase, our attention is drawn to sculptures in base relief, with which the palace walls are ornamented. The lion and

the bull seem to have been the favourites of the Iranians. Sometimes a fight between these animals is represented; sometimes armed warriors are depicted keeping watch and ward, and sometimes captives from conquered countries are shown humbly paying tribute.

Near the main door, there are the familiar figures of two man-faced winged bulls. On the capital of every column we find the figures of two kneeling bulls, looking in opposite directions. Often the King himself is represented sitting on his throne, or fighting with some gigantic animals.

There is a difference of opinion about these animals; some taking them to be celestial spirits, and others interpreting them as embodiments of sin, destined to perish at the hands of the king. (1)

In these magnificent palaces, banquets were held on an imposing scale and as many as a thousand oxen, sheep and other animals were slaughtered daily for the service of the palace. The dainties for the royal table were brought from the most distant parts of the empire. The bread which the king ate, was made from the wheat of Aeolia; the salt which he used was brought from the neighbourhood of the temple of Ammon in Africa; the wines which he drank, came from Chalybon in Syria; the drinking water, was from the Choaspes.

Near-by the palace of Darius is the famous Naksh-i-Rustam, the 'astodans' or ossuaries, or the tombs of the Achaemenian kings. Here in the face of a long high bluff are hewn four sepulchres, from the solid mountain belonging to the elder kings of the second line, Darius, Xerxes, Artaxerxes and Darius II. These rock cut walls lie five or six miles north of the great platform where once stood the palaces of the kings, and behind them are three other Achaemenian tombs of somewhat later date.

A story prevails that the parents of Darius, who were anxious to go up to see his sepulchre, were being pulled up, by the priests; while in that action, the workmen saw some serpents and became so frightened, that they let go the ropes, and the parents of the king fell down the mountain and were killed. The grief of Darius was so great that he ordered forty of those who had pulled on the ropes to be beheaded.

Darius the great was followed by his equally illustrious son

(1) For greater details of the palaces of Darius and Xerxes, readers may consult "Persia" by Lord Curzon.

Khshayarsha (Xerxes) Ahasuerus of the Book of Esther. He was born in the purple, his mother Atossa being a lineal descendant of King Cyrus. For this reason Darius had nominated him as his successor in preference to his eldest son Artabazanes, whose mother was the daughter of a nobleman, namely Gobryas, one of the six Confederates who had cooperated with Darius in the removal of the usurper Gaumata.

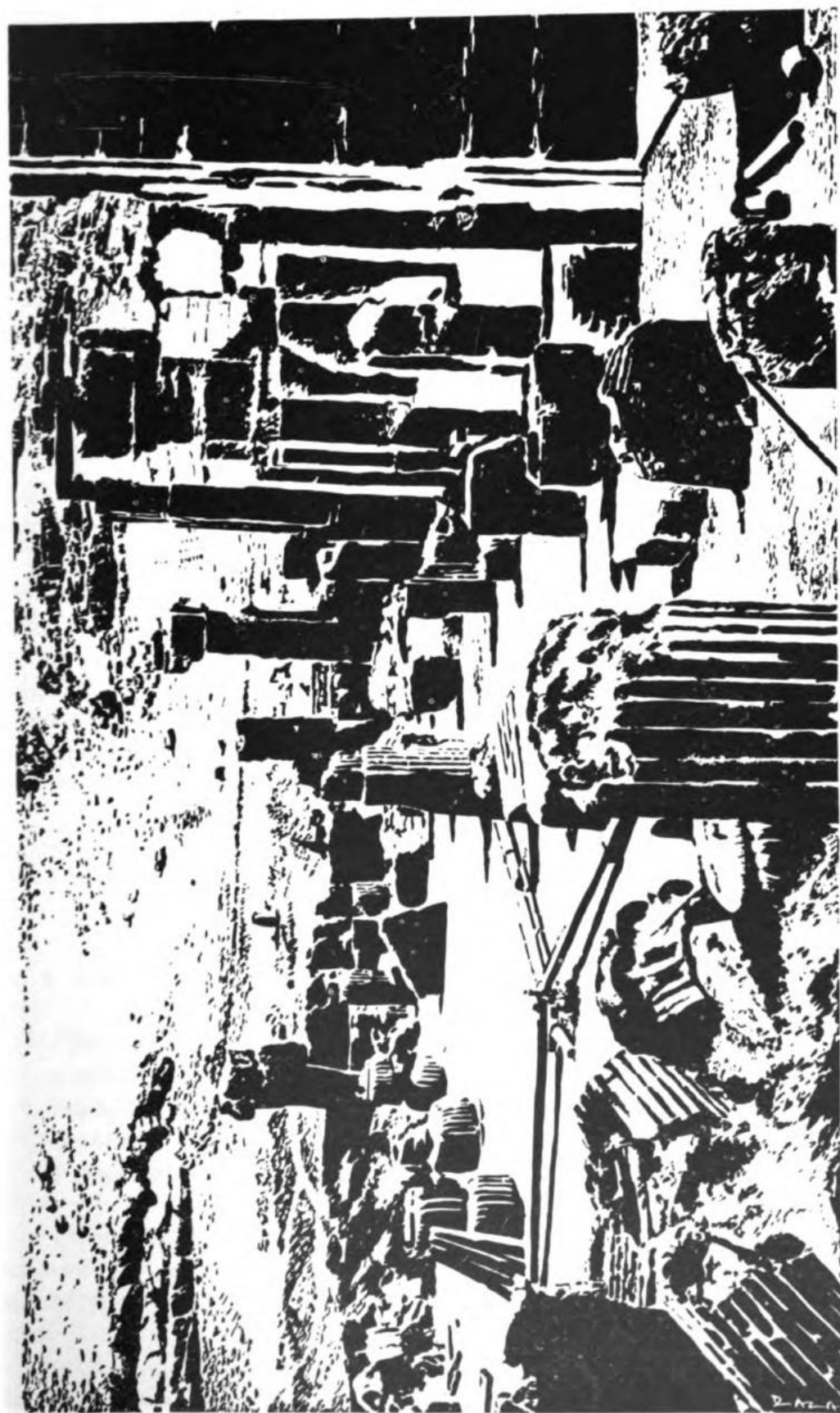
Xerxes was 34 years of age, very beautiful in person and in stature taller than all his subjects. In the Book of Esther it is said that he reigned from India even up to Ethiopia, over a hundred and seven and twenty provinces.

He took an army in the second year of his reign to Egypt, and crushed the rebellion of Khababesha, who had usurped the government of that country. Khababesha was defeated. A little later on the Babylonians revolted, and chose one Shammashirba as their King, but their independence was of short duration. The rebellion was crushed and the famous temple of Bel-Merodach was seized and its treasures conveyed to the capital of Xerxes.

His next big move was to invade Greece once again from Hellespont where he made a magnificent bridge, by tying ships firmly together and spreading branches of trees over them, thus making it look like the Grand Trunk Road, and in order that the animals, like camels, horses and elephants might not be frightened at the sight of the water of the sea, on both sides of the bridge, pieces of wood were fastened together. This wonderful bridge was one mile long.

He further proceeded towards the Isthmus of Athos, where the sea was very rough, and to make his ships sail with ease, he cut off large tracts of land, thus turning them into canals about a mile and a half long. Thus Xerxes successfully reached the Pass of Thermopylae. But at the pass itself King Leonidas of Sparta offered him resistance with 10,000 tough soldiers, who for two days stopped Xerxes from moving any further. However, Xerxes succeeded in finding a secret path from which he landed his troops and surrounded the Greeks from the other side, and thus won a victory against them.

The army of Xerxes proceeded further, with the result that the Greeks vacated Athens, and with a view to avenging the action of the Athenians in burning Sardis during the time of his illustrious father Darius, Xerxes set fire to Athens.



Ruins of the Palace of Xerxes at Persepolis.

The Greeks in honour of Leonidas, the king of Sparta, and his brave soldiers had the following lines written by Leonidas inscribed in their memory:

"Go, traveller, to Sparta tell,
That here, obeying her, we fell."

On the great platform of Persepolis, Xerxes constructed the Propylaea, two masses of work, guarded back and front by colossal winged bulls with human faces, standing 15 feet high. They formed a gateway through which marched the envoys of the rulers of various lands, bringing gifts to the king of kings. Behind it was the superb audience chamber, the roof of which was supported by 72 columns. Further south was the superb palace, the ruins of which still stand, bearing evidence of its original grandeur.

The ruined columns of Xerxes' lofty Audience Hall give rise to the native designation "Chahal Minaar" (forty pillars). But the original number of columns was seventy-two and of these only thirteen are standing.* They mark with their tall fluted shafts the aisles that led to the spot where Xerxes held levees within its once tapestry-hung walls. The ruin and desolation form a pathetic contrast to the proud boast of the king in the cuneiform tablet, carved on the stairway of the porch:

"I am Xerxes the Great, King, King of Kings
King of the nations, with their many peoples,
King of this great earth, even to afar."

and a sadder comment on the pious fervour of the words that follow:

"Thus sayeth Xerxes the Great, King. Everything that has been made here and all that has been made for me elsewhere, I have made by the grace of Ahura Mazda. May Ahura Mazda with the other divinities protect both my kingdom and all that I have made."

Despite these pious hopes, nothing but ruins, all relics of glory past, are to be seen today. Rightly has Omar Khayam, the famous Poet of Iran, said:

* This was in the year 1906 when Prof. Jackson had personally seen this ruined palace of Xerxes.

"The Worldly hope men set their Hearts upon,
Turns Ashes—or it prospers; and anon
Like Snow upon the Desert's dusty Face
Lighting a little Hour or two—is gone."

'Yet, who knows', says Prof. A.V. Williams Jackson, in his masterly book, "Persia, Past and Present", 'out of the shadow of bygone days, out of the dust of departed ages, out of the ashes of the Simurgh's fire, out of the fragments of shattered Iran, there may arise one, whose master hand will restore the glory of the ancient Persian kingdom, illumine again the pages of Persia's chronicles, recall what was noblest in the Parthian rule and the Sasanian empire, and make splendid once more, the land and power of the Lion and the Sun'.

Xerxes left three sons Darius (Dara), Hystaspes (Vishtaspa) and Artaxerxes (Arakhshatra, Ardeshir). At the time of the king's death, Hystaspes was in Bactria as Satrap. Artaxerxes, known as Longimanus, because his right hand was longer than his left, being led by Artabanus to believe that the assassination of Xerxes was the act of his brother Darius, consented to the murder of the latter, and ascended the throne (B. C. 466 or 465). Hystaspes claimed the throne and he was supported by the Bactrians but in two hard battles he was defeated by the royal army (B. C. 462) and nothing more was heard of him.

Artaxerxes reigned for fortyone years, and brought peace and prosperity to Egypt. He was called Mnemon by the Greeks on account of his extraordinary memory. There was nothing that he had seen or heard, or read, that he did not remember in every detail.

After him came Xerxes II, and then Sogdianus and Darius Ochus, of all of whom, nothing worthwhile can be said, till Darius III, known as Codomannus, came to the Iranian throne as the last of the Achaemenians. He sent to Macedonia his ambassadors for bringing the customary tribute from there. At that time Alexander had succeeded his father, Philip of Macedon. He was born in the summer of B.C. 356 and was only twenty when he came to the throne.

When Darius' ambassadors came to him and demanded the customary tribute, Alexander curtly replied, "When Philip had no children, his hens used to lay golden eggs, but from the time that his son Alexander has been born, they have become barren and do not lay eggs any longer. Now, I will go thither in person and will take the tribute from

thee, which until now thou hast received from my father."

Early in the Spring of 334 B.C. Alexander mustered his army and crossed the Hellespont. The Persians, confident of their own personal bravery decided upon a pitched battle on land, but Alexander inflicted on them a great defeat.

Darius eventually resolved to abandon the policy of his dead General Mennon, of defence by sea, and to take offensive measures by land. He had gathered from various parts of the empire a considerable force; a battle took place near Tarsus on the banks of the Issus, in the province of Cilicia. Unfortunately Darius sustained a severe defeat and his wife, mother, two daughters and a son, fell into the victor's hands (B. C. 333).

When Darius wrote to Alexander to set his wife, his mother and his daughters and son free, Alexander sent the following characteristic reply:

"By the Grace of the gods I have been victorious, first over your Satraps, next over yourself. I have taken care of all who submit to me and make them satisfied with their lot. Come yourself to me also, as to the Master of all Asia. Come without fear of suffering harm. Ask me, and you shall receive back your Mother and wife and anything else which you please. When next you write to me, however, address me not as an equal, but as Lord of Asia and of all that belongs to you, otherwise I shall deal with you as a wrong doer. If you intend to contest the kingdom with me, stand and fight for it, and do not run away. I shall march forward against you, wherever you may be." (G.H.G. Vol. 8356).

After his flight from the battlefield of Issus, Darius engaged himself in unremitting efforts to get together an army for the final struggle for the preservation of his country's independence. Such were the immense resources of the empire yet, that he was able to levy and fully equip an army superior in number and more effectively armed than that which had fought at Issus.

A spacious and perfectly flat plain in the neighbourhood of Gaugamela, about 30 miles west of the City of Arbella, was chosen by Darius as the field of battle. But here again the battle ended in complete

disaster for the Persians (1st October 331 B.C.).

Alexander rushed straight towards the person of Darius but, seeing the situation unfavourable, Darius left the field for safety.

At the "Persian Gates" the formidable pass leading up to Persepolis, the satrap Ariobarzanes made a stout attempt to bar Alexander's progress towards Perses or Iran proper. Alexander's frontal attack was repulsed and he had to return to his camp, after sustaining losses and without doing any damage to the defenders. Unfortunately, a Lykian captive slave acquainted him with the existence of a track, known only to himself, which brought Alexander in the night with a small mobile force to the rear of the Persians, whom he took unawares.

From Persepolis Alexander secured the enormous amount of 120,000 talents, equivalent to £. 27,600,000 and so much other valuable booty, that 10,000 two-mule carts and 5000 camels were required to transport it.

The helpless Persian monarch fled from Ecbatana to Rhagae with the intention of crossing through the Caspian Gates, to escape from the Macedonian victor. Eight days after he quitted Ecbatana, Alexander entered it.

Leaving Ecbatana in charge of Parmenio, with a strong garrison, Alexander hurried to overtake Darius before he crossed the Gates, but when he reached Rhagae, he learnt that the fugitive had already passed through them.

The last and most unfortunate of Achaemenian kings had escaped capture by his Macedonian adversary, only to fall to the daggers of two of his satraps, Bassus, Satrap of Bactria and Barsaentes, satrap of Drangiana and Arachosia; just as Alexander reached the chariot in which the murderous traitors had left their king, somewhere in the neighbourhood of Damghan, 200 miles East of Bhagae, Darius breathed his last. Alexander undoing his own cloak, cast it upon the body of the last of the heirs of Cyrus and Darius, and ordered him a suitable royal burial at Persepolis.

Chapter VII

THE GREEK INTERREGNUM

Alexander assumed the Imperial Persian Crown and regarded himself as the legitimate successor of Darius, and the head of the Persian Empire. Becoming more Persian than either Macedonian or Greek, he adopted the dress and ceremonial of Persian sovereigns. His headdress "the Diadema" was copied from that of the Persian monarchy.

Although Alexander was a bitter opponent of the Religion of Zoroaster and a persecutor of the priests of that faith, he regarded the Persian people themselves as a race worthy of all respect, and sought in them a second pillar for his universal empire.

He armed and drilled on the Macedonian model thirty thousand vigorous Persian youths whom he called the Epigonoi and into this Corps d'Elite, the Companion Cavalry, he incorporated a number of Persian Officers and soldiers.

When due to the mutiny in his army he was compelled to retreat from India, and reached Susa, he consummated his contemplated fusion of the two Imperial races, Macedonians and Persians, by holding a grand marriage feast at which eighty of his officers were married to girls of the Iran aristocracy, according to Zoroastrian rites as a symbol of the union of Hellas and Persia. Some ten thousand Macedonian soldiers, who had taken Persian wives, received wedding presents from him. And he himself married Statira, the daughter of Darius Codomannus, thus assuming the character of the king's legitimate successor.

Prior to this marriage, he had married, according to Zoroastrian rites, Roshanak (Roxsana) the beautiful daughter of Oxyaries, a Bactrian Prince. These two Persian Princesses were his only legal wives.

While engaged in constructing a dockyard at Babylone, with the principal purpose of building a fleet for his intended conquest of Arabia, Alexander was struck down by fever and passed away in Nebuchadnezzar's Palace, now called "Al Qasr", at the young age of 32 years and 8 months, after a reign of 12 years and 8 months (13th June 323 B.C.).

In the Pahlavi books Alexander is denounced as one of the three arch enemies of Persia. The first is Zohak, the Babylonian monarch, who overthrew the Peshdadian king Jemsheed, and ruled Iran with exceeding oppression and cruelty. The second is Afrasiab, the Turanian or Tartar King, who for a long period of years waged war with Iran during the Kayanian period, ravaging and destroying many fair portions of the country. Alexander of Macedonia is regarded as the third in that he terminated the Achaemenian rule and destroyed the ancient literature of Persia, extinguished the Holy Fire in many Fire Temples, and slew a number of Zoroastrian priests.

History records that under the influence of heavy bouts of drink, and instigated by the wiles of the charming Athenian harlot Thais, Alexander cast firebrands on the palace of Darius, followed by the guests and the servants, and finally by the mistresses, who not only ruined the most magnificent palace of Darius, which was the envy of the then world, but also the great hall of Xerxes, which was perhaps the largest and most splendid structure the world has ever seen. With the destruction of these two unsurpassed palaces, the royal library of Dizh-i-Nipisht (Fort of Documents) where the royal archives and Zoroastrian and Pre-Zoroastrian scriptures and other literature were treasured carefully, was also demolished in the conflagration.

Similarly documents which were deposited in the library of Ganj-i-Shapigan at Samarkand were destroyed by the drunken Alexander.

This has left a very bitter taste in the mouth of the Persians, as several books written during the Sasanian period testify. However, the great victory over Iran was not consolidated. When Alexander was on his death bed, he was asked in his last moments to whom he bequeathed his kingdom, he gave the reply so characteristic of him, "To the strongest." The result therefore was that there was a struggle amongst his various Generals who became independent kings in several provinces and these are known in Greek history as the Diadochi.

The entire reign of the Greeks did not last longer than 75 years, when there suddenly appeared on the world stage one of the most remarkable nations of the East, the Parthians, who have played a most notable role in the histories, both of ancient Persia and ancient Rome, and so long as that dynasty lasted, it acted as an effective curb on the progress of Roman power in the East.

Chapter VIII

THE PARTHIAN DYNASTY

Between the death of Alexander the Great (B.C. 323) and the overthrow of the Arsakanian or Parthian Emperor, Artabanus IV (Ardawan) by Artaxerxes I (Ardashir Papakan) the founder of the Sasanian Dynasty (A.D. 226), a period of five centuries and a half intervened.

There were in the neighbourhood of Bactria number of desert nomad tribes, who were accustomed to make inroads into the Bactrian territories with the object of plundering. One of these nomadic tribes was that of the Parnian Dahae who had migrated from Scythia, and had their pasturing grounds on Bactrian territory.

Diodotus, the powerful satrap of Bactria, attempted to bring these predatory people under his rule, and to escape him, they moved westward and settled within the boundaries of the Seleucid territory near Parthia. These Parnians came to be known as Parthians.

As to the religion of the Parthians, it is the confirmed opinion of the late Dr. Sir Jivanji Jamshedji Mody, a very eminent Parsee Scholar, that they were Zoroastrians in descent and faith. They erected fire temples and held the Magi originally in great reverence. The word Magi is derived from the old Persian word Magav, which signifies connection with the Median tribes of the Magavs. The priests of the Parsees are known to this day as Mobads, and this word is derived from the same root. The sacerdotal profession was reserved to the Magi in ancient days, as it is reserved for the Mobads today. Their garments were white as are those of the latter, white being the colour symbolical of physical, mental and spiritual purity.

In addition to their spiritual functions, they distinguished themselves as physicians, astrologers, teachers and annalists, and from the Shahanama we see that the principal ministers of the Iranian Kings were almost invariably Mobads.

The early Parthians did not bury their dead, but followed as well as possible the injunctions concerning the dead preserved by later Zoroast-

rianism. They exposed the corpses to be devoured by birds and beasts of prey, after which their bones were collected and placed in a sepulchre called Astodans. Herodotus says that the successors of the early Parthians burnt their dead in Nisibis.

Under the Achaemenids, they were subjected for several centuries to the religion followed by Cyrus and Darius, but their national faith inclined rather towards the worship of the elements and especially towards that of the sun and the moon, the latter they worshipped under the name of Anaitis, Artemus and Nannee. It was also influenced by the Pantheistic religion of the scythes, and the Polytheism of the Helenese. The cult of Mithra was widespread among the Parthians, and when they came in touch with the West, they erected temples and set up in them the statues and icons of their deities. In refinement and quickness of intelligence they were inferior to the Persians. Their language and writing were called by the later Persians Pahlavi, that is the language of the Pehlwans (Warriors or Parthians).

They were a nation above all of riders and from their childhood they acquired the art of riding bareback. Driving in chariots and a disinclination for hunting were considered by them as effeminate. They passed almost their whole time on horseback, conversing, buying, selling and even eating on their horses.

Their cavalry was of two classes: firstly, a body lightly armed with a bow of great strength and a quiver of arrows, and probably also carrying a sword and a knife; secondly, a body of heavy cavalry with horses clad for riding in armour and carrying a long and heavy spear, more powerful and weightier than the pilum of the Romans, and also a short sword which was used in close combat.

The horse archers were equally formidable in the charge and in the retreat, being trained to shoot from their bows at full gallop while advancing or retreating, a skill which has descended to the men of Persia to this day.*

Their principal mode of fighting was to make a series of attacks separated by swift flight, in which they shot backwards with terrible effect.

* Sir Percy Sykes (S.H.P. 3rd Ed. Vol. 1, 341) mentions that Persian Horsemen shoot rifles off horseback at full gallop, with remarkable precisions, their shots to the rear being ones that would baffle any European Cavalryman. 'Ancient Persia and The Parsees' by Jehangir B. Sanjana.

Plutarch described this as indeed a cunning practice, for while they thus fought to make their escape, they avoided the dishonour of a flight.

The Greek phalanxes and the Roman legions, unaccustomed to this method of warfare, were often overwhelmed and completely shattered by these warriors. The mailed horsemen charged at full speed and drove their spears with such force as often to pierce the bodies of two enemies at one thrust.

As to the foundation of the dynasty, it is said that the Parnians or Parthians, who settled themselves within the boundaries of the Seleucid territory, near Parthia, had two chiefs, the brothers Arsaces and Tiridates. When the Governor of Parthia, by name Andragoras, a Macedonian, having offered a wanton insult to Tiridates, the two brothers took up arms and unfurled the ancient Persian battle standard, the Drafsh-i-Kave-yan, which their uncle had saved from falling into the hands of the Macedonians at the battle of Arbella, and had secretly preserved. They attacked Andragoras, slew him and permanently freed this part of the country from Macedonian rule.

The elder brother Arsaces was proclaimed king and in B.C. 250, the Eleventh Year of Anthiocus Theos, the foundation of the renowned Arshkanian or Parthian Empire was laid.

Parthia proper was founded by the countries of Chorasmia, Margiana, Sarangia, Sagathia and Hyrcania. In area it was about 33,000 square miles.

In the third year of his reign Arsaces was killed in battle by a spear thrust, and was succeeded by Tiridates who on accession adopted the name of his brother Arsaces as a throne name. The same name came to be adopted in addition to his own by each succeeding Parthian sovereign, and so the Dynasty is also known as the Arsacid or Arshkanian Dynasty.

From the foundation of the Arshkanian or Parthian Dynasty there began a long series of fights between the Romans and the Parthians, and this went on for more than 300 years, during which many rulers both in Rome and in Parthia came to power. It is not the purpose of this book to deal with the details of the fights between the Romans and the Parthians. Those who are curious about it can learn from Gibbon's "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire." Suffice it to say that powerful generals like Pompey and Mark Anthony, as also Caesar, could not subdue this

proud and warlike race, which in the long run was instrumental in repeatedly defeating the mighty Roman Empire.

Crude as the Parthians were, there are scores of instances of barbarity and infidelity shown by the Romans also towards the Parthians time and again, which have besmirched the proud name of the Romans in history.

Nevertheless, the Parthians' loss of reverence for the Magians, their leaning towards idolatry and their other notorious defections from the pure tenets of Zoroastrianism gave great offence to the Persians, who were staunch adherents of the old faith. And this was not the least among the causes that culminated in the revolt of the Persians against Parthian domination under the leadership of their national Prince, Ardeshir Papekan (Artaxerxes I) who founded the great Sasanian Empire on the ashes of that of the Parthian.

Chapter IX

SASANIAN DYNASTY

More than all the Iranian dynasties that we have dealt with in the previous pages, the Sasanian dynasty was the most glorious, the most successful and yet the most ill-starred, inasmuch as with that dynasty the great Persian Empire ended, and the Parsees had to bid farewell to their dear motherland for ever.

The dynasty started with Papak, also known as Babak, who ruled the country under the Parthians, with Artabanus at its head.

One of the Princes of the Parthian dynasty, by name Sasan, had gone away to India and had settled down there when that dynasty was nearing its end. The Prince was roaming incognito, but having found him out and knowing about his real royal blood, Papak favoured him and eventually married him to his daughter, who gave birth to a son. The child was named Artakhshathra or Ardasheer. He completely won over the heart of Papak who gave him all necessary training worthy of a Prince, and in due course the Queen of Artabanus having heard about him, requested Papak to send the child to her.

The young prodigy was kept in the King's palace with all comfort and was given the best of training for his future career. Once, while idling away his time in a corner of the Palace all by himself, Ardasheer met a very beautiful and intelligent lady by name Goolnar. The meeting terminated in their marriage.

About this time Papak died. Naturally Ardasheer should have been made his successor. But for some reason Artabanus did not give Ardasheer his rightful place, and assigned the Governorship of Pars to his own son Behman, so that, out of sheer disappointment prince Ardasheer ran away from the kingdom with Goolnar, his young and beautiful wife, towards Pars.

As soon, therefore, as Ardasheer reached Pars, the inhabitants came running to greet him as a Sasanian, and to make him their leader. Ardasheer, anticipating that Artabanus would send an army against him, began collecting an army himself and he succeeded so well that he engaged

King Artabanus in three big battles, and eventually defeated and killed him on the field of Ahurmazd in 226 A.D. Thus ended the great Parthian Dynasty that was founded by Arshak and gave place to the Sasanian dynasty in Iran.

After this, Ardasheer's star ascended higher and higher, and he began to conquer the countries round Azarbaijan and Armenia as well as Babylonia and Assyria.

Having established himself well, and with his name and fame spread over a wide area, he sent a delegation of 400 tall and handsome Parsee warriors with equally strong, attractive and well caparisoned horses, to King Alexander Severus of Rome, with a message to say that the great King Cyrus had conquered every country of Asia from Propontius to the Aegean Sea, and these had remained for long with the Achaemenians. "Now that by the grace of God I have established myself as the founder of the Sasanian dynasty, it is my desire that Rome should give up all the countries they had taken in Asia from the former Persian Kings, and should content themselves by remaining within the boundaries of Europe," read his message.

Naturally the Romans would not consent to such humiliating terms; they gave battle to Ardasheer, who in the end succeeded in driving them away from all those countries that the Persians had had in their possession since the time of Cyrus the Great.

Among many reforms that Ardasheer brought about during his regime, there was one whereby his pious and extremely learned High Priest Dastur Tansar collected the scattered Parsee religious Avestan books and had them translated into Pahlavi, which was the language current throughout the Sasanian period. He founded huge libraries, and encouraged learned priests to give their services to the religion of Zarathushtra. He also established hospitals and clinics for the betterment of the health of his people and provided wells and canals so that the farmers might cultivate their lands, apart from their own benefit, for the welfare of the kingdom and the people therein. Further, he paid personal attention to the requirements and comforts of his army.

He died, leaving behind his great son Shapoor I, who came to the throne in 240 A.D. At that time several small kings tried to be independent of Iran, but this brave son of Ardasheer Papakan gave them the lessons



Bas-relief at Naksh-e-Rustam:
Roman King Valerian surrendering to Shahpoor the Great.

they deserved, and established his name as a worthy son of a worthy father.

Shapoor next extended his attention to Mesopotamia, which he conquered by defeating the Roman soldiers stationed there. He then conquered Antioch and defeated Valerian, who at that time was about sixty years old, and captured him in the year 260 A.D. Not only that, but Shapoor refused to acknowledge the son of Valerian as Emperor of Rome. Instead, he made a Roman nobleman by name Syriades all-powerful in that country, since he was more inclined towards Iran. This was indeed a great achievement in history. Little by little he conquered so many countries that a vast part of the then known world began to acknowledge his sovereignty.

In a tri-lingual inscription at Naksh-i-Rajab Shapoor has inscribed the following, which in Pahlavi language reads as under:

*"PATKALI ZANEH MAZDAYASN BAGI SHAPAHRI
MALKAN MALKA AIRAN VE ANIRAN MINOCHITRI
MIN YAZTAN BAREH MAZDAY BAGI ARTAKHSHATR
MALKAN MALKA AIRAN MINOCHITRI MIN YAZTAN
NAPI BAGI PAPAKI MALKA".*

i.e. "This is the image of the Mazda-worshipping Divinity Shapoor, King of Kings of Iran and non-Iran, of spiritual origin from the sacred beings, son of the Mazda-worshipping Divinity Ardasheer, King of the Kings of Iran, of spiritual origin from the sacred beings, grandson of the Divinity Papak, the King".

Apart from being a great conqueror, he was a great administrator, as also a patron of the Arts. Amongst many public works that he is credited with, he built with the aid of the Roman engineers a great dam, 20 feet broad and 1200 feet in length, across the River Karoon flowing by the Town of Shooshter, and named it "Band-i-Kaisar" (Caesar's Dam).

According to Tabari, and some other writers, even the Town of Shooshter was built by Shapoor with the assistance of Roman captives. In addition he constructed the great Bridge of Dizful which has 22 arches and is 450 paces long.

It is said that his features were not handsome, but he was distinguished for great personal courage and munificence.

It is recorded that there existed in the ruined city of Shapoor, a colossal marble statue of this king, on the right hand bank of the river, but far up at the entrance to an enormous cave in the face of the cliff. It now lies broken and defaced beside the huge pedestal on which it once stood. The pedestal is 10 feet in diameter and 5 feet high. The sandaled feet that once stood upon it are 39 inches in length. The full height of the statue must have been some 20 feet. *

In the year 1926, some enthusiastic young Parsees from Bombay under the leadership of Kaikhooshro A. Fitter, thought they would lift up the statue and place it again with the help of the Iranian Government on the pedestal. An equally enthusiastic Parsee from Karachi gave them strong ropes and pulleys and other equipment necessary for this undertaking, but unfortunately the statue was found to be too huge and weighty, and the surroundings not favourable to permit these young men to lift the statue up. It is still lying there, in the same broken condition, deteriorating more and more as the years go by.

The latest particulars in connection with this statue, having been received after the manuscripts were given for printing, will be found in Appendix 'C'.

During the time of this King, a painter by name Mani or Manes began spreading his own religion known in history as Manichaeism.

This remarkable man was born in Babylon in A.D. 215-216 in the reign of Ardvan, the last of the Parthian Kings. He received his first revelation at the age of thirteen and ultimately claimed to be a prophet, the very seal or last messenger of God. He began his propaganda under Ardasheer, but worked with greater vigour under Shapoor I, who embraced his faith.¹

Mani taught that everything was evil in an evil world, and he consequently denounced marriages and the propagation of the human race. In addition to the doctrines of Christianity, Mani had made a deep study of the Zoroastrian and Levitical tenets and was familiar with the philosophical system of Sakhia Mooni. He promulgated a synthetic creed, combining the essential truths of all these faiths.²

* (B.B.T.P. 86-7) from "Ancient Persia and the Parsees" by Jehangir Burjorji Sanjana, B.A., J.P.

¹ Mirkhond, pp 333,336 al-Ya'qubi quoted by Browne, Literary History, Vol. I, 156 New York 1902, quoted in 'Zoroastrian Theology' by Dastur Dr. Dhalla.

² From 'Ancient Persia & The Parsees' by Jehangir Burjorji Sanjana, B.A., J.P., Bombay.

Manichaeism flourished with varied success side by side with the state religion, until Behram I ascended the throne. The teachings of Mani acquired a strong hold over the minds of many, and threatened to be a powerful rival of the ancient faith.

The national spirit rebelled against the encroachment of the new cult, and the King strove to extinguish the heresy, with a firm hand. He confronted Mani with his Dastur, who threw him a challenge, that both of them should pour molten lead on their bellies and whoever came out unhurt should be declared to be in the right. This Mani did not accept. Consequently in A.D. 276-7 he was flayed to death and his body was stuffed with straw. *

After Shapoor I, a few kings followed and then Narsi became King, against whom his brother Ahurmazd collected an army, in which he was helped by the Russians. This was for the first time that the name Russia came to be known to the world. Narsi succeeded in defeating his brother, but having lost certain parts of his country to the Romans again, he relinquished his right to the throne and gave it to his son Ahurmazd II, who died after reigning for eight years.

The Iranians were reluctant to give the throne to Ahurmazd's son who was more inclined towards Rome and its customs. His wife, the Queen, who was at that time pregnant, was offered the throne in the hope that if she delivered a boy he would be the rightful heir to the throne of the Sasanians.

In due course a boy was born. When he was forty days old, a coronation was held and the Prime Minister Shehruye (Kingly-faced) was appointed regent. The child was named Shapoor II, and from his very early years began showing signs of greatness.

At the tender age of sixteen he collected an army, and brought to bay the Arabs, who had created a rebellion in Mesopotamia. He spread such terror that all the rebels at once accepted his sovereignty and thus he earned the title 'Shapoor the Great'.

The Arabs were so much afraid of Shapoor II, due to the severity of his punishments, and at times were so much under obligation to him,

* Al-Biruni p. 191, al Ya' qubi, cited by Browne 'Literary History of Persia' Vol. I, p. 157, Mirkhond p. 337 Tabari translated by Moldeke Geschichte der Perser and Araber p. 47 Leyden 1879 quoted by Dastur Dr. Dhalla in "Zoroastrian Theology".

due to his clemency, which he was wont to show to enemies, that they gave him the title of Zoulactaff (Lord of the Shoulders). This was due to his practice of dislocating the shoulders of the Arab pirates, or removing their shoulder blades, or stringing the men together, in couples, by boring their shoulders and passing a rope through them. Of this latter practice, the proof can be seen from the base-relief at the Tak-e-Bostan (Arch of the Garden) and elsewhere, where figures of persons, with strings passed through holes in their shoulders can still be seen.

At this time the Emperor Constantine had adopted Christianity and while it had spread itself in Iran prior to this, Shapoor found that the Christians were taking undue advantage of the tolerance that he was exercising in his kingdom towards the followers of other religions, and therefore he began placing restraint on the movements of his Christian subjects.

Constantine on the other hand requested Shapoor the Great to exercise a little more tolerance towards the followers of Christianity in his kingdom, to which the latter replied by asking the former to give back those countries which the Romans had taken away from his grandfather by fraud.

This again started war between the Romans and the Persians. While preparations for the war were going on, Constantine died, and the Eastern portion of the Roman Empire came to the share of Julian, the nephew of Constantine, who built a new city and called it Constantinople.

Shapoor the Great sent word to this young King of Constantinople, to fulfil the terms that had been offered to his father, and finding that he would not comply, he sent an army and defeated the Romans in the battle of Singara, and once again took Armenia into his possession. During this time the Scythians and the Tartars descended from the north of Iran, and also met with defeat at the hands of Shapoor.

Several wars took place during the time of Shapoor the Great, but every time he proved his military superiority, so much so that even the Romans had to submit and pay Iran large sums of money by way of indemnities.

Shapoor the Great ruled for seventy years and made for himself and for Iran, a great name. He died in 379 A.D.

The thirteenth king of the Sasanian dynasty was Yazdajard I, who came to the throne in A.D. 399. He was reputed to be ill-tempered and unstable. Yet the Roman King Arcadius had so much faith in him, that when he was dying he gave his son, Theodosius, in charge of Yazdajard, and left a very large sum of money at the disposal of that King, so that he could bring up Theodosius in a manner befitting a prince.

As a result, Yazdajard I became very friendly towards the Christians, who, taking advantage of his kindness towards him became arrogant, and raised a rebellion, wherein several Zoroastrians were killed and several fire temples were destroyed. But when matters went too far, Yazdajard quelled the rebellion with a strong hand at the cost of precious Christian blood.

Yazdajard I had taken in marriage a Jewish Princess named Shisin Dokht, who bore him a son called Behram, who afterwards came to the throne as Vrahran V. The Jewish Princesses and other Jewish ladies had begun exercising considerable influence over the Persians in one way or the other, with the result that the Iranians were tired of Yazdajard, and when Behram was born, they put him under the very able and worthy Ruler of Yemen, by name Munzir (Al Mondhir).

The result was that young Behram became an expert at riding, shooting and all manly games, and having a very brave and sympathetic nature, he won over the heart of Munzir, who did everything possible for his education, and taught the young prince Persian, Arabic and Greek, thus training him to be a worthy king of the Iranians.

Behram is known in history as an expert with the bow and arrow; so much so that it is recorded, that once he saw a tiger in the act of attacking his prey; Behram threw a dart at the animal, in such a way, that both the tiger and its prey were transfixed. A further instance of his control over archery is recorded. He once threw an arrow in such a manner as to just graze the tip of an animal's ear without doing it serious harm; the moment the animal lifted its hind leg to scratch its ear, Behram threw a second arrow, transfixing the leg of the animal to its neck. He seldom missed the mark while hunting in the jungles.

When Yazdajard I died there were other claimants to the throne. So the Iranians approached King Munzir for advice. He suggested a way of settling the throne amongst the rival claimants, and told them to bring forth the throne of ivory and set the Imperial Crown over it, and then bring two savage lions and chain them on each side. "He who aspires to

kingship", said he, "should advance, lift the crown from the throne and, placing it upon his head, beset himself on the throne between the lions".

This cooled the ardour of the claimants, and Behram was the only one who took up the challenge. He carried an oxhead mace in his hands and approached the lions. As he was nearing the first lion, it made a ferocious jump at Behram, who gave a hard blow with the mace on the animal's head; the animal fell down dead on the spot. Meanwhile, the other lion broke its chain and rushed at Behram, who, keeping his wits about him, dealt him a severe blow on the head, with the result that he too died on the spot. The audience, which was watching spell-bound, all this time, broke into resounding cheers.

Behram picked up the crown and put it on his head. He held a Durbar at which all the Iranians whole-heartedly accepted him as their rightful king.

During his reign, Behram had to fight the Romans and the Khaqans (Chinese). From them he gained huge sums as indemnities, which he spent for the betterment of his subjects.

It is recorded that after a time Behram thought of going to India, with a view to getting for Iran an annual subsidy from there. During the time of Darius I and Xerxes this had been collected, but subsequently India had stopped paying an indemnity to Iran. Behram, on pretence of sending a mission, picked a few selected warriors from his army, and lead them himself, as if he were an envoy from the king of Iran. He reached Kanauj and presented the message as if from Behram V, the King of Iran, to the Indian King, Shangal (Vasudev).

Shangal, ignorant of the fact that the leader of the Iranian delegation was the King of Iran himself, asked him to read out the message from his King, which Behram did. Thereupon, the Indian King was very annoyed and on the spur of the moment he wanted to kill them all. But wiser counsel prevailed, and gradually he cooled down. He arranged for a feast, where the famous wrestlers of India challenged the Iranians, with the result that Behram himself came forward, and so quickly toppled his rivals over, one by one, that the king was amazed and frightened.

Behram took this opportunity to inform the King that he was only one of the humblest in the army of the King of Iran and from this his majesty could judge what a powerful army the King of Iran must have,

with such champion warriors to fight for him. The King thereupon gave his daughter Sapinood to Behram in marriage.

After some time Behram revealed his real identity to Sapinood, who informed her father, who in turn was greatly pleased that his daughter had become the Queen of Iran unawares. Thus, Behram returned to Iran, with the daughter of the Indian King as his Queen, as well as a large subsidy, which the King promised to pay Iran annually.

Behram thus ruled gloriously for twenty years, during which he fought several times with the Romans and other nations and brought much lustre and prestige to Iran. He died in A.D. 440.

After some more rulers Pirooz came to the throne. He left a name behind him as a good and brave King. The gravest event that took place during his reign was a terrible famine that lasted for seven years. The King, with a view to protecting the poor of his kingdom, issued an order that the rich and the upper class in his kingdom must come forward to help the poor in their dire need, and if anyone died for want of sympathy from them, such unsympathetic persons would be very harshly punished. He spent all his fortune in importing grain from Abyssinia and the territories around the River Oxus, as also from Greece and India to give relief to the poor, and to prevent them from starving.

He further issued an ordinance to the effect, that the rich and the upper classes must eat only once a day, and the food prepared daily for their usual normal consumption, such as for lunch or dinner, must be given to the poor. Thus did he avert the calamity that usually follows severe famine, and earned the blessings of the poor and the needy of his country.

This is the first time in the history of Zoroastrianism that compulsory fasting was ordered by a Zoroastrian King, since Zoroastrianism is against fasting in any shape or form. The only fasting enjoined in the Zoroastrian religion is the fasting against sins.

A great nobleman in Iran, by name Surkhvan or Soofzai, defeated the Huns that had come rushing through the north of that country, in the year 468 A.D. and gave the kingdom to Kobad, the son of Pirooz, in the year 487 A.D.

In the reign of Kobad, Mazdak, the second great heretic, who was a pious Mobad and son of Bamdat, proclaimed religious reforms, the basis

of which was economic. He is described as the accursed heterodox in the Pahlavi Bahman Yasht, who observed fasts, and appeared to cause disturbances among the faithful, says Dastur Dr. Dhalla in his **Zoroastrian Theology**.

Mazdak realised, as had Plato in the **Republic** that wealth and women were the prime sources of sinfulness in the world. He further held that the sole individual possession of money and women was a crime. In his opinion since God is the undisputed master of everything, wealth and women must be had in common by people in general, so that there might be no occasion for greed and envy. While Plato's **Republic** was an imaginary commonwealth, Mazdak's creed was a strong reality.

In fact Mazdak so won over King Kobad by his eloquence, that during a famine he was able to get the consent of the King to incite the people to attack and rob the rich, who hoarded grain in such critical times. This considerably raised Mazdak in the estimation of the people.

While Kobad publicly repudiated the Mazdakian creed, he was so much taken up by it in secret, that setting aside all essence of religious and moral propriety, he fell in love with his own beautiful sister. Mazdak also now proceeded to extremes, and claimed the hand of the fair Queen of Kobad, the mother of Naushirvan. It was only when matters had reached such a stage that Prince Naushirvan was exasperated and saw the necessity of immediate and severe disciplinary measures.

He gathered together learned and intelligent men from the King's court and held consultations with them over this very sore point. One morning Naushirvan presented himself at the Court with his wise men and nobles and addressing the King Kobad, his father, said that the time to determine which was the true religion, Zoroastrianism or Mazdakism, had arrived. If it appeared that the latter was true and the former false, he was prepared to accept it and value it more than his life. But, he added, if on the other hand it be proved that what Mazdak had been preaching was false and misleading, and he was not seeking the way of God, "then, Oh King, thou shalt renounce his heresies and denounce his mischievous propaganda and leave him and his sectaries to be dealt with by me."

On the King consenting to these terms of his son, one of the sages present began his interrogation as follows:

"Oh Seeker after wisdom, thou hast propagated a new creed, and makest women and riches, common property of all. Then tell us how a father can know his own child and the child recognise its parent? When all men are on one level and none is high or low, who will care to serve and how possibly can there be mastery? Who will labour for them and for me? How shall the good man be distinguished from the bad? On a man's death, who will be the inheritor of all movable and immovable property, the king and the citizen both being in your eyes equal? Your doctrine will devastate the country. Such evil must not come upon Iran. If all would be masters, who would be the servants? And, if all wealth be common, who will be the wealthy persons? No prophet has uttered such heresy before. There is madness in thee. Evil doing, thou recognizest not as wrong, and so leadest all men to hell". *

The people in the Court raised the cry, "Let Mazdak never remain near our King's person. He violates God's religion. May he never be in this majestic Court".

Convinced of the falsity of Mazdak's creed, Kobad left Naushirvan to decide the fate of that heretic and his adherents, as he willed. It is said that Prince Naushirvan consequently arranged a banquet where he invited Mazdak and his followers and killed them all at the feast.

According to Professor E.G. Brown in his *Literary History of Persia*, Naushirvan is accused of the heinous crime of burying alive Mazdak and his followers, with their heads thrust underground, keeping their legs dangling above, for those who were still secretly inclined towards Mazdak's communistic theory to see and learn a lesson therefrom.

Owing to the unsettled state of affairs there was a revolt against the unpopular Kobad who was imprisoned and his brother Jamasp was installed on the throne. Kobad was handed over to Zarmehar, who was the son of Soofzai, whom Kobad had killed under some suspicion, which was not justified. Zarmehar, however, set Kobad free with the result that the latter began repenting of his hasty action. Eventually, however, he was successful in again getting back his throne with the help of Zarmehar and the army of Ephthalites. He made Jamasp and Zarmehar his Chief Ministers.

* From 'Ancient Persia and the Parsees' by Jehangir Burjorji Sanjana B.A., J. P., Bombay.

Having had a bitter experience because of the thoughtless way in which he had handled his country, Kobad began paying serious attention to the improving of his lost prestige.

He had planned a wall, on the tops of the Caucasus Mountains and the shores of the Caspian Sea, which was unusually thick and high, extending over many hundreds of miles. The strength of the wall, which was built to prevent the hordes from the north rushing down on Iran, could be gauged from the size of the stone used for the purpose, each piece of which was 21 feet long and 7 feet thick.

Towards the expense of this great wall, the Romans had agreed to give their share, but later on they repudiated the agreement, with the result that Kobad took an Army against them, and conquered the castle of Amida, with the city surrounding it.

Great were the conquests made by Kobad during these fights with the Romans, by virtue of which he washed out the stain that he had allowed to remain on his character, when in the beginning of his reign he had accepted the sinful doctrine of Mazdak.

Prince Kaoos (Kausas), the eldest son of Kobad, assumed the insignia of royalty by right of birth. The nobles were disposed to support him, but when the Minister, Ramburzin, produced the late King's will, there was general acquiescence in favour of Khoosrau and he was installed in A.D. 531.

A party of noblemen plotted to bring Prince Kobad, son of the late King's second son, Zames, to the throne. Zames himself being blind in one eye, was ineligible for kingship, but it was intended to make him regent during his son's minority. The plot was discovered in time and according to Prokopius, Khoosrau condemned to death all the sons of Kobad, together with all their male offspring. Kobad, the son of Zames, alone escaped.

Khoosrau's first important act was to summon wise men from different parts of the empire into his presence, and in consultation with them to inaugurate important administrative reforms. Before his time, the empire had been divided into a multitude of provinces, each governed almost independently by a satrap, who held his office directly under the crown.

It was difficult for the King of Kings to exercise sufficient supervision over all domains, specially those which were remote from the Court. Khoosrau formed four great divisions or governments, to each of which he assigned a controlling officer or viceroy, in whom he had confidence. The duty of this officer was to guide, control and watch the conduct of the satraps within his division. The Satraps reported to the viceroys who, in their turn, submitted general reports to the King.

As soon as Khoosrau put the crown on his head, the Emperor of Rome wrote to him, offering terms for a long peace between the two countries, which Khoosrau gladly accepted, and the Romans gave him a large sum of money together with two castles. They also offered to remove the Roman soldiers from the Castle of Dara.

Naushirvan on his part handed over to the Romans the Castle of Mongralia and signed a treaty to bind the Iranians in perpetual friendship with them. He further agreed to give them help in case of necessity.

Unfortunately, the Romans took advantage of Naushirvan's treaty of peace, conquered the northern portion of Africa and captured the Moors and almost destroyed the Kingdom of Ostrogoth in Italy. This, naturally, brought to the king of Iran requests for help from several Kings, including the Kings of Italy and Armenia, as well as the Saracens.

Much against his will, Naushirvan had to declare war against Rome in 540 A.D. and he conquered a vast portion of the Roman Territory on the borders of the Mediterranean and also conquered Antioch and Appenia. On his return, he conquered Charles' Idessa, Constantina and Daras and also several castles.

After this, Naushirvan built on the Tigris a beautiful city and named it Zaib-e-Chosroes, or Roomia, which he populated with all the prisoners he had brought from Syria and he let them mix with the Greeks.

Apart from being called a great conqueror and a brave King, Khoosrau earned the title of Adil and Dadgar; he was generally called Anushehrawan Dadgar or Adil.

Dadgar stands for "Listener of complaints" or "Giver of Justice". Adil means "Just". So he was looked upon as a just king or the king who listened to the complaints of his subjects, and redressed their grievances.

From Anushehrawan the name changed into Anushirvan, and finally to Naushirvan, with the added titles of either Dadgar or Adil.

It is recorded that Naushirvan had fixed a bell in his palace, with a long chain attached to it, which anybody, rich or poor, was entitled to use. The moment the chain was pulled, and the bell rang, it was the order of Naushirvan that he be informed immediately and the seeker after justice be brought before him.

Once, so the story goes, an old and feeble horse that was discarded by a minister of Naushirvan, happened to be grazing near the palace, when accidentally the chain came between his teeth and the pull made the bell ring. An attendant at once ran out to see who was seeking justice. When he saw no human being around, he quickly returned to his task. Naushirvan, having also heard the bell, felt sure that somebody wanted to see him. So he ordered his vassal to go and find out again who it was that had pulled the chain. The puzzled attendant went to the door again and found only an old and emaciated horse grazing. He returned and told the King that there was nobody but an old and decrepit horse, who could not possibly have rung the bell of justice.

The King was not satisfied with this explanation. He ordered his Captain of the Guard to make inquiries as to whom the old animal belonged. It turned out to be the horse of the King's own minister. The King sent for him and asked him if the animal really belonged to him. On his acknowledging the ownership of the horse, Naushirvan asked him under what circumstances the animal happened to be wandering around the palace garden. The Minister confessed that being old and weak and useless for his purpose, he had left the horse loose, rather than keeping him and feeding him all his life.

The King was very annoyed at this heartless treatment of a faithful animal. He told the minister that precisely for that reason he had no need for his services from that day. He would let him free in the very manner in which the horse was let free. The King said he found the minister aged and not capable of hard work. The Minister was very much taken aback. He fell upon his knees and begged his majesty to forgive him. Naushirvan consented to do so on the minister consenting to take the horse back, and keeping it in comfort till the end of its days. This, Naushirvan said, was the true reward that everyone deserved, for rendering long and faithful service; and, in the name of justice and fairplay, he expected his subjects to be appreciative of where justice was due.

In Ctesiphon, his capital city, Naushirvan had built a great palace named Taq-e-Kisra, whose ruins are still standing some 40 miles from Baghdad. *

Thus did Naushirvan gain the title of Adil and Dadgar, and thus has he immortalised his name in the Sasanian Dynasty and in the history of the world.

"Peace hath her victories no less renowned than war" says Professor Firoz C. Davar in his "Iran and Its Culture", and continues, that the true glory of Naushirvan's reign lay in the encouragement he gave to art and scholarship.

Naushirvan spent considerable time in war, and yet he was a devotee of learning, fond of collecting books and appreciative of the worth of scholars. He was himself well read in the works of Plato and Aristotle, which were translated into Pahlavi by his orders. He had indeed seven Greek scholars in his court at Jund-i-Shahpur, the great intellectual centre of Naushirvan, where Nestorian Christians conveyed the fruits of Greek culture, and discoursed with Persian and Indian Scholars. He kept them in comfort for 20 years, and he often entered into philosophical discussions with them. Some of these were the Greek scholars whom the Emperor Justinian of Constantinople had driven away from the academies of Athens and Alexandria, which were suppressed in 528 A.D.

Not only that but Naushirvan, with his usual sense of justice and fair play, had allowed these philosophers to follow their own faith.

It is said that Naushirvan was very particular about the officers of his household and of his army, as also of his political departments carrying out their duties honestly and faithfully. The punishment for any officer found guilty of bribery was to be sawed alive.

Similarly, Naushirvan was very particular regarding the discipline in his army. On pay days every soldier had to appear fully armed and give proof of his proficiency in his particular art, which minimised all chances of deceit.

* The magnificent arch of this Palace is 72 feet broad and 85 feet high, while the Hall adjoining it is 115 feet long, 72 feet broad and 85 feet high. One could just imagine what a magnificent structure Taq-e-Kisra must be from these dimensions.

Though Naushirvan was officially considered the Commander-in-Chief, he had the sense of fairness to place himself on a level of equality with the rank and file. Once on pay-day, when all the soldiers and military officers had gathered together, Naushirvan absented himself. The Paymaster of the Army, Babak by name, twice dispersed the soldiers, without payment, and declared that salaries could not be disbursed till the Commander-in-Chief had put in his appearance. When Naushirvan came to know of this and when the Army had gathered for the third time for its pay, he galloped upon his horse, amidst cheers from his men, to receive his pay. To everybody's surprise the Paymaster turned Naushirvan away without paying him, saying that he had failed to provide himself with two spare strings for his bow according to the rules then in force. Like a true soldier and sportsman, Naushirvan galloped back and returned fully equipped with uniform and extra strings, as required by the then prevailing army code, and got his pay like every other soldier. Far from being annoyed with the Paymaster, he complimented him on his strict discipline and promoted him to a higher rank. *

Such was Naushirvan, a just, wise, vigilant and martial, yet merciful monarch, under whom Iran achieved great eminence, expanded on all sides, and enjoyed abundant prosperity.

