SHAMIL

Frontispiece

'konk west
ilə'streiʃən

THE RUSSIAN CONQUEST OF THE CAUCASUS

BY

JOHN F. BADDELEY

WITH MAPS, PLANS, AND ILLUSTRATIONS

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'laikən - to compare
'maitɪ - very strong and powerful
ˌɑ:tɪfɪʃl
'gærɪsn
'eskəleɪt - to become stronger or more serious
'strɔŋhəʊld
kə'mɑ:ndə
'nju:mərəs
rɪlɔ:ɪ - having to use sth or ask sb for help in a difficult situation
'pærəlel - smth or sb similar...
mine - a deep hole or a system of passages under the ground where minerals are dug; a bomb
sap - trench

"The Caucasus may be likened to a mighty fortress, strong by nature, artificially protected by military works, and defended by a numerous garrison. Only thoughtless men would attempt to escalade such a stronghold. A wise commander would see the necessity of having recourse to military art, and would lay his parallels, advance by sap and mine, and so master the place."—VELIAMEENOFF

14.09.

ənə'kʌmpənɪd - alone
'kærəktə
kən'fɔ:m - to obey
ju:pə'stɪʃn - a belief that cannot be explained by reason or science
'predʒudɪs
'ledʒənd
'laikwaiz - the same
strife - trouble or fighting between people or groups

teem - ti:m to have a lot of people
fa:stnəs - a place that is thought to be safe
'desperət; deed - an action
'a:mɪ
'sɔ:rəʊ
'peinjənt - causing sadness

PREFACE

WHEN a non-military writer deals with military affairs a word of explanation seems called for.

Riding through and through the Caucasus unaccompanied save by native tribesmen, living with them, accepting their hospitality, studying their way of life and character, conforming as far as possible to their customs, noting their superstitions and prejudices, writing down their songs and legends, I became interested, likewise, in all that related to that strife with Russia in which they or their fathers had, almost without exception, taken part. Nor is this surprising; for the whole country teemed with memories of the fighting days, and wherever we rode, wherever we rested—in walled cities, in villages, on the hills or the plains, in forest depths, in mountain fastnesses —there were tales to tell of desperate deeds, of brave adventures, the battle shock of armies, the slaughter of thousands, the deaths of heroes. Dull, indeed, must he be whose blood is not stirred in a land so varied and beautiful, filled with memories so poignant.

Coming back from each of many excursions with interest heightened by all I had seen and heard, I sought to complete from books the information gathered, locally, from word of mouth. And not in vain. In the voluminous literature of the Caucasus I found a wealth of material relating to the various wars, yet, strange to say, not, even in Russian, any complete history of the conquest. Thus Lieut.-General Doubróvin's great attempt breaks off in

1827;[1] General Potto's comprehensive work, still in course of publication, ends, so far, with the Turkish campaign of 1829.[2] By neither, therefore, is the Murid war so much as touched. Colonel Romanovsky's lectures, delivered and published in 1860, cover the whole period up to Shamil's surrender, but are too brief to do full justice to the subject. In languages other than Russian—and notably in English—I could find little but fragmentary accounts and references, or at most the record of some particular phase or episode of the wars, and these for the most part full of prejudice and error.

In these circumstances it seemed that a narrative of the Russian conquest of the Caucasus should have its interest for English readers, even though written by one who disclaims all expert knowledge of military affairs, and leaves purely military deductions to be drawn by those better qualified for the task. It is in that hope, at all events, that I offer this book to the public, claiming for it only that it is a true statement of the facts, as far as I could discover them, soberly written, and free from bias.

To the authors above-mentioned, in the periods treated by them, my acknowledgments are due for such information as I have been unable to trace to more original sources. My chief reliance throughout, however, has been on the vast collection of authentic documents published by the Caucasus Archæographical Commission,[3] the work referred to in my text and notes as "Akti"; while next in importance come the twenty volumes of the *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, published under the supervision of the Grand

[1] *Istoria voinee ee vladeetchestva rousskikh na Kavkazye*, St. Petersburg, 1871–1888, 6 vols.

[2] *Kavkazskaya voiná*, St. Petersburg, 1887-1897, 4 vols., each in four parts.

[3] *Akti Sóbranniye Kavkázskoyou Arkheografeetcheskoyou Kommissieyou*, 13 vols. Tiflis (various dates).

Duke Michael, a collection of articles on the war by many hands and of very unequal merit, but on the whole a valuable source of information.[1] Other works referred to in the following pages need not be particularised here; but a word of acknowledgment is due to Professor Miansároff for his *Bibliographia Caucasica et Transcaucasica*,[2] a remarkable work, wherein any one may see at a glance what rich stores of literature have already accumulated round that fascinating subject the Caucasus, and, be it added, how little of any value is contributed by English writers. There is one notable exception, however. Englishmen will always cherish the fact that their countrymen were the first to set foot on the summits of Elbrouz and Kazbek, and such books as Freshfield's,[3] Grove's,[4] and Mummery's[5] will be read by coming generations when they have found—as they will find—in the mountain country between the Caspian and the Black Sea another and a larger "playground of Europe."

Specifically, in regard to the warfare between the Russians and the tribesmen, as distinct from the Persian and Turkish wars, the only works by English writers of even slight interest are those in which Messrs. Longworth and Bell recount their dealings with the tribes of the Black Sea coast;[6] and in this connection I must explain briefly why in the following pages so little has been said of

[1] *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, 20 vols., Tiflis, 1876–1899.

[2] St. Petersburg, 1874–1876, 1 vol.

[3] "The Central Caucasus and Bashan," by Douglas W. Freshfield. London, 1869, 1 vol. The same author's "The Exploration of the Caucasus." London, 1902, 2 vols. Second Edition.

[4] "The Frosty Caucasus," by F. C. Grove. London, 1875, 1 vol.

[5] "My Climbs in the Alps and Caucasus," by A. F. Mummery. London, 1895, 1 vol.

[6] "A Year among the Circassians," by J. A. Longworth. 2 vols., London, 1840. "Journal of a Residence in Circassia during the years 1837–1839," by James Stanislaus Bell. 2 vols., London, 1840.

the warfare in the western Caucasus, which began as early as that in the east and lasted longer, namely, until 1864.

The truth is (as Colonel Romanovsky puts it[1]) that this western warfare never had anything like the importance for Russia that attached to the struggle in Daghestan and Tchetchnia; and when the Russian Government did concentrate its attention mainly in that direction, as in the 'thirties, the mistake cost dear. Moreover, there was never the cohesion between the western tribes attained under Shamil in the east, nor was there ever amongst them a really great leader. The fighting was of a desultory nature, and to relate chronologically the events of what was practically an independent war would have been to destroy the unity of my narrative. On the other hand, to tell the story separately, and subsequently, would, after the dramatic ending at Gouneeb, have been to risk an anti-climax. I decided, therefore, in the present work at least, to omit all but the briefest and most necessary references to it, yet the fact that the struggle took place and that it outlasted even Shamil's resistance must not be forgotten.

In conclusion, I must put on record my gratitude to two kind friends, Colonel Ernest Pemberton, R.E., and Cecil Floersheim, Esq., for much good advice; and to Mrs. Tyrrel Lewis for her beautiful drawing of Shamil.

Note 1.—All dates, unless otherwise stated, are Old Style, *i.e.* twelve days later than the same dates, New Style, for the nineteenth century, eleven days later for the eighteenth century.

Note 2.—Transliteration. As the whole of the Caucasus forms part and parcel of the Russian Empire, and has done since 1864, and as Russian is the official language of the country, it is only reasonable to follow the Russian nomenclature, except in cases where other names or spellings have acquired a prescriptive right and may continue in use

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 226.

without inconvenience. Georgia and Georgian, for instance, need not be changed to Grouzia and Grouzeen, any more than Russia and Russian to Rosseeya and Rousski.

But as the Russian alphabet differs greatly from the English, it is obvious that words and names transferred from one to the other must undergo transliteration. Now this is a difficult and much-vexed question, on which no authority holds at present; but it is admitted on all sides that for any given book at least, a definite system should be chosen and kept to from first page to last. In the present work this condition has been observed or attempted, the system itself aiming merely at so rendering Russian words that the English reader may pronounce them colourably like the originals; and as the main difficulty in doing so arises from the arbitrary incidence in Russian of the stress or emphasis so strongly noted in nearly every word of the language, this "stress" has been marked throughout by an acute accent, except when it falls on the vowel usually rendered "i," which is then written "ee," lest it be taken for "i," as in "child." To this I will only add that, roughly,

"a"	has the sound of	the second "a" in	*papa*.
"e"	„	„	"a" in *paper*.
"ou"	„	„	"ou" in *through*.
"zh"	„	„	French "j."
"kh"	„	„	German "ch."

I am aware that the "t" and "d" I use before "ch" and "j" respectively are redundant, but they can do no harm and serve to guard against the pronounciation of those letters as in French.

In regard to Persian and Turkish names, an endeavour has been made to avoid the extremes of egregiously bad spelling on the one side, and, on the other, a scientific accuracy for which the general public is not yet prepared.

In Shamil's Psalm (Appendix III.) I have adopted throughout, in Chapter XV. (Muridism) in part only, the spelling kindly furnished me by Prof. E. G. Browne, of Cambridge University.

ARAKANEE (A TYPICAL AOUL OF DAGHESTAN)

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"O, wild the tribes that dwell in those defiles;
Freedom their God, and Strife their only law!
. . . . . .
In friendship firm, in vengeance firmer still—
Not theirs the Master's teaching from above—
They render good for good, for evil ill,
And Hate with them is limitless as Love."

LERMONTOFF, *Ismail Bey*, iii.

lofti - лофтъ
mi: dʒəɪ
ə'plai - to involve, to spread
'frʌntiə - border
'seɪʃli
ik'seɪʃn - исключение

eli'veiʃn - the height
range - a line of mountains or hills
'zeiliənt - noticeable

INTRODUCTION

THE name Caucasus has been used from the days of Æschylus and Herodotus, at least, to denote the chain of lofty mountains stretching across the isthmus between the Caspian and Black Seas from west-north-west to east-south-east, together with a varying extent of the regions on either side.

It is applied at the present day to the whole of the territories south of the government of Astrakhan and the province of the Don up to the Persian and Turkish frontiers.

To describe even in summary fashion a country so extensive and varied within the limits of one short chapter is clearly impossible. For anything approaching full treatment a volume would be little enough, and the following pages aim only at giving the reader some general idea of the Caucasus and its inhabitants, and of the problems involved in the conquest.

The Caucasus is essentially a mountain country; its inhabitants, with the exception of the Christian population occupying the river valleys of the Rion and Koura, essentially mountaineers; for, just as, thanks to its mass and elevation, the great central range has largely influenced all other physical features, so together with them has it been the determining factor in the matter of population. The peoples of the Caucasus owe to it not only their salient characteristics, but their very existence. It may be said without exaggeration that the mountains

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made the men; and the men in return fought with passionate courage and energy in defence of their beloved mountains, in whose fastnesses, indeed, they were well-nigh unconquerable. Yet, by one of those strange contradictions that meet us on all sides, strength and weakness went hand in hand. The very height and ruggedness of the great ranges, the profound depth and steepness of the valleys, the vast spread of the primeval forest, made union impossible; and without unity the tribes in the long run were bound to fall before the might of Russia.

The mountain chain, to which, admittedly, the name Caucasus was once restricted, has a total length of some 650 miles, of which the really mountainous part is 400 miles long with skirts stretching out for another 150 and 100 miles respectively, to the neighbourhoods of Baku, on the Caspian, and of Novorosseesk, on the Black Sea.[1] Its width varies considerably, and in estimating it there is room for divergence of opinion, but roughly it may be stated at about 100 miles, save in the middle, where it narrows considerably, and at the tapering extremities.

The triple division thus indicated by Nature corresponds, though roughly and for not very obvious reasons, to the three sections into which during the whole of the long struggle for supremacy the mountain country was divided. To the west, from the neighbourhood of Elbrouz to the Black Sea coast, is a forest region wherein the main chain sinks gradually from a height of 10,000 feet to the sea-level; and here the local tribes, the Tcherkess and others, to whom in general the name Circassian is applied, kept up a fierce though desultory

[1] Freshfield, "The Exploration of the Caucasus," vol. i. p. 27, to which the reader is referred for further information. Those who read German will find much to interest them in Dr. Merzbacher's ponderous volumes.

warfare against the northern invaders from the close of the eighteenth century down to 1864. To the east the Tchetchens in their hillside forests and the many tribes of Daghestan on their barren mountain plateaus maintained the struggle for independence nearly as long, with greater vigour and with a larger measure of success. But in between, where the mountains are highest, where for 100 miles at a stretch there is no pass under 10,000 feet, and for 400 miles but few, the Russians met with little opposition. The Ossietines, Kabardáns, and Tartar tribes to the west of the Georgian road, the Ingoushee, Galgais, Khevsours, and Pshavs to the east, robbed and raided as their nature was, and more than once rebelled; but on the whole they accepted Russian rule, or sovereignty, for the most part nominal, with much equanimity, and seldom gave any serious trouble. There was thus a great gap between the two main theatres of the mountain war threaded by the one and only convenient line of communication from north to south, the Georgian road—a gap that, in spite of Shamil's desperate effort in 1846, was never bridged over; and this in the history of the conquest is a fact of primary importance never to be forgotten.

On the south side of the main chain dwelt the various divisions of the Georgian race in whose defence the Russians first crossed the mountains, and who, with occasional aberrations, held loyally to the compact in virtue of which they became subjects of the Tsar. Farther south still lay, on the east, the Muhammadan khanates, vassal states of Persia; on the west, the semi-independent pashaliks of Turkey in Asia.

Russia's task should now be clear—in the Caucasus proper to subdue, on the one hand, the western tribes,

who looked for support to Turkey; on the other, the peoples of Daghestan and Tchetchnia; in Transcaucasia, to reunite the Georgian race, defend it against Persian and Turk, and enlarge and make safe its boundaries at their expense. How this task was accomplished it is the object of this volume to tell; but in regard to the Russo-Turkish campaigns beyond the Caucasus, it must be remembered that they served also a second purpose, and served it well—to keep, namely, in war-time many thousands of Turkish troops employed in Asia Minor, and thus ease, for Russia, the strain in Europe.

The struggle for the possession of the Caucasus was carried on for a period, roughly speaking, of sixty years continuously against the mountaineers, and, in a succession of wars extending over a still longer period, against the Turks and the Persians. The three areas of conflict (counting Transcaucasia as one) were practically separate, though Persia was at times in contact with Daghestan, Turkey with the country of the western tribes; and as, for reasons set forth in the Preface, the present volume deals hardly at all with the last-named, and as, moreover, the Turkish and Persian borders are sufficiently well known, it will only be necessary here to describe in somewhat greater detail the scene of the Murid war—Daghestan and Tchetchnia—and the peoples there inhabiting. But before doing so it will be as well to say a few words as to the races of the Caucasus in general and as to their origin, at once the most fascinating and the most difficult of the many problems there confronting us.

A well-known passage in Strabo states that Dioscurias, on or near the site of the present Soukhoum-Kalé, was frequented by people speaking seventy different languages. Pliny quotes Timosthenes to the effect that the number was

300, and says "afterwards we Romans conducted our affairs there with the aid of 130 interpreters." And Al-Azizi called the eastern Caucasus "the Mountain of Languages" (Djebal Alsuni) because, according to him, the people inhabiting it spoke 300 different tongues. Allowance must be made for Oriental exuberance of imagination, but even quite recently the number was given by sober Europeans as not less than forty for Daghestan alone, and it was supposed that many if not most of these were totally unconnected one with another. But recent researches have thrown quite a new light on this branch of comparative philology, and, according to F. Müller, the greater part of the languages of the Caucasus form one independent family consisting of three groups, namely, the Kartvel, the western and the eastern Caucasian, all originating in one parent language, and differentiated from it in the course of time in much the same way as the languages of the Hamite-Semitic family from a like common original. In this way the Georgian and cognate languages of the Kartvel group would answer to those Semitic languages which are obviously connected together, while the languages of the mountain tribes would correspond to the Hamitic dialects, the connection between which only becomes apparent on the application of analytical methods proper to comparative philology. However this may be, and the last word on the subject has not yet of course been said, the Caucasus is inhabited probably by a greater number of different tribes, races, and peoples than any similar extent of territory on the surface of the globe, speaking, too, a greater variety of languages; and, as General Kómaroff remarks, the more inaccessible the valleys in which they dwell, the smaller the individual groups and the sharper, apparently, the linguistic and other distinctions between them.

Shamil's explanation of this great variety of population in the Caucasus was, that Alexander the Great took a dislike to the country owing to the barrenness of the soil and severity of the climate, and out of spite made it a place of exile for the criminals of all the world; and with the bitterness of a leader who felt that his failure was due to the defection of his own people rather than to the power of his enemies, the captive chieftain professed to attribute the evil nature of the mountaineers to this vile origin. But Alexander was never within hundreds of miles of the Caucasus, and it is unnecessary to seek elsewhere than in its geographical position and physical configuration for good and sufficient reasons why the mountain range between the Caspian and Black Seas should have become the refuge of many a race conquering and conquered in turn, succumbing at last to fresh waves of invasion from south or from north. Driven into the mountains, where defence was easy and the temptation to follow them slight, they made good their footing amongst those who had preceded them in similar circumstances, or, failing in that, disappeared for ever from amongst the nations of the earth. That those who survived maintained in many cases their individuality, that they even differentiated into still more numerous clans and tribes and peoples, varying more or less in appearance, language, customs and beliefs, if such be really the case, was due, no doubt, to the nature of their new country, and is a phenomenon the less surprising when we consider what Humboldt has to say of the similar results produced on the vast plains of Brazil merely by the density of the forests.

From the dawn of history, and doubtless long ages before, these mountain fastnesses were the refuge of vanquished races, the plains at their feet the camping-ground of con-

quering hordes. Egyptian, Mede, Alan, and Scythian; Greek, Roman, Persian, and Arab; Mongol, Tartar, Turk, and Slav—these and more have one after another and times without number surged up against the Caucasus like angry waves on a storm-vexed coast; but the wonder is that, while some or all of them contributed their quota, traceably or not, to the population of the Caucasus, the majority of the tribes that now inhabit its recesses, or dwell at its base, to judge from existing philological data, derive ultimately from none of them, but are remnants—so at least Uslar thinks—"of many peoples inhabiting in prehistoric times vast stretches of land in Asia and in Europe, and belonging to one race which has everywhere else disappeared."

Turning now more particularly to Daghestan, we find that, roughly speaking, that country consists of a narrow strip of littoral and an elevated tableland, through which rivers have cut their way to a depth often of thousands of feet, the whole backed and ribbed, south and west, by mountain chains having many peaks over 13,000 feet in height.

The name Daghestan[1] was formerly applied to the whole of the region forming, roughly, a triangle between the Caspian Sea, the main chain, and the so-called Andee chain, completed by the line of the Soulák with a slight extension northward to the mouth of the Térek. It is now, or should be, confined to the Russian province which, though generally speaking identical with the Daghestan of former days, differs from it in detail, and in one very important particular—for its south-east border follows the line of the Lower Samour, so that instead of a triangle we have a fairly regular quadrilateral, narrowing towards the south-east in the line of its greater dimensions.

[1] Derived, it is thought by some writers, not from hybrid Persian and Turkish, meaning mountain country, but from the name of a people formerly inhabiting it—*Dag* or *Dághi*.

The extraordinary complexity of the mountain system is due, geologists tell us, to the fact that it originated in two separate movements of upheaval, one acting in a direction from north-west to south-east, and giving rise to the main chain or watershed, together with lateral ranges on the north; the other, acting at right angles to the former direction, or from south-west to north-east, and producing the great series of ridges or ranges which occupy a large part of the region between the main range and the sea coast. It is noticeable that, as a rule, the mountains running north-west to south-east have their south-west flanks steep and north-east sloping; those that run from south-west to north-east are steep on the north-west and sloping on the south-east. The highest summits, as in the central Caucasus, only in still greater proportion, are on the láteral or outlying ranges, the watershed or main chain, from Shavi-klde (and indeed from Arkhotis-mta) to Bazar Diouzi, where it rises to 14,722 feet, a distance of nearly 170 miles, being nowhere higher than 11,800 feet, while the side chains are seldom under 13,000 feet, with many peaks still higher. The Bogos group, forming the watershed between the Avar and Andee Koisous and running north-east from the main chain, has at least three peaks well over 13,000 feet. Farther to the south-east there are two or more peaks of over 13,000 feet on the Dolti Dagh chain, with its outlier, Dioulti Dagh, 12,435 feet high; and, still farther in the same direction, lie the Shal Bouz Dagh, 13,679 feet, and Shakh Dagh, 13,952 feet, the latter in the province of Baku.[1]

There are two main river systems, of which the most important is that of the Soulák, formed by the union of the four Koisous—the Kazi-Koumoukh, Kara, Avar, and

[1] Merzbacher, *Aus den Hochregionen des Kaukasus*, vol. i. p. 21, Leipzig, 1901.

Andee—of which the latter alone takes its rise outside the province, in Toushétia. All these run north and north-east in the direction of the ranges of the second upheaval, and all have worn channels of extraordinary depth and narrowness forming, next to the chaos of mountains, the most characteristic feature of Daghestan. The other system is that of the Samour, which, rising not far from the sources of the Kara and Avar Koisous, runs, though with a bend to the south, in a generally eastern direction, its lower course being now, as already stated, the boundary line of the province on the extreme south-east.

The geology of Daghestan still wants elucidation, but one fact stands out prominently, namely, that, contrary to what obtains in the central Caucasus, the crystalline rocks underlying the main chain are completely hidden, the whole visible mountain system consisting of jurassic, cretaceous, and tertiary formations.

The total population of the Caucasus at the time of the war may be given, roughly, at four millions; that of Daghestan at half a million, of which the Avars numbered some 125,000. Historically the most important of the tribes, and one of the most numerous, they inhabited a stretch of country more than 100 miles in length, from Tchir Yourt on the north to the borders of Zakatáli on the south, cutting Daghestan completely in two, and 45 miles wide at the meridian of Khounzakh. Their language is divided into two main dialects, those of Khounzakh and Antzoukh differing greatly, according to some authorities, one from the other—and into a number of lesser ones,[1] though Erckert says exactly the contrary.[2]

[1] Komaróff, *Zapeeski Kavk. otdiéla, I.R. Geogr. obshtchestva*, vol. viii.; Uslar, *N. V. in Sbor. Svied. o. Kavkazk. Gortsakh.*

[2] "Der Unterschied kein bedeutender ist," and "Die Sprache ist sehr übereinstimmend und zerfallt nicht in lokale Dialeke"; Erckert, R. v., *Der Kaukasus und seiner Völker*, p. 257.

The Khounzakh dialect being that of the three Imáms, Kazi Moullá, Hamzad Bek, and Shamil, as well as of all their principal lieutenants, became naturally enough the official language of Muridism,[1] and therefore to a great extent the general medium of communication in Daghestan, and this the more easily that the warlike and numerous Avars held a central position which brought them into direct contact with most of the other tribes. The Avar language, like many others in the Caucasus, is extremely difficult of pronunciation to Europeans, in proof of which it may be mentioned that the "tl" so frequently occurring on the map is the only rendering the Russians have been able to find for four different sounds or clicks; while their "k" represents no less than six. Nor is the grammatical construction easier.

Avar is said to be a Turkish word meaning restless, vagabond, &c., and was borrowed by the Russians from the Koumuiks. The Avars, who ignore it, call themselves individually by the name of the aoul or community to which they belong, but all agree in saying that they are Maaroulal (mountaineers) and their language Maaroul Mats (mountain language); though the northern Avars call their southern brethren Bagoualal, meaning poor, rude people, and this division corresponds pretty exactly to the linguistic one of the two main dialects, the line of demarcation being just south of Khounzakh. A Russian writer summarising the opinions of Uslar, Schiefner, Komaróff, and Tchirkeyeff, says that they once spread farther north, and were probably nomads on the Koumuik Plain. There is even some indication that they dwelt north of the Caspian, and if so they were, doubtless, driven into the mountains by stronger tribes from the north. They had nothing to do with the

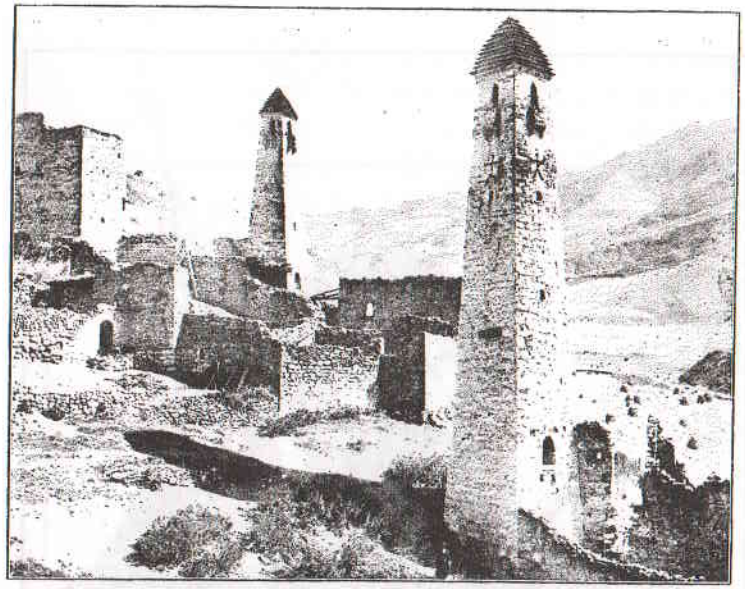
[1] The language of religion being Arabic.

