

“named Sultan Mustafa, and he hoped in this way in his position as governor to put him forward so that he himself would remain superintendent of the whole kingdom. He (Tahmasp) determined to put to death Sultan Haidar his son, and with that object he sent to summon three of his captains. One of them was named Sultan Ibrahim Mirza, his nephew, who was then in the province of — (? Mashhad—? Mazandaran) in some forts of his, distant 6 or 7 days’ journey from Qazwin by the eastern gate. He (Tahmasp) notified him to join him with all the forces he could raise: and he (Sultan Ibrahim Mirza) arrived with 12,000 horse, taking up his quarters in the royal palace, and he received authority to govern and the office of principal chamberlain with the right to wear a sword, which is granted to no one. The second was Mirza ‘Ali Sultan, the third —. With these he (Tahmasp) conferred about what was to be done: and it was decided to put to death Sultan Haidar, this being contrary to the custom of Shah Tahmasp, who did not like asking advice, nor did he trust his captains or anyone. They sent a summons to Haidar from his father, having him told that the latter before he closed his eyes wished to see him and make him his successor. The young man, obedient and perhaps credulous too, appeared and directly he came within sight of his father, the king told an officer of his to do his duty: so the officer took the wretched Haidar and put him in chains in a very dark room under a very strong guard.

“When the king was dead, his death was kept secret, all the gates of the palace being kept shut. Seeing that, the rebel governor unwilling to delay any longer in having Haidar proclaimed king went sword in hand to the palace with a force of 15,000 men,<sup>1</sup> made up of his relatives and followers; and, the first, second and third gates having been thrown down, they began to shout after their fashion for ‘Haidar their king’. Perceiving the risk, if they were to delay any longer, the four sultans (governors) who were guarding the palace, sent a Circassian named — into the room where Haidar was confined, and had him decapitated, and his head by their orders was thrown down the steps to the feet of the horse on which was mounted the rebel governor (who had been continuing to shout for ‘Shah’ Haidar), calling out to him: ‘Take the head of ‘your king’, with many words of abuse while they reproached him for his disloyalty. Since they too had been provided with a force of men and assistance secretly, they attacked the crowd, cutting to pieces as many as they met, and they did not leave alive anyone whether small or grown-up of either sex of the race of the (rebel) captain and his followers, sacking their houses and razing them to the foundations. The (rebel) governor saved himself by flight with no more than 1,000 men, and was deserted by them too because of the hunger and deprivations which they suffered. Among them was Mustafa, the son of the king already mentioned, who had been with him, and who went off to Qum, to the queen-mother of Isma’il and of the present king, a Turkman by race, and aunt of Amir Khan (who at present is captain-general and is called by the surname ‘Sword of Persia’), hoping by her mediation to save his life. But he did not succeed in his design; the contrary happened, for after some days he was killed, together with six others of his brothers.<sup>2</sup> When the (rebel) governor saw himself abandoned, he resolved to take refuge with the Turks, and in order not to be recognized clothed himself as a doctor; but when passing over some mountains he was recognized and taken prisoner by some hunters belonging to Absalom Baig his enemy, to whom they led him, and the latter had him kept under guard till the arrival of Isma’il, by whose instructions he was put to death, as will be told farther on.

“Because of the looting and bloodshed which followed in the town, where on account

<sup>1</sup> The Ustaghî tribe, but the large figures used here, and elsewhere in contemporary narratives or letters from Persia, should be regarded sceptically, as wild estimates: with the exception of distances, which are constantly underestimated, all estimates, especially in reply to questions, are much exaggerated.

<sup>2</sup> The barbarous habit of a general fratricide on the succession of a new monarch had been used by Sultan Selim I of Turkey in 1512: it was followed by several of the Safawis; but that after Tahmasp I’s death would appear to be the first on a large scale.