Hazrat Muhammad, the Prophet, spoke with pride of being born during the regime of King Naushirvan. In fact it is stated in the Hadis, "The Prophet, on whom be peace, sayeth, 'I was born in the reign of King Naushirvan, the Just'." **

So much has the name of Naushirvan been revered in the Muslim world, that even today travelling through Afghanistan and Baluchistan, if an Afghan or a Baluchee met a Parsee and asked him who he was, the Parsee would answer: 'I am from the lineage of Naushirvan Adil'; great would be the joy of the listener, who would embrace him and respect him, as a descendant of a great and just King, of a renowned race.

Khosroes, the Celebrated Khoosrau Pervez, was declared king of Iran in A.D. 590.

Behram Chobin started minting coins with his own name as King, whereupon Khoosrau Pervez tried to win him over, but failing to do so,

* "Iran and its Culture" by Prof. Firoze C. Davar.

** "Ancient Persia & The Parsees" by Jehangir Burjorji Sanjana, B.A., J.P., Bombay.

he sent troops against Behram. Unfortunately the troops deserted Khoosrau and joined the rebel forces. He escaped with a few faithful soldiers and decided to seek help from the Romans.

The Emperor Maurice, on hearing of his misfortune and difficulties, gave him permission to take up his residence at Hieropolis, and also gave him 70,000 men of his own forces, under the command of Narseez, a noted Persian General, in the service of Rome, and further, released the Persian prisoners, who were in confinement at Constantinople, and ordered them to join their King's colours. As if this was not enough, the Emperor Maurice gave a subsidy amounting to two million sterling and also gave his daughter Marian (Maria) in marriage to Khoosrau, in the hope that affinity would make the alliance sure. By this treaty of alliance, Khoosrau ceded to the Emperor Maurice, who had become his virtual father-in-law, the rights he enjoyed in Egypt and Syria, which his grandfather Naushirvan had conquered.

Supported thus by a large army and money, and also by his maternal uncle Bindoees, who had escaped from the prison, into which Behram had thrown him, and by several Armenian and Persian Grandees who had gathered round his banner, he fought two pitched battles with Behram, who sustained a severe defeat and fled with 4,000 men to the Eastern Provinces of the Oxus. There he sought the protection of the Khan of the Turks, by name Permudeh, who gave him shelter and the hand of his daughter in marriage.

But unfortunately, within a short time Behram fell a victim to the poisoned dagger of a slave of the Khan's wife. This made the field clear for Khoosrau, who now became the rightful heir to his father's throne.

Soon after, in the year 602 A.D., the centurion Phocas deposed the Emperor Maurice, and had him murdered and declared himself Emperor. He sent Lilius, whom he had used as a tool to murder Maurice, as envoy to the Persian court, to announce his assumption of the Imperial throne.

Khoosrau naturally was annoyed at this cowardly and brazen-faced act and imprisoned the envoy, while he declared war on Phocas. He defeated the Roman General Germinius near Dara and conquered several other cities. Carrying the war into Syria, he captured Hieropolis, whereas his general took several other places and the Persian forces penetrated as far West as Chalcedon, which lay opposite Constantinople.

The young Heraclius, who was on the throne, sent three Roman nobles as Ambassadors to the Persian Court to sue for peace. Khoosrau replied that the Empire was his and Heraclius must give it up to him.

The Sasanian monarch Khoosrau Pervez had restored the Parsee Empire to almost the same extent to which it had risen under the eminent Achaemenian Emperor Darius the Great. It stretched from the Tigris and Euphrates to the Aegean and the Nile. This was a proud moment for Khoosrau Pervez and one of the proudest in Parsee history. The Parsee King had cleared Asia of its European conquerors. Of all those vast territories in Africa and Asia which the renowned legions of Rome, led by such commanders as Julius Caesar, Pompey, Lucullus, Mark Antony, Aurelian, Trajan and Belisarius had conquered, not a foot of land remained, which Rome could claim as her own.*

Heraclius was stricken with despair. He contemplated flight and made secret arrangements for transporting himself, his family, and his treasures to Carthage. The treasure ships were put to sea, but before the Emperor could follow his design the people rose against him. The Patriarch took him to the Cathedral of St. Sophia, and there extracted from him an oath at the altar, that whatever might come, he would not separate his fortunes from those of his people. The Emperor's treasure ships were caught in a tempest. Some sank and others were wafted by adverse winds to a Port in Asia Minor. The spoil was conveyed to Khoosrau Pervez and formed the treasure called Baad-Avard (wind carried) which was among the glories of his palace.

Heraclius in the end became desperate and made up his mind either to defeat the Persians or be killed in the attempt. He therefore invaded Armenia and destroyed several towns and places, one of the most important being the City of Lake Urumiah, known in Avesta as Chaechista, where burned one of the most sacred fires of the Zoroastrians. Heraclius further on recovered Martyropolis and Amida.

Inspite of Khoosrau Pervez making an alliance with the Khan of Avars, and despite an army of 50,000 which he put under the command of Shahan, to hold Heraclius in check, somehow the efforts were not successful. Even later on Khoosrau's army under another general, Rhazates, met the Romans near the ruins of Niniveh, but there too the

* "Ancient Persia & The Parsees" by J.B. Sanjana, B.A.,J.P., Bombay.

Persians retreated to a strong position at the foot of the mountains, having lost their General in the battle.

The matter did not stop at that, but Heraclius eventually attacked Dastagard, which was Khoosrau Pervez's Court for 40 years, and which was about 70 miles to the North of Ctesiphon. The royal palace at Dastagard was pillaged and the very rich plunder was divided among the troops of Heraclius who further recovered 300 Roman Standards; this was in the year 628 A.D. Heraclius offered peace terms to Khoosrau Pervez, by which he demanded Syria, Asia Minor and Egypt as indemnity. Naturally Khoosrau refused these terms.

The continuous disastrous results to the Persian territory enraged Khoosrau, who began to give vent to his vexation by acts of cruelty. He threw into prison several of the officers who had been defeated by Heraclius and put many to death. He went to the extent of imprisoning some of his own sons. But what gave the greatest displeasure to Khoosrau's nobles was his declared intention of appointing Mardasas (Mardan Shah of Firdausi), the son of his favourite Christian wife, the beautiful Shireen of Shira, as his successor, setting aside the legitimate claims of his eldest son Sirooees.

The result was that 22 nobles, headed by Gaudanaspa, the Commandant of the troops at Ctesiphon, formed a conspiracy and rose in favour of Sirooees. They held a mock trial of the misdeeds of Khoosrau Pervez and found him guilty. They went to the extent of killing several of his children before his eyes; some of his nobles insulted him to his face. But the culminating point was that they sent one Mehr Hormazd, an ugly and evil-looking man, to kill the king.

Such was the most tragic end of a most brilliant king of Iran, Khoosrau Pervez, after a reign of 38 years (590-628 A.D.).

It is said that under this king the imperial revenues, according to a statement prepared in A.D. 607, amounted to six hundred million Drachmae.

Khoosrau Pervez was in the habit of dividing his daily duties into four sections; the first was devoted to state affairs; the second to pleasures, to music and friendly conversation with his grandees; the third to prayers; the first half of the fourth to observation of the sky and to philosophy, the other half to the drinking of wine in the company of beautiful women.

Khoosrau Pervez was a lover of the beautiful and also a patron of the arts. No reigning prince has done more to stimulate the fine arts than he.

In the vicinity of Kermanshah, and not far from Taq-i-Bustan, was situated the famous quadrilateral platform, where this king received homage in royal assembly, from the kings of China, Turan, India and Byzantine. Its length and breadth were a 100 cubits and it was constructed with dressed blocks of stone, skilfully matched and joined together by iron clamps so closely, that they looked like a single piece.

His palace at Canzaca was a domed building, the ceiling of which was ornamented with representations of the sun, moon and stars, while below was an image of the monarch, seated and attended by messengers, bearing wands of office. A machine was attached by which rain and thunder could be imitated.

His palace at Artaima, referred to by Oriental writers as Dastagard, was supported by 40,000 columns of silver, adorned by 30,000 rich hangings upon the walls, and further ornamented by 1000 globes suspended from the roof.

The Mashita palace, in the land of Moab, situated about 30 miles due east of the head of the Dead Sea, was built between 614 and 627 A.D. It was one of Khoosrau's rich and rare possessions. It consisted of two buildings, separated by a courtyard of nearly 200 feet, each of which was 180 feet along the front, with a depth respectively of 140 and 150 feet. The second building, which lies towards the south, was adorned externally with a richness and magnificence, unparalleled in the remains of Sasanian times, and scarcely excelled in the architecture of any age or nation. *

Khoosrau Pervez had a throne called Takadis, supported on 4 feet of red rubies. At the end of each foot there were 100 pearls, each of the size of a sparrow's egg. The story goes that when Khoosrau became King, he came to know that here were records to show that the Kayanian King Vishtaspa had intended to construct a throne on the design of his Minister Jamasp. Khoosrau obtained these records and constructed the Takadis.

This throne was of ivory and teak, adorned with silver and gold, 180 cubits long, 130 cubits broad and 15 cubits high, surmounted by a canopy of gold and lapis-lazuli, on which were represented the sky and the stars and signs of the Zodiac and the seven climes (Kishwars), as well as the

* 'Ancient Persia & The Parsees' by J.B. Sanjana, B.A., J.P., Bombay.

former kings in their different attitude, either at banquet or in battle or hunting. A special mechanism indicated the hour of the day. The throne was throughout covered with four carpets of brocade embroidered with gold and decked with pearls and rubies, each of these carpets symbolising one of the four seasons.

Among this king's other remarkable possessions there were the following works of ingenuity, namely:

1. a cup in which the quantity of water was never diminished however much a person drank from it.
2. an expanded hand of ivory, which whenever a child was born to the king, being immersed in water, closed, and exhibited the conjunction of stars presiding at the infant's birth and thus the horoscope was known.
3. a piece of pure gold, pliable and soft as wax.
4. a napkin for cleaning the King's hands, made out of malleable gold, which, when soiled and thrown into the fire, became clean. His crown was enriched with a thousand pearls, each as big as an egg.

King Khoosrau Pervez had nine seals of office:-

The first was a diamond ring with a ruby centre, bearing the portrait, name and titles of the monarch. It was used for despatches and diplomas.

The second, also a ring with a cornelian set in gold with the legend 'Khorasan Khoreh', was used for the state archives.

The third was an onyx ring, with the portrait of a galloping rider and the legend 'celerity', used for postal correspondence.

The fourth, a gold ring with a bezel of a rose covered ruby, had the legend 'Riches are the source of prosperity'. It was impressed upon diplomas and letters of grace.

The fifth seal, a ruby, the best of the red, pure, valuable kind, bore the legend "Khooreh va Khoorram" (i.e. splendid and auspicious) and was used for sealing treasures of precious stones casket and wardrobe and crown ornaments.

The sixth, with a bezel of chinese iron, bore the emblem of an eagle and was used for sealing letters to foreign rulers.

The seventh was surmounted by a bezoar, with a fly engraved on it. It was impressed on meats, medicines and perfumes reserved for the King's use.

The eighth was one of a bezel of pearls, and bore the emblem of a pig's head. It was used for the purpose of marking the necks of persons condemned to death, and for death warrants.

The ninth was an iron ring which the King took with him to the bath.

The pomp and pageantry, vanity and pretensions of Khoosrau Pervez did not end here. He had a thousand and more elephants maintained for the use and the splendour of his court, besides 12,000 white camels, and 50,000 horses, asses and mules.

In his harem were 3,000 ladies; these were kept more or less for the purpose of adding to the ostentatious splendour of a great court.

He constantly kept in his palace 15,000 Kanize Mootrabe (female musicians) and 6,000 Khaje Sarra (household officers). Whenever he rode forth 200 persons attended him, scattering perfumes on every side, while a thousand water carriers sprinkled the roads on which he was to pass.*

It is recorded in history that King Khoosrau Pervez had a minstrel by name Barbud, the like of whom Iran had not seen. It is said that he was prevented at first by the jealousy of the courtiers from being presented to the court, but he contrived on a moonlit night to hide himself in the trees, clad in green, and when King Khoosrau Pervez made his appearance in convivial company in the garden, he fascinated the hearts of all by singing three songs in succession. He then showed himself and was appointed Chief Court Minstrel by the gratified monarch, whom he regaled day in and day out with his specially composed songs.

It is said that Khoosrau Pervez had a famous black charger, named Shabdiz, who was such a favourite of his master that the latter had announced that he who first brought the news of its death, would be slain forthwith. When this favourite animal died, Barbud on the

* 'Ancient Persia & The Parsees' by Jehangir Burjorji Sanjana, B.A., J.P., Bombay.

entreaties of the courtiers, presented himself before the King, and poured forth such a pathetic melody on the philosophy of death, that the King's heart was touched, and he guessed the end of Shabdiz, but forbore to inflict any injury on him who had broken so skilfully the ominous news.¹

It is further narrated that when Khoosrau Pervez was imprisoned prior to his death by the rebels of his Court, Barbud made his home outside the prison and night and day began singing melodious songs to while away the time of that unfortunate monarch. And when the King was murdered, Barbud burnt his instruments and cut off his fingers, saying he would not sing any more nor play for anyone hereafter. Such was the love of that Minstrel for his great master.

Amongst many tales told about King Khoosrau Pervez and his glorious reign, there is one prevalent about a stone carver, named Farhad, who is supposed to have fallen in love with his beautiful Queen Sheereen.²

To put an obstacle effectively but courteously out of the way, it is said that the King proposed to give up Sheereen to Farhad, if he hollowed out a rock and made the waters of the neighbouring river flow into the adjoining river.

Nothing daunted, Farhad started the job with his chisel and hammer with an iron resolution, ceaselessly continuing his work day and night, and making the wilderness resound with his desperate cries of 'Sheereen, Sheereen'.

The King was afraid lest the mountain should be hollowed and therefore he contrived to despatch an old woman to Farhad to convey the false news of Sheereen's death. Farhad heard this heart-rending news when at work on the mountain, and he hurled himself into the valley below, destroying his life, but immortalising his name in the love episodes of Iran. Even today this partially hollowed rock bears the name of Behistoon ("Bi-Sutoon" meaning without pillars or foundation).³ This tragic love legend has so fascinated Iran that even today performances are staged where this grand episode is depicted by first class artistes of both

1 'Iran and Its Culture' by Prof. F.C. Davar.

2 Mirkhond mentions that it is said that a woman in order to be perfect must be endowed with 40 qualities and that in those times they were not concentrated in any female excepting Sheereen. Sheereen is celebrated in the East for her singular beauty. The famous poet Nizami has particularly celebrated her in his poem "Khoosrau va Sheereen". (From 'Ancient Persia and the Parsees' by Jehangir Burjorji Sanjana).

3 'Iran and Its Culture' by Prof. F.C. Davar.

sexes. The author had the opportunity of seeing such a performance in a theatre in Tehran in 1950.

Such was Khoosrau Pervez, the Parsee sovereign of fabulous magnificence, who in the course of his triumphant career, succeeded in driving the Romans from every inch of land on the Asiatic continent and was within an ace of capturing their metropolis, Constantinople.

Shirooee was proclaimed King on the 25th February 628 A.D. and took his great father's place. Shirooee is the diminutive of Shir, meaning lion. He was Khoosrau's son by Mariam (Maria), who was daughter of the Emperor Maurice. Khoosrau gave this son of his the name of Kobad at his birth, but this name was for use in the domestic circle only, whereas for universal use, his name was Shirooee.

Unfortunately, shortly after the accession to the throne of this Prince, the conspirators who had brought about the assassination of his father, perpetrated the further outrage of murdering fifteen sons of that king to the great grief of Shirooee, who was too weak to prevent the foul deed.

In fact, he had to open peace negotiations with Rome, and 26 years of terrible struggle was ended by a treaty, under which all conquests and prisoners were surrendered by both powers. The Persian monarch also gave back the True Cross, which, to the great joy of the entire Christian world, Heraclius in person restored to its place in the Shrine at Jerusalem, from which the Persians had carried it off during the conquest of the Holy Land.

It is said about this king Shirooee that he fell in love with the beautiful Queen Sheereen (his mother); but she, wanting to remain faithful to the memory of Khoosrau Pervez, swallowed poison, and died in the last resting place of that unfortunate monarch. Shirooee himself died as a victim of a great plague that took place a few months after he assumed the reins of his kingdom; according to Firdausi, however, he is said to have died of poisoning.

The King-makers at Court set Ardashir, a boy of seven, on the throne of his father; but Shahr-Barz entertained the ambition of seizing the throne for himself, for which purpose he entered into an alliance with the Roman Emperor Heraclius. Shahr Barz with the help of Heraclius' army, marched on Ctesiphon with 60,000 soldiers, captured it, put the minor king, his ministers and a number of the nobility to death

and ascended the throne on the 27th April 630 A. D. He restored the last Roman province to Heraclius. But he too was killed, because he was not of royal Kayanian or Sasanian blood, and the soldiers dragged his corpse through the streets of Ctesiphon, proclaiming: "Whoever, not being of the blood royal, usurps the throne of Iran, shall share the fate of Shahr-Barz".

There being no Sasanian Prince near at hand, Pooran Dokht, the daughter of Khoosrau Pervez, was elevated to the throne. She ruled kindly, but died after a short reign of sixteen months.

Her beautiful sister, Azar Midokht, succeeded her, but her reign did not last more than half a year; according to Gibbon she was deposed by the unanimous vote of the priests and nobles, whereas according to Mirkhond and Tabari, she was murdered.

During the short interval of four years, between the death of Khoosrau Pervez and the accession of Yazdajard III, no less than ten sovereigns had sat on the throne—an indication that the Persian power, though formidable to outward appearances, was fast crumbling. This woeful decline of one of the greatest empires that the world had seen was the natural and unfailing consequence of seething discontent, intrigues, internecine quarrels and fratricidal strife.

Amongst the Sasanian princes of the Royal Blood was Yazdajard III, who having been brought up in obscurity, in Istakhr (Persepolis) escaped being murdered. He was put on the throne. But this unfortunate prince, having such a bad start in life, naturally could not stop the rot that was setting in in Iran. He is recorded in history as the last King of the Sasanians and the last Emperor of the mighty Persian empire, which was lost to the Arabs.

In this connection Dossabhai Framjee Karaka in his "History of the Parsees", Vol. I, page 11, says:

"It was in the time of ARDESHIR the Third that the fanatical and ambitious spirit of the Arabs expanded into the bold design of invading and conquering the land of the Persian. The first invasion began by order of Khalif Omar, A.D. 633, when Khalid Ben Walid marched at the head of ten thousand men, and Mosanna at the head of another eight thousand, against Hormaz (the Persian governor of the lower portion of Erak) and defeated him. After this victory, Khalud marched further into

the country and conquered Erak after fighting several battles, but he soon lost it again in the battle called "the Day of the Bridge", or of Marwaha and of Kirkis, near which place it was fought (A.D. 634). Four thousand Mussulmans lost their lives in the struggle, and two thousand returned to Medina. If Behman Jaduyeh, the Persian commander on this occasion, had followed up his victory, it would have been impossible for the Arab army to have escaped complete destruction. But two Persian factions, one under Rustam, the generalissimo of the Persian empire, and the other under Prince Firuzan, being at feud and a civil war seeming imminent, Behman, instead of fighting his country's battles, hastened to support Rustam in Madayn, the capital of the kingdom, against Firuzan.

Encouraged by their first success and fired with religious zeal, the Arabs were not to be dismayed by a single defeat. They established their camp on the brink of the desert, between Kadesiah and Kaffan, where they were gradually reinforced by nomadic hordes of Arabs, who joined them by order of the Khalif. The rivals, Rustam and Firuzan, who had at last merged their differences and become colleagues, on being informed of this concentration of the enemy, despatched a force of ten thousand men under General Mihran to disperse them.

The two armies met, and a combat took place in which the Persians were overthrown. Mihran was slain, one half of his army was annihilated, and the other put to flight. The Arabs pursued the fugitives, and, making plundering excursions, devastated the country along their route, and returned to their camp laden with an immense quantity of booty.

Rustam and Firuzan had made no efforts to stop these marauding expeditions, which soon extended to as far as Bagdad; and this inaction naturally displeased the people as well as the magnates of Persia, who attributed all the misfortunes of the State to the rivalry of these two men. So loud did the popular outcry become that the people rose and threatened to put them to death. Seeing that they had no other chance of retaining authority, Rustam and Firuzan determined to remove Purandukht, one of the daughters of Khosru Parvez, who occupied the throne, and to give Persia a king in the hope that he might enjoy greater support among the people. A young scion of the royal house having been found in a youth named Yazdejard, at that time about twenty years old, he was acknowledged sovereign by acclamation.

Yazdejard, having intelligent advisers, and profiting by the enthusiasm of the people, immediately took measures to drive out the

Mussulmans from Arabian Iraq. Large number of troops were raised and generals appointed with orders to march simultaneously to Ambar, Hirah and Abotta. Mosanna, the Arab Commander, aware of his inability to resist the impending storm, retired towards the desert, allowing the Persians to occupy without any resistance all the points of Iraq where the Mussulmans had become masters. The Khalif Omar, however, raised new levies, and, appointing Sad Ben Abu Wakkas commander-in-chief, sent them against the Persians. As soon as Yazdejard had become aware of the first movements of Sad, he ordered a considerable army to be levied under the command of Rustam, who enjoyed at that time the highest military reputation among the Persians. Whilst Yazdejard, much agitated by the depredations of the Arabs and the cries of distress of his people, was endeavouring to spur on Rustam, his generalissimo, to take more energetic measures, a deputation of fourteen Mussulmans arrived at Madayn, otherwise called Ctesiphon, which was at that time his capital and residence. After these Arabs had been brought into his presence, Yazdejard first asked them some unimportant questions through an interpreter. He desired to know how they called their cloaks, whips and sandals. They replied *Burd*, *Saut*, and *Na'l*. The analogy between the sound of these Arabic words and the Persian ones designating the ideas of taking (*Boordan*), burning (*Sookhtan*), and lamenting (*Nalidan*), appeared so ominous of ill to the monarch and his officers, that they all changed colour.

"What motive brings you here?" then asked the king, "and why has your nation taken up arms against us?" Noman Makarin, the spokesman of the deputation, replied: "Allah commanded us, by the mouth of His Prophet, to extend the dominion of Islam over all nations. That order we obey, and say to you, become our brothers, by adopting the Faith, or consent to pay tribute if you wish to avoid war".

"The dissensions which have for some years troubled Persia must have greatly emboldened you", said Yazdejard; "but we are now in a position to make you feel our power, as you formerly experienced it, when the ordinary garrisons of our frontiers sufficed, to stop your progress and to inflict chastisement. Mice and serpents are your food, and you have nothing to dress with except the wool of camels and sheep. Who are you that you think yourselves able to fasten on to our empire? Of all the nations of the world you are the poorest, the most disunited, the most ignorant, the most estranged from the arts which constitute the sources of wealth and power. If a foolish presumption has taken hold of you, open your eyes and cease to indulge in deceitful illusions. If misery and want

have driven you out from your deserts, we will grant you food and raiment; we will deal liberally with your chiefs, and we will give you a King, who will govern you with gentleness and wisdom".

The deputation kept silence for a while, but one of its members soon broke it "My companions", said he, "are men of distinction among Arabs. If, in consequence of a demeanour, which their sense of delicacy impels them to use towards an august personage, they hesitate to reply, and frankly to express their thoughts, I shall do it for them and speak with the liberty of a Bedawi. What thou hast said about our poverty, our divisions and our state of barbarism was quite true. Yes, we were so wretched that persons could be seen among us, appeasing their hunger by feeding on insects and serpents, while some killed their daughters to avoid sharing their food with them. Plunged in the darkness of superstition and idolatry, without laws of restraint, always foes to each other, we were occupied only in robbing and killing, where we could. This is what we have been. At present we are a new people. Allah has raised in our midst a man, the most distinguished of Arabs by the nobility of his birth, by his virtues, by his genius; and Allah has selected him to be His Apostle, and His Prophet. Through the mouth of this man Allah has said to us: 'I am the only God, the eternal, the creator of the universe. My goodness sends you a guide to direct you. The way which he shows you, will deliver you from the pain I reserve in the life to come for the impious and the criminal, and will lead you near me to the sojourn of felicity'. Persuasion gradually insinuated itself into our hearts: we have believed in the mission of the Prophet; we have recognised that his words are the words of Allah, and His commands, the commands of Allah, and that the religion he announced to us, which he called Islam, is the only true religion. He has enlightened our minds, he has extinguished our hatreds, he has united and converted us into a society of brothers, under laws dictated by divine wisdom. Then he said to us: 'Complete my work; spread everywhere the dominion of Islam. The earth belongs to Allah; He gives it to you. The nations which shall embrace your faith will be assimilated to yourselves, they shall enjoy the same advantages and will be subject to the same laws. On those who will be desirous to retain their own beliefs, you are to impose the obligation of declaring themselves subject to you, and of paying tribute, in consideration whereof you are to cover them with your protection; but those who shall refuse to accept Islam, or the conditions of tributaries, should be waned upon, until you have exterminated them. Some of you will perish in the struggle. Those who fall therein will obtain Paradise, and those who survive, victory'. These are the destinies of power and glory, towards which

we confidently march. At present thou knowest us; it is for thee to choose either Islam or tribute, or else war unto death".

"If I entertained no regard for your capacity as deputies", replied Yazdejard, "I would instantly deprive you of life." Uttering these words, he ordered a bag full of earth to be brought, and ironically alluding to the tribute the envoys had ventured to demand, he said to them, "This is all you will get from me. Return to your general; inform him that Rustam will, in a few days, go to bury him with his whole army in the trench of Kadesia". Then he added, "let this bag be placed on the shoulders of the Chief of the deputation, and let the man be pushed out from the gates of Madayn."

Asim Amin hastened forward, to receive this load, and, far from feeling humbled by taking it, he lifted it on his head with an air of satisfaction, which appeared to Yazdejard to be a mark of stupidity. The Arabs had scarcely departed, when Rustam, having been informed of the details of the conference, and of the manner in which it terminated, immediately understood the presage which had excited the joy of Asim. He sent persons to run after the deputies, in order to take from them the earth, which they were carrying away, as a pledge of future success. They had, however, progressed so far, that all pursuit was in vain, and when they reached their camp, Asim, depositing the bag before his general, exclaimed, "The soil of Persia is ours!"

After this striking interview, our description of which is taken from the graphic pages of the great historical work of Tabari, hostilities were resumed, and at the battle of Kadesia (A.D. 636) the victory turned in favour of the Mussalmans after several days' severe fighting. Very soon afterwards, and without any further pitched battle, Madayn, the capital, was occupied by the Arabs. Yazdejard fled from Madayn, and retired to Holwan, where another great battle was fought on the plains of Jalula and ended in the defeat of the Persians—(November-December A.D. 637). When the news of this fresh defeat of his army reached Yazdejard, he hurriedly quitted Holwan and proceeded in the direction of Ra-e. The towns of Masebedan and Shirwan surrendered after a battle, which raged fiercely for three days (January, A.D. 638), and thenceforth Islam prevailed over all Iraq from the heights of Holwan to as far as Mosul and Syria. By the end of October, A.D. 641 some of the towns of the province of Ahwaz were conquered by the Arabs, who also undertook an expedition to Bahrain, and forced the Persian general, Hormazan, to capitulate, after having besieged him for six months in the town of Tuster, which they only succeeded in entering by means of an underground canal.

Yazdejard, when he had been at Rae a short time, became aware that the Mussulmans would soon invade that part of the country also; so he summoned to his aid the bravest of his generals, and collected an army exceeding one hundred and fifty thousand men. With these forces he decided to make a final effort to check Arab ambition. Fortune having already smiled upon Omer, he too followed up his advantages by sending large reinforcements from every part of the Arab dominions to the army in Persia. A sanguinary battle was fought on the plains of Nahavand, a village some fifty miles from the ancient city of Ecbatana. This battle decided the fate of the Persian empire. The Arabs, kindled with enthusiasm, careless of danger, and insensible to fatigue, fought bravely with the newly inspired zeal of their religion, which recognised the hero alone as worthy of Paradise. On the other hand, the glory of the Persian monarch had declined, and the empire was barely recovering from a series of internal troubles when thus beset by the gravest external danger. Ruler after ruler had been dethroned and murdered, and the army of the empire, though large in point of numbers, could not be said to approach in valour and discipline, the hardy Arabs of the desert. On the authority of the *Zeenut-ul-Tawarikh*, Sir John Malcolm thus describes the battle of Nahavand (A.D. 641) and the fate which overtook the unfortunate Yazdejard:-

"The Arabian force assembled at Kufa and from thence marched to the plains of Nahavand, on which the Persian army had established a camp surrounded by a deep entrenchment. During two months, these great armies continued in sight of each other, and many skirmishes were fought. The Persian general appearing determined not to quit his position, the zealous valour of the leader of the faithful became impatient of delay. He drew up his army in order of battle, and thus addressed them: "My friends! prepare yourselves to conquer, or drink of the sweet sherbet of martyrdom. I shall now call the Tukbeer three times; at the first you will gird your loins, at the second, mount your steed, and at the third, point your lances and rush to victory, or to Paradise. 'As to me,' said Noman with a raised and enraptured voice, 'I shall be a martyr. When I am slain obey the orders of Huzeefah-ebn-Ally-Oman'. The moment he had done speaking the first sound of Tukbeer, (Allah-Akbar, or God is great), was heard throughout the camp. At the second all were upon horses; and at the third, which was repeated by the whole army, the Mohamedans charged with a fury that was irresistible. Noman was, as

Note: For a very interesting account of the immense and priceless booty that the Arabs seized with the conquest of Persia, see Appendix D, under the heading "The Spring of Khoosrau".

he predicted, slain; but his army gained a great and memorable victory. Thirty thousand Persians were pierced by their lances, and eighty thousand more were drowned in the deep trench by which they had surrounded their camp. Their general Firuzan, with four thousand men, fled to the hills; but such was the effect of terror on one side, and of confidence on the other, that the chief was pursued, defeated and slain by a body of no more than one thousand men".

"The battle of Nahavand decided the fate of Persia, which from its date fell under the dominion of the Arabian Khalifs. Yazdejard protracted for several years a wretched and precarious existence. He first fled to Seistan, then to Khorassan and lastly to Merv. The governor of that city invited the Khakan of the Tartars to take possession of the person of the fugitive monarch. That sovereign accepted the offer; his troops entered Merv, the gates of which were opened to them by the treacherous governor, and made themselves masters of it, inspite of the desperate resistance of the surprised but brave and enraged inhabitants. Yazdejard escaped on foot from the town, during the confusion of the contest. He reached a mill eight miles from Merv, and entreated the miller to conceal him. The man told him he owed a certain sum to the owner of the mill, and that, if he paid the debt, he should have his protection against all pursuers. The monarch agreed to the proposal; and, after giving his rich sword and belt as pledges of his sincerity, he retired to rest with perfect confidence in his safety. But the miller could not resist the temptation of making his fortune by the possession of the rich arms and robes of the unfortunate prince, whose head he separated from his body, with the sword he had received from him, and then he cast his corpse into the watercourse that turned the mill. The Governor of Merv, and those who had aided him, began in a few days to suffer from the tyranny of the Khakan, and to repent the part which they had acted. They encouraged the citizens to rise against the Tartars; and not only recovered the city, but forced the Khakan to fly, with great loss, to Bokhara. A diligent inquiry was made after Yazdejard, whose fate was soon discovered. The miller fell a victim to popular rage; and the corpse of the monarch was embalmed and sent to Istakhr, to be interred in the sepulchre of his ancestors. This prince, who appears to have been as weak as he was unfortunate, sat upon the throne only nine years—that being the period from his elevation to the battle of Nahavand. He was the last sovereign of the House of Sasan, a dynasty which ruled Persia four hundred and fifteen years, and the memory of which is still cherished by a nation, whose ancient glory is associated with the fame of Ardeshir, Shapur and Naoshirvan".

Such of the followers of Zarathushtra, as obeyed the dictates of their conscience, in preference to freeing themselves from the persecution of the new rulers, abandoned their homes and fled to the mountainous districts of Khorasan, where for a time they succeeded in evading the pursuit of their foes. For about a hundred years they remained in Khorasan in the unmolested enjoyment and practice of their religion.

But persecution at last reached them even in those remote districts, and they were once more compelled to flee before the enemies of their faith. A considerable number succeeded in reaching the little Island of Ormus, at the entrance of the Persian Gulf.

Their stay in that place of retreat could, however, only be of short duration, for they were still within reach of their persecutors. Rather than fall into the hands of the conquerors of their country, they at last determined to relinquish forever the land of their forefathers, and to betake themselves to some other country, where they might hope to live in tranquillity and in the enjoyment of their social and religious rights.

Like the English Pilgrim Fathers, who left England for America to follow their faith unmolested, the Parsee Pilgrim fathers left their country forever, to seek safety and freedom of religion in the far off land of India.

CHAPTER X
EXODUS TO INDIA
OF THE
PARSEE PILGRIM FATHERS

And so a noble band of Iranians, exiled under the compelling force of circumstances, decided to leave their ancient home, for the love and for the liberty of conscience, to keep up the burning flame of their noble religion in their hearts; since they could not keep it in their historic home.

Not a single reliable history of the Zoroastrian community after the extermination of the Sassanian Empire has been written. In the absence of such a history the Parsees as a whole believe in a legend, written more than three centuries ago, as the history of their advent to, and settlement in India, by a Parsee Priest, known as Mobed Behman Kaikobad Sanjana, an inhabitant of Navsari, a place 145 miles away from Bombay, in the year 1599. This legend, popularly known as Kissah-e-Sanjan, is written in Persian, and the author says he has written it from what he had heard from a Dastur (High Priest). Amongst the Parsee scholars, this legend has raised a sharp controversy, but the community loves to believe in it, and proudly narrates the romantic adventures of their Pilgrim Fathers.

All the Dasturs and Behdins (Priests and laymen) leaving their houses and gardens, mansions and halls, for the sake of their religion, first fled to a mountainous district (Khorasan) and remained there for a hundred years. Finding no safety there, they came to the Island of Hormas and resided there for fifteen years. Again, being harassed by their enemies, they took to their ships with their families and while between Div and Sanjan being caught in a violent storm, they prayed to God for safety, making a vow that if they reached Hindustan (India) safely, they would consecrate an Aatash Behram (Fire Temple of the highest order) there.

At last, after a great deal of vicissitudes and suffering, they arrived at a port called Diu, which was one of the earliest seats of the Portuguese power in India, a small island in the Gulf of Cambay, lying to the South of the Kathiawar coast. Here they disembarked and took up their residence for nineteen years. For some season or other, they quitted Diu to find another place of settlement more suited to their requirements.

In the splendid "History of the Parsees", written by Dossabhai Framji Karaka, C.S.I., in the year 1884, the author describes the second exodus in the following graphic words :

"That misfortunes never come singly, was demonstrated in the case of these ill-fated people, for they had hardly lost sight of land, when a severe storm overtook the little fleet, and deprived them of all hope of reaching their destination. Rather than abandon the faith they had inherited from their fathers, they had voluntarily made themselves exiles for ever from the land that gave them birth. Their later experience had been equally hard. Refusing to be dependent upon strangers for a home, they were now at the mercy of the treacherous deep. What wonder, then, that this little band, confused and in despair, were ready to believe that they were the sport of a merciless and irresistible fate? But though sick at heart, their better sense does not seem, even in this extremity, to have entirely forsaken them. In their helplessness they called to mind Him who is the author of all good, the Preserver, Supporter and Cherisher of the poor and the distressed, and Who never fails to give ear to the supplications of the humble and the meek".

"To rescue them from the impending danger, they are said to have offered up the following prayer to the throne of the Most High: 'O Wise God, come to our assistance in this jeopardy; and we pray Thee to deliver us from the impending danger. O glorious God, we beseech Thee to gladden our hearts by removing these difficulties with which we are now surrounded. On Thy goodness, O Lord, we fully depend, and hope that the storm which has overtaken us will soon be over through Thy Divine Grace. As long as we have hopes of Thy aid, O God, we tremble not at this calamity. We have implicit faith in Thee, as the hearer of those who cry to Thee. Deliver us, therefore, O Merciful Providence, from this trouble, and lead us to the right path, that we may escape from this sea to the shores of Hindustan (India) and we promise O Lord, to kindle on high the flame sacred to Thee, in grateful remembrance of Thy kindness and protection".

"We cannot doubt that this prayer of faith was heard, for the storm abated, and a gentle gale carried them in safety to Sanjan, some twenty-five miles south of Daman, where they landed about the year A.D. 716".

The territory of Sanjan was at that time under the rule of a wise and liberal Hindu chief named Jadi Rana. In fact, during their stay at Diu the band of the Parsee Pilgrim Fathers had acquired a knowledge

of the language, religion, manners and customs of the Hindus, which enabled them to approach this Hindu chief under the leadership of their very learned Dastur Nairiosang Dhaval, and ask for refuge in his country. The Dastur with his faithful band approached the Rana and blessed him and explained to him the reasons which had caused the Parsees to leave their native country, and detailed their sufferings and misfortunes, and begged that his kinsmen and he might be allowed to reside in Sanjan.

The Prince was struck with the warlike and hardy appearance of the men, fair of skin and with golden hair, who had come to his court as refugees, and had at first some fear for the safety of his throne, and therefore, before granting the desired permission, he requested the Chief Priest to explain to him the state of their affairs and the nature of their faith. Above all, the first thing he asked the learned dastur, was, "Who are you? From what land? And what do you call yourselves?" To this the learned dastur replied, "We call ourselves PARSEES, being the inhabitants of PARS, a province in Iran, and our language is known as FARSEE".

"As to our faith, we are worshippers of Ahura Mazda, one Supreme Being, to whom we offer worship, by standing before nature's elements, such as the Sun, the Moon, the Stars, the Rivers, the Seas, the Mountains, and so on."

"In our religious ceremonies, we use incense, perfumes and flowers. We wear the sacred garment known as Sudra (shirt) and Kusti (the sacred girdle or cincture for the loins) and a cap or turban to cover our heads. We offer devotion five times a day; we are careful observers of conjugal fidelity and purity. We perform annual religious ceremonies for the relief of our ancestors".

The Prince sent them away saying he would consult his courtiers before sending a final reply. Next day he sent them a pot full of pure milk, as a token of welcome and friendship; with the words, that he had decided on giving them shelter in his country.

Overjoyed and filled with pleasure and gratitude, the High Priest of the Parsees returned the pot of milk with a handful of sugar in it, with the message that he and his faithful band of Parsee Pilgrim Fathers were grateful to the Prince for giving them shelter in his country, and that they would become assimilated with the people of his country in the same way as the handful of sugar had done in the pot of milk, and would

thus sweeten the life of the people of his country, by their honesty, bravery and faithfulness.

Thus compliments having been exchanged on both sides, the Prince made certain conditions prior to granting permission, and among them the following are noteworthy, namely:

(1) that the Parsees would adopt the language of his country, (Gujrati) and cease to speak that of their forefathers;

(2) that they would adopt the customs of his country;

(3) that they would renounce arms of any sort, that they had been carrying, on their landing on the shores of India;

(4) that they would perform the marriage ceremonies of their children at night in conformity with the practice of the Hindus, and

(5) that they would not slaughter cows, and would respect the sentiments of the Hindus in that matter.

Incidentally, it might be mentioned here, though more than 1200 years have passed since the Parsees landed in India, and though out of the 1200 years the last 200 were spent in contact with European races, who came to India such as the Dutch, the Portuguese, the French and the British, and though they were in no wise bound by the rule of the Hindus, yet out of sheer gratitude for the shelter that the Hindus gave to their forefathers, 95% of the Parsee men and women, even today do not touch beef, even though their religion does not forbid them to eat beef or, for that matter, any animal flesh.

The exiles had but two alternatives; either to accept these conditions, or to return to their ships. They chose the former course, rather than again become wanderers on the face of the earth. They rested in the land of the Rana, and occupied a large tract of waste land in the immediate vicinity of Sanjan, where they started settling down in a strange land, amongst strange people among whom Providence had cast their lot.

After a long succession of hardships, endured for many years, the exiles had at last found a resting place with a reasonable prospect of enjoying repose and happiness. Everyone then betook himself to his profession and the Parsee settlement, which but a short time before had

been a sterile desert, became converted, according to early writers, into a garden of heaven.

Neither did the Parsees forget Him who had assisted them in their days of trouble. Remembering the vow which they had made on their voyage from Diu to Sanjan, to kindle on high the flame sacred to Him, in grateful memory of deliverance from the hand of death, they embraced the earliest opportunity, somewhere in the year 719 A.D., of intimating to the Hindu Chief their intention of building with his permission a Fire Temple in Sanjan. As the Hindus themselves hold fire in veneration, not only was the desired permission at once and cordially accorded, but every assistance was given to further the object. The Fire Temple was, however, wholly and exclusively constructed by the Parsees themselves. The Rana did no more than supply various articles for the purpose of expediting the great work. A.D. 721 witnessed the completion of the temple, and the sacred fire kindled on its altar, in accordance with the rites of the Zoroastrian religion.

Non-Zoroastrians may be interested in the following description of the consecration of the Atash Behram or Fire Temple of the highest order in the Zoroastrian community.

This holy fire that the Parsee pilgrim Fathers consecrated, was named Iran Shah Atash Behram. It is enthroned in the middle of the sanctum sanctorum in a fire urn. Nearby the ceremonial implements are kept. In the holy scriptures of the Parsees, the holy fire is called Aaderaan Shah Pirojgar (victorious king fire). Therefore, in the sanctum is also kept the gorz (Av. Vazra—mace) and also a shield, both of which are regarded as insignia of royalty. These insignia are kept in all Atash Behrams of the Parsees, since the holy fire is called 'Victorious King Fire'.

Incidentally, the Priests, attached to the sacred fire Iran Shah, are called the Sanjana Priests. It appears that there were three Dasturs among the Sanjana Priests; but about 1740 on account of some dispute one of them was deposed and since then there have been two Dasturs at Udvada, where this sacred fire—first kindled at Sanjan by the Parsee Pilgrim Fathers—now remains burning throughout over 1200 years.

"In establishing a fire-temple, fires from various places of manufacture are brought and kept in different vases. Great efforts are also made to obtain fire caused by lightning. Over one of these fires, a perforated metallic flat tray, with a handle attached, is held. On this tray are placed

small chips and dust of fragrant sandal-wood. These chips and dust are ignited by the heat of the fire below, care being taken that the perforated tray does not touch the fire. Thus a new fire is created out of the first fire. Then from this new fire another one is created by the same process. From this new fire another is again produced, and so on, until the process is repeated nine times. The fire thus prepared after the ninth process, is considered pure. The fires brought from other places of manufacture are treated in a similar manner. These purified fires are all collected together upon a large vase, which is then put in its proper place in a separate chamber.

Fire produced by lightning was obtained for Hormasji Wadia's Atash-Behram at Bombay, from Calcutta, through the exertions of a highly respected Parsee citizen, Naurozji Sorabji Bengali, who was then living in the latter city. This gentleman, having received information that a tree some miles distant from Calcutta had caught fire through lightning, he and his friends immediately proceeded to the place, and secured a block of the burning tree, and kept its fire alive for several days, by feeding it with sandal-wood. It was afterwards conveyed to Bombay, by land, in charge of Parsees. This presented in those days no slight difficulty.

Now, what does a fire so prepared signify to a Parsee? He thinks to himself: "When this fire on this vase before me, though pure in itself, though the noblest of the creations of God, and though the best symbol of the Divinity, had to undergo certain processes of purification, had to draw out, as if it were, its essence, nay its quintessence of purity, to enable itself to be worthy of occupying this exalted position, how much more necessary, more essential, and more important is it for me, a poor mortal, who is liable to commit sins and crimes, and who comes into contact with hundreds of evils, both physical and mental—to undergo the process of purity and piety, by making my 'manashni', 'gavashni', 'kunashni' (thoughts, words and actions) pass, as if it were, through a sieve of piety and purity, virtue and morality, and to separate by that means my 'humata', 'hukhta' and 'hvarshta' (good thoughts, good words and good deeds) from 'dushmata', 'duzhukhta', and 'duzvarshta' (bad thoughts, bad words, and bad actions), so that I may, in my turn, be enabled to acquire an exalted position in the next world!" " • (1)

The Kissah-e-Sanjan further informs us of the tradition, namely, that when seven hundred years had elapsed in this way (since their founding a fire temple at Sanjan) a calamity befell them.

* From the 'History of the Parsis', Vol. II, by D. F. Karaka.

(1) More details, as to how the Fire of Atash Behram is made, will be found in Appendix 'E'.

The dominion of the King of Sanjan was invaded by a Mussalman Army of 30,000 under the generalship of Sultan Mahmood under Alaf Khan. The Rana, conscious of insufficient resources to enable him to cope with the hardy soldiers of the enemy, feared for his crown and country. He solicited the assistance of the Parsees, and summoning them to his presence addressed them as follows:

"My ancestors exalted you and lavished favours upon your people, and it behoves you, in this my difficulty, to show your gratitude and to exert yourself on my behalf, and lead the way in battle".

The Parsees were not unmindful of their obligations to the former rulers of Sanjan, and at once undertook to defend the country which had so hospitably welcomed their forefathers to its shores. They replied to the address of the Chief:

"Fear not, O Prince, on account of this army: all of us are ready to scatter the heads of thy foes, and we will fight as long as a drop of blood remains in our veins. In battle, we never give way; not one man of us will turn his back, though a millstone be dashed at his head".

In making this resolve, the Parsees well remembered the persecutions sustained by their ancestors, and they determined that the invaders must be repelled by any sacrifice needed, and victory achieved at any cost. The cause of the Rana was their own. Notwithstanding their oath, never to bear arms, they considered that this extremity fully justified them in drawing the sword to defend the territories of the Rana, and accordingly a force of fourteen hundred Zoroastrians, under the leadership of one Ardesheer, was immediately added to the Rana's army.

This accession to his force caused the Rana to take courage; every preparation was made for the impending struggle, which was to decide the fate of his kingdom. Soon the opposing armies met, and a fierce battle was fought, a few miles beyond Sanjan. Sword, javelin and arrow did their deadly work, and many fell on both sides. In the thick of the battle, the Rana's soldiers were unable to keep their ground against the furious onslaught of the enemy and they fled from the field.

The noble band of Parsee allies, however, was not dismayed. Fighting for their faith and their homes, their leader, Ardesheer heroically led them

on, and at length they broke the enemy's ranks, and threw them into confusion. The whole force was soon discomfited, and fled, leaving Ardesheer and his little band of conquerors Master of the field.*

According to the Kissah-e-Sanjan, the fugitives, after a sojourn of twelve years, left this mountainous district and, still carrying their sacred fire, went to a place called Bansda, about fifty miles north-east of Navsari, where a few Parsee families had already settled, and after another fourteen years (i.e. A.D. 1331) they bore the sacred fire to Navsari, where the Parsees had already become an opulent and influential race. It may well be presumed that between the flight of the Parsees from Sanjan and the recovery of their influence and freedom in religious worship, a period of not twenty-six but of a hundred years must have elapsed.

From Navsari the fire was removed to Surat in the year 1733, as about that time there was some apprehension on account of the Pindhari ** inroads into that city. It was again removed to Navsari three years later, when, owing to disputes among the priesthood, it was transferred in 1741 to Balsar and after being there for some time, it was taken to Udvada on the 28th October, 1742, where it still exists. On account of its being the oldest fire-temple of the Zoroastrians in India, it is held by them in the highest possible veneration.

Nothing worth chronicling is known of the history of those Parsees, who, before the overthrow of the Rana of Sanjan, had migrated to other cities of Gujrat.

The emigrants, wherever they located themselves, pursued the quiet and peaceful art of husbandry. But their national energy and courage never seem to have forsaken them; in proof of which an affair at Variav may be cited.

For the first thousand years after their landing in India, the Parsees had to suffer untold privations. Those were the days when barbarous and semi-civilised tribes, like the Bhils, the Girasias, the Pindhari, who were alike the terror and the curse of India, were scourging the country with periodic raids. Knowing no law or authority, they carried fire and sword wherever they went, and a story is told, in the author's family of some four generations ago, that one day, the marauders came rushing down

* See Appendix F for the inscription on the column which was raised by the Parsees at Sanjan on August 6th 1917 to commemorate their first landing in India.

** 'Pindhari' means a bandit.

on their home, with a view to carrying away the women, and stealing whatever they could lay their hands on, by disabling the menfolk. It is said that on the spur of the moment the family connived at the idea by pretending the death of a member of the house. So, they made a beautiful girl (whom they feared most that the marauders would carry away), to pretend death, and to lie down on the floor, wrapped in funeral garb. The other ladies of the household set around, weeping and wailing aloud, while the menfolk brought in a small fire urn and began burning sandal wood and frankincense on the fire, and chanting the prescribed funeral prayers. The marauders were taken aback, and the ruse was kept up by the family so cleverly, that the brigands withdrew, taking the girl for dead, much to the relief of all the members of the family. Such were the times when that handful of brave Parsee men and women had to pass their days in constant dangers, worries and anxieties.

There were occasions when the Parsees exercised wonderful presence of mind, and the following instance, though humorous, may give an idea to the readers, of the frequent stratagems, they had to resort to, to keep their enemies at bay.

It would appear that in the first quarter of the 15th century, the Roman Catholic missionaries once intended to compel the Parsees in a similar way to become Christians. Tradition says that on one occasion the authorities of the place issued an order to that effect. The Parsees seeing that open resistance would be futile, contrived by an artful scheme to escape the religious persecution with which they were threatened. Accordingly, they went to the Governor in a body, and said that they were ready to embrace Christianity, and that they had really felt inclined to do so before. They also expressed themselves as willing to be baptized on the following Sunday, but requested two or three days' grace to enable them to worship their sacred fire for the last time, and also to have a day of rejoicing among themselves prior to their conversion.

The Portuguese were so gratified at this readiness to be converted, that a proclamation was issued, to the effect, "that on the day fixed, no one should interfere with the Parsees in the performance of their rites and ceremonies or in their mode of rejoicing".

The Parsees then prepared a sumptuous feast, to which all the officials of the place were invited. Wine flowed freely, and the guests heartily indulged themselves. During this bacchanalian feast the Parsees, to the accompaniment of music and dancing, took the opportunity

of making their exit out of the city. Their stratagem succeeded so well that they made their way without molestation, to Kalyan, twenty miles south of Thana, and settled themselves there.

The Europeans started coming to India, and with the advent of the Portuguese the Parsees began to search for trade with them. They began learning the new languages, which enabled them to act as interpreters between the Europeans and the native population. The Portuguese were followed by the Dutch, the French and the British, all of whom found the Parsees most useful for their purpose, in as much as they were quick to understand and could adapt themselves quickly to circumstances. There was no question with them of untouchability vis-a-vis a foreign race.

About that time, Bombay was ceded to the British by the Crown of Portugal as part of the dowry of the Infanta Catherine of Braganza on her marriage to King Charles II of England (1661). The King seems to have found this distant acquisition of his so unprofitable that he got rid of it by bestowing it in 1668 upon the East India Company, on payment of an annual rent of £ 10 in gold. In a letter dated Bombay 18th January 1671 Sir Streyntsham Master, who was one of the four leading servants of the East India Company selected in 1668, to go to Bombay and take over charge of the island from the King's Officers, writes, "Here are also some Parsees, but they are lately come since the English had the island, and are most of them weavers and have not any place to do their devotion in or to bury their dead".

Thus when the British began building up Bombay, the Parsees, whose stronghold till then was at Surat, gradually began moving on to Bombay, helping the British as interpreters, and they were known as Dobhashias. The word 'Dobhashias' is a compound of two words, "Do" * meaning two and "Bhashas" meaning languages; in other words they knew two languages, and therefore they were called Dobhashias. The British called them "Dubashes", and many Parsee families have thus acquired the surname of Dubash.

Thus, after fully a thousand years of hardships, trials and tribulations, during which the Parsees were mere hewers of wood and drawers of water, the advent of the Europeans gave them a chance to prove their mettle, and to attain prominence from among the millions of Indians.

Their propitious stars began to rise from then on. A later chapter will show, how the Parsees made a name and fame for themselves, and began to be known to the foreign races all over the world, as the tiniest yet the most intelligent, faithful, loyal and valorous race in the world.

* 'Do', pronounced as in Donor, in Hindi & Urdu, means two.

CHAPTER XI

ZOROASTRIANS WHO RESOLUTELY CLUNG TO THE MOTHERLAND

While the Parsees for a thousand years in India passed through great trials and tribulations, their co-religionists, who had remained behind, went through even far worse experiences, hardships and sufferings.

Their lands, once fertile, had become dreary wastes, and their fields, where the golden corn had waved during the period the Sassanian Kings reigned in Iran, were now deserted by the husbandmen, and afforded pasture for wild animals. The ploughshares were beaten into swords, and the pruning hooks had been exchanged for spears. Hence the country which had been the home of peace and prosperity was thrown into the greatest confusion, and hordes of robbers, driven to crime by the distress of times, traversed every part of the land, perpetrating the most cruel atrocities.

Iran never revived, but sank gradually into insignificance. Perhaps no country in the world has witnessed so many revolutions as that unhappy land. The tyrants, who occupied the throne, owed their elevation to treachery and bloodshed. The inhabitants who adhered to the ancient faith of Zoroaster have experienced the greatest barbarity. Constant oppression and tyranny naturally reduced their numbers. In less than two centuries after the invasion, the greater part of the population embraced Islam. In the tenth century of the Christian era, remnants of the Zoroastrian population were only to be found in the Provinces of Fars and Kerman. The rate at which their remnants had declined can easily be imagined in recent times when it is stated that, while about 200 years ago it numbered one million souls, it does not at present exceed 18000 in the whole of Iran. *

A large majority of the Zoroastrians in Fars, Yezd and Kerman are of the humbler class, eking out an existence by farming. A few of the poorer class work as artisans, brick-layers, carpenters and weavers, or follow other mechanical occupations. Very few are well to do, merchants

*For population of various cities of Iran, See Appendix G.

or large land owners. Amongst these latter may be mentioned Arbab Rustam Guiv, who is the richest Zoroastrian in Iran at present, owning very large estates, and he is the Zoroastrian Representative in the Iranian Majlis.*

The conditions of this poor class of Zoroastrians can well be imagined from the letter received in the year 1478 from them by their brethren in Navsari; in it they stated that "never since Kaiomurs had they suffered more than what they were then undergoing. In sooth they declared that they were more oppressed than their race had ever been at the hands of the tyrants Zohak, Afrasiab, Tur and Sikander (Alexander the Great).