YERMÓLOFF

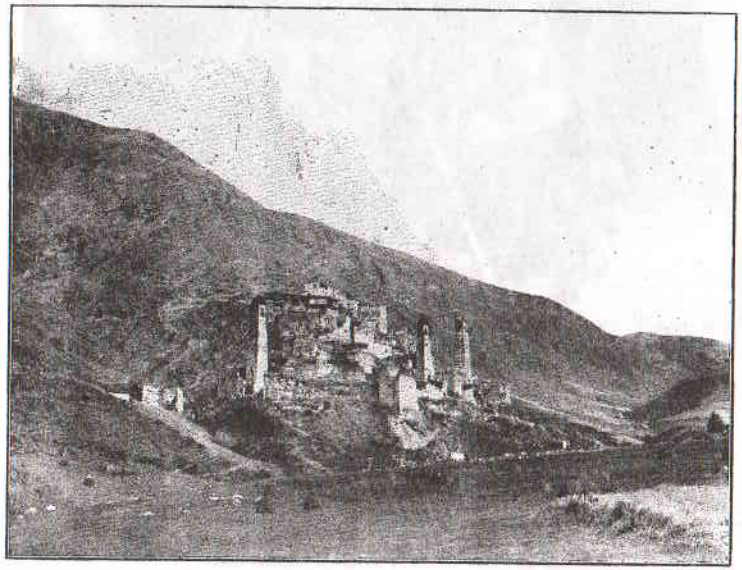
Field-Marshal Paskiévitch of Eriván, Prince of Warsaw

A Murid with a Naïb's Standard

(From Theo. Horscheldt's picture)



Towers in the Country of the Galgais, with Crosses worked in the Masonry



Aoul of Lialakh, in the Country of the Galgais

General Kluke von Klugenau

PRINCE VÓRONTSOFF

Avars who were conspicuous in European history from the fifth to the ninth century, and finally disappeared under the blows of Charlemagne, for the latter belonged to the Uro-Altais (Finno-Turk-Mongols), whereas the language of these Avars convinces us that they had nothing to do with the Uro-Altaic peoples. Nor any better founded is Klaproth's idea of their kinship with the Huns, and therefore with the Madiars.[1] But here again Erckert is of an opposite opinion. Speaking of a connection between the Avars of to-day and those who invaded Germany, he says that, in any case, it cannot be considered impossible,[2] and from anthropological data—the features and the shape of the head—he declares that the Avars are the most mixed race in Daghestan, a fact he found especially noticeable in the neighbourhood of Khounzakh. He admits, therefore, the probability of their having received additions, at least, from the Uro-Altaic peoples, and adds "in measuring heads at Khounzakh we were struck involuntarily by the occurrence of Finnish types in the widest acceptation of the word, though we were not seeking or wishing to find any such relationship." He then cautiously enough suggests a connection between Khounzakh and Hun, observing that in any case Hunnish peoples dwelt to the north of the Caucasus from the fourth to the sixth century as Utgur and Kutugur, and when they disappeared were replaced in turn as lords of the Steppe by Bulgarians, Sabirs, Avars and Khazars, *i.e.* by Uro-Altaic peoples, who were only dispossessed by the Turanians or Tartars from Turkestan in the tenth century.

The people of Daghestan chose the sites of their towns and villages first of all with a view to defence, for which

[1] *N.V. in Sborn. Svied. o. Kavk. Gortsakh.*, vol. ii.
[2] "*Jedenfalls scheint die Möglichkeit nicht ausgeschlossen.*" *Op. cit.*

reason they were nearly always built high up, on or against the face of a ridge or rib of rock, isolated, or backed by inaccessible cliffs, to guard against surprise. The aoul of Arakanee (see illustration) is a fairly typical one. The houses were of stone, two storeys high, well built and convenient, the interior faced and floored with clay carefully smoothed and frequently whitewashed. They were disposed, as far as possible, amphitheatre-wise, so as to enfilade one another, the streets being tortuous and barely wide enough for two horsemen to ride abreast; straddled, too, in places by a house furnished with a wooden bar or portcullis, making passage impossible until the defenders posted there had been ousted or killed. Nearly all these aouls could be battered to pieces in half-an-hour by modern weapons from half-a-dozen different emplacements, but in the days of the war they were either far enough from any neighbouring points of greater elevation, or sufficiently sheltered from them, to run no danger from plunging fire, such as could always be directed on an enemy below. They could, in fact, only be taken by storm, and that was a formidable business when every individual house had its garrison of desperate men and often still more desperate women.

Fuel being scarce, the next consideration was warmth, and for this reason the aoul invariably had a southern aspect, so as to benefit to the utmost extent by the sun in winter, while sheltered from the northern blasts by the rocks and cliffs behind it. All other conditions were of secondary importance, including even the extent of cultivable land in the vicinity, and the distance from which water had to be brought. The former limited the number of inhabitants, and was so far a disadvantage; the latter was not worth a moment's thought, provided only that the source lay well within the area capable of protection against an

enemy, for the drawing and carrying of water was woman's work, such as no mountaineer ever demeaned himself with. His it was to bask in the sun, whittling sticks, when not eating, sleeping or fighting; while all manual labour was left to his wives and daughters. As for these, the harder a girl worked the sooner she found a husband; and if after a few years of labour and child-bearing she became a bent and wrinkled hag, what matter? God was great, Muhammad His Prophet, women plentiful and polygamy no sin—her lord and master married another. Truly, the lot of woman in the mountains was (and is) no enviable one.

The various tribes of mountain Daghestan differed one from another in many respects, but they all had certain characteristics in common. They are described as being intellectually well developed, patient, cunning, able to read others at a glance and judge them at a word, strictly honourable, and religious in the highest degree. In eating and drinking they were noted for extreme moderation, and they took but little sleep. It is scarcely necessary to add that they were brave to a fault. In war, however, they were less quick and bold than their neighbours the Tchetchens, though more obstinate, and, when driven to extremities, more fiercely desperate.[1]

Such were the inhabitants of mountain Daghestan, and, in following the campaigns against them, it must be borne in mind that the fighting took place for the most part in an elevated country, bare of trees, where the general level of the land is some thousands of feet high, with many ridges and peaks rising far above the snow-line; and that through this so-called plateau, too rugged as a matter of fact to deserve the name, the rivers have cut their narrow beds to a depth, generally, of 3000 feet and more. In the

[1] General Okólnitchi in the *Voyenny Sbornik* for 1859.

valleys or chasms thus formed the aouls are often hidden, and there the vine flourishes, and fruit trees, maize, and other cereals repay abundantly the truly marvellous care bestowed upon them. The irrigation-channels and terrace-work, that in places have made a garden of a land by nature so barren, cannot fail to excite the admiration of visitors from more favoured regions. There are scraps of cultivated land on many a rocky hillside of Daghestan to be reached only by arduous climbing, to which every particle of soil has been carried by hand; so small, too, some of them, that the anecdote of the Avar or Andeean, whose field disappeared while he slept, to be found again beneath his *bourka* (felt cloak), seems hardly an exaggeration.

In person the Daghestanis are true mountaineers, strong, lithe, active, and enduring. In type they differ greatly, as might be expected, seeing how various is their origin; but many of them are handsome, and amongst them, on the higher levels, are men with blue eyes, fair hair, well-cut features, and somewhat prominent cheek-bones, whose like may be seen any day north of the Tweed, and who, for all we know, may be the descendants of the Cimmerians or of the Scythians who, as Herodotus tells us, invaded Persia by way of the western Caspian littoral.

In the larger part of Daghestan, at the commencement of the war, the despotic rule introduced by the Arabs still obtained; but there were also numerous free and very democratic communities, both large and small.

Tchetchnia was the name given by the Russians to the region bounded on the east by the Soulák, on the west, roughly, by the Upper Soundja, and on the north by the Lower Soundja and Térek; while to the south its confines touched the mountainous countries inhabited by the

Andeeans and Avars of Daghestan, the Tousheens and the Khevsours. The whole country was, and for the most part still is, covered with dense forests intersected by numberless streams, deep-set and rapid, having their sources in the mountains that rise range upon range, higher and ever higher, to the south. On the banks of these streams dwelt the Tchetchens, in isolated farms or in aouls (villages), numbering sometimes hundreds of houses. The latter were one-storeyed, flat-roofed, built of wattled, sun-baked mud, strengthened with wood—clean and neat inside and out—and not without adornment and comfort in the way of carpets, mats, pillows, and quilts, copper pots and pans, and other domestic utensils. Each house commonly had its garden, or orchard, and round the aoul, in the forest clearing, stretched the cultivated fields, sown with maize, oats, barley, rye or millet, according to the locality—but, as the villages were unfortified, care was taken to keep one side ever in contact with the forest, whither at the first threat of danger the women and children fled with all portable wealth. The forest, composed as to nine-tenths of giant beech-trees, was their sure refuge in distress; their chief safeguard against the advancing Russian. To it the Tchetchens owed much of all that went to distinguish them from their neighbours of the Koumuik plain and the Daghestan plateau—and just as it constituted the chief natural feature of their country, so did it mainly determine the nature and duration of the war for their subjection—a fact that will find abundant illustration in the following pages. As long as the forest stood the Tchetchens were unconquerable. The Russians made no permanent impression upon them save when and where they cut the beech-trees down; and it is literally the fact that they were beaten in the long run not by the sword but by the axe. Shamil

realised to the full the vital importance of the forests, and gave strict orders as to their preservation. He imposed severe penalties not only for the wanton destruction of trees, but even when they were cut down, without his permission, for legitimate use. A cow or bull was the fine imposed for every trunk so felled, and in the worst cases the culprit was hanged in the middle of his own aoul, and his body left swinging a whole week as a warning to others.

In Tchetchnia there was no system of government nor any class distinction; every man claimed equality with his neighbour as a birthright. But, like other democratic peoples, the Tchetchens were readily subject to the "last infirmity of noble minds." In their eagerness to secure fame in the only way open to them, the more ambitious amongst them pushed valour and enterprise on the road and on the battlefield to their utmost limits; and fame once acquired brought, as elsewhere, respect and influence; yet no Tchetchen ever attained to supreme authority in his own country or even in his own district.

Every man was a born rider, a keen swordsman, and a good shot; his arms (gun or rifle, sword and *kindjal*) were his most cherished possession, handed down from father to son, generation after generation; and next to his arms, his horse. The one deep and ineradicable feeling of the Tchetchen could not possibly be better voiced than in the words of an English poet:—

"A steed! a steed! of matchless speed,
A sword of metal keen;
All else to noble hearts is dross,
All else on earth is mean." [1]

[1] Motherwell.

In religion the Tchetchens were Mussulmans—though with many a trace of paganism; not yet fanatical, in the earlier days, at least, of their contact with the Russians, but apt to become so. There were mosques in the principal villages where Moullás expounded the Koran, Arabic being, as in Daghestan, and throughout the northern Caucasus, the language of religion and the only written tongue. But until Shamil's advent all civil and criminal affairs were decided in the native language by the Adats or Customary Law, which sanctioned, or existed side by side with an elaborate system of vendetta or blood-feud.

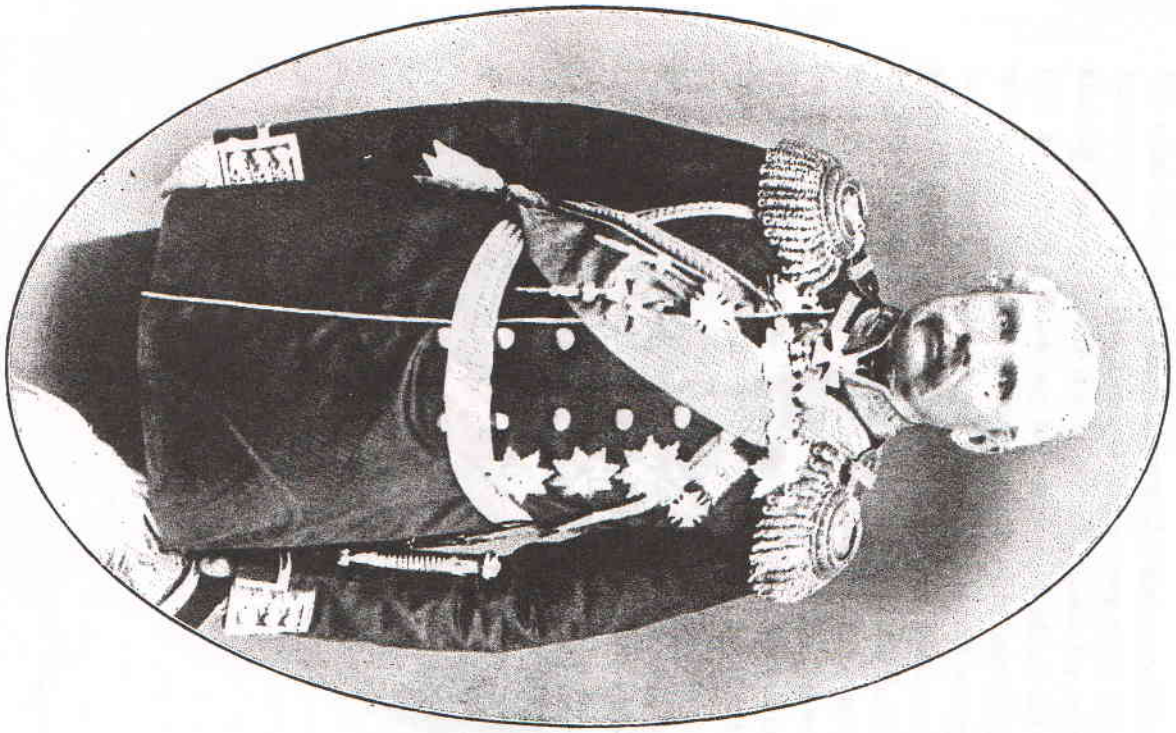
In person the Tchetchens were tall, lithe, well (though slenderly) built, and often handsome; alert in mind, brave and cruel, treacherous and cunning; yet, strange as it may sound, honourable according to their own peculiar code, to a degree little known to more civilised races. Hospitality, as with all the mountain tribes, was—and is still—a most sacred duty; and the man who would slay a chance-met traveller without pity or remorse for the sake of trifling gain, would lay down his life for the very same individual were he to cross his threshold as even an unbidden guest. Cattle-lifting, highway robbery, and murder were, in this strange code, counted deeds of honour; they were openly instigated by the village maiden—often, by the way, remarkably pretty—who scorned any pretender having no such claims to her favour; and these, coupled with fighting against any foe, but especially the hated Russians, were the only pursuits deemed worthy of a grown man. Household and agricultural work were left to the women-folk or to slaves, the latter being mostly prisoners of war.

Such, in brief, was the country; and such were the peoples who, with no outside assistance, with no artillery

but what they could capture from the enemy, with no trust but in Allah and His Prophet, their own right hands and flashing blades, defied the might of Russia for more than half a century; defeating her armies, raiding her settlements, and laughing to scorn her wealth, her pride, and her numbers. And the story of their heroic struggle has a special claim on the sympathy of English readers. They fought, it is true, for themselves alone—for Faith, freedom, and country. But they stood too, though all unknowingly, for the security of British rule in India. In the words of Sir Henry Rawlinson, "So long as the mountaineers resisted, they formed an effective barrier to the tide of onward conquest. When once they were swept away there was no military or physical obstacle to the continuous march of Russia from the Araxes to the Indus."[1]

[1] "England and Russia in the East," p. 264. London, 1875.

TODTLEBEN



General Count Yevdokiemoff

The Surrender of Shamil on Gouneeb, 25th August 1859

(From Theo. Horscheldt's picture)

SHAMIL

THE RUSSIAN CONQUEST OF THE CAUCASUS

PART I

FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES TO 1829

CHAPTER I

The Russian approach to the Caucasus—First contact—Free Cossacks—Early relations with Georgia—First conflicts with the natives—Cossack colonisation—Formation of the great Cossack Line—First crossing of the mountain chain—Summary of events leading to the incorporation of Georgia in the Russian Empire

THE connection between Russia and the Caucasus goes back to the year A.D. 914, when a Varangian expedition from the mouth of the Dnieper reached the Caspian by way of the Don and the Volga, the ships or boats being dragged overland from the first to the second of those rivers. In 944, three years after Igor, Prince of Kieff's attack on Constantinople, others of these "Russ" or "Ros" (Varangians, Variags) again made their appearance on the Caspian, invaded Persia, and captured from the Arabs the city of Berdaa, capital of Arran, now Karabágh.[1] A little later the Grand

[1] Soloviôff, *Istoria Rosseëi*, 2nd ed., Book I. v. 129, where the authorities are given. The Varangian question, whether the "Russ" were Slavs or Scandinavians, raged at one time with much fury. The arguments on both sides will be found impartially summarised in the Russian Encyclopædic Dictionary. English readers may be referred to Professor Vilh. Thomsen's work, "The Relations between Ancient Russia and Scandinavia and the Origin of the Russian State" (Three Lectures, &c., Oxford and London, 1877); Finlay's "Greece," (*sub nom.* Index).

Prince Sviátoslav extended his conquests to the river Koubán in the north-west Caucasus, and carried on war against the Yassi and the Kossogs, supposed to have been the ancestors of the modern Ossietines and Tcherkess (Circassians);[1] and before the end of the same century these Variags, Russ or Russians, had established the Principality of Tmoutarakán, the Tamatarchia of the Greeks, on the peninsula opposite Kertch, now called Tamán, all notices of which cease, however, in the Russian chronicles from the year 1094.

The Grand Prince Vladeemir, who converted Russia to Christianity towards the end of the tenth century, on his death left Tmoutarakán to Mstislav, "... the latter having acquired great fame from the wars with the Khazars, whom, with the aid of the Greek Emperor Basil II., he finally defeated, and with the Tcherkess, whose chieftain he slew in single combat."[2]

Later we hear of Vladeemir Monomakh (1113–1125) obtaining great successes against the Tcherkessi and other tribes.

Without entering into the much-vexed question of the identity of the "Russ," and merely noting that early in the thirteenth century the great Queen of Georgia, Tamára, married George, son of the Grand Prince Andrew Bogolioubsky, and that Mikhail of Tver was assassinated in 1319, near Derbend, by the renegade Románets at the instigation and under the eyes of the Grand Prince of Moscow, we may say that the contact of the Russians, as a people, with the tribes of the Caucasus—leading to the Russian conquest of that country—began with the Cossack invasion of the districts about the mouth of the Térek in the latter half of the sixteenth century.

[1] Soloviôff, I. vi. 142.
[2] *Ibid.*, 191. Rambaud, *Histoire de la Russie* (Paris, 1879), p. 6.

The origin of the Cossacks themselves is involved in considerable obscurity, but they first appear in history as free and lawless communities on the south and east of the Polish and Moscovite dominions, such as were naturally engendered during the troublous times following the Tartar and Mongol invasions. Nomadic, probably, at first—mere roving bands—they afterwards settled down, as opportunity allowed, at favourable positions along the courses of various rivers; and eventually, as times grew more peaceful, added agriculture to the more primitive occupations of fishing and pasturage, without, however, abandoning their primary pursuit, the raiding warfare directed constantly against their Mussulman neighbours, occasionally against their fellow-Christians of Poland and Moscovy. Thus were formed, in turn, the Cossacks of the Don, the Volga, and the Ural, who, as the Russian princes reasserted or extended their sway, came, nominally at first, under their authority; and those of the Ukraine, or Little Russia, who owed a wavering allegiance to the Kings of Poland, until driven by the tyranny of that inept race of rulers, backed by Jesuit oppression and Jewish exaction, into the arms of their Moscovite rivals. Besides all these there were the Zaporózhians,[1] who took their name (Zaporózhtsi) from the fact that they dwelt "beyond"—that is, below—the rapids (*poróghi*) of the Dnieper, their chief settlement being the *sietcha*, or fortified camp, established on an island in that river. These people differed considerably in their organisation from all other Cossack communities if, as alleged, they allowed no women in their camps, and formed, in fact, a sort of commonwealth, or republic, of warrior monks. In any case they succeeded in realising very thoroughly the ideal of the French Revolution—Liberty, Equality, Fraternity.

[1] Often incorrectly written Zaporóvians.

They, too, owned at times the suzerainty of the Polish kings, but their allegiance sat so lightly on them that they engaged in constant warfare against the unbelievers, even when Poland was at peace with both Turk and Tartar. "They neither asked nor gave quarter, existed on the plunder of the Infidel, courted danger and martyrdom."[1] Little Russians by race, with some admixture of Lithuanian and Polish elements,[2] they were zealous sons of the Holy Orthodox Church, not Sectarians or "Old Believers" like their cousins of the Don and the Volga. Thrust forward against the Crim Tartars and the Ottoman Turks, they formed the "vanguard of the vanguard" of the Russian Slavs, and in that perilous position maintained themselves, their liberty and privileges, against Christian and Infidel alike until Peter the Great captured their stronghold after Pultóva, whereupon they migrated to the Crimea, but were allowed by the Empress Anne to re-establish themselves on the Lower Dnieper. Meantime, however, many changes had taken place. The fierce, liberty-loving Zaporózhians scarcely recognised their former country in its altered conditions; and, as their presence seemed incompatible with the security of the colonists who had taken their place, Catherine II. in 1775 finally extinguished the Republic. Potiomkin, by her orders, occupied and again destroyed their *sietcha*.[3] The malcontents fled to the territory of the Sultan; the rest were organised and embodied as the Black Sea Cossack troops; and in 1792 the Isle of Phanagoria and the eastern shore of the Sea of Ázoff were assigned them to dwell in.

In this way the Cossacks gradually occupied the whole

[1] Rambaud, pp. 316 *et seq.*

[2] Erckert adds Tcherkess: *Der Ursprung der Kazaken*, Berlin, 1882.

[3] For interesting details, see Potto, *Kavkazskaya Voiná* (St. Petersburg, 1897), I. ii. p. 168, and, generally, D. I. Evarnitsky, *Istoria Zaporózhskikh Kazákoff* (St. Petersburg, 1897), 3 vols.

of the debatable land east and south of Russia and Poland; little by little drove back the Mussulman hordes; and in the course of centuries added belt upon belt of fertile territory to their own possessions, and eventually to the Empire of the Tsars. As time went on, despite many vicissitudes, they steadily gravitated towards Russian allegiance; but the process of absorption by the central power was a slow one; and, at first, as some communities came under the ægis of the Princes and afterwards of the Tsars, others continued to form on the old lines from those individuals or classes to whom, for one reason or another, restraint was irksome, or life in their own homes intolerable. Such were the bold and adventurous spirits always numerous in time of trouble; fugitives from justice, from oppressive taxation, from religious persecutions, and, later—when by an edict of Feodor Ivánovitch (1584–1598) the peasantry had been ascribed to the glebe—runaway serfs in ever-increasing numbers. Nor were these the only sources of increment. The vast majority of those who joined the Cossack ranks were, naturally, men; and célibacy had no attraction for any of them, with the one exception already mentioned. Wives they must have, and, as a consequence, the capture of women formed a main incitement to their constant raids, a necessary condition, indeed, of their continued existence and prosperity. It follows that those who represent the Cossacks as almost entirely of Slav blood are just as wide of the mark as those who see in them, merely, the descendants of the Khazar and other Turk or Tartar tribes. If one thing is certain about them, it is that they are of mixed race; for if, as may fairly be inferred from the language and religion of their descendants, the men who formed the original bands were Slavs, their women, at first and for long afterwards, must have been drawn in

great part from the tribes they warred against or settled amongst—and it is well known that male recruits from the same sources joined them from time to time in large numbers. In their earliest days raiders, spies, and frontier-guards—wary, bold, alert; later on, as their power increased, a rampart of ever-growing efficiency against the Infidel foemen; and, eventually, settled, law-abiding colonists, holding a vast extent of land under military tenure, the Cossacks, notwithstanding all aberrations and defections, rendered very great service to Russia, at first quite unconsciously, with no intention of benefiting any but themselves, but later on as loyal subjects of the Tsar. In both cases—as free-lances, robbers, and pirates, and as military communities obedient to the central authority—they carried on with zeal and success the work of conquest and colonisation. Themselves the spontaneous outcome of circumstances, and guided only by their own uncurbed desires, they performed in their early days a work far beyond the power of any government then existing in Russia, and added a vast empire to the comparatively restricted domains of the Moscovite princes. True it is that before this consummation was arrived at their lawless and independent spirit gave constant cause for anxiety to their nominal or actual suzerains; embroiled them, times without number, with Turk and Tartar; and more than once imperilled their dynasties and dominions. From the ranks of the Cossacks came the first and second of the false Dmeetris, and other pretenders. The rebellion of Stenka Razeen (executed 1671), that of 1706 under Boulávine, that of Mazeppa six years later, and, finally, the great rising under Pougatchéff in the time of Catherine the Great, were one and all Cossack rebellions, and they deluged southern and eastern Russia with blood. But it must not

be forgotten that this very lawlessness and independence of spirit had been an element of success, a factor craftily used on numberless occasions by the Moscovite princes, whose policy it was to egg on the borderers to harass and attack their Mussulman neighbours, profit by their efforts when successful, but repudiate all responsibility for their misdeeds when called to account by khan or sultan.