The following account by Sir John Malcolm in his "History of Persia" would give an idea of the sufferings of the Zoroastrians of the 18th century:

"He (Mahamud the Afghan) resolved to penetrate that country by the province of Kerman, preferring a march over the desert of Seistan to the obstacles which presented themselves in every other direction. Though he took every precaution to surmount the difficulties of the march, he lost many men and horses; but his appearance was so unexpected, and his force so considerable, that the city and province of Kerman immediately submitted to his arms. This ready acknowledgement of his authority, did not save the inhabitants from suffering the most intolerable oppression, and it was with joy they learned that Lutf Ali Khan had left the sea coast and was hastening to their relief. That chief, who had collected a considerable force, attacked and defeated the Afghan prince, and compelled him to fly to Kandahar. Kerman, however, was only exposed, by this victory, to a repetition of what it had before suffered; and when Lutf Ali Khan marched from that province, it was difficult to say whether the invasion of the Afghans or the advance of the Persian army to their relief had been most ruinous to its inhabitants".

During this invasion by the Ghilji Afghans, the Zoroastrians of Kerman drank their full share of the cup of suffering. Indeed it would

*Due to ill health and advancing age he resigned the Presidentship of the Zoroastrian Anjuman of Teheran, and in his place Dr. Esfandiar Yaganegi, Ph. D., an industrialist and an active member of the community, is appointed as President; Arbab Rustom Guiv is still a member of the Iranian Majlis representing the Zoroastrians of Iran.

almost seem as if they were made the special objects of the vengeance of the Persian troops, at whose hands they suffered heavy losses both by massacre and compulsory conversion.

In the second invasion of Persia, Mahmud the Afghan raised levies among the Zoroastrians of both the provinces of Kerman and Yezd, persuading them to join his banner by appealing to their miseries. Remembering their ancestors and the wrongs which they endured at the hands of the Persians, they eagerly seized what seemed to be an opportunity to obtain revenge, and at the same time hoping that they might gain some honour and renown. The proposals seem to have been readily accepted, probably in the hope that the success of the Afghan chief would tend to alleviate the oppression to which they had been constantly subjected by the Persians. It is unnecessary to follow Mahmud in his various successes, or to describe his final victory at Isfahan and the capture of that city. Of how the Zoroastrians, who formed a portion of the army of Mahmud, fared at the hands of the chief in the hour of victory we are altogether ignorant. We are not even told what became of them afterwards, but we can imagine that, however valuable their services, they received little substantial reward from that leader. We might even infer, from the condition of their descendants, that they obtained very much the reverse of what they had expected or deserved.

When these circumstances are taken into consideration, it ceases to be a matter of wonder that a population very recently numbering many thousands of people should have been nearly exterminated by the cruelties of successive tyrants. The ruins of numerous fire-temples in the city of Kerman at this day, prove that it must have been, at no very remote period, the abode of a considerable population of the Zoroastrian persuasion.

We could not expect, after the revolutions, persecutions and oppressions to which the small body who may claim to be the descendants of the ancient Persians had been subjected, that they should today possess any of their religious books or be well informed respecting the tenets of their religion. Among all the vicissitudes of their race they have, however, adhered most devotedly to the form of faith which descended to them from their ancestors, and they could give no stronger proof of their staunchness. At one time the Parsees in India believed that copies of their ancient books, which they did not possess, could be furnished to them by their co-religionists in Persia; but this was soon shown to be a delusion. The accounts of their condition given by European travellers, by the Parsees

who had gone to Persia to obtain information connected with their religion, and also by the Iranis who have visited India, in our time, set all expectations at rest on that point. They showed that, instead of being in a position to impart knowledge, the Zoroastrians of the fatherland needed advice and instruction from those in India.

They have now only one fire-temple in Yezd (and its vicinity), but they possess no ancient liturgical books except those in possession of their brethren in India. Professor Westergaard of Copenhagen, who visited Persia in the year 1843, wrote to his friend, the late Dr. Wilson of Bombay, as follows on this subject:-

"I stopped at Yezd eleven days, and though I often went out among them, I did not see more than sixteen or seventeen books in all; two or three copies of the Vendidad Sade and the Izeshne (which they call Yacna),* and six or seven of the Khorde Avesta, of which I got two and part of a third. These, besides part of the Bundesh and part of another Pehlevi book, were all I could get, though I tried hard to obtain more, especially part of the Izeshne with a Pehlevi, or as they say, Pazand translation, of which there is only one copy in Europe—at Copenhagen".

The same learned traveller, referring to the Zoroastrians then residing in Kerman, says:-

"The Guebres here are more brutalised than their brethren at Yezd. They had only two copies of the Vendidad and Yacna, but a great many of the Khorde Avesta, which, however, they would not part with. No one here can read Pehlevi. They complain that most of their books were destroyed, and great numbers of the race were killed".

We have thus seen how wretched is the general condition of Zoroastrians remaining in Persia. The few who can be called rich belong to the merchant class; and besides these there are perhaps none who can be said to be in good circumstances, while the great majority are in a state of extreme poverty.

One of the severest hardships under which these people suffered until quite recently, was the levy of the poll-tax, called "jazia". The Moslem

*Pronounced Yesna as in Yes.

population alone was exempt from this tax—all 'unbelievers' residing in the kingdom, such as Armenians, Jews and Parsees, being compelled to pay it. The Armenians at Tabriz and in other places of Persia contiguous to the Russian frontier, had been exempted from the payment of it, a favour which they owed to the influence of the Russian Government. The straits to which these races were driven in order to meet this tax were often deplorable. We have no means of knowing the exact amount of the impost which the Armenians and Jews were required to pay, but it has been ascertained that the annual tax leviable on the Parsees, according to the imperial order, was six hundred and sixty-seven tomans. As is the case, however, in all Oriental kingdoms, the governors or collectors and magistrates enhanced the amount by their own commissions, and consequently the sum required to be paid by these poor people often amounted to as much as two thousand tomans.

Upon the annual collection of the tax the scenes presented at the homes of those who were unable to pay it were most terrible to witness. Unheard of cruelties were practised in the vain attempt to extort money from those who had none even for their own wants. Some, to save themselves from torture, and as the last resource, gave up their religion when they were relieved from payment of the tax. Others, who would not violate their conscience, abandoned their homes to escape the exactions of the tax gatherer. These determined individuals, even when they escaped, had always to leave their wives and children behind them. Ground down by poverty, it is not strange that they were unable to pay the smallest tax. In this miserable condition the Zoroastrians of Persia looked to their co-religionists in India for rescue. The few who from time to time found their way to Bombay often asked the question, "Cannot the influential Parsees of Bombay do something to relieve our countrymen in Persia, through the representation of the British Ambassador to the court of Teheran? The court of St. Petersburg and other European powers have obtained various rights and privileges for the Christian inhabitants of Persia, and why cannot the English do as much for the Parsees?"

What the Parsees in India did for their co-religionists in Iran will be seen in a later chapter.

The sanctuary of the fire-temples and towers of silence belonging to the Zoroastrians, was often invaded, and any appeal to the authorities was usually unheeded, if not treated altogether with contempt. Rare instances, however, occurred, when justice was done to the aggrieved party.

About the year 1795, there lived in Kerman two well-to-do respectable Zoroastrians, by name Eezdaiyar and Adarbad, who, to save their lives, their self respect and their religion, fled the city in disguise and came to Yezd where the son of Eezdaiyar, by name Kaikushru, was married to Gulnar the daughter of Adarbad. One of the daughters from this union was so extraordinarily beautiful, that the enemies of the Zoroastrians had planned to carry her away forcibly and convert her. The father, having come to know of this, contrived after very considerable trouble and risk to his life, to bring her in disguise to Bombay. There these two, father and daughter without a home or friends, and unacquainted with the language, were waiting near Cowasji Patel Street in Fort, Bombay, in extreme grief, worry and anxiety. A Parsee Zoroastrian, by name Edulji Darabji Laskari, seeing them in that condition, took them over to his house, out of sheer pity, and kept them there in comfort. Then the father, leaving the daughter behind with Mr. Edulji Darabji Laskari and his family, went back to Iran and gradually brought the rest of his family to Bombay in safety. Here these beautiful daughters of Iran were married in various Parsee families, such as Pande, Cama, Petit* and Meher Homji. This resulted in the Parsees in Bombay coming to know at first hand of the real sufferings of their co-religionists in Yezd and Kerman. Thereupon, in 1853, they founded a society for the amelioration of the conditions of the Zoroastrians in Persia.

In 1854 the first accredited agent of the above society was deputed from Bombay to Yezd; his name was Maneckjee Limjee Hataria. One achievement of Hataria will remain associated with his memory while Zoroastrianism lasts in Persia. His herculean exertions, persistence and profound knowledge of the country were greatly responsible for the abolition of the Jazia tax. If we rely on history, the Jazia tax in itself was not iniquitous, in as much as it connoted in theory certain advantages to the Zoroastrians, including protection from foreign invaders, and exemption from military service. The payment of Jazia placed the Zoroastrians on a place of equality with the Jewish and Christian subjects. In fact, however, the tax degenerated into a pretext for humiliation and extortion. Fortunately, Hataria received help from the chivalrous Sir Henry Rawlinson, British Ambassador at the Court of Teheran. After several futile attempts, he succeeded in obtaining a reduction of one hundred Tomans in the 992 Tomans, payable by the Zoroastrian inhabitants of Yezd and Kerman.

*The girl was married to Sir Dinshaw Petit and was subsequently known as Lady Saakerbai.

It was not till 1882 that the first Sir Dinshaw Maneckji Petit of happy memory, President of the Amelioration Society, received through Mr. Thompson of the British Embassy, a communication, enclosing an Imperial Farman,* decreeing the final repeal of the odious tax. The campaign on the part of the Parsees of India, to relieve their co-religionists from the crushing Jazia, cost them, it is estimated, Rs. 1,00,000/-. The Imperial Charter of August 1882 is a historical document reflecting credit on the devotion, tact and perseverance of Maneckjee Limjee Hataria.

It will be interesting to give here a short account of the interview Maneckjee had with Nasiruddin, Shah of Iran. This interview was arranged by the well known explorer, writer and traveller, Sir Henry Rawlinson on the 14th May 1860.

On the first day, Hataria, with six other Zoroastrians, went to the Court of the Shahinshah; and, though they waited for the whole day, they could not get permission for an interview. Next day they went again, and after waiting till 3 o'clock in the afternoon, Maneckjee Hataria alone was permitted to present himself before the Shahinshah. After staring at him intensely for a few minutes, the Shah enquired:

"Is this Maneckjee?"

at which Maneckjee bowed and replied,

"Yes, your Majesty, I am the one to be sacrificed under the golden dust of your feet".

After this the Shahinshah got busy with his Ministers, till Maneckjee gradually advanced and placed before the sight of the Shah the silver casket that the Parsees of Bombay had sent as a present for him.

Whereupon Shah Nasiruddin enquired:

"Do you know Pharsee ? - Pharsee.?"

Maneckjee replied,

"Yes, the light of the world".

*This is reproduced in extenso in Appendix H.

Thereupon the King enquired:

"Are you of the Zoroastrian fold, and are you a believer in Zoroastrian religion?"

Maneckjee: "Yes, Oh King of the world".

Shah: "What are the tenets of your religion?"

Maneckjee: "The tenets are very much like the tenets of the Islamic Shariat, with very slight difference in the wording of the prayers; yet, in reality, they are very much alike.

Shah, addressing his Ministers, who were all standing with their heads bowed, said:

"This flock is pure and good, and seems to have been the remnant of the flock of the ancient world."

Then, looking at Maneckjee, he said,

"Are you a fire worshipper?"

Maneckjee: "No, Your Majesty, we consider fire as a symbol, same as Mussalmans consider the Kaabaa."

Shah: "Do you not consider fire as your God?"

Maneckjee: "No, Your Majesty, we try to reach God through His creations, such as water, fire, sun, moon, and stars—before which we stand and offer prayers to the Almighty."

Shah: "So, then you do not pray to the fire?"

Maneckjee: "No, Your Majesty, we only stand before fire and sun for the purpose of inspiration during prayers."

Shah: "Why do you pray by standing near the fire?"

Maneckjee: "Because fire is pure and we consider it proper to offer prayers to the Almighty, who is purity personified, by standing before the fire which also is the symbol of purity."

- Shah: "Do you mean to convey that fire is light?—light?"
- Maneckjee: "Yes, ruler of the world".
- Shah: "Do you observe fast (Roza)?"
- Maneckjee: "No, Your Majesty, we do not remain hungry all day and fill ourselves up with food at night. But every time that we eat thrice a day, we eat a little less and give away what we save to the poor, as such is the commandment in our religion."
- Shah: "Do you solemnize marriage?"
- Maneckjee: "Yes, Your Majesty, as amongst the Mussalmans, in our religion, the priests offer prayers to solemnize the marriage."
- Shah: "Do you offer prayers?"
- Maneckjee: "Yes, Your Majesty,—six times between the day and the night, do we remember Ahura Mazda."
- Shah: "Do you do trade?"
- Maneckjee: "Yes, Your Majesty, we do. But my particular job is to protect the interests of the Zoroastrians in Iran".
- Shah: "What particular trade do the Parsees in Hindustan do?"
- Maneckjee: "Several there are rich people, and several are serving the British Government as Clerks, etc....".

The Shah then spoke to his Ministers:

"The people of this flock are very honest and are of the original Iranian blood."

After that, he accepted the casket that was sent to him as a present from the Parsees of India and, while Maneckjee was stepping backwards to leave the Court, the Shah said to his Ministers,

"He looks a gentleman".

The efforts for the abolition of 'Jazia' lasted from the middle of 1857 until nearly the close of 1882 when it was abolished to the unspeakable joy of those who suffered from it, and of those who had agitated for its abolition.

Incidentally it might be mentioned that this glorious result was not accomplished without the greatest discretion, and the most determined and unflagging zeal being exercised on behalf of the sufferers. Much pressure was used on the Shah, through the British Government, and on one occasion, Mr. Maneckjee Antaria* was accompanied by Major General Sir Henry Rawlinson, British Ambassador at the court of Teheran, whose skilful introduction of the subject was most valuable in rousing the sympathy of the Shah against this injustice that was being perpetrated on the Zoroastrians in Iran.

The Parsees cannot adequately thank the following distinguished and generous-minded British Officers, namely Sir Henry Rawlinson, Mr. E.B. Eastwick, M.P. and Mr. Ronald F. Thompson, all at the Court of Teheran, who used all their eloquence and diplomacy to soften the heart of the Shah.

But much water has flown through the river Karoun since this obnoxious Tax was removed.

The Parsees in India gradually began taking more and more interest in their co-religionists left behind in their motherland.

One more representative was sent as a permanent resident in Iran, by name Mr. Ardeshir Reporter, who made a stay of thirty years and married a Zoroastrian Persian Lady, and was from time to time keeping the Parsees in India informed of the needs of their co-religionists.

After him, professional men such as Doctors (Parsees, of course) were being sent, for a shorter period, to keep the Parsees in India acquainted with their co-religionists. Later on, in more recent times, Parsees individually, or with a party, began touring Iran and bringing back fresh ideas with them as to how further to help their co-religionists, who are as a whole settled in villages as farmers, and who have no wherewithal or means with which to educate their children or their families.

One great Parsee patriot arose in Bombay, whose heart was all the time burning for his co-religionists in Iran, and who profoundly wanted to help those forgotten and far off co-religionists, scattered through the cities of Yezd, Kerman, etc. He was Mr. Pestonji D. Marker, who has spent Rs. 400,000 to build and establish two schools in Iran. They are

*Antaria is another way of calling Hantaria.

both in Yezd which contained a large number of Zoroastrians. These schools are located in the quarter that the Government of Iran, out of appreciation for Mr. Marker's generosity, have named Markerabad, and which covers twenty acres. The schools are separately built, one for girls and another for boys, and they are for cosmopolitan communities. There is also an orphanage for Zoroastrian boys. The children in all these institutions are taught up to Ninth Standard English, and also according to the curriculum fixed by the Iranian Government. After finishing school, most of the students go into Government service, while some continue with their family vocation. Many have taken to the medical, engineering and military professions. These schools, where religious knowledge of the Zoroastrian faith is imparted, tend to prevent the future generation of the Zoroastrians in Iran from becoming Bahais. This is a great boon, in as much as, due to poverty and oppressive surroundings, many Zoroastrians were compelled to become Bahais, so that they could at least keep their bodies and souls together.

Mr. Marker has further built a clock-tower, in memory of the immortal poet Firdousi Tusi, with dials discernible from all four sides of the tower in 'Khayaban-e-Peshotan Marker'.

For these many valuable charities and services of Mr. Pestonji D. Marker in Iran, the Shahinshah of Iran has been pleased to bestow upon him, from time to time, the following titles within the last twenty-five years, namely (1) Neshan-e-Elmi, (2) Neshan-e-Sepas, and (3) the Illustrious Order of Neshan-e-Humayun. Recently the Municipality of Yezd has, in appreciation of Mr. Marker's many valuable services rendered to Iran, named the big road running from Yezd to Kerman after him, and called it Khayaban-e-Peshotan Marker. Previously the road was known as Khayaban-e-Rah-e-Kerman.

From time to time, scholarly Dastoor, like the late Dastoor Dr. Dhalla, the late Dr. Sir Jeewanjee Jamshedjee Mody and Dastur Kaikhooshru Mahiyar Kutar, had visited Iran and lectured before the Zoroastrian brethren, with a view to imparting religious knowledge to them.

The Iran League that has been formed in Bombay since 1922, is also doing valuable work in cementing friendship between the Iranian Government and the Zoroastrians in India, with a view to inducing the Government of Iran to keep a kindly eye on the Zoroastrians in their country.

Conditions have doubtless improved considerably, and since 1906 one Zoroastrian has been allotted a seat in the Iranian Parliament. The latest one to occupy that seat is Arbab Dr. Esfandiar Yaganegi, Ph.D.

The author, while in Iran in 1950, noticed several Iranians who were outwardly Mussalmans, but inwardly cherished a love for the ancient faith of their forefathers. In fact, their very names were a curious mixture of Zoroastrian and Mussalman origin. For instance, one Iranian called himself Faramurz Abdullah—the first name being purely Iranian and the second purely Muslim. Similar names are those of Mr. Ardeshir Fazollah Zahedi, son-in-law of H.I.M. the Shah, and son of ex-Premier Fazollah Zahedi; H.E. Dr. Minoucher Egbal, Premier of Iran; Mr. Cyrus Parham, Asstt. Editor of Teheran Journal; Dr. Jamshid Mofakham; Mr. Bahman Mahomed Kamgar-Parsi, son of Mr. Mohammed Kamgar-Parsi, Director of the Iranian Cultural House, Bombay.*

These were the people, who when questioned as to the curious mixture in their names, promptly replied that till the time of their grandfathers they had been Zoroastrians, but had had to change the religion under force of circumstances. They invariably kept up at heart the religion of Zarathushtra as also the reverence for fire.

*The Secretary, Iran League, Mr. Kaikhosrow A. Fitter, Neshan-e-Elmi, in this connection writes to me :

"I have to draw your attention to the queer historical fact that when the Zoroastrians were converted to Islam, after the downfall of the Sassanian Empire, generally the son of the Zoroastrian father changed his Zoroastrian name and adopted Islamic name, e.g. Hussein Ardeshir, Ali Hormazd, etc.....But since Reza Shah encouraged Ancient Iranian Culture, the fashion is that the son adopts a Zoroastrian name and the father retains his Moslem name. Thus history repeats itself."

CHAPTER XII

SHAHNAMA

The Glorious Epic of The Parsees.

If the Parsees glory in any book pertaining to their ancient country, it is in the Shahnama. Every Parsee child knows of it, and is told and taught many of the stories, historical and legendary, that appear in it, from its childhood. Though Persian was the mother-tongue of the Parsees, through force of circumstances, by virtue of their stay in India for over 1200 years, they have completely forgotten their own language, having had to adopt Gujrati from the Hindus of the Bombay Presidency. In schools and colleges they pick up Persian, paradoxically enough, as a second language. There they glory in reciting the masterly verses of Firdousi, the poet, who has composed sixty thousand couplets, dealing with the ancient history and legends of Persia, in which he has embodied many things imaginary too. Nevertheless, to the Parsees, the dearest book in the world is the Shahnama. As the great poet himself says:-

*"Haran Kas ke Shahnameh Khwani Kunad
Agar Zan Boovad Pahlavani Kunad."*

Whoever reads my Shahnama
Even were she a woman, she would bravely fight like a warrior.

Rightly enough, while reciting some of the stirring passages of this master poet of Persia, the heart of the reader throbs with excitement, as he pictures before his eyes the scenes so vividly depicted.

The author of this masterpiece is known as Firdousi. His real name is Abu'l Qaasim, though he is variously known also as Hasan, Ahmad and Mansur. His pen-name, Firdousi (of paradise) has stuck permanently, and he is famous in the Persian speaking world as Firdousi.

He was a Dihqan from the village of Razan, near Toos. The Dihqans were a class of superior farmers and small landlords, hardy and independent, and proud of their pure and ancient blood.

He was born somewhere about 935 to 936 A.D. Toos was once a very ancient city of Khorasan, but at the present day it has been

practically wiped off the map of Iran, and its site occupied by the modern Meshed. The popular story about Firdousi's life, as told and taught to every Parsee child, is that, when he was about the age of eighteen or so, he set out on foot to Ghazna.

It so happened that, as he was approaching the stately gardens of the King's abode, three of the King's favourite court poets, by name Unsuri, Asjadi and Farrukhi, were sitting on the lawns, discussing congenial topics, so that when they saw this rustic yokel, not desiring any intrusion, they decided to avoid him, by the most courteous method possible. When this young Dihqan greeted them, Unsuri told him that they were the King's poets and did not admit any but poets into their company. The young man humbly submitted that he too had some pretensions that way, upon which Unsuri rejoined that they would be glad to entertain him, should he demonstrate his powers by completing a quatrain, the first three lines of which would be composed, one each, by himself and his two friends. The young poet having consented, Unsuri began:

"Chun Arez-e Tu Mah Nabashad Roushan"

The moon is not so bright as thy face.

Followed by Asjadi:-

"Manand-e Rukhat Gul Nabuvad Dar Gulshan"

There is no rose in the garden as beautiful as thy cheek.

And Farrukhi :

"Mazhganat Guzar Hami Kunad Az Joushan"

Your eyelashes can pierce even a coat of mail.

Now, the rhyme chosen by these Court poets was purposely such as would make the finding of a fourth rhyming word difficult and almost impossible. It is said that to the utter surprise and amazement of the three, the young Dihqan unassumingly and without hesitation struck in with:-

"Manand-e Sinnan-e Giv Dar Jang-e Pashan"

Even like the spear of Giv in the field of Pashan.*

The look of surprise on the faces of these three court poets could more be imagined than described. They were beaten with their own weapons. With all their learning they had never heard of the battle of Pashan, and it shows how well informed and widely read this young Dihqan was, in ancient Persian history, even at that young age.

He was eventually introduced at the court of Sultan Mahmud as a poet newly arrived. The King said to him, "If you are a poet, could you compose a verse or two now in my presence", whereupon, Firdousi composed extempore, a few verses of which the following two lines pleased the vanity of the King:-

*"Chu Koodak Lab Az Sheer-e Madar Bishust
Bigahwara Mahmud Gooyad Nakhust"*

"The new born babe its mother's breast first sips
And Mohammed's name then lets fall from its lips."

So pleased was the King that he asked, "Are you from Firdous (paradise) that you have brightened our court like paradise?" This is stated to be the occasion of his assuming Firdousi as his pen-name, and henceforth we shall speak of this young prodigy of Persia as Firdousi.

It is narrated that the King was fond of the ancient history of Iran and he knew of a book called "Bastan Nama", in which were chronicled the history and legends of ancient Iran from time immemorial. This, King Mahmud of Ghazni placed in the hands of Firdousi and asked him to versify the contents with his magic metres, promising him that for every couplet he would be paid a golden dinar.

The story goes that a house was provided for him, who was subsequently styled Shayaran Shayer (Poet of Poets). The walls were painted with scenes of war and battlefields to inspire him in his great task.

*Professor E. G. Brown, the famous author of "The Literary History of Persia", has rendered into English the above, as under:

Unsuri : "The moon is not so radiant as thy brow"

Asjadi : "No garden rose can match thy cheek, I trow"

Farrukhi : "Thy lashes though the hardest breast-plate pierce"

Firdousi : "Like Spear of Giv in Poushan's duel fierce",

For thirty long years he worked night and day, and completed sixty thousand couplets.

The Shahnama having been completed, Firdousi set out with it for Ghazna, taking with him his Repeater Abu Dulaf. He succeeded in interesting the Prime Minister in his work, which was by his instrumentality brought to the notice of Sultan Mahmud, who expressed himself as greatly pleased with it. But the Prime Minister had enemies who were continually casting "the dust of perturbation into the cup of his position", and Mahmud consulted with them as to what he should give Firdousi. They replied 60,000 Dirams* and even that is too much, seeing that he is in belief a "Shee-ite".

Sultan Mahmud was a zealot and he believed these imputations and ordered only 60,000 dirams to be paid to Hakim Firdousi. Naturally Firdousi was bitterly disappointed. At the time the three bags were delivered to him, he was in the public bath, from where he went out and bought a drink of sherbet, and divided the money between the bathman, the sherbet seller, and the Courier (one bag of 20,000 each) and said to the courier, "Go and tell your king that I, a poet, have a bigger heart than he has."

Immediately thereafter he went to the mosque, where the King used to go every week, and on the wall which the King used to face while praying, he wrote the following couplets:

*"Agar Shah-ra Shah Boodi Pidar
Bisar Bar Nihadi Mara Taj-e-Zar
Wagar Madar-e Shah Banu Budi
Mara Sim-u Zar Ta Bizanu Budi".*

"The Ruler's father, were he born in royal bed
I would have had a crown of gold upon my head;
And had his mother been with female virtues crowned
I would have been in gold and silver drowned."

* 'Dirams', pronounced 'deerums' (as in 'drum'), are silver coins.
'Dinars', pronounced 'deenars', are gold coins.

Having done this Firdousi fled the Capital for the sake of safety.*

The King, when he read these bitter, ironical and grossly insulting couplets, was so enraged, that he at once sent his soldiers in search of Firdousi, to bring him back, so that he could have the pleasure of seeing him crushed under the feet of an elephant. But the poet had fled far away just in time, having anticipated his doom.

Wherever he went for shelter, the moment he heard that he was being followed by the King's soldiers, he kept moving on and on. At this time he was over eighty years of age, crushed in spirit, grown grey and stooping, roaming around the streets of small towns and villages like one demented.

One day it is said, wandering in the streets of his native town worn out, neglected, in poverty and distress, the octogenarian poet overheard a child sing his famous verses from the satire:

*"Agar Shah-ra Shah Boodi Pidar
Bisar Bar Nihadi Mara Taje-Zar
Wagar Madar-e-Shah Banu Budi
Mara Sim-u Zar Ta Bizanu Budi"*

These lines once again put the poet in mind of his grievous disappointment and he felt a great pain in his heart; he swooned on the spot and expired.

Thus passed away the master poet of Persia of whom his contemporaries have sung:

"Blessings and Benedictions upon the spirit of Firdousi of blessed and auspicious birth. He was not (only) our master and we his pupils (but) he was our Lord and we his slaves".

Daulat Shah, another great poet of Iran, writing towards the end of the fifteenth century of the Christian era, with all the masterpieces of

* According to the Author of the *Chahar Maqala*, Firdousi's patron Ispahbad Shahriyar B. Shirwin of the house of Bawand who was King of Tabaristan, persuaded the poet to expunge these verses of the Satire, advising him further not to throw away the labour on such a book, as Mahmud would surely in the end do him justice. Next day he sent Firdousi 10,000 Dirhams saying: "I will buy each couplet of the Satire on the Sultan at a 1000 Dirhams. Give me those 100 couplets and rest satisfied therewith".

the great Persian classics before him, sums up his countrymen's estimate of Firdousi's composition thus:

"All great men and great scholars are agreed that in all this long period of Islam, a poet like Firdousi has never stepped out of the curtain of non-existence into the populous city of existence. And a just testimony in support of the truth of this claim is the Shahnama, which for the last 500 years* has not been successfully emulated by any created being from among poets and writers, and which status has not been vouchsafed to any poet and the circumstance is proof of divine guidance in the case of Firdousi."

The historian Awfi writes about Firdousi:-

"The miracle of Firdousi's art consists in this that from start to finish he has sung in one even tenor and maintained an equal level and his last verse has the power and freshness of the first. This is indeed the extreme limit of poetic power and art".

Theodore Watts-Dunton refers to Firdousi's Shahnama as a standing wonder in the literature of poetry.**

Let us turn now to the remorse that eventually came to King Mahmud. He was unaware of the whereabouts of Firdousi, and did not know whether he was dead or alive. But one day, having returned from an excursion, he was tired and in need of some diversion. His Prime Minister began reading from the Shahnama some exquisitely charming verses, depicting the bravery of Rustam in one of the numerous battles that he fought during his life time.

So happy did the King feel on hearing this masterpiece of poetry that he atonce exclaimed, "And who wrote this?" The answer was 'Firdousi'. Atonce his conscience smote him, and he realised what great and grievous injustice he had done to the poet who had shed so much lustre on his court. Turning round, he ordered the Prime Minister atonce to send 60,000 Dinars to the poet in his native place Toos, with instructions that these bags of gold should be carried on the Sultan's own camels with apologies to him.

* Now more than 1000 years.

** From the monograph on Firdousi and The Shahnama by P.B. Vachha, M.A., LL.B.

But alas, even as the camels entered the Rudbar Gate, the corpse of Firdousi was being borne forth from the opposite Gate of Razan, followed by his grief-stricken daughter, to whom the couriers offered the King's gift; she declined to accept it, asking what use was the money to her now, when the King's heartlessness had broken the heart of her beloved and world-renowned father.

As far as the Parsees are concerned they hold him in the highest honour, for having revived and immortalised the ancient Persian history of their kings and queens. As the poet himself writes:

*"Basi Ranj Burdam Dar in Sal-e Si
Ajam Zinda Kardam Bidin Parsi."*

"For thirty long years have I zealously strived
(and) Iran and the Parsee religion revived."

No poet has done greater service to a nation than has Firdousi to Iran and the Parsees. Rightly therefore do the Parsees glory in this great Shahnama, portions of which up till the last 25 years were recited after dinner in every village, town and city, wherever the Parsees happened to be, including those of Iran. Various were the places chosen for these recitals; sometimes in the open parks, sometimes in the Atash Kadehs (Fire Temples), sometimes in public halls and sometimes in private houses.

The mere recital of Firdousi's verses to the audience was like "melting music's mystic lay". The recital in Firdousi's original Persian verses and in his inimitable style enthralled the entire audience for hours on end. Men, women and children used to throng to the Shahnama Recitals, where the graphic descriptions of the battle between Rustam and Sohrab brought applause and, at the time of the recital, narrating the grief of Tehmina on the death of her beloved son, Sohrab, the whole audience in sympathy shed silent tears. Even today, these recitals from the Shahnama, take place in villages and smaller towns of Gujrat where Parsees abound. In all Parsee schools, children are especially encouraged to recite portions from the Shahnama, for which annual functions are held and prizes awarded.

RUSTAM AND SOHRAB: Of all that Firdousi has versified in the Shahnama, it is his three tragedies which have immortalised him, particularly the one known as "Rustam and Sohrab". A similar tragic

romance also occurs in Chinese legend under the name Li Ching and his son No-Cha, and there is also a similar story amongst the Irish, known as Cucullin and Conloch. Both these latter are subsequent to the Shahnama.

For the elucidation of European readers, a very brief narrative of this heart-rending tragedy is narrated here.

Rustam, the Paladin, finding his beloved wife Tehmina enciente, proceeds to Iran; but while parting gives her an armlet saying, "If God favours you with a son, when he grows up, put this on his arm as a signet, from which I can recognise him as my son should I meet him. Should God favour you with a daughter, instead pin this precious gift in her hair."

Tehmina is grief stricken, but in the hope of meeting her beloved again, she passes her days in quiet retreat and in due course there is born to her a brilliant boy, whom she names Sohrab. He grows very quickly; at the age of ten he looks like a full grown man, endowed with matchless strength, knowing no fear, without guile or suspicion, and self-confident. He is a born fighter and is marvellously precocious. Says Firdousi, when Sohrab was only a month old he looked like a child a year old. At three he donned the armour of battle and at five awed the hearts of experienced fighters. At ten there was not a single man in the whole country who could stand against him. To him the hunt of lions was like child's play. He would run after a galloping steed, hold him by his tail and the steed would stop dead on the spot.

At such a stage Sohrab rushes up to Tehmina, his mother, and asks her to tell him of his birth and of his sire. When he was told that he was the son of the world famous champion Rustam, he answered "None would keep such a glorious fact concealed from the world. Now I shall go and collect a mighty army of Turkish fighters, march upon Iran and see the blessed face of my noble father. I shall bestow the throne, crown and treasure upon Rustam, and place him upon the seat of King Kaikaus. I shall make thee Queen of Iran and perform the feats of lions in battle. With Rustam and myself as father and son, there shall not remain a single crowned head upon the face of the earth."

And so Sohrab with characteristic impetuosity throws in his lot with his father's mortal enemy Afrasiab of Turan. This crafty king, the

arch-enemy of Iran, makes a plan to win over Sohrab and put him against Rustam, so that if one or the other gets killed in battle, so much the less will be the danger to Turan. This stratagem succeeds through Homan, his favourite courtier, who sends Sohrab at the head of a large army to fight Iran.

On the way Sohrab comes to the castle known as Daz-e-Sapeed, which was on the border of Iran and Turan, and shouts to the keeper of the castle to come and give him fight. The old keeper comes to fight Sohrab, but is taken prisoner. Whereupon his daughter, Gordafreed, dons a male armour and hides her hair under a helmet. Galloping on a horse, she approaches Sohrab. In a gallant fight she is thrown off her horse. Her helmet having been cast off her head, she reveals herself as a beautiful damsel. Sohrab is both astonished and at the same time enamoured of her. Like a true woman she takes advantage of the situation and promises that she will meet him again in the morning if he sets free her father and lets her go back to the castle. The simple and unsuspecting little warrior was thus duped and Gordafreed with her father disappeared behind the castle wall. In the middle of the night, finding very little chance of resisting Sohrab and his army, they desert the castle and run away to Iran. When in the morning Sohrab found out this stratagem, he was greatly chagrined. In the meantime Hazir, the keeper of the castle at Daz-e-Sapeed, sent word to his King, Kaikaus, to send Rustam with an army to save the situation and drive back Sohrab to Turan.

When the two champions meet on the battle field, Rustam, the father, does not naturally recognise his son Sohrab not having ever seen him from the time he had left Tehmina with the gifts and instructions. Somehow the natural love and affection make Sohrab's heart go out to Rustam and he keeps asking him whether he is not the famous Rustam whom the whole world has heard of. But, according to the custom of the warriors of those days, Rustam does not want to declare his identity and he evades answering—with the result that perforce they start attacking each other.

We will not waste space here to reproduce the graphic description by the great poet Firdousi on the fight that lasted for three days between the father and the son, but it would suffice to say that in the first round on the first day Sohrab knocked down Rustam from his horse. While sitting on his chest, he was wanting to kill him with the dagger when, like a wily old warrior, Rustam reminded him that no true warrior gets elated

with success in the very first bout but tries his mettle in three bouts to see if he can be the champion in the end.

Thus Rustam evades death, and in the next day's fight he somehow overpowers Sohrab and thrusts his dagger into the tender heart of his handsome young son.

The poor boy then narrates the tale before dying as to how his beloved mother had told him of the world champion Rustam being his father and how she had given him an armlet to show to him so that he could recognise him as his son Sohrab without the slightest doubt. He actually lifted the sleeve of his arm and showed him the armlet.

No words could describe the grief of Rustam when he realised, too late, how he had killed his own son so ruthlessly, without waiting to ponder over and verify the truth of what his son had declared.

But Fate is all-supreme and the great warrior had the mortification to see his son dead of the mortal stab with his own dagger.

Can mere words adequately describe the intense grief of Tehmina when she heard of the death of her only beloved child having been killed by his own father? She took the grief to heart so much that within a month she died mourning day and night the loss of such a precious child God had blessed her with.

Sorrow was never brought home to a mortal, even in the remorseless course of the Greek tragedy, in a more cruel and more unbearable form. There is nothing more moving and overwhelming in literature than the picture of Tehmina in her sorrow and distraction as described by the great poet in his immortal verses.

Thus ends this most beautiful and yet most tragic of Firdousi's romances and tragedies. His forceful flowing rhythm in original Persian verses makes many a cold heart shed tears on reading the grief of Tehmina.

RUSTAM AND ASFANDYAR: Firdousi has given yet another historical narrative in his matchless verses of the contest between Rustam and Asfandiyar, the son of King Vistasp of the Avesta, and Gustasp of the Shahnama.

Asfandiyar was a young ambitious prince, sturdy and handsome, who wanted to rule the kingdom during the lifetime of his father who was not desirous of renouncing the throne. However he promised his son the kingdom on condition that he defeated Rustam and brought him as a prisoner before him.

The rash and inexperienced youth accepted the challenge and went to Rustam, seeking for a fight. Poor old Rustam did his very best to persuade the prince to desist from such rashness as, after all, he as the World champion would never condescend to be taken, even as a mock prisoner, to the great King Gustasp and thus permit his good name to be tarnished.

Tradition hath it that when Holy Zarathushtra wanted Gustasp and his Queen to accept his religion and be Zoroastrians by faith, he had promised three gifts to Gustasp. Of those, one was that he would so transform Asfandiyar's body that neither sword nor arrow would cause it any injury. And it was therefore that Rustam during the skirmish saw that while none of his arrows ever produced any effect on Asfandiyar, the latter's arrows were hurting and wounding him. So, much against his will, not seeing any way out, he sent a two-pronged arrow straight into the eyes of the unfortunate contestant which killed him outright.

Only then did old Gustasp realise what a foul speculation on his part had done to his son. Out of utter remorse he renounced his kingdom in favour of his grandson, Behman.

Thus ends this equally great tragedy of Firdousi.

CHAPTER XIII

PARSEES DURING THE BRITISH REGIME

In the chapters ten and eleven are described the hardships and privations suffered, both by the Parsee Pilgrim Fathers in India, as also by the Zoroastrians who resolutely clung to their mother-land after its conquest by the Arabs.

It is intended to give in this chapter an account of the conditions of the Parsees before the arrival of the British and during their reign in India, when these unfortunate refugees from Iran showed their high character and great ability in every walk of life. They pursued a coasting trade, and as their number increased they began, about three hundred years after their landing in Sanjan, to disperse over the neighbouring districts, such as Vankaner, Broach, Variav, Ankleshvar, Cambay and Navsari. In fact, wherever they went, they prospered. Subsequently, many settled in Thana, where they were found by Friar Odoric, while he was travelling in India in 1321.

The first settlers in Cambay having succeeded in trade, others followed, and in time the Parsee element became so strong, that by their overbearing conduct they forced the natives to leave the city. Among those who had to leave was a baqqal or bania, Kalyanrai by name, who having amassed considerable wealth in the pearl trade in Surat, levied a numerous band of Kolis and Rajputs. In a night attack, he put to the sword many of the Parsee residents in Cambay, and set fire to their houses. Such as were able to save their lives fled, and not one Parsee was left in Cambay. This seems to have happened in the 17th century A. D. (H. P. A. 1, 52).*

At the end of the next century another disaster befell the Parsees. They had a small colony at Variav, which is situated at some distance from Surat. The ruler was the Rajput Raja of Ratanpur, who imposed an extraordinary tribute on the Parsees. The latter refused to pay and drove away the troops sent by the Chief to enforce the demand. When a fresh force arrived from Ratanpur the Parsee men happened to be at a feast outside the limits of Variav. Nothing daunted, the Parsee women donned the armour of their husbands and relations, and made a determined stand against the troops. When on the point of victory the

*Taken from 'Ancient Persia and the Parsees' by Jehangir B. Sanjana.

helmet of one of the female warriors fell down, exposing her long flowing hair. Seeing that their opponents were females, the Ratanpur soldiers took heart, rallied and made a desperate assault. The brave Parsee ladies, preferring death to dishonour, heroically leapt into the Tapti river, which runs through Variav, and perished in the cold embrace of its waters. The memory of this sad event is kept alive at Surat, Navsari and in surrounding localities, by the observance of religious ceremonies, on the 25th day of the first month (of the Shahenshais). The day is known as the Variava Behedin's Parabh.*

One of the earliest Parsee settlers in Bombay, probably the first, was Dorabjee Nanabhai, the founder of the well-known Patel family, which has produced many men of fame. He came with his family from Mora Sumari (near Surat) in A.D. 1640 and was appointed by the Portuguese as their Agent to deal with the indigenous population—which duty he was required by the English to continue to perform after their entering upon the possession of Bombay.

On his death in 1669, his son Rustam was confirmed by the English in all the offices which his father had held.

In 1689/90, when a severe plague broke out in Bombay, most of the Europeans and the garrison were laid up with fever and plague. Taking advantage of this unfortunate circumstance, Yakoob Khan, the Sidi Chief of Jhanjira, who was an independent ruler and who commanded a large fleet, invaded Bombay. He seized the Fort of Dongri, as the Englishmen were unable to do anything on account of their illness. Rustam Patel, true to the tradition of his race, determined to show his loyalty to the Government whom he was serving. He raised a force of Kolis from the native population, boldly fought the invaders and routed them.

The Bombay Dockyard is a monument of the industry, enterprise and integrity of a Parsee family known as the Wadias.

Lovejee Nusserwanji, the founder of the illustrious Wadia family and the first of a long line of naval architects, was born at Surat, in the year 1710. He took employment in the East India Company's dockyard there.

In 1735, a Parsee, Dhanjibhai by name, became a master builder at Surat. In that year a vessel called "The Queen" was built in the dock at Surat for the Company, under the foremanship of young Lovejee.

*'Ancient Persia and the Parsees' by Jehangir B. Sanjana.

Lovejee brought up two of his sons, Manekji and Bomanji, to his own craft. They entered the Dockyard, working as common carpenters, for the paltry sum of Rs. 12/- a month. But, in due course, they acquired under their father's instructions such proficiency in naval architecture that, by their united exertions, they made the reputation of the Bombay Dockyard universal in India. Before his death Lovejee was presented, by order of the Board of Directors, with a silver foot rule, with the inscription, "A Memorial from the East India Company, of the long and faithful services of Lovejee, their Master Builder at Bombay, Anno 1772".

The two sons of Lovejee built 29 ships for the East India Company, besides repairing many vessels of the British Squadron. So pleased were the British with the work of these two sons of a Master Builder, that more than once they were specially thanked by the Board of Directors, and in 1783 they were presented with Gold Medals by Vice-Admiral Sir Edward Hughes with suitable inscriptions. In addition they were given Jagirs in perpetuity, in the District of Parel, which is a part of Bombay City.

Bomanji's son, Jamshedji, built in 1872 the 'Cornwalis', a frigate of 50 guns, for the East India Company, and his success decided the British Government to order the construction of ships for the Royal Navy at Bombay. Thus Jamshedji was the first of the Parsee Master Builders to be entrusted by the Lords of the Admiralty with the building of men-of-war in India. He designed and built sixteen men-of-war and forty large ships.

Jamshedji had the satisfaction of having his good work appreciated by the Board of Directors in the substantial shape of the grant of a Jagir, yielding an annual revenue of six thousand rupees.

The list of ships built by the Wadias, between 1735-1863, comprises 170 war vessels for the East India Company, 34 warships for the Royal Navy, 87 merchant vessels for private firms and three vessels for the Queen of Muscat.

A well known Desai, by name Tehmuljee Rustomjee Sirvai, in the year 1714, placed himself in communication with Pilaji Rao Gaikwar, and induced him to establish posts in Surat. Consequently he was entrusted with the management of the collection of the revenue of these posts known as Thanas.

In the year 1800 Mancherjee Cursetjee, a Parsee Desai, rendered very useful service to the British authorities, when they formed their first connection with Baroda. Mr. Duncan, the then Governor of Bombay, when he visited Surat in order to deal with Govind Rao Gaikwar, for an exchange of territory, Mancherjee who was employed in the negotiations showed much tact and zeal in his work. He also shared in the secret negotiation in 1802 between Rao-ji Apaji Anandrao Gaikwar and the Bombay Government, which resulted in the extrication of the Gaikwar from the domination of the Arabs. These Arabs had formed a mercenary force, which had acquired such great influence and power in the State, that when their pay fell into arrears, they seized the city of Baroda and kept Anandrao Gaikwar confined in his own palace as a prisoner. This resulted in the influence and increase of the control possessed by the British in the affairs of the Baroda State. Consequently, Desai Mancherjee Cursetjee was granted in 1817, by the Court of Directors of the East India Company, a pension of Rs. 200/- a month for three lives.

It was at Surat, however, that the Parsees laid the foundation of their real prosperity. By their pleasant manners and affable disposition, as well as by their industrious habits and their character, sobriety, intelligence and honesty, they soon acquired considerable influence, and a secure position in that flourishing city of the Moghuls.

The establishment of European trading companies at Surat atonce brought the Parsees to the front. The true era of Parsee prosperity and importance had its origin from that day. The Parsees had the knack of ingratiating themselves in the favour of the Europeans, as also intelligent business-like habits and integrity. Due to these the closest confidence and most cordial relationships were established between them. The Portuguese, the French, the Dutch and the English factories all employed Parsees as their chief brokers. Without them, it may be said, the foreigners found it almost impossible to conduct their trading and banking operations.



One Mr. Rustam Manek, who was born in Surat in the year 1635, gained a high reputation as the chief broker of the English factory at Surat. He was a man of great ability and excellent character, and had been most useful in advancing English interests in that town. He often smoothed over the difficulties which did not fail to arise between the English and the Officers of the Moghul, with whom also he possessed great influence.

In the year 1660, many impediments were thrown in the way of the English by the Nawab or Ruler of the City. Rustam Manek took the bold step of going for redress, accompanied by the Head of the English factory at Surat, straight to the Court of Aurangzeb, at Delhi. He addressed the Emperor personally, by introducing the Englishman, who he said had come to Hindustan for trading purpose, but he added that since His Majesty's nobles were throwing many obstacles in his way, the noble Englishman was seeking the Royal favour. He urged the Emperor to permit the English to settle at Surat, and be allowed to establish a factory there for trading purposes. Further he made a request that they might be protected in their business by the Emperor's imperial commands. Aurangzeb was pleased with the way the Parsee Rustam Manek had espoused the cause of the Englishman. Therefore, strict injunctions were issued not to molest the English in any way at Surat. The Emperor was further pleased to make a free gift of land for the building of a factory. *Suckling.*

Thus a Parsee rendered extremely useful services to the English at Surat. Not only that, but in the true Parsee spirit, he furthered the general interests of that City. Whenever an occasion arose, he sided with the aggrieved, and did his utmost to obtain redress wherever a wrong had been inflicted. As an instance, a ship belonging to a Turkish merchant, named Usman Chalebi, was unwarrantably seized by a Portuguese man-of-war. The Turk, being unable to obtain redress for his wrongs, applied to Mr. Rustam Manek for assistance. That gentleman at once went to Goa, and appealed for justice to the Portuguese Governor General, Senor Vizrael. The outcome of his effort was satisfactory, both to himself and to his client.

But it was not all smooth sailing with the Parsees as brokers and interpreters. Often misunderstandings arose, putting them to a great deal of inconvenience and trouble. For instance, from the authentic papers in the possession of the descendants of Mr. Rustam Manek it is found that after his death in 1721, a dispute arose between his sons and the officers of the English Factory as to the amount due by the latter to Mr. Rustam's estate. Great pressure was brought to bear upon Mr. Rustam's heirs to forego their claim. Mr. Hope, who was then the Head of the English factory at Surat, induced Momin Khan, the Nawab of Surat, through the influence of Governor William Phipps of Bombay, to imprison Framji Rustamji, the eldest son of Mr. Rustam, and to put Mr. Rustam's house under attachment. Framji was also fined by the Nawab Rs. 50,000 and made to pay Rs. 200/- daily for the supply of food to the members

and servants of his family. As may be surmised, this oppression filled the family with dismay as it seemed a hard return for the valuable services the family had rendered to the English. Mr. Bomanji, the younger brother of Framji Rustamji, went to Bombay to seek redress from the Governor. Instead of getting the justice which he expected, he was placed under surveillance and was unable to go anywhere beyond the limits of the island. Seeing no way of obtaining redress from the authorities at Bombay, Naorozji Rustamji, the youngest of the brothers, sailed for Europe in the man-of-war Salisbury, in the hope of obtaining it in London. He reached England in April 1723 and was received most kindly by the Court of Directors (of the East India Company). At last the English sense of justice prevailed, and all claims in dispute between the late Mr. Rustam Manek's family and the English factory were referred by mutual consent to the arbitration of Messrs. Matthew Decker, Josias Wordsworth, Edward Harrison and John Heathcote, who awarded* to the heirs of late Mr. Rustam Rs. 5,46,790 to be paid in three instalments. The first instalment of Rs 1,70,000 was paid on the 1st of February, 1724, and the second and third each of Rs 1,88,395 on the 1st of February 1725 and 1st of February 1726, respectively.

After this settlement of the dispute Naorozji Rustamji was presented by the Court of Directors with a dress of honour before his return to Bombay. He was thus the first Parsee who went to England. He returned to Bombay deeply impressed by the high sense of English justice.

Thus Naorozji gained the esteem of all those who came in contact with him, by his success in England.

Another Parsee of repute by name Sohrabji Kavasji possessed considerable knowledge of mechanics, and was a man of real talent. A lucky circumstance laid the foundation of his future success.

It so happened that a clock, which had been presented to the Emperor of Delhi (Muhmedshah) by the Sultan of Turkey, got out of order. Many persons tried to repair it without success. The Emperor Muhammad Shah (see appendix J) thereupon sent orders to the authorities throughout the length and breadth of his dominions, to find out and send to Delhi all persons competent to repair the clock. Sohrabji's fame as a mechanic was not unknown to the Nawab of Surat, who in obedience to the Imperial

*The award being of interest is reproduced in Appendix I.

command, sent Sohrabji to Delhi, in the year 1744. He was entrusted by the Emperor with the work, which he performed so satisfactorily, to the astonishment of the Emperor and his nobles, that it gained for him the title of 'Nek-Sa'at Khan', that is, "The Lord of the Auspicious Moment".

By the Emperor's desire, Sohrabji remained at the Court for some time and, while there, taught without remuneration, the art of repairing watches to many who were eager to learn. The Emperor was much pleased and bestowed many favours upon him. Among other honours, he was conferred upon the title of Sardar of a force, consisting of 200 infantry and 500 cavalymen. At the same time Sohrabji's two sons received the titles of Behremand** Khan and Tale-yar Khan.*** The Emperor further gave him the right of collecting the Customs dues at Surat, besides several pieces of land near that town. He thus gained considerable influence. There is no doubt that by means of his exceptional influence some valuable privileges were obtained for the English at Surat.

On his return to his native place from Delhi, in 1760, Sohrabji was appointed Controller of the Surat Revenue, and entrusted with the important charges of the presentation of Khilats (dresses of honour) to the Hon'ble Charles Crommelin and Mr. John Spencer, the Heads of the English Factory at Surat.

On the 2nd of May of the same year Sohrabji Nek-Sa'at Khan was presented in full Darbar with a dress of honour by the Representative at Surat of the Honourable East India Company.

After the death of Sohrabjee Nek-Sa'at-Khan his son, Dhanji-shah was appointed Mamlatdar (Chief Divisional Officer) of Olpad, Karod and Walwad in 1791.

In 1800, when the Honourable East India Company took Surat from the Nawab, he was appointed the Native Agent of the small neighbouring States of Sachin, Bansda, Mandvi and Dharampur. At that time, a Mussalman pretended to be the Mehdi, foretold in Islamic tradition. He appeared in the year 1810, in the small town of Bodhan, some 15 miles from Surat, belonging to the Raja of Mandvi. He wrote to the Chief of Surat, to accept the religion of Muhammad, or be prepared for the consequences. The Chief of Surat, Mr. Crow, accompanied by

* Pronounced 'Nayk'.

** Pronounced 'Behr-e-Mand'.

*** Lord of friendly fortune.

Dhanjishah Behremankhan and a troop of Dragoons, attacked the mosque where Abdul Rahman, the pretender, had taken up his quarters with about 75 Arabs. Dhanjishah was among the first to cross the river and to prevail upon the Fakir, the pretender, to surrender without a vain resistance. In the scuffle that followed, Dhanjishah was killed. Thus a brave Parsee lost his life at the early age of 40. The Government of Bombay generously bestowed upon his widow a pension of Rs 3000/- per annum, in recognition of the services rendered by her gallant husband.

But a family, in which some of the best traits of character that have distinguished the Parsee race in the past generation—such as commercial enterprise, industry, integrity, benevolence and public spirit—were most conspicuously shown forth, was that of the Vikajis.

They came originally from the small seaport town of Tarapur, in the Thana district. In the beginning of the eighteenth century, the family was represented by the brothers Vikaji Mehrji and Pestanji Mehrji, and by their cousins Behramji Bhimji and Hirji Bhimji, of whom the eldest and most enterprising was Vikaji. For several generations previously the chief occupation of the family had been agriculture, but these men departed from the traditional groove, and began a new career in which they attained, in an incredibly short time, an extraordinary degree of success. They began by farming the revenues of a small 'mahal' named 'Aseri', in the Bassein district under the government of the Peshwa (marathas). In course of time, when the East India Company succeeded to the Peshwas of Poona, they were appointed farmers of the land and sea customs of Northern Konkan. In 1836 they were the sole farmers of the customs of Northern and Southern Konkan, and also of the land-customs of the districts of Poona, Sholapur, Ahmednagar, and a part of Kandesh. Their management of these provinces was remarkable, on the one hand for the magnitude of its area and the vastness of its resources, and, on the other, for a vigorous and well organised system in the administration of its details. The solid results of this policy on Vikaji's part were that the State revenues of the provinces, within the seven years that they had been administered by him, were more than doubled, without at the same time appreciably adding to the burdens of the subjects. Currently with their official connection with the State, they also directed their energies to commercial business. At the highest period of their prosperity in trade, which was from 1835 to 1845, they had their head office in Bombay, with branch firms and corresponding houses in every important town of the Bombay Presidency and also in Calcutta,

Singapore and China. In 1825-26, as an experiment, they imported the first batch of Berar cotton that ever came to Bombay, in five hundred bullock-loads, and this they subsequently followed up by numerous other efforts in the same direction, notwithstanding the thousand and one difficulties which nature and the Nizam's officials created in those days of comparative ignorance and little or no communications. They were the first to erect cotton screws and presses at Khangam and in the neighbouring cotton districts. They made various cart-roads over the Chats between the Berar and the Malabar coast, and built bridges over streams and rivers for the speedy transit of merchandise between Bombay and the Deccan. In a word, they were the pioneers and founders of the cotton trade between the Nizam's Dominions and the Bombay Presidency.

In 1830 they were specially invited by the Nizam's minister, Raja Chandu Lal, to open banking firms in his territories. In this line of business they displayed such energy and tact that, within a year or two of their connection with the Nizam's Government, the firm of 'Pestanji Vikaji' of Hyderabad, became its principal banking house. They were lending to the Government for State purposes, several lakhs of rupees every year including the expenditure on military forces.

From 1835 to 1845 their direct advances to the State amounted to the gigantic sum of one crore and eight lakhs of rupees (£ 1,080,000), out of which no less than eighty-three lakhs were handed over to the East India Company for defraying the expenses of the 'contingent troops' which the Nizam, under treaty, was bound to provide as the means of supporting. For the liquidation of these advances, the Nizam entered into a scheme or arrangement by which he mortgaged to them the revenues of the valley of the Berar, together with the province of Aurangabad. They were also allowed to retain in their service a small armed force, and it is said that the Nizam received from them, as from his other vassal chiefs, the usual foundatory homage of Nazarana.

The State Mint at Aurangabad was also entrusted to their charge, and since the advent of the Parsees into the country (Hyderabad-Deccan in India), there has perhaps been no other family that has been permitted by the State to have its own initials or marks engraved on the national coin.

A silver coin was struck, probably at the Aurangabad mint, bearing the initial letters of Vikaji's younger brother Pestanji Mehrji, and widely known after him as the PESTANSHAHI COIN, of the Nizam Government.

In 1845 Raja Chandu Lal retired from office, and with that event began a slow decline, which ultimately resulted in the bankruptcy of the family firm. The new minister proposed a settlement of the claim of Vikaji Mehrji, which amounted at that time to about 37 lakhs of rupees, on the basis of payment at the rate of five annas less in the rupee. This proposal was not accepted, and the Peshkar Raja Rambax caused a peremptory sequestration to be made of the provinces, which had up to that time been mortgaged to Vikaji Mehrji and his brother.

They presented petitions to the Nizam. They appealed to the Government of India, and ultimately to the former Court of Directors, and even to that last resource for relief, the British Parliament. But all without effect. The British authorities refused to lend their aid in the matter on the avowed principle that the subjects of the British Government, when advancing money to native States, did so at their own risk, and that it could not depart from its invariable practice of not interfering in the matter of the realisation of such claims.

Though they were defeated at every stage in their efforts to enforce their claim on the Nizam's Government, it is but fair to that Government to state that a later minister, Sir Salar Jung, amply made up for the past acts of injustice, by extending the liberality of his patronage to several members of the family, who were appointed to posts of trust and high emoluments, and at the same time he made provision for the family out of the State exchequer, in recognition of the very valuable services rendered by its founder to the Nizam, in times past.

The Government of the East India Company, too, on its part, had, as far back as 1829, acknowledged in a most substantial manner the great benefits which the enterprise and public spirit of Vikaji Mehrji had conferred on the trade of the Presidency by making him a gift of the village of Parnali.

On the 29th May 1860, a Parsee by name Mr. Pestonjee Sohrabjee of Poona received from the Government of India a patent of the title of Khani-va-Bahaduri (a lord and a brave man), a medal and handsome gratuity as a reward for his indefatigable exertions in the conveyance of mails during the perilous time of the Sepoy Mutiny.

At the time of the Sepoy Mutiny at Cawnpore, an intrepid young Parsee, by name Aderji, was in the midst of the fight, and was the first

to scale the walls and implant and unfurl the flag on the Fort, for which brave deed he was decorated with a gold medal, presented with a revolver and a Sword of Honour, and was awarded a special pension.

Before we come to the part played by the Parsees in the two Great World Wars and in several other fields of activities, mention might be made of Sir Jamsetji Jeejeebhoy, Baronet.

In the field of Parsee philanthropy Sir Jamsetji Jeejeebhoy, whose name is a synonym of 'philanthropy' and 'benevolence', was born of a poor Parsee couple on 15th July 1783. In course of years he earned for himself a great reputation as one of the Merchant Princes of the World. His uncle, Framji Nusserwanji Batliwala, had a shop where he bought and sold bottles, and there Jamsetji had his first training in business, and came to be known as Jamsetji Batliwala. At the age of 16 he was unfortunate enough to lose his parents, but nature had endowed him with enterprise, so that at that young age he embarked for China on his first mercantile speculation, with all the capital he then possessed which amounted to Rs. 120/-.

While his first voyage was not a prosperous one, he had established his credit as a level-headed and honest young man, so that he was able to raise a capital of Rs 40,000/-, and embark on a second voyage to China, as a partner in the firm of his uncle, Framji Batliwala. Yet again, a third time when he went over to China, while returning in July 1806, he had the misfortune to see his ship BRUNSWICK intercepted and overpowered by two French men-of-war, who were in conflict with the British at that time. Jamsetji lost all his property and had to remain for a time a prisoner in the hands of the French. He was taken to the Cape of Good Hope, which was then a neutral port belonging to the Dutch, and, except for his clothes, everything was taken away from him. The British Consul there assisted him however and procured for him a passage to Calcutta in a Danish ship sailing for Serampore. In a letter written to a friend in Bombay he wrote, "On board the vessel we used to get one biscuit a head in the morning, and at 4 or 5 o'clock some boiled rice; and in this manner we struggled on, bordering on starvation. The Danish Captain, for Rs 1600/- gave us such miserable berths that they were worse than those on a country craft which we got for Rs 50/-. He gave one pot of water between nine men, both for cooking and drinking. For about 15 days after we left Ceylon, the cold was severer than what I experienced in China. My sufferings and privations were such as I have never before experienced."

But, notwithstanding the perils of the sea, heightened by war with the French, he went once more on a voyage to China. His main trade was in cotton and opium, and from Bombay, where he settled down in 1807, he directed all his operations concerning his extensive trade with Madras, Calcutta, Colombo, Penang, Singapore, Siam, Sumatra, China and England. In 1814 a new line was added to the business, namely shipping. The first vessel owned by Jamsetji's firm was named 'GOOD SUCCESS', and she was indeed such a success that the firm soon became owners of a formidable fleet. Thus, with limited education, but a shrewd inborn instinct for business, and a heart that knew no disappointment, through these repeated voyages to China, he amassed fabulous wealth.

Having grown up from sheer poverty, he began distributing part of his wealth lavishly for the benefit of the poor, both of his own community and those outside his Faith. It will be too long to narrate here all the varied charities to which this merchant prince of India gave away lavishly, building hospitals, schools, rest houses and so on; but suffice it to say, that the total amount that he gave away in charity stood at the fabulous figure of 41 lakhs of rupees (roughly £ 2,73,333 sterling).*

These large communal and cosmopolitan charities did not naturally remain unnoticed, and Queen Victoria the Good, in 1842, was pleased to confer on him the honour of Knighthood. Thus he was the first Indian and the first Parsee on whom the rank and privileges of a Knight of the British realm were conferred.

In 1855 he was given the unique honour of the Freedom of the city of London for his justly renowned character as a princely benefactor of his country and mankind.

The crowning honour of his life was when Sir Jamsetji was offered a Baronetcy at a public meeting in the Town Hall, and here again he was the first Parsee and the first Indian to be thus honoured. Lord Elphinstone, the Governor of Bombay, who presided, said that 'In honouring Sir Jamsetji the country merely honoured itself'. "In what age," asked his Lordship "and in what country, can we find another example of such princely munificence?"

* Fabulous compared to those days when money did not come in so easily, and when black marketing was a word unheard of.

But it was not the amount only of Sir Jamsetji's charities that commended admiration. True liberality is shown more in the manner and distribution than in the amount. "I will not go back to the dark ages," said Lord Elphinstone, "and cite the times when Christian monasteries and Buddhist Viharas were endowed by men who sought to gain the favour of heaven, by renouncing their possessions and performing what they considered an act of charity, but which was certainly one of abnegation. Yet, I cannot help remarking that Sir Jamsetji's charities, with the sole exception of the Parsee benevolent institutions, are made to the entire community—not for Parsees only, but for Hindus, Jews, Christians and Mussalmans. It is the catholic character of Sir Jamsetji's benevolence, his sympathy for the poor and sufferings of all castes and creeds that has won for him the universal respect and esteem of all classes of the community."*

Subsequently, it was resolved that Sir Jamsetji's name and memory should be perpetuated by the erection of a statue, on which multitudes yet unborn might gaze with feelings of reverence and emulation. The Statue accordingly erected now adorns the Town Hall of Bombay.

Thus passed away one of the greatest Parsee philanthropists on the 15th of April 1859, the most eminent British subject of India, one of the best beloved citizens of the world, whose memory for the last six generations the Parsees are still venerating.

Recently the Government of India have issued a postage stamp displaying the bust of Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeeboy, Baronet, with the years of his birth and death (1783-1859) printed in Hindi and English. This is a great honour to a Parsee indeed.

Incidentally, India has also recognised the services of a Parsee lady, by name Madame Bhikaiji Cama. She was born in Bombay in 1861 and died in France in 1936.

* The Illustrated London News published the interesting information in its issue of the 14th February 1957 connected with the Baronetcy conferred upon Sir Jamsetji Jeejeebhoy as under:

"A deputation consisting of Colonel Sykes, Chairman of the Court of Directors of the East India Company, Sir George Anderson, Mr. John Abel Smith, M.P., Mr. Moffat, M.P., Mr. H. B. E. Frere, Chief Commissioner of Sciende (Sind), at an interview with Lord Palmerston (Prime Minister of England) on the 29th ultimo, the object being to represent to the Premier the distinguished merit of Sir Jamsetji Jeejeebhoy of Bombay and to request that His Lordship would solicit Her Majesty (Queen Victoria) the additional honour of a Baronetcy for that gentleman."

Soon after Sir Jamsetji Jeejeebhoy was gazetted a Baronet on 24th May 1857, the Letters Patent dating 6th August of the same year. (From 'Bombay Knights & Baronets' by J. R. B. Jeejeebhoy, Sanj Vartaman Press, Bombay, 1946).

See Appendix K for further interesting information in this connection.

Long before India ever made any claim to Swaraj or Independence, or even dreamt of it, this Parsee lady had originated a flag for a free India and had unfurled it in England to the great annoyance of the British authorities, who promptly expelled her from that country. Whereupon she made her stay in France, known for her love for freedom for which the French had fought and killed King Louis XIV and King Louis XV and declared the country a Republic under Napoleon Bonaparte.

To perpetuate her memory and out of reverence for this Parsee lady, the Indian Government has brought out recently a postage stamp of 15 N. P. (Naya Paisa), with her photograph bearing the date 1861-1936. This is another instance of a signal honour done to a Parsee.

But the greatest name amongst the Parsees and Indians in Commerce, Industry and Manufacturing enterprise is that of Mr. Jamsetjee Nusserwanji Tata who was born in 1839 at Navsari, a small town 145 miles away from Bombay.

After passing thirteen years of his boy-hood at Navsari, he came to Bombay and finished his education there in 1859 upto the Matric standard. About that time, his father, the late Nusserwanji Tata, was doing a large trade in opium with China, but he found that in this trade the middlemen, as agents, used to take the cream of the profit. Therefore, he arranged for his young son, Jamsetjee, to go to China and establish a firm there.

Accordingly, young Jamsetjee at the age of twenty left for Hongkong. He had no knowledge either of the language or the country, nor of the trade itself. He had neither friends, nor relations in that strange land, nor did he have any experience of the world. However, after a long and tiring voyage, during which he was always wondering whither he would go and where he would stay and what the country would be like, he reached Hongkong. Taking a man-pulled rickshaw, he reached the agent of his father—by name Chan Took. This agent called his interpreter and, after being satisfied with the letters of recommendation that young Jamsetjee had brought with him from his father, he settled him in a small hotel.

Due to his inherent talents, young Jamsetjee soon settled down in China, picked up the language, and began following the opium trade so well that, during the three years that he stayed in China, his father made many millions in opium transactions.

At the same time his father began dealing in cotton. Both in England and America, the demand for Indian cotton kept on increasing at that time, with the result that here again his father, through the energy and resourcefulness of his young son, began making a fortune in that line.

It happened at the time that the British banks were not giving the same facilities to the Indian merchants as they did to their own countrymen, so that Jamsetjee's father, Nusserwanji, who had very good business connections with a rich Hindu, by name Premchand Raichand, consulted him as to how to get over these difficulties. Both of them came to the conclusion that it would be better if a branch of one of the Bombay banks was opened in London. But they could not find a suitable Manager to go over to England to open it. Thereupon old Nusserwanji asked his son, Jamsetjee, to close down the firm at Hongkong and return to Bombay, which he did in 1863. On arrival, his father asked him to prepare himself to go to England, and open a branch there of his firm. During this time, unfortunately, the price of cotton seed began falling considerably in the world markets, with the result that the trade was hampered greatly and Jamsetjee's father had to give up the idea of sending his son to England. As ill-luck would have it, his father began to lose all the wealth that he had amassed due to the crash in the cotton market.

After his father's death, Jamsetjee Nusserwanji Tata, the founder of the House of Tata, established in 1868 the private trading firm of Tata & Company, with a capital of Rs 21,000 (£ 1,575 or \$ 4,410).

His stars being propitious, it happened that in 1868 Britain came into conflict with King Theodore of Abyssinia, over the water of the river Nile, of which one source is in East Africa, from Lake Victoria, and the other from a lake in Abyssinia, known as Tana. The dispute led to the British having to send an army against King Theodore which gave young Jamsetjee the chance of obtaining contracts to supply foodstuffs to the British Army. So once again, with his keen business acumen he began making money, which his father had unfortunately lost, due to the fall in the price of cotton seeds.

After King Theodore had been defeated and the British Army had withdrawn, Jamsetjee visited England for the first time and there he acquired much insight into the working of the Mills at Lancashire, so that on his return from England he decided to venture in the Mill

industry, and purchased the Chinchpoogly Oil Mills, which he immediately transformed into a Spinning and Weaving Mill, and named them The Alexandra Mills.

He visited England for a second time in 1872 to complete his study of the cotton industry at Lancashire, and to add to his knowledge by still further practical experience. After his return, he decided that Nagpur fulfilled his requirements, due to its central situation as well as the vicinity of the Cotton Districts, and there on the 1st January, 1877 he started another mill and named it "Empress Mills".

But that was not the only interest Mr. Jamsetjee had in business. In 1892 Jamsetjee, mainly with a view to enabling Indians to have their training in England, and to compete on equal terms with British graduates entering for the Indian Civil Services, from which Indians were practically debarred, founded an Endowment known as "J. N. Tata Endowment for Higher Education".

From this endowment Indian graduates of exceptional promise are advanced funds for their maintenance and education abroad on condition of repayment, so that the funds can be made available again to others.

As long ago as 1903, this respected founder of the House of Tata had opened a 300 room hotel, which has become internationally famous as "The Taj Mahal Hotel", over-looking the beautiful harbour of Bombay. It is a landmark in Bombay, as steamers from all over the world slowly glide over the waters of the Arabian Sea into the harbour of that beautiful city. It cost at that time Rs 42,50,000 (£ 318,750 or \$ 892,500). Since then it has considerably improved, and the establishment is now valued at over Rs 10 million. The idea behind the venture was to give Bombay a hotel worthy of her importance as the "Gateway of India". It is equipped with every modern amenity. Lately, modernisation of some of the residential rooms has taken place, and a Pent-House has been created, which will serve as a prototype for further alterations. Some of the suites in existence can be called "Royal Suites", as they compare favourably with similar suites which are found in some of the best hotels in the world. This hotel is now amalgamated with "Green's Hotel and Restaurant" next door, and is equipped with a Post and Telegraph Office, a Travel Information Bureau and a Shopping Avenue.

The late Mr. Jamsetjee was a man of many parts. He did not confine himself only to establishing a first class hotel in Bombay, which

still keeps his memory fresh and enhances the prestige of his firm and family, but in 1911 he set aside the munificent sum of Rs 31,25,000 (£ 234,375 or \$ 653,423) towards an institution at Bangalore known as the 'Indian Institute of Science'. This is now valued at over Rs 90,00,000 £ 675,000 or \$ 1,881,860).

The State of Mysore provided a large plot of land for the building as well as a financial contribution. The Government of India from the outset made a recurring grant.

This institute is a living force in Indian scientific training and research, and is well equipped with laboratories for post-graduate work in physics, physical, inorganic and organic chemistry, biochemistry, chemical technology, chemical engineering, electrical technology, aeronautical, engineering, metallurgy, internal combustion engineering, power engineering (including high voltage engineering), etc.

In 1907, Tata Sons and Company was formed, consisting of Sir Dorab J. Tata and Sir Ratan J. Tata, sons of the founder, and Mr. R.D. Tata, their cousin, with a capital of Rs 1,50,00,000 (£ 1,125,000 or \$ 8,150,000). This was converted in 1917 into Tata Sons Limited, a private limited company, with an authorised capital of Rs 2,25,00,000 (£ 1,688,000 or \$ 4,727,000) which now controls the largest single aggregation of Indian Industry, with a total financial investment of Rs 136 crores (£ 162,000,000 or \$ 285,000,000), 117,000 employees, and an output of goods and services amounting to Rs. 61 crores (£ 45,750,000 or \$ 128,100,000).

About 85% of the capital of Tata Sons is held by charitable Trusts endowed by members of the Tata family. The assets of the Trusts amount to Rs 5,49,00,000 (£ 4,117,500 or \$ 11,479,351). An overwhelming proportion of the profits of the firm is thus devoted to philanthropic objects, and so returns to the people of the country.

Tata interests now cover iron and steel, locomotives and locomotive boilers, diesel trucks, bus-chassis, engineering equipment (mechanical and electrical), machine tools, agricultural machinery and implements, textiles, textile machinery, electric power, chemicals, cement, vegetable oils, soaps and toilet products, industrial investment, insurance, radios, hotels, air-conditioning and refrigeration equipment, pharmaceuticals, antibiotics, vitamins and typewriters.

Tata is now a household word in Bombay particularly and in India generally, and this is confirmed by the fact that step by step the House of Tata have entered into various industries and manufacturing concerns all over India.

During the second world war the annual production at Jamshedpur reached 1,237,000 tons of pig-iron, 1,092,000 tons of steel ingots, and 239,000 tons of saleable steel.

In 1932, Sir Dorab Tata founded a Trust as a memorial to his wife Lady Meherbai Tata, and he called it the "Lady Tata Memorial Trust".

A fifth of the net income is earmarked for the encouragement of research by Indians in India or abroad, by awards for scientific investigations, which have a bearing directly or indirectly on the alleviation of human suffering from disease. The rest of the income is devoted towards research in diseases of the blood, with special reference to leucaemias, by the award of special scholarships, fellowships and grants-in-aid to such work, open to candidates of all nationalities.

"The Associated Cement Companies Limited", "The New India Assurance Company Limited", "The Associated Building Company Limited", "The Commercial Printing Press Limited", "Indian Institute of Science" and "Voltas Limited", are some of the commercial and industrial projects, into which the House of Tata have entered. These are undoubtedly among the largest commercial, industrial and enterprising houses in the world, with a capital of over a billion pounds sterling.

In 1941, Sir Dorab Tata further established a Trust at a cost of Rs. 30,00,000 (£ 225,000 or \$ 627,000), for the "Tata Memorial Hospital" which was the first in India to specialise in the treatment of Cancer and allied diseases, by every known effective method, and it is a model institution of its kind in the East. It is also an all-India centre for research into the origin, forms, treatment and prevention of this major scourge.

The House of Tata also established "Tata Aircraft Limited", a private Limited Company as far back as 1942. Under an agreement with the Government of India, the Company was during the second war engaged in the assembling, repair and maintenance of aircraft and the manufacture of component parts for the Air Forces in India.

Indeed the two sons of Late Mr. Jamsetjee, Sir Dorab and Sir Ratan, have proved themselves worthy sons of a worthy father, and have made the name and fame of the family of Tatas known throughout the entire world.

All these wonderful achievements, carried on for half a century, with sturdy, honest and consistent work, cannot but be taken notice of by India; and, therefore, it proved to be a big day for the private enterprises and a big day for the country as a whole, when on the 1st of March, 1958, the Prime Minister of India travelled all the way from Delhi to Jamshedpur to take part in the celebrations of the Golden Jubilee of the Tata Iron & Steel Company and to perform the unveiling ceremony of the bronze statue of the great and revered founder of the House of Tata, the late Mr. Jamsetjee Nusserwanji Tata.

The Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, paid glowing tribute to the illustrious founder for the priceless services rendered to India as a whole.

On that occasion the present head of the House of Tata, Mr. J.R.D. Tata, announced that he thought it appropriate to create a permanent memorial of the occasion, which would be of some value to those who worked and spent their lives at Jamshedpur, by presenting to the people a park, to be known as Jubilee Park. This stands at the conjunction of the two rivers near Jamshedpur, the spacious lawns and lovely tall trees all round almost giving one an idea of the gardens at Delhi during the Moghul period.

But what greater honour could a country confer upon one of its greatest sons and one of its best commercial and industrial houses, than by commemorating the Golden Jubilee of the Steel Industries in India, by issuing a special Postage Stamp, depicting the Iron and Steel Works at Jamshedpur, with the portrait of its revered founder inserted in it.

This was done by the Government of Bharat on the 1st March, 1958, thus showing the respect and regard the country has for the great Parsee Patriots of the House of Tata, who have served India so magnificently in trade commerce and industry.

Incidentally, it might be mentioned that the Parsees had a great share in beautifying Bombay, and the present magnificent Flora Fountain, in the heart of the City of Bombay, that attracts considerable attention

of all foreigners visiting that City, was the gift from Mr. Cursetjee Fardunjee Parakh, who in October, 1864 paid Rs 20,500/- to the Agri-Horticultural Society of Western India for the erection of a Fountain at the Victoria Gardens in memory of Sir Bartle Frere, Governor of Bombay (1862-1867).

Somehow the plans changed and the present Flora Fountain is placed in the heart of the town on the most famous road that used to be known as Hornby Road up till the last few years. Unfortunately, no tablet is placed to commemorate the name of the donor of this valuable fountain, nor of the Governor in whose memory it was supposed to have been erected. *

Rightly is the Parsee Community proud of the achievements of the House and the family of Tata.

While Mr. Jamsetjee Nusserwanji Tata and his two worthy sons have left an immortal name amongst the Parsees, as also in the history of Trade, Commerce and Industry of India, a very poor, rough and tough Parsee boy—named Byramji M. Malbari—by sheer dint of hard work and sincere and selfless service to humanity, became an all-India figure in the second half of the nineteenth century.

He was born in 1853 in Baroda, of very poor parents. His father having died early, the widow married another Parsee, just for the sake of the boy. As the second father to the boy did not seem to have been of much help to the family, even while alive, his mother had to leave her husband's home at Baroda and go back to her birth-place Surat with the infant in her arms.

More than 100 years ago this journey was quite an uncommon feat. It was the time of the much dreaded Maratha Confederacy. The Bhils, the Girasias and the Pindaris (in short, the very scum of the society), who were alike the terror and the curse of Western and Central India, were scourging the country with periodic raids. Knowing no law nor authority, they carried fire and sword wherever they went.

One of these gangs of robbers suddenly swooped down upon Malbari's mother, like brigands from the bush. She was a girl in her teens and had nothing about her, but this precious child of two, clinging

*From "BOMBAY'S PUBLIC FOUNTAINS" by J.R.B. Jeejeebhoy, 1951.

convulsively to her bosom. The headman of the gang took the child in his arms and said "It is only a girl and a baby in the cart." He was so completely won over by their innocent charms that he immediately ordered his men to escort them home with suitable presents (just like Robin Hood of the western fables). "The narrative of this lucky escape," young Malabari used to say in later life, "was repeated to me whenever I was ill, after which both of us (mother and child) prayed to God."

During the first 12 years of his youth, young Malabari seems to have lived a sort of Bohemian life, and almost exhausted all sorts of forms of youthful folly. He changed schools like changing linen, giving up one eccentric teacher for another, and learning little by way of methodical study. Skilled in flying kites, he devoted the day to fun and frolic. Though a child of a poor family, he knew nothing of care or fear. He fell in with a gang of street Arabs with whom he wasted his hours, and he kept his comrades merry with an artless native tune. With a batch of tyrant boys, he would rush pell mell into the streets, offer his charming adorations to the shop maid and many a time his calf love would be returned with bullock blows.

Suddenly, there came a crash as of a bolt from the blue. One day, going home rather late in the night, he found his mother laid up with cholera. It was a perilous plight. He stood at her feet, an orphan boy, shamefaced, crestfallen and almost dazed, not knowing what to do. She hovered between life and death, her eyes wistfully gazing beyond, only her hands still holding her beloved son to the last. He stood like a statue, his tears frozen at their fount, his eyes moistened with the mist of despair. All was dark. Next morning he became an old man. All his former associates were discarded. He became a new man.

Fortunately there was an Irish Christian Missionary and his wife at Surat, known as Mr. & Mrs. Dixon. They took charge of this miserable boy, and here he had his first serious lessons in English literature. Gradually he learnt enough to want to sit for the Matriculation examination, which in those days had to be taken at Bombay. He had no wherewithal to pay for his train journey, but a kind-hearted Parsee offered him Rs 20/-, and some tender-hearted ladies made him a suit to make him look respectable enough, and thus he went to Bombay.

Three times he failed in the Matriculation examination, chiefly because he had a horror of Mathematics and of Science, in which

he could never get sufficient marks to pass the exam. A Parsee head master of the Preparatory School took him on as a pupil teacher, and there for three years he worked, and in the end passed the Matriculation examination.

It was Dr. Wilson who first introduced the young man to Mr. Martin Wood, the then editor of the Times of India, an event which set him on a career in Journalism. It was again Dr. Wilson who arranged for the publication of Malabari's Gujrati poems in 1875. Endowed with true genius and taste, he surpassed himself by publishing "The Indian Muse in English Garb", in 1876, and dedicating it to Miss Mary Carpenter. Just to give an idea of his mastery of the felicities of English diction and a racy humour, the following lines may be quoted in which he describes one of his terrible teachers:

"He chanted prayers Oh Lord! in such gruff tones,
'T would set on rack the hoar Zoroaster's bones,
He shrieked and staggered in his zealous rage,
Till he looked an actor on a tragic stage,
But when our whines the neighbouring women drew,
The man of zeal at once persuasive grew—
Expounded doctrines, in a fervid breath,
Preached patience, virtue, truth and tacit faith,
Thank God I'd then too small religious wit,
To understand that canting hypocrite."

Later on, young Malabari took to Journalism. His writings displayed an uncommonly intimate knowledge of the English language and were the outcome of a gifted mind, trained to habits of deep meditation and fresh and felicitous expression. John Bright, Tennyson, Florence Nightingale, all wrote to congratulate the young poet. The German Professor Max Muller was enthusiastic in his admiration. In fact he fought the battle of life with the pen. His writings in "Indian Spectator" made a great mark and brought him forward in the rank of first class writers.

In 1901 he started the "East & West" as a monthly, and till the day of his death he watched with affection and care the growth of these two children of his heart, for which he spared neither time nor purse. For well nigh 40 years he was the premier journalist of India. The "Englishman" bore testimony to his idiomatic English and his bold trenchant style. The "Daily News" eulogised his remarkable fairness and ability. French and American journalists were not slow to recognise the advent of this potent

force in India. The "Academy" considered the "Indian Spectator" no unworthy rival of its London namesake, everywhere he was commended for his intelligence, moderation, liberality and the limpid English which he kept undefiled. Not only that, but Lord Ripon admired him as much as he admired his journal.

But this was not all in which Behramji Malabari excelled himself. At a mature age, he took to Indian Social Reforms and visited England thrice in this connection, with a view to enlisting the sympathy of the people in England, with whose help he could accomplish these reforms on which he had set his heart. He wrote a book called the **INDIAN EYE ON ENGLISH LIFE** which ran to three editions in a year, and the "Saturday Review" compared the author with Rudyard Kipling.

Malabari was essentially an interpreter between East and West, and he launched an all out attempt on the Indian Child Marriage Act. In those days, children even under ten were given away in marriage by Hindus and Mussalmans: and Malabari, in one of his brilliant essays on the Indian problems, wrote "A wife at 10, a widow at 12, a mother at 13—these are monstrosities, in the face of which it is madness to think of a consistent, progressive public life. And so long as this state of things continues, so long will the Indian sphinx continue to laugh at the efforts of man to shake her from her purpose which is to puzzle, to mystify, and to undo the work of years." He agitated in England, during his mission three times there, and he won over Herbert Spencer to his theory of the necessity of State aid, in dealing with what he called "certain outer aspects of Social Reform." Finally, a committee of the most influential and representative persons, including prominent English as well as Anglo-Indian statesmen, men of letters and philanthropists, was established in England to urge the necessity of legislative action upon the Indian Government. For a dozen years, India and England were ringing with the cry of Indian women. At last the chief recommendation of the committee, that of raising the marriageable age of Indian girls from ten to twelve, was embodied in the famous Age of Consent Bill of 1891, passed by the Government of Lord Lansdowne.*

Malabari was indefatigable in his efforts to improve on the Infant Marriage and Enforced Widowhood, and he wrote an invaluable Note on both these subjects in 1884. The result of it was, that Province by

*Many years after, a Hindu Parliamentarian by name Basu fought hard and raised the age of consent to 14 years, which is still prevalent.

Province, the idea spread like wild fire, and gave a death blow to superstition. Lord Roberts instituted a practical reform in his Army, on the model suggested in the notes of Mr. Behramji Malabari. Here again the Government was moved and the bill was passed.

But the greatest work for which this great Parsee Social Reformer will be remembered for generations, is his accomplishing a more glorious memorial of his services, in the shape of the two philanthropic institutions—The Seva Sadan and the Sanatorium. The Viceroys and Governors, Maharajas and Merchant princes vied with one another in helping the cause of public beneficence. In all his works, the one notable feature of his life was his complete self-effacement. Yet, had he chosen to shine and sparkle, he would have blazed in fame, and made a mark like any burning star. Three times he refused the shrievalty of Bombay, he refused to be decorated with the insignia of the K.C.S.I. by Lord Minto. Often he had much difficulty in excusing himself from the obligation of accepting the Dewanship of Indian States. This was because his heart was with the poor, and, like them, he was content to be obscure if occupied in love and service. What a lesson is such a life! Born a Parsee, deriving his main inspiration from Christian life and Christian ideals and dedicating his services to Hindu and Moslem India.

The Seva Sadan, which has for its chief object the uplift of India by Social, Educational and Medical service through Indian sisters, both regular and lay, is almost the first and unique institution of its kind in India. The Society has been maintaining homes for the Homeless, Industrial Homes, Shelter for the Distressed, Dispensaries for women and children, Ashrams* for Hindus, Moslem and Parsee sisters, Free Educational classes, Libraries and Reading rooms, and work classes and Home classes for helpless orphans and invalids.

The Consumptives' Home Society at Dharampore, adjoining Simla, a Hill Station in northern India, is another of his creations, to which he dedicated all that was left of him.

The Home was opened in 1909, and the establishment of the King Edward Sanatorium has been a blessing to hundreds of patients. The Maharajas of Patiala, Gwalior and Bikaner, the Tikka Sahib of Nabha and a brilliant array of donors supplied ample funds. Expert physicians, whose services are invaluable for the upkeep of such an institution,

*Widows' Homes.

volunteered assistance and made the Sanatorium a marvel of success. For both these institutions he laboured for their maintenance with the same faith and tenacity of purpose, with which General Booth worked for the Salvation Army. He gave away his Life Policies as a modest contribution, to what the Late Lord Minto aptly characterised as a "National Movement."

Year after year he was seen amidst the pine forests of the Himalayas, helping the invalids, consoling the distressed, and modelling the Homes. If ever there was a soldier in the Liberation War of Humanity, assuredly Behramji Malabari was one.

On the 12th of July, 1912, came the end. His soul had need of rest, and he passed away, silently and with no pain, at Simla. King George V and Queen Mary, sent a message of sympathy regretting the death "of our old friend", and the ex-Viceroy Lord Hardinge and Lady Hardinge, the Provincial Governors, and a hundred other men and women of mark in England and India, sent wreaths.

Years ago while in England, he told his school-mate Dr. Bhabha to bury his body, in the event of death, in a poor man's grave in London, but to send his heart to India, to be interred "at the foot of the Himalayas, under the eternal snows." His wish was granted, his prayer was answered. He sleeps at the foot of the Himalayas under the eternal snows, a poor vagrant boy, who made himself one of the most notable Parsees and Indians in the beginning of the twentieth century. *

Besides the Tatas, several outstanding Parsee families have, by virtue of their munificent communal and cosmopolitan charities in India, earned for their community the appellation, "Parsee, Thy Name is Charity".

Mention may here be made of the famous Wadia family, and particularly of Mrs. Jerbai Navroji Wadia and her two sons, Sir Cusroo N. Wadia, Kt. C.I.E., and Sir Ness N. Wadia, K.B.E., C. I. E., MIN., FCPS (Hons.). The two latter have rendered yeoman services in the promotion of the textile industry in Bombay, and were both, therefore, elected, in turn, as Chairman of the Bombay Mill Owners' Association in 1911 and 1918, respectively; and again in 1925. But it is not only for this that the House of Wadia is so famous throughout India. They have given large sums of money for the relief of human suffering and the

*From 'Famous Parsees'—by G.A. Nateson & Co., Madras.

amelioration of the conditions of the poor and the distressed without distinction of colour, caste or creed, and, taking their cue from their mother, Mrs. Jerbai Navroji Wadia*, in this respect, they have donated twenty lakhs of rupees for a Children's hospital in Bombay, and big sums of money for the housing problems of the Parsees in that city.

The latest princely gift from this trust has been nine million rupees, given only a year ago, from which houses will be built on the latest sanitary principles for the poor and the middle class Parsees and will be let out at very moderate rents. All told, this famous Parsee family has given away more than twenty million rupees in communal and cosmopolitan charities throughout India.

Among the innumerable munificent sums of money given away in charity by Parsee philanthropists, without distinction of creed, colour or caste, may be mentioned the following:-

- (1) The Engineering College at Poona, which owes its existence to the liberality of the first Sir Kavasji Jehangir, Kt. C.S.I. (the Peabody of the East).
- (2) The Mr. Nadirshaw Edulji Dinshaw Engineering College at Karachi.
- (3) The Victoria Jubilee Technical Institute, Bombay.
- (4) The Elphinstone College, Bombay.
- (5) The Sydenham College of Commerce, Bombay.
- (6) The Grant Medical College, Bombay.
- (7) The Sir Kavasji Jehangir University Hall, Bombay.
- (8) The Sir Jamsetji Jeejeebhoy School of Art, Bombay.
- (9) The J.N. Petit Institute, Bombay (popularly known as the Petit Library).

*Her famous husband, Naoroji Wadia, was a direct descendant of Lovji Nusserwanji Wadia of Singapore, who came from Surat to Bombay in 1735 and died in July 1774 at the age of 64. From his birth till today a little more than 220 years have gone by and within that period upto date nine generations of the famous Wadia family have been doing yeoman service to the Parsee community in particular and to India generally.

One of the famous men in these nine generations was Nawrosjee Nasharwanjee Wadia, who had established great name and fame in India and in England for his knowledge in the Mill Industry. He died on 19th December 1899 in England and on his mausoleum there are five inscriptions in English, one of which is interesting—in as much as it is on the style of the inscriptions found on the Tomb of Cyrus the Great—and reads as follows:

"I am Nawrosjee Nasharwanjee Wadia, of the ancient Aryan race of Persia, a citizen of the loyal town of Bombay, who lie here peacefully under the far off sky of wide-famed Britain."

- (10) The Deccan College. Poona (now defunct).
(11) The famous Tata Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore etc.....

In the field of Finance and Banking, no name stands higher in pre-partitioned India than that of Sir Sorabji N. Pochkhanavala, Kt., the founder and Managing Director of the Central Bank of India, Bombay, nor in Public Accountancy none is higher than that of Sir Shapoorji B. Billimoria.

Sir Sorabji has earned a higher reputation as a most successful Bank Manager. In 1921 the Government of India availed itself of his services by appointing him as a Member of the Government Securities Rehabilitation Committee. In 1934 he earned the distinction of being appointed Chairman of the Ceylon Banking Enquiry Commission by the Government of Ceylon.

The most outstanding name as an eminent economist in the whole of India is that of Mr. A.D. Shroff, whose deep knowledge in the field of economics has earned him world-wide fame. He has helped the famous House of Tatas very considerably in launching various schemes with which the Tatas are concerned and known all over India.

Mr. K.R.P. Shroff, though in no way related to Mr. A.D. Shroff, has made a name for himself by being elected the President of the Stock Exchange of Bombay. This post he has been enjoying for the last 35 years to the entire satisfaction of the Members of the Stock Exchange of Bombay. The Bombay Stock Exchange enjoys a first-class reputation in the whole of India. For his unique services, a grand function was recently held at Bombay, where various speakers eulogized in glowing terms his expert knowledge as a Stock Broker.

Yet another Parsee, young Dr. Homi J. Bhabha, D.Sc., deserves mention here for becoming a world figure by his researches in Cosmic Rays, which has given India a prominent position amongst the countries advancing in scientific researches up to date. His valuable researches may prove a boon to humanity and reflect great credit both to his country and his community.

In Karachi, one most popular name might be mentioned here and that is of the late Mr. Jamshed Nusserwanjee Mehta, who in the latter years of his life was known as Jamshed Nusserwanjee. Not only was he a successful businessman and industrialist, but he became one of the

greatest social workers in all-India. There was not an institution to which he did not belong and gave his best to help the cause of serving humanity. He gave away all his fortune to ameliorate human suffering and advice and monetary assistance. In politics also he made a name, and crowds used to come to his office every day for help, advice and monetary assistance. In politics also he made a name, and in Karachi he was the only Mayor, who was elected to the Mayoralty for ten years in succession, probably a world record. He is known all over India as the maker of modern Karachi, and he has been the crown and culmination of the Karachi Parsees in his days. Incidentally, he was offered a Knighthood by Sir Leslie Wilson, the then Governor of Bombay, which—as in the case of the late Byramjee Malabari—he politely declined to accept, saying he would serve humanity and Government much better as plain Jamshed Nusserwanjee rather than as Sir Jamshed Nusserwanjee.

It is not only in the field of commerce and industry that the Parsees have established enviable records and done lasting service to the country of their adoption. In the whole of India there are no keener sportsmen or more sociable people than these descendants of the ancient Iranian race. They were the first Indians to take cricket teams to England, and challenge the English teams in their home in 1886.

Another Parsee, by name Mr. Jamshedjee Marker, defeated in England his English and American compatriots, and won the championship in racquet playing in England in 1903, which championship he retained up to 1911.

In rifle shooting, wrestling, weight-lifting, globe trotting, swimming, aviation and other feats of strength and endurance, the Parsee record is an enviable one.

During the years 1892 to 1900, when the British had skirmishes and small wars on the North West Frontier (in places like Ishazai, Chitral, Tochi, Mallakand, Tirab) and in South Africa and China, a patriotic and enterprising Parsee, Dhanjibhoy Fakirjee Commadore by name, rendered yeoman service to the British, by supplying them with a tonga service, which became subsequently famous as "Nawab Dhanjibhoy's Tonga Train".

These were small carriages, drawn by two horses and they were used for carrying mail, and were of immense value to the British during these

skirmishes. Even in South Africa and in China, these tonga trains were found so extremely valuable that for three years they were kept in China during the China Expedition, running from Peking to Paotangfu. These services were very well recognised and appreciated by the British.

In connection with the St. John Ambulance Brigade and the Red Cross Society, the most valuable service that was rendered at Karachi to the British during the beginning of the Second World War, was the presentation of a building, specially erected at a cost of rupees fifty thousand, for the use and occupation by both these worthy institutions, during the period of the war and thereafter. This gift was from Khan Bahadur Kavasji H. Katrak, OBE., JP., the 'Grand Old Man' of Karachi.

Prior to this princely gift for war services, Khan Bahadur K. H. Katrak had subscribed Rs 15,000/- to the military authorities with a request that they would pay the annual interest thereon in equal shares to the Sind Women's Branch and the Indian Soldiers' Entertainment fund during the continuance of the War. He further stipulated that on the declaration of Peace, the principal should be handed over as a donation to Queen Mary's Home for disabled soldiers and sailors.

Similarly, for a building for recreation purposes for the Indian soldiers during the Second World War, Khan Bahadur K.H. Katrak donated Rs 12,000/- to the Y.M.C.A., Karachi, and a further Rs 3,000/- for teaching handicrafts to the blind and the infirm soldiers.

For all this and for his many princely charities * he was appointed an Associate Commander (Brother) of the Most Venerable Order of St. John of Jerusalem in 1941.

In 1942, King George V dubbed him a Knight at Buckingham Palace, London, a fitting recognition for a life devoted to Charity and for loyalty to the British Regime.

*Rs 1,00,000 for Katrak Charity Trust.

Rs 60,000 towards Kaurak Parsee Colony, Karachi.

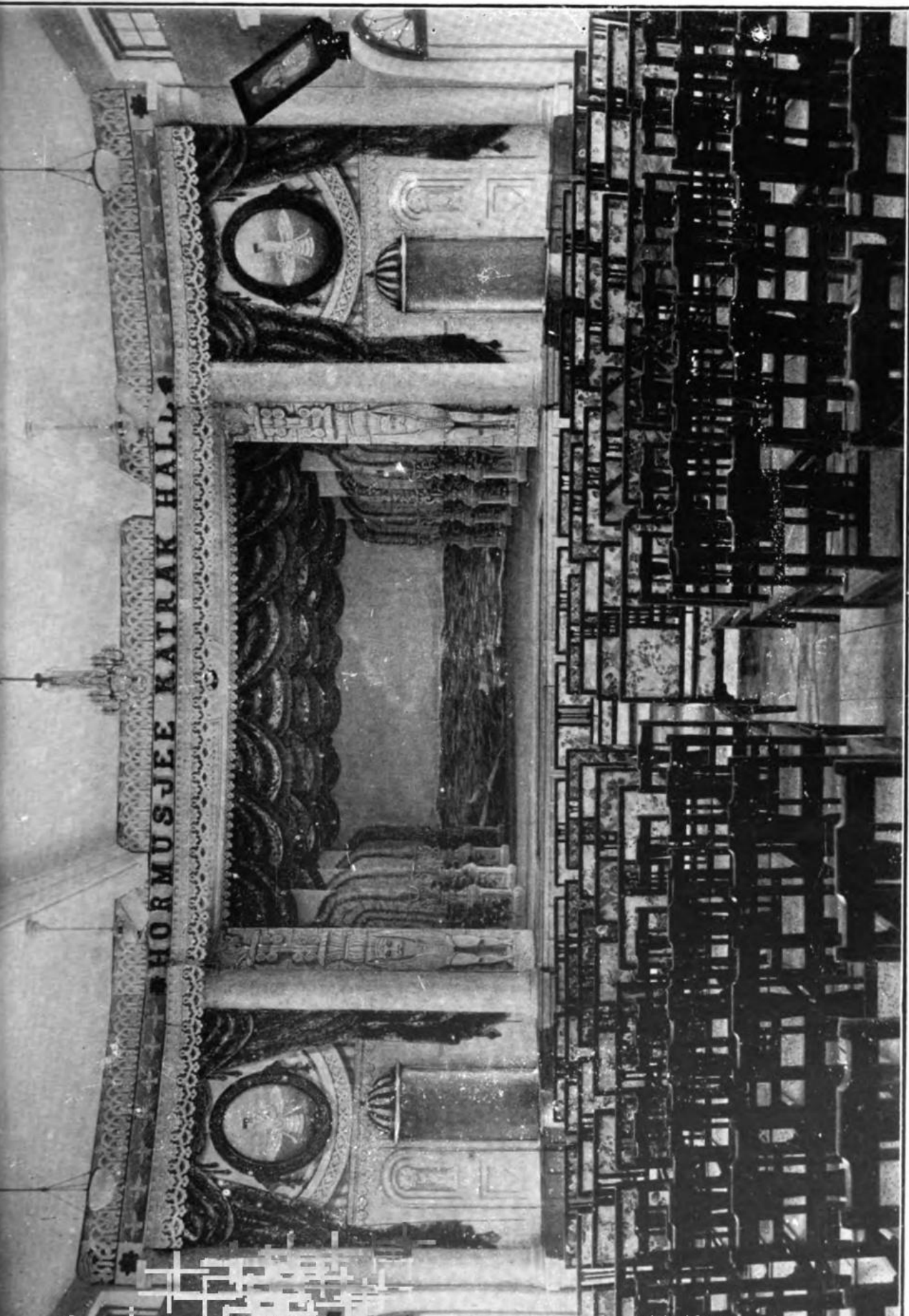
Rs 60,000 for the Hormuzjee Katrak Hall for the Young Men's Zoroastrian Association, Karachi.

Rs 50,000 towards a Wing in the Lady Dufferin Hospital, Karachi.

Rs 25,000 for the Parsee General Hospital, Karachi.

Rs 25,000 for Khorshedbai Katrak Chawl, etc:

are some of the many princely charities, communal and cosmopolitan, made by Sir Kavasji H. Katrak, OBE., JP.—for which he was universally respected all over the world, where he had a large circle of friends and admirers.



The Stage and Scenery at The Hormusjee Katrak Hall

With the commencement of the two great World Wars, a number of Parsees availed themselves of the opportunity to show their loyalty and attachment to the British Government. Many of them were mentioned in despatches, many received various war distinctions and decorations, both British and Allied, for gallant and devoted service. A number made the supreme sacrifice, in commemoration of whom a memorial column has been raised in a prominent position in Bombay.*

During the 1914-1918 war, many young Parsee Doctors had the chance of a military career in the Indian Medical Service (I.M.S.). A great number of these newly qualified Parsee Doctors joined these Corps. After the War was over, many of them were retained under permanent King's Commission in the service, which speaks for itself of the devotion to duty and the efficiency they displayed during the war.

Because of their eagerness to join the I.M.S. during the First World War, and their steadfastness and loyalty during the intervening period of the two World Wars, Parsees in the Indian Medical Service, who had risen to higher ranks, continued to distinguish themselves in their careers in the War, and achieved even higher ranks during the Second World War.

An instance may be given of the magnificent work done by a Parsee, in the Indian Medical Service during the two Wars, namely of H. J. MANOCKJEE CURSETJEE, who graduated from Gonville and Caius College Cambridge, became M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., M.B.B.Ch. (Cantab) and passed into the I.M.S. in January 1912.

After some months on probation at Millbank, Aldershot and Rawalpindi, he was posted as Medical Officer to the 14th King George's Own Sikhs, PESHAWAR. He proceeded on active service with them in October, 1914, and served in ADEN, SUEZ Canal and GALLIPOLI, where he was severely wounded and evacuated to MALTA and ENGLAND. When passed as fit, he served with his Regiment in MESOPOTAMIA until the end of the War. For his meritorious services he received two Mentions in Despatches and the immediate award of the D.S.O.

He returned to India in January 1924 and in process of time as a Staff Officer, received a Brevet promotion to Lt. Colonel, later Colonel

*In Appendix 'L' are given in detail the inscription on the Memorial Column as also the names of those who laid down their lives while in war service.

and became King's Honorary Surgeon. He was promoted Major General, and for services during the Second War was appointed C.S.I.—1941, and created K.C.I.E. at the end of the War—January 1st 1946.

His father when a Fellow Commoner of Trinity College Cambridge served in the Cambridge University Rifle Volunteers in the 1860s, and rowed in a Trial Eight College Boat on the River in 1868.

Another Parsee I.M.S., by name Kaikhooshroo Sohrabjee Master, won the M.C. in the First War, and rose to the rank of Lieutenant General, Indian Army Medical Corps, in 1947, after partition.

The grand-father of the Major General Sir H.J. Cursetjee, Mr. MANOCKJEE CURSETJEE, was the first non-European Judge in Bombay, and was elected to the Atheneum Club in London in 1865, a rare distinction attained by an Indian. When such memberships were not open to non-Europeans in Bombay or India, he was also elected a member of a Masonic Lodge in London and the Royal Asiatic Society of London. This liberal and enlightened treatment by London compelled the Bombay Bodies to accept him as their first non-European Member, and thus to throw these societies open to others of the Country.

His very brilliant daughter, Miss Serene Maneckjee Cursetjee, deserves mention here. Born on 20th October, 1844, she was taught at home by tutors and governesses, and all her early education was in English.

As far back as 1862 she was the first Parsee woman to go to England along with her sister, and in 1863 she had the honour of being presented at the Court of Queen Victoria, her sponsor being the Duchess of Wellington. She was the first Parsee Woman at the European Courts to be presented to the Czar and Czarina at Moscow and to the King and Queen of Bavaria as also to the Crown Prince of Germany at Potsdam.

She travelled widely in Europe and happened to be a close friend of the Poet Alfred Tennyson, who asked her to spell her name 'Serene', instead of 'Sheereen', which is the correct Parsee name. This the poet suggested to her, saying it would be a constant reminder to her to maintain a serene temperament. Therefore, thereafter, throughout her life, she spelt her name 'Serene'.

Coming to more recent times, mention may be made of a young Parsee, by name Sam Manekshaw, who was trained at Sandhurst and was made a pre-war officer in the Frontier Force Rifles and raised to the rank of Brigadier. He rendered services in the Delayed Retreating Operation in Burma during the Second World War and was decorated for his bravery. He was badly injured, and was in the Madras Military Hospital for treatment for a long time, where he recovered completely and he is now on the General Staff of the Indian Army at Delhi.

Recently he has been promoted to the rank of Major General in the Indian Army.

An instance of bravery and loyalty is well provided by Late Dr. Cawas Khurshedji Lalkaka, who had been to England to get higher degrees in medical science.

On the 1st of July, 1909, an 'At Home' was arranged under the auspices of the East India Association at the Jehangir Readymoney Hall of the Imperial Institute in London, where Sir William Curzon Wylie, the A.D.C. to the Viceroy of India, was also present. A Punjabi Hindu student, by name Madanlal Dhingra, in the fanatical zeal of a patriot fighting for self-government for India, wanted to shoot Sir William Curzon Wylie. Noticing the movement of the said fanatic, Dr. Lalkaka immediately stood between him and Sir William. In spite of Dhingra telling the young doctor to be out of his way, he would not move—with the result that he was shot and died after two hours in the Hospital and, at the same time, Sir William Curzon Wylie was also shot dead.

Needless to say, the fanatic went to the gallows.

One Parsee in the Police service deserves a special mention here, namely Khan Bahadur Jehangir R. Sukhia. He joined the police department in Sind in July 1908 as a Sub-Inspector of the Fifth Grade, and rose step by step to be Superintendent of Police, C.I.D.

There was not a year in which in the police records his name was not mentioned for some meritorious deed or other, and in several difficult cases which defied all solution, he was the man who was finally resorted to and invariably he succeeded in bringing the criminal or criminals to book.

Once he was on the point of being shot by a Pathan, whom he had gone to arrest, but so dexterously did he pin the criminal's hand,

that inspite of his best efforts, the pathan could not use his loaded firearm.

Once, in a crowded building, he dashed single-handed to catch a criminal, who lifted him in his arms to throw him out of the gallery. He again saved himself by using a jujitsu lock around the neck of the assailant.

Thus for thirty years he rendered meritorious service in the Police Department and was awarded the King's Police Medal, which is the highest honour that can go to a policeman. Inspite of his age and retirement, he is still actively moving about in Karachi.*

Apart from the faithful service in the Police, during which the Parsees showed no lack of bravery and spirit of adventure and devotion to duty, there are instances where even as suppliers to the British Army, as camp followers, they have dauntlessly put up with innumerable hardships, even to the extent of sacrificing their lives.

The persistency with which a Parsee fights for a righteous cause, was shown by Dossabhai Sohrabji Dalal. He was fighting for the right of the Indian railway engine drivers to be allowed to drive the mail trains. This was about 1900 when Mr. Dossabhai happened to give evidence before a Commission—specially appointed for this purpose.

Fearing the consequences of this evidence being on record, Dossabhai was, on one pretext or another, dismissed from the railway service. Against this he made an appeal to the then Viceroy of India, Lord George Nathaniel Curzon, through the Agent of the Indian Railways. For months, as no reply was received, this intrepid Parsee made up his mind to see the Viceroy personally—not an easy job in those far off days of British bureaucracy.

He went towards the Viceregal Lodge at Simla, where naturally he was stopped at the gates by the sentries. He coaxed them into thinking that he was a rich merchant from Bombay, wanting to have an opportunity of seeing the Lodge, even from outside, if possible. The guard at the gate kept him concealed behind a bush, waiting for an opportunity when the Viceroy would leave the Lodge for his usual drive, when he could surreptitiously show him round.

*He died, at the age of 73, by heart failure on the 1st of October, 1958, at 9 p.m., at Dusseldorf in West Germany.

In a few moments Lord Curzon came out driving towards the gate, when the guards presented arms. Much to their consternation and indignation, this wily Parsee came out of hiding, and requested His Excellency to give him a hearing. The guards rushed at him with fixed bayonets, but Lord Curzon stopped them from doing any harm to the petitioner, and made inquiries as to his grievances. Finding the cause of the petitioner justified, His Excellency invited him for an interview the next day, and ordered the guards not to harass him in any way.