In course of time the Cossacks were brought directly and finally within the fold of the State, and the work of conquest and colonisation continued under the sagacious guidance of the central power with more definite aims than before, but hardly with greater success.

There is no necessity to describe here the growth and history of the Cossacks in general, but in the following sketch of what may be called—in terms of Veliameenoff's comparison—the Russian approach to that vast fortress, the Caucasus, and later in more detail, we shall obtain glimpses of them in either phase of their development and under both aspects of their service.

According to one tradition, certain Cossacks of Riazán, fleeing from the wrath of Ivan III. (1462–1505), floated down the Don with their wives and children, their flocks and herds, and crossing over to the Volga, followed the course of that river to the Caspian, and thence reached the Térek. Here they found a settlement, semi-piratical, semi-commercial, called Tioumén; but continuing their flight inland, came to a halt at the confluence of the Argoun and Soundja, that is to say, not far from the present town of Grozny. From the ranges of hills in this neighbourhood they took the name of Grebéntsi,[1] and in the time of Ivan IV. (the Terrible) sent a deputation to Moscow asking

[1] *Grében*, a comb or ridge.

pardon, which was granted on condition that they built a fort at the mouth of the Soundja, and held it in his name.[1]

Here they came in contact not only with the local tribe, the Tchetchens, but with the Kabardán princes, who from their own land between the Térek and the Koubán had extended their authority eastward to the Koumuik plain. The Kabardáns were of the noble race of the Adeeghe, which included the Tcherkess or Circassians proper, and of Ivan the Terrible's many wives one was Maria, a Tcherkess princess.

In 1579 Yermák and two other outlaws took counsel at the mouth of the Volga as to where they should seek refuge from the vengeance of the Tsar. Yermák went north and east, and eventually added Siberia to the Russian dominions. One of his companions, Andréya Shádrin, so the story goes, sailed south and fortified Terkee, apparently the same place as Tioumén, at the mouth of the Térek; and a little later settled at Andreyevo, the present Enderee.

So far the Russian State was not immediately concerned, but in 1586 the Iberian[2] Tsar, Alexander, sent ambassadors to Moscow asking help against the Shamkhal of Tarkou,[3]

[1] A contemporary song tells the story:

"No grey geese cackling, there, in the field;
No eagles that scream in the under-sky;
But Grében Cossacks before the Tsar,
The Tsar Iván Vasseelievitch.

'Little Father of all of us, Orthodox Tsar,
What will you give and grant unto us?'
'I will give and grant, little Cossacks mine,
The Térek river that runs so free
From the ridge itself to the wide blue sea,
To the wide blue sea, to the Caspian.'"

[2] Georgia was known to the Greeks and Romans as Iberia, and the name was used in former times by the Russians and by the Georgians themselves.

[3] Shamkhal, as the title of the Koumuik rulers, dated from the Arab invasion in the eighth century A.D. Tarkou was afterwards corrupted into Tarkee by the Russians, probably by analogy with the neighbouring Terkee.

with the result that a force under the Boyar Khvorostin, in 1594, attacked and captured the Shamkhal's capital, but was afterwards driven out and, to the number of 7000 men, annihilated on the banks of the Soulák. The Tsar Feodor Ivánovitch, in spite of the ill-success of the Russian arms, took to himself, prophetically, the additional titles of "Lord of the Iberian land, of the Tsars of Georgia and of Kabardá, of the Tcherkess and Mountain princes." In 1596 Moscovite ambassadors journeyed to Tiflis, returning in 1599, and five years later the Tsar Boris Godounóff sent two forces, from Kazán and Astrakhan,[1] to avenge the insult and injury suffered, but with no better result. The promised co-operation of the Tsar Alexander failed—as it had before—and the Russian force, which had been joined by some of the Terkee and Grebéntsi Cossacks, was again cut to pieces by the Shamkhal's troops.

These accounts rest partly on tradition, and the date of the first appearance of the Russians on the Térek remains an open question; but it is probable that about the middle of the sixteenth century Tioumén, afterwards Terkee, was really founded or fortified by a band of roving Cossacks or outlaws; that Shadrin led another band up the Térek to the Aktash and the Soundja; and that from these two bands came the historical Grebéntsi and Térek Cossacks. It is certain that the former were found by the Government geologists Fitch and Herold in 1628 living in the foot-hills of Tchetchnia, and that about 1685 they retired northward to the Térek at Bragounee. Meantime the celebrated Stenka Razeen had, in 1668, attacked Tarkou, but, beaten off by the Shamkhal, had sailed south on his raid into Persia.

In 1707 the Térek Cossacks suffered defeat at the

[1] Under Boutourlin and Pleshtchéyeff.

hands of the Khan of Koubá,[1] and five years later the famous General-Admiral Apraxin, on his return from a successful expedition against the western tribes, finding the Grében Cossacks in their settlements on the south or right bank of the Térek, induced them to cross that river, establish themselves in stanitsas [2] on its left bank—where they dwell to this day—and hold it against all comers as loyal servants of the Tsar.

Apraxin in Peter's name gave each man a rouble, and to the whole community or regiment a mace of honour, still religiously preserved, together with various trophies, including a banner of the Tsar Alexei Mikhailovitch (1645–1676), the possession of which is not so clearly accounted for.

In 1716–17 the Grebéntsi, who, it is quite evident, must have been living all this time on terms of amity, not to say friendship, with some of the Koumuik and Kabardán princes, furnished 800 men to Peter's fatal Khivan expedition, commanded by Prince Békovitch-Tcherkásky, one of a family that had adopted the Orthodox religion and served Russia devotedly from generation to generation. Of the 800 only two came back to tell that tale of horror on the banks of the Térek. Békovitch-Tcherkásky was flayed alive, and his skin, stuffed with straw, was hung up over the principal gate of Khiva.

Six years later (1722) Peter himself headed an expedition to the Caucasus, and on his return from the capture of Derbend, founded the Holy Cross fort on the Soulák,[3] afterwards (1735) abandoned in favour of Kizliar, which, up till 1763, was, so to speak, the Russian capital of the Caucasus.[4] The Térek Cossacks retired to their old

[1] Kayeeb Sultan. [2] Cossack military settlements.
[3] From a plan furnished by Captain Bruce; see his "Memoirs," p. 294.
[4] Akti, preface to vol. i.

haunts on the lower course of the Térek, and Don Cossacks and others, to the number of 450 families, who had settled on the Agrakhán channel of the Soulák,[1] filled up the gap between them and the Grebéntsi. These newcomers took the name of Térek-Seméiny (or family) Cossacks.

The number of aliens amongst the Térek Cossacks was very great, whole stanitsas being non-Christian; but the Grebéntsi admitted none but Christians, or those who consented to become such. Their own wives were of native birth, probably for the most part Tchetchens, with a mixture of Koumuiks, and to this it is said they owed their comparatively advanced agriculture and much else—for, be it remembered, this was not a case of contact between a civilised and a savage people. The Cossacks of that day were probably at most the equals in civilisation of the Tchetchens and Koumuiks, and certainly the inferiors of the Adeeghe, to whom belonged the Kabardán princes and people. "Kabardá served as lawgiver to the Grebéntsi in matters of fashion, and from there they took their light and convenient military equipment and arms, their method of warfare, *djighitovka* (feats of skill on horseback), &c." [2] ". . . These people," says M. Popko, "lived at the expense of their neighbours, many of whose customs they introduced into their settlements, together with the spoils of war." [3] As regards the houses, the typical Russian *izbá* was forgotten, and instead appeared the Kabardán *ouna*, with its open gallery and its internal construction, arrangement, and decoration. All that remained of the Russian village was, externally, the street and, internally, the stove. The Russian *teliéga* (four-wheeled cart), draught-horse, and way of harnessing were likewise abandoned in

[1] Potto says 1000 families: *Kavkazskaya Voiná*, I. i. 39.
[2] Makseemoff, *Terskoe Kazatche Voisko*, p. 15.
[3] Popko, *Terskoe Voisko*, p. 116.

favour of two-wheeled *arbas*, oxen and yoke. The Kabardáns were an agricultural people, and the newcomers were wise enough to follow their example in matters wherein they had been eminently successful. Two kinds of culture, however—both new to the Russians—were more probably borrowed from the Koumuiks, those, namely, of the vine and of the silkworm, which flourish on the banks of the Térek to this day, having doubtless been supported through times of trouble and danger by the Cossack's passion for drink and his wife's delight in finery. The Grebéntsi women are noted, now, for their good looks and free manners, and both in colouring and features, as well as in their semi-Oriental costume, they show very strongly the strain of native blood in them and the continuing influence of Kabardá.

Among less admirable customs borrowed from the natives was that of putting all the field and domestic work on their womenkind; but like causes produce like effects, and the Cossacks, who took to marauding as ducks to water, had little time to give to such peaceful employment, even if not infected by their new neighbours' notion that to work was beneath the dignity of man. They kept, however, to their own form of government, all matters affecting the public good being decided in the "military circle," in which every Cossack who was of age had a right to take his place. The powers of the "circle" were both legislative and executive; it made laws and enforced them; acted as judge, jury, and executioner; and elected its own public officers, from the ataman downwards. This was the case for the whole body of Cossacks forming one "soldiery" (*voisko*), and exactly the same arrangements held good for each separate settlement, township, or stanitsa within its own limits. The law was that of

custom handed down by tradition; and there seems to have been an appeal from the decision of the stanitsa circle to that of the whole community; but the sentence of the latter was final.

Thus organised, the Cossacks led a life of "sturt and strife," and, together with their native allies, raided all other neighbouring tribes, extending their depredations even to the waters of the Caspian;[1] but their most frequent victims were the wandering Nogai Tartars, a remnant of the Golden Horde.

Through all, however, they remained faithful to the religion of their Slavonic ancestry, and that, for the future of Russia, was the all-important matter; for they and their conquests were in this case sure to revert to the mother-country at last, though a foolish and bigoted priesthood did its best to alienate them, and did, in fact, considerably widen the rift already existing between the Grebéntsi and the Orthodox, as a result, mainly, of their obstinate adherence to the two-fingered way of crossing themselves, and to their making the round of the altar as the sun goes, instead of the reverse, at the sacraments of marriage, baptism, &c. The heresy was so slight that the real Raskolniki,[2] who had fled to the Shamkhal's territory, refused to acknowledge the Grebéntsi and Térek Cossacks as true believers, while the bishops of Astrakhan, who included them within the ambit of their authority, were content at first to wink at the faults of these erring members of their flock; and even Peter, severely as he persecuted sectarianism, found it pos-

[1] In 1573 Thomas Banister and Geoffrey Ducket, servants of the Russia Company, returning from Persia with great store of valuable merchandise, were attacked at sea by Cossacks, "outlaws or banished men," who took their ship and all that was in it, only a small part of the lading being afterwards recovered by the exertions of the Russian Governor of Astrakhan.

[2] Sectarians.

sible to leave the Grebéntsi in peace owing to their small numbers and the comparative insignificance of their heresy. In the middle of the eighteenth century, however, pressure began to be put upon them, with the result that they fell into the hands of the Raskolniki popes, and it is estimated that already in 1768 half the Grebéntsi were perverts, while by the beginning of the nineteenth century nearly all were at open variance with the Orthodox Church.[1]

So far we have seen the lower course of the Térek occupied gradually by the Térek, Térek-Seméiny, and Grebéntsi Cossacks. In 1763, for the protection of a princeling of Little Kabardá, who had been converted to orthodoxy and Russian vassalage, a small fort was built at Mozdók (*mez dog*, "the dense forest"), and in 1770 this was transformed into a strong fortress, to garrison which 350 families of Don Cossacks were brought down, while 517 families of Volga Cossacks were distributed along the gap between them and the Grebéntsi. All these together formed the Mozdók Cossack regiment, afterwards recruited by 200 families of converted Kalmucks from Sarátoff.

As time went on the Line was continued bit by bit to the Sea of Ázoff by the building of forts and stanitsas, and the transference to them of Cossacks from the Volga, the Don, and the Dnieper, these being supplemented largely, as before, from various less regular sources.

In this way was formed by 1832 the great Cossack Line of the northern Caucasus, stretching its unbroken chain of military and agricultural communities right across the isthmus, a distance of over 700 versts (466 miles).

Nor was this all. So long as the Cossacks were left

[1] In the other regiments sectarianism was less rampant, but in 1888 the Raskolniki still numbered in their ranks 15½ per cent. of all the Térek Cossack population.

pretty much to themselves they did as their neighbours, siding now with one, now another, of the petty rulers or communities with whom they came in contact; and, though ever at strife, roused no national animosity, nor any greater hostility than they could fairly hope to deal with. But with the growing aggressiveness of the central power, and especially with the advent of Yermóloff (1816), that movement began which eventually, under the name of Muridism, brought the Russians face to face with a more or less united opposition on the part of the native population of Daghestan and Tchetchnia, and against this the Cossacks unaided could never have held their own, much less made good any further advance. Their safety depended thenceforth on the co-operation of the regular troops of the Empire, who in increasing numbers garrisoned the forts and fortresses interspersed with the stanitsas at suitable points, or, as time went on, thrust boldly forward into the enemy's country.

The burdens put upon the Térek Cossacks in those days were very onerous, for, in addition to their military duties, they had to keep up the roads, maintain the postal service, repair the ever-crumbling banks of the river, and provide food and quarters for the regular troops, as well as fodder for their horses. The result was that even the women did not suffice for the cultivation of the fields and vineyards; and native labourers were bought, or obtained by capture, to supply the dearth. It cannot be said, however, that actual slavery was established, for, in theory at least, these unfortunates could regain their freedom on working off a certain valuation set upon them, towards which each year of labour counted at a fixed rate.

As to military obligations, the Grebéntsi, during the early years of the nineteenth century, had to furnish one

man per family, which in those days made up a force of 1000 men, of whom one-half had to serve as cavalry with the forces of the State, while the rest garrisoned and defended their own stanitsas. In 1816 the quota for active service was increased to 700, and in 1819 Yermóloff, owing to the prevalent drunkenness and disorder, abolished the right of electing atamans and other officers, who were henceforth nominated by him and his successors, as representatives of the home government. The other *voiskos* contributed on the same basis in proportion to their numbers, and from time to time new regiments were formed, new districts settled, and subsidiary lines established in advance of the main position. The Cossacks, be it noted, were mounted troops, and each man was bound to provide his own horse and arms.

From the completion of the Line in 1832 dates a new period, the separate *voiskos* being converted into so many regiments coming strictly within the general military organisation of the Empire. In 1845 further modifications took place, and each regiment was henceforth made up of six *sotnias* (hundreds), representing as many thousands of the population, on a strictly territorial basis, with the civil and military administration united in the regimental and stanitsal institutions. At the same time they were confirmed in various privileges—the exemption from taxes and police rates, from furnishing recruits to the regular regiments, &c., and in the ownership, in common, of the vast and rich lands taken by force or by fraud from the former native owners.

To complete the picture of the organisation of the Cossack Line facing the north-eastern Caucasus in the days of the war with Shamil—due, like so much else, in conception, though not in execution, to Veliameenoff—it may

be added that in case of necessity a reserve could be drawn on, consisting of every male inhabitant of the stanitsas capable of bearing arms, for every Cossack was taught to ride, shoot, and wield the sword from early childhood, almost from infancy, and, both by inheritance and the conditions of their existence, courage, self-reliance, and hardihood were practically universal amongst them. Finally, the chain of forts and stanitsas was admirably organised for mutual succour and defence, all being within supporting distance one of another, and—on the Soundja—none more than twelve miles apart. Each had its watch tower, with alarm bell, and watchman on the look-out night and day. Every movement was communicated to the Line, if necessary, by cannon fire. Thus, two shots meant a simple call to arms; four indicated that some untoward event had occurred, such as the raiding of cattle, the killing of herds, or the waylaying of individuals or small parties, &c.; while eight shots announced an occurrence of serious import, such as an attack in force on the part of the enemy, and called for immediate help from the neighbouring stanitsas or forts. These in turn transmitted the signal, if need were, to those beyond them on either side, and in this way considerable forces could be concentrated very rapidly at the point of danger.

Having traced the approach of Russia along the Caspian littoral and to the northern foot of the mountain range, let us now glance briefly at the course of events which led her across the central chain, and, eventually, brought her, from sea to sea, into contact, immediately, with Persia and with Asiatic Turkey.

If the Russian invasion of the Caucasus, so far as we have followed it, was due to the lawless movements of

the Cossacks and the ambitions of Peter and his successors, we must admit, when we come to speak of the regions south of the mountains, the existence of a more worthy motive. Here too, doubtless, ambition and political expediency played their part; but the succour of the Christian States inhabited by the Kartvel race—Georgia (Kakhétia and Kartalinia), Imeritia, Mingrelia, and Gouria—from the total ruin threatened by the unspeakable Turk, and still more unspeakable Persian, was as righteous a cause as ever inspired a military or political undertaking; and, by the force of circumstances, it was imposed upon Russia, the only Christian Power that either would, or could, move in the matter.

In the fertile valleys watered by the Koura and the Rion the Christian faith had been maintained through good and evil fortune from the end of the fourth century by a people few in numbers but renowned for valour and personal beauty. In the twelfth century, under the famous Tamára[1] (1184–1212), the Georgian kingdom had reached the height of its power, and the great queen's fiat ran unchallenged over the larger portion of the Caucasus. But terrible times were to come. The Mongol and Tartar invasions of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, frequently repeated with every circumstance of ruthless atrocity, brought ruin and desolation on the fair inheritance of the Georgian race, and Tamára's lowland kingdom was broken up into the separate principalities above named; while in the more mountainous regions the unhappy people, left to their own devices, relapsed into paganism and a barbarism from which they have not yet emerged.

[1] Queen Tamára must not be confounded with the legendary heroines of Lérmontoff's two poems, "The Demon," of which there is a readable English translation by the late Sir A. Condie Stephen; and "Tamára," founded on a local tradition obviously connected with the worship of the goddess Astarte.

Tchenghis Khan and Timour were succeeded by the Sultans of Turkey and the Shahs of Persia, and the subsequent history of the Georgian race for four hundred years is that of one long martyrdom, culminating in the sacking of Tiflis and massacre of the inhabitants in 1795 by the accursed eunuch, Agha Muhammad Shah.

More than once during these centuries of oppression the Tsars of Kakhétia and Kartalinia had turned to Moscow for help,[1] but in vain. Russia was too far away, and the Muhammadan Powers too strong. But at last, in 1769, Todtleben, with 400 men and four guns, crossed the mountains by way of the Dariel gorge, entered Tiflis, and the next year, having meantime been reinforced, marched into Imeritia, took by storm the strong castle of Bagdat and captured Koutaïs, the capital, which had been held by the Turks for 120 years. In 1774 the treaty of Kutchuk-Kainardji put an end to Turkish domination in Imeritia and Georgia, and in the north-west established the river Koubán as the boundary between Russia and Turkey.

Irakli II., Tsar of Kakhétia and Kartalinia, was now relieved of all fear of direct hostility on the part of the Turks, but they still gave secret support to the Mussulman mountaineers; and when Ali Mourád, the new Shah of Persia, reversing the policy of his predecessor, Kerim Khan, insisted on Georgian subjection, Irakli, in despair, turned, as his ancestors had done, to the Northern Power, whose dominions were now separated from his own solely by the mountain chain, and implored protection. The commander-in-chief of the Russian troops in the Caucasus was at

[1] In 1658 Taimuraz, Tsar of Iberia (Georgia), came to Moscow in person to implore the aid of Alexis against the Turks and Persians. In Peter's time the Shah had his commandant and garrison in Tiflis, and treated the Georgian king as a vassal: Akti, vol. i. p. 70.

that time (1783) Lieut.-General Count Paul Potiomkin (Potemkin), first cousin of Catherine's favourite, the celebrated prince of that name. The latter, engaged in consolidating his Turkish conquests, had already in view the establishment of Russian influence, if not authority, in Transcaucasia; and, acting under his instructions, Count Paul hastened to embrace the favourable opportunity now offered. There was no road over the central chain, nothing more than a bridle-path of the roughest kind, and the passage through the Dariel defile and on over the pass above Kazbék and Kóbi was fraught with every danger. Rock and ice falls were of frequent occurrence below, avalanches above; and the northern half of the route was in the hands of the Ossietines, who levied toll on all passers-by, and were so powerful and truculent in these, their native, fastnesses, that in 1772 a force of 600 men with two guns was barely sufficient to relieve the Academician Guldenstedt, who with his party had been cut off by them at the village of Stepan Tsminda (St. Stephan, now Kazbék) on his return journey from Tiflis. Potiomkin's first care was to build a fort, Vládikavkáz, where the Térek issues from the mountains, and connect it by fortified posts with Mozdók. His next was to convert the bridle-path into something in the nature of a road; and such was his energy and that of the 800 Russian soldiers employed on the work, that in October 1783 he was able to drive to Tiflis in a carriage drawn by eight horses.[1]

By this time Catherine had already taken Irakli II.

[1] The distance from Vládikavkáz to Tiflis is about 145 miles, the height of the pass 7977 feet. Dr. Merzbacher finds it strange that the height is variously given by different authors, but the explanation is simple. The road at the summit of the pass has been lowered at least three times since it was first made. *Aus den Hochregionen des Kaukasus*, Gottfried Merzbacher, 2 vols., Leipzig, 1901.

nominally under her protection, for by an Act signed at Gori on the 24th July, the latter had acknowledged himself a vassal of Russia, and on the 3rd November two Russian battalions with four guns, having crossed the mountains by the newly-made road, entered Tiflis in triumph. The day was cold and gloomy, and the shivering Georgians remarked that their new friends had brought their climate with them; but they had brought something else it was thought, or at least hoped—permanent protection, that is, against the Tartar and Persian—and the sorely-tried inhabitants of Tiflis rejoiced accordingly. They were doomed, however, to bitter disappointment. Catherine's proclamation establishing her suzerainty over Georgia was published at Tiflis 25th January 1784, but the Russian troops were soon withdrawn, and in the absence of military protection the Empress's interference proved worse than useless; it helped to exasperate Persia, and contributed thereby to the invasion of Agha Muhammad. Russia then declared war, and an army was despatched under command of Count Zóuboff, which in 1796 took Derbend, Koubá, and Baku, and conquered all the Persian khanates lying between the latter city and the eastern confines of Georgia. But the great Empress died soon after; Paul succeeded; and the Russian troops were once more withdrawn north of the mountains. Derbend and Baku were abandoned, and only became permanent possessions of Russia in 1806.

In 1799 Vládikavkáz, meantime abandoned and destroyed, was rebuilt; for the third time a Russian force crossed the main range to Tiflis; and a year later, just before the death of the Tsar George XII., Georgia, by a manifesto (18th December 1800) of the Emperor Paul,[1] who was then

[1] Confirmed by Alexander I. on the 12th September of the next year.

meditating the invasion of India,[1] was finally united to Russia. That country now had to face the permanent hostility of Turkey and Persia, and that being so, the presence of independent Mussulman tribes and communities within her own borders constituted a danger such as no State would willingly endure. The subjugation of the mountaineers by Russia was thenceforth a necessity; and, in the long run, it was inevitable.

[1] In September 1800 an embargo was laid on English vessels in Russian waters. Next year Paul decided to take the offensive, and on the 12th January 1801 gave the Ataman of the Don, General Orloff, orders to march on India with all his troops. A little more than a month later (27th February) the Cossacks to the number of 22,507 men, with 24 guns, without transport, stores, or maps, began the campaign; the troops marched in four echelons, one commanded by Plátoff specially set free from the fortress of St. Petersburg for the occasion. The Cossacks, who suffered great privations, had only crossed the Volga (18th March) when they received notice of the Emperor's death: *Russian Biographical Dictionary*, article "Paul I."

CHAPTER II

1722–1771

Peter's campaign—Derbend occupied—Peter returns to Moscow—His lieutenants take Baku—Their further successes—Under Anne the Russians retire to the Térek—Catherine the Great—Strengthening the Line—War with Turkey—Todtleben crosses the mountains—The Russians retire once more—Plátoff's action—Flight of the Kalmuck Tartars

The conquest of the Caucasus, as distinct from the Cossack approach, begins with Peter the Great's campaign, the outcome of those views which, embodied in his alleged political testament, apocryphal or not, have since the time of the Emperor Paul been part of the inheritance of the Russian people. The ill-fated expedition to Khiva (1717) had been undertaken partly with a view to opening up, if possible, a commercial route to India; and, undismayed by the result of this first attempt, no sooner had the happy termination of the war with Sweden relieved Peter of anxiety in that direction, than he determined to try his fortune once more in the east and south, and this time in person. Persia at this time was in a most miserable and distracted condition, thanks to the Afghan invasion under Mahmoud, a very monster of cruelty. The Turks profited by the occasion to encroach upon their neighbour's territory, and Peter, alarmed for the safety of his trade-route of the future, determined to prevent their approach to the Caspian by occupying the whole of the coast provinces himself.