Next day Dossabhai gave all the necessary information to the Viceroy, who at once took up the matter, and finding that his appeal had been purposely kept back, he punished the offenders and obtained for Dossabhai a higher post on the Oudh-Rohilkand Railways. He also ruled that Indian engine drivers should be allowed to drive the mail trains.

This bold Parsee in those far-off days, had also saved the mail and cash from being stolen from the train he was driving, inspite of being severely hit on the head by dacoits. For this service he was suitably rewarded, and was subsequently made Special Deputy District Traffic Superintendent, which post he was the first Parsee and Indian to get.

The deep religious fervour with which the Parsees underwent untold hardships in those days may be witnessed in the case of Dasturs Ferdunji Byramji Jamasp-asa, Cavasji Bhicaji Masani and Hormuzdyar Temulji, who walked in the hottest month, through the desert of Kutch, with the sacred Nirang* and reached Karachi in 1844—a task which even those born and bred in the desert districts would not dare to attempt.

It will require a separate volume to give the "stories of the wealth, intellect, industry, activities—social, civic and political—and of the pioneering work done by some of the progenitors of the Parsee community, of their romantic rise from obscurity, their splendid enterprise and their manifold achievements". Also of the "pioneering spirit of merchant princes like the Readymoneys and the Banajis, the Wadias and the Dady-seths, the Jamsetjees and the Camas, the Jeejeebhoyes and the Petits, the Meherjees and the Patels, the Adenwalas and the Tatas—names which have elevated the Indian people to the dignity of a commercial nation."**

*Concentrated urine of a pure white bull.

**From the Introduction by J.R.B. Jeejeebhoy in the "Parsi Lustre on Indian soil."

However, it will be abundantly clear from this Chapter what glorious opportunities the coming of the British in India, along with other European nations, gave to the Parsee refugees from Persia, to better their position, and to keep their heads above the sea of four hundred millions of humanity in the sub-continent (India), despite their infinitesimal number—a mere hundred thousand.

CHAPTER XIV

PARSEES IN POLITICS

Till about the middle of the 19th century the Parsees were quite indifferent towards Politics. Being refugees from Iran, after having lost a mighty Empire, having had the misfortune to see almost all of their sacred and sacerdotal literature consigned to the fire at the hands of Alexander the Great at first, and by the Arabs afterwards, they had a very difficult time for about a thousand years, out of their stay in India. The best they could do during that millennium was to keep themselves alive and just manage to maintain their families. They were throughout all these ten long centuries hewers of wood and drawers of water. Therefore, with the changing world where different races ruled, and where almost the law of the jungle prevailed, there was no question of the Parsees ever being able to take any active interest in politics. X

Even in the initial stages, at the advent of the ^{Excellency} European powers like the Dutch, the Portuguese, the English and the French, for the first fifty years they concentrated on getting acquainted with the new mode of life and taking the utmost advantage of the English education that providentially fell to their lot. They took to acquiring knowledge of the English ways, manners and customs with the result that they were the first in every branch of education, such as the Medical, Legal and Engineering. Also in Trade, Commerce, Industry, Manufacturing, Accountancy, Science, etc. they gave the lead to the vast and overwhelming population of the peoples of India, numbering nearly three hundred and fifty millions at that time. X

It was towards 1825 A.D. that a great leader was born among the Parsees, who afterwards became the most famous personality in the whole of the sub-continent, and was fondly called the Grand Old Man of India. His name was Dadabhoi Navrojee, and he was born in a very poor but respectable Parsee, priestly family. He was so poor that as he grew in age and was advancing in education, he had to sit on the foot-paths on a public road, underneath the lamp-post, reading far into the morning, since he could ill-afford a lamp for his study at home. He turned out to be a very brilliant scholar in the Elphinstone College, Bombay, and impressed the College authorities so greatly with his profound knowledge of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy, that he was made a Professor in his own College in these two subjects. He was the first Parsee and the first X

Indian to get such a responsible post in those far off days. We can only give here a brief sketch of his life.

In 1851, at a young age, he became the founder of a Gujarati newspaper called RASTGOFTAR (Truthful Speech), and through that paper he began educating the Parsees and made a strong plea for female education. For this, though he suffered in the earlier stages, towards the end of his life he got the greatest encomiums from the female sex and the Parsee community as a whole. A taste for the English education enabled the Parsee community to be in the vanguard of the millions in India.

X In 1856 he went to England in a Parsee firm, known as Kama & Company, the first firm to be established in England by any Indian. After a while he left all business connections, and interested himself in the problems of India. In those days the old system of nominees to the Indian Civil Service was abolished and the one of recruitment by open competition was adopted instead. Among the candidates who offered themselves at the first competition was an Indian by name Mr. R. H. Wadia, the son of the distinguished Parsee family of Master Builders. The Civil Service Commissioners objected to Wadia on a technical point regarding limit of age, a point altogether doubtful. This led to a correspondence between them and the rejected candidate. Dadabhoj Navrojee, who was in England at that time, took up young Wadia's cause and, with the support of Mr. John Bright, fought for the relaxation of the age rule in his case. He did not succeed, but this led him to take up the larger question of the desirability of holding simultaneous examinations in India and England for the Indian Civil Service. While Dadabhoj Navrojee secured as many as four members of the Indian Council on his side, one of them wrote a minute to the effect that "Our rulers were giving a promise to the ear and breaking it to the heart." Even when the majority was in opposition, Dadabhoj persistently fought for the cause with characteristic perseverance, until in 1893 the House of Commons by a majority declared itself in favour of simultaneous Examinations.

Dadabhoj returned to India in 1874 when he was appointed the Dewan of Baroda State owing to the mal-administration of its Ruler, Mulhar Rao Gaekwar. This was a great honour indeed, but at the same time it was a tremendous responsibility. He carried out his duties so well, however, that the British had nothing but praise for his honest, straight-forward hard work, which once again put the finances of the State in stable order.

Financial Stability after 1864.

In 1885 Dadabhoy Navrojee was elected to the Bombay Corporation, where he did some excellent work. Impressed by his selfless love for work in the public interest, Lord Reay, the Governor of Bombay, offered him a seat in the Bombay Legislative Council.

In 1886 Dadabhoy Navrojee went again to England, this time to try and get a seat in the British Parliament. At that time England was in the throes of a general election. Dadabhoy succeeded in getting himself accepted as a Liberal candidate from Holborn Constituency, but he failed to win a seat, as the principal issue fought out was the question of granting home rule to Ireland. Public opinion on this was against Mr. Gladstone, who proposed granting the concession. Dadabhoy Navrojee was being branded as a black man by Lord Salisbury. Yet in the open election he managed to poll 1950 votes against his opponent who secured 3061, a very creditable performance indeed. Dadabhoy did not lose heart. He kept knocking at the door of the British Parliament. After five years' hard work, he succeeded in being returned by the electors of Central Finsbury as a Liberal member in the General Elections held in 1892. All India congratulated him on the unique honour of being the first Parsee, and the first Indian, ever to be elected to a seat in the British Parliament.

Incidentally, Dadabhoy's success eventually paved the way for two other Parsees to gain a seat in the British Parliament, namely Sir Muncherjee Merwanjee Bhavnagree and Mr. Shapoorjee Saklatwala.

Let us quote some portions of the maiden speech made by Dadabhoy on the 9th of August 1892, in the House of Commons, during the debate on the address to the Queen, which produced a very favourable impression:-

"My election for an English constituency is an unique event. For the first time during more than a century of settled British rule, an Indian is admitted into their House, as a Member for an English constituency. That, as I have said, is an unique event in the history of India, and I may also venture to say, in the History of the British Empire.

"The glory and credit of this great event, by which India is thrilled from one end to the other—of the new life, the joy, the ecstasy of India at the present moment, are all your own; it is the spirit of British institutions and the love of justice and freedom in British instincts which has produced this

extraordinary result, and I stand here, in the name of India to thank the British people that they have made it at all possible for an Indian to occupy this position, and to speak freely in the English language, of any grievance which India may be suffering under, with the conviction that though he stands alone, with only one vote, whenever he is able to bring forward any aspirations and is supported by justice and proper reasons, he will find a large number of other members from both sides of the House ready to support him and give him the justice he asks.

"Central Finsbury has earned the everlasting gratitude of the millions of India, and has made itself famous in the History of the British Empire by electing an Indian to represent it. Its name will never be forgotten by India. This event has strengthened the British power and the loyalty and attachment of India to it, which is ten times more than the sending out of one hundred thousand European soldiers would have done.

"So long as India is satisfied with the justice and honour of Britain, so long will her Indian Empire last, and I have not the least doubt that though our progress may be slow and we may at times meet with disappointments, if we persevere, whatever justice we ask in reason, we shall get."*

The other great move by Dadabhoy Navrojee was to organise, in hearty co-operation with Mr. Allan Octavian Hume, a distinguished retired civilian of the United Provinces, together with Sir William Wedderburn, Mr. Telang, Judge of the High Court at Bombay, W.C. Bonnerji the famous politician of Calcutta, S. Subramanya Aiyer of Madras, Pirozshaw N. Mehta (later Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, K.C.I.E.) the uncrowned King of Bombay, and others, what is known as THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS, which played such a prominent part in Indian politics, and which held its first meeting in Bombay during the Christmas week of 1885, wherein 75 delegates were present. Dadabhoy was made the President of the Congress at Lahore. He came out to India all the way from England, to preside over the 9th Session of the Congress.

His journey from Bombay to Lahore was a triumphal progress, a right royal welcome being accorded to him at every station at which the

*From "Famous Parsees", Biographical and Critical Sketches", 1st Edition, by G.A. Nateson & Co., Madras.

train stopped. They would not allow the horses to draw his carriage, but had it dragged to the President's camp by the hands of enthusiastic young men.

The late Sir William Hunter wrote in the *TIMES* on 'Indian Affairs' as under:

"The brilliant young student and Professor of Elphinstone College, who left Bombay to seek his fortune in England in 1855, was received back last month, bowed with the weight of 68 years and of great family sorrow (the sorrow referred to was the death of his only son). He had a welcome on landing, which has only on one occasion been rivalled, even by a viceregal ovation. His reception at Lahore has perhaps not been surpassed since the days of Ranjit Singh."*

The most substantial result of Mr. Dadabhoy Navrojee's short Parliamentary career, was the appointment of the Royal Commission on Indian Expenditure in 1896, of which he himself was a member, and wherein he played a very prominent part. Here again some striking paragraphs from his speech are worth quoting: *

"My propositions are", said he, "that it is the desire of the British people that British rule should be one of justice and righteousness for the benefit of both India and Britain, and not for the benefit of Britain only, to the detriment of India. And that the financial relations in apportionment of charges should be as that between two partners, and not as those between master and slave."

Further on he said that:

"The creation and maintenance of British Imperial supremacy in India is a British interest of the first magnitude. Yet with a few exceptions India has been unjustly charged with the whole cost of creating and maintaining the British Imperial supremacy, without Britain giving any portion and without India being allowed to share in the advantages connected with that supremacy."

* From "Famous Parsees' Biographical and Critical Sketches", 1st Edition, by G.A. Nateson & Co., Madras.

"That as a practical arrangement, Britain should pay for all British employed in Britain; that India should pay for all Indians employed in India, and that, as regards British employed in India and Indians employed in Britain, there should be an equitable apportionment according to the respective benefits and capacity to pay. To put it still more moderately, the payments to Europeans in both countries may be divided half and half between Britain and India.

"The principle which I approve is the one which was declared by the Duke of Devonshire, who said, if the country is to be better governed, that can only be done by the employment of the best and most intelligent of the natives in the services, and if we are to govern the people of India efficiently and cheaply, we must govern them by means of themselves and pay for the administration at the market rates of native labour. An administration conducted on these principles will stop the material, political and intellectual drain from India.

"I gladly recognise the benefits of British rule, especially as regards law and order, education and freedom of the press and public meetings; but I believe that British power and influence are much weakened by the refusal to administer expenditure in a way so as to give the people justice and a voice in their own affairs, by the consequent extreme poverty of the masses by the non-fulfilment of the solemn pledges given by the Parliament, and the Crown of equal opportunity in the public services to all subjects of Her Majesty; I sincerely desire to see British Rule strengthened on the lines most beneficial to the people both of India and Britain.

"I desire to ~~put in~~ my correspondence with the War Office, the Admiralty and the Civil Service Commissioners. In this I claim that neither the War Office, nor the Admiralty had any authority or power to exclude Indians from the commissioned ranks."*

Thus did this great and noble Parsee selflessly serve the millions of Indians, with the supreme advantage as a British Parliamentarian and thus did a Parsee shed so much lustre on Indian soil.

*From "Famous Parsees' Biographical and Critical Sketches," 1st Edition, by G.A. Nateson & Co., Madras.

In 1902 Dadabhoy published his famous book with the significant title of 'Poverty and Un-British Rule in India'. This book is a solid contribution to the literature on Indian Questions, and is a storehouse of information on Indian economics. It is worthwhile just quoting two paragraphs out of this magnificent book:

"True British rule will vastly benefit both Britain and India. My whole object in all my writings is to impress upon the British people that instead of a disastrous explosion on the British Empire, as must be the result of the present dishonourable, un-British system of Government, there is a great and glorious future for Britain and India to an extent inconceivable at present if the British people will awaken to their duty, will be true to their British instincts of fair play and justice, and will insist upon the faithful and conscientious fulfilment of all the good and solemn promises and pledges.

"Mr. John Bright has truly said 'the good of England must come to the channels of the good of India. There are but two modes of gaining anything by our connections with India. The one is by plundering the people of India and the other by trading with them. I prefer to do it by trading with them. But in order that England may become rich by trading with India, India itself must become rich. Cannot British authorities see their way to such intelligent selfishness?'"*

Such were the grand ideas and ideals that this great Parsee politician expressed from time to time in his speeches, writings and books, which enshrined him permanently in the hearts of the millions of Indians.

In the presidential address in the Calcutta Congress, where he was once again made President in December 1906, in the great speech that he delivered at the time, he said:

"I do not know what good fortune may be in store for me during the short period that may be left to me, and if I can leave a word of affection and devotion for my country and countrymen, I say, be united, persevere and achieve self-government, so that the millions now perishing by poverty, famine and plague and the scores of millions that are starving on scanty

* From "Famous Parsees'-Biographical and Critical Sketches," 1st Edition, by G.A. Nateson & Co., Madras.



subistence may be saved and India may once more occupy its proud possessions of yore among the greatest and most civilised nations of the World."

Truly prophetic words these, that brought India self-government forty years later.

It will not be an easy task to give in detail all the great and glorious deeds that this Grand Old Man of India performed for over half a century. But the gods are jealous, and the penalty of longevity is inexorable.

On the morning of the 1st June 1917, a painful message that he was dangerously ill cast a gloom all over India. He retained full consciousness until the last half hour of his life and eventually expired peacefully and painlessly, his features retaining their saintly look even after death.

Thus expired at the ripe old age of 92 one of the greatest Parsees and one of the greatest Indians of the 19th century. Over 15,000 people of all nationalities followed the procession to the Tower of Silence, and there Sir Narayan Chandavarkar, one of the famous politicians of those days, delivered a funeral oration in which he said:

"It is no exaggeration to say, it is not marring the beauty of the religion to say that he was a second Zoroaster sent to India to make the sun of righteousness and of India's future progress shine more and more by means of pure thoughts, pure words, pure deeds. Countrymen, not only the Parsees but men of all races regarded Dadabhoy as their own. He went into the bosom of us all. His death is the greatest loss to us at the greatest time and yet he is not dead. The sun that shone just 93 years ago over India is set, but I say it is set to rise again in the form of regenerated India, for Dadabhoy lived and worked for us with a self-devotion which must remain for all of us an inspiring example. Let us therefore, before we depart, pledge ourselves that we will live by the light of his example, pure in all that we do, sacrificing ourselves for the sake of India, full of devotion and that marvellous patience which was the best adornment of Dadabhoy's great and sacred and worshipful life."

A grateful India raised a beautiful monument at Bombay in remembrance of him. The inscription below the monument reads:

Dadabhoy Navroji
First Indian Member of Parliament 1892-1895
Revered and beloved of the country
The Grand Old Man of India
Born 4th September 1825, Died 30th June 1917.

Madras also raised a marble bust which adorns the Convocation Hall of the University.

If Dadabhoy Navroji was the first Indian Member of the Liberal Party of the British Parliament, it was left to Sir Muncherjee Meherwanjee Bhownagree, KCIE, another Parsee, to follow his lead in the General Elections to the House of Commons and find his seat there to represent Bethnal Green as a Conservative Member of Parliament for over a decade beginning from 1895.

Of the only three Parsee and Indian Members of the British House of Commons, the third was Mr. Shapurjee Dorabjee Saklatvala, strangely enough taking his seat in the British Parliament as a Communist.

No other Indian or Parsee has been in the British Parliament except the three mentioned above. The only Indian who became a Lord and sat in the House of Lords was Lord Arun Sinha.

SIR PHEROZESHAH MEHTA, K.C.I.E. In the long list of eminent Indians who had during the last half a century awakened in India a new political consciousness, quickened a new life with new hopes and aspirations, Sir Pherozeshah Merwanjee Mehta, K.C.I.E. occupied a unique place. Next to Dadabhoy Navrojee, he was by far the ablest and most sagacious political leader and thinker of his time. While Dadabhoy had imposed upon himself the gigantic task of rousing the British conscience to the Indian grievances, Sir Pherozeshah Mehta was devoting himself to the counterpart of that work in his own country and among his own people.



He was born on the 4th of August 1845 of a respectable middle class family. His father, who was a successful partner of the firm of Messrs. Cama & Co., Pioneer Merchant, first of China and then of London, himself being an educated man, naturally encouraged

and did everything for the higher education of his brilliant son, who passed with honours his M. A. at Bombay, and was the first Parsee to get that high degree in education.

Sir Alexander Grant, who was his great benefactor, arranged to send him to England where, for three years, he stayed in Lincoln's Inn and became a Barrister. While in England, he came in close contact with Dadabhoy Navrojee, from whom he got his first inspiration to serve India. On his return from England, an evidence of his independence was given as early as 1877 when, at a public meeting held in the Town Hall of Bombay, under the Presidentship of the Governor, Sir Richard Temple, he moved an amendment to the resolution on the Volunteer Movement. The public meeting had been called in the name of all citizens of Bombay, with a view to forming a volunteer corps, solely and exclusively among the European inhabitants, for the better preservation of the safety of the Island of Bombay.

When His Excellency asked if anyone present wished to address the meeting, young Pherozeshah rose to move an amendment to the effect that it was not advisable to resolve on the formation of the Volunteer Corps composed exclusively of Europeans in a public meeting of the inhabitants of Bombay. He declared that he had nothing to say against the admirable objects of the promoters of the meeting, but he felt that the citizens of Bombay could not be a party to their own condemnation.

Throughout his long and chequered career, Pherozeshah's best work was done for the Corporation, of what they proudly called in those days 'the Kingdom of Bombay'. In fact his work can be compared to the work done by the late Mr. Joseph Chamberlain for the City of Birmingham. Really it was due to Pherozeshah Mehta's exertions that the Bombay Corporation owed its constitution and the reputation which it has acquired as the premier Corporation in India, if not in Asia.

So great was the importance of Sir Pherozeshah Mehta that the consideration of important subjects in the Corporation had to be postponed to suit his personal convenience. The Corporation considered his presence indispensable, whenever important matters were to be decided once for all, and his views mostly prevailed. In fact he combined in himself both the Bar and the Bench. He was enslaved neither by popular prejudice nor by the applause of the listening Senate. The citizens of Bombay owe to him not only the Act of 1872 but the Act of 1888,

which they rightly regard as the Magna Carta of Municipal freedom. They owe it mainly to his indefatigable exertions.

But while he scathingly criticised the government of his day, two principles always actuated him throughout his long political career, and these he never failed to impress upon his countrymen. The first was that **British Rule in India was a thing which had not merely to be endured but to be regarded as the will of an all-wise Providence.**

During the Ilbert Bill controversy he said:

"If I entertain one political conviction more than another, it is that this country in falling under British Rule, has fallen into the hands of a nation, than which no other is better qualified to govern her wisely, as well. Look among all the leading nations of the world, said he, and you will not find one who, both by her faults and by her virtues, is so well adapted to steer her safe on the true path of progress and prosperity. It is true that the English are a stubborn piece of humanity, who might well be asked sometimes to take to heart the exhortation addressed once to the chosen people of God:

'Circumcise, therefore, the foreskin of your heart and be not more stiff-necked'. But it must be acknowledged at the same time that it is perhaps this very trait that has preserved this country from rash and extreme experiment, and put it on the path of sure though slow development."

In his presidential address at the Calcutta Congress in 1890 he said:

"I have no fears but that the English statemanship will ultimately respond to the call. **I have unbounded faith in the living and fertilising principle of English culture and English civilisation.** It may be that at times the prospect may look dark and gloomy. Anglo-Indian opposition may look fierce and uncompromising; they are after all part and parcel of the great English nation, bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh, and they must ever work along the main lines of that noble policy which Great Britain has deliberately adopted for the government of this country when, **in inscrutable dispensation of Providence, India was assigned to the care of England;** one can almost imagine that the choice was offered to her as to Israel of old:

‘Behold I have placed before you a blessing and a curse. A blessing if ye obey the commands of the Lord your God, but go after other gods who ye have not known.’

“All the great forces of English life and society, moral, social, intellectual, political, are slowly yet steadily and irresistibly declaring themselves for the choice, which will make the connection of England and India a blessing to themselves and to the whole world for countless generations.”

Thus, with a firm faith in the eventual fulfilment of their promise by the British to liberate India, Sir Pherozeshah Mehta worked in all spheres in the Viceregal Council, the Bombay Legislative Council, in the Bombay Senate, in the Municipal Corporation, where he was termed ‘the uncrowned King of Bombay’, in the Indian National Congress, whose presidentship he adorned, in the South African question and in innumerable other ways. As a result thereof the Bombay Provincial Conference and the Citizens of Bombay voted him addresses, which were presented on December 28, 1895. The citizens of Calcutta gave him an address in March 1896, signed by ~~over 3,500 citizens of that City~~, and presented by Mr. W.C. Bonnerji, one of the prominent leaders of India in those days.

The Corporation of Bombay elected him successively in 1884 and 1885 as its President, an honour which none else has received at its hands, and it was recognised that he made the best ‘chairman’, which was the appellation used prior to the passing of the Act of 1888.

He was elected President of the Bombay Municipal Corporation for the fourth time in 1911, on the 2nd December of which year he read the Corporation’s welcome address to King George V and Queen Mary when they landed in Bombay. His Majesty King Edward VII made him Knight Commander of the Indian Empire. He enjoyed thus the approbation not only of his countrymen but of the government. Lord Willingdon, the Governor of Bombay, made him Vice-Chancellor; the University of Bombay conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Laws.

“Thus Sir Pherozeshah’s was indeed a many sided career, whether on the Bombay Corporation, in the University, in the Congress, or in the Bombay or Imperial Legislative Council. He was everywhere supreme, the brilliant speaker, the keen debater, the conscious firm leader, with the compelling look and towering personality.”*

* From “Famous Parsees’ Biographical and Critical Sketches,” 1st Edition, by G.A. Nateson & Co., Madras.

What respect and affection did Sir Pherozeshah Mehta enjoy in the hearts of the Indians in Bombay, will be judged by the fact that when the author was the Mayor of Karachi and was invited by the Mayor of Bombay, in the year 1942, to see the Municipal Hall there, and to watch the proceedings of the municipal meeting—the municipal clock of the Corporation, inside and outside the building, showed not the **standard time**, that was adopted all over India, by the order of the then Viceroy Lord Curzon, but the local **Bombay time**, that prevailed prior to the adoption of standard time.

When asked for its reason, the Deputy Mayor, sitting next to the author said, "You know what a fight Sir Pherozeshah gave over the changing of the time to the Viceroy, and even though he did not succeed, out of sheer gratitude, respect and reverence for our one time leader, in this sacred precinct (viz. Municipal Building) we want to perpetuate his memory by still keeping Bombay time as against standard time." 

What better honour can be paid to a popular leader—even though a Parsee—by the grateful citizens of Bombay?

Towards the end of his life, his health was causing anxiety for some months, and he quietly passed away on the 5th November, 1915.

No greater tribute can be paid to him than that sent by Lord Hardinge to Lord Willingdon, by the following telegram.

"I should like to associate myself with the people of Bombay, who are meeting today, to express their grief at the loss of Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, and to take steps to perpetuate his memory. HE WAS A GREAT PARSEE, A GREAT CITIZEN, A GREAT PATRIOT AND A GREAT INDIAN. Please convey my very deep sympathy to Lady Mehta. I should like to subscribe Rs 1,000/- to any memorial fund that may be initiated as a result of your meeting."

The 'Times of India' gave the following fitting epitaph to the memory of a great patriot and a born leader of men:

"No man could deliver harder blows; no man was better prepared to receive them. In this, he was quite exceptional in Indian public life. One of the most unfortunate tendencies in

that life is for controversies immediately to descend into personalities. He would fight with the best but bore no malice. He rarely, if ever, descended into personalities and he retained warm personal friendships with many, with whom he exchanged the shrewdest buffets. Few men have ever been so completely above race or sectional prejudice. He was proud to claim—
HE WAS AN INDIAN FIRST AND A PARSEE AFTERWARDS."

Among the memorials raised after his death was a portrait of him unveiled by his compatriot, Sir Dinshaw Vacchha, on the 4th April 1917 which was subscribed for, and presented to the Bombay Presidency Association, by its members.

Sir Homi P. Mody, Kt. brought out two magnificent volumes on Sir Pherozeshah Mehta; a political biography, in which he recorded adequately and fittingly the life and career of a great political personality who, for over forty years, had dominated the public life of India. The biography to which His Highness the Aga Khan (the Third) has prefixed an admirable foreword, gives the full length portrait of the hero, and throws a flood of light on the character of one who in Free England might have attained the position of Gladstone or Beaconsfield.*

The citizens of Bombay honoured themselves by erecting a beautiful and imposing bronze statue of him, at a cost of Rs 80,000/-, which was unveiled in front of the Municipal Office, on the 3rd April 1923, by His Excellency the Governor of Bombay.

At that time His Excellency the Viceroy of India, in an appropriate message to the meeting, congratulated the Memorial Committee and the subscribers on having given to Bombay and to India, a memorial which will recall and perpetuate the memory of the patriotic labours through many years on behalf of his country and city, of Sir Pherozeshah Merwanjee Mehta, K.C.I.E., a distinguished statesman and public citizen—a Parsee withal.

SIR DINSHAW EDULJEE WATCHA, KT., J.P. Sir Dinshaw Eduljee Watcha, the distinguished Parsee leader and publicist, was born on the 2nd August, 1844, in a respectable family of middle class parents. At an early age he was sent to the Elphinstone Institution, Bombay, where

*'Famous Parsees' by G.A. Nateson & Co., Madras.

he studied for four years. In his case, the child was indeed the father of the man. He conducted himself in such a way that he won the goodwill of his professors—Sir Alexander Grant specially commending 'his gentlemanly pleasing deportment'. He made his name essentially as an expert in Finance. The old generation still remembers him speaking from old Congress platform and fiercely condemning the questionable methods of the manipulators of Indian Finance, subjecting them to a close scrutiny and exposing the innumerable fallacies that lurked behind a thick cluster of words and figures, which made everyone exclaim "here is a born financier". He always advanced views with a wealth of learning and attention to detail that were the admiration of his friends and the despair of his critics.

He was a close and intimate student of contemporary European politics, and could discourse upon all the phases of European diplomacy and policy as ably as any other non-official European who had no access to the archives of the Foreign Offices and European States.

He was a Governor of the Imperial Bank of India, Member of the Bombay Legislative Council and of the Imperial Legislative Council, Director Central Bank of India and Scindia Steam Navigation Company, Member for 30 years of the Bombay Municipal Corporation, Member for 40 years of the Bombay Mill Owners' Association Committee, Member of the Bombay Improvement Trust, since its formation in 1898 to 1919, Trustee of the Elphinstone College and General Secretary, Indian National Congress for 18 years, besides being actively connected with many other institutions. People always wondered how he managed to get through so much in a day, and yet he was simple, just, generous, unassuming and unpretentious. In fact he was a lamb at home, but a lion in the chase. He was one of the most prominent figures in the life of Bombay and had the honour of being appointed President of the Indian National Congress in 1901.

In fitting recognition of his great public services, the British Government Knighted him in 1917. In 1920, on the inauguration of the Montague Reforms, Sir Dinshaw found his proper place among the Council of Elders.

During the last days of his life, he often differed from his own colleagues. Indeed, with Dadabhoy and Sir Pherozezshah, Sir Dinshaw completed the triumvirate, who among the Parsees, were the pioneers of the National Movement in India.

The great Gopal Krishna Gokhale of the famous Servants' of India Society said of him in 1896: "Those of you who may have the privilege of knowing Mr. Dinshaw Vatcha as intimately as I have known him for the past few years, will bear me out when I say, that a nobler, a purer, a simpler and an honester individual does not exist."

What high compliments from an Indian compatriot to his Parsee friend of equally great fame?

The grateful public of India raised a bronze statue to his memory, which stands in a prominent place in Bombay.

Thus the Parsees have distinguished themselves as patriots, philanthropists, politicians, reformers, scholars and captains of industry. Indeed, with their genius for adapting themselves to their environment, the Parsees have risen to the top in every sphere of private and public life.

There are no more illustrious names in the roll of Indian patriots than those of Dadabhoy, Mehta and Watcha; no more distinguished captains of industry than the Tatas and Petits; no greater philanthropists than the Jeejeebhoy and Wadias; no more ardent reformers than Malabari and Bengali; no more venerated scholars than K.R. Cama, Dr. Sir Jeewanjee Jamshedjee Mody and Shamsul Ulema Dastur Dr. M.N. Dhalla.

CHAPTER XV

PARSEES AS PIONEERS

The Parsees have created a world record by being pioneers in every walk of life since the advent of the British in India. Considering the fact that they are only a hundred thousand in India and Pakistan, out of the total population of four hundred millions, this record of pioneering will ever remain unbroken in history. A prominent Bengali patriot, the Honourable Mr. S. Sinha (subsequently Lord Sinha), said, not long ago:

“When I recall how the Parsee community, numerically so small, is great beyond measure in social progress, political talents, constitutional agitation, commercial and industrial enterprise and in large-hearted charity and philanthropy, and how much India owes, in her march on the road to modern progress, to her Parsee sons, I feel that one of the greatest and happiest days in the history of our country was that on which the Parsee refugees from Persia landed on the Indian shore.”*

The following eulogy from a speech made by Mr. Justice Ranade, the great Hindu jurist and philosopher, while presiding on the 10th March, 1899, at the Alexandra School, Bombay, is worth perusing:

“The greatest patriots, the greatest philanthropists, the greatest merchants, educationists, orators and missionaries, who have flourished on this side of India, have all belonged to the community of a few handfuls of men. At times, I am almost tempted to feel misgivings as to what the conditions of Western India might have been but for the influence which the Parsees have exercised among us, not only on this side which is their chief home, but outside in Poona, Surat, Ahmedabad, Nagpur, Mhow, Karachi, Aden, Zanzibar and other places. In our national car, hoary with the weight of ages, and immoveable in numbers, we too often serve as a dead-weight and a brake. The car would never have moved an inch but with the inspiring contact with the English, and the elevating example of the Parsees. They pioneer the way, and we slowly follow at a great distance.”

*From “Ancient Persia & The Parsees” by Jehangir B. Sanjana, B.A., J.P., Bombay.

We start in alphabetical order with instances of the Parsees being the first in every walk of life:-

Alderman:- The proud distinction of being elected as an Alderman went to Mr. Navroji Dadabhoy Allbless of Bombay in 1931; he was four times President of the Hampton District Council and represented that District, in the Middlesex County, for a period upwards of a quarter of a century. For a Parsee of India to be an English Alderman is indeed a unique distinction, to make every Parsee proud.

Archaeologist:- The first and only lady in the sub-continent of India to get her Ph.D. in Archaeology, from London University, is the author's daughter, Dr. Vera Sohrab Katrak, Ph.D.* The subject of her successful thesis was the Development of Achaemenian Persian Art and Architecture from the 6th to the 4th centuries B.C.

Architect:- The first woman architect in the whole of India was Miss Perin Jamshedji Mistri, G.D. Arch., A.U.A. (now Mrs. Ardeshir Bhimandiwalla).

The first Indian and Parsee President of the Indian Institute of Architects and the first Indian and Parsee who served on the Council of the Royal Institute of British Architects, London, was Mr. Burjore Sohrab Jamshed Aga, F.R.I.B.A. (Lond.), M.I. Struct. E. (Lond.), F.I.I.A., L.C.E., M.I.E. (India), J.P.

Author: The first book to be dedicated to Her Majesty Queen Victoria of England was "GEORGE NAMEH", a grand epic of the British conquest in India, written in Persian by a Parsee scholar of repute, by name Mulla Pheroz Bin Mulla Kaus.

Aviation:- The first Indian and the first Parsee to fly from Europe to India was Dr. Dara N. Masters.

In the field of aviation in India, a young Parsee lad, hardly out of his teens, by name Aspy** Meherwan Engineer of Karachi, astounded all India by his winning the £ 500 prize offered by His Highness Agha Khan, the Third, to the first Indian, who made the solo flight between England and India within four weeks. Aspy Engineer accomplished the flight in 17 days and thus became the first Indian and the first Parsee to get this prize.

* Now Dr. (Mrs.) Vera C. Cowasjee, Ph. D.

**Aspy is short for 'Asfandyar'—a sort of a nickname.

Besides, among the Cadets of the senior team at the Royal Air Force, Cranwell, this young Parsee airman was chosen as the best all-round pilot, and was awarded the R.N. Groves Memorial prize, the coveted distinction of all Cadet Officers of the Force. This was in July 1933.

Subsequently, Aspy created a name for himself. He is now an Air Marshal in the Indian Air Force with Headquarters at New Delhi.

The first Indian to receive Air Pilot 'A' Certificate was Mr. J.R.D. Tata, the present head of the famous House of Tata in Bombay.

The honour of being the first Indian Lady Air Pilot has gone to a Parsee lady, Mrs. (now Lady) Sherene Dinshaw Petit, member of an equally famous and wealthy Parsee family of Bombay.

Bench and Bar: Among the very few Indians who have received the honour of being made His Majesty's Privy Councillors, there has been no more shining name than that of the Late Rt. Hon. Sir Dinshaw Fardunji Mulla, Kt. PC., CIE., MA., LL. D., Hony. Benchers of Lincoln's Inn, sometime acting Judge of the High Court, Bombay, and Law Member of the Council of the Governor General of India, Member of the Law College, Bombay (1907-1913), Tagore Law Lecturer 1929 and author of numerous legal works of distinction.

The first Indian Chief Presidency Magistrate in Bombay and the first Indian Chairman of the Bombay Municipal Corporation, was a Parsee, the late Mr. Dossabhoy* Framji Karaka, CSI., who had to his credit the two monumental volumes of the 'History of the Parsees', published in 1881, and presented to the late Queen Victoria of blessed memory.

Mrs. Freni N. Jabwala was the first Indian and first Parsee lady to be both an advocate of the High Court (on the original side), and a solicitor.

Chartered Accountant: The first Indian and the first Parsee to be a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of England and Wales, Incorporated by Royal Charter in the year 1880, was Mr. Ardeshir Eduljee Cama, ACA.

*The real Gujrati word is Bhai—Brother. The Hindus add 'Bhai' after every name. The Europeans not knowing the word and not being able to pronounce the word correctly began saying 'Bhoy'. The Parsees preferred to imitate the Europeans—specially the British and pronounced as well as spelt their names accordingly as Dadabhoy, Dosabhoy, Nanabhoy, Dhanjibhoy, etc.

Cinema: The first Indian and the first Parsee who ventured in the cinema trade in India was late Mr. Jamsetji Framji Madan of Calcutta, who started making films in Calcutta, with the aid of foreign technicians, and owned sixty cinemas at a time, all over India—a record which no individual has established in this line in the sub-continent of India.

Commerce, Trade & Industry: The first Indian and the first Parsee from India to go to China, as far back as 1756, and build up trade connections between the two countries, was Mr. Heerjee Readymoney.

The first Indian and the first Parsee to establish a spinning and weaving mill in India was Kavasji Nanabhai Davar, who opened the Bombay Spinning & Weaving Mill in 1854 and thus laid the foundation of Bombay's future greatness and prosperity.

The first Indian and the First Parsee to inaugurate the Hydro-Electric Works (in the Bombay Presidency) and the Iron & Steel Works (in Bihar) was the prince of industrialists, Mr. Jamsetji Nusserwanji Tata.

The first Pakistani and the first Parsee to be appointed as Controller of Insurance, Government of Pakistan, is Mr. Zal S.D. Contractor of Karachi.

Consuls: Major S. A. Paymaster, A.I.R.O., a Parsee, was the Consul at Bombay for the States of Rumania and Uruguay.

A Parsee, known as the Oil King in the United States of America, by name Feroze Dorabji Saklatvala, had the distinction of being confirmed by the Government of his late Imperial Majesty Reza Shah Pahlevi as the Consul General for Persia, in the States.

Female Education: The pioneers of female education in India have been the Parsees. The distinction of being the first Indian lady called to the English Bar (in 1923) goes to a Parsee Portia, Miss Mithan Ardeshir Tata (now Mrs. Lam).

The first non-European Professor of English in the Elphinstone College, Bombay was Miss Amy B.H.J. Rustomjee, who was also the first Parsee lady to take her Degree of Master of Arts from Girton College, Cambridge.

Free-masonry: The first Indian and the first Parsee to be admitted as a member of a European Free-Masonic Lodge was Mr. Maneckjee Cursetjee.

Governor: Another outstanding personality is Sir Homi P. Mody, Kt., who had the unique honour, after the partition of India, to be the first Governor of the United Provinces. So far he has been the only Parsee Governor of a Province in India or Pakistan. X
1965

High Commissioner for India in the U.K: The first High Commissioner to be appointed for India in the United Kingdom was Sir Dadiba Merwanji, Kt., CIE., who was also the first Parsee Member of the Council of the Secretary of State in India.

Histrionic Art: Amongst the successful actors on the stage as a comedian was Mr. Cursetji M. Baliwala, who was the first from India to take a theatrical company to England and had the honour of playing by command before Her Majesty Queen Victoria and Edward VII, then the Prince of Wales. *
*

Honour & Titles: The first Asian and the first Parsee to be created Knight Bachelor and a Baronet was Sir Jamsetji Jeejeebhoy.

The first Nawab to be created by the British in India, was Khan Bahadur Dhanjibhoy Fakirjee Commodore, C.I.E. This high title was conferred on him for carrying mails and parcels from Rawalpindi to Murree, a distance of about forty miles, by tongas drawn by two horses, with stages to change horses, as Murree Hill station is about 9,000 feet above sea level.

Later on Khan Bahadur Dhanjibhoy was given contracts to make roads from Murree to Kashmir for use of horse tongas and subsequently he was given the contract to carry Government mails from Rawalpindi to Murree and from Murree to Kashmir. The distance was two hundred miles and very steep, yet the mail was carried within 24 hours by horse tongas.

The first Indian and the first Parsee to get the Freedom of the City of London (in 1855) was Sir Jamsetji Jeejeebhoy, Baronet.

Interpreter: A Parsee, by name Hormusjee Eduljee Kamajee, went to China in the year 1785 A.D. and made himself so proficient in the Chinese language, that the Chinese used to call him 'Pahva' (an expert in

languages; hence an interpreter) and the Supreme Court of Bombay engaged him as an interpreter when the Chinese were being tried. Thus he was the first Asian, the first Indian and the first Parsee to enjoy that position.

Ministers: Among the first, who during the British regime reached the rank of Cabinet Ministers in the Bombay Legislative Assembly, may be mentioned the names of:

- (1) Sir Cowasjee Jehangir, Bart. KCIE., OBE., MLA., MA. (Cantab), who happened to be the first Parsee Member of the Executive Council of the Government of Bombay.
- (2) The Late Honourable Sardar Sir Rustom Jehangir Vakil, Kt., who was placed in charge of the portfolio of Local Self-Government.

Municipal Commissioner: The first Indian Municipal Commissioner of Bombay was Mr. (later Sir) Rustom Pestonji Masani, MA.

X **Newspaper:** The founder of the first vernacular newspaper in Western India was Mobed Fardunji Marzbanji, the Caxton of Gujarati Printing Press.

Peregrinations: The first Indian and the first Parsee to go to England was Naorozji Rustamji in the Man-of-War 'SALISBURY' in April 1723. He was received most kindly by the Court of Directors, of the East India Company.*

X **Politics:** The first three Indians and the first three Parsees to become Members of the British Parliament were, Mr. Dadabhai Navroji, Sir Muncherjee M. Bhownagree, KCIE, and Mr. Shapurjee Dorabjee Saklatvala—the first as a Member of the Liberal Party, the second on the side of the Conservatives and the third as a Communist.

Professor: The first Indian and the first Parsee to be appointed a Professor at Berlin University (Germany) for Persian and Sanskrit languages, was Ardesir M. Vacha (from 1893-1925).

He has to his credit the translation of the 'Shahnama' in German language.

*Refer to pages 144—145 for further particulars.

The first Parsee and the first Indian to be made a Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy in the Bombay University was Dadabhoy Navrojee.

Sheriff: The first Indian and the first Parsee Sheriff appointed in 1873 at Calcutta was Maneckji Rustomji Banaji, JP.,

Sports: Mr. Framroze C. Billimoria was the feather-weight boxing champion in India, and had the distinction of being appointed an instructor of the Norfolk Regiment at Simla, being the first Indian and the first Parsee to be so appointed.

War Service: Rustam Jivanji Mody, Bar-at-Law, the son of the late veteran savant among the Parsee community, Dr. Sir Jeewanjee Jamshedjee Mody, Kt., BA., Ph.D., as also Dorabji Sorabji K. Adenwala, were the first and only Parsee members of the Honourable Artillery Company of London.*

*For most of the above information the author is indebted to 'The Parsee Lustre on Indian Soil' by H.D. Darukhanawalla.

CHAPTER XVI

PARSEE NAMES AND SURNAMES

With their advent in India, the Parsees naturally came in very close contact with the Hindus in the province of Gujrat, who while addressing a person by his name, added 'jee' as a suffix. This particularly applies to their own names also in the manner that the word 'Esquire' is added after a name in the English language. Thus the pure Persian names of the Parsees were changed in such a way as to submerge their original identity.

There is some difference of opinion as to whether the word 'jee' was added to the original Persian name by the Hindus when they came in contact for the first time with the Parsees some 1200 years ago, or whether it was added due to the Pazend style of blessing, when the Zoroastrian Persians met and greeted one another with 'Dair-zee'* (may you live long), and 'Shad-zee'* (may you live happy).

In this connection Mr. Sohrabji M. Desai of Navsari, a prolific Parsee writer and an author of numerous books well received by the Parsees, says in his Gujarati book entitled '*Parsee Vishayo*', published in 1914 A.D., that the officers of the higher rank among the Mussalmans during the Moghul period, were respected by the addition of the word 'jeeoon' after their names, such as Khan Maulajeeoon, Sheikh Daulat Khanjeeoon, etc. This honorific title was adopted by the Hindus from their Muslim masters and Nawabs. Subsequently the Parsees accepted the first syllable only, namely 'jee', to be affixed to their Persian names. This was done with a view to make their names appear as if of Hindu origin. Thus, the learned writer says, the Parsees in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, changed their dress, their manners, their customs and also their names. For a wonder, says the learned author, they did not completely turn Hindus, but kept the flame of their religion still burning within their hearts.

Before the Parsees arrived in India, their names were purely Persian and their surnames known among them as Atak (distinguishing affix), were derived from the villages or cities from where they came, e.g. Nasrabadee, Khoramshahee, Koochbiogee, Kermanee, Shirazee, Khairabadee, Tehranee, Isfanee, Yazdee, etc.

*'Z' to be pronounced as in 'azure', in both cases.

But on their first arrival in India, in order to identify themselves with the Hindus, apart from changing their dress, their manners and customs, they adopted typically Hindu names, for example Chanjee, Ramjee, Laxmanjee, Ratanjee, etc.

As time passed, they began to be known by the names of the trade they were handling, such as 'Sopariwala' (seller of betelnut, known as 'Sopari' in the Hindu language), Daruwala and Pithawala (trading in liquor), Toddywala (selling toddy), Kandawala (doling out onions), Papetawala (supplier of potatoes), Chutneewala (maker of condiments), Guard (Guard on the Railways) and so on.

• Again, the Parsees who were employed in European Firms derived their surnames from the names of the Firms themselves, such as Forbes, Nicholson, Spencer, Ralli, Marshall, Alson, etc.

Others derived their names from the city or town from where they hailed, such as Bengali, Calcuttawalla, Jullundurwala, Adenwala, Jangbarwala.*

Even from the name of birds and animals, the Parsees have derived their surnames. For example Popat (parrot), Challa (sparrow), Nolya (mongoose), Wagh (tiger), Bulbul (canary), etc.

Yet again, there are names that were given to them due to their fondness for certain spices, such as Rye (mustard), Amra (sour berries), Ganja (opium), Elchi (cardamom), etc.

Certain names are given out of sheer fun, due to the characteristics of some individuals, such as Ghambheer (serious), Boomla-Khao (fond of eating Bombay ducks), Khory (rancid or stale), Tata (talkative or hot-tempered), Bhoot (ghost), Makhania (flatterer), Hoshiyar (clever).

Some have derived their names from figures, such as Adhaarya, Bontair, Dumree, Sataona.** Some surnames were given from sheer lack of good manners, such as Adagra, Gora, Saamra, Dave, Bhangya, etc.

And there are surnames adopted purely from Hindu origin such as Kashinath, Ratnagar, Jogee, Lakhmidas, Sakhidas, Virjee, Motishah, etc.

*Refer to appendix M for more names.

**These typical names derived from figures are difficult to translate in accurate English.

Strangely enough, the names of the Parsee priests, even to the present day, are suffixed with the word 'daroo', such as Jamshed-daroo, Behram-daroo, of which the learned writer, Mr. Sohrabji Desai, traces the origin of the suffix 'daroo' to the original Sanskrit word, 'Adhvaryu' meaning 'priests'. The Adhvaryu, subsequently, changed into 'Andhyaru' and again in turn it became 'daroo', so that up to today, as far as names of the Parsee priests are concerned, the suffix 'daroo' after their names has stuck permanently.

The Parsees have no surnames which go down from generation to generation in a family, as is the case amongst Europeans. For instance, while the sons of Thompson, Brown, Jones or Smith and their descendants are all Thompson, Brown, Jones or Smith, respectively, the Parsees give a name to the child and after its name add that of its father. A small minority of educated Parsees put the initials of the names of their fathers and grand-fathers before the surnames. In most cases, the surnames depict the profession to which they belong. After one or two generations, the surname used to change according to the change of profession in the family. For instance, if Mr. Rustom Sohrab is a carpenter, he will be known as Rustom Sohrab Suthar (carpenter). If his son becomes a school master, he will change the surname from Suthar to Master (Teacher). Still further, if the grandson becomes an attorney or solicitor, he will change his surname into Vakil (Solicitor or Advocate). Thus Parsees, upto the last generation or two have adopted surnames according to the profession they followed.

On the other hand, modern Parsee boys and girls coin their surnames in ingenious ways: for example, if the name of the mother is Bachubai and of the father Hormusji or Homi, then the surname ingeniously coined will be "Buchome". Another instance of this type is: where the mother is known by the name of Hilla or Hirabai and the father is named Framroze or Framji, the surname is Hillfram.* Thus the ultra-modern Parsee boys and girls invent for themselves their surnames.

Still further a large number among the Parsees prefer not to use their surnames, but only use their own names with those of their fathers, e.g. if a Parsee's name is Rustom, his father's name Sohrab and

*Buchome, Hillfram and Hillhome are surnames actually coined by three young Parsees in Karachi.

his surname Desai, he will entirely eliminate the surname and style himself Mr. Rustom Sohrab.

The following list of modern Parsee names is typical:-

Original Persian	Hindu Style	Anglicised
Adel	Edalji	Edie
Behman	Bomanji	Bomy
Jamshed	Jamshedji	Jim or Jimmy
Fareedun	Fardunji	Freddy
Hormuzd	Hormusji	Homes
Jehangir	Jehangirji	Jangoo
Kershasp	Kershaspi	Kersey
Minocheher	Mancherji-Maneckji	Munchy
Navroz	Naorozji	Neville
Peshotan	Pestonji	Polly
Tchemuras	Tehmulji	Tim or Tom

Names of Women

Avan	Avanbai	Amy
Dina (<i>pronounced Deena</i>)	Dinabai	Diana
Nanibai	Nahlibai	Nelly, Nancy,
Sheereen	Sakarbai	Silla
Virbai	Virbaiji	Villa, Villy, Vera.
Soona	Soonabai—Soonoo	Sonia.

Besides these, during their sojourn with the Hindus for over 1200 years, the Parsees like the former, gave names to their children out of superstitious beliefs. For instance, Fakirji (mendicant) or Bhikaji (beggar) are names given to male children to signify that they were unwanted and were not worth anything, so as not to attract the attention of the evil spirits towards them. On the other hand, Bapai and Mamai are strange names for girls. They depict the parents' earnest desire to see the children grow up to the age of paternal or maternal grand-mothers. This was purely due to the very long contact of the Parsees with the Hindus from whom they borrowed much of their superstitious beliefs.

The following are typically Hindu names given to Parsees, males and females:-

Males —Gandhibhai, Jeejeebhai, Dadabhai, Dajibhai, Dosabhai, Bhimji, Hiraji, Jivanji, Cooverji, Limji, Pochaji, etc.

Females —Chandenbai, Dhanbai, Dosibai, Hirabai,* Cooverbai, Manekbai,* Motibai,* Nallibai, Roopanbai,* Sakarbai, Soonabai,* etc.

*In Gujrati	1. Hira	—	Diamond
	2. Manek	—	Ruby
	3. Moti	—	Pearl
	4. Roopoon	—	Silver
	5. Soonoo	—	Gold

CHAPTER XVII

THE PARSEE NEW YEARS

Shahanshahi and Kadmi

The Parsees in India and Pakistan observe three New Years.

For an enlightened community in the world to do this may appear strange. However, considering the fact that the Mussalmans are divided into seventy-two sects, and Christianity could be reckoned as having at least half as many, the Parsees in India and Pakistan having been divided into two sects, or rather schisms, should not be a matter of much surprise.

These two sects are known as Shahanshahi and Kadmi, but they do not differ on any point of faith, as the Protestants do from the Roman Catholics, or the Roman Catholics do from the Greek Church. Nor does the distinction between them at all resemble that which divides the different castes of the Hindus, or, the Shias and the Sunnis, among the Mussalmans. Their forms of worship and religious ceremony, as well as the tenets of their religion are the same in every respect. The cause of division between the two sects among the Parsees is merely a difference as to the correct date for the computation of the era of Yazdegard,* the last King of the ancient Persian monarchy. Actually no such difference exists among the Zoroastrians in Iran.

The Schism amongst the Parsees in India and Pakistan was due to the fact that every King, who came to the throne of Iran, calculated his own era from the date of his accession to the throne, but with this proviso, that if he ascended the throne before the 21st day of March—the commencement of the solar year—the first year of his reign should be said to have ended on that day. For instance, if a King was crowned on the 1st day of January, or on any other subsequent day before the 21st of March, the second year of his reign would be reckoned from the latter date.

Yazdegard Sheriar, the last King of the Sassanian Dynasty, in whose reign the Persians lost the Kingdom to the Arabs, ascended the throne on the 1st day of the month Fravardeen, which corresponds to the 16th of June, A.D. 632. The second year of his reign commenced, according

*The last syllable 'gard' of the word 'Yazdegard' is pronounced as 'gird' as in the word 'girdle'. Also see Appendix "N" for the different ways the word 'Yazdegard' is spelt and pronounced.

to practice, on the 21st of March A.D. 633. As a matter of fact the Parsee year commences somewhere in the beginning of August as far as the Kadmis are concerned, and somewhere in the beginning of September in the case of the Shahanshahis. This would not have happened, if regular intercalations had taken place after Yazdegard, III up to the present day, and the Parsee New Year would have always commenced as from the 21st day of March, a day still celebrated with great pomp and joyous celebrations for at least ten days, in Iran, by the Persians, both Zoroastrian and Mussalman.

In fact, the Parsees reckon their year on the basis of three hundred and sixty days, and each of their months consists of thirty days. Incidentally, these thirty days each have a name, and so have the twelve months of the year, contrary to the English calendar, in which the days have numbers from one to thirty, although the months, like those of the Parsees, have each a name.* At the end of three hundred and sixty days, the Parsees add five days more; each day is named after each of the five Gathas, composed by Zarathushtra.

Now, at this rate, in every year, there is a difference of nearly six hours according to strict astronomical calculations.** Therefore, the Persians from the very ancient times used to add one day after every four years (as is done in the case of the English leap year) and, sometimes, one month after a hundred and twenty years. This was known as "Kabiseh", or "Intercalation".

It does appear that, after the Arabs conquered Iran and the Parsees gradually moved into the mountainous parts of their country for safety, and eventually to India, during the long and persistent hardships, worries, troubles and anxieties, they seem to have overlooked the system of Kabiseh or Intercalation, with the result that the festivals denoting the several seasons of the year, known amongst the Parsees as the Gahambars, which should take place in proper seasons, recur as they do at present, out of their seasons.

On the 26th of November 1720, a Mobed by name Jamasp Velayeti, started from Iran for Surat, where at that time there were a good number of Parsees. When he reached there, he found that there was a difference of **one month** between the Iranian and the Indian-Zoroastrians, in the

* For these, refer to Appendix "O".