It is true that Russia and Persia were at peace, and that there was no justification for an armed attack on the latter Power. But, just at the right moment, a plausible pretext was supplied by the plundering, to the value of half a

million roubles, of certain Russian subjects at Shemakhá, the capital of Shirván, by mountaineers of Daghestan, against whom the Shah, their nominal suzerain, was powerless. Indeed when, somewhat tardily, Peter's ambassador arrived at the Court of Isfahan in 1722 to demand redress, he found that Shah Sultan Husayn had been forced to abdicate by Mahmoud, who repudiated all responsibility, saying "that he was desirous of living upon good terms with the Tsar, whom fame had represented as a wise and warlike prince; but as the people he complained of were neither his allies nor subjects, he could not prescribe laws to them, nor be accountable for their conduct. He therefore recommended to him to provide for the security of the caravans henceforward by strong convoys, unless he chose to enter into an alliance with those nations through whose territories they were to pass."[1] This was enough for Peter, who lost no time in completing his preparations for the invasion of Persian territory.

It was now for the first time that the line of Cossack settlements on the Lower Térek, hitherto viewed mainly as a defensive position, proved its utility as an aggressive base, furnishing, moreover, a contingent of exceptional value to the regular army. Of this the foot and artillery with all stores and munitions of war were collected at Astrakhan, and thence shipped to the mouth of the Soulák, while the cavalry marched overland to the same destination by way of Mozdók and the Koumuik steppes. The regular infantry alone numbered 22,000 men, veterans who had fought throughout the Swedish war. The cavalry consisted of 9000 dragoons, besides 70,000 Cossacks, Kalmucks, and Tartars.[2]

[1] Hanway's Historical Account, &c., vol. iii. chapter xxiii.
[2] Soloviόff, xviii. chapter i. 671.

The flotilla arrived at the spot chosen for landing on the 27th July 1722, and Peter, carried by four boatmen, the shallowness of the water not allowing his barge to reach the shore, was the first to disembark.

The news that now reached him was of a somewhat disquieting nature. A portion of the cavalry had been detached to occupy the village of Enderee, on the Aktash, and had suffered a reverse—it was called a disaster—at the hands of the Tchetchens. This was the first time that Russian regular troops had come in contact with that tribe in their native forests, and the result was ominous of what was to take place on numberless occasions during the ensuing 130 years. It will be seen that in the history of the conquest of the Caucasus the forest fighting against the Tchetchens played a part second in importance only to the mountain warfare against the tribes of Daghestan; it cost Russia an even greater expenditure of blood and money, and led to more extensive and more sanguinary disasters.

The first report as to the affair near Enderee proved, however, to have been exaggerated. The brigadier, Veterani, had suffered some loss in a wooded defile, but had been extricated by Colonel Naoumoff. Peter sent a Kalmuck punitive expedition against the Tchetchens, and having assembled his army, made, with the Empress, his state entry into Tarkou, the Shamkhal's capital, on the 12th of August. Three days later he returned to his camp on the seashore, and, after service in the campaigning church of the Preobrazhénsky regiment, gathered a few stones together, his immediate followers adding others till the heap became a mound, on the site of the present town of Petróvsk, so named when founded, more than a century later, in honour of the great Tsar's presence on

this occasion. Next day Peter at the head of his army set out for Derbend, the flotilla with stores, &c., being left to follow coastwise.

Meantime proclamations were sent to Derbend, Shemakhá, and Baku disclaiming on the part of the Tsar any ambitious views, and giving as the reasons for his presence a desire "to rescue the King of Persia and his loyal subjects from the tyranny of the Afghans, and to chastise these rebels for the disorders and excesses which they had committed against the Russians."[1] Bruce states that the deposed Shah had actually begged for Russian assistance.

The Shamkhal, Adil Gherem, Sovereign Lord of the Koumuiks, who must not be confounded with the Kazi-Koumoukhs,[2] dwelling in the mountains farther south, had received Peter as a friend, and offered him every assistance. Akhmet Khan, Outsmi of Karakaitagh, next in importance of those native rulers who dated their authority from the establishment of Arab dominion in Daghestan in the eighth century, took a very different line. A Cossack officer and three men sent to him with a letter from the Tsar, couched in conciliatory terms, were put to death, and, gathering an army of 16,000 men, Akhmet attempted to bar the way to the Russians at Outemish, a few miles inland from Kayakent. The result might have been foreseen. As in other parts of the world, the native levies in the Caucasus, however numerous and however brave, have never been able to stand against the disciplined forces of a more civilised neighbour in the open, whatever success they might, and did, achieve—witness a hundred instances in Daghestan and

[1] Hanway, *ut supra*.

[2] Both Russian and foreign writers frequently fall into this egregious error.

Tchetchnia—in forest depths and mountain fastnesses. We have Peter's own testimony that the men of Karakaitagh fought with desperate valour, but in vain. The Russians gained a complete victory; Outemish was taken and burnt, and all prisoners hanged in revenge of the murder of the Russian envoys. Derbend, which had been waiting the result of the fight to determine on its course of action, made haste to submit; on the 23rd August the Khan, accompanied by the Moullás, notables, and others, came out to meet the victor with bread and salt, and presented Peter with the keys of the city and fortress on a silver plate covered with cloth of gold.[1] The Tsar then made his entry in state at the head of his troops, but before doing so, a slight shock of earthquake occurring, Peter, in the spirit of the Norman conqueror at Pevensey, seized the doubtful omen and turned it to his advantage. "Lo!" cried he, "Nature herself gives me a solemn welcome and makes the very walls to tremble at my power!"

Derbend owed its importance to a unique position on one of the highroads between Europe and Asia; for the strip of low land between the mountains of Daghestan and the Caspian Sea, from Petrórsk to the Ápsheron peninsula, affords the only level route from north to south in the whole of the Caucasian isthmus, the only one, indeed, that does not involve the passage of lofty mountains and rugged defiles. In no place more than a few miles wide, except where the Samour flows down to the sea, this strip is here reduced to such narrow dimensions as to admit of being easily barred against an enemy approaching from either side, yet Derbend could hardly be turned, in former times, by land or by sea, for the latter was stormy and

[1] These trophies are now in St. Petersburg.

dangerous, without any harbours, the former rugged to a degree and peopled by fierce and independent tribes.

The fortunes of Derbend were for the most part intimately bound up with those of Persia, whose rulers, native or foreign, could not fail to realise the strategic importance of the position, nor is it to be wondered at that the Arabs, after the overthrow of the Sassanian dynasty, lost little time in extending their conquest to what was rightly considered the northern gate of Persia.[1]

While at Derbend, Peter broke with his own hands a window through the wall of the room he occupied in the Khan's palace that he might watch the waters of the Caspian, over the city at his feet, for the coming of his transports. But though, as Horace tells us, even the Caspian is not always stormy, it is subject to frequent and violent gales. One such caught the flotilla on its way, wrecking twelve ships, while thirty others reached Agrakhán in such plight that they could go no farther. The consequent shortage in stores and munitions of war made an advance in force impossible at that late season of the year; and as to sit idle was not in Peter's nature, leaving a strong garrison in Derbend he marched back to the Térek, thence set sail for Astrakhan, and on the 13th December made a triumphal entry into Moscow.[2]

But before leaving Astrakhan, on the invitation of the Vazir and people of Resht, who were then threatened by the Afghans, he despatched Colonel Sheepoff (6th November)

[1] For description of Derbend and the famous walls, see Abercromby, "A Trip through the Eastern Caucasus," London, 1889.

[2] Such is the Russian version, no doubt the correct one. Bruce states positively that Peter retired at a day's notice on being threatened with a declaration of war by a Turkish envoy ("Memoirs," p. 289, London, 1782). Hanway gives no reason for Peter's return, but relates in detail the mission of the Turkish envoy *after* Peter's withdrawal from the Caucasus: vol. iii. chapter xxvi.

with an expeditionary force down the Caspian with instructions to seize and hold the province of Ghilian. Sheepoff, who had with him two battalions of regular infantry, sailing fast, made a sudden appearance at Resht, and occupied that town and harbour before the Persians, who meantime had changed their mind, could gather in sufficient strength to oppose him.

The Russians posed as friends and allies of the young Shah Tamasp, and opponents of the Afghan invaders or rebels, as they were called. But the inhabitants proved hostile from the first, and when the newcomers cut wood for fuel, grumbled, saying, "Our forests serve to pay the Shah's taxes," and denied having invited them.[1]

The Persians soon gathered a force of some 15,000 men, and their attitude became so threatening that the Russians were driven to entrench themselves, a proceeding that gave further offence. In February messengers arrived from the Shah with peremptory orders to evacuate Resht under pain of expulsion, and towards the end of March the Persians began firing on the town, whereupon Sheepoff sallied out and, taking them both in front and in rear, routed them with a loss of over 1000 killed. About the same time 100 Russians beat off 5000 Persians who ventured to attack their ships.[2] The relations between Russia and Persia from this time onward until 1732 were strangely confused. Russian historians recognise a state of war as existing practically the whole time, the enemy being sometimes the Afghans, sometimes the Persians themselves. Yet negotiations were carried on almost continuously, and a treaty of alliance with Shah Tamasp actually signed. The truth is that the Afghans having taken Isfahan and overrun a large part of the country, Russia and Turkey hastened to occupy

[1] Soloviôff, XVIII. i. p. 680.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 681.

what was left, and the consequent rivalry brought them very nearly to blows. The key to the situation is to be found, as far as Russia is concerned, in the vital importance attached by Peter and his successors to safeguarding the Caspian against Turkish aggression.

The following year General Matioushkin took Baku (25th July 1723), an event that filled Peter with joy, for he looked upon that city as "the key to all our business."[1] The khanates of Baku and Shirván, and the Persian provinces of Ghilian, Mazanderan, and Astrabad, were rapidly occupied, and when, for a short time, an alliance with the Turks, made in England's despite, added to Russia's strength and Persia's difficulties, her conquests spread even farther inland. On 12th September a treaty was signed between Russia and Persia, by which the Tsar undertook to drive out the Afghans and establish Shah Tamasp on the throne, the latter in return ceding in perpetuity to Russia the towns and dependencies of Derbend and Baku, with the provinces of Ghilian, Mazanderan, and Astrabad.[2] But next year Prince Meshtchérsky, specially accredited for the purpose, failed to secure ratification, and going and coming his life was attempted.

The history of this, the first, Russo-Persian war is filled with feats of adventurous daring—victories won by handfuls of men over thousands; towns and fortresses stormed and captured; provinces overrun—but as, in the end, nothing was retained, this brilliant episode contributed little or nothing directly to the conquest of the Caucasus. The tribes to the north grew more and more troublesome; Persia, torn by internal dissensions, was once more united under Nadir Shah; and the Porte, which in 1724 had concluded a treaty with Russia, again became hostile. In

[1] Soloviόff, 682. [2] Hanway, vol. iii. p. 181.

1732, two years after her accession, the Empress Anne restored to Persia everything south of the Koura, and three years later, war with Turkey being inevitable and Nadir threatening to join forces against her unless Baku and Derbend were also surrendered, Anne, by the treaty of Gandja, abandoned the rest of Peter's conquests and agreed to the withdrawal of the Russian forces to the old Line of the Térek. Nadir resumed hostilities against the Turks and, having beaten them, was free to march on Kandahar and India (1739).

To give way under compulsion was humiliating indeed; but the blow was softened to Russia by two considerations: the deadly climate of Ghilian had made that province a very graveyard to the army of occupation; and, after all, the chief aim of Russia's Persian policy was secured. With Nadir on the throne, there was no danger of the Turks being allowed to approach the Caspian.

Nor were the efforts and sacrifices of the past thirteen years fruitless in some other respects. As Züsserman points out,[1] it was during these years that the soldiers of the Tsar laid the foundations of those qualities for which the regiments of the Caucasus were afterwards famous. Many of these regiments were constituted at this time, forming part of the "Persian" army corps of Matioushkin and his successors, and their record is one of which any army and any nation might well be proud.

From the treaty of Gandja, 1735, to the death of Anne, five years later, and on through the twenty-one years of Elizabeth's reign, Russia's only concern in the eastern Caucasus was the defence of the Line on the Térek, then extending little farther inland from the Caspian than the mouth of the Soundja; and even here the central power

[1] *Istoria Kabardeenskavo Polká*, 3 vols., St. Petersburg, 1881.

seems to have left the Cossacks very much to their own devices.

A Russian historian[1] extols the dauntless valour and superhuman efforts requisite to maintain the struggle against the united forces of the Daghestanis, Koumuiks, Tchetchens, and Kabardáns. But it may safely be asserted that all these native tribes never did unite against the Cossacks. Had they done so, the latter could not possibly have withstood them. They must either have been annihilated or driven out, unless supported in strength by the regular troops of the Empire.[2] None the less their life was one of constant, if petty, strife, and then, as ever, up even to our own times, the Cossack ploughed his field and gathered his harvest with sword on thigh and musket on back. Then, as ever, he was frequently called upon to defend his home against raiding bands, and take part in turn in similar raids, directed now against one, now another of the neighbouring tribes.

Elizabeth died in December 1761. Peter III. succeeded, and was soon murdered. From 1762 Catherine reigned alone, and the affairs of the Caucasus at once attracted her attention.

With intuitive genius the great Empress grasped at once the importance of maintaining and extending the Cossack Line. A Kabardán renegade, with forty families of his people, was encouraged to found Mozdók, and already, in 1763, the new settlement could boast of an Orthodox Church and a fortified outpost—emblems of the important part Mozdók was destined to play in the conquest of the Caucasus and the conversion of some, at least, of its in-

[1] Potto, I. i. 59.

[2] The Kabardáns in early times were for the most part very friendly to Russia, and often enough took her side against other native tribes. In 1764 Catherine offered a reward of Rs. 3000 to the Kabardán princes for aid given seven years previously against the Tchetchens.

habitants to Christianity; for this village on the Térek has since been called the corner-stone of the Russian conquest, and was certainly the starting-point of Russia's missionary activity amongst the Ossietines. Even Catherine could hardly have realised the full significance of her action; but it is characteristic of genius to formulate thoughts and adopt measures wise in themselves, the results of which go far beyond their author's anticipations.

Meantime, however, the effect was disquieting. Russia claimed the site of Mozdók on the strength of the treaty of Belgrade. The Kabardán princes considered it theirs, and justly, no doubt, in virtue of the fact that they had been in the habit from time immemorial of pasturing sheep and cutting wood in the vicinity. To witness the building of a Russian fortress on what they held to be their own territory was galling enough, but when Mozdók became, as it speedily did, a place of refuge for their runaway slaves, the measure of their patience was filled to overflowing. They sent deputies to St. Petersburg to urge their claims or lodge their protests, and, failing to obtain satisfaction, broke out into open hostility, lasting from 1765 to 1779, and marked by many a desperate fight; for these people were in civilisation the most advanced of the tribes, in valour second to none.[1]

Nor was this all. Turkey, whatever her rights in the case, viewed the construction of the new fort with grave misgiving, and made diplomatic representations at the Russian Court.

[1] Akti, i. p. 82. It would be unfair to the natives to forget that, time after time, from their earliest contact with the northern invaders down to the last shameful act of the conquest, the wholesale expatriation of the western tribes in 1864, we come upon evidence of Russia's unjust and even treacherous dealing with them, and this though we are perforce confined to Russian sources for our information.

The College of Foreign Affairs did its utmost to soothe Turkish susceptibility, but at the same time secretly ordered the commandant of Kizliar, Major-General Potápoff, to proceed with the fortification of Mozdók, though as quietly as possible[1]—instructions carried out with such zeal and energy, that by 1765 the new settlement was a place of considerable strength. In June of that year the exasperated Kabardáns besieged Kizliar, and failing to capture that important stronghold, devastated the neighbouring steppe. It was this and other raids that led to the transference of the Volga Cossacks to the Térek in 1769 under their ataman, General Savélieff, a most important addition to the strength and extent of the Line. The newcomers had to face the hostility not only of the Kabardáns and Tchetchens, but of the Kalmuck nomads to the north; but with the courage and tenacity of their race, the only true colonisers besides the British, they held their own. It is to these qualities and to the combination of plough and sword, mainly in the hands of the Cossacks, that Russia owes to-day the extent of her empire and the safety of her boundaries, east and south.

Turkey, dissatisfied with Russia's assurances, declared war on the 18th November 1768, and the Caucasus was included in the field of operations, as indeed on all occasions of a like nature. For it was to Russia's advantage to create a diversion that could not but weaken the forces of her adversary in the main theatre of war—on the Danube or the Dniester, or in the Crimea; while Turkey, similarly, had much to hope from the co-operation of the Mussulman tribes of the Caucasus, whose greed and fanaticism it was so easy to arouse.

The war was waged with various fortune. Kizliar was

[1] Akti, i. p. 82.

taken and all its inhabitants put to the sword by a raiding party of Kisteens or Mountain Tchetchens. But this and other successes were more than outbalanced by the results of Todtleben's expedition to Georgia and Imeritia, though the campaign itself was in some respects a failure. Todtleben, one of the strangest figures in the history of those times, was a German by birth, an adventurer who, having entered the Russian service in the time of Elizabeth, achieved in 1760 undying fame by his sudden capture of Berlin. The following year, possibly in connection with the death of the Russian Empress, he prepared to betray his trust, was arrested by his own officers, and after an exhaustive inquiry, condemned to death by quartering. Catherine commuted the sentence to banishment, and on the outbreak of the Turkish war restored him to the rank of major-general, and sent him to the Caucasus. In 1769, as already stated, Todtleben crossed the mountains, and having restored to Solomon, Tsar of Imeritia, Koutaïs, the capital of his kingdom, he advanced on Poti, dispersed a Turkish army of 12,000 men which attempted to bar the way, and laid siege to that important stronghold. But fortune now deserted him. Poti held out stoutly. Todtleben had become involved in a web of intrigue, due, no doubt, in great measure to his own hot-headedness and fantastic character; and mutual recriminations between himself and the Georgians, Imeritians, Gourians, and, above all, the Russians, reached such a pitch that Catherine, alarmed at the possible results of such a state of things, recalled him, and so ended his strange career.

His successor, Soukhótin, continued the siege of Poti; but foreseeing failure, pretended sickness, and returned to Tiflis. Tsar Solomon again complained to the Empress, and Catherine, heartily sick of the whole business, ordered

the withdrawal of the Russian forces to the Line, an operation carried out in the spring of 1772.

The war went on in the northern Caucasus, and was made memorable by the heroic resistance in the open Nogai steppe of the Ataman[1] of the Don Cossacks, Plátoff, afterwards so widely celebrated, with 2000 men against a Turkish and Crim-Tartar army of 25,000, and the successful defence of the Naour stanitsa by Mozdók Cossacks against 8000 Turks and tribesmen.[2] The Cossack women on this occasion fought alongside their husbands and sons, and with equal valour; but the sudden retreat of the besieging force was attributed to an apparition recalling that of the Heavenly Twins at the battle of Lake Regillus. It was the day of the Holy Apostles Bartholomew and Barnabas, who, seeing the desperate position of the besieged, made their appearance dressed in white on white horses, and riding along the enemy's front, instilled such panic fear that the latter fled incontinently. A chapel in the church at Naour commemorates both fact and tradition; and the 11th July is still the great festival at this stanitsa.

It was during this war (in 1771) that a vast majority of the Kalmucks, disgusted by the treatment meted out to them by their Russian allies, struck their tents and fled from the Volga to the confines of China.[3] The remainder moved westward to the plains midway between the Caspian and Black Seas, where their descendants still roam.

[1] Altered from hetman, the word used by the Poles and Little Russians; said to be derived from or equivalent to "headman": *Russ. Encycl. Dict.*

[2] Akti, i. p. 88.

[3] See De Quincey's "Revolt of the Tartars," a fantastic performance, magnificent as literature, but historically beneath contempt. Professor Masson in his edition of De Quincey's works (vol. vii. pp. 368 *et seq.*) supplies most of the necessary corrections. But see also "Turkestan," by Eugene Schuyler, 1876, vol. ii. p. 171.

CHAPTER III

1771–1796

Peace with Turkey—Derbend reoccupied and again abandoned—The Line extended—the Koubán—The Nogai Tartars—Their subjugation by Souvóroff—Count Potiomkin, first Viceroy of the Caucasus—Colonisation—Shaykh-Mansour—Tchetchen victory—The first forest disaster—Battle of Tátartoub—Shaykh-Mansour goes to the western tribes—War with Turkey—First and second attempts on Anápa—Hermann defeats Batal Pasha—Anápa taken—Shaykh-Mansour a prisoner—His death—Strengthening of the Line—Agha Muhammad's sack of Tiflis—War with Persia—Zóuboff appointed to the command-in-chief

Peace being established between Russia and Turkey by the treaty of Kutchuk Kainardji[1] the latter could no longer openly support the tribes, though secret encouragement and assistance were given as freely as before. The Russians were once more able to devote their undivided attention to the strengthening of the Line and the consolidation of their power both east and west; the tribesmen reverted to their desultory, undeclared warfare, which, in spite of occasional successes, could put no permanent check on Russia's advance. On the Caspian the Outsmi of Karakaitagh, emboldened by the long absence of any manifestation of Russia's power, committed various outrages, culminating in the seizure of the Academician Gmelin, who, relying on personal acquaintance with that ruler, chose the land route on his return from a scientific mission to Persia. Gmelin, heart-broken, soon died in captivity at Kayakent; and the Empress, who valued him highly, and felt, moreover, her own dignity involved, ordered General Medem, now commanding on

[1] Signed 10th July 1774, ratified 13th January 1775.

the Line, to attack the outsmi and ravage his dominions. Medem arrived (March 1775) to find Derbend on the point of surrendering to the common enemy after a siege that had lasted nine months. The Karakaitaghans retreated on the approach of the Russians, but were met and their forces defeated in a pitched battle, whereupon the Russian commander proceeded to carry out ruthlessly Catherine's instructions. But not content with this, he occupied Derbend, the ruler of which, Feth Ali Khan, was a vassal of Persia—one of many high-handed and utterly unjustifiable acts committed, from time to time, by Russia against that country, and treasured up for future reprisal if, as now, circumstances were unfavourable to instant action. Medem returned to the Line, leaving a small force at Derbend. Soon after, a Russian merchant vessel was cast ashore in the neighbourhood and pillaged by order of Feth Ali Khan, who, to conceal his share in the transaction, put all the crew to death. The affair leaked out, notwithstanding; but, probably for fear of provoking a war with Persia, for which Catherine was not then prepared, no punishment was exacted. The Russian detachment was recalled; its commander, Major Krudener—who had meantime suffered a reverse in the neighbouring mountains, losing two colours—reduced to the ranks; and Derbend, for the second time, abandoned.

Medem was succeeded in the autumn of 1777 by General Yakobi, but the military forces in the Caucasus being then divided into two army corps, the Caucasian and the Koubán, he was appointed to command the former only, while the latter was entrusted to the celebrated Souvóroff.[1] By the united efforts of these two com-

[1] "Anglicè Suwarrow," as Byron says.

manders during the ensuing five years Russia's position on the western portion of the border-line was very much strengthened, and a solid foundation laid for future success against the tribes inhabiting the country between the Térek and the Black Sea coast. It may be regarded as certain that had they been followed by leaders of equal capacity and energy, backed by such a government as that of Catherine, the war in that quarter of the Caucasus would not have lingered on, as it did, for the best part of a century. It was Prince Potiomkin who chose them for their commands, and it is probable that much of the credit for what they effected is properly due to that singular genius, who was meantime occupied in finally extinguishing the independence of the Crimea, abandoned by Turkey to its own devices in 1778.

Yakobi founded the fortresses of Ekatereenograd, Gheórghievsk, and Stávropol, initiated the colonisation by Crown peasants of the present government of Stávropol, and completed the Line from Mozdók to Rostóff (then known as Fort Dmeetri) by the addition of six minor forts.[1] The settlers in these new colonies were Cossacks brought from the Volga and elsewhere, and, as usual, with their wives and children, their flocks and herds, their implements of agriculture and domestic utensils. They were, like all Cossacks, born fighters and horsemen, and imbued with a sturdy and independent spirit. They had by this time, moreover, become confirmed ploughers of the soil, though in earlier days agriculture was forbidden, at least amongst the most important of the Cossack communities, those of the Don.

While Yakobi was thus employed, Souvóroff busied

[1] From Mozdók to the Sea of Ázoff there were now ten fortified posts, each with its Cossack stanitsa, or military colony.

himself, similarly, with the construction of a fortified Line stretching from the point where the Lába falls into the Koubán to the mouth of the latter river on the coast opposite Kertch, and consisting of four fortresses,[1] linked together by a score of redouts.

A glance at the map will show that while the main Line ran north-west from Mozdók to Ázoff, the Line of the Koubán ran nearly due west from the present Kavkázskaya, though with a southward bend, in accord with the course of that river.

To understand the necessity and full significance of these Lines, we must have some idea of the nature of the country they traversed, and of the peoples inhabiting it. Roughly speaking, then, south of the main Line from Kizliar to Kavkázskaya, and of the eastern half of the Line of the Koubán, lay the region of forests, clothing in the densest manner not only the alluvial foothills and higher cretaceous ranges, but the limestone mountains parallel to them and to the granitic axis, to the height of several thousand feet. This forest region was intersected by numberless torrents and streams, flowing mostly from the region of perpetual snow, to join sooner or later either the Térek, the Malka, or the Koubán; and on the banks of their many waters, in the glades and clearings of the forest, dwelt, to the east of Vládikavkáz the various tribes of the Tchetchens, to the west, the Kabardáns and their kindred the Tcherkess. North of the Térek and Koubán the forests gave place rapidly to fertile plains, succeeded in turn by desert steppes. This flat country, of vast extent, was inhabited by the nomad hordes of the Kalmuck and Nogai Tartars, the first named occupying the eastern half, while the Nogais, recent immigrants

[1] Alexandrovskaya, Mareenskaya, Kopuil, and Novotroitskaya.

from Bessarabia, wandered in large numbers over the country between the Koubán and the Manitch and Don, whence their predecessors, likewise nomad Tartars of the Kasaievtsi and other tribes, had on the coming of the Nogais taken refuge among the Tcherkess. On the peninsula opposite the eastern extremity of the Crimea two strongholds, Tamán and Anápa, whether in the hands of the Turks or of the Crim-Tartars, gave command of the straits of Yenikáli, and ensured communications between those peoples and the Nogais, whom they counted as vassals, and encouraged in their recurrent hostility to Russia.

It does not appear that the Nogais were naturally a warlike people; and the historian, having Russian sources only whence to draw his information, may be allowed to surmise that the raids and forays, of which the Don Cossacks and the new settlers on the Line complained, were but the natural result of the Russian advance, which must have borne heavily on the Nogais as more and more of the most fertile portion of the steppes became occupied by the ever-widening stream of settlers from the north. If to this we add the incitements of Tcherkess, Turk, and Tartar, and the exasperating policy of *divide et impera* avowedly followed by Russia, it is not surprising that the Nogais, goaded to desperation, resorted to measures of reprisal, and embarked on a course which led, as it could not but lead, to their final ruin.

All the Nogais are derived, according to their own tradition, from a chieftain of that name who in the thirteenth century separated from the Golden to found the Blue Horde. Powerful for a time, they soon broke up into several bands, and, weakened by internal dissensions, no less than by the hostility of neighbouring tribes, were

by 1552 driven to seek the protection of Ivan the Terrible against the most powerful of their oppressors, the Khan of Astrakhan, and thus became subjects of Russia. They are at the present day divided into eight main families or clans, of which the Kara (black) Nogais, the most important, lead a purely nomad existence on the steppe to the north of the Térek. They are strict Muhammadans of the Sunnite persuasion, hospitable, thievish, dirty, not over brave, and, with few exceptions, miserably poor. Their customs are for the most part those of their neighbours, the Koumuiks, Tchetchens, and Kabardáns, and have probably been borrowed from them; but they have songs, stories, and legends, including something like an epos, of their own, and one or two curious superstitions.

M. Semiónoff[1] argues with some plausibility that the Nogais are not the descendants of the warlike Mongol-Tartars of Djinghis Khan, but of the Petchenegs, Polovtsi, and other peoples mentioned in early Russian history, whom he considers indeed to belong to the same stock as the Mongols, but to branches that came sooner to Europe, and were ruder and less warlike. He insists particularly on the want of culture and of courage displayed by the Nogais as distinguishing them radically from the fierce warriors of the Golden Horde, who had attained by the time they invaded Russia to a considerable degree of civilisation.

During seven years from the peace of Kutchuk-Kainardji to 1782, when Potiomkin annexed the Crimea to Russia, the Kabardáns, the Tcherkess, the Kasaievtsi and their kindred, as well as the Nogais, were in perpetual unrest, any two of them uniting against the third, with kaleidoscopic changes of combination, such as we need not attempt to follow. In 1777, it is true, they all joined forces for an attack on the Russians; but finding the latter on their guard, fell once more to mutual recrimination and slaughter. The Tcherkess raided the steppe; the Nogais made incursions beyond the Koubán. Nomad encampments on the one side, villages on the other, were destroyed. Flocks and herds were driven off, fields of standing corn devastated, and many bloody battles were fought, victory declaring now for the Tcherkess now for the Nogais with fairly regular alternation. But the former with their forests and hills were better situated for defence than the latter on the open steppe, and, moreover, had no Russians behind them, whereas the Nogais were always liable to be taken between two fires. After three years of this desolating warfare, plague, famine, and civil war broke out amongst the unhappy nomads, and Russia's task became easy. Prince Potiomkin's hands were now free, the Crimea, thanks to him, having at last become a Russian province. He saw that the moment had come to crush once for all the last remnants of the hordes that had overrun Russia in the thirteenth century, and force them to abandon their present country for the plains lying between the Volga and the Ural, unpeopled since the Pougatcheff rebellion. He entrusted the task to the very competent hand and brain of Souvóroff.

Summoning the Nogais in their thousands to meet him at Yeisk, on the shore of the Sea of Ázoff, the Russian commander at a solemn durbar read to them the manifesto by which Shaghin-Ghirei, last Khan of the Crimea, abdicated his sovereignty in favour of Catherine II., together with all rights and privileges, including suzerainty over the Nogais. The assembled clans listened in silence, and took without demur the oath of allegiance to their new

[1] *Touzémtsi Siévero-Vostótchnavo Kavkáza* (St. Petersburg, 1895), p. 395.

ruler. A mighty feast, at which 100 beeves and 800 sheep furnished two items in the bill of fare, followed by horse-races and *djighitovka*,[1] marked the close of the ceremony, and the popular contentment seemed to give promise of peace and happiness in their new relationship for Russians and Nogais alike. But when, a little later, Souvóroff, having won over some of the more influential chieftains, allowed Potiomkin's plan to become known, the disillusionment was great. The evil news ran like wildfire through the vast encampment; murmured discontent rapidly grew to loud-voiced protest, and from word to deed with the semi-savage Tartars was but a single step. The call to arms resounded far and wide; swords were girt on, bows and quivers seized; and the space between and around the *kibitkas*[2] was soon filled with a mass of raging, vociferating humanity. A little later blood flowed in torrents. The first victims were those mourzas and sultans who had been seduced by Russian promises and probably by Russian gold; and so swift was the deed of vengeance, that before the Russians could interfere, one and all had paid for their treachery with their lives. But Souvóroff, with a sagacity which wins him the commendation of his countrymen,[3] had foreseen some such turn of affairs, and had taken his measures accordingly. When the infuriated Nogais proceeded to attack the nearest of the Russian detachments, regiment after regiment closed in upon them, and in a short time all was over. Driven into boggy ground, and seeing no possibility of escape, the miserable nomads in a mad access of despair destroyed their valuables, slaughtered their women, and threw their little children into the neighbouring stream.

[1] *Ante*, chap. i. p. 11.
[2] Tents made of wooden lattice-work covered with felt.
[3] Potto, I. i. 118.

But these were a portion only of the whole race. Calling on the Tcherkess for help, readily granted, the remnant of the Nogais made desperate efforts to save their country and maintain their independence. They gathered in great numbers, and even laid siege to Yeisk; but, defeated again and again, they were pursued and finally routed with merciless slaughter by Souvóroff himself and Ilovaisky, Ataman of the Don Cossacks, on the far side of the Koubán. Of the survivors, an irreconcilable minority settled amongst the Tcherkess; the remainder made their submission and were transferred to the Crimea, whence the Crim-Tartars, panic-stricken at Russian methods of government, fled to Turkey in such numbers that to this day the peninsula has never recovered its former population.

Souvóroff for this campaign received the Order of St. Vladeemir of the 1st Class, and his companions in arms, from Ilovaisky down to the common Cossacks, were lavishly rewarded by Catherine. The fertile steppes of the government of Stávropol were now open to the Russian settlers, and colonisation proceeded apace. The Tcherkess, thenceforward, had no possible allies north of the Koubán; no possible victims but the Russians; and the latter grew daily in numbers and in strength.

The event of the year 1783, the expedition to Georgia, has already been related. Its leader, Count Paul Potiomkin, on his return found peace established all along the Line, and though that word never possessed a very positive significance in relation to the tribes, and there were sharp brushes with the natives from time to time, notably with the Tchetchens, he was able to devote his very great energy and ability for the next few years mainly to administrative reform and to colonisation. Souvóroff, in February 1784, returned to Russia, and Potiomkin united in his person

the command of both the army corps. In May 1785 he was appointed first Viceroy of the Caucasus, a sounding title which at this time, however, was expressly limited to the governments of Astrakhan and Stávropol, and certainly counted no real authority beyond the Lines. Potiomkin promoted Kizliar, Mozdók, and some other stanitsas to the rank of towns, and chose one of them, Ekatereenograd, as his place of residence. There he built the first viceregal palace, where, surrounded by a brilliant military court, he busied himself with devising and executing those measures which entitle him to a place of honour amongst the "conquerors" of the Caucasus. To him Russia owes the foundation of the civilian as distinct from the military occupation of the Lines and of the Stávropol steppes. He it was who first brought German colonists to the Caucasus that they might improve the existing industries of wine-making and silk culture, and by their example give an impetus to a better system of agriculture. He invited immigrants from the interior of Russia, Crown peasants and others, and with such success that at first some difficulty was found in satisfying the newcomers' demands for land. To improve trade he extended hospitality to the Armenians, who to this day almost monopolise the petty shopkeeping of the Caucasus, as well as trade and commerce in its larger aspects. When war again broke out with Turkey in 1787, Potiomkin, whilst retaining his viceroyalty, was appointed to a command in the army of the Danube, and distinguished himself under Souvóroff at the storming of Ismail. But an event that had taken place during the last year of his administration in the Caucasus becoming known some time later cast a shade over his renown, and apparently was not unconnected with his sudden death soon afterwards. It appeared that a brother of the Shah, Agha Muhammad, seeking

refuge from that bloodthirsty tyrant, reached the banks of the Térek, and appealed to the commandant of Kizliar for protection. Boats with a detachment of soldiers were sent ostensibly to his assistance. But the soldiers, whether by order or acting on sudden impulse is uncertain, fell upon the unfortunate prince and his companions, killed them, and appropriated the rich treasures they had with them. It is not clear what part Potiomkin took in this shameful affair, but as he not only failed to punish its authors, but kept the whole matter a profound secret, it is only reasonable to suppose that he profited by it in one way or other.

Meanwhile, in 1785, an event had occurred the full significance of which, undreamed of at the time, will become apparent later on. Shaykh-Mansour, the first to preach and lead the Ghazavat, or Holy War, against the infidel Russians in the Caucasus, was one of those strange beings, compounded of religious fanaticism, military ardour, and a nature prone to adventure, for whom only the dreaming, fighting, tumultuous, ignorant East, in its days of trouble and unrest, can supply a fitting field of action; for there and there alone can they find the human materials and the local conditions requisite to any considerable measure of success. Of obscure origin, of doubtful race, his birth, upbringing, nay, his very name unknown, Shaykh-Mansour dropped, as it were, from the clouds full grown, a warrior, preacher and prophet; and, in spite of the many failures that far outbalanced his occasional successes, he drew after him now one, now another, of the fierce tribes of the mountain and the forest. He failed, it is true, in his endeavour to unite them against the common enemy, but he it was who first taught them that in religious reform lay the one chance of preserving their cherished liberty and independence, and thereby laid the foundation for future

union and for that great movement which under the name of Muridism was, in the coming century, to set at naught, year after year, decade after decade, the whole might of Russia. The exact time and place of his first appearance in the northern Caucasus is, like all that appertains to his earlier years, uncertain. Professor Ottino a few years since unearthed in the State archives at Turin a series of letters written home to his father by Shaykh-Mansour, which, if authentic, puts an end to the mystery in which so much of his life is involved, but render his career only the more amazing. According to those documents, we have to do, in the person of the supposed Shaykh, with an Italian adventurer, one Giovanni Battista Boetti, born at Monferrat, where his father practised as a notary. Destined for the medical profession, the young Boetti ran away from home at the age of fifteen, and after various adventures and wanderings became a monk of the Dominican Order and found his way to the East as a missionary. Here in Asia Minor, in Palestine and Turkey, in Cyprus—and even, it is said, in St. Petersburg—he passed many years of wandering, filled with all sorts of amazing and even scandalous adventures, culminating in his appearance in Kurdistan as a Mussulman prophet, in which character he achieved such popularity as to lead armies of fanatics, many thousands strong, to the storming and sacking of such important towns as Bitlis, Akhaltsikh, Kars, and even Tiflis. But as, whatever the truth as to his origin, there is certainly none in the relation of these his supposed early military successes, it is safer, pending confirmation from other sources, to treat the revelations of the Turin archives as altogether the product of fantastic imagination.[1] The Russians, to whom alone we can look for authentic information as to his later career, lay

[1] *Curiosità e richerche di Storia Subalpina* (Torino, 1876), No. VI.

no claim to certainty in regard to his early life. Kazimbek, a learned Mussulman and a Russian subject, states that Shaykh-Mansour was an Orenburg Tartar who received his religious education in Boukhara, while the Russian military reports indicate Aldee in Tchetchnia as his birthplace and Daghestan as the locality where he studied the Koran. But as Potto points out,[1] this information was in all probability derived from the Tchetchens themselves, and may well have no better foundation than the natural desire of that fanatical race to attribute to themselves the honour of having produced so renowned a patriot and prophet. Certain it is, however, that he made his appearance at Aldee in 1785 preaching the Ghazavat, and soon acquired so dangerous an influence that Count Potiomkin found it necessary to send Colonel Pieri with a very considerable force to take him prisoner. The history of this expedition is that of others without number, in which the forests of Tchetchnia proved fatal to well-won military reputations, the grave of valiant men who in the open would have made short work of an enemy twice as numerous and no less brave than the Tchetchens. Pieri stormed Aldee and burnt it, but Shaykh-Mansour escaped; and on the return march the Russians were surrounded in the dense forest and all but annihilated, losing in killed alone their commander, seven other officers, and more than 600 men. Amongst the few who escaped was Prince Bagration, of the royal house of Georgia, then serving as a non-commissioned officer, but afterwards a distinguished general, and famous as one of the heroes of the "patriótic" war of 1812.[2] This success, naturally, brought fame to the prophet in every nook and corner of

[1] I. i. 149. See also General Khánikoff, the chief Russian authority on Muridism, in that bibliographical rarity, the *Sbornik Gazéti Kavkaz* (1847), vol. i.

[2] Prince Bagration was mortally wounded at Borodinó.

the Caucasus, and fresh adherents flocked to his banner. Marshalling an undisciplined army he marched on Kizliar, captured an outlying fort, but before reaching the town itself was attacked by the Cossacks in boggy ground, and, losing many of his men, retreated in disorder. This defeat shook for a time the confidence of his followers; but, undismayed, the Shaykh set to work to regain his influence, and calling on the Kabardáns to join him, proceeded to lay siege to Grigoriopolis, one of a chain of small forts in line between Mozdók and Vládikavkáz. The garrison held out stoutly, and reinforcements arriving, Shaykh-Mansour was again defeated, but soon after made a second attempt on Kizliar. This time the gardens, vineyards, and outlying houses were devastated, but the attack on the fortifications failed; once more the Tchetchens fled; yet this continued want of success, due mainly no doubt to their own disregard of all discipline, so little cooled their warlike ardour and faith in their leader's credentials from Allah, that soon afterwards he was able to oppose to the strong column sent against him by Potiomkin under Colonel Nagel[1] a motley force of many thousands of Tchetchens, Koumuiks, Kabardáns, and even mountaineers from Daghestan. The battle took place (2nd November) at Tátartoub, on the Térek, near the present Ossietine aoul, Elkhótovo, and was fought with desperation on either side. But in the end disciplined valour prevailed, and the tribesmen suffered a crushing defeat.[2]

As usual with semi-savage allies, defeat brought dis-

[1] Four battalions of infantry, two squadrons of dragoons, the Mozdók Cossack regiment, and one sotnia each of Don, Térek, and Grében Cossacks.

[2] All that remains of Tátartoub, then a large and flourishing aoul, is a lofty minaret, visible from the railway, and doubly worthy of preservation, if, as supposed, it marks the site not only of Shaykh-Mansour's defeat, but of Tamerlane's great victory over Toktamuish in 1395. For Shamil's appearance at this spot, see further on under the year 1846.

integration in its train. The Koumuiks retired to their eastern steppes, the Tchetchens and Daghestanis fell out and fought; the Kabardáns remained, for Tátartoub was in their own country; but they soon made peace with the victors, and two years later, on the declaration of war with Turkey, furnished a contingent to the Russian army which crossed the watershed and, defeating a Turkish detachment at Soudjuk-Kalé,[1] brought back in triumph two captured cannon. Shaykh-Mansour took refuge with the Turks on the Black Sea coast, and within a year had acquired no less influence and authority amongst the Tcherkess than formerly amongst the Tchetchens and other eastern tribes, a striking proof that, whatever his origin, whether Monferrat, Aldee, or Orenburg can rightly claim the honour of his birthplace, this forerunner of Moullá Muhammad and of Shamil was a born leader of men, endowed with some high qualities to a very remarkable degree. Under his inspiration and leadership the Tcherkess renewed their raids across the Koubán, burnt villages, carried off hundreds of prisoners and thousands of cattle and sheep, threatened Rostóff, and even approached Tcherkask, the headquarters of the Don Cossacks, while on the anniversary of the battle of Tátartoub they are said to have attacked and annihilated three Don Cossack regiments at the Bolduireff redout on the river Yei.

The Turkish war now broke out (1787), and Potiomkin, anxious to crush the Tcherkess and their redoubtable leader before dealing with the more serious enemy, sent three separate columns across the Koubán. The Russians were victorious in more than one desperate engagement, but Shaykh-Mansour always made good his escape. Again, the following year, he was defeated by General Tekelli,

[1] Near the present Novorosseesk.

the new viceroy, and, abandoned at last by the tribesmen, he took refuge once more with the Turks at Anápa.

Situated on the Tamán Peninsula, twenty miles from the mouth of the Koubán, Anápa was a maritime stronghold of great importance, and served as the basis of Turkish influence and power in the northern Caucasus, the starting-point whence religious and political propaganda made way amongst the Tcherkess and other neighbouring tribes. At first merely a minor fort and a place of no strategical value, Anápa, when the conquest of the Crimea cut off the Turkish communication by land with the Caucasus, acquired a very different significance, and with the aid of French engineers was converted into a first-class fortress, round the possession of which the present war between Russia and Turkey, in so far as concerned the Caucasus, mainly turned. Once ousted from Anápa, the Turks could no longer hope to take any direct part in the struggle, and though the religious influence of Stamboul would still count as an adverse factor, Russia might well expect that, no longer backed by armed force, it would dwindle and eventually die out. Anápa, therefore, became their main objective, and at the third attempt, thanks to the customary carelessness of the Turk, though even then only at very great cost and still greater risk, it fell. Tekelli's was the first expedition, in the autumn of 1788, but that cautious commander recognising that Anápa was too strong a place to take with the force at his disposal, and knowing full well that defeat in the circumstances would mean disaster, retired after reaching the walls, and recrossed the Koubán. His successor, General Bíbikoff, renewed the attempt the following year; but starting at the end of January, when the ice

on the river was already unsafe, yet the snow still encumbered the roads, he courted more than the dangers that Tekelli's prudence had alone enabled him to avoid. The Russian army, 8000 strong, succeeded in reaching Anápa; but, harassed all the way by the Tcherkess, and delayed not only by them but by the state of the roads, arrived at its destination in no state to deal successfully with a place of such strength. Nevertheless, after a successful battle fought under the walls against the garrison on the one side and the Tcherkess on the other, Bíbikoff gave orders to storm. The attempt failed, as might have been foreseen, and was followed by one of the most disastrous retreats recorded in Russian military annals. Provisions gave out, the weather was vile, the roads mere quagmires, and the unfortunate soldiers, perishing of cold and hunger, fought their way verst by verst, as best they could, back to the Koubán and to safety. The official relation puts the losses at no more than 1100 men, but according to other accounts, of the 8000 only 3000 returned whole, and these in a most pitiable state, bringing along with them 1000 sick and wounded, of whom but a small minority recovered. No wonder Catherine wrote to Potiomkin: "I think he must have been mad to keep the men forty days in the water, almost without bread. It's a wonder that any one survived. I conclude that few returned with him; let me know how many were lost, as to which I grieve greatly. If the troops showed insubordination it is not to be wondered at; rather must one admire their forty days' endurance." Bíbikoff was cashiered; the troops rewarded with a silver medal with the inscription, "For fidelity."

This miserable failure not only left open the entry to the Caucasus through Anápa, but encouraged the Turks to

combine operations against the demoralised Russians in the Koubán district with those in contemplation for the recovery of the Crimea. The latter half of the project was rendered abortive owing to the destruction of the Turkish flotilla in the straits of Yenikali by the Russian fleet under Admiral Oushakóff; but the seraskier, Batal Pasha, in the autumn of the same year, landed with his army on the Black Sea coast and marched inland, confident of victory, and calling to his standard all the tribesmen of the northern Caucasus. Count de Balmen, the newly-appointed commander-in-chief on the Russian side, lay sick to death (at Gheórghievsk), and was unable to direct operations. As a consequence even the larger bodies of troops failed to co-operate. One division of the eastern army corps lay inactive more than fifty miles away when the hostile forces met on the banks of the Podpáklea, while the whole of the western or Koubán army corps was concentrated on the Lába, and, as afterwards appeared, did not even know of the invasion. The result was that the whole weight of the Turkish attack fell on the single division of General Hermann, a Saxon by birth, whose dauntless valour was proverbial amongst the soldiers, but whose military career ended ingloriously at Bergen-op-Zoom, when, acting in concert with the English under the Duke of York, he was defeated and taken prisoner by the French. In the present instance he covered himself with glory, for with only 3600 men all told and six guns he utterly routed Batal Pasha at the head of an army estimated at from 40,000 to 50,000. The seraskier himself was taken prisoner. The Turkish losses were enormous, for "the Russians, owing to their small numbers, were unable to make any prisoners." The victors lost only 150 men killed and wounded. The remnant of the beaten army was met by Rosen with the

Koubán army corps on its retreat and "demolished."[1] De Balmen lived just long enough to receive news of Hermann's success.

The total failure of the Turkish expedition, prepared with so much care and on so large a scale, obliterated the impression created by Bíbikoff's disaster, and prepared the way for the third attempt on Anápa.

Count Paul Potiomkin, who had retained all this time his title of viceroy, though absent from the Caucasus since 1787, was succeeded towards the end of 1790 by Count Goudóvitch, who arrived at Gheórghievsk in the following January, and at the head of an army counting 15 battalions of infantry, 3000 sharpshooters, 54 squadrons of cavalry, and 2 Cossack regiments, with 50 guns, stormed Anápa on the 22nd of June. The garrison, numbering 15,000 men, was "annihilated," for "the victors, exasperated by long resistance and the losses they had sustained, thought only of vengeance," a phrase that recurs again and again in Russian military history and is repeated by Russian historians as the most natural thing in the world. The idea that the more valiant the foe the more respect he deserves, the greater mercy he should meet, never, it seems, enters their minds.

The Russian losses were indeed heavy—93 officers and 4000 men killed and wounded, about half the troops engaged. The trophies taken included 83 cannon, 12 mortars, and 130 banners; but a prize more valuable still, perhaps, was Shaykh-Mansour, who, the life and soul of the defence, was one of the few prisoners taken. He was sent first to St. Petersburg and, it is said, to Tsarskoe

[1] The name of Hermann is almost forgotten in the Caucasus, while, strange to say, the site of his great victory is now occupied by a Cossack stanitsa bearing the name of Batal Pasha (Batalpashinsk).

Sieló for the Empress's inspection, and was then immured in the Soloviétsk monastery on an island in the White Sea, where he died a few years later.[1]

Goudóvitch, having finished with the Turks, turned his attention to the further strengthening of the Lines, and obtained permission to settle large numbers of the Don Cossacks in new stanitsas, from the upper waters of the Kouma and the Koubán to the confluence of the latter river with the Lába. But the Don Cossacks, ready as they ever were to fight, had no mind permanently to leave the districts occupied for generations by their forefathers. They broke out into open insubordination, and a thousand or two made their way home in defiance of their commander-in-chief's orders. Even when shown the Empress's oukase they refused obedience; regular troops had to be sent to restore order; and it was not until three years later (1795) that a thousand families were at last transplanted to six new stanitsas.