** To be exact : 5 hours, 54 minutes and 54 seconds.

matter of the reckoning of their day and month called by them Roz* and Mhah. He did not say anything about it at that time, because he had opportunities to observe the general ignorance which prevailed among Parsees there as regards religious forms and ceremonies. Therefore, after mature consideration he took three intelligent priests as his pupils, namely, Dastur Darab (Kumana Dada Daru) from Surat, Dastur Jamasp (Jamasp Asa) of Navsari, and Dastur Fardunji of Broach, and taught them the Avesta and its Pahlavi commentaries.

In the same year, at the instance of Jamasp Velayeti, one Manekji Edulji, the broker to the Armenians of Surat, began to use the Persian calendar, known as Kadmi. Upon this, a great dispute arose among the Parsees, who hitherto had been following the Indian Parsee calendar.

In 1736, another Zoroastrian by name Jamsheed, who claimed to have some knowledge of astronomical science, came from Iran to Surat. His coming added fuel to the fire, as the dispute regarding the Persian calendar had taken a more serious turn. The Parsees requested this Jamsheed to solve, by means of astronomical calculations, the doubts which had arisen in their minds, since Jamasp Velayeti's advent to India. He taught astronomical calculations known as "Najum" to an intelligent Mobed by name Kaus Faridun, who began afterwards to be known as "Munajjem" (i.e. one versed in the science of stars). He made astronomical calculations and declared that Jamasp Velayeti was correct in wanting the Parsees to observe their New Year in Kadmi style.

Several others having followed suit, the Parsees became very anxious to acquire religious knowledge and instituted research on the subject of Kabiseh.

A leading Parsee of Surat, by name Dhanjisha Manjisha, who was inclined to the Kadmi doctrines, sent for Mobed Kaus Rustam Jalal from Broach, and sent him to Iran, to institute inquiries into this much disputed question. Accordingly, Kaus proceeded to Iran on 28th April, 1768, with his son Peshutan, who afterwards changed his name to Feroze and later became famous as Dastur Mulla Feroze. The expenses for both the father and son for their travel were paid by Dhanjisha Manjisha.

For twelve years Mobed Kaus Rustam Jalal travelled in various provinces inhabited by the Zoroastrians in Iran, and made all possible endeavours to sift the truth. Having acquired the necessary information, he returned to Surat on the 9th February, 1780. He brought with him

* Pronounced as 'Rose'.

several manuscripts, copies of which found their way into the hands of intelligent members of the Parsee community.

On the other hand, those Parsees who preferred to calculate their year according to the Parsee Calendar, and are still known as Shahanshahis, brought forward evidence in favour of their calendar. This controversy went on for forty years, when the arguments on both sides became heated, and a lot of money was being spent on both sides, in issuing pamphlets for and against, as also influencing newspapers to carry on propaganda among the community for the correct observance of the Parsee New Year.

Temper on both sides were lost to such an extent that in Broach in the year 1782-83 a Parsee, Homaji Jamshedji, who was the follower of the Kadmi sect, struck a pregnant Parsee woman, by name Behenbai, who happened to be the sister of a well-known priest of Broach, called Padshah. Homaji was condemned and put to death. Others, who had a hand in this unfortunate incident, were heavily fined and their fines were paid by the Kadmi sect.

By this time, modern learning had brought this vexed question of the Kabiseh within its true limits in as much as, in the year 1870 Mr. Cursetji Rustomji Cama,* a very learned Parsee, who belonged to the Kadmi sect, and who had studied Zoroastrian religion in a scientific way under European scholars, in France and Germany, took up this question very seriously. For a good many years he gave lectures before the Parsee public, and printed pamphlets at his own expense, distributing them widely amongst the Parsees, free, to enable them to study the question dispassionately, in a scholarly manner and with cooler heads.

He declared that the Shahanshahis and Kadmis were both wrong in their assertions, and gave the following reasons:-

1. That the Kadmis were wrong in denying that the Parsee New Year commenced on the 21st of March, for, from a more exact knowledge of the language of the Avesta, and deciphering of Pahlavi coins, it is demonstrated that the Zoroastrian religion admitted the intercalation.

2. That the Shahanshahis were equally wrong, for, since the downfall of the Persian Empire, there had not been any intercalation as they affirmed.

* See Chapter XXII on "The Parsee Priesthood" about his career.

3. That the view of the Kadmis, in accordance with the date accepted by the Zoroastrians of Persia, which proves that there had been no intercalation after the fall of the Sassanian Dynasty, is absolutely correct.

4. But as the intercalation was not ordered by the Zoroastrian religion, it appeared that both sides were wrong in the controversy of the Kabiseh.

There are many other points besides these into which we need not go. Suffice it to say, that both parties remained adamant, with the result that they stopped inter-marriages between their respective sects. Further, the Kadmis organised and established their own Atash Behram with their own Dastur, and have kept on till now, with their own Roz and Mhah according to their faulty calculations.

For some years, the Shahanshahis and the Kadmis remained at loggerheads, with bitter feelings against each other, the same as has been recorded of the Roman Catholics and the Protestants, during the bitter days and years of difference of opinion between them. But eventually, as education spread amongst men and women in the Parsee community, both sects gradually reconciled themselves to the circumstances, and though they still observe the New Year according to their own calculations, now absolutely no feelings of bitterness exist. In fact marriages between the children of the Kadmis and the Shahanshahis take place without any qualms; although the children resulting from such a marriage have to adopt the father's sect.

But the result of all this controversy was that one very small sect formed itself into a society, and held a ceremony on the 20th of March, 1908, whereat they declared themselves Members of the Zarthoshti Fasli Sal Mandal (The Zoroastrian Seasonal Year Society). From that day onwards, the Society has reckoned its correct religious year from the Jamsheed-i-Naoroz (of the Vernal Equinox), and to this day they observe their New Year on the 21st of March each year, even when their number is so insignificant.

Thus, by ignoring intercalation, the Parsees wrongfully observe their New Years (Kadmis in August and Shahanshahis in September) and still keep up March 21st (Jamsheed-i-Naoroz) as a separate festival, and as the national day of celebrations in Iran. Only the Fasli sect, of which we

have spoken above, observe one new year, and very rightly, on the 21st of March, and call it Naoroz.

Incidentally the followers of His Highness the Aga Khan and Shiha Mussalmans all over Iran and elsewhere observe Jamsheed-i-Naoroz as their New Year, with great eclat.

Thus the Parsees observe three New Year days, and, when taunted about it, reply 'The more the merrier'.

CHAPTER XVIII

SUDRAH — KUSTI

Initiation Ceremony

As soon as a Parsee child attains the age of about seven, the parents begin to make preparations for its initiation ceremony, known as NAOJOTE. The word "Naojote" is a compound of Nao (Av. Nava; Sk. Nava; Lat. Novus) = New; and Zote (Av. Zatar from Zu; Sk. Hu; to offer prayers) meaning one who offers prayers. Hence Naojote means a new initiate who is ripe to offer prayers as enjoined by the religion of the Parsees. This ceremony must be performed before the child, male or female, attains the age of fifteen, and it consists of the investiture of the child with the sacred shirt called SUDRAH, and the sacred thread called KUSTI.

Two or three months before the parents have decided on the performance of the ceremony, a Mobed, or priest, is generally asked to come to the child every day for about an hour, to teach him or her the necessary prayers for the occasion, and depending upon the child's memory and aptitude, the priest teaches as much as the child can retain. The reason for this is that the sacred prayers of the Parsees are mostly in Avesta, dating back some 3500 years and which, except the scholars, who have spent a considerable number of years in learning, nobody knows or understands. The Christian and Mussalman children learn their prayers by heart in Latin or Arabic, without understanding them, and the Parsee child does likewise.

Depending upon the circumstances of the parents, invitations are sent to friends and acquaintances in small or large numbers, in whose presence the Dastur (High Priest) with other priests under him, from two to twenty in number, performs the ceremony.

Before the ceremony actually starts, however, the child is given a bath known as Nahn (Sk. Snan), and while the bath is being given by the mother or the lady of the house, a Mobed recites certain sacred formulas, standing outside the bathroom, after which the child is given a clean pair of trousers and on the upper part of the body a shawl is wrapped, to prevent the child catching a chill.

He or she is then led to the hall where the congregation has gathered, and is made to sit on a flat wooden stool on a platform, whereas the Dastur and other Mobeds squat round the child, on rich carpets.

There will also be noticeable:

1. A new set of clothes for the child, including a new sacred shirt and thread placed in a silver shiny round shaped tray.
2. A tray full of rice, which, at the end of the ceremony, is presented to the family priest. It is a remnant of the old system by which a part of the payment to the priest was made in kind.
3. A tray full of flowers to be presented, at the end of the ceremony, to the assembled guests.
4. A lighted lamp, generally a lamp burning with clarified butter. There may be one or more candle lamps.
5. Fire burning on a censer with fragrant sandal-wood and frank-incense.
6. A tray, containing a mixture of rice, pomegranate grains, small slices of cocoanut, raisins and almonds, to be sprinkled, later on, on the child as a symbol of prosperity.

The tray containing the suit of clothes for the child, also contains some betel leaves, betel nuts, a few pieces of sugar candy, a few grains of rice, a garland of flowers, a metallic cup containing kanku or a kind of red powder and a few Rupees. All these things have nothing to do with the religious ceremony, but, being considered in India as emblems of good luck, are handed to the child, later on, by the officiating priest.

The officiating Dastur places in the hand of the child seated before him the sacred shirt and recites the Repentant's prayer, known as Patet. With him the child also recites the prayer which he or she has been taught. Any child who does not commit the whole of it to memory, recites only portions of it or some other short sacred formulas taught to him or her. These short sacred formulas correspond to some extent to the Pater Noster of the Christians.

At the conclusion of the prayers the officiating Dastur stands up and makes the child stand before him, always facing the sun, that is in the morning facing east or, if the ceremony is in the afternoon, facing west and asks him or her to make a declaration of faith as follows:-

"Praised be the most righteous, the wisest, the most holy and the best Mazdayasnan Law which is the gift of Mazda. The good, true, and perfect religion, which God has sent to this world, is that which Prophet Zarathushtra has brought in here. That religion is the religion of Zarathushtra, that Ahura Mazda communicated to holy Zarathushtra."

While this declaration of faith on behalf of the child is made, the Dastur stands behind the child and recites a prayer as under:-

"The Omniscient God is the greatest Lord. Ahriman is the evil spirit, that keeps back the advancement of the world. May that Evil Spirit with all his accomplices remain fallen and dejected. O Omniscient Lord! I repent of all my sins. I repent of all the evil thoughts that I have entertained in my mind, of all the evil words that I may have spoken, of all the evil actions that I may have performed. May Ahura Mazda be praised. May Ahriman, the evil spirit, be condemned. The will of the righteous is the most praiseworthy."

During this recital the Dastur ties the KUSTI (the sacred thread), which is made of lamb's wool, three times round the child's waist. The wool is at first combed and then spun in a fine thread. Two such threads are prepared on two spindles called 'Chatri' by the Parsees. These two threads are then twisted into one thread and these thus twisted or doubled are woven into a knot on a handloom called 'Jantar'. Seventy-two threads go to make up the KUSTI, and at first these are separated or divided into six parts or strands, each of 12 threads. It is considered to be the privilege of the women of the priestly class to weave the KUSTI, and it is the privilege of the priest finally to consecrate it before its ends are woven and finished. In the end the KUSTI, which is hollow, is turned inside out, by means of a needle, and then the remaining unwoven parts of the thread are knit together. Three string ends in the form of tassels each of 24 threads are formed at each end of the woven thread. So at both ends there are, in all, six string ends.

Now Kusti being prepared from the wool of a lamb is considered to be the emblem of innocence and purity, and is held to be a badge

reminding the follower of the faith of Zarathushtra, of the purity of life and action, which he has always to observe.

The 72 threads which make up the Kusti symbolise the 72 chapters of the Yesna, which forms an important part of the liturgical prayers of the Parsees.

The hollow of the thread symbolises the space between the earth and the heavens, between this world and the next. The two worlds are so connected that what one sows in this world he reaps in the next. The turning of the Kusti inside out has a somewhat similar signification. It symbolises the passage of the soul from the corporeal to the spiritual world. The weaving or uniting of all the threads into one symbolises universal union, or brotherhood. Through the explanation of the symbolism rests not on any old Avesta books, but on later books, still it is clear that the structure of the Kusti had some symbolic signification like that of the cord worn by the Franciscan fathers round the waist. The Kusti is said to have existed as a symbol prior to Zarathushtra.

It is enjoined that, except at the time of bathing, a Parsee must always have the sacred shirt and thread on his body. This thread is to be united and regirded several times during the day, such as immediately on leaving bed in the morning, after the ablutions and answering the calls of nature, after the bath, before meals and before retiring to bed. While untying and regirding the Kusti, a Parsee always turns towards the light; in the morning he turns towards the East, facing the sun; in the afternoon and evening towards the West facing the sun, and at night, towards a lamp, or the stars and the moon.

The tying of the knots is symbolical; for instance, while performing the tying of the first half of the first knot in the front, a Zoroastrian thinks that Ahura Mazda exists, that He is one, is holy, and is matchless. While performing the second half of the first knot, he must remember that the religion of Zarathushtra is the word of God and that he must have full faith in it. While performing the first half of the second knot at the back, he remembers that Zarathushtra is the Prophet of God and that he shows the proper path of worship. On the other hand, while performing the second half of the second knot, he has to bear in mind that he has always to attend to good thoughts, good words good deeds. A knot symbolises a resolution; so these knots of the sacred thread symbolise resolutions for the above thoughts.

The Kusti, as can be imagined from the description given above is a kind of belt. In Persian what is called 'Kamar-Bastan', i.e. the tying of

the waist or putting on the belt, is a phrase which has come to mean 'to be ready for work'. Therefore, the putting on of the Kusti round the waist symbolises that the follower of Zarathushtra who puts it on thereby indicates his readiness to serve God. A person stands before a superior with his waist girded with a belt to show that he is ready to obey the orders of his master or superior. So, the follower of the Prophet with waist girded by a belt or Kusti, shows his obedience to his Great Master.

The ceremony being over, the lady members of the family collect on the platform and start dressing the child in the clothes kept ready on a silver salver. The child, as we have seen above, was wrapped up with a shawl on the upper part of the body, whereon the sacred shirt (Sudrah) and the sacred thread (Kusti) are eventually put by the Dastur, while reciting the prescribed prayers.

Incidentally, Sudrah is made of muslin or similar cotton material, with very short but broad sleeves, with the length coming a little nearer to the knees. Below the neck of the Sudrah is kept a little pouch which in the Parsee religious language is known as Gire-ban. This pouch is symbolical of a purse, and the child is given to understand that just as a purse is valued according to the richness of the jewels put in it, so this Gire-ban will be valued on the Day of Judgement at the Chinvat Bridge, by the Archangel Mehr Davar, in accordance with the quantity of pure thoughts, pure words and pure deeds, accumulated by the child during its life time, which will pave its way to Heaven.

At the same time the mother of the child, or the senior lady member of the family, presents a purse to the Dastur or the officiating priest for his services, and in both cases, namely that of the child and of the Dastur, according to the Hindu custom borrowed by the Parsees, a red vermilion mark is first put on the forehead vertically (in the case of a girl, a tiny beauty spot in the middle of the forehead on which are pressed some grains of rice, after which a lump of sugar is put in the mouth of both, and then garlands are placed round the neck. At the same time, a cocoanut is placed on one palm, the other palm being naturally filled with a packet, whatever it may contain, according to the financial circumstances of the giver, or the parents. The lady then moves her arms over the head of the child and the priest and brings the fingers of both the hands together and cracks them, which signifies that she has taken over her own head all the ill-luck that may be in store for them both.

After this, the priests depart, while the music starts and the guests prepare themselves for the feast.

CHAPTER XIX

THE PARSEE MARRIAGE CEREMONY

Twelve hundred years with the Hindus in their adopted country made the Parsees borrow many of their ways, manners, customs and superstitions. The marriage ceremony is one, to which the Parsees have added quite a lot of Hindu customs.

The following description taken from D.F. Karaka's 'History of the Parsees' was accurate up to the last forty years.

First of all there were professional match-makers in the community both men and women. Some of the priests also joined them in this profession. In a large majority of cases amongst the Parsees the marriages are arranged by the parents, as the family system of old is still maintained, whereby the children, even grown-ups, are under the sway of their parents, who decide for themselves what is good for the children, and particularly whom they should marry.

Many still believe in consulting astrologers about the horoscopes of their children, and depending upon what the "Joshi" (Horoscope reader) says, the parents make up their mind whether a particular boy or girl would be suitable for the family or not. In fact, if the 'Joshi' does not approve of the match and augurs that ill will arise from it, negotiations are broken off, often much to the grief of the young couple.

At least up to a 100 years ago, the Parsees had adopted the child marriage system, borrowed from the Hindus, and marriage used to take place with the boy and the girl, aged three or four, sitting on the laps of their respective parents, when the ceremony was being performed. They were brought together only after puberty, when they were considered ripe enough for marriage. Needless to say, this system is now completely abolished with the spread of education among both the parents and their children. It might be added, incidentally, that the present-day Parsees are cent per cent literate.

Usually a fair number of friends, relations and admirers are invited to a Parsee wedding. Amongst the wealthy, it is not unusual in a city like Bombay to invite four to five thousand people at a time, when a lot

of money is spent on presents, as also on food and drinks. (Paradoxically since the partition of the country, India has introduced prohibition, much to the disappointment of a merry race like the Parsees).

The marriage ceremony in 99% of cases, always takes place in the evening after sunset, a custom that the Parsees have adopted in accordance with the promise given to the Rana of Sanjan, by their ancestors, on their landing at that place.

The Parsees at Bombay and adjoining towns used to have friends and relations of the bride sitting on one side, and of the bridegroom on the opposite side, before the marriage ceremony started.

Upto the last 25 years, the wedding attire for the males was like that of the Parsee priests, but now-a-days fashion has changed, and the bridegroom sits simply wearing a white coat and a pair of trousers, with the headgear which will be seen from the photographic plates shown on the opposite page.

As an example of the progressive tendencies among modern Parsee youth, exceptions are made now-a-days for an eccentric bridegroom appearing for the wedding ceremony in full naval dress, for example, if he belongs to the navy.

Shortly before the marriage procession starts, a large number of the female friends of the bride go to the bridegroom's place with a present of a rich dress, or a ring of gold with diamonds, according to her parents' means. All these are arranged in a rich tray of silver, which is carried by the bride's mother in her right hand. When they return after executing this errand, that is about the time the sun sets, bouquets of roses or other beautiful and fragrant flowers and small triangular packets of "Pan and sopari", i.e. betel leaf and nut, wrapped in gold leaf, are distributed to each member of the assembly, upon whom rosewater is also sprinkled from a large gold or silver sprinkler. This custom too, since the last 25 years, is dying out.

After this the entire party proceeds in due order to the side of the bride. The bridegroom, accompanied at his side by the priest who is to perform the ceremony, walks next, and then follow the male portion of the assembly, the female company bringing up the rear. This custom too, upto the last 25 years, was very imposing; the band playing lively airs and the menfolk all clad in white, and the ladies and maidens dressed in their

very best, with merry little children on the arms of their well-clad Ayahs, formed a colourful spectacle.

On reaching the bride's side, the men accompanying the groom take their seats among the male guests of the bride's party, and the ladies go inside the hall and take their places with the others. When all are seated, the bride and the bridegroom are led on to the stage, specially erected for the purpose, and are made to sit opposite each other.

A piece of cloth is held between them as a curtain, so as to screen them from each other's view. Under this curtain they are made to hold each other's right hands in their grasp. Then another piece of cloth is placed round, so as to encircle them and the ends of the cloth are tied together in a double knot. In the same way, raw twine is taken and wound round the pair seven times by the officiating priests, who during this performance repeat the short prayers prescribed for the purpose. On completing the seventh round, the twine is tied seven times over the joined hands of the couple, as well as round the double knot of the ends of the cloth previously put about them.

When this is over, incense is burnt in fire placed in a flat metallic vase, after which the curtain is suddenly dropped down and the bride and the groom who have each been provided with a few grains of rice, hasten to throw them at each other. This is followed by a clapping of hands by the ladies, who are seated round the bridal pair, and the applause is taken up by the gentlemen.

After the rice has been thus thrown by the couple, they are made to sit side by side, and the curtain between them is removed. Then starts the recital of "Ashirwad" or blessings, by the two Dasturs or chief priests. One of the Dasturs stands facing the bride and the other the groom.

Now, the holding of the curtain between the bride and the groom, and its subsequent removal, are meant to show that up to the time of the ceremony the couple were separated from each other, but that they are now so no longer. The grasping of the right hand each by the other and their being tied with a string, signify that they are thenceforth united. The putting round of the string and the cloth, so as to encircle them with a double knot at the ends, means that they are now joined together and made one. The object of using raw twine, and of its being put round them seven times, is to show that while raw twine can easily be broken, when it is strung round seven times twisted into one, it forms

so strong a band that it cannot be broken by ordinary strength, thus implying that the love and affection of the husband and wife for each other should be so strong that nothing can undo it. The reason for the twine being strung round seven times, is because this number is held to be very auspicious amongst the Parsees, there having been seven Ameshaspands (Archangels), seven heavens and seven continents known to the ancient Iranians.

Lastly, the throwing of a few grains of rice upon each other is watched with keen interest by the friends and relations of the bride and the bridegroom, because the one who is successful in throwing rice first on to the other is supposed to evince more love and affection.

On the conclusion of this preliminary ceremony, the senior Dastur begins the most solemn part of the marriage ceremony, and pronounces the following blessing:-

“May the Omniscient Lord bless you with many sons and grandsons, with good livelihood, heart-ravishing friendship, long life, and an existence of one hundred and fifty years!”.

Paradoxically the ancient Persians always prayed for sons, as even amongst the ancient Arabs it has been recorded that not wanting daughters, when a female child was born, she was done away with by drowning. This idea of always desiring sons has prevailed in almost all the ancient races. Hence, this prayer of the ancient Iranians, desiring the blessings of sons, may well be appreciated.

There are witnesses standing or seated behind the couple, one by the side of the bride and one by the side of the bridegroom. They represent their parents, or guardians. Of them the officiating priests ask, two or three times, during the ceremony, whether the marriage receives their consent or not. The person representing the father of the bridegroom is first asked the following question by the priest:-

“In the presence of this assemblage, which has gathered here in this Town (the town is named, such as Bombay, Karachi or wherever the wedding may be taking place) on this day, in this month, and the year of Emperor Yazdezard Sheriar,* the King of the Sassanian dynasty, of auspicious Iran, say whether

* The correct Persian spelling is “Shehriar”.

you have consented, according to the rules and customs of the Mazdayasnan religion, to take this bride in marriage for this bridegroom on a promise of paying her 2000 "derams" of pure white silver and two red gold 'dinars' of the city of Nishapore?"

and the witness answers:-

"Yes. I have consented."

The Representative of the father of the bride is then asked:-

"Have you promised to give forever this girl of your family in marriage to (here name of the groom is mentioned) with honest thoughts, good words and for the increase of goodness?"

The witness answers:-

"Yes, I have promised."

The following question is then put to those about to be married:-

"Have you both consented to act according to your promise with honest heart, till the end of your lives?"

They answer:-

"Yes, we have."

After these interrogations and answers, both the Dasturs or priests deliver to the marrying couple a short address, containing good, sound and practical advice, which, if attended to, would benefit the bridegroom throughout his career in life in all its different aspects, whether social, political or commercial.

It might here be mentioned for the information of non-Zoroastrians that when the Parsees were allowed to land in Sanjan on certain conditions, one of them was that their marriage ceremony should be performed in Sanskrit, side by side with their own language. So until the last forty years, this custom of a Sanskrit recital, after the Pazand and Avestan recital, was kept up, with the result that the ceremony used to

be inordinately long. Incidentally, the Sanskrit portion of the Parsee marriage ceremony was composed by the famous Parsee high priest Neriosang Dhaval, who came to Sanjan when the Parsee flock landed there. This custom now is entirely dropped.

But not only that, till the last forty years, the parents were not content with this long marriage ceremony of their children. They insisted on it being performed again at one o'clock in the morning, so that the marrying couple, along with their parents and near relations did not reach home till the appearance of dawn. The modern Parsees have now cut down the marriage ceremony, so that it lasts not for more than 20 minutes.

For long, the Parsees had preserved a custom after the marriage ceremony of having a banquet, where friends and relations were invited, including friends from outside communities. There they refrained from offering meat, to avoid giving offence to the feelings of the Hindus, but this custom now is entirely eliminated and, apart from having meat and all sorts of viands, drink is freely offered, with which the health and happiness of the bride and bridegroom, as also their parents, is toasted.

Till the partition of the country, it was customary during Parsee marriage banquets to start first with a toast to H.M. The King or Queen of England, as the case might be, and the Royal Family, which was invariably received with enthusiasm, and drunk amidst cheers.

As among European, after dinner, ladies retire to the drawing rooms, and gentlemen remain in the dining room, smoking, drinking and chatting, the custom up to the last 75 years among the Parsees was for the ladies to retire to their own houses after the marriage banquet, and for the gentlemen to remain behind till an early hour of the morning, enjoying the pleasure of a "Natch", in other words a dance, which in those days was performed by non-Zoroastrian women, who were not much thought of in respectable society, and who were always boycotted by Parsee ladies. This custom too is now entirely dead. Instead, sometimes a musical concert is given, or a cinema film is shown, by way of entertainment for the guests.

Needless to say, wedding processions and several other ceremonies that were held up to the last 40 years, including the recital of the wedding ceremony in Sanskrit, the discordant native music, the gaily caparisoned steeds, the boys dressed in military uniform, and the little girls in European garb, together with the silver-plated palanquins and other ancient

customs, have now entirely disappeared owing to the increase of education amongst young and old in the Parsee community. *Y. J. 1911.*

Incidentally the customs that prevailed amongst the Parsees up to the last 50 years of grown-up sons and their wives and children staying together with the family in the house of their sire, and the grey-headed patriarchs who used to look with pride and pleasure upon the group of children and grandchildren round them, are also events of the past, as the present-day younger generation, as with Europeans, wish to live apart from the parents as soon as they are married.

Against this description of the marriage ceremony amongst the Parsees in India, upto the last forty years, and the present day, let us describe in short the marriage ceremony as it is performed by the Zoroastrians in Iran. It is much simpler than among their Indian co-religionists.

On the wedding day a number of male relations and friends of the bridegroom go to the house of the bride, where on arrival, they are regaled with sweetmeats and sherbat. One of the elders of the bridegroom's party asks the girl whether she is willing to accept as her husband the man who has been selected by the respective families. On receiving an answer in the affirmative, the bridegroom's party along with that of the bride, return to the former's house. After they are all seated, a priest stands before the bridegroom and advises him in the Dari language, to this effect:-

"Follow the commandments of the Lord God and His Prophet Zarathushtra; pray to the Almighty three times a day, participate in all the 'Gahambars' and other 'Jashns' (festivals); fulfil your duties towards your parents and your tutor; appoint an angel, a 'dastur' and a wise man, as your guardians; do good to mankind; keep peace with all men; follow the path of righteousness, for righteousness alone secures the fulfilment of all your hopes; be humble and of good behaviour; hurt nobody; do not be envious of any one; do not look with contempt upon your poor relations; on the contrary, help them as far as it lies in your power, in all your actions seek the advice of wise men and in all things trust in God, and always thank Him for His mercies."

After these prayers, the priest asks the father of the girl whether

he has consented to give his daughter to the man proposed. On receiving the answer, he asks the bridegroom whether he has agreed to take the young woman for his wife. The bridegroom having answered in the affirmative, he and the bride join hands, and walk round a blazing fire three times.

This completes the ceremony, and after partaking of a sumptuous dinner, the audience separates. The girl then goes to live with her husband. The Persian Zoroastrians do not, as already stated, give their children in marriage till the boy has attained the age of twenty and the girl that of fifteen.

It is most fortunate that despite several customs of the Hindus that the Parsees adopted due to their sojourn in this country for over 1200 years, they never adopted the cruel custom of prohibiting their widows from remarrying, a tyranny which is generally followed by so much sin and immorality and which custom, despite the laws framed against it, is still surreptitiously followed by the ignorant masses among the Hindus.

Widows

CHAPTER XX

THE PARSEE FUNERAL CEREMONY

The customs of the funeral ceremony of the Parsees have been handed down from pre-Zoroastrian times. The Magis who are supposed to be connected with the Parsee religious book, known as Vandidad, written about a thousand years after Zarathushtra, have followed the system for the disposal of the dead for over 3,000 years. It is described hereunder, though the Parsees are most unwilling to make any changes therein.

When a Parsee is on the brink of death, a Mobed or a priest is called, who puts a few drops of consecrated juice, prepared by a priest in the fire temple, from the Homa, the plant of immortality, into the mouth of the dying person, at the same time reciting certain prescribed prayers into his or her ears. Sometimes the juice of a few grains of pomegranate, which is considered essential in some of the Parsee ceremonies, is dropped into the mouth of the dying person.

In the meantime, the family members remove the furniture and carpets from the spot in the house, where they intend laying the dead body, and wash and clean it.

As soon as the person is dead, the corpse bearers are called in. They are divided into two classes. One is known as Khandhias; their job is to wash the body and prepare it for the ceremony and carry the bier, on which the corpse is placed eventually, on their shoulders to the resting place known in Persian as Aram-Ghah. The others are known as Nasasalars, whose job is to carry the dead body right into the Dokhma, commonly called by Europeans 'The Tower of Silence' and which for brevity will be referred to hereafter as Dokhma.

The Khandhias first wash the body. Sometimes, when they are not available in time, some of the family members undertake that task: ladies in case the corpse is that of a female, and men in case the corpse is of a male.

The body, after being washed, is covered with a white, clean suit of clothes. This suit of clothes is not washed by the washerman, but is generally washed beforehand at home by some one of the family, when

it is known that death is imminent. The Kusti is then girded round, over the Sudrah, which is already put on the dead body, by a relative while reciting the prescribed prayer. The deceased is then placed on a white clean sheet of cotton cloth, spread over the ground. The relations of the deceased now meet him or her for the last time. After this, nobody is allowed to touch or come into contact with the body, which is supposed now to fall under the influence of what is known in Zoroastrian Scriptures as 'Druj-e-Nasush', that is the evil influence of decomposition.

The law of Vandidad is extremely strict in this regard, and it considers it unsafe to touch the body, which now begins to decompose, lest the touch may spread contagion and disease among the living. Only those who put on the clothes over the body and the corpse bearers are allowed to come into contact with it. If someone happens to touch by mistake a dead body, he or she is prohibited from touching other persons before a purification ceremony is gone through, known as 'Rimani', which consists of washing himself or herself by a particular method prescribed in Vandidad. This precaution is considered extremely necessary to stop the spread of contagion.

The body is then entrusted to two persons (Khandhias) who are generally trained for this work. They have at first to wash themselves, put on a clean suit of clothes, recite the prescribed prayers, and then place the body on the ground on a white sheet of cloth, and proceed to cover the whole body with a white cloth. The only portion kept uncovered is the face. The body is then put on slabs of stone or marble in a corner of the room. The hands are arranged upon the chest, crosswise.

The body is never allowed to have its head facing the north.* After this, one of the two Khandhias draws, with a metallic bar or nail, three deep circles, known as Pavi, which indicate that the ground within the circles is the ground temporarily set apart for the dead body, and nobody is allowed to go to that part of the ground, lest he catch infection.

*For many centuries Iran was invaded from its northern borders by some semi-civilised races, who wore headgears with two horns like that of a bull which made them appear in the eyes of the Iranians like the devils incarnate. Further, the winds blowing from the north were always found to be injurious both for men and cattle, as also for the crops. Therefore the northerly direction bore evil for the Iranians, and even in their prayers the north is always deprecated. Hence the dead body, during the ceremonies and till the time it is removed to the Tower of Silence, is never allowed to be placed facing towards the north.

Incidentally, the Parsees not being able to understand the prayers written in Avesta and Pahlavi, still abuse the supposed devils coming from the north of Iran, their motherland, and also the bad winds, while reciting their prayers. It is purely a case of 'Ignorance is Bliss'.

If death takes place late at night, the funeral generally takes place in the afternoon of the following day, to enable friends, relatives and members of the community to take part in the ceremony, and to pay their last respects to the departed soul. If death takes place in the evening, then the body is kept all night at home, and the funeral ceremony takes place early in the morning.

While the body is in the house, continuous prayers are being offered by the priests in turn, during which a fire urn is kept near the body and it is fed with sandal wood and frank-incense continually, to purify the atmosphere and prevent it from spreading obnoxious germs round about. A small lamp, which is kept burning with clarified butter, is placed near the corpse, from the time it is laid on the ground duly washed. This lamp keeps burning night and day, for ten days, near the spot where the body was laid prior to its removal to the Dokhma.

The funeral ceremony generally lasts for an hour. Two priests during that time recite the **first Gatha**, out of the five, composed by the Prophet. In these "Has" (Chapters), which are recited, there is no special reference to the dead, but their recital is intended as a sermon upon our transient life in this world, addressed to those who attend the funeral, and upon the benefits accruing from leading a life of morality and virtue. The priesthood of the present day are unable to explain why this sermon is recited before the dead body, instead of being preached directly to the persons attending the funeral; but it is believed that the recital of the Gatha is sufficient to destroy any evil influence that may affect the soul of the departed; it is also believed that the soul finds it soothing.

In the tenth paragraph of the Vandidad, Zarathushtra is said to have asked God, "How shall I combat the 'Druksh,' which flies from the dead upon the living? How shall I subdue the 'Nasush' which defiles the living, from the dead?" The answer of Ahura Mazda was, "Speak the words which are in the Gathas". And this, most probably, is the reason why these "Has" are recited before the dead body.

Of this we are certain: that its recital was not introduced in later times, because it is enjoined in some of the earliest religious books as being the most ancient Avesta composition. Though through sheer custom for thousands of years this recital continues, the advantage of it is, that for one hour, while this recital goes on, it gives time to the late-comers to the ceremony to pay their last respects to the departed soul.

In between this long ceremony, another one takes place, known as Sag-Deed (showing the corpse to a dog). No satisfactory explanation is available why this peculiar and ancient custom of Sag-Deed is being kept up. But generally it is believed that, during the pastoral ages when the Persians were moving from place to place for pasture for their herds, their constant companions were the dogs, who watched over their flock and prevented them from going astray, or getting lost. They also kept watch over them at night. So the animal became a faithful companion of the household, and probably the idea was developed to give even this faithful friend of the house a chance to pay its last respects to the family member.

The dog usually selected is known as possessing "Chehar Chasham", literally four eyes. Above his eyebrows there are yellow spots on each side; such dogs are supposed to be of a species that possess the characteristic of staring steadily at a body if life is altogether extinct. On the other hand, if there appear any sign of life in the body, the dog would not look at it at all. Thus it is presumed that the ancient Persians ascertained by this method of Sag-Deed if life was really extinct in a person.

Dr. Martin Haug suggests that this Sag-Deed has been performed, since time immemorial, due to the belief of the Persians that such dogs possess some magnetic influence in their eyes. Others again connect the Sag-Deed with the idea of loyalty and gratitude that must exist between the living and the deceased. Thus, though inexplicable, the ceremony of showing the dead body to the dog, three times before it is removed from the house, is rigidly kept up by the Parsees.

After this, all those co-religionists, who have gathered together for the funeral ceremony (and in case of important personages among the community, many thousands gather together), form a queue, and pass one by one round the body, with bowed heads, by way of paying their last respects to the dear departed. Sometimes this latter ceremony itself takes more than half an hour. During the time the last funeral ceremony is being performed by the priests, the ladies sit in the hall a few feet away from the body; and, out of respect for the deceased, they squat on the ground instead of using chairs. Gradually this old practice is being replaced—the ladies too being provided with chairs inside the room where the body lies.

At a Parsee funeral, all males dress in pure white, white being the symbol of purity with the Zoroastrians; and the priests never wear anything but white, whether in summer or winter, including the headgear.

Ladies, until recently, always wore black sarees, as a sign of mourning, but now that idea is fast changing, and they too put on pure white sarees, to be in keeping with the dress of the whole congregation, as also keeping up the symbol of purity, according to the tenets of the Zoroastrian religion.

After the menfolk have finished passing round the bier as a mark of respect, the ladies all get up in a body and bow before the deceased, while the corpse bearers enter the house, cover the face of the dead body, which they put on the iron bier, known in Parsee religious language as Gehan, and then wrap the entire body round with a clean white sheet, the ends of which they tie round the iron bars of the bier. Gradually they lift the body and the bier on to their shoulders, and march slowly out of the house to the street and on to the Dokhma.*

According to the law of Vandidad, a bier made only from iron is permitted for carrying the body, because wood is supposed to be porous, and therefore is likely to be infected by obnoxious germs from the decomposing body, thus endangering the health of the corpse bearers.

When the funeral procession with the bier arrives at the Dokhma, the bier is once again placed upon the ground and the face of the deceased uncovered for about five minutes, to give the relatives and the nearest and dearest ones, who have walked behind the bier all the way up to the Dokhma, a last chance of looking at his or her face, after which the face is again covered up, and the bier is carried on the shoulders, up to the gate of the Dokhma, where the head corpse bearer, who carries the key to unlock the door, opens it with a short prayer, and then, with one other corpse bearer (Nasasalar), takes the body inside the Dokhma, and closes the door behind. The body is never allowed to be carried by more or less than two persons.

The body having been completely stripped of all garments and left at the respective pavi (separating space on which the corpses are kept, according to whether it belongs to a male, female or child), the Nasasalars

*The Parsees have now started using a motor van, in cities like Bombay and Karachi, in which they carry the bier—which saves so much hardship to the pall-bearers and saves so much time of the mourners and the Priests who follow the bier up to the Dokhma.

come out and lock the door behind. Immediately after that the mourners begin to depart and the Khandhias and the Nasasalars go and have a complete bath of purification.

Incidentally, the clothes wrapped round the dead body and those of the Nasasalars are thrown in a pit and burnt with sulphuric acid, the reason being that these are considered too infectious for the safety of the people around, with the result that the corpse bearers are not allowed to remove the clothes from the body of the deceased with their own hands, but are enjoined to do so by means of metallic hooks and similar instruments with which they are provided. On the other hand, the clothes of the Khandhias are carefully boiled and washed, for use for the next occasion.

On the third day after the death of a person, a ceremony takes place known as "Oothamna", where prayers are offered for the departed soul and for its safe passage over the Chinvat Bridge on to Heaven. This ceremony generally takes place at a fire temple, and occasionally at the house of the deceased, in the room where the body was kept. At this ceremony, friends and relations of the deceased take the opportunity to announce sums of money for charity, for the consolation and benefit of the departed soul.

On the dawn of the fourth day, another ceremony is performed, which is the real 'Oothamna' ceremony, because it is the belief among the Parsees that, on the dawn of the fourth day after death, the soul reaches Chinvat Bridge, where Mehr Davar* judges its good or bad actions, and rewards it with blessings of heaven or otherwise, as its actions justify.

*Mehr Davar is the Angel who sits in Judgement over the good and bad deeds of the deceased, and gives judgement as to whether the soul be sent to Heaven or Hell.

CHAPTER XXI

DOKHMA—THE TOWER OF SILENCE

To maintain Fire, Air, Sky, Water and Earth, pure and undefiled is the cardinal principle of the creed of Zarathushtra.

In fact, long before the advent of Zarathushtra, dead bodies were taken by the Persians to the top of mountains, where the arms and legs of the corpses were tied securely to iron pegs, and left exposed to be devoured by the dogs, who always formed part of the funeral, and who were specially trained for the purpose. After the flesh was thus devoured and the bones dried up by atmospheric influence, they were collected together and put into an earthen pot, which was buried in the ground. Centuries after this device, the Persians took to the method of exposing their dead in round walled towers, white washed inside and outside, which are known by the name of Dokhmas.

↙ If one were to enter this grim silent white Tower of Silence at Bombay, which is the largest in India, one would find, first of all, that it is open at the top, that the outside walls are from 20 to 30 feet high, and that it is about 300 feet in circumference. It is entirely paved with large stone slabs, well cemented and divided into three rows of shallow open receptacles, corresponding to the three moral precepts of the Zoroastrian Religion, namely good thoughts, good words and good deeds. The first row is used for corpses of the males, the second for females and the third for children. These are called Pavees.

There are footpaths for the corpse-bearers to move about, and there is a deep central well in the Tower, 150 feet in circumference, the sides and bottom of which are also paved with stone slabs, and used for depositing the dry bones. The corpse is completely stripped of its flesh by vultures within a short time, and the bones of the denuded skeleton, when perfectly dried up by atmospheric influences and the powerful heat of the tropical sun, are thrown into this well, where they gradually crumble to dust. Thus the rich and the poor meet together on one level of equality after death.

There are holes in the inner sides of the well, through which the rain water is carried into four underground drains, at the base of the Tower. These drains are connected with four underground wells, the

bottoms of which are covered with a thick layer of sand. Pieces of charcoal and sand-stone are also placed at the end of each drain, and these are renewed from time to time. These double sets of filters are provided for purifying the rain water passing over the bones, before it enters the ground, thus observing one of the tenets of the religion of zarathushtra, namely that "the mother earth shall not be defiled".

The vultures (nature's scavengers) do their work much more expeditiously than millions of insects do when dead bodies are buried in the ground. By this rapid process, putrefaction with all its concomitant evils is most effectually prevented. It is for this reason that the Parsees are prohibited by their religion from burying, or burning, or confining the bodies of their dead to the seas or rivers.

In accordance with their religious injunctions, the Parsees build their Towers of Silence on the tops of hills, if available. No expense is spared in constructing them from the hardest and best materials, with a view that they may last for centuries, without the possibility of polluting the earth or contaminating any living being dwelling thereon.

However distant may be the home of a deceased person, whether rich or poor, high or low in rank, he has always a walking funeral—his body is carried to the Towers of Silence on an iron bier, by official corpse-bearers, and is followed in procession by the mourners, relatives and friends in white flowing full-dress, walking behind in pairs, each couple joined hand in hand by holding a white handkerchief between them, in token of sympathetic grief.

There are instances where non-Zoroastrians out of curiosity have tried to peep into the Dokhma, and it is recorded that in the year 1792 a European resident of Bombay secretly climbed up its wall, and looked into it. The feelings of the Parsees were greatly outraged by this act, with the result that the Governor-in-Council at Bombay had to issue a proclamation to the effect that whoever shall obtrude themselves on the temples, tombs or religious ceremonies of the native residents, under the Company's service, if in their employ, or if free merchants, mariners or others, shall be adjudged to have forfeited their licences, and will be sent to Europe.

During the Second World War, in Karachi also, planes were found flying very low over the Dokhma, with a view to getting a photograph of the bodies laid therein. In fact, one of the foreign magazines reproduced an aerial photographic view taken by one of the pilots. The Parsee

community in Karachi thereupon made a strong protest before the military authorities, who promptly issued strict injunctions to the pilots not to fly within certain distance of the Dokhma.

It is but natural that non-Zoroastrians may consider this mode of the disposal of the dead bodies, as practised by the Parsees even now, revolting. But usage from time immemorial has not only reconciled the most sensitive Parsee to it, but has led him to think that it is the best that could be adopted under all circumstances.

Cremation, doubtless, is the best of all existing methods known to Science. But unfortunately the Parsees carry their flight of fancy so far as to imagine that the heat created by the crematorium turns the walls of its chamber into actual red, hot fire, and that the body is being burnt on fire. Fire being their sacred symbol, they consider it heinous, according to the laws of Vandidad, their ancient sacred book, to burn the body in a crematorium. In this, the present day youth of the community differ. But we shall deal with the arguments on their behalf in a separate chapter, dealing with the Revolt of the Parsee Youth.

For the present, let us weigh some of the arguments, as advanced by the large majority of the Parsees to others, when the latter express their abhorrence of this practice.

Years ago, when Mr. Monier Williams, Professor of Sanskrit at the University of Oxford, went to see the Tower of Silence on the Malabar Hill at Bombay, during his first visit to India, he asked the then Secretary of the Parsee Panchayat, Mr. Nusserwanji Byramji, how it was possible to become reconciled to such an usage; to which the following reply was given:-

"Our Prophet, Zarathushtra, three thousand years ago, taught us to regard the elements as symbols of the Deity. Earth, fire, water, he said, ought never, under any circumstances, to be defiled by contact with putrefying flesh. Naked, he said, we come into the world, and naked we ought to leave it. But the decaying particles of our bodies should be dissipated as rapidly as possible, and in such a way that neither Mother Earth nor the beings she supports, should be contaminated in the slightest degree. In fact, our Prophet was the greatest of health officers and, following his sanitary laws, we build our towers on the tops of the hills, above all human habitations.

We spare no expense in constructing them of the hardest materials, and we expose our putrescent bodies in open stone receptacles, resting on fourteen feet of solid granite, not necessarily to be consumed by vultures, but to be dissipated in the speediest possible manner, and without the possibility of polluting the earth or contaminating a single living being dwelling thereon. God, indeed, sends the vultures, and, as a matter of fact, these birds do their appointed work much more expeditiously than millions of insects would do if we committed our bodies to the ground. From a sanitary point of view, nothing can be more perfect than our plan. Even the rain water, which washes our skeletons, is conducted by channels into purifying charcoal. Here in these five towers rest the bones of all the Parsees that have lived in Bombay for the last two hundred years. We form a united body in life, and we are united in death."

What effect this produced upon Professor Monier Williams' mind is described by himself, in a letter published in the Times (of London) of those days as under:-

"I could not help thinking that, however much such a system may shock our European feelings and ideas, yet our own method of interment, if regarded from a Parsee point of view, may possibly be equally revolting to Parsee sensibilities. The exposure of the decaying body to the assaults of innumerable worms may have no terrors for us, because our survivors do not see the assailants; but let it be borne in mind that neither are the Parsee survivors permitted to look at the swoop of the heaven-sent birds. Why, then, should we be surprised if they prefer the more rapid to the more lingering operation? and which of the two systems, they may reasonably ask, is more defensible on sanitary grounds?"

The same year Professor Monier Williams visited the Dokhma a second time, and this time he communicated his view to the Parsee Panchayat as follows:-

"On Friday, 10th November, 1876, I had the pleasure of a second visit to the towers of silence. I had already expressed my opinion in a letter published in the London Times of the 28th January, 1876, as to the excellent arrangements connected

with the place set apart by the Parsees for the exposure of their dead. My second visit has confirmed me in my opinion that the Parsee method of disposing of dead bodies is as perfect as anything can be in a sanitary point of view. There is no spot in Bombay where the breezes appear so healthful as in the beautiful gardens which surround the towers. Nothing during all my travels throughout India, from Cashmere to Cape Comorin, has instructed me more than my two visits to the Parsee Towers of Silence."

Incidentally, when His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales visited Bombay in company with His Grace the Duke of Sutherland and Dr. W. H. Russel, in the year 1875, and paid a visit to the Tower of Silence on Malabar Hill, he showed considerable interest in the sanitary precautions adopted in the method of the disposal of the dead by the Parsees.

CHAPTER XXII

PARSEE PRIESTHOOD

The first of the four classes of Iranian Society, described in the opening Chapter of this book, consisted of the Priests. They were called Athravans from their chief duty of tending the fire. Athravan literally means the protector of fire, and the word is derived from 'Atar' meaning fire. It corresponds to the Sanskrit 'Atharvan', the fire priest of the Indo-Iranian period.

"The high estimation in which the priestly class was held among the ancient Iranians, is to be seen from the fact that Athravan is one of the titles assumed by Ahura Mazda himself," says Dastur Dr. Dhalla in his 'ZOROASTRIAN CIVILISATION'. The High Priest ranked second to the King in the Empire.

The head of the Zoroastrian Priests of all Iran received his title from the name of the Prophet, and was called Zarathushtratema, or the most supreme Zarathushtra. In his capacity of a teacher, the priest was known as Aethra-paiti, that is master of knowledge.

The chief characteristics and also the qualifications of a priest were: living on simple and light fare, contentment and patience, uprightness of character and the embodiment of holiness and of religious power. In fact, an Athravan was one who invested a child with a sacred shirt and girdle, celebrated marriages, recited the final prayers over the dead. He was a sacrificer in the Fire Temple, a cleanser of the defiled, a healer of the sick, an exorciser of evil powers, an interpreter of dreams, a reader of stars, an educator of youth, an administrator of justice, a scribe at the Royal Court and the counselor of the King.

The chief means of livelihood of the priests occupied with ceremonial functions came from the fees received from the laity for the performance of sacrificial rituals. The family priests received alms on festivals and on other auspicious occasions. The food and clothing consecrated for ceremonial purposes formed another source of income for the priests. The farmers, making the offering of the first crop of the season to the genius of culture, gave the consecrated grain to them. The physicians who healed the sick, and the cleansers who purified the defiled, were specially enjoined

to charge no fees for services to the priests, but to heal them solely to receive their blessings.*

During the Sasanian period, the word used for the High Priest of the first order was Magopatan-Magopat. Subsequently, it became Mobadan-Mobad, which still further became Dastooran-Dastoor in modern times. In fact, all these titles amounted to the highest office amongst the clergy, known amongst Roman Catholics as the Pope and in the Greek Church as the Patriarch.

In the Zoroastrian prayers, known as Aafrins, a distinction is made between Erwadan, Mobadan and Dastooran.

Erwadan applies to Erwads, who are a priestly class who pass through certain purificatory ceremonies, known as Naavar and Maratab. Only those sons of priests, who have passed one of the above two examinations, along with the appropriate ceremonies, have the right of putting on the white turban, commonly used by all the priests and Dastoors amongst the Zoroastrians. They can perform the thread ceremony, the wedding ceremony as also the ceremony for the dead. They can join in the Jashn ceremony.

Mobadan applies to Mobads or priests who, besides passing through the purificatory ceremonies that the Erwards do, have to go through a special ceremony known as Barasnoom, which alone entitles them to perform higher ceremonies, such as Yazashne, Vandidad and Baaj, apart from the ceremonies for investiture, marriage, death and Jashn.

Dastoorans are the Dasturs who have control over the Mobads, who are guided by the former and who carry out all religious instructions they give to them.

During the Sasanian period, the High Priests became Prime Ministers, Ambassadors, Chief Justices, religious teachers, writers of books on religious and philosophical subjects, and holders of high titles. In fact, the High Priest of King Shapoor II, most famous in the Parsee History of the High Priests, known by the name of Aadarbaad Maraspand, was the Prime Minister in his kingdom.

When the Sasanians came to power, the Avesta, the sacred language of Zoroastrianism, had ceased to be a living tongue. The daily prayers

*'ZOROASTRIAN CIVILISATION' by Dastur Dr. M.N. Dhalla.

continued to be recited in the defunct language. Need was evidently felt to supplement the Avestan prayers by some additional prayers in the vernacular. Dastoor Aadarbad Maraspand, therefore, composed such supplementary prayers in Pazend. His example was followed by other Dastoors. Several benedictory thanks giving and expiatory prayers, composed during the Sasanian period, have come down to us, and are recited as supplementary to the Avestan prayers, up to the present day.¹

Among the Dastooran-Dastoors, mention has already been made of the most revered and saintly Dastoor Meherjirana of Navsari, who visited the Court of the great Moghul Emperor Akbar.

Mr. Vincent A. Smith, M.A., M.R.A., M.R.A.S., late of the Indian Civil Service, in his important book 'Akbar, the Great Moghul (1542-1605)' says about Dastoor Meherjirana that Akbar's principal teacher in Zoroastrian lore was Dastoor Meherjirana, a leading Mobed or theologian, from Navsari, in Gujarat, then the principal centre of the Parsee Priesthood in India, whose acquaintance he had made at the time of the siege of Surat in 1573, when the Imperial Army was eager to learn the mysteries of Zoroastrianism. He extracted all the information he could from that Dastoor, and persuaded him to come to Court, in order to continue the discussion.

Further that his son, who succeeded him, also visited Akbar. All Parsee prayer books of the 18th century are extant, which include the name of Dastoor Meherjirana among the most honoured benefactors of the Zoroastrian faith.

Akbar rewarded him by a heritable grant of 200 bighas of land, as subsistence allowance. The deeds of grant are in existence.

In addition he says that the Dastoor taught Akbar the peculiar terms, ordinances, rites and ceremonies of his creed, laying stress above all things on the duty of reverencing the sun and fire. A sacred fire, prepared according to Parsee rules, was kindled in the palace, and made over to the charge of Abul-Fazl. He was made responsible to see to it that the fire was never extinguished.

The advent of the British in India, which ushered in an era of peace, justice and security of life and property, was a new page in the history of the Parsees. Having a ready scope, the means of adaptation and also

1 "HISTORY OF ZOROASTRIANISM" by Dastur Dr. M. N. Dhalla.

elasticity in their religion, they now began to assert their latent capacity, and soon emerged from the obscurity in which they had lived, to become the foremost race in India in educational, industrial and social matters. They came in the vanguard of progress, massed vast fortunes and munificently gave large sums in charity. This unprecedented economic prosperity helped the revival of learning amongst the Zoroastrians. The Parsee Priesthood had long before degenerated into ignorance. The situation was not keenly felt so long as the laity was equally illiterate. During the long period of twelve centuries, very few priests rose above mediocrity. The youth of the new school demanded that the priest should act as a moral preceptor, a spiritual ministrant to his soul. This, in those times, the priest could not do. He could not widen his religious outlook and adapt himself to the demand of the younger generation.

In the year 1771, that worthy pioneer of romantic renown in Iranian studies, Anquetil du Perron, published his volumes containing the first European translation of the Avesta, which he had studied for six years under Dastoor Darab Sohrab Kumana, the leader of the Kadimi sect at Surat. That gave an impetus, in England and Europe, to scholars like Dr. Mills, Dr. J. Hope Moulton, Spiegel, Martin Haug, Burnoff, Geiger, Darmesteter and hosts of other Professors, who, with the standard editions of the sacred texts, or compilation of grammars and dictionaries, or again in the preparation of scientific translations as well as making ecclesiastical, philological and archaeological researches, left behind a lasting monument. The services that these scholars have rendered to the Parsees are far greater than can ever be expressed.*

During that period the Sanjana and Jamaspasana families of the High Priests provided great Dastoor in India, who wrote numerous books. For instance, Shams-ul-Ulema Dastoor Dr. Peshotan Byramji Sanjana, M.A., Ph.D. (Turin), who published eight volumes of the translation of the Dinkard which is considered a scholarly work. For his great learning he was decorated with the Shams-ul-Ulema (the sun amongst the learned), the first Parsee to get this distinction. He was the first Parsee high priest to be elected a member of the German Oriental Society in 1864.