Meantime took place Agha Muhammad's incursion into Georgia and monstrous sack of Tiflis. War with Persia became inevitable, and Goudóvitch was ordered to commence operations at once with the means at his disposal. Before, however, he could complete his preparations Catherine appointed Count Valerian Zóuboff to the command of the army in the field, and Goudóvitch, deeply mortified, feigned sickness and begged to be recalled. The Empress consented, and solaced him with the title of general-in-chief and a present of 1800 "souls."

[1] The last of the letters published by Professor Ottino bears date "Soloviétsk, September 15, 1798," and is signed "Giovanni Baptista Boetti, Preacher." In it he begs forgiveness of his venerable father.

CHAPTER IV

1796–1806

Persian campaign of 1796—Derbend taken again—Russian successes—Death of Catherine—Paul orders retreat to the Line of the Térek, but is compelled to interfere again—Incorporation of Georgia—Alexander I.—Tsitsiánoff—The Tsaritsa Marie—Death of Lázareff—Tsitsiánoff's policy and successes—The whole of Georgia reunited after four hundred years—Death of Gouliákoff—War with Persia—Heroic conduct of Russians—Baku—Death of Tsitsiánoff

THE campaign against Persia in 1796 need not detain us long, for, though equally successful, it had no more influence on the future of the Caucasus than that of Peter the Great and his lieutenants three-quarters of a century earlier, and for the same reason. Now, as then, the death of one ruler and the caprice of another led to the abandonment of whole provinces won with astonishing ease by comparatively small bodies of men. The great Empress died, and Paul, who bore no goodwill to his mother or her policy, made haste to relinquish Catherine's Persian conquests as completely as Anne had relinquished those of Peter. But, to preserve the sequence of events, we may briefly indicate the course of the war, which, if it did nothing else, confirmed the Russians in their utter contempt for the Persians in the field, and the latter in their wholesome fear of Moscovite power and prowess.

Count Valerian Zóuboff, the new viceroy and commander-in-chief, was the younger brother of Catherine's favourite, Count Platon Zóuboff, but while owing his selection mainly to this fact, he justified it by his successful conduct of extensive and hazardous operations,

though the amount of serious fighting was not very great. Count Zóuboff was at this time only twenty-four years of age, but he had already served with distinction under Souvóroff in Turkey and in Poland. He was adored by the soldiery for his youthful dash and brilliant courage, and officers of rank and name were willing enough to serve under him, and put freely at his disposal their greater knowledge and experience.

Derbend, ever the first objective, offered, this time, some resistance, but surrendered at discretion on the 10th May after the storming of an outlying tower and several days' bombardment of the town and fortress. The khan, Shaykh Ali, a youth of eighteen, was made prisoner, but soon afterwards effected a most daring escape in view of the whole Russian army, an event that was to cost it somewhat dear. Advanced corps under Rakhmánoff and Boulgákoff next occupied Baku and Koubá respectively, and Zóuboff, following with the main army, subdued in succession the khanates of Shirván, with its capital Shemakhá, of Shekeen, and of Karabágh. All this took time, and an unfortunate affair in the mountains, near Alpáni, where Shaykh Ali, who had found an ally in the Khan of Kazi-Koumoukh, waylaid and cut to pieces a strong Russian detachment under Colonel Bakounin, caused more delay.[1] But before the end of the year Gandja, with the capital of the same name, afterwards Elizavétpol, the Mougan steppe, and all the territory along the Caspian to the mouth of the Koura, was in the occupation of the Russian troops, and the Persian province of Azerbijan[2] lay open before them. The Shah himself, meantime, was busy elsewhere, or the

[1] Yermóloff, afterwards so famous, begged to be allowed to accompany Bakounin, but in vain.

[2] Also spelt Aderbijan, and in various other ways.

invaders would, doubtless, have met with more serious opposition.

Then came the news of Catherine's death, and with it orders from Paul to put an end to the campaign and retire to the Line of the Térek. Zóuboff, in no favour with the new Tsar, was superseded by Count Goudóvitch, from whom he had so recently taken over the command, and many of his subordinates, including Yermóloff, rather than meet that capricious and unpopular veteran, made their way overland to Astrakhan, and so home. The conquered khanates recovered their semi-independence, Persia her suzerainty.

It may be noted in passing that though the invasion and devastation of Georgia by Agha Muhammad Shah[1] was the ostensible and very sufficient justification for the war thus hastily ended, it is said also to have been undertaken in connection with Count Platon Zóuboff's great plan, approved by the Empress, for the seizure of Constantinople and the revival of the Greek Empire under the protection of Russia, and the selection of the younger Zóuboff as commander-in-chief lends colour to the statement. Had Catherine lived longer the history of Europe might have run a different course.

The Emperor Paul not only reversed his mother's policy, but put aside the galaxy of warriors and statesmen distinguished by her favours—and for the most part, be it admitted, by their own merits—who had contributed to the success of that policy by their qualities and their actions, for it is pre-eminently the mark of great rulers to be served by great men. Tsitsiánoff, a Georgian of princely rank, whose family for two generations had been

[1] Assassinated by two of his servants at Shoushá in 1797. Civil war ensued, ending with the establishment on the throne of Feth Ali.

settled in Russia, and who had already distinguished himself in the Caucasus and elsewhere, shared the fate of his commander-in-chief, Count Zóuboff, and so many others. While Paul lived he remained without employment, if not actually in disgrace. But with the accession of Alexander I. all was once more changed. The men of Catherine's day, or many of them, were restored to favour, and Tsitsiánoff was appointed inspector-general of the Line and commander-in-chief in Georgia. This was in September 1802, and in the short time that elapsed before his premature death he did more than all his predecessors, taken together, for the establishment on a permanent basis of Russian domination in Transcaucasia.

Meantime the force of circumstances soon compelled Paul to turn his most serious attention to the affairs of that province. In the summer of 1800 King George XII., who had succeeded to the throne on the death of Irakli II. in 1798, received letters from the Shah, Feth Ali, couched in violent terms, demanding that his eldest son be sent to Teheran as a hostage, and threatening invasion in the event of refusal.[1] At the same time a Persian army began to assemble on the frontier. The king, encouraged by the Russian envoy, Kovalensky, firmly refused compliance, and Paul I., on learning what was taking place, ordered General Knorring, commanding the troops in the northern Caucasus, to prepare at once an expeditionary force of 15 squadrons and 9 infantry battalions together with artillery, and cross the mountains into Georgia the moment he became convinced that the threatened invasion of that country was really imminent. Meantime he was to inform King George of the Emperor's determination to protect him.[2]

[1] Akti, i. p. 105.

[2] *Idem*, p. 106.

In July the king's brother, known as the Tsariévitch Alexander, turned traitor and fled, an event of no little importance, for during many subsequent years of a romantically adventurous life the fugitive prince was the arch-enemy of Russia,[1] continually stirring up Persia and the smaller native States to attack Georgia, or the latter to revolt against its new masters. It was at his instigation that Feth Ali now crossed the Aras, while Omar, the Avar khan, came down from his mountain home to invade Georgia from the north. The Persians thought better of it, and retired without venturing to provoke a war with Russia; Omar, less prudent or more generous, reached the junction of the Yora and Alazán Rivers, only to suffer total defeat at the hands of General Lázareff (7th October 1800).[2] For the moment all danger was averted; but George XII., who lay dying of dropsy in Tiflis, seeing no hope for his country save in the strong protecting hand of Russia, sent an embassy to St. Petersburg begging Paul to accept once for all the Georgian crown. Paul's manifesto in compliance was published on the 18th of December, and ten days later George died.[3]

Tsitsiánoff was a man of indomitable courage and extreme energy, but these were qualifications too common in those strenuous days to suffice in themselves for any great distinction. He was also endowed with administrative ability of a high order, coupled with an aggressive, overbearing spirit, that served him admirably in his dealings with the native rulers, Christian as well as Mussulman,

[1] Akti, i. p. 107.

[2] *Idem*, p. 168. The Lesghians (Avars and other Daghestanis), who numbered 15,000, left 1500 dead on the field. The Russian loss, out of a total of 1224 men of all arms, was quite insignificant. The Georgian cavalry distinguished itself by its valour and ferocity. Very few of the wounded made their escape, but amongst them was the Tsariévitch.

[3] Akti, i. p. 188.

though probably enough it contributed both to his own tragic fate and to that of one of his most valued subordinates. He was possessed, moreover, of a biting wit, freely exercised on all who roused his animosity or contempt, without distinction of persons; and his satirical sayings and writings, if they made him powerful enemies, yet taken with his soldierly qualities and care for those who served him well, secured him the love, the adoration almost, of the army.

In the Polish war he dispersed the partisan bands of Prince Sapieha, stormed Vilna, and totally defeated Grabóvsky, winning by these achievements the flattering notice of Souvóroff, who, in an order of the day, called on his troops to "fight energetically like the brave Tsitsiánoff." But all his qualities and abilities would hardly have availed for the attainment of his actual successes in Transcaucasia had it not been for that birthright which gave him at once the power of understanding, as no Russian could, his own fellow-countrymen, and an inherited influence over them. As a Georgian, and the scion of a princely race, he had that country's best interests at heart; but, born and bred in Russia and serving the Tsar, he was in honour bound to devote his energies and abilities to the furtherance of Russia's aspirations, the attainment of Russia's political aims. To many Georgians it must have seemed, as we know it did to members of their royal house, that patriotism in this case must necessarily war with duty. But Tsitsiánoff held otherwise, and the impartial historian can neither question his motives nor impeach his judgment. He found his unhappy country, untaught by the bitter past, still a prey to internal dissension, still, after the oppression of centuries and the recent horrors of Agha Muhammad's incursion, at the

mercy of Tartar, Turk, and Persian the moment the grey-coated Moscovite soldiers should turn their backs at the caprice of an autocratic master. Convinced, therefore, that the safety and future well-being of the Kartvel race depended on the reunion of its component parts under Russian rule, he exerted himself whole-heartedly for the extension and consolidation of that rule; and in the brief time allowed him, by a series of able and energetic administrative and military measures evolved order out of chaos within; reunited, after a separation of four hundred years, Mingrelia and Imeritia to Georgia proper; and extended Russia's sway from the Caspian to the Black Sea.

Tsitsiánoff's first care was to put into execution his projected expulsion of the members of the royal family, for which he had obtained the imperial sanction before leaving St. Petersburg, and amongst them of the Tsaritsa Marie, a near relation of his own—born, indeed, Princess Tsitsiánoff—a harsh measure, but a necessary one if an end were to be put to the intrigues of which the palace at Tiflis was then a hotbed. Marie was the widow of George XII., and neither she nor her children could reconcile themselves to the altered state of their fortunes. The Russians, as we have seen, had once and again withdrawn their forces after more or less prolonged periods of occupation. Their power even now was by no means firmly established, and it was not unnatural that the widowed Tsaritsa should dream of seeing in her own person, or in that of one of her sons, the dynasty that had ruled Georgia for centuries once more in possession of the throne. The resulting state of things may well have seemed intolerable to Tsitsiánoff, for not only was the whole country kept in perpetual unrest, but intrigues with the Court of Persia, whither some of the princes had fled,

threatened danger from without in addition to the discord obtaining within.

The Russian commander-in-chief, whose preconceived opinion was but confirmed by all that he learnt on arrival, acted with his usual promptitude and firmness. The most piteous entreaties failed to move him from his purpose, and when the Tsaritsa feigned illness, he ordered General Lázareff to effect her arrest, while General Toutchkoff secured the persons of her elder sons. It was her intention to leave Tiflis and seek refuge elsewhere; but early on the morning of her projected flight, Lázareff entered the palace and informed her of Tsitsiánoff's decision. The Tsaritsa was in bed, and it may be imagined with what outraged feelings this woman and sovereign, in whose veins ran the passionate southern blood, met the intrusion of such a visitor charged with such a mission. She refused to budge, and Lázareff, finding argument of no avail, left the room with the intention of arranging for her removal by force. Hardly, however, was he outside the door when the noise of desperate struggling induced his return. It then appeared that a son and a daughter of the ex-queen, drawing their *kindjals*, had made a violent onslaught on a subordinate officer left by Lázareff on guard. Lázareff himself rushed up to the bedside, bidding Queen Marie call off her children, instead of which she dealt him, with a dagger hitherto concealed under the bedclothes, a blow in the side which proved immediately fatal. This tragic affair naturally created an immense sensation in Tiflis and throughout Georgia. But Tsitsiánoff's end was gained. The Tsaritsa, with most of her family, was secured and deported as a common criminal to Russia, where she spent the rest of a long life; at first, for seven years, immured in a nunnery

at Vorónezh, afterwards as an exile but in comparative freedom at Moscow. She died in 1850 at the age of eighty, and was buried with royal honours at Tiflis, forty-seven years after the crime which her countrymen may be pardoned for regarding as, at worst, excusable.

The viceroy was now free to pursue his plans and carry out the new system of government already matured in his own mind, a system radically opposed to that of his predecessors. His own people, no longer disturbed by the intrigues of the ex-reigning family, might be thankful to obtain comparative safety and rest under the ægis of Russia and the wise and vigorous administration of their own most distinguished countryman. The Tartar and Persian khans were treated in a way infinitely better suited to their semi-barbarous comprehension than the alternate bullying and cajolery to which they had grown accustomed, without thereby acquiring either respect or affection for their Moscovite masters. "Fear and greed are the two mainsprings of everything that takes place here," wrote Tsitsiánoff to the Emperor Alexander I. "These people's only policy is force, and their rulers' mainstay valour, together with the money requisite to hire Daghestanis. For this reason I adopt a system of rule contrary to that hitherto prevailing, and instead of paying, as it were, tribute in the shape of subsidies and gifts intended to mitigate mountain manners, I myself demand tribute of them." His proclamations and letters addressed to the native khans were drawn up in language far more forcible than polite. "Is it reasonable," he writes, "for the fly to enter into negotiations with the eagle? Your bullet won't kill five men: my cannon, with ball or shrapnel, will cut down thirty at a time." The refusal of the free Djáro-Bielokáni tribesmen to

deliver up those of the Georgian princes who had taken refuge amongst them was made the excuse for an expedition resulting in the annexation of their territory, thereby to some extent guaranteeing Georgia against the raids of the Daghestan mountaineers. Severe punishment meted out to those of the latter who had settled in the neighbourhood of Akhaltsikh kept them in check until the following year, when, to the number of 600, they were disarmed and sent back to their native fastnesses—not, however, before they had inflicted severe loss on the Russians, one whole detachment being literally annihilated. Western Georgia now breathed more freely, and Tsitsiánoff's next step was to annex Mingrelia, which, as already stated, had been declared independent of Turkey by the treaty of Kutchuk-Kainardji. Poti, however, the key to the whole principality, had remained in the hands of the Turks, and served as the principal centre for the collection and deportation of slaves, numbers of whom were Mingrelians. On the other hand, the rulers of Imeritia carried on perpetual warfare with their western brothers, and at last, instigated, no doubt, by Tsitsiánoff himself, the dadian,[1] following the example of Georgia, sought Russian protection, and Mingrelia was formally proclaimed a Russian province. Imeritia was now isolated, with the Russians on either side, and could no longer hope to maintain its independence. With a very bad grace the Tsar Solomon submitted to the inevitable, and his kingdom likewise was annexed by Russia on the 25th April 1804. Thus the ancient Iberian monarchy, broken up by the testamentary dispositions of the Tsar Alexander I. of Georgia four hundred years previously, was at last reunited under the sceptre of Alexander I.

[1] The title of the rulers of Mingrelia.

of Russia, whose sway in Transcaucasia now extended from sea to sea, though Baku for the present retained its independence. These successes, diplomatic rather than military, brought, however, serious trouble in their train. The Ottoman Porte viewed the absorption of the Christian States by her old enemy with growing concern, and a Russian expedition to Abkhasia, in the course of which possession was taken of the Turkish fort of Anáklia, situated on the Black Sea coast, though Tsitsiánoff hastened to disavow his subordinate and even apologise for his utterly indefensible action, filled the measure of Turkish exasperation, and led ultimately in 1807 to one more in the long series of Russo-Turkish wars.

Meantime, in other directions, the Russian commander-in-chief continued his aggressive policy at the expense of the Persian and Tartar khans. Thus Gandja, on the pretence that from the time of Tamára it had really belonged to Georgia, though long lost to that country owing to the weakness of her rulers, was invaded, the capital city of the same name stormed after a month's siege (2nd January 1804), Djavat Khan killed, and the khanate annexed. "Five hundred Tartars shut themselves up in a mosque, meaning, perhaps, to surrender, but an Armenian told the soldiers that there were some Daghestanis amongst them, and the name was a death-signal for all, so great is the exasperation of your Majesty's troops against those people for their raids into Georgia and the robber war they carry on,"[1] but all the women in the town were spared—a rare occurrence in Caucasian warfare, and due to Tsitsiánoff's strict injunctions. As evidence of his determination that Gandja should henceforth and for ever belong to Russia, he re-

[1] Tsitsiánoff's report to the Emperor: Akti, ix. (supplement), p. 920.

named the city Elizavétpol, in honour of the Empress, the name it now bears.

But while success crowned the expeditions led by Tsitsiánoff in person, one of his bravest lieutenants, General Gouliákoff, was killed and his forces compelled to retreat by the turbulent Djáro-Bielokánis. Then the commander-in-chief's rage knew no bounds. To the rebels he wrote: "The blood in my veins boils like water in a kettle and my limbs tremble with rage;" to the Sultan of Elisou, their ally: "Shameless sultan with the soul of a Persian—so you still dare to write to me! Yours is the soul of a dog and the understanding of an ass, yet you think to deceive me with your specious phrases. Know that until you become a loyal vassal of my Emperor I shall only long to wash my boots in your blood;" and to others in a similar strain, threatening all with fire and sword. The result proved how well he understood the native character. Elisou, Samoukh, and the Djáro-Bielokánis submitted, took the oath of allegiance to Russia, and were forced to pay tribute. "Our prince," said Kariághin, "making music with bombshells and bullets, constrains every khan to dance to his piping."

Tsitsiánoff's policy, however, was open to one very grave objection. Had the native princelings stood alone his methods, leaving the moral question aside, would have been beyond cavil, his success unqualified. But the two great Muhammadan Powers could not fail to take alarm at the rapid progress of Russia; moreover, Gandja and others of the khanates were still counted as vassal States by the Shah, however shadowy his suzerainty may have become; and as Turkey in the west, so Persia in the east soon saw that war with Russia was inevitable. In 1804 Tsitsiánoff, with about 10,000 men and 20 guns, marched on Eriván, another

nominally independent khanate at that time actually threatened by a Persian army,[1] but, for once, failed. The Persian force under Abbas Mirza, heir to the throne, numbering 30,000 men and 6 guns, was beaten in the field (7th June 1804); a series of most brilliant feats of arms covered with glory the names of Portniághin, Montresor, and others; but Eriván held out, and a wet autumn, making transport difficult, coupled with other unfortunate circumstances, compelled the Russians to raise the siege and effect a perilous retreat to Georgia. Eriván then opened its gates to the Persians.

Tsitsiánoff now resumed his diplomatic campaign, and succeeded in securing the submission and allegiance of the Khans of Karabágh (capital city Shoushá) and Shekeen (capital city Noukhá). A Persian army of 20,000 men led by Abbas Mirza entered the first-named khanate, but wasted its strength in the vain effort to overcome the resistance of a mere handful of Russians under the leadership of the heroic Kariághin, with Kotliarévsky to help him, whose feats of arms sound truly legendary. For three weeks, though frequently surrounded, he defied the whole Persian army, defeating it in pitched battles on three separate occasions; not only that, he stormed and captured various fortified places, and finally, with a force reduced to 100 men, cut his way through to the commander-in-chief, on whose approach the Persians beat a hasty retreat. The Shah himself, Feth Ali, who with 40,000 men had crossed the Aras, likewise thought better of his proposed meeting with Tsitsiánoff, and retired without fighting.[2]

So ended the campaign of 1805, noted in Russian mili-

[1] Monteith, "Kars and Erzeroum," p. 37.

[2] Monteith, pp. 41–45. His account of this campaign is summary, and differs in details from that of the Russians; but there is no variance as to the main facts.

tary history for the valiant and almost incredible deeds performed by handfuls of men opposed to whole armies.

Tsitsiánoff's career, however, was destined to be no less short than brilliant. He had set himself the task of establishing Russian sovereignty firmly and finally on both the Caspian and Black Seas, realising that on no other condition could her position in Transcaucasia be safeguarded against Persia on the one hand, Turkey on the other. Failing in an attempt to negotiate the cession of Poti, he built the fort of Redout Kalé on the Mingrelian coast, and then determined to obtain possession of Baku. The Caspian flotilla, carrying an expeditionary corps, the whole under the command of General Zavaleeshin, laid siege to the city by sea and land, but being threatened by the horde of the Khan of Koubá, the Russian commander beat an inglorious retreat. Thereupon Tsitsiánoff, with an army of 1600 men and 10 guns, took the matter in hand himself, though so worn out with fever and the fatigues of his previous campaigns that frequently he had to be lifted from his horse and laid to rest on the bare ground. His indomitable courage, however, never flagged. With characteristic energy of speech he informed Husayn-Kouli-Khan that he came with the firm determination of capturing the town or dying under its walls. After a difficult march through the mountain khanate of Shirván, which he annexed on the way, Tsitsiánoff crossed the frontier of Husayn's dominions on the 30th January 1806, and demanded the surrender of his capital. The khan feigned submission; the 8th February was fixed as the day on which the Russians were to take possession of Baku; the Russian commander-in-chief, accompanied only by a small escort, approached to within half a mile of the walls, where the elders of the town met him and delivered up the keys,

begging for some assurance as to the khan's personal safety. Tsitsiánoff replied that he would be glad to meet once more his old acquaintance, and returned the keys so that Husayn might re-deliver them in person. The latter now rode out with a mounted escort, and Tsitsiánoff advanced to meet him, accompanied only by his adjutant, Prince Eristoff, and one Cossack. The little party had no sooner come within reach than the treacherous natives rushed at them, firing their pistols. In a moment all was over; Tsitsiánoff fell dead; Prince Eristoff met the same fate immediately after. The guns mounted on the walls of the town opened fire on the Russian army, and Zavaleeshin, upon whom the command devolved, for a second time showed his pusillanimity. Careless of Russian honour, he thought only of securing his own safety and that of his men; and instead of avenging the infamous murder of his chief, retreated by way of the Caspian, first to the Shamkhal's dominions, and finally to the northern Line.

Tsitsiánoff's head and hands were cut off and sent in triumph to Teheran; his body was buried under the walls of Baku, to be disinterred later on when that city was finally captured by the Russians under Boulgákoff, and, eventually, in 1811 committed to its last resting-place with every circumstance of funeral pomp and solemnity in the venerable church of the Sion monastery in Tiflis.

Potto sums up Tsitsiánoff's achievements and character as follows: "In the short time he passed there (in Transcaucasia) he managed to completely alter the map of the country. He found it composed of minutely divided, independent Muhammadan States leaning upon Persia, namely, the khanates of Baku, Shirván, Shekeen, Karabágh, Gandja, and Eriván, to which must be added the territory of the Djáro-Bielokáni Lesghians, the pashalik of Akhaltsikh,

and the Turkish fortresses situated on the shores of the Black Sea. All these khanates, territories, and fortified places constituted a hostile ring, encircling on three sides the Georgian countries, of which Mingrelia and Imeritia warred not only with each other, but with Georgia proper, while the latter was further torn by the dissensions of her own princes. Three years passed, and Tsitsiánoff left Transcaucasia in extent almost as it now is, peaceful, moreover, and submissive from sea to sea. And all this he accomplished at a time when Russia, occupied with the preparation[1] of great wars, could do little for the Caucasus, when a single fresh regiment was considered a vast reinforcement.

"Tsitsiánoff was not merely a most distinguished military leader, to whom is due the spirit of our Caucasian soldiery, but an administrator of exceptional rank. Under him the road from the Line to Georgia was commenced,[2] Vládikavkáz rebuilt, and a regular postal service established over the mountains. Nor amidst his uninterrupted series of campaigns and battles did he cease to contrive how to overcome the ignorance in which the whole population of Georgia was then sunk. He took steps towards the establishment of schools in Tiflis, urged the sending for teachers of the Russian language, the supply of books, &c.

"At the same time, it might be said with truth that 'He was a man indeed.' His humane care for his military comrades presents an example both rare and touching. . . . Endowed with uncommon abilities, valour, penetration, and strength of will, Tsitsiánoff held high and proudly the banner of Russia, and left behind him in the annals of Caucasian warfare a glorious and immortal memory."

[1] And conduct—for Austerlitz was fought 2nd December 1805.

[2] As a matter of fact, a road, if a rough one, had, as already stated, been made by Potiomkin in 1783.

CHAPTER V

1806–1816

Derbend captured for the fourth and last time—Goudóvitch again—Troubles on all sides—Niebolseen's victory—War with Turkey—Anápa retaken—Goudóvitch repulsed at Akhalkaláki and Eriván—Capture of Poti—Imeritia annexed—Unification of Christians—Paulucci's victory under the walls of Akhalkaláki—Dangerous position of the Russians—Combined action of Persia and Turkey—It comes to nothing—Kotliarévsky takes Akhalkaláki—Russian disasters—Rebellion in Georgia—Its suppression—Paulucci recalled—General Rteeshtcheff—Peace with Turkey—Russia's conquests abandoned—Kotliarévsky's victory at Aslandouz—Lenkorán—Peace with Persia—Russian conquests

HAD Tsitsiánoff lived, it is possible that he would have maintained internal order in Transcaucasia, notwithstanding the Persian and Turkish wars. His death, coupled with the retreat of Zavaleeshin, gave the signal for a recrudescence of trouble both in the reunited provinces of the ancient Iberian kingdom and in the newly acquired native khanates. The Georgian princes found in it a fresh opportunity to pursue their personal ambitions; the Muhammadan khans renewed hope of independence; while Turkey and Persia were only too ready to encourage all who on any pretext, or for any reason, were hostile to Russia. General Glazenap, however, who commanded on the Line, did all that lay in his power to counteract the disastrous impressions produced by the commander-in-chief's death and Zavaleeshin's unfortunate withdrawal from Baku. Having reported these untoward events to St. Petersburg and received instructions to take command of all the forces, he proceeded to organise an expedition against Derbend and Baku, taking such good care to keep his objective a

secret, that none of the native rulers suspected it until too late to bar his progress. Passing unmolested through the country of the Aksais, the Russians, a mere handful, crossed the Soulák and came to a halt under the walls of Tarkou. The Shamkhal of that day held the nominal rank of general-adjutant in the service of the Tsar, and Glazenap, knowing his own weakness and the vainglorious nature of the native princes, profited by this circumstance to win by flattery the support of one who, if unpropitiated, might easily render the expedition abortive. Professing to regard the Shamkhal as his superior officer, the Russian general made him his report, and by this treatment so won upon his feelings, that after feasting Glazenap and all his officers, and offering the former the choice of his harem, he agreed to take part in the campaign, and, as a matter of fact, reinforced the Russians with a contingent of cavalry. Knowing, moreover, that the ruler of Derbend, Shaykh Ali, was extremely unpopular with his own subjects, the Shamkhal sent emissaries to foment their discontent, and with such success, that no sooner had the Russians set foot on the borders of the khanate than a rebellion broke out, resulting in the flight of the khan and the surrender of his capital without a shot being fired. It was thus that Derbend, on the 22nd June 1806, for the fourth and last time fell into the hands of Russia, who, having always the command of the sea, ought, from the day when it first surrendered to Peter the Great, never to have abandoned it.

The way was now clear for the further advance to Baku, which khanate, as well as intervening Koubá, hastened to offer submission. But Glazenap, like Peter before him, had to wait the arrival of the Caspian flotilla, and meantime an event occurred disastrous to his fortunes. The veteran Count Goudóvitch was once more appointed

commander-in-chief in the Caucasus, and immediately on his arrival at Geórghievsk sent peremptory orders to Glazenap to await in Derbend the arrival of General Boulgákoff, to whom he entrusted the carrying out of all further operations. Goudóvitch, with old age, had become capricious, tyrannical, and vain to a degree, while losing to a great extent those military qualities which had formerly won him renown; and his treatment of Glazenap, against whom he appears to have nourished some spite, was both harsh and unjust. The latter, however, in the most chivalrous way voluntarily placed himself under Boulgákoff's orders, and thenceforth in a subordinate position took part in the campaign he had himself planned and so successfully initiated. There was no fighting, however, as both Baku and Koubá surrendered at discretion; and having in vain advised a further advance on Eriván, this gallant officer retired in dudgeon, and though afterwards for some time stationed at Gheórghievsk as chief of the celebrated Neezhni-Nóvgorod Dragoons, his fighting career was at an end.

The new commander-in-chief's failings soon made themselves felt. The state of affairs was such as to demand that whoever held the reins of government should, above all things, be prompt to decide, energetic in action; yet promptitude and energy Goudóvitch no longer possessed. A very sea of troubles beset him. On the northern Line and in Ossetia the plague was raging, and there were not enough troops to stamp it out. The Ossietines rebelled. The Kabardáns and the tribes beyond the Koubán took the opportunity to raid the Russian settlements, the latter penetrating even as far north as Stávropol. In Transcaucasia Tsar Solomon of Imeritia openly defied his new masters. Husayn-Kouli-Khan of Baku, who had taken refuge amongst the Persians, together with the Georgian Tsariévitch Alex-

ander, invaded Georgia from Eriván. A Persian army, 20,000 strong, marched on Shoushá at the call of the Khan Ibrahim, and on the death of the latter at the hands of the Russians—accidentally, as they professed [1]—the Khan of Shekeen threw off his allegiance; while the ever-turbulent Djáro-Bielokánis, who had made a desperate but abortive attack on the Russian fort Alexandrovsky, on the Alazán, the previous year, revolted once more. When it came to fighting, the Russians as usual were victorious. General Niebolseen, with only his own regiment and the battalions of Kariághin and Lissaniévitch, 1600 bayonets in all, totally defeated the Persians in the Khanashin defile; then marched on Noukhá, the capital of Shekeen, and took it by storm; while in no direction did the enemy gain any real success. Comparative order was restored. The rebellious khans were deposed and other native rulers appointed in their stead, a measure severely condemned by Russian military writers, who would have had Goudóvitch take this opportunity of reducing the khanates to Russian provinces. But war with Turkey was now inevitable, and Goudóvitch, knowing that with Napoleon threatening the Vistula he could expect no reinforcements from European Russia, may well have been impelled to this policy by the paramount importance of conciliating the Persians, with whom he now concluded an armistice.

War was declared with Turkey in 1807, and the first-fruits to Russia was the recapture of Anápa, which surrendered this time with scarce an attempt at defence to a squadron commanded by Admiral Poustoshkin. For the next five years, while Goudóvitch remained in command, Russia held her own, though with difficulty. Beyond her borders one failure followed another, and fell short of

[1] But see Monteith, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

disaster thanks only to the heroism of subordinate officers and the men they inspired and led, coupled with the fatally incompetent conduct of the foe.

Leaving Niebolseen with a small force to watch the Persian frontier, the commander-in-chief led his main forces against Akhaltsikh, while subsidiary columns marched on Kars and Poti. But Goudóvitch himself was defeated with a loss of 900 men and three guns in an attempt to storm the minor, yet important, fortress of Akhalkaláki, and retreated into Georgia. The other two attempts likewise failed, and the Turks took the offensive; but after three abortive attacks on the small force under General Niesvietáeff at Goumri (Alexandropol), were completely defeated by Goudóvitch, who had hastened to his rescue, thanks mainly, be it said, to the heroic conduct of the first-named general. Goudóvitch was rewarded with the rank of field-marshal, and such was the effect of the victory that the Shah, though nominally still at war with Russia, made haste to congratulate him. The ensuing negotiations for peace, however, took so unsatisfactory a course, in spite of the friendly efforts of Napoleon's envoy at the Persian Court, General Gardanne,[1] that Goudóvitch in September 1808 made an attempt on Eriván. To what extremes of folly and injustice the vanity of old age had brought him is shown by his proclamation on this occasion to the inhabitants. "Do not rely," he writes, "on the former unsuccessful blockade of your fortress. The circumstances then and now differ *in toto*. At that time the leader was Prince Tsitsiánoff, a young general, not very experienced in martial affairs, whereas now it is I who command—I, who for more than thirty years am

[1] Akti, iii. pp. 471 *et seq.* Peace had meantime been concluded between France and Russia at Tilsit.

accustomed to lead powerful Russian armies." Just as at Akhalkaláki an attempt at storming failed, heavy losses were suffered, and retreat became imperative. The conditions, owing mainly to frost, snow, and impassable roads, were onerous in the extreme; a thousand men, mostly sick or wounded, were frozen to death; the whole army seemed doomed to destruction, and owed its escape solely to the brilliant victory gained by Niebolseen and Lissanié-vitch over a vast horde of Persians who barred the one line of retreat. Goudóvitch reached Tiflis worn out and utterly dispirited; his two years' rule, heralded by the high-handed supersession of Glazenap, and inspired by that vainglorious spirit not unfrequently noticeable in Russian military leaders, had proved a miserable failure, and the Emperor had no hesitation in accepting his proffered resignation.

With the advent of Count Tormázoff, Goudóvitch's successor, in April 1809, the Russian position improved. Poti, for the first time, was captured by a brilliant feat of arms, the hero of which, Prince Orbeliáni, was one of the many Georgians of illustrious family who devoted their valour and talents whole-heartedly to the service of Russia. Moreover, Tsar Solomon was deposed and Imeritia finally annexed; while Gouria and Abkhasia, with Soukhoum Kalé, voluntarily joined their fate to that of Russia, thus completing the unification of the Christian races (1810). In the main theatre of the war the threatened invasion of Georgia by the Turks was averted by the brilliant victory gained under the walls of Akhalkaláki by the Marquis Paulucci, an Italian in the Russian service. The Persians invaded and devastated Talish, but were eventually beaten back ingloriously by Tartar militia supported by General Niebolseen. Paulucci's great victory is thus described by

the Emperor Alexander I. in an order of the day: "The victory gained on the borders of Kartalinia on the 5th of September over 10,000 Turks and Persians is one hardly possible to any but Russian troops. Two battalions of the 9th and 15th Sharpshooters, with two light guns and a Cossack contingent, march for three days in cold and wet weather over mountains covered with snow, and such that the natives themselves deemed them impassable. At midnight they make their approach so quietly and in such good order that the enemy's sentinels discover them only when within a hundred yards of their camp. Their unlooked-for appearance, the sudden volley from musketry and cannon, followed by a headlong attack with the bayonet, spread hopeless panic amongst the enemy. The valiant Russian soldiers rush through the camp from one end to the other, and the terrified Turks and Persians seek safety in flight."

This defeat, which had the happy effect of setting the allies by the ears, was followed by an attempt on the great Turkish stronghold Akhaltsikh (November 1810), but, after one brilliant victory gained under the walls, Tormásoff retired, owing to an outbreak of plague amongst the troops. The following year he was recalled at his own request, and in September the command in Transcaucasia devolved on Paulucci, General Rteeshtcheff being appointed to the northern Line.[1]

The above successes notwithstanding, the year 1811 saw the Russians once more reduced to a position of danger, which was to reach its culminating point in 1812.

The war with Napoleon was already foreseen, and,

[1] In 1812 Tormásoff covered himself with glory at Kobrin, where he gained a brilliant victory, involving the destruction of the Saxon contingent, the first success of the Russian army in the "Patriotic War."

secretly, three regiments were withdrawn from the already insufficient army of the Caucasus. The Mussulman hostility both north and south of the mountains grew more intense, the Turkish and Persian wars continued, and there were ominous signs of discontent in Georgia itself. Face to face with, numerically, such vastly superior forces, the Russians, who constantly had to oppose companies and even half-companies to battalions, squadrons to whole hordes of native cavalry, could find safety only in superior discipline and a valour that counted no odds too formidable, no fortified place too strong to assault, no mountain fastness inaccessible, that held defeat preferable to dishonour, and death to retreat. Paulucci, energetic, brave, and a stern disciplinarian, embodied these ideas in his orders of the day, one of which runs: "Soldiers must know that it is better to die with glory than live dishonoured, so that, even at the cost of life itself, no one should yield a foot's space to the enemy, whatever his numerical superiority. . . . I hereby declare that any officer who gives way before the enemy will be tried by court-martial and dismissed the service in disgrace, for whosoever bears in mind that he is a Russian and unconquerable will always beat the foe." Such was the school in which the army of the Caucasus was trained, and such the spirit animating, with few exceptions, both officers and men. Nothing less would meet the exigencies of the case; nothing less would have preserved Transcaucasia to Russia, which country in the Caucasus, as England more than once in India, fighting with her back to the wall, was abundantly justified in her sons. Later on, as we shall see, when the pressure had relaxed, when attack not defence was the order of the day, there were many instances in which the Russians, like others similarly

placed, showed no such heroism—one more proof, if such be needed, that in corporate bodies valour, like cowardice, is to a great extent the product of circumstance. Even now there were occasional reverses, a case here and there of misconduct, but on the whole Russia has good reason to be proud of those who, in days of trouble and disaster at home, maintained her position and prestige against terrible odds in the far-off lands beyond the mountains. And of all the many heroes who there won fame immortal, Kotliarévsky, with whom even Scóbeleff can hardly compare, stands pre-eminent for conduct and dauntless valour.

In the summer of 1811 the danger seemed greater than ever. The Persian and Turkish commanders, putting aside their jealousies and suspicions, agreed upon concerted action, and made ready for a combined attack, in overwhelming force, on the Russian positions, Goumri being the first objective. They met at Magasberd[1] on the 30th August, but Fate was this time on the side of Russia, a tragic incident characteristically putting an end to the enemy's plans and combinations. During the usual djighitovka, to celebrate the meeting, a Kurd, bought by the chieftain of Magasberd, who in secret hated the Turks, passing in full career, discharged a pistol point-blank at the Seraskier of Erzeroum, inflicting a mortal wound. The dying man was carried off to Kars; his troops followed and dispersed to their homes. The Sirdar of Eriván retired in turn, and the Pasha of Trebizond, finding himself alone, retreated to Batoum. All this took time, but Paulucci, the pressure removed, determined to take the offensive, and Kotliarévsky was chosen to make an attempt on Akhalkaláki, a fortress

[1] Russians call it Mazagbert. Possibly Melasgird?

which had successfully resisted Goudóvitch's whole army. Kotliarévsky, taking with him but two battalions of the Georgian Grenadiers, made a forced march over the snow-covered mountains, avoiding altogether the main roads, and, surmounting very great natural difficulties, reached Akhalkaláki unobserved on the night of the 9th December. So complete was the surprise that the first Russian stormers, led by Captain Schulten, were on the walls before the garrison dreamed of their approach. The Turks resisted desperately, but it was too late. Daylight saw the fortress in the hands of the victorious Russians, who lost only thirty men killed and wounded. The hero of this gallant feat of arms was promoted to the rank of major-general, being then only twenty-nine years of age.[1]

Meantime on the southern and eastern borders of Daghestan there had been a good deal of trouble and some fighting. General Gourieff having under his command the Sevastópol regiment, then the worst in the Caucasus, suffered a reverse in Koubá. He was superseded by General Khatountseff, a brave and energetic officer, who, with reinforcements, soon restored order, won a complete victory over the mountaineers, and, later, stormed the chief stronghold of the Kioureen khanate near the borders of Kazi-Koumoukh, part of which was also devastated.

So ended 1811, on the whole successfully for the Russians. But the ensuing year, that of the Napoleonic invasion, opened with disasters that were but the prelude to a period of such trouble and danger as seriously threatened Russia's domination in the Caucasus from sea to sea and on either side of the mountain chain. And,

[1] Akti, v. 184.

of a truth, in contemplating the history of 1812, one hardly knows which to wonder at most — the heroic tenacity of the Moscovite troops, under such leaders as Kotliarévsky, Portniághin, and others, or the hopeless incompetency of the various Mussulman Powers, great and small, who, with everything in their favour, not only failed to throw back the northern invaders to the line of the Térek and Koubán, but, beaten time after time by vastly inferior forces, lost ground in every direction.

The year had hardly opened when the Persians, many thousands in number, invaded Karabágh, and, blockading a battalion of the Troitsky regiment, under Major Djini, in Sultan-boudá (Kerza-Kertchee, fifty miles from Shoushá), occupied Shakhboulakh, twenty miles farther north, in order to cut communication with Shoushá. A small reinforcement then on its way took Shakhboulakh by storm, but could go no farther. The Persians, 18,000 strong, then attacked the Russians at Sultan-boudá. Djini and the officer next in rank were killed, others wounded, and the command falling to Captain Oloviashnikoff, he surrendered at discretion, the colours of the regiment falling into the hands of the victors, a fact almost unparalleled in the annals of Caucasian warfare.[1] The rejoicings at the Persian Court may be imagined; the Russians were no longer invincible, and the Shah had visions of further successes that would restore his lost suzerainty over the khanates and, possibly, over Georgia. In these circumstances Paulucci, who was in Derbend occupied with the affairs of Daghestan, recalled

[1] According to Monteith, the Persians owed their success on this occasion to the advice of D'Arcy (afterwards D'Arcy Todd), a British officer, who in the fight commanded the Persian regular forces, consisting of six battalions, 80 guns: *op. cit.*, p. 83. The locality is difficult to identify.

Kotliarévsky from the Turkish frontier, gave him the command in Karabágh, and himself hastened thither.

Meantime, however, yet more serious events were at hand. Popular discontent, due to the high-handed exactions of the Russians, grew to a head in Georgia itself, and open rebellion broke out on the 31st of January at the village of Akhmet, and on the following day at Tionéti, where a Russian officer, accused of outraging a Georgian woman, was cut to pieces with all his men. Soon all Kakhétia was in a blaze. The towns of Teláf and Signákh were besieged by the insurgents. The former, strongly fortified, held out, but Signákh was taken and the garrison exterminated with horrible cruelty. At the village of Kaghobéti a squadron of the Narva Dragoons was destroyed, after Marteenoff, colonel of the regiment, had been mortally wounded. Reinforcements were hurried to Teláf from all sides, but not a tithe of them succeeded in reaching their destination. One detachment, consisting of 280 dismounted Narva Dragoons, was surrounded under the very walls of the town. Yesseepoff, in command, was killed, and of the whole force no more than 120 men without a single officer entered Teláf, and that thanks only to a desperate sally on the part of the garrison. In the Signákh district the rebels attacked Bodbiskhévi, though occupied by a whole battalion of the famous Kabardá regiment, which, after losing two officers and 212 men, finding the position untenable, retreated to Kara-agatch, where, though strengthened by two more companies of the same regiment and two squadrons of the equally celebrated Neezhni-Novgorod Dragoons, the Russians were closely besieged during twelve days, with no other food than the barley intended for the cavalry horses. So sudden was the outbreak, so rapid its spread, that the chief of the district,

the valiant Portniághin, was caught with only fifty Narva Dragoons at Sagaredjio. Already half his men had been killed or wounded when two companies of Kherson Grenadiers came up, and Portniághin, thus reinforced, with difficulty made his way to Tiflis. Here, in the capital, trouble was brewing, and Prince Orbeliáni warned the commander-in-chief that he could no longer answer for the safety of the city, as the Lesghians had made their appearance in the very suburbs. Northward the rebellion spread over the whole district of Ananour, and extended even into Ossetia. Thus a detachment of three companies with one gun, hastening to Doushét, was forced to retreat after losing its commanding officer; but in this direction the success of the rebels was short-lived. Lieutenant-Colonel Oushakóff with a battalion of the Georgian regiment marched rapidly on Doushét, took that important centre by storm on the 12th February and captured Ananour, whereupon in this part of the country things quieted down.

Paulucci soon afterwards arrived in Tiflis, and strong reinforcements being sent to Teláf, the enemy were beaten in a pitched battle, the outlying detachments relieved, and communications restored.[1] At the same time (21st February) the Turks, 5000 strong, made a desperate attack on Akhalkaláki, but were beaten off with heavy loss. Three days later, Lissaniévitch with a small force of Russians in conjunction with Kara-bek, of Magasberd, gained a victory over Turkish troops at Parghita. Paulucci, relieved of anxiety in this quarter—and had the Turks recaptured Akhalkaláki the gravity of the situation would have been extreme—hastened to crush the rebellion in the Teláf district. The insurgents were beaten, their principal

[1] See Paulucci's full account of the Georgian rebellion in his report to the Emperor of 26th March 1812: Akti, v. 67–81.

leader, Prince Kabouloff, taken and sent to Russia. The immediate danger was over, and at this very moment Paulucci received letters of recall, the Emperor appointing him chief of the staff to the 1st Western Army, acting against the French. He was soon, however, transferred to the Governor-Generalship of Finland and the Baltic provinces, owing, it is said, to dissensions with Barclay de Tolly. He afterwards left the Russian service, and was for some time Governor-General of Genoa.

In 1811 the command in the Caucasus had been divided, Transcaucasia being left to Paulucci, the northern Line, together with the government of Astrakhan, given to Lieutenant-General Rteeshtcheff, who, on Paulucci's recall, again united in his person full authority over both divisions of the country. The new commander-in-chief, a man of exceptional probity, was lacking apparently in other qualities even more desirable at headquarters at such a time as the present. He had neither energy nor firmness, and his attempt to win the turbulent northern tribesmen by conciliatory methods failed, not, perhaps, as Russian writers affirm, owing to the inherent impossibility of success, but because, after all that had gone before, conciliation unaccompanied by severity could, in the eyes of the natives, only mean weakness; and with savage and semi-savage peoples, above all others, weakness breeds contempt; in proof of which his celebrated successor, Yermóloff, adduces the fact that the Ingoush elders, whom Rteeshtcheff had summoned to Mozdók and dismissed to their homes laden with presents, that very night fell upon his baggage-train and pillaged it almost under their benefactor's own eyes. To the policy followed by him during his four years' tenure of office his successors attributed much of the trouble that befell in their time, though with what justice it is difficult to say. But this is a point that will be referred to later on.

Certain it is that Rteeshtcheff's inheritance from Paulucci was the reverse of enviable. Russia, fighting for her existence at home, was still at war with both Persia and Turkey. The army in the Caucasus, never really adequate in numbers, had suffered heavy losses, and the weakening process was still going on, while reinforcements were quite out of the question. Discontent prevailed amongst Christian and Mussulman alike, resulting in secret conspiracies and overt acts of violence and rebellion from the Aras to the Térek and Koubán, from the Caspian to the Black Sea. Between Vládikavkáz and Tiflis all the mountain tribes—Ossietines, Khevsours, Pshavs, and Tousheens—had risen, and for a time communications were broken.

In these circumstances it is evident that unless the pressure were relieved no amount of heroism on the part of the Russian forces in the Caucasus, a mere handful comparatively, could avert something worse than the loss of a battle here and there, the destruction of an outlying detachment in this or that corner of the vast territory to be defended. And at the right moment relief came. Russia, driven to extremities, made peace with Turkey; and Rteeshtcheff, no longer threatened in that direction, gladly withdrew such of his forces as were stationed on the Turkish frontiers and in the territories taken by conquest from that Power. For by the treaty of Bucharest (16th May 1812) Turkey recovered nearly all she had lost in recent years in the Caucasus, and her beaten troops reentered peaceably into possession of Anápa, Poti, and Akhalkaláki. Soukhoum Kalé, however, was retained by Russia, in despite of the treaty, on the more or less plausible pretext that it had never in reality been a Turkish

possession. Locally the chagrin of the Russians was great; it was bitter indeed to find that in the ultimate result so many successful efforts, such lavish sacrifices of blood and treasure, had been made in vain, so much heroism wasted. But prolongation of the war with Turkey might very well have led to losses more disastrous still; and if the conquered territory and fortresses were to be given up, it was better that their abandonment should be effected in this way with no further loss of life, nor, so far as the army of the Caucasus was concerned, of honour or prestige. That army was now able to cope, though barely, with its remaining foes. The Ossietines who, coming south, threatened Tiflis itself, were beaten and dispersed by Colonel Petchérsky, who succeeded in clearing the road all the way to Vládikavkáz. In Kakhétia, at Signákh, Orbeliáni finally defeated the Georgian Tsariévitch Alexander and his horde of Daghestanis (14th October 1812), and five days later Kotliarévsky, who had been kept in check by the cautious Rteeshtcheff, taking advantage of the commander-in-chief's absence in Tiflis, crossed the Aras unperceived, defeated the main Persian army on the banks of that river, and totally routed it at Aslandouz[1] in a night attack, when 10,000 of the enemy were slain, the Russian loss being only three officers and 124 men killed and wounded.[2]

[1] "Lion's plain," so called from a mound erected by Timour on the spot where a lion had been slain: Monteith, *op. cit.*, p. 93, *note*; and see generally his account of the battle, pp. 88–95. Also for the Russian account, Akti, v. 690.

[2] This was Kotliarévsky's second victory at this spot, and in each case his general orders were that no quarter was to be given, though on this occasion he spared the lives of 537 prisoners.

Two of the British officers in the Persian service, Major Christie and Captain Lindsay, took part in the battle. "Christie was shot in the neck, and more than half the battalion he had raised and disciplined himself fell in this attempt to bring him off. The attempt was unsuccessful, but it afforded a noble proof of their attachment and devotion. Christie was discovered in the morning by a Russian party, who offered assistance; but he had determined never to be taken alive, and cut down the officer who attempted to raise him. A report was sent to General Kutlerousky (*sic*) that there was a wounded English officer who refused to surrender; orders were sent to disarm and secure him at all hazards. Christie, however, made a most desperate resistance, and is said to have killed six men before he was despatched, being shot by a Cossack. Thus fell as brave an officer and amiable a man as ever existed."—Monteith, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

Eleven cannon of English make were captured, bearing the inscription, according to the Russians, "from the King of Kings to the Shah of Shahs."