Dastoor Dr. Jamasji Minocherji Jamaspasana, M.A., Ph.D. (Turin), DDL (Oxen), published a Pahlevi dictionary, which attracted considerable attention among the savants of Europe.

Shams-ul-Ulema Dastoor Dr. Darab Peshotan Sanjana, B.A., Ph.D.

*'HISTORY OF ZOROASTRIANISM' by Dastur Dr. M. N. Dhalla.

(Germany), has also to his credit important publications of volumes 10 to 19 of the 'Dinkard'.

Millions of rupees every year are being spent by the Parsees on religious ceremonies as also on sandalwood and frankincense, which are burnt day in and day out. These alone, in their belief, are an echo of their prayers to the Almighty. They believe with an unshakable faith that the Almighty always showers His blessings on those, who have prayers recited and ceremonials performed by hired priests. The Prophet himself in the Gathas propounds his philosophy, that each individual reaps as he sows, and one's own good thoughts, good words and good deeds, form the only means of salvation. Further, the Prophet says that it is the actions of the man during his life on this earth that secure for him his heaven, or his hell. But, these ideals take a secondary place in the psychology of the Parsee masses, who prefer to remain secure in their blind faith.

To bring a revival of higher ideals among the Parsee Priesthood, a Parsee philanthropist, by name Mr. Merwanji Muncherji Cama, established a Trust, some twenty years ago, with a princely sum of twenty-five lakhs of rupees, and opened a boarding school of Theology, at a place called Andheri, a few miles away from Bombay.

The result of this endowment was, that while with the knowledge imparted in the seminary the young aspirants to the Parsee Priesthood turned out to be superior to the sons of the priests who were taught at home (by their fathers or uncles) in the orthodox way, they could get no better status or corresponding increased emoluments for their services under the Punthakeys.

The word 'Punthakey' is derived from the word 'Punthak' which means control and supervision over a certain number of families, in a certain area, for whom the priest was bound to carry out all ceremonies during auspicious or mournful occasions.

When the sons of the priests came out of the seminary, with a better knowledge of religion, having spent five to seven years on their study, and found that neither the Punthakeys nor the laity considered them in any way better than the illiterate sons of the priests (taught at home and who understood precious little of the religion), they began seeking service in business houses, banks and elsewhere, in preference to remaining under the Punthakeys. The deplorable result of this was that

when the family of the founder, the late Mr. Merwanji Muncherji Cama, found that the number of boys wanting to take advantage of the seminary was greatly diminishing, they were disheartened. They approached the Court to get the Trust reduced by almost a million and a half rupees, utilising the rest for other communal purposes. Thus, a grand and sound scheme ended in disillusionment, while the average Parsee priest, known as Mobed, still remains where he was a thousand years ago.

Further, it is a well known fact that amongst the Parsees, and amongst the Hindus, only the son of a priest can become a priest. In exceptional cases, a brilliant son of a priest can be a Dastoor. Generally the Dastoorship, or this Pontifical office, is hereditary, so that the sons of the laity can never hope to get into the Parsee Priesthood.

And yet, as we have seen above, after the advent of the British, and with the English education, which the Parsees assimilated so thoroughly, some of them—though not the practising priests—have rendered a far greater service to the community by their scientific learning and knowledge of the religious lore, than some of the High Priests themselves. A brilliant instance is that of the late Mr. Kursetji Rustomji Cama, who, for his learning and character, was called by the late Professor James Darmesteter of Paris "*Le Dastoor Laique*" (the layman Dastoor).

Young Cama went through the Elphinstone Institute, which he left after winning the West, Clarke and other scholarships, which in those days were considered like winning honours in the present days.

After a while, having joined his relative's business in Calcutta in connection with which he visited China and remained there for four years, he went to England in 1855. As he was not endowed by nature to be a businessman he changed his mind and journeyed from England on to the Continent of Europe to pursue his studies. He first went to France, and then to Germany, and took lessons on Iranian subjects under the learned Professors of these countries. He also studied French and German, and translated from the works of some of the European scholars, specially from the works of Dr. Rapp of Germany. In Paris he took lessons from Professor Jules Oppert, whose special subject was the cuneiform inscriptions. From Professor Mohl, the well-known editor and translator of Firdausi's *Shah-nameh* (*Livre des Rois*), he learnt Persian. He further came into contact with other scholars, like Burnouf and Monsieur Joachim Menant. While in Germany, he studied under the great Professor Spiegel at Erlangen. In passing, it may be mentioned that Professor Spiegel was

the very first translator of the complete text of the Avesta, into a European language.

Not being content with having studied his religion under European scholars, Cama started classes to encourage young Parsees, most of whom were the sons of priests. They studied under him their religion, in the light of European scholarship aided by the philological research. He had the satisfaction of seeing some of the great Parsee scholars making their name and fame, in the community and outside, for their scholarship in the Zoroastrian religion. Among these may be mentioned Ervad Sheriarjee Dadabhoy Bharucha, one of the most brilliant pupils, Ervad Kavasji Edulji Kanga, Tehmuras Anklesaria, Jeewanjee Jamshedjee Mody, Dastur Dr. Dhalla and others. All these scholars rendered a very distinct service to the study of Zoroastrian religious literature.

On the morning of the 13th August, 1909, when preparing himself to attend to his work as an Honorary Magistrate, he got a heart attack, of which he died instantaneously. He died to live in the memory of a number of societies and of a number of admiring friends.

**SHAMS-UL-ULAMA DR. SIR JEEVANJEE
JAMSHEDJEE MODY, Kt., B.A., PH.D.**

Jeevanjee Jamshedjee Mody was born at Bombay in Colaba on 26th October, 1854. He was the son of a practising priest; and, instead of taking up his father's profession, he preferred to join the Elphinstone College, where he took his B.A. degree in 1877. He also joined Mulla Feroze Madressa and Sir Jamshedjee Jeejeebhoy Madressa, where special training is given in the ancient languages of Avesta and Pahlevi, along with religious knowledge on the Zoroastrian religion. After passing out from these Madressas, he took up French and German, and then began his life's career.

He began writing papers on historical and religious subjects and shed a flood of light on these questions with his very extensive reading.

When he went to Sweden to attend the 8th Congress of Oriental Scholars held at Stockholm, he created such a favourable impression with his scholarship that the King of Sweden awarded him the Diploma of Letteris et Artibus, with a Gold Medal as its insignia. For the continuous scholarly work that he kept on doing, and for his writings and his valuable books, the Government of India conferred upon him in 1893

the title of Shams-ul-Ulema, which literally means 'the sun amongst the learned'.

His general lectures and sermons amongst the Parsees and public would be numbered at round about 500. For all these learned activities, the famous University of Hiedelberg conferred upon him the honour of its Doctorate, (Ph.D).

In 1917 the Government of India bestowed upon him the title of 'the Commander of the Indian Empire'.

When he was in Paris, the French Government conferred upon him the much coveted honour of 'Chevalier de Legion de Honneur', and in Budapest he received from the Hungarian Government the honour of 'Officer de Croix de Merit'.

In June, 1930, on the occasion of the King's Birthday, he received a Knighthood, a fitting recognition of his great merit as a distinguished Parsee divine.

No Parsee scholar has ever had so many honours conferred upon him for the deep tone of piety and reference which marked all his thoughts, words and deeds.

He died in 1933 at the ripe old age of 79, and left a mark behind, as a savant of high literary attainments, as well as profound scholarship of Oriental languages.

**SHAMS-UL-ULEMA DASTOOR DR.
M.N. DHALLA, M.A., PH.D., LITT.D.**

Amongst all the Dastoors that the tiny Parsee community has produced within the last 150 years, the one who was universally acknowledged as the most learned, the most gifted, the most refined and the most respected was Shams-ul-Ulema Dastoor Dr. Maneckji Nusserwanjee Dhalla, M.A., P.H.D., Litt. D.

He was the only exceptional Dastoor, whose advanced views on matters religious and social were not readily accepted by a vast majority of the orthodox Parsees in India. He enjoyed the highest respect and regard for his vast learning as also for his unimpeachable character.

He was born in a tiny village called Param Para in Surat in 1875. His parents were extremely poor, and yet respectable and religiously inclined. His father and his uncle came to Karachi in 1878 on a salary of Rs 12/- per month to serve the Parsee Atash-Kadeh (Fire Temple), that still stands in the centre of Sadar Bazar in Karachi. At that time young Dhalla was four years of age. They were staying in a lane in Sadar Bazar, known as Cheek Gali, where there were expert workers making screens, curtains and blinds, out of thin bamboo sticks. According to the means of the family they were paying a rent of Rs 4/- a month. They lived most economically, eating one meal of rice and dall a day.

In his youth Dhalla was not inclined seriously to study. Besides, he was very weak in Mathematics—therefore he could hardly go through the Matriculation examination. All the same "Sarasvati"—the Indian goddess of knowledge, learning and wisdom—began to smile on him, and he started reading voraciously. His father and his uncle did their part, in as much as, they encouraged in him a sound habit of getting up before dawn every day, and going with them for a walk and fresh air. They instilled in him the love of God, and imparted to him whatever knowledge of religion they possessed in their time.

To add to the meagre income of the family he joined the famous firm of Ralli Brothers at Karachi, as a clerk, in 1894, and served there till 1901, on a small salary. But, while he was serving, his mind was always engrossed in reading books and writing novels or poetry. He even began preparing lectures on religious subjects. From his knowledge and learning, compared to his age, he gave high hopes to the community, as a promising young priest.

The late Mr. Kursetji Rustomji Cama once presided over a lecture of young Ervad Dhalla at Bombay, and was very favourably impressed by his ideas and also by his way of speaking and his zeal for public service. Mr. Cama marked him out as a coming young man in the Parsee community. A little later on, happening to come to Karachi, Cama again heard young Ervad Dhalla, and was so disposed towards him that he persuaded the then leaders of the Parsee community to send him to Bombay to enable him to pursue further his study on Avesta and Pahlevi languages. An arrangement was made, whereby this promising young son of a priest went to Bombay to study there for four years. Here again, he impressed the late Kursetji Cama so favourably that the latter persuaded the Parsee leaders of Karachi to gather funds to send him to America,

*Sons of priests, after passing certain religious ceremonies, are entitled to call themselves Ervad, among the Parsees.

the late Sir Ratan Jamshedjee Tata, to finance the young man during his studentship in Columbia University. This, Sir Ratan did with the result that, after four years of laborious study in America, he succeeded in getting the degree of 'M.A.' and later on of 'Ph.D.'.

After acquiring the University degrees, on his arrival at Bombay, he made a great impression with his first speech there, which gathered a batch of young Parsee admirers round him, who appreciated his advanced ideas and reformed views on matters religious, apart from his oratorical gift.

His patron Saint, the late Kursetji Rustomji Cama, used his best influence with the Parsee leaders in Karachi to appoint him a Dastoor. This they did, by raising a fund, from the interest of which he was given monthly emoluments.

It is worth mentioning here that he has been the only exceptional Dastoor in any part of the world, where the Parsees are, and where they have their Fire Temples, who, very firmly but politely, refused to perform ritualistic ceremonies such as Jashn, Vandidaad, Nirangdin, Baaj, Afargan, etc.*, and declined to interfere with, or share in, the income of the Punthakeys, who generally are under the supervision of a Dastoor. This he did, because he firmly believed that too much importance was given to the ceremonial part of the religion, by the Parsees, whereas the teachings of Zarathushtra laid special stress on the good actions of mankind which alone were responsible for the just reward in the coming world.

Dastoor Dr. Dhalla's theme in all his speeches and writings was, that while certain ceremonies, which have become a part and parcel of the Zoroastrian religion, were permissible, the majority of the community, through sheer ignorance, believed that the greater the number of ceremonies performed by the priests, the more would be their chances of securing a seat in Heaven, after death. He, therefore, kept on preaching to his coreligionists that it would be far better if all these millions

*He always attended Jashn ceremonies and Funeral ceremonies, but did not lead the priests in actual recital of prayers. He sat on a chair along with the audience with his priestly garb, over which he wore the Dastoor's shawl. Navjote and Marriage ceremonies he always performed himself, and often gave short sermons in Gujrati or in English after the ceremonies were over, if special desire was expressed for the same, by the family.

In not wanting to perform all the ritualistic ceremonies himself, as a High Priest, his real aim was to save that much time for his study, his lectures and sermons, as also for writing his valuable and scholarly books.

of rupees, spent on religious ceremonies every year, were diverted to worthier causes, such as education, health and other social needs of the community.

Dastoor Dr. Dhalla throughout the fifty long years of his Dastoorship in Karachi, during which he often travelled round many parts of India and the world, and particularly Bombay, on frequent lecture tours, kept impressing upon his audiences that Prophet Zarathushtra laid far more stress on the good actions of his disciples and followers than on the ceremonials. Subsequent to the Prophet's departure from the world, the ceremonial part of his religion was developed more and more by his disciples, who lost sight of the very essence of the Master's grand religion and lofty philosophy. Not only that, but he used to emphasize the fact that hundreds of years after the great Prophet's departure, the old beliefs of the Mazdiasnan religion were again revived, which prevailed before his coming, and which enjoined nature worship, besides the worship of many other angels and arch-angels, in whose praise, volumes were written, which are known as Nyayashis.

All his life was spent in writing books, preparing lectures and sermons, giving interviews to seekers after knowledge on religion and in establishing social institutions, beneficial to the cause of the Parsee community. And yet, he did it all as a labour of love; never did he ask the community for any increment in his monthly emoluments.

Numerous books did he write, such as the 'Zoroastrian Theology', the 'Zoroastrian Civilisation', 'Wither Bound Mankind' the 'History of Zoroastrianism', 'Homage unto Ahura Mazda', 'Our Perfecting World', 'Atma Katha' (Autobiography), and many others.

In accordance with the prevailing practice at the Columbia University, any student, who was found to have made a mark in scholarship, was given the degree of 'Doctor of Literature' (D. Lit.). Dastoor Dr. Dhalla was specially marked out for this great honour, twenty-five years after he had left Columbia University as a student, and he was therefore invited to receive this much esteemed and coveted degree, in America.

Thus, amongst the Parsee scholars—proficient in the Zoroastrian lore—he became one of the most outstanding and learned Dastoors, whose opinion even the Law Courts at Bombay highly valued, whenever there arose any question under dispute pertaining to the Zoroastrian religion.

God had endowed him with such abundance of tolerance, that whenever he gave a rejoinder to his critics, through the medium of his lectures or his books or writings, he scrupulously avoided being personal and acrimonious, in spite of the insults hurled against him—with the result that the public gradually began to appreciate his angelic nature, and respect him for his forbearance towards unjust and uncharitable critics.

But, as time elapsed, the great gift of oratory with which he was endowed by nature, won him thousands of admirers—young and old—and those who came to chaff, remained to pray at the end of his brilliant lectures, to thank him for the true knowledge that he was imparting to the community.

The one great institution, amongst others, that he brought into existence in Karachi for the benefit of the Parsee community, was the Young Men's Zoroastrian Association, mainly with a view to bringing forward young men and women of the community in the forefront, with the spirit of service.

The spirit with which he filled the young generation of the Parsee boys and girls to study with enthusiasm their religion and its philosophy and to come forth on public platforms, was such, that the late Khan Bahadur Sir Kavasji H. Katrak, Kt. OBE, JP., a most respected and prominent Parsee, was prompted to build a spacious hall, especially to give the gifted Dastoor a platform. From this, untill the end of his life, he delivered some hundreds of lectures and sermons, to listen to which, crowds of young and old Parsees used to gather. This hall was built with, the combined aim of housing the Young Men's Zoroastrian Association, where the young and old of the community could take advantage of the library as well. The Hall is named the 'Hormusji Katrak Hall', to perpetuate the memory of his revered father, whereas the Library after his son is named the 'Sohrab Katrak Library, of the Young Men's Zoroastrian Association, Karachi.'

Of all the books that Dastoor Dr. Dhalla has written and left behind, and which scholars acknowledge as being authoritative, as far as Zoroastrian religion and philosophy are concerned, his 'Atma-Katha' (Autobiography), is a master-piece indeed. He wrote it in Gujarati, which is commonly used by the Parsees in their daily conversation, and particularly by the older generation. In this Autobiography, he has recorded all the events, big and small, of his life, from his very infancy. It is both beautiful in language and inimitable

in style, which people like to read over and over again. Therein he has described all the various activities that he carried on throughout his three score and twenty years, with the sole object of enlightening the community with the knowledge of the religion and philosophy that the great Master (Zarathushtra) taught some 3500 years ago, in Iran.

Neither did he hanker after reward for his life long labour of love, nor did he care for his community's frowns or favours. His sole aim in life was to win the community over from the non-Zoroastrian beliefs, which had found their way, hundreds of years after the Prophet's demise, into his pristine pure religion.

It is here that he came into constant conflict with a large majority of the orthodox element, who would not shake off the traditional rituals which they have been practising from generation to generation. They, in his opinion, were kept in ignorance of what was the Prophet's own gospel and what was changed subsequent to his departure, by his disciples, as also by the priesthood of the Sasanian period. Alexander the Great had set fire to the Royal Library containing the sacred books on the Zoroastrian religion, that were kept in the Royal Palace at Persepolis. Even from what meagre remnants of the sacred scriptures that could be saved, much more was burnt by the Arabs after their conquest of Iran. The result was that when the Parsees came to India, they had virtually nothing left of the sacred books of their ancient faith, and what they had they could hardly understand. The natural consequence of this was that much was added subsequently to the scattered religious literature, by the priesthood, without any authority or understanding.

In the light of the modern research by Western scholars, as also by some brilliant Parsee scholars in the middle of the nineteenth century, when Dastoor Dr. Dhalla made it his life's task to teach the Parsees the true religion as Zarathushtra taught it, a large majority of the community looked askance and derided him. Verily, Ahura Mazda had sent him amongst the Parsees a hundred years in advance of the time. But, whether the community accepted his teaching or not, he kept to the path of righteousness, as the great Master had done before him. He has left behind monumental works, which perhaps will be fully appreciated a generation or two later, when enlightenment has reached the community in its full measure, and when extreme orthodoxy has dwindled.

In the meantime, with his passing away, on **25th May, 1956**, at the ripe old age of 81, a great vacuum has been created in the Parsee Community, both in India and Pakistan, which will be hard to fill.

A committee has been formed, to raise a fitting memorial to this Dastooran-Dastoor, in Karachi as also at Bombay. It can also be said without the slightest exaggeration that the future generations will not have the good fortune of seeing, hearing or greeting a Dastoor like him, for at least half a century.

His powerful personality, like a magnet, drew thousands of admirers to him, both from the Parsee community as also from non-Zoroastrian communities. For having derived the love of learning through his inspiring personality, specially for the religion and philosophy of Zarathushtra, as also for the art of writing and public speaking, the **author**, in deep reverence and gratitude, lays this book by way of a humble tribute, at the feet of this great scholar and teacher, of the religion of the Prophet of Ancient Iran.

CHAPTER XXIII

PARSEES AND THEOSOPHY

With the advancement made in education, the younger generation of the Parsees began to drift towards indifference in religious matters, with the result that a period of transition followed, when the old practices seem to have spent their force. This heralded the rise of a new class of dissenters. *along with younger generation.* *

"Those of a prosaic and matter-of-fact turn of mind in the community had steadily doubted the statements that did not admit of a rational justification, and refused to believe in anything mysterious and mystical in religion. But human life cannot altogether be stripped of mystery. Rationalism is not the whole of human nature. Man is essentially a religious being. He feels an inherent need in himself for some form of religious belief which would satisfy the yearnings of his spirit—that irrepressible heart-hunger of the human soul". ?

"The Parsee priesthood were incapable, at this juncture, of helping the community in its religious crisis. The youth yearned for new light and if that light did not come from within, they began welcoming it from without." X

At this juncture the Theosophical Society began its propaganda in India and a number of Parsees eagerly embraced the movement. The Parsee theosophists introduced metaphysical themes, such as the nature of Being, a personal or an impersonal God, creation or emanation, reincarnation, and such like, for discussion. To start with they said that "Zarathushtra and his disciples wrote in a mystic language which conveyed a double meaning. The exoteric, or surface meaning, was intended for the vulgar, and the esoteric, or inner meaning, was designed only for the initiates. The adepts of various periods were the ones who possessed the mysterious key to the chamber of hidden truths. The last of such Parsee adepts was Azar Kaivan, who died at Patna in 1614. With his death this key was lost".

"The Parsee theosophists applied this key to Zoroastrianism to unravel the mysteries of its exoteric teachings. They aimed at an adjustment of the fundamental Zoroastrian concept according to the

On the dox?

* standard philosophy of their society, which was an eclectic system drawing its materials mostly from Hinduism and Buddhism. They alleged that the philologists, being bound by the fetters of literalism in the interpretation of the sacred texts, generally took a statement at its face value and adhered to the surface meaning. Consequently, the sense of proportion, critical acumen, the historical sense, accurate thinking, and such preliminary requisites of modern scholarship became conspicuous by their absence in most of the interpretations of these Parsee theosophists.²

a "Thus, in-as-much as the Parsee theosophists declared that they worked to bring out the youth of the community from the trough of materialism, endeavouring to defend Zoroastrianism against innovations of the reformers, they were regarded as the pillars of faith and the guardians of the edifice of ceremonialism."

"The syllables composed in the Avestan texts, they averred, were so mysteriously adjusted to each other in their prayers that when pronounced they produced vibrations on the ethereal plane. The potency of such rhythmical sound was so great that, like every good thought that flashed out with strong occult force and sent forth a good "elemental", it created forms in the ethereal world, attracted good "elementals", and repelled evil ones. Every single sentence conveyed an occult meaning, and the prayers composed in the celestial tongue of the prophet and other seers had an unspeakable efficacy, conducing to the welfare of the individual concerned, but their renderings into any modern vernacular would make them totally ineffectual as prayers. Such an interpretation, however, led them to credit the religion of Zoroaster with ideas that in no period of its religious history were ever included in its sphere."³

* "These Parsee theosophists attempted a readjustment of the Zoroastrian doctrine of a personal God, in accordance with their theory of an impersonal God. Personality, they alleged, implied limitation and was a characteristic of the finite. A personal God meant that the god-head was a limited God, and therefore an incomplete God. This doctrine is certainly not Zoroastrian, because throughout the whole history of the religion, individuality is not an illusion, it is ever a stern fact. Personality is not an imperfection, but it is the highest expression of life, that ultimately strives for the divine. Not the losing of individuality and the loss of the personal self, and not the weakening

2. 'History of Zoroastrianism' by Dr. M. N. Dhalla.

3. 'History of Zoroastrianism' by Dr. M. N. Dhalla.

of personality, but the gaining and strengthening of it is the Zoroastrian ideal. This has been the truth taught by Zoroastrianism in the striving for the highest aims comprehensible to mankind from the remotest antiquity."4.

"From first to last, Zoroastrianism, like Judaism, Christianity, and Mohammedanism, shows no sign of the theory of rebirth. This dogma occupied a pre-eminent place among the theosophists, being, in fact, one of the most conspicuous characteristics of their doctrines. To teach man to attain liberation from the bondage of rebirth was the ultimate aim of their ethics."5.

The saner element among the Parsees, however, have been fighting bitterly against this small band of misguided Zoroastrians because they considered this a direct insult to their Prophet Zarathushtra, whose religion breathes optimism and to whom the belief in re-incarnation, or metempsychosis is entirely foreign. Further, Zarathushtra has laid great stress on actions—what the Hindus and the Buddhists call "Karma". The reward, according to Zarathushtra, is to be had here and hereafter, as we have seen in the Chapter dealing with "The Teachings of Zarathushtra". On the contrary, the Parsee Theosophists, along with the Hindus and the Buddhists, believe that the reward of "Karma" can only be Reincarnation or Metempsychosis, and that, too, eighty four hundred thousand times.

Not stopping at that, the Parsee theosophists believe in total abstinence from flesh-eating and alcoholic drink. They insist on the removal of flesh meat and liquor from religious rituals. They believe that flesh-eating and liquor drinking are not only bad in themselves but they are heinous sins. Hence, no true and good religion would permit them.

Zoroastrianism is an eminently good and true religion, they say, and therefore, cannot permit these evils. Hence it must have forbidden flesh eating and wine drinking. In fact, none cared among these Parsee theosophists to look at the problem from a historical, or logical, point of view. Historical tradition and immemorial custom prove that no such abstinence was practised in ancient Iran, socially or ritually. There was nothing in the Avestan literature, of Pahlavi writings, or in Pazand prayers, or in the Shahnama that can prove the existence of a select class of ascetics, who abstained religiously from meat and wine. On the contrary, several Avestan prayers and injunctions in commentaries

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

distinctly enjoin the use of meat and wine for ritual purposes and they are specially mentioned in a score of Avesta and Pazand texts.

The other great obsession of these misguided Parsee theosophists, acquired by them through Theosophical propaganda, is, that for spiritual advancement 'CELIBACY' is what the Zoroastrian religion enjoins. Not only that, but some of them even go so far as to argue that, in view of the spiritual teachings of Theosophy, Zarathushtra must not have been married and could not have had any children. This, despite the fact that in the 5th Gatha 'Vahishtoista' we find the Prophet Zarathushtra himself blessing "Pouruchista", his daughter and giving her much sound advice as to her duties as a wife and mother. What is most repugnant to the large majority of the Parsees in this connection is that some of these misguided Parsee theosophists, in order to refute this argument, go so far as to say that the 5th Gatha was spurious and was not composed by Zarathushtra. If these nonsensical arguments were to be taken into consideration at all, the assertion would go to prove that all the five Gathas that for thousands of years Zoroastrians have regarded as the sacred words of the Holy Prophet himself are, spurious forgeries.

The excitement that prevailed some years ago in the Parsee community against the Parsee theosophists for these un-Zoroastrian beliefs began to subside gradually, and today they are being shown by the community at large mere pity and compassion which are due to people who suffer because of their credulity. No real animosity against them prevails now.

5th disintegrating group

In passing, mention might be made of another extremely tiny band amongst the Parsees, who call themselves Ilm-e-Khshnoomists. They believe in a religious leader by name Mr. Behramshah Shrooff, who died some 25 years ago in Surat. He created a sensation amongst the Parsees by announcing that once, while he happened to be in Peshawar, on the extreme northern border of Pakistan, he was accosted by someone who took him to the mountain caves nearby, where a class of saintly individuals stay, known as Saheb Delans. These Saheb Delans are supposed to be invisible to ordinary mortal eyes. Amongst them, he declared, he lived for some time and learnt of the true Zoroastrian religion, which, he asserted, has not been understood, or observed correctly by the present-day Parsees.

In the main, the theory expounded by this Parsee, as taught to him by this supposed invisible Saheb Delan sect, is the Soofi theory, and

strangely enough, these Ilm-e-Khshnoorrists also believe in reincarnation, but in a different way from the Hindus. The number of times the soul reincarnates is limited to a maximum of about fifty-two in his belief. This philosophy, without exaggeration, is apt to give one high fever if he seriously tries to analyse it, and, therefore, these deluded few in the community are only treated as soft-heads and no importance whatsoever is attached to their beliefs. They, however, observe their New Year on the 21st of March each year.

Thus a highly intellectual community like the Parsees have amongst them a few, to whom reason or logic is unknown and who insist on being guided by mere credulity.

CHAPTER XXIV

PARSEES AND THE PARTITION

With the British quitting India finally in 1947, the sub-continent was divided into two parts; one part is now known as ~~Bharat~~ *India* and the other as ~~Pakistan~~.

The history of this partition is too fresh to require details here. But, as far as the Parsees are concerned, their population in the world can be counted roughly as follows:-

Mistake ~~to~~ 11,791 in Bombay and rest of India.
18,000 in Iran.
6,000 in Pakistan (East and West).
and about 4,000 scattered round the rest of the world.*

Prior to the partition, when travel all over India and the world was unfettered, the Parsees, who now occupy that portion of the former India which is known as Pakistan, had no difficulty about contacting their co-religionists as often as they liked, by going over to Bombay and the Bombay Presidency, or attending any conferences pertaining to the Parsee religion and Parsee social problems there. But now, with the two parts of the country having framed their respective laws and constitutions and having their own special financial problems, a virtual ban is put on free movement to India from Pakistan, and, even when a permit is granted, the obtaining of a passport becomes a very trying proposition.

① The foreign exchange granted on both sides is hardly Rs 100/- (roughly seven and a half pounds sterling). This has hampered very considerably the movement of the Parsees from Pakistan to Bharat and vice versa.

*  The result of it is, that the Parsees in Pakistan now find it extremely difficult to arrange marriages for their sons and daughters. It is a known fact that, as far as marriages are concerned, 95% of the Parsees will not permit outsiders to be brought into their fold. Therefore, the selection for the boys and girls of the Parsees in Pakistan is becoming a very acute problem.

*For details of the Parsee inhabitants of the various States in India according to the census taken in India in 1951 see appendix 'G'.

Another difficulty that the Parsees experience due to the partition of the country is when marriages are arranged between a Parsee boy who is a Bharati and a Parsee girl who is a Pakistani subject, and vice versa. The trouble starts when the boy or the girl has to stay in one Dominion or the other, because the citizenship of either Bharat or Pakistan is not so easily granted. They pray that Bharat and Pakistan may soon become so friendly as to permit free exchange of travel between the two Dominions without let or hindrance. The leaders of the community are put to the test as to whether under such circumstances, the Parsees should allow marriage between outside communities and their own, or still stick to the policy adopted by their forefathers, since their advent to India more than twelve hundred years ago.

It would not require a great deal of imagination to predict the result if six thousand Parsees, in a population of eighty millions, between East and West Pakistan, decided to permit inter-marriage with non-Zoroastrians. Naturally, there will be no more Parsees left, and that is why such a large majority of the community insists on keeping up its separate identity, as they have done for more than 1200 years, even when they are like a drop in the mighty ocean of humanity on the Indian sub-continent.

In the matter of religious questions, a similar difficulty arises, as, after all, three-fourths of the entire population of the Parsees in the world is in Bharat. Consequently, the libraries containing the religious books of the Parsees as also the scholars of their religion are mostly in Bharat. No advantage, therefore, could be taken of these libraries or these scholars, without free movement of the Parsees to and from Bharat and Pakistan.

The third great problem due to the partition of the country as far as the Parsees are concerned is, that the charities that the Parsees give away, and have given away large-heartedly in trust, in Bharat, for the benefit of their co-religionists, cannot be taken advantage of by the Parsees in Pakistan, nor can the rich and charitably inclined Parsees in Bharat send money out to Pakistan in charity for the benefit of their co-religionists, due to the foreign exchange regulations.

Yet another difficulty for the Parsees in Pakistan is, that their sacred fire that burns in the Atash Behram at Udwada, which is more than a hundred miles away from Bombay, and which the Parsees consider the most sacred of their fires among the Atash Behrams in Bharat, can no

* longer be the object of their special worship as in the pre-partition days. Just as Rome is sacred to the Catholics, just as Jerusalem is to the Jews, Mecca to the Mussalmans and Meshed to the Shiabs of Iran, so is Udwada to the Parsees. The Parsees after the partition, unfortunately, are not able to go there for religious pilgrimage so easily as they used to do before.

⑤ In fact a large portion of the Parsee community and the Trustees of the various charitable, religious and educational institutions have invested their money in Government of India loans. These were always considered to be the soundest securities during the British regime. Not anticipating either the partition of the country or the exchange problem, most of the Parsees had these loans kept in various banks in Bombay. Now, due to the exchange regulations having cropped up, not only are they not able to divert these back to Pakistan, but the interest that accumulates on these loans is only recoverable after deduction of the highest percentage of income-tax leviable in Bharat. For the purpose of obtaining a refund of the income-tax so deducted, applications have to be made both in Bharat and in Pakistan, as the case may be, showing the world income of the individuals concerned. As may be imagined, this also takes a very considerable time before the exact amount due is realised. Besides, the remittance thus received was at one time considerably lessened, due to the uneven ratio between the value in Bharat and Pakistani rupee. In cases of life insurance policies in particular, which matured when the rupee values of Pakistan and Bharat were not at par, hundreds of Parsees, whose policies matured for payment, were forced to bring their money to Pakistan, in accordance with the foreign exchange regulations, resulting in a loss of at least 50% of their earnings after years of saving.

* Tax

Many charitable institutions and poor widows, who depended solely on the interest on these loans, prior to the partition under the British regime, have been extremely hard hit.

⑥ Further, those in Pakistan, who had invested in shares of various mills and industries in pre-partitioned India, now find it impossible to get their shares returned to them. Not only that, but even the interest accumulated is credited in Bharat to the individual's account called 'Non-resident Account' and cannot be utilised by the Parsees, who are Pakistani subjects, except only when they happen to go to Bharat by chance, when they may be permitted to utilise the amount lying to the credit of their accounts.

In business, many import houses belonging to the Parsees have lost a very considerable portion of it. Several, on the other hand, who were fortunate enough to go in for other lines, such as hotel-keeping, house-building, engineering, cinema, liquor bar business, etc., have become intensely rich. 7

Instances may be cited of two Parsee proprietors in Karachi of Metropole Hotel (belonging to Mr. Cyrus F. Minwalla) and Beach Luxury Hotel (belonging to Mr. Dinshaw B. Avari), both of whom have justified the proverb 'From poverty to Power'. By starting from scratch they built two magnificent hotels mentioned above, which served Pakistan considerably in the beginning stages when there were no hotels worth the name, nor big enough to accommodate the constant flow of foreigners from England, Europe and America.

8 X Young Parsee women, knowing shorthand and typewriting, have been getting very good salaries in European banks and European houses of business, as also in several Foreign Embassies. In that respect, the family income of the Parsees has fairly increased. +

We have seen in a previous Chapter on 'Parsees in Politics' how great a part the Parsees played in putting the tremendous population of India on the way to the goal of Swaraj or Independence. The proof of their invaluable services to pre-partitioned India in that direction is evinced by the number of statues erected by the grateful public, particularly in Bombay, to perpetuate their memory. 9

A great upheaval took place in the form of a Revolution in Pakistan. whereby, at eleven o'clock on the night of the 27th of October, 1958, the curtain fell most suddenly and dramatically on its political life and ushered in a new era under the leadership of Field Marshal Muhammad Ayub Khan, N. Pk., H.J., which has gone down in the history of this country as THE REVOLUTION. 10

The Parsees as a loyal and faithful race are happy and contented with the new regime, where the motto of the great leader is 'Honesty and Hard work' and where he will not tolerate any underhand work in any of the Government departments or the Ministries.

He is gifted with the power of oratory, both in English and in Urdu as also in Pushtu—of which he is the master—and it is ever a delight to listen to his speeches, both public and private, intermingled with

abundance of wit and humour as well as commonsense. He is not in the habit of mincing matters, and has the reputation for calling a spade a spade.

He is lenient towards the minorities, and watches their interests with a soft corner in his heart even in case of the tiniest minority, the Parsees. It cannot be gainsaid therefore that he is an idol of the Parsees who have the greatest regard and respect for him, and feel that since the partition of the country they have never been more secure, more free and more happy.

So far, the number of the Parsees in the whole of Pakistan being only 5219 (i.e. 2664 males and 2555 females according to the census of 1961), naturally they have very few chances of being in the National Parliament to do any service they can to the country. The new Constitution being under preparation, one can only hope that this particular minority community will have a fair chance of being represented in the National Assembly.

In place of the Constitution which was in force before the Martial Law came in and which was prorogued by that regime, a new Constitution based on democracy suited to Pakistan has been substituted by the President, by virtue of the powers vested in him by the people of Pakistan, through the Basic Democrats. This new Constitution, however, is a bone of contention among the members of the newly-formed Provincial Assemblies and the National Assembly; and what will be the ultimate outcome of this, no one can foresee just now.

But whatever shape the Constitution may take finally, it is not likely to affect the Minorities, like the Parsees, because in every Constitution there are safeguards for the Minorities, and our Community by nature desiring to remain non-political, a change in the Constitution or otherwise does not much affect them.

In social service, the Parsees are rendering very valuable share to various institutions, all over Pakistan. They also liberally subscribe, whenever called upon, to any charitable cause for the public good, as they always have done, since their advent to India. In this connection, the following speech delivered by the President of Pakistan, Field Marshal Muhammad Ayub Khan, at the Beach Luxury Hotel on the 8th September, 1959, at a dinner given by the Young Men's Zoroastrian Association of Karachi on the occasion of Khordaad Saal, the birthday of Prophet Zarathushtra, is worth reproducing:-

"The teachings of Prophet Zoroaster are, indeed, a source of infinite inspiration not only to Parsees but to all those who believe in the sanctity of moral and spiritual values in human lives. It redounds to the credit of the Parsee community that they have endeavoured to translate the teachings of their Prophet into their day to day lives and have sought to apply the principles of their religion to the practical fields of social and economic enterprise. Pakistan has every reason to be proud of her Parsi citizens who have contributed so much to the progress and development of the nation.

"Spirit of loyalty and unreserved cooperation which Parsees have shown wherever they have settled down is a tribute to the greatness of their religion as well as to their wisdom. The people of Karachi owe a great debt of gratitude to the Parsee community for the immense contribution they have made to the economic development of the City. The many welfare institutions which Parsee philanthropists have raised in Karachi are a boon to its citizens. The tradition of public welfare which Parsees have built is worthy of emulation by other communities in Karachi and elsewhere in Pakistan.

"One of the tenets of your religion which you have quoted, namely "happiness can come to him only who makes others happy", is reflected not only in words but in deeds which Parsees have performed admirably throughout Pakistan. It has no doubt endeared them to other communities in our country. It will be our earnest endeavour to ensure that Parsees—like other communities—continue to enjoy equal rights as free citizens of a free country. You have rightly observed that the patriotism of the Parsees is second to none. Nobody is more conscious than I of the great patriotic zeal which you have displayed in a fact of national activity in which you have participated with substantial measure of success, contributing to the progress and prosperity of the nation.

"I have noted your desire that Parsi New Year should be observed as a full public holiday at least for the city of Karachi, where Parsees form a sizeable section of the city's population. I shall refer this matter to the Minister for Interior and I trust that your desire for a public holiday will be duly considered.

"In conclusion, I should like to take this opportunity of emphasizing that no nation can become truly great until its spring of action is based on moral and spiritual values, transcending material and mundane considerations, in maintaining as well as sustaining these fundamental

values. Parsees have a very important role to play, and I have not the slightest doubt that they would continue to play that role as effectively as they have done in the past."

Can any better praise be showered by anyone on this tiny community!

CHAPTER XXV

THE REVOLT OF THE PARSEE YOUTH

*"A little learning is a dangerous thing:
Drink deep or taste not the Pierian spring."*

—POPE.

During the two hundred years of the British regime in India, the Parsees imbibed western education. For three generations before the present one, they have appreciated many of the western ideas, and imitated many of the European ways. But, as far as the religious beliefs were concerned, they hesitated to alter them. If they did so, it was with a great deal of caution.

On the contrary, the modern Parsee youth of both sexes, with the greater freedom and higher education that they acquired at the Universities in all branches of art and science, saw little in the faith of their grandfathers and grandmothers.

With the knowledge of English language which they have fairly mastered, by passing as graduates from the Universities of India, England and Europe, they have begun to be hyper-critical on religious matters. The western scholars, having thrown new light on the religion of Zoroastrianism, the younger generation of the Parsees has begun searching for information through the written books, either in English or Gujarati, by master scholars in Bombay, Europe, England and America. Their fondness for hearing lectures and reading controversial articles on their ancient religion in the daily newspapers has been growing. When at Bombay, the Reverend Mr. Wilson, in the middle of the 19th century, began reviling the religion of the Parsees, with his lectures and writings, in a very odious manner, it gave the youngsters food for thought and they concluded that what was good enough for their grandfathers and grandmothers, was not good enough for them. For every belief of their parents and grandparents, they wanted a logical answer and explanation. But, faith and logic do not go hand in hand; therefore, the modern Parsee youth slowly but steadily has been dissenting from the deep-rooted faith of their elders.

This led some young men and women in the community to the study of Theosophy, a mixture of Hindu and Buddhist philosophy, or

Other influences

Christianity, or Ilm-e-Khshnoom, a philosophy borrowed from the mystic Soohs of Iran and elsewhere, so as to satisfy their thirst for the knowledge of the mysteries of life. Yet, the vast majority of the Parsee men and women remained steadfast to their ancient faith and the ancient ways of worship with the ceremonials. The result has been a schism created in the community, which has virtually caused a revolt of the youth.

The modern Parsee youth do not see the good in offering prayers in their ancient language, of which they do not understand a word. Their complaint is that even while verbatim translations of their sacred lore are made by scholars in English and Gujarati, they evoke no enthusiasm in them, nor raise devotion in their hearts, because of the ambiguity of expressions and ideas in the ancient original scriptures. They, therefore, advocate the prayers to be written, either in prose or poetry, by Dastoor or scholars in modern language, either Gujarati or English, which they can understand, rather than hinder them from praying altogether. They further strengthen their argument by saying that when the Avestan language ceased to be a spoken language and Pahlevi became the language of the Sasanians, all the Avestan lores were translated into Pahlevi and subsequently into Pazend to enable the people of the time to understand their prayers.

The elders take very strong exception to this suggestion, in as much as they believe that their prayers, composed in Avesta, are a dispensation from Heaven, given to Zarathushtra. Therefore not only are they very sacred, but they possess such mystical and magical effects while they are recited, that they create vibrations in the atmosphere and route the evil spirits. On the contrary, they say that prayers composed in modern languages would never evoke any spiritual sublimation, nor would they create that grand mystic and magic influence, to rout the evil spirits that hover round the devotees.

To this the youth reply that what is not understood, cannot create any inspiration or devotion in the human heart, and cannot raise the soul to a spiritual eminence. Therefore offering prayers in the language they do not understand is tantamount to muttering something parrot-like, without understanding its meaning. They, therefore, argue in favour of composing prayers in the language they can understand and which they can even chant as is done by the Christians and the Hindus in their respective Churches and Temples. As, unfortunately, no efforts have yet been made, nor any encouragement given to composing prayers in

the modern languages which the Parsee youth can understand, the result has been that a large majority of them go without prayers.

II Another important point on which the modern Parsee youth differ from their elders, is the question of the ancestral worship. The Parsees, as a rule, believe in the existence of the soul after death and, therefore, they have prayers recited for the dear departed souls with elaborate and expensive ceremonies. This is done several times in a year, and in some orthodox houses such ceremonies with prayers are performed every day of the year. This the modern youth consider unnecessary waste of money. They argue that their great Prophet has clearly laid it down in his holy Gathas that the soul gets its reward in the spiritual world in accordance with its actions, good or bad, and therefore, prayers offered by a third party, namely the priests, can never do any good to the soul. In fact the soul desires remembrance directly from its dear ones on this earth and not through uninterested and hired priests.

Somehow the faith, in the older generation of the Parsees, is so deep-rooted that they cannot see eye to eye with the modern youth in the above arguments, and they sincerely believe that without ceremonies the prayers can never reach the souls or their Fravashis, and that the ceremonial prayers must be offered in the ancient Avestan language. Since they understand nothing of the prayers or the ceremonies, they believe that the surest way is to let the priests perform them. Here comes the clash between the elders and the modern youth of the Parsee community. Then again, some of the ancient religious customs and ceremonies appear unintelligible to the modern Parsee youth who, as stated above, want convincing and logical proofs to their satisfaction to make them share the faith of their elders.

* For instance, immediately after the death of a Parsee, his body is washed and laid on stone or marble slabs, after a prescribed formula of prayers and ceremony. From that moment till it is laid in the Tower of Silence, no non-Zoroastrian is allowed to have the last look at the face of the dear departed, no matter how very intimate and friendly he or she may have been with the deceased during his lifetime. This surpasses the imagination of the modern Parsee youth, who fail to understand why non-Zoroastrians are forbidden from seeing the face of the dead one, and why are they prevented from paying their last respects to the deceased.

The older generation, on the other hand, have been brought up under a belief since thousands of years, that every person possesses an

invisible aura round his or her body, and the aura of the non-Zoroastrian disturbs the soul of the departed Zoroastrian, once the funeral ceremonies have been performed after death.

The modern youth on the contrary consider this as utterly illogical. Not only that, but they consider it a great insult to the non-Zoroastrians with whom, the deceased while alive, had daily contact in all walks of life. However, whether logical or senseless, the elders amongst the Parsees will not budge an inch. On the other hand they chide the youth by reminding them of Alexander Pope's quotation cited at the commencement of this Chapter.

Further, the modern Parsee youth do not understand why a dog is brought, two or three times during the funeral ceremony, to see the corpse, while highly educated and cultured human beings are debarred from so doing just because they do not belong to the Zoroastrian faith.

* In fact, the very idea of consigning the corpse to the Tower of Silence is revolting to the modern Parsee youth. They cannot understand what difference it makes to any dead person of any religion, whether the body is buried, burnt or consigned to the sea. They do not in the least understand how religion comes into the picture. They argue that these are mere ancient customs, which have nothing in common with religion. In sooth, the community can change them in the same way as they have changed their social customs and manners. They advocate cremation as the best, the most modern and the most scientific way of the disposal of the dead. No amount of argument or logic or appeal can change the opinion of the elders of the community in this matter. They, like the Jews, prefer to stick to their ancient faith and their ancient customs, which they regard as part and parcel of their great religion.

Besides, the contact with the western world has now made the Parsee youth of both sexes so modern, that they do not see anything wrong in smoking, or going bare-headed. To the elders it is a sacrilege to smoke, and in their opinion it is tantamount to polluting fire, which is the most sacred emblem of the Parsees. The idea of even a hair of the head falling in the sacrificial viands prepared for the sacred ceremony, is so repugnant to the priests and the elders, that the ceremony that is being performed is considered to have been desecrated. Therefore, not only the priests, but also the followers of both sexes of the Zoroastrian religion are expected always to keep their heads covered throughout the day. This is carried so far that some Parsees, not to mention the priests,

sleep at night with their caps and women with white scarves on their heads. The modern youth consider this sheer nonsense.

During the initiation ceremony of investing a Parsi boy or girl with Sudra and Kusti, the priests offer bull's urine both for drinking and for applying to the body*. This substance is called by the orthodox Nirang or Ab-e-Zar (Golden water), to hide its real identity. This also disgusts the modern youth, most of whom insist on being given Homa, the consecrated juice made from the leaves of pomegranate. Many have even gone to the extent of discarding Sudra and Kusti, which sacrilege has made the gulf between the old and the young even wider.

But the most vexed question among the Parsees for the last fifty years, is the question of marriages contracted outside of their community.

We have seen in Chapter 10 how on landing in India, in an entirely strange environment, the Parsee flock of pilgrim fathers decided on keeping their identity separate, instead of allowing the mixing of the blood with people of an alien faith. This understanding was strictly adhered to** upto the last fifty years, when the Parsee boys going to England, Europe and other parts of the world for higher education, happened to marry women of alien faith by civil marriages. Here the community is faced with the problem of the children born of these unions. The orthodox element would not allow the children of such marriage to be taken into their fold. In one case, a Parsee married a French woman and had her invested with the sacred emblems of the religion, namely Sudra and Kusti. This created a hubbub in the community, which took a very serious turn when that young Parsee insisted on his French wife, whom he had given a Parsee name, acquiring all the rights enjoyed by Parsees born of Parsee fathers and Parsee mothers—in other words, the right of entering the Fire Temples and being consigned to the Tower of Silence. In the opinion of the orthodox Parsees, this was the acme of impudence from a Parsee reformer. They approached the Court for redress and the case lasted for many months before a panel of judges, of which one was an Englishman and one a Parsee.***

Parsee racial question! Mixed marriage

*The urine of a pure white bull, who is not supposed to have even one black hair on his body, is made pure by boiling and by reciting sacred formulas—which makes a very long ceremony—but which the orthodox Parsees consider most sacred. The ceremony is known as Nirangdeen.

**In the early part of the 19th century, when the Parsees used to travel far and wide in countries like China, and when they were working in out of the way villages on their lands, not having their women folk with them, they used to take alien women for company, and their children were quietly converted into the Zoroastrian faith. In spite of general protests from the community as a whole, this was going on surreptitiously in rare cases, and the efforts of the Parsee panchayat to put a total stop to it were not always successful.

***Mr. Justice Beaman and Mr. Justice Dinshah D. Davar (later on Sir).

Parsee scholars of repute were enjoined by the Court to produce evidence side by side with learned Dastors and educated leaders of the orthodox element, to prove that their sacred books debarred a Zoroastrian from marrying an alien woman.

From the evidence it was revealed that the Zoroastrian religion, as such, had put no bar on Zoroastrians marrying outside their faith. On the contrary, proofs were produced from historical records that Parsee Kings, like Noshirwan Adil, Khushro Perviz, Behram Gore and others, had married alien women, who were acknowledged as Queens in the history of the Sasanian period. In fact, the evidence proved further that it was made obligatory on Zoroastrians, in the books written during the Sasanian period, to convert aliens to the Zoroastrian faith, and this act was considered particularly meritorious in as much as an alien was thereby led to the true path as shown by Zarathushtra.

The opposition, on the contrary, proved to the Court that the Parsees, after landing in India, had determined on not mixing their blood with that of alien women. They had established their Atash Behrams (Cathedrals), Towers of Silence, their Trusts for religious ceremonies, their schools for boys and girls, their hospitals, etc. all on the explicit understanding that the advantages accruing from these had to go to Parsees, born of Parsee fathers and Parsee mothers only. Further they said, that long usage of a thousand years and more had made this understanding an unwritten law for the Parsees.

The learned judges, after very carefully weighing and sifting the arguments on both sides, gave judgment to the effect that the religion of Zarathushtra not only has not prohibited its followers from marrying alien women, but on the contrary, it has been considered as a meritorious act to convert an alien to the Zoroastrian faith, thus to show the real path to happiness to non-Zoroastrians.

Side by side, they added that it was also established that charities worth many millions, with which several social and religious institutions had been established by the Parsees for the uplift of their co-religionists, were put in trust, wholly and solely for the benefit of the Parsees born of Parsee fathers and Parsee mothers.

Therefore, the learned judges laid it down in their judgment that the children born of a Parsee father and of an alien mother, could be

accepted as Parsees and could get all the benefits of the Parsee charities, without any let or hindrance. Further, that they be taken into the fold in the usual prescribed manner.

It was further added that, should a Parsee woman marry outside her own community, her children could not be taken into the Zoroastrian fold by any right whatsoever.

Thus the curtain dropped on this most sensational case in the history of the Parsees after their advent to India.

However, it did not satisfy the enlightened young women of the community with their university education. They did not think it either fair or just, that while the boys of their community could marry outside of their fold and have their children taken into the Zoroastrian faith, but just because they happened to be women, the same right should be denied to them. This they felt all the more, when it was established that the religion itself did not prescribe such marriages. The Parsee women marry non-Zoroastrian boys of their choice, despite the fact that by that daring step they are being ex-communicated, and their children are not accepted as Parsees. The modern young Parsee girls are further irritated by the fact that even when the alien boys of their choice show their willingness to be converted to the Zoroastrian fold, the community has sternly barred their entrance for all time.

The modern age brings numerous races of the world in closer touch. Trains, steamers and aeroplanes make this easy and convenient. Children from schools and youths from colleges are now being invited by one country or another to stay for a short term with some families there, so that they may get to know about their religion, manners, customs and ways of living, more intimately. This sort of intercommunication is bound to knit the world, in the long run, into one big brotherhood.

On the other hand, social clubs, cinemas and dancing halls in the East, during the last two wars and even now, have tended to bring Parsee boys and girls into intimate contact with the opposite sex of foreign races. Naturally, therefore, they, in accordance with nature's law of the opposites, cannot possibly restrain themselves from falling in love with one another and wanting to unite in wedlock. Sex makes no difference to colour, caste, creed, religion or education. Therefore, while the Parsee boys were permitted the privilege of marrying outside their fold and the girls were severely restricted in that direction

subjectively, the latter in their turn revolted against the unfairness of the community as it appeared to them. Verily, this has brought the Parsee community to the cross-roads.

As an instance, at Karachi, nine Parsee girls of marriageable age, and with college education, wrote a letter to the High Priest of the Parsees and with college education, wrote a letter to the High Priest of the Parsees in that City to enquire if he had any objection to their marrying boys from outside of their community. If so, on what grounds? If on religious grounds, could he kindly quote to them Chapter and verse of the Zoroastrian sacred scriptures, which as far as they know have never prohibited marriages between Zoroastrians and non-Zoroastrians. They remained anonymous by signing the letter "Nine Parsee Girls"! This clearly shows the spirit the modern young Parsee girls possess, with their modern education.

In the report, circulated in June 1957, of the General Body meeting of the members of the Incorporated Parsee Association of Europe (Founded in 1861 in London), the following paragraphs give an exact idea as to the anxiety of the matured, enlightened and thinking group among the Parsees:

"Now let us examine what has been happening to our people permanently residing in this country*. Individuals and families come from India and other places to settle down here for good. The first generation remains true to its faith. The second generation has little or no idea about our culture or religion. There are no facilities available. Inevitably they are drawn away and are absorbed into other religions and other communities. In the third generation they are completely merged and not even a trace is left that they were Parsees or Zoroastrians. This has been happening for a 100 years to the flower of our Community."

"In an advanced Country like Great Britain, the pressure of other religions and Communities is terrific. The doors of other Churches and temples are wide open. They receive you with open arms. The doors of our Religion are closed to outsiders everywhere. In this Country there are no doors, no facilities to learn and to practice, no place which we can

* England.

“In India, Pakistan and other Eastern Countries, our people are well organised. Our religious and cultural standards are very high. There we are not in such great danger of submersion, although they also have their local problems.”

The young generation of the Parsees does not marry so early in life as their parents and grandparents did. They do not like to stay together under one roof with their parents, with an eye to economy. On the contrary, the modern youth of both sexes want to enjoy life to the fullest. Therefore, in these days of high inflation, they find their income not sufficient to induce them to remain united in wedlock and bring up children. While late marriage is the order of the day, the birth and the death rate amongst the Parsees is almost equal. The stamina too of this tiniest race on earth is being gradually undermined. The enormous funds established by the Parsees in charity in the middle of the last century, are not sufficient to cope with the growing need for doles and alms amongst the Parsees, who, so far, have been well looked after by the community from the cradle to the grave.

With the partition of India, the chances of the Parsees to show their talent in the field of politics, as the Parsees two generations ago did, are fast receding. Economically too, amongst the millions of Hindus and Mussalmans, they have no chance now of amassing wealth, nor of giving away largely in cosmopolitan charity, as their forefathers did.

And, so, the enlightened element in this tiny community is greatly perturbed. They know that religious sentiments have their values up to a certain extent. But now, with the world progressing with such rapidity in education, science and culture, the Parsees can ill-afford to live a secluded life amongst the millions, as their forefathers did for 1200 years in India. The question of losing every Parsee girl who marries outside is also disturbing, if one looks at the figures of births and deaths amongst the community. And yet the great majority of the Parsee community does not seem to care. They philosophise that as God has looked after them for 1200 years, He will continue to do so forever.

The enlightened ones, on the contrary, think seriously over the future of the community. But, as we have seen above in this

*The place where the sacred fire is housed.

Chapter, the gulf of separation between the young and the old is getting so very wide, that it becomes extremely difficult to predict the future of this tiny community.

On the contrary, to keep the doors open for non-Zoroastrians to come into the Zoroastrian fold, will definitely be tantamount to annihilating the entire community, as with the population of a mere ~~hundred and fifty thousand in the whole world~~, they would get so merged into the teeming millions outside their fold, that within half a century there will be no more Parsees left in the world.

How will the young generation, with its broad outlook in life and higher education, tackle this extremely grave question of inter-marriages? Time alone will tell.

In the meantime, the community is in the hands of Ahura Mazda. May He continue to shower His blessings on it, and may He guide its youth and elders aright. Amen.

APPENDIX 'A'

Opinions re. the time Zarathushtra lived.

In the "Times of India" Bombay, dated June 6th. 1957, Mr. F.N. Tavaria airs his views regarding the age of Zarathushtra as under:-

"With reference to the controversy over Lord Zarathushtra, it is stated in Ohaspi—the common Bible published by the Confraternity of Faithists, London, that "Zarathushtra, erroneously called Zoroaster, a Persian Law giver, lived in the cycles of Fragaratti eight thousand nine hundred years ago, the farthest back of all historical characters."

In Sacred Books of the East, Vol. XLVII, Dr. West observes: "Singularly enough the oldest writers, those who lived only two to four centuries after the traditional period of the life time of Zarathushtra, are those who report that he lived some 6,000 years before that period." It is this so called "traditional period" that has been confusing philological scholars. A certain Iranian writer has enigmatically mentioned that "after 300 years the religion was disturbed." This disturbance refers to the burning of the royal libraries of Iran by Alexander in about 331 B.C.

The old Arab writers were as unaware of the mystery behind "300" years as modern philologists who have been misguided into the belief that those '300' years were solar years. The fact is they are lunar years of the old Iranian "Kar" system referred to in Dabistan. In the solar year when the earth traverses 30 degrees of a sign it is called a month, but in the Kar system it is called a day. Hence a Kar year is equal to 30 solar years. A lunar year consists of 343 days i.e. 0.9 of a solar year. A lunar Kar year consists of 27 years (0.9x30). Hence the "300" years are actually $300 \times 27 = 9,100$ years which is very near the period given by Greek writers."

On the other hand, Dr. Jamshed M. Unwala, Ph.D., a Parsee, former collaborator of the French Archaeological mission of Susiana in Iran, writes as under:-

"This much is sure that the archaeological excavations carried on in the Middle and in the Far East and Egypt have shown that the earliest traces of civilisations in these countries can be dated at the earliest 5,000 B.C. At Susa and at Xehavend (Tepe Cyan) in Iran the early civilisation is

marked by an exquisitely decorated fine painted pottery with highly stylised animal and bird motifs and bronze mirror (99% copper and 1% antimony), but with the total absence of written document. Thus, it would be absurd to put the age of Zarathushtra at 7000 years or even more from today.

I have put the age of Zarathushtra in the iron age, as clear reference to bronze or copper are not found in the Avesta literature. We have on the contrary many references to iron in the later Avesta, and one even in the Gatha, Yasn 51.9 where the universal judgment at the final dispensation by molten iron—a yangha khshusta—metal par excellence is mentioned. The later Avesta, especially the Yasht literature (Yt. 10, 13, 14, 17), describes offensive and defensive weapons and armour of Mithra and of the Fravashis which are made of iron (Av. a yangh, Ved. Skr. ayas). Now, we know from the excavations at Kashan, at Nehavand and in Luristan that iron weapons, like poignards, lance-heads and arrow heads, were found in graves which could be dated as early as the 14th. 13th, century B.C. Whereas at Susa in Elam iron made its appearance still later in about the beginning of the first millennium B.C. Thus we can place the Gathas of Zarathushtra tentatively as early as the 14th century B.C. and the later Avesta perhaps not later than in the beginning of the first millennium B.C.

In my address at Annamalainagar, I have said "I may add that Prof. Carnoy of Liege places the age of Zarathushtra with Bartholomae not later than nine hundred B.C. whereas Prof. Henning fixes it categorically at 588 B.C. According to the Syriac writer Theodor bar Qoni, Zarathushtra lived 628 years and seven months before Christ." It is well known that Dastur Dr. Dhalla has placed it at 1000 B.C.

I hope you have perhaps more to say on this point in your book. The very high date fixed for Zarathushtra by Parsi writers is the result of an attempt to prove that Zarathushtra lived much earlier than Moses, who flourished in the time of Ramses II of Egypt, i.e. in the middle of the 13th century B.C."

APPENDIX "B"

DECIPHERMENT OF DARIUS' GUNEIFORM INSCRIPTIONS

(From "*Rock Records of Darius the Great*"
by MANECK B. PITHAWALLA, B.A., B.Sc).

Dr. Thomas Hyde, as early as 1700 A.D. regarded these inscriptions on the Dabistan Rocks as "trifles hardly worthy of attention but for the curiosity already aroused by them." He further described these inscriptions as "mere fanciful designs of the original architect." Some other savants of the West also styled these writings as architectural ornaments, work of mason's marks and what not.

Anquetil du Perron (1763-1771) the forerunner of the Western Avesta scholars, believed that Persepolis had been built by Jamsheed, and the Achaemenian inscriptions, if really alphabetical, were probably secret and sacerdotal, or a mere cipher perhaps of which the priests only had the key.

No sooner was Anquetil's work published in France, than Sir William Jones of Oxford went so far as to deny the very existence of a lore like that of the Avesta, and Anquetil's translations were laid aside as "spurious and not deserving any attention. "But he was to be vindicated by Sylvester de Sacy, who in 1793 deciphered some Sassanian Pahlavi inscriptions and proved the possibility of their close relation to Avesta.

The next greatest achievement of Persian scholarship is that of the translation of Old Persian Cuneiform by Grotefend in 1802. A young man just fresh from the Bonn University, he took two of the Persian inscriptions of which he possessed copies and laying them side by side compared them with the diligence worthy of a deep scholar.

The first thing that struck him in both the writings was the frequent occurrence of the same word in both. He concluded at once that the contents must be similar at least. That word occurred in two slightly varying forms (1) short (identified as a singular) and (2) long (plural form). These he afterwards concluded to be (1) 'king' and (2) 'kings'. This word was followed in both by the same word and that he guessed to be 'great' as the title, from similar Sassanian records. He

combined his archaeological method with the philological, for in the Sassanian records the first word was the king's name, and was invariably followed by 'great king, king of kings.' If that were true, he thought the name was different in the two tablets he was comparing. This name followed the word 'king' and also another 'son'. He thence surmised that there were three rulers mentioned therein. Referring to the history of Achaemenian rulers he found that the three names were Hystaspes, Darius and Xerxes. He then secured the letters D-A-R-S-H and other proper nouns amounting to nearly one-third of the whole alphabet. This was confirmed by another discovery of a stone with trilingual inscriptions viz. cuneiform, hieroglyph and ancient Greek. All this meant one of the most wonderful achievements of the modern world. For, "to very few men has it been given to make discoveries so important for history as well as for philology." Grotefend thereby discovered, fortunately for himself and for Persia, the key to three of the world's ancient languages.

After Grotefend, Martin made some improvements in his discoveries but unfortunately died soon after. Prof. Rask of Denmark followed him (1787-1832) and found the plural ending. He showed the strange resemblance between Gunei and Sanskrit and discovered M and N. Then followed the father of Zend Philology, Eugene Burnouf, who by means of a study of some Persian geographical names, discovered all the letters.

Simultaneously with him Lassen of Bonn was studying the same list of names. He had discovered independently some 6 signs and was progressing. He made a very important discovery that if the system of Grotefend was rigidly followed, some words would be left wholly without vowels. His knowledge of Sanskrit alphabet helped him more and he concluded that the ancient Persians signs were not entirely alphabetical. "A" was included in the consonant sign, eg. Va-za-ra-ka.

Major Rawlinson, then a young military officer of the E. I. C. aged 25 years, was deputed to Persia to reorganise the Persian army in 1833. For some time he stayed at Hamadan, where in his leisure hours he studied the Cuneiform characters. In 1835 he was transferred to Kermanshah whence he went to Dabistan and studied the inscription with a field-glass. In 1838 after making several ascents up the rock, he sent to the Royal Society his translation of the first two paragraphs containing the name, titles and genealogy of Darius. This translation created a great sensation at that time. While in 1839 he was just ready to publish his entire work, he was sent to Afghanistan as Political Agent at Kandahar. Returning in 1843 he transcribed the remaining texts as well

as the Elamitic and the Babylonian versions of the Persian and at last in 1846 published in the journal of the Royal Society, his first complete translation and carried imperishable fame. To quote the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*: "That two men Lassen and Rawlinson of such different training and of such opposite types of mind should have lighted upon the same method and by it should have attained the same results confirmed in the eyes of many the truth of the decipherment."

In 1884 Rawlinson wrote in the *Athenaeum* as follows:-

'At the close of the war (Afghan) in 1843 I was offered, as a reward of my services, the highest political employment and an assured career in India; but I had not forgotten Behistun. It had become the ambition of my life to carry on my Cuneiform researches, and especially to work out the Babylonian puzzle; and accordingly to the astonishment of my friends I deliberately declined the brilliant prospect opened out to me in India and elected to return to what was called 'exile' at Baghdad, where for 12 weary years—broken by only one brief visit to England—I resided, in an exhausting climate, Cut off from all society, sparingly supplied with the comforts of civilisation and in fact doing penance in order to attain a great literary object. During this period of probation on two occasions—in 1844 and 1847—I again visited the rock of Behistun riding 1,000 miles for the purpose and disbursing above £1,000 from my own funds for the expenses of the expedition. I will not say much as to the danger or difficulty of ascending the rock and reaching the upper part of the sculptures which are some 500 ft. above the plain."

Taking these researches as all in all, it must be stated that the decipherment of the Cuneiform records is one of the most instructive chapters in the history of philological research and one of the most memorable accomplishments of the 19th century.

APPENDIX "C"

Statue of the Sassanian King, Shahpour I (242-272 A.C.)

In connection with the account of the broken statue of the Sassanian King, Shahpour I (242-272 A.C.), given on page 85, heartening news have now been received that, after having lain for 1300 years in the cave in a broken condition, it has been restored and put back in its original place.

The unveiling ceremony was done by Lieutenant General Ariana, the Chief of the General Staff (Land Forces), on behalf of His Imperial Majesty, the Shahinshah of Iran, Muhammad Reza Shah Pahlevi, on the 9th April, 1958 (17th Farvardin, 1337).*

It was a gigantic task to lift this 25 ton marble statue, which has a height of 20 feet, from the cave with considerable amount of debris in it, and to instal it in its original place, viz: Ghar-i-Shapoor in the Province of Pars, district of Kazeroon—about five kilometres from the tower of Kazeroon in Iran. This has been most successfully done after fourteen months of immense hard labour, in which 200 soldiers, 7 officers and 22 non-commissioned officers of the 5th Fars Army worked night and day, on the mountain.

The following tablets are put on two sides of the statue in Persian as under:-

"This is the image of the Mazda-worshipping divinity Shahpour King of Kings of Iran and non-Iran, of spiritual origin from the sacred beings, son of the Mazda-worshipping Ardeshir, King of Kings of Iran, of spiritual origin from the sacred beings, grandson of the divinity Papak, the King."

All told, the reinstalling of the statue has cost 330,000 rials only because the work was carried out by the Army, as otherwise, the estimated cost would have been 20,000,000 rials.

The Parsees all over the world feel very proud of this patriotic task successfully carried out by Iran to perpetuate the memory of one of their ancient Kings and they offer most sincere and grateful thanks to His Imperial Majesty, The Shahinshah of Iran, Muhammad Reza Shah Pahlevi, and His Majesty's Government for the same.

* The year 1337 is known as Yazdgardi, the same as 1958 is termed as A.D., the reason being that the Zoroastrian Parsees count their year from the death of their last King, Yazdgard III.

APPENDIX "D"

THE SPRING OF KHUSRAU

*Being a beautiful description of the carpet
belonging to the Sasanian King, Khusro Parviz.*

Jehangir Burjorji Sanjana, B.A., J.P., Bombay, in his "Ancient Persia and the Parsees", on page 546, gives a beautiful description of the Carpet known as "The Spring of Khoosrau", as under:-

"Sa'ad made his entry in Ctesiphon. The magnificent royal palaces, the palatial residences of the rich, and the glory of the gardens, fountains and meadows of the capital of the Sasanians amazed the victors and they looked with eyes of wonder at the treasures they beheld there. The various rooms of the magnificent palace, Tak-e-Kesra or Takht-i-Khusrau, were full of gold and silver, of costly robes and precious stones, of jewelled arms, and dainty carpets. There was a carpet of white brocade, 450 feet long and 90 broad, which Tabari names "The spring of Khusrau", and describes as follows:- 'In Khusrau's treasures the Arabs found a carpet 300 cubits long and 60 cubits broad. They called it Dastan. The kings of Persia spread it and sat on it at the time when there was nothing green in the world (i.e. in winter). On every ten cubits of it, they had woven different jewels and on ten cubits yellow rubies. Whoever looked at it thought that it was fairy-born (i.e. fairy made). In it, jewels were set in, and pictures of all things which grow on earth and water and all green plants were woven in it.' (M.As.P., Pt. IV, 35). There were also a horse made entirely of gold bearing a silver saddle decorated with numerous jewels, and a camel of silver accompanied by a golden foal.

The works of art and a fifth part of the priceless booty were set apart for the Caliph and sent to Medina. The rest Sa'ad divided among his sixty thousand soldiers, the share of each amounting to 12,000 dirhams.* The priceless carpet, "The Spring of Khusrau", was sent by the Arab general to Omar, who ordered it to be placed in the mosque.

* Estimating the dirham as worth from 65 to 70 French centimes, Rawlinson finds the entire booty, exclusive of the works of art, to have been worth from £ 23,400,000 to £ 25,200,000. Major Price by substituting dinars for dirhams, on the authority of Habibasseir raises the value to the incredible sum of £ 300,000,000.

At Jalula, near Holvan the army of Yezdegard, led by a Mihran, whose name Mirkhond gives as Mohran ben Behram Razy, received a great defeat at the hands of Hashem, a brother or nephew of Sa'ad (A.D. 637). The slaughter was immense. The general and a hundred thousand Persians fell on the battle field. The Arabs seized such immense booty that the share of each soldier who took part in the battle came to ten thousand dirhams (£260). In one of the Persian tents an Arab, Khareja, found a golden camel adorned with rubies and pearls, with a man of pure gold on its saddle. The victory of Jalula took place in the 16th year of the Hejira."

APPENDIX "E"

DESCRIPTION OF THE PURIFYING PROCESS OF ATASH BEHRAM

Purifying Process by filtration of the Atash Behram
From: "The Parsis in INDIA", English Edition,
by M.N. Murzban Volume II, Pages 407 to 411.

The (Fire of) Atash-Beheram is made up of one-thousand-and-one fires, belonging to sixteen different classes: Fire (1) of dead body, (2) of the Dyer, (3) of King's house, (4) of the Potter, (5) of the Brick-maker, (6) of the Copper-smith, (7) of the Gold-smith, (8) of the Mint-master, (9) of the Black-smith, (10) of the Weapon manufacturer, (11) of the Baker, (12) of the Distiller, (13) of the Warrior, (14) of the Shepherd, (15) of Lightning and (16) of the Priest. These sixteen types are a *sine qua non* for the ceremony, and as each sort is obtained, a purificatory rite it must undergo. Thus, when the fire of the dead-body is obtained, it is carried to a selected plot, where a metallic, perforated, flat plate, with a handle attached, is held over it, so as not to touch the fire; this flat plate has, on it, sandal-wood, incense etc., and the blowing wind, — the spot selected must be a windy one — and the heat of the fire ignite the same, and thus a new fire is obtained. Then, it is carried to a plain, where are kept ready 91 pits dug out with a space of about half-a-yard between them, wherein is placed fire-wood, etc. In the first of these pits, the fire brought is placed, and a flame made, over which the perforated plate is held as before, and its kindled contents are used to light the second pit. This process is repeated, till the ninety-first pit yields its fire, which is carried to a temple. Here begins the second part of the ceremony. The priests then perform the sacred . . . Yasna ceremony in which only a part of the fire brought to the temple, on the previous day, is used. This, then, is kept apart. A second portion is similarly used, on the following day, and the process is repeated on the third. Then, the priests must wait for the 1st day of the month 'Ahur Mazda,' — when the remainder of the fire is used, for 88 days consecutively, in the Yasna and the Vendidad ceremonies, bringing their number to 91, — that is the same as that of the number of pits in the first part of the ceremony. When this is done the first fire is ready for the (Atash-Beheram.)

In exactly the same way, the other fifteen fires have (each) to undergo a purification process; the number of pit-purification and the

Yasna -Vendidad purification (ceremony) is not the same (for each of these fifteen fires). Thus, for the second fire, it is 80, for the third, it is 70, for the 4th, 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th (kind of fire), 61: for the 5th, it is 75: for the 6th, it is 50: for the 7th, it is 60 for the eighth it is 55: for the 13th, it is 35: for the 14th, it is 33: for the 15th it is 90: and for the last, it is 184.

What do these sixteen fires mean? Is the whole ceremony a mere meaningless force, or, has it some teaching to impart to man It appears that 1001 fires, derived out of the sixteen particular types, represent, — among other things, — the very many branches of knowledge, which, when united, give to man the science of all sciences,— Divine Wisdom, the synthesis of science and art, philosophy and religion....”

In 1891, Monier Williams inquired of K.R. Cama whether there was any mandate, in the Zoroastrian religion, to erect Atash-Beherams. This subject was therefore placed before the ‘Zarathushti Din-ni Khol karnari Mandli.’ Mr. Cama expressed his views that neither in the Avesta nor in the Pahlavi books any mention of any Atash-Beheram has been made, and that, in Persia, there was no such institution as an Atash-Beheram, but that, possibly, it may have been instituted since the arrival of the Parsis in India; that, the Zoroastrian refugees having, it is alleged, encountered a storm at sea, on their voyage out from Persia, had taken a vow that, in case they safely landed, they would build an Atash-khane, dedicating it to Behram Yazad; that, it was this that had been called Atash-Beheram. But some members of the above society observed that in ancient times, there must have been Atash-Beherams, ~~because allusion is made to them in Pahlavi books.~~ Ervad Tehemuras D. Anklesvaria pointed out certain passages, in the Dadistan-i-Dinik, leading to an inference that the institution of an Atash-Beheram originated in Persia, and not in India; and that, from some Pahlavi books, it appeared that at the time Dastur Minusheher wrote this book, and even before that, — institutions like Atash-Beherams did exist. Mr. Cama’s rejoinder, by way of a query, was: “Why should the name ‘Beheram’ appear coupled in the term ‘Atash-Beheram.’” And he further queried what connection ‘Fire’ had with ‘Beheram’, as in the Avesta, nothing appears to indicate that Beheram was, in any way connected with Fire. In reply to this, his attention was drawn to para 55 of Beheram Yasht, but on scrutinizing that passage, the meeting could not come to the conclusion that Fire was in any way connected with Beheram. Ervad Kharshedji M. Kateli pointed out, from several Persian lexicons, the

names of nine Atash-Khanas, which were named after their founders, such as: (1) Azar-e Meher, (2) Azar-e Beheram, (3) Azar-e Noosh, (4) Azar-e Ayin or Arbin, (5) Azar-e Khoorin or Khordad, (6) Azar-e Burjeen, (7) Azar-e Zarathusht, (8) Azar-e Abadgan, (9) Azar-e Goshasp. That the 5th was built by Khordad, and hence named after him, the 6th by Burjeen in Fars, a successor of Zarathusht; but that, a tradition says it was king Kaikhusru who ordered the fire-which was lit by a lightening which set the saddle of his horse on fire-, to be preserved, and he named that fire after this incident: the 8th was built by a Mobed named Abadgan in Tabriz; the 9th. was by king Gushtasp, but it was surmised that the name was corrupted into Goshasp. Inferentially, therefore, the structure, wherein a Fire was consecrated, was named after those who built them. (See the Gujarati Proceedings of the Society, in Vol. II of 1891, pp. 161, 164 and 165). It appears, therefore, that the nomenclature 'Atash-Beheram' is not generic, but to have originated with the name of its founder, as in Persia, or with the name of the Yazata to whom it was dedicated, as in India, where all the so-called Fire-temples are known by the appellation of 'Atash-Beheram'.

APPENDIX "F"

The Column at Sanjan, raised by the Parsees on August 6, 1917 to commemorate their first landing In India, contains the following inscription:-

HOMAGE TO THEE, O AHURA MAZDA:

THIS COLUMN HAS BEEN ERECTED BY THE PARSEES OF INDIA IN PIOUS MEMORY OF THEIR GOOD IRANIAN ANCESTORS, WHO AFTER THE DOWNFALL OF THEIR EMPIRE UNDER THEIR LAST MONARCH YAZDAZARD SHAHRIYAR, FOR THE SAKE OF THEIR RELIGION DEARER THAN LIFE:LEFT THEIR NATIVE LAND, SUFFERING INNUMERABLE HARDSHIPS AT LENGTH LANDED AT THIS ONCE FAMOUS PORT OF SANJAN, ARE SETTLED UNDER THE PROTECTION OF ITS HINDU KING JADI RANA.

**"WE WORSHIP THE GOOD, STRONG,
BENEFICENT FRAVASHIS OF THE HOLY."**

**6th August, 1917
1286 Yazdezardi.**

APPENDIX 'G'

PARSEE POPULATION OF INDIA, PAKISTAN AND IRAN

According to the information conveyed by the Secretary, Office of the Trustees of the Parsi Punchayat Funds and Properties, Bombay, the present Parsee population in India, as per the Census of 1951, is:-

Men	56,137
Women	55,654
Total:-	111,791

For greater details, the following will be of interest to the curious:-

Uttar Pradesh	1258
Bihar	455
Orissa	181
West Bengal	1918
Assam	27
Madras	2087
Bombay	97573
Madhya Pradesh	3066
Punjab	77
Mysore	470
Travancore Cochin	38
Saurashtra	560
Madhya Bharat	934
Hyderabad	1992
Rajasthan	500
Pepsu	98
Delhi	164
Amjer	262
Tripura	1
Coorg	10
Kutch	49
Vindia Pradesh	13
Bhopal	55
Andaman and Nicobar	2

With regard to Pakistan, the figure recorded is 5235, both men and women and including East and West Pakistan. Since the last census population has increased to about 6000.

As to the population of Zoroastrians in Iran, the rough figure as given in Chapter XXIV is 20,000. The actual figures, however as supplied by Arbab Rustam Guiv, the Leader of Zoroastrian Community in Iran and a former Member of Iranian Parliament, are shown in column, 'A' below, and those supplied by Aqa-i-Asad Homayoun of the Imperial Iranian Embassy in Pakistan, are given in column 'B' below:-

	'A'	'B'
Teheran	6500	8923
Yezd	7000	4990
Kerman	3700	2386
Shiraz	150	118
Isfahan	120	64
Ahwaz	140	124
Taft	—	635
Zahidan	—	57
Abadan, Bem and other cities.	390	—
	18,000	17297

APPENDIX 'H'

THE ROYAL FIRMAN BY NASSER-UD-DIN SHAH, ABOLISHING THE JEZIYA TAX, LEVIED ON THE ZOROASTRIANS IN IRAN

"In consideration of the innumerable benedictions which it has pleased the Almighty to accord to us, and as an act of grace towards HIM who has given us the Royal Crown of Persia, with the means of promoting the welfare of its inhabitants, there has devolved on us the duty of securing tranquillity and happiness for all our subjects to whatever tribe, community or religion they belong, so that they may be profited and refreshed by the beneficent waters of our special favour.

"Amongst these are the Zoroastrians of Yezd and Kirman who are descended from ancient and noble race of Persia, and it is now our desire to make their peace and well-being more complete than before.

"That is why, by this Royal Firman, we ordain and command that the taxes and imposts of the Crown, levied previously on our Musalman subjects of Yezd and Kirman, may be recovered in the same way from the Zoroastrians who reside there. In this manner the impost, which exacts from this community the sum of eight hundred and forty-five tomans is abolished, and in the commencement of this propitious year of the Horse, we make an abatement of this sum and free the Zoroastrians from it for ever. We therefore order and command our Mustaufis and officers of the debt of the Royal Exchequer to remove it from the revenues which have to be paid in by Yezd and Kirman. The Governors now in office, or those who will be nominated subsequently, at the head of these provinces, ought to consider all right to the payment of this tribute abolished for ever; and, as regards the present year, and the following years, if this sum should happen to be exacted, they will be held responsible and will be punished for it. Moreover, in the tribute of the titles and imposts on water and land, and for all trade duties, the Zoroastrians must be treated in the same manner as our other subjects.

"Given at Teheran in the month of Ramzan 1299 (August, 1882)."

APPENDIX 'I'

THE AWARD BY THE COURT OF DIRECTORS OF THE UNITED COMPANY OF MERCHANTS OF ENGLAND GIVEN IN FAVOUR OF NOWROJI FRAMJI RUSTOMJI

"The original award, which is written on parchment, is in the possession of Mr. Kaikhosru Rastamji Dadabhai Sethna, one of the descendants of Rastam Manak.

London the 19th August 1724.

OUR PRESIDENT AND COUNCIL OF BOMBAY—We the Court of Directors of the United Company of Merchants of England Trading to the East Indies send this to acquaint you that by the King George lately arrived and the Stanhope which came in sometime before, We have received your several packets and advices giving us an account of our affairs under your Management with the reasons of your proceedings. We observe in your letters by King George that the Governor of Surat and the Merchants think it very reasonable that the late Brokers should give us satisfaction as to all just demands upon them, which as you have wrote us is what you desire and would be content with the proof of even from their own Books and accounts and to submit any matters of difference that may arise to the Determination of the Merchants of Surat to be mutually chosen by the said Brokers and you for them to conclude and settle the same.

We find in the letter by the King George that Framjee is in custody at the Surat Durbar and Bomanjee remains confined to his house at Bombay. Former letters gave us your reasons why you did not then think it proper to let him go off the Island.

The Salisbury Man-of-War, which arrived at Spithead the latter end of April last brought Nowrojee from Surat, he is since come up hither and hath laid before us several papers and accounts which are ordered to be perused and taken into consideration.

Among other Papers he gave us one intituled the case of Framjee in close Prison at Surat, wherein he represents that this was occasioned by the English Chiefs', Mr. Hope's and afterwards Messers. Cowan's and

Courtney's applications to Momeen Caun, the Surat Governor, and by a letter delivered to him wrote by Governor Phipps on which Framjee was at first confined. Then Guards set on his father Rustomjee's house after this Framjee was forced to pay Momeen Caun at times fifty Thousands Rupees and also two hundred Rupees a day for leave to supply the people in the house with Provisions and water and besides all these hardships he has undergone corporal punishment.

We are apt to think this case is greatly aggravated or at least that the Governor proceeded the rigorous treatment, to oblige Framjee to come to a fair account according to the custom of the country, which was at first civilly desired to be done without any compulsion and ought to have been Complied with.

But however the case be, we have at Nowrojee's request consented and agreed and do hereby direct and order that you do give leave to Bomanjee, if he do yet remain at Bombay, to go to Surat whenever he please without delay and that you do your endeavour by proper application to the Governor of Surat to get Framjee released from confinement, and the Guards taken off from his late Father's house, our desires being to end all differences amicably, for we would not have him oppress.

We have at Nowrojee's desire given him six letters all of the same tenor with this that as he intends to send them Overland, if any should miscarry the rest may come safe and Earlier than by the shipping directly from hence for they will not sail till the proper season, by which you may expect an answer to your letters now before us:—

We are, your loving friends.

EDWD. HARRISON, *Chairman*

ABRA. ADDAMS, *Deputy.*

JOHN DRUMMOND

WILLM. AISLABIE

WM. BILLERS

WM. GOSSELIN

RICHD. BOULTON

ROBT. HUDSON

FRANCIS CHILD

JOSIAS WORDSWORTH *sen.*

JOHN COULD *jun*

JOHN ECCLESTON

EDW. OWEN

JOHN BANCE

BALTZAR LYELL

JOSIAS WORDSWORTH *jun.*

MATTHEW DECKER

A gentleman, who had then lately retired from the factory at Surat, wrote to Naorosji's brothers thus:—

I have advised Mr. Nowrojee and so have several gentlemen here that you three Brothers should live amicable and peacefully in all your affairs, because in a very short time its to be hoped that the Hon'able Company will employ you all jointly as their Broker, as is promised by my own, and Nowrojee's good friends here, but any dispute happens among you then you will ruin your business, since Nowrojee's coming to England he hath been very ill, but he hath taken great pains in this business, and every body here hath great value and esteem for him, because he hath managed this affair to the satisfaction of the Hon'ble Company, and for the Good and Interest of his brothers and family; therefore you ought to make him a hand-some present for his long and fatiguing voyage and good services."

APPENDIX 'J'

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER FROM MR. CAWASHAH M. TALEYARKHAN, B.A.LL.B., ADVOCATE, DATED 11TH JUNE 1958. FROM BOMBAY RE: THE MOGHUL KING AT DELHI WHO CONFERRED THE TITLE OF NEK-SA'AT KHAN ON SORABJI KAVASJI, THE CLOCK REPAIRER.

I send you herewith the information required by you. My ancestor Sorabji Kavasji went to Delhi in 1744. He was honoured with the title of Nek Sa'at Khan. There is no doubt that the Emperor who gave him the title was Mohammadshah. According to the traditions of our family Sorabji's wife, two sons, son-in-law Kalabhoy Sorabji and daughter also went to Delhi in subsequent years and remained there till 1760. Sorabji came across four Mogul Emperors as under

Mohammadshah	(1719-1748)	
Ahmedshah	(1748-1754)	Maratha
Alamgir II	(1754-1759)	Diary.
Shah Alam II	(1759-1806)	

I have never come across the statement that Mohammedshah was also known as Alamgir. Sorabji returned to Surat in 1760 after securing valuable political privileges for the Surat Factory. The descendants of his second son Pestonji who received the title of Taleyarkhan constitute the the Taleyarkhan family of today. I also wish to draw your attention to a small mistake made by Dossabhoy Karaka in his book. The name of the elder son of Nek Sa'at Khan who received the title of Behremankhan is Burjorji and not Bejenji.

APPENDIX 'K'

LIST OF PARSEE KNIGHTS AND BARONETS DURING THE BRITISH REGIME

From the total population of one hundred thousand Parsees in the undivided India, as many as sixty-three Knight Bachelors have been created during the British regime, commencing from 1842 and ending with 1946. Similarly, from among the eight Baronets created in Bombay Presidency, three were Parsees, two Jews, one Musalman and one Hindu. From this, would it not be appropriate to say that the Parsees are a race with a world record?

Needless to say, the Parsees need not dream of Knighthood and Baronetcy any more in this democratic age.

The list of Parsee Knights and Baronets is reproduced as a record for the future Parsee generations *:-

<i>Names</i>	<i>Born-Died</i>	<i>Created</i>
1. Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy	(1783-1859)	Knight, 3rd March, 1842. Baronet, 24th May, 1857.
2. Cowasjee Jehangir Readymoney, C.S.I.	(1812-1878)	Knight, 24th May, 1872.
3. Dinsha Maneckjee Petit	(1823-1901)	Knight, 16th Feb., 1887. Baronet, 18th March, 1890.
4. (Jehangir) Cowas Jehangir	(1853-1934)	Knight 1st July, 1895. Baronet, 26th June, 1908.
5. Muncherjee Merwanjee Bhaonagree, C.I.E.	(1851-1933)	K.C.I.E., 22nd June, 1897.
6. Pherozeshah Merwanjee Mehta, C.I.E.	(1845-1915)	K.C.I.E., 27th June, 1904.

*FROM: J. R. B. JEEJEEBHOY'S BOOKLET ON "BOMBAY KNIGHTS, BARONETS", 1946.

<i>Names</i>	<i>Born-Died</i>	<i>Created</i>
7. Dorabjee Jamsetjee Tata	(1859-1932)	Knight, 1st January, 1910.
8. Hormasjee Naorojee Mody	(1839-1922)	Knight, .. March, 1910.
9. Justice Dinsha Dhanjibhoy Davar	(1856-1916)	Knight, 12 December, 1911
10. Shapurjee Barjorjee Bharucha	(1845-1920)	Knight, 12 December, 1911
11. Khan Bahadur Bejonjee Dadabhoy Mehta	(1840-1927)	Knight, 12 December, 1911
12. Dr. Tehmuljee Bhikajee Nariman	(1848-1940)	Knight, 1st January, 1917.
13. Faridunjee Jamsetjee Wacha, C.S.I., C.I.E. (Nawab Faridun Jung Bahadur)	(1849-1928)	K.C.I.E., 3rd June, 1915.
14. Ratanjee Jamsetjee Tata	(1871-1918)	Knight, 3rd June, 1916.
15. Naorojee Pestonjee Vakil	(1840-1926)	Knight, 12th Feb., 1917.
16. Dinsha Edaljee Wacha	(1844-1936)	Knight, 3rd June, 1917.
17. Hormasjee Ardesar Wadia	(1849-1928)	Knight, 3rd June, 1918.
18. Hormasjee Edaljee Banatwalla, C.S.I., I.M.S.	(1859-1932)	Knight, 5th June, 1920.
19. Manekjee Byramjee Dadabhoy, C.I.E.	(Born 1865)	Knight, 1st January, 1921. K.C.I.E., 1st Jan. 1925. K.C.S.I., 1st Jan., 1936.
20. Jehangir Hormasjee Kothari	(1859-1935)	Knight, 4th June, 1921.
21. Dhanjibhoy Bomanjee	(1862-1937)	Knight, 1st January, 1922.

<i>Names</i>	<i>Born-Died</i>	<i>Created</i>
22. Hormasjee Cowasjee Dinsha, O.B.E., M.V.O.	(1857-1939)	Knight, 3rd June, 1922.
23. Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, Bt. (5th)	(1878-1931)	K.C.S.I., 3rd June, 1922
24. Dadiba Merwanjee Dalal, C.I.E.	(1870-1941)	Knight, 1st January, 1924.
25. Sirdar Khan Bahadur Rustom Jehangir Vakil.	(1878-1933)	Knight, 3rd June, 1924.
26. Nusserwanjee (Ness) Naorojee Wadia, C.I.E.	(Born 1873)	K.B.E., 1st July, 1926.
27. Pheroze Cursetjee Sethna ,O.B.E.	(1866-1938)	Knight, 1st July, 1926.
28. Cowasjee Jehangir, C.I.E., O.B.E.	(Born 1879)	K.C.I.E., 3rd June, 1927. G.B.E., 1st Jan., 1944.
29. Sirdar Bomanjee Ardesar Dalal	(1854-1932)	Knight, 1st January, 1927.
30. Padam Pestonjee Ginwalla	(Born 1875)	Knight, 3rd June, 1927.
31. Sorabjee Bejonjee Mehta	(1871-1938)	Knight, 3rd June, 1927.
32. Byramjee Jeejeebhoy	(1881-1946)	Knight, 2nd January, 1928
33. Shapurjee Bomanjee Billimoria, M.B.E.	(Born 1877)	Knight, 2nd January, 1928
34. Jehangir Cooverjee Koyajee	(1875-1943)	Knight, 2dn January, 1928
35. Jamshed Byramjee Kanga	(Born 1875)	Knight, 3rd June, 1928.
36. Dr. Nusserwanjee Hormasjee Choksi, C.I.E.	(1861-1939)	Knight, 1st March, 1929.

<i>Names</i>	<i>Born-Died</i>	<i>Created</i>
37. Barjorjee Jamsetjee Dalal, I.C.S.	(1871-1936)	Knight, 1st January, 1930.
38. Dinsha Fardunjee Mulla, C.I.E.	(1863-1934)	Knight, 1st January, 1930.
39. Shams-ul-Ulma Jivanjee Jamshedjee Mody, C.I.E.	(1854-1938)	Knight, 3rd June, 1930.
40. Khan Bahadur Byramjee Hormasjee Nanavati, C.I.E.	(1861-1937)	Knight, 3rd June, 1930.
41. Cursetjee (Cusrow) Naorojee Wadia, C.I.E.	(Born 1869)	Knight, 1st January, 1932.
42. Hormazdiyar Phiroze Dastur (Born 1877)		Knight, 3rd June, 1932.
43. Naorojee Bapujee Saklatwalla, C.I.E.	(1875-1938)	Knight, 3rd June, 1938. K.B.E., 12th May, 1937.
44. Hormasjee Manekjee Mehta (Born 1871)		Knight, 3rd June, 1933. K.B.E., in 1941 K.C.I.E. 13th June, 1946.
45. Jehangir Bomanjee Bahman Behram	Born 1868	Knight, 1st January, 1934.
46. Sorabjee Nusservanjee Ponchkhanawalla.	(1881-1937)	Knight, 4th June, 1934.
47. Dossabhoy Hormasjee Bhiwandiwalla	(1901-1940)	Knight, 4th June, 1934.
48. Lt.-Col. Jamsetjee Nusserwanjee Daggan, C.I.E., O.B.E.	Born 1884	Knight, 1st January, 1935. K.B.E., 14th June, 1945.
49. Hormasjee Pirojsha Mody.	Born 1881	K.B.E., 3rd June, 1935.

<i>Names</i>	<i>Born-Died</i>	<i>Created</i>
50. Khan Bahadur Dhanjisha Bomanjee Cooper.	Born 1878	Knight, 31st Jan., 1937.
51. Ardesar Rustomjee Dalal, I.C.S.	Born 1884	Knight, 2nd January, 1939 K.C.I.E. 1st Jan., 1946.
52. Sorabjee Dorabjee Saklatwalla	Born 1879	Knight, 1st January, 1941.
53. Khan Bahadur Kavasjee Hormsasjee Katrak, O.B.E.	(1856-1946)	Knight, 1st January, 1942.
54. Dr. Ratanjee Dinsha Dalal, C.I.E.		Knight, 1st January, 1942.
65. Pheroze Merwanjee Khareghat, C.I.E., I.C.S.	Born 1890	Knight, 1st January, 1943.
56. Rustom Pestonjee Masani	Born 1876	Knight, 1st January, 1943
57. Naorojee Jehangir Wadia, I.C.S.	Born 1884	Knight, 1st January, 1944
58. Bomanjee Jamsetjee Wadia	Born 1881	Knight, 1st January, 1945.
59. Jehangir Jivajee Gandhi		Knight, 1st January, 1945.
60. Noshirwan P. Engineer	Born 1884	Knight, June, 1945.
61. Brigadier-General Hirajee Jehangir M. Cursetjee, C.S.I. I.M.S.	Born 1885	K.C.I.E., 1st Jan., 1946.
62. Byram Naorojee Karanjia, M.B.E.	Born 1876	Knight, 1st January, 1946.
63. Khan Bahadur Manekjee Naorojee Mehta.		Knight, 13th June, 1946.

B A R O N E T S

1. Sir Jamsetjee was gazetted a Baronet on 24th May, 1857, the Letters Patent dating 6th August of the same year.
2. Sir Albert Sassoon, Kt. (1818-1896) on 1st January, 1890.
3. Sir Dinsha Manekjee Petit, Kt. (1823-1901) on 18th March, 1890.
4. Sir (Jehangir) Cowasjee Jehangir, Kt. (1853-1934) on 26th June, 1908.
5. Sir Jacob Sassoon (1844-1916) on 1st January, 1909.
6. Sir Currimbhai Ebrahim, Kt. (1839-1924) on 24th June, 1910.
7. Sir Sassoon J. David, Kt. (1849-1926) on 12th December, 1911.
8. Sir Chinubhai Madhavlal, Kt. (1864-1916) on 1st January, 1913.

In this connection, Mr. J.R.B. Jeejeebhoy writes in his small pamphlet entitled 'Bombay Knights and Baronets', printed at Sanj Vartaman Press at Bombay in 1946 as under:-

"Now that the Congress Ministry has come into power in Bombay, it is doubtful whether the British Government will continue to bestow English titles to Indian gentlemen because the Bombay Legislative Assembly had adopted on 18th January, 1938 the Resolution of Mr. B.G. Kher, Prime Minister, for the dis-continuance of the practice of conferring titles by H. M. the King and Viceroy, ninety-eight members supporting the motion. There was no dissentient vote. A review therefore of the names of Bombay recipients of higher titles from the time they began to be awarded to Indians, to the present day, will be found interesting to the reader at this juncture and hence the above enumeration."

APPENDIX "L"

LIST OF NAMES OF THE PARSEES WHO DIED IN THE GREAT WAR OF 1914-18 AS INSCRIBED ON THE COLUMN RAISED AT BOMBAY IN THEIR MEMORY:-

"In Pious Memory of the Zoroastrians who died doing their duty during the Great War of 1914-1918."

Then the list of the deceased is given which is reproduced below for record purposes:-

- | | | | | |
|-----|---|----|----|----|
| 1. | Captain Meherwanjee Dinshajee Printer | .. | .. | .. |
| 2. | „ Khairkhushroo Hormusjee Contractor | .. | .. | .. |
| 3. | „ Rustomjee Hormusjee Bharoocha | .. | .. | .. |
| 4. | „ Feroze Bapoojee Chinoy | .. | .. | .. |
| 5. | „ Pestonjee Behramjee Doctor | .. | .. | .. |
| 6. | „ Sorabjee Dhunjibhoy Rattnagar | .. | .. | .. |
| 7. | Lt. Darabshah Rustomjee Kharas | .. | .. | .. |
| 8. | „ Gustasp Shapoorjee Engineer | .. | .. | .. |
| 9. | „ Maneckjee Burjorjee Patel | .. | .. | .. |
| 10. | „ Framroze Khurshedjee Desai | .. | .. | .. |
| 11. | Sergt. Naorojee Jehangir Mistry (Columbowalla) | .. | .. | .. |
| 12. | Mr. Kaikobad Cooverjee Cawasjee (Mahableshwarwalla) | .. | .. | .. |
| 13. | „ Nusserwanjee Meherwanjee Mandroina | .. | .. | .. |
| 14. | „ Kaikobad Dorabjee Khambatta | .. | .. | .. |

15.	„	Pallonjee Pestonjee Tata..	..	..	..
16.	„	Framrose Meherwanjee Chakhanawalla	..	..	..
17.	„	Hormuzdiyar Rustomjee Aga	..	..	..
18.	„	Hormusjee Sorabjee Writer	..	..	..
19.	„	Sorabjee Pestonjee Boochia	..	..	..
20.	„	Eduljee Jamshedjee Battliwala	..	..	..
21.	„	Eruch Karanjia	..	..	..
22.	„	Sorabjee Cawasjee Karanjia			
23.	„	Firoseshah Dadabhoy Hansotia	..	..	..
24.	„	Burjorjee Dinshahjee Meherwanjee Aria	..	..	..
25.	„	Rustom Sorabjee Dossabhoy Paymaster	..	..	..
26.	„	Nusserwanjee Dorabjee Padamjee	..	..	..
27.	Mr.	Mancherjee Nannabhoy Bannaji	..	..	..
28.	Dr.	Ardesiar Behramjee Engineer	..	..	..
29.	„	Nusserwanjee Sorabjee Parekh	..	..	..
30.	Mr.	Firoze Behramjee B. Bhicajee	..	..	..
31.	„	Jeejibhoy Meherwanjee Dubash	..	..	..
32.	„	Bhiakhajee Adarjee Elaviya	..	..	..
33.	„	Rustomjee Rersaspjee Bhadha	..	..	..
34.	„	Nadirshah Behramjee Bomanjee Patel	..	..	..
35.	„	Kaikhusroo Behramjee Pohncha	..	..	..

36.	„	Sheriahar Kaikhusroo Irani	..	..	..
37.	„	Minocher Behramjee Khadiwalla			
38.	„	Hormusjee Meherwanjee Sopariwalla	..	..	..
39.	„	Manchershah Naorojee H. Nania	..	..	..
40.	„	Piroze Jehangir Mulla Firoze	..	..	..
41.	„	Ardeshir Eruchshah Shroff	..	..	..
42.	„	Rustom Jehangir Irani	..	..	..
43.	„	Eruchshah Adarjee Ghiara	..	..	..
44.	Dr.	Kaikhusroo Jehangir Bhamgara	..	..	..
45.	Mr.	Pallonjee Rustomjee Bhesania	..	..	..
46.	„	Sorabjee Dorabjee Kanga	..	..	..

APPENDIX "M"

ADDITIONAL LIST OF PARSEE NAMES AND SURNAMES

Derived from:—

Professions:

1. Paghdiwala, 2. Hodiwala, 3. Surmawala, 4. Afimwala, 5. Jariwala, 6. Kothawala, 7. Motiwala, 8. Jeenwala, 9. Boatwala, 10. Clubwala, 11. Kerawala, 12. Moudawala, 13. Sagriwala, 14. Unwala, 15. Mewawala, 16. Darukhanawala, 17. Batliwala, 18. Gheewala, 19. Bhajiwala, 20. Rccwala, 21. Golwala, 22. Mithaiwala, 23. Masalawala, 24. Lillamwala, 25. Bcywala, 26. Sukhadwala, 27. Limbuwala, 28. Arsiwala, 29. Nariawala, 30. Moorawala, 31. Sodawaterwala, 32. Machliwala, 33. Tarkariwala, 34. Lakdawala, 35. Kolsawala, 36. Ghaswala, 37. Ghodawala, 38. Jhaveri, 39. Gandhi, 40. Gadhiali, 41. Mobed, 42. Sarkari, 43. Mehta, 44. Master, 45. Shroff, 46. Kotwal, 47. Lohaar, 48. Mody, 49. Mistri, 50. Merchant, 51. Kapadia, 52. Motishah, 53. Commissariat, 54. Kola, 55. Sukhaddia, 56. Paymaster, 57. Katgara, 58. Nanavati, 59. Dubash, 60. Karani, 61. Engineer, 62. Patel, 63. Driver, 64. Parekh, 65. Rabadi, 66. Davar, 67. Fozdar, 68. Talati, 69. Contractor, 70. Punthakey, 71. Meerza, 72. Shaher, 73. Nazir, 74. Daroga, 75. Vassania, 76. Kharadi, 77. Desai, 78. Doctor, 79. Dastur, 80. Pastakia, 81. Joshi, 82. Vakharia, 83. Khajurina, 84. Printer, 85. Makhania, 86. Indawala, 87. Attarwala, 88. Tarkariwala, 89. Biscuitwala, 90. Bhumgara, 91. Foodnawala, 92. Tarwala, 93. Pinjara, 94. Ingreji, 95. Gujarati.

For the information of non-Parsee Readers, meanings of some of the Parsee surnames are given here under. Wherever the word is followed by 'wala' it has to be taken to mean 'dealer in', e.g. Motiwala meaning 'Dealer in Pearls'. So, at such places, only names of the articles are given, leaving the Reader to understand that the second word 'wala' will mean dealer in :-

1. Parsee headgear, 2. Canoe, 3. Antimony, 4. Opium, 5. Golden thread, 7. Pearls, 11. Banana, 12. Country liquor, 14. Wool, 15. Dry fruit, 17. Bottles, 18. Clarified butter, 19. Vegetables, 20. Cotton, 21. Molasses, 22. Sweets, 23. Condiments, 24. Auctioneer, 26. Sandalwood, 27. Lemon, 28. Mirror, 29. Coconut, 30. Radish, 32. Fish, 33. Vegetables, 34. Wood, 35. Coal, 36. Grass, 37. Horse, 38. Jeweller, 39. Chemist, 40. Watchmaker, 41. Parsee Priest, 42. Government Servant, 43. Teacher, 44. Teacher, 45. Cashier, 46. Police head, 47. Ironmonger, 51. Cloth dealer, 52. Pearl dealer, 55. Dealer in sandalwood, 59. Stevedore, 60. A village head, 66. Judge, 67. Police head, 75. Dealer in household utensils, 81. Astrologer, 85. Seller of butter, 86. egg, 87. Perfumes, 88. Greengrocer, 91. Mint and 92. Telegraph.

Place of residence:

Belgaumwala, Gamwala, Malegamwala, Satarawala, Uranwala, Colabawala, Vandrewala, Calcuttawala, Adenwala, Colombowala, Taraporewala, Pardiwala, Thanewala, Madraswala, Mandviwala, Bangalwala, Nargolwala, Cochinwala, Ranikhetwala, Olpaadwala, Nasikwala, Suraliwala, Bharucha, Poonegar, Wankadia, Randeria, Bhathena, Anklesaria, Surti, Udwardia, Damania, Khambatta, Amroli, Bulsara, Irani, Vilayati, Sanjana, Variawa, Kermani, Yezdi, Hansotia, Illavia, Siganporia, Billimoria, Bala-poria, Dumasia, Marolia.

Names of Heads of Offices:

Duke, Nicholson, Captain, Rogers, Crawford, Spencer, Duggan, Marshall, Guinea, Lord, Barnett, Forbes.

Founder of Family:

Byramji, Jamshedji, Jeejeebhoy, Jehangir, Cowasji, Dadachanji, Batliboy, Dinshaw, Pestonji, Dadiseth, Meherjirana, Jamasp-assa, Mullan-feroze, Wadia, Banajee, Pavri, Cama.

Nicknames:

Adagra, Manjra, Ghorkhodu, Bukkakhau, Mudikhau, Gorkhau, Keri-khau, Ogra, Tengra, Fatakia, Boochia, Damri, Gagra, Khichrikhau.

* The above names are given to the Parsees who arrived at Bombay and other big cities from the original towns and villages from where they migrated.

Here too the word 'wala' would mean hailing from the particular town or village, the name of which precedes the word 'wala'.

APPENDIX "N"

Extract from letter, dated 18th January, 1959, from Mr. Jamsheed Katrak of Bombay, showing the different ways the word 'YAZDEGARD' is spelt and pronounced.

The explanation about the words Yezdejard and Yazdegard is as under:-

1. The name of our last Sassanian King was written in Pahlavi as 'Yejda-Kard' It means 'created by God!'. Pahlavi inscriptions depict King Shahpur as having divine origin (minochitri men Yezdan).
2. The earliest record of the name is in the famous Pahlavi Epistles of Manush-chihar, written in 250 A.Y. i.e. 1078 years ago. Therein we find the original form 'Yezdekard', as shown above.
3. In the Pazand Ashirwad prayer, composed over a thousand years ago, we find 'Yezdegird', which occurs in manuscripts, printed Gujrati-text editions; and is recited as such even now. The Pahlavi letters 'k' and 'g' are often interchanged.
- 3A. The text of the Sanskrit version of Ashirwad has the word 'Yezdegird'.
4. In the colophon of the oldest Avasta-Pahlavi Yasna manuscript preserved in Copenhagen, occurs the Pahlavi form 'Yezdekard'.
5. The Pahlavi text of Ashirwad, a later composition has 'Yezdegird'.
6. 'Kisseh Sanjan', written in 1599 in Persian verse, gives the word 'Yezdegird'.
7. In the Rivayets, from 1478 A. D. downwards, the Persian Zoroastrians, in their replies to Indian co-religionists, invariably use, in their colophons, the word 'Yezdegird'.

So you see the correct word is 'Yezdegird'. The form 'Yezdejird' is an Arabicised form. Persian 'g' is changed to 'j' in Arabic. For instance,

Pahlavi Persian word 'gaohar' meaning 'nature'; 'origin'; 'jewel' was incorporated in Arabic in the form 'jaohar' of which the plural is 'jawahir'.

Of course, the Parsis by usage for some time past have used 'Yezdejird'. We find it in old documents also. It should also be noted that in Pahlavi the same form(s) can be read 'g' as well as 'j'. Thus, you see, the change over from 'g' to 'j' occurred and remained in vogue. The accurate form as found in Pahlavi, Pazand, Sanskrit and even in Persian of Firdousi and other writings noted above is 'Yezdegird' It is only in Gujarati of Parsis we find 'Yezdejird'. Iran today has eschewed Arabic element from its vocabulary and made the language pure, adopting old Pahlavi and Pazand words."

APPENDIX "O"

NAMES OF PARSEE ROZ AND MAAH

Roz	Maah
(Names of the days)	(Names of the months)
1. Ahur-Mazd	Parvardeen—Fravardeen
2. Behman	Ardi-Behsht
3. Ardi-Behsht	Khordaad
4. Shehrevar	Teer
5. Asfandaad—Asfandarmard	Amardaad
6. Khordaad	Shehrevar
7. Amardaad	Mehr
8. Dep-aadar	Avan
9. Aadar	Aadar
10. Avan	Deh
11. Khorshed	Behman
12. Mohor	Asfandarmad
13. Teer	
14. Gosh	
15. Dep-Mehr	
16. Mehr	
17. Sarosh	
18. Rashne	
19. Farvardeen-Fravardeen	
20. Behraam	
21. Raam	
22. Gowad	
23. Daep-Deen	
24. Deen	
25. Ashishvangh	
26. Aastaad	
27. Aasmaan	
28. Jamiaad	
29. Marespand	
30. Aneraan	

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