Lord Curzon's account of Christie's death, that he was "killed by a Russian officer while lying wounded on the ground," even if literally true, gives an impression very different from that conveyed by Monteith's narrative: "Persia," i. p. 578.

"God, hurrah, and the bayonet," wrote Kotliarévsky, "have given the victory to His Most Gracious Majesty." Rteeshtcheff, who was nothing if not chivalrous, condoned his valiant subordinate's disobedience of orders, and recommended him warmly to the Tsar. In December the young hero crowned his career of victory by a yet more desperate deed. Crossing the snow-covered Mougan steppe, he appeared before the walls of Lenkorán, a fortress recently rebuilt after the plans of English engineers, and the Persian commander refusing his summons to surrender, stormed that stronghold, after five days' siege, with a loss of 1000 men, more than two-thirds of his total force. The general order issued to the troops on this occasion was couched in heroic language, and contained the famous phrase, "There will be no retreat."[1] It may be added that there was also no quarter. General Rteeshtcheff reported to the Emperor: "The extreme exasperation of the soldiers at the obstinacy of the defence caused them to bayonet every one of the 4000 Persians composing the garrison. Not a single officer or man escaped death."[2] Kotliarévsky himself was wounded in three places, in the head severely, and this, added to his previous wounds and sufferings, rendered further service impossible. Found under the

[1] The full text is given by Romanovsky, p. 110, *note*.

[2] Akti, v. 703.

walls amidst a heap of dead, he was carried half-dying to Tiflis, but survived thirty-nine years, during all which time his sufferings never ceased. The Emperor rewarded him with the Order of St. George of the 2nd Class—the 3rd he had already received—an almost unparalleled honour for one so young, he being even now only thirty-one.[1]

A victory gained by the Russians under Colonel Pestel over the brother of the Sirdar of Eriván, "a most timid and incompetent chief,"[2] at Kara-bezouk (3rd April 1813), completed the discomfiture of the Persians. Negotiations for peace were already being carried on through the intermediary of the British ambassador, and an armistice was followed in October by the preliminary treaty of Gulistan. Russia by this instrument was confirmed in possession of all the khanates—Karabágh, Gandja, Shekeen, Shirván, Derbend, Koubá, and Baku, together with part of Talish and the fortress of Lenkorán. Persia further abandoned all pretensions to Daghestan, Georgia, Mingrelia, Imeritia, and Abkhasia.[3]

A notable campaign against the Khevsours in the spring of 1813, during which the Russians under Simonóvitch penetrated the uttermost fastnesses of the east-central mountain chain and took Shatil, the chief stronghold of that strange race, on the upper waters of the

[1] A few days before his death in 1851, Kotliarévsky, in the presence of his relatives, opened a small case, of which he had always kept the key himself. In it were forty splinters of bone taken from his skull after Lenkorán. Pointing to them he exclaimed, "There—that is why I was unable to accept the Emperor's appointment [in 1826] and serve my sovereign and my country to the grave."

[2] Monteith, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

[3] A treaty was drawn up by the British ambassador, Sir Gore Ouseley, at this time, stipulating amongst other things that the Indian Government should continue the subsidy of £120,000 a year until Russia should have restored some portion of the Persian provinces: Monteith, *op. cit.*, p. 100. But this article was omitted in the text of the treaty (of Teheran) as finally ratified.

Argoun; other successes over the refractory Kioureens, and the fact that neither help nor encouragement could be hoped for longer from either Persia or Turkey, damped the courage both of the smaller native potentates and of the Georgian rebels. Things gradually quieted down, and when, in 1816, Rteeshtcheff made way for Yermóloff, though passions only slumbered, and nearly half a century was to elapse ere the conquest of the Caucasus could be called complete, it may be said that peace prevailed.

CHAPTER VI

1816–1817

Yermóloff—His early career—Character—Policy—His mission to Persia—The Line

"Bow down thy snowy head, oh, Caucasus;
Submit; Yermóloff comes!"

So wrote Poushkin, and the verdict implied has become an article of faith—with what justice we shall endeavour to make clear—to succeeding generations of Russians. Rightly or wrongly, of all the long line of warriors and statesmen who in the course of a century or more brought the Caucasus under the domination of Russia, Yermóloff, in the hearts and minds of his countrymen, has long held the first place. Destined, as another poet, Domontóvitch, puts it, to "carve his name with the bayonet on the mountains," he is credited not only with having accomplished that feat, but with having inaugurated and, so long as he retained the command, carried out the only policy to which success in the long run could attach. To his inspiration is attributed that heroic spirit which, with pardonable exaggeration, is said to have rendered the soldiery of the Caucasus invincible,[1] and much else that goes to fill up in Russian eyes the measure of his services and of his glory. The years of his rule are known as "the Yermóloff period"; the first organised plan of action as "the Yermóloff system"; his advent is held to mark the dividing line between the old ideas and the new; ideas inherently fallacious, and ideas which,

[1] Quite unwarrantably, for it existed before ever he set foot in the Caucasus.

if followed out consistently and with adequate means, must inevitably triumph over all difficulties and eventuate in a conquest of the Caucasus complete, and irrevocable, from sea to sea, and from the northern steppes to the confines of Persia and Turkey. Let us now see what manner of man this was, and what, as a matter of fact, he accomplished.

Born in 1777, it is significant that he began his career under Souvóroff, who bestowed on him the Cross of St. George for his heroism at the storming of Praga[1] at the early age of sixteen. After the Polish campaign Yermóloff, who was in the artillery, went to Italy and served with the Austrian army against the French, and in 1796 took part in the Persian war under Count Valerian Zóuboff, including the capture of Derbend and the defeat of Agha Muhammad at Gandja, when the Persians brought eighty elephants into their battle line. For his services on this occasion he received the Cross of St. Vladeemir and, though still in his teens, the rank of lieutenant-colonel; but with the accession of the Emperor Paul, Fortune played him false. Returning to Russia, he was soon arrested on suspicion of being concerned in a military conspiracy, and after a term of imprisonment in the fortress of St. Petersburg was exiled to Kostromá. In this way he missed Souvóroff's Italian campaign, but in 1805 gained his promotion to the rank of colonel at Austerlitz, and the campaign of 1807 established him in the eyes of the Russian army, and especially of its rank and file, as one of the most heroic and gifted of their leaders. This reputation was fully borne out by his conduct during the Napoleonic invasion as chief of the staff to Barclay de Tolly; and subsequently, when the tide of war rolled

[1] A suburb of Warsaw.

across the frontier, at Bautzen, where in command of a small rearguard he saved fifty guns; and above all at Kulm, where, Count Osterman being dangerously wounded, Yermóloff took the supreme command almost from the beginning of the action. In 1814 he commanded both the Russian and the Prussian Guard at the taking of Paris, and in 1816 was appointed commander-in-chief in Georgia (with jurisdiction over the whole of the Caucasus) and also ambassador-extraordinary to the Court of Persia. In the latter capacity, as will be seen, he proved himself well worthy of his master's confidence in quite other than military fields.

In 1820 Alexander I. was on the point of sending an army to Naples under his command; but Austria, always uneasy at Russia's interference in Southern Italy, hastily despatched Finmont thither, who put an end to the Neapolitan and Piedmontese constitutions. The Russian flag thus escaped the doubtful honour of protecting, as in 1799, the bloody Neapolitan reaction and of sanctioning the vengeance of Austria against Pellico and his fellow-sufferers in the cause of freedom. Yermóloff, for his own reasons, rejoiced at it. "The Emperor was astonished when I told him that I had learnt without regret of the expedition being countermanded. Souvóroff, I remarked, commanded the Austrians and aroused their jealousy. . . . I should like to see the man who, without shrinking, would make his appearance on the scene made memorable by the mighty deeds of war of that remarkable man, and, a little earlier, of Napoleon."[1]

In person no less than in character Yermóloff impressed all who came near him as one born to command. Of

[1] Pogódin, *Materiali*, &c. (materials for a biography of Yermóloff, containing his scanty journals and memoirs and various letters). Moscow, 1863.

gigantic stature and uncommon physical strength, with round head set on mighty shoulders and framed in shaggy locks, there was something leonine in his whole appearance, which, coupled with unsurpassed courage, was well calculated to excite the admiration of his own men and strike terror into his semi-barbarous foes. Incorruptibly honest, simple, even rude in his habits, and of Spartan hardihood, his sword was ever at his side, and in city as in camp he slept wrapped only in his military cloak, and rose with the sun.

Careless of his own life, a willing sharer in all privations, exacting to the uttermost at the call of duty, no commander was more sparing of his men when to spare them was consistent with success, none so thoughtful of their well-being,[1] none so regardless of formality, none ever so unfeignedly friendly. Jealous of the honour of his Caucasian regiments, he appealed successfully to Alexander I. to put an end to the prevailing custom of filling their ranks with military offenders and criminals from European Russia. "Henceforward," he wrote in an order of the day, "officers will no longer see amongst them comrades for whom they need blush, nor will unworthy men share the service and the glory of the brave soldiers of the Georgian Army Corps." To him the humblest, raggedest soldier who did his duty cheerfully—and Yermóloff's army was the raggedest and cheerfullest ever seen—was a friend and brother. Habitually he addressed them as comrades; habitually he entered into their feelings, sympathised with them in their troubles and hardships, visited

[1] On one occasion he administered a severe reprimand to a commanding officer who, in the absence of express orders, had kept his men on the plains in summer instead of withdrawing them to the hills, "as if to take measures for preserving the health of the troops were not one of the duties of a commander, and as if it were necessary to await special orders to that effect." Akti, vi. i. p. 511.

them by day and by night as they huddled round camp-fire and kettle, joked, laughed, and chaffed with them.

With all this, it is no wonder that he became the idol of the soldiery, upon whom, we are told, his mere name acted like magic; while the fact that his biting tongue and caustic wit were freely exercised, very much to his own hurt, on the German party then predominant at Court, is not the least of his claims to the gratitude and admiration of the Russian chauvinist of later days.

Asked one day to say what favour he desired, he replied, "To be made a German, for then I shall be able to get all I want." On another occasion, addressing a crowd of generals in the Emperor's antechamber, he asked, "May I inquire, gentlemen, if any one amongst you speaks Russian?" When we add that his arrogance and self-sufficiency were such that he looked upon all, or nearly all, however highly placed, as his inferiors, and, whenever possible, treated them as such, it is not difficult to imagine what feelings such a man roused amongst the ruling clique of Barclays, Wittgensteins, &c., and perhaps the most eloquent tribute to his superlative merits is the fact that he forced his way to the front in their despite. If, on the other hand, his name and fame still linger in the memory of the mountaineers of Daghestan and Tchetchnia when those of most of his contemporaries and successors have already been forgotten, it must be admitted that this survival is due not merely to his commanding personality or actual accomplishment, but in part, at least, to the calculated cruelty of his methods — methods, unhappily, too generally characteristic of Russian warfare, morally indefensible, but possessed of undoubted advantages in dealing with Oriental peoples. It will always be argued, more or less

plausibly, that the tribes of the Caucasus would have mistaken clemency for weakness, whereas campaigns conducted on the good old plan with fire and sword—the devastation of crops, the sacking of villages, the massacre of men and the ravaging of women—gave a lesson they thoroughly understood and fully appreciated. The Russian General Erckert says of Yermóloff, "he was at least as cruel as the natives themselves." He himself said: "I desire that the terror of my name should guard our frontiers more potently than chains or fortresses, that my word should be for the natives a law more inevitable than death. Condescension in the eyes of Asiatics is a sign of weakness, and out of pure humanity I am inexorably severe. One execution saves hundreds of Russians from destruction, and thousands of Mussulmans from treason." "In these words," says Potto, "we have his whole system. He regarded all the tribes, 'peaceable' or not, inhabiting the mountains of the Caucasus, as *de facto* Russian subjects, or destined to be so sooner or later, and in any case demanded from them unconditional submission. And in his hands the former system of bribery and subsidies gave place to one of severe punishments, of harsh, even cruel, measures, but always combined with justice and magnanimity."[1] Politically, it is difficult to see where justice came in, but in this respect Russia was only doing what England and all other civilised States have done, and still do, wherever they come in contact with savage or semi-savage races. By force or by fraud a portion of the country is taken, and, sooner or later, on one excuse or another, the rest is bound to follow.

Administratively, on the other hand, something may

[1] Potto, *op. cit.*, II. i. p. 15.

be said for the claim thus boldly advanced, for Yermóloff was wont to insist that the word of a Russian official should be sacred, so that the natives might be led to believe it more firmly than the Koran itself; and to the extent of his power he enforced good faith on either side.

It comes then to this, that if once we allow Russia's claim to exact submission and obedience from the tribes; if, further, we admit the right of man to play the part of Providence in punishing the innocent with the guilty, and both alike with the utmost severity, then Yermóloff's justification is complete. Yet a tolerance so wide would vindicate not his misdeeds alone but the crimes of a Tamerlane, and, failing a reversion to Old Testament ideas of man's duty to man, Christianity must ever reprobate the one and the other.

There are native songs, composed on the occasion of some of Yermóloff's terrible punitive expeditions, which betray the singular mixture of fear and admiration inspired by grim "Yarmoul," as they called him; and the same feelings we know were roused by Skóbeleff amongst the Tekkes, and by many another Russian general in the Caucasus and elsewhere. But, as we pass in review his ten years' rule, still more when we come to consider the results he achieved, it will perhaps be difficult to accept without serious modification the estimate of his fellow-countrymen.

It will be found that Nicholas I., who stands for the embodiment of chivalry, deliberately advocated a policy of stirring up one tribe against another in order that Russia might profit by their dissensions, knowing full well the horrors involved. Alexander I., on the contrary, was ever humane. The cruelty so rife in the Caucasus caused him genuine distress. He repeatedly inculcated a resort to

more merciful measures, expressed his abhorrence of unnecessary bloodshed, and on one occasion, not many months before his death, refused to confer the St. George's Cross, recommended by Yermóloff, on Prince Békovitch-Tcherkásky because, in a daring and successful raid beyond the Koubán, that savage leader had destroyed a populous aoul, sparing neither women nor children.[1]

Alexander is impugned as weak and visionary, and it is probable that Rteeshtcheff's reputation, too, has suffered unduly from the fact that he was of a nature both chivalrous and humane. His unwillingness to resort to harsh measures, his attempt to win over the natives by justice and kindness, found no favour with the men of Souvóroff's school. Yermóloff treated them with scorn and condemned them in no measured terms, with the result that his predecessor has ever since been stigmatised as both weak and incapable. But we have seen under what conditions Rteeshtcheff took over the command, under what totally different conditions he surrendered it to Yermóloff. We shall note, presently, what was the state of affairs in the Caucasus when the latter in turn made way for Paskiévitch.

Yermóloff's central idea was that the whole of the Caucasus must, and should, become an integral part of the Russian Empire; that the existence of independent or semi-independent States or communities of any description, whether Christian, Mussulman, or Pagan, in the mountains or on the plains, was incompatible with the dignity and honour of his master, the safety and welfare of his subjects. On this idea was based the whole of his policy, every one of his administrative measures, every movement of the troops under his command, and to the

[1] Alexander I. to Yermóloff, 29th September 1845 : Pogódin, p. 325.

end thus clearly set up in his own mind he from the beginning devoted himself heart and soul.

Arriving at Gheórghievsk in the autumn of 1816, he made but a short stay there to acquaint himself with the state of affairs in the north, then hurried on to Tiflis, which place he reached on the 10th October.

Both north and south of the mountains he found much to displease him,[1] and he has left on record his astonishment at the little that had been done to secure and confirm the Russians in their possessions. He would willingly have taken in hand the necessary reforms without delay, but the mission to Persia was urgent, and, indeed, caused him very serious misgivings. Unused to diplomacy, he had undertaken it with reluctance, feeling strongly that to win through such an ordeal with credit to himself and satisfaction to his sovereign needed, beyond any qualifications he possessed, no common measure of good luck.

Feth Ali, though no longer encouraged by his English friends, had not yet lost hope of recovering the khanates ceded by the treaty of Gulistan, or at least a considerable part of them. To this end he had sent a special envoy, Abdoul Hassan Khan, to St. Petersburg; but the Tsar, while empowering Yermóloff to "see what could be done" towards satisfying the Shah's desires, stated clearly in his reply to the envoy's representations that his first care must be the safety and honour of Russia, and gave little hope of any territorial concession whatever.[2]

It was Yermóloff's task to put an end once for all to

[1] Pogódin, 255.

[2] Potto states that Yermóloff's business was to evade the fulfilment of a promise actually given by Alexander I. to restore at least a portion of the khanates (*op. cit.*, vol. II. i. p. 14). But the authentic documents cited by Doubróvin (vol. vi. chapter x.), and the Emperor's instructions to Yermóloff of the 29th July 1816 (Akti, vol. vi. ii. 122), furnish proof positive that no such promise was either made or contemplated.

Feth Ali's cherished desires, yet at the same time to establish, if possible, genuinely peaceful and friendly relations between the two Courts. To this end English influence must be undermined by all means, and eventually, if possible, destroyed.[1] If some slight rectifications of the frontier were found compatible with Russia's interests, he might to that extent give way,[2] but anything like restoration on a large scale was really out of all question, and any one less likely than Yermóloff to abandon an inch of territory already won it would have been difficult to choose. In order, however, to prepare himself fully to meet any contrary arguments and justify his Majesty's views, he was ordered to visit the khanates in person before setting out for Persia. He journeyed accordingly from one to another, growing more and more convinced of their value and strategic importance to Russia, and more and more determined not to cede any part of any one of them.[3]

Delayed by this tour of inspection, and, after crossing the Persian frontier, by the intrigues of Abbas Mirza and others, he finally met the Shah at Sultanieh in July (1817), and there, in spite of the many difficulties put in his way by the anti-Russian clique, headed by the kaimakan, Bazurg, Abbas Mirza's chief adviser, he carried a seemingly almost impossible mission to a triumphant conclusion.

Penetrating the characters of Feth Ali and his Ministers, he resorted with some of them, including the Shah himself, to the grossest flattery, while with others, and notably with Bazurg, he gave full play to his own limitless arrogance. In conversation with the "Refuge of the Universe," "it happened not once only," writes Yermóloff himself, "that, praising his Majesty's rare and exalted qualities of

[1] Akti, vi. ii. p. 122; Pogódin, 195.

[2] Akti, vi. ii. p. 122.

[3] Akti, vi. ii. p. 142: Yermóloff to Alexander, 9th January 1817.

soul, and assuring him how vastly I was devoted to him and affected by his perfections, I summoned the tears to my eyes, and simply melted with emotion." But speaking beforehand to one of the Ministers, he took a very different line. "It is my duty to look to the honour of my master and of Russia, and if the Shah receives me coldly, or during the subsequent negotiations I see any intention of breaking the peace, I will myself declare war, nor end it until I have made the Aras my boundary."[1] The fact that Yermóloff was not only ambassador but commander-in-chief gave weight to this threat, the effect being heightened by the fact that "my grim visage always expressed pretty clearly what I felt, and when I spoke of war conveyed the impression of a man ready to set his teeth in their throats. Unluckily for them I noticed how little they liked this, and consequently, whenever more reasonable arguments were wanting, I relied on my wild beast's muzzle, gigantic and terrifying figure, and extensive throat; for they were convinced that any one who could shout so vociferously must have good and weighty reasons.[2] . . . When I spoke the Persians seemed to hear not my voice alone, but the voices of 100,000 men." Yermóloff refused absolutely to put on the customary red stockings when visiting either Abbas Mirza or the Shah.[3] Of General Gardanne, Napoleon's envoy, who made no such objection, he said, "After the red cap of Liberty, the red socks of Servitude—naturally!"

[1] Akti, vi. ii. p. 179: Yermóloff to Nesselrode, October 1817. Pogódin, 208.
[2] Yermóloff to Count Zakrevsky, 12th October 1817: Pogódin, 241.
[3] Yet the Emperor had written, sensibly enough: "In Asiatic ceremonials there are many things that, owing to their strangeness, often appear improper to foreigners; in such cases you must be reasonable, for it is not difficult to distinguish what is merely customary from such things as may justly be considered humiliating." The truth is, that Yermóloff's conduct was the result of Mazaróvitch's urgent advice. See his despatches. Akti, vi. ii. pp. 144–5; Pogódin, 201.

and attributing a similar complaisance on the part of the English to a desire to preserve their commercial advantages, he remarked later on, "As I was animated neither by the feelings of a Napoleonic spy, nor by the sordid calculations of a shopkeeping nation's clerk, I consented neither to the red stockings nor to the other conditions." He claimed, without any warrant, Djenghis Khan as his ancestor, and remarked with satisfaction that "the Shah looked with no little respect on the descendant of so redoubtable a conqueror."[1]

But it must not be supposed that this singular being neglected the more usual and obvious resources of diplomacy. There were in reality very good reasons why Persia should dread another war with Russia, and these were urged in the most convincing manner. Above all, Yermóloff laid stress on the danger to the royal house, for Feth Ali had some sixty sons, and had set his heart on the succession of Abbas Mirza, not the eldest. In the event of another defeat, dissensions would surely break out amongst them, civil war would ensue, and might end disastrously, not only for Feth Ali's darling project, but for the Kadjar dynasty itself.

In the end Feth Ali, upon whom Yermóloff's strange personality seems to have made an extraordinarily favourable impression, and whose rule over the khanates in question had in reality been little more than nominal, suffered himself to be persuaded or cajoled. Russia retained all her conquests, and Yermóloff returned in triumph. But, going and coming, he had passed through Tabriz, the residence of Abbas Mirza; and his high-handed, not to say insolent treatment of that prince confirmed the latter in his hostility to Russia, and made him Yermóloff's

[1] Pogódin, 228.

bitterest enemy, a fact that had no little influence on coming events. Russia's improvised ambassador, however, fully satisfied with the immediate success of his mission, and caring not a jot for Abbas Mirza or his feelings, hastened to Tiflis, already determined in his own mind to reduce the khanates to Russian provinces, though constrained, first of all, to devote his attention to affairs on the northern Line.[1]

Here the position was very much as it had been for decades past. There was no open warfare, but there was continual unrest. No man's life was safe outside the forts and stanitsas; robbery and murder were rife; and raiding parties, great and small, harried the fields, the farms, and the weaker settlements. It was imperative, doubtless, to put an end to this state of things, either by peaceable means or by force of arms. It is quite possible that the former alternative would have failed. But it never had a fair trial; and in judging the natives, it is grossly unjust to leave out of account, as the Russians always did, and do, the fact that they were the aggressors, the invaders, the occupiers of lands to which they had no title but that of might. It would be futile to make this the base of any serious indictment, for it is but the old story of the contact of civilised with barbarous races all the world over; on the other hand, it explains the attitude of the native tribes, and to some extent palliates their crimes. Nor was it a case of honest, peaceable settlers on the one side, ferocious brigands on the other. Between Cossack and native, from the moral point of view, there was often little to choose; not seldom, indeed, the balance of merit distinctly favoured the latter; and to this day the rare traveller who knows

[1] On crossing the frontier he exclaimed, "To you, to you, O Persia, I consecrate my hatred; and putting my curse upon you, I prophesy your downfall": Pogódin, 231.

the language and customs even of the worst of the tribes is safer amongst them than in the neighbouring Cossack settlements.

Be this as it may, Yermóloff's mind was made up. The natives without exception must submit; and, to begin with, the Tchetchens.

NOTE.—Tchetchnia was sometimes divided by the Russians into Greater and Lesser, to the east and west of the river Argoun respectively.

CHAPTER VII

1818

Building of Grozny—Veliameenoff—His early career, character, and policy—His Memoir and Commentary on Paskiévitch's letter—Comparison between Cossack and native—Plans for the subjugation of the Caucasus

YERMÓLOFF found the strip of land between the Térek and the Soundja, with its double range of hills separated by the valley of the Neftianka, occupied by the so-called "peaceable" Tchetchens, who, on the retirement of the Grebéntsi across the first-named river and the weakening of the authority of the Koumuik and Kabardán princes, had established themselves there in aouls, and lived a life of lawless independence. Ostensibly the friends and even the allies of Russia, they were, naturally enough, in complete sympathy with their marauding kinsmen, who, as well as the numerous Russian deserters, found amongst them a sure refuge from pursuit and a convenient base for their raiding operations against the Line. It was primarily to put an end to this state of things that Yermóloff undertook the construction of Grozny and other fortified places. "When the fortresses are ready," he wrote to the Emperor, "I shall offer the scoundrels dwelling between the Térek and the Soundja, and calling themselves 'peaceable,' rules of life, and certain obligations, that will make clear to them that they are subjects of your Majesty, and not allies, as they have hitherto dreamed. If they submit, as they ought, I will apportion them according to their numbers the necessary amount of land, dividing the rest among the Cossacks and the Kara-nogais; if not, I shall propose to them to retire and join the other robbers from whom they differ

only in name, and in this case the whole of the land will be at our disposal."[1]

In 1817, when he left the Line to visit Persia, Yermóloff gave orders to build the small fort called Prigradni Stan, near the present Mikhailovskaya stanitsa, a proceeding which was viewed with alarm and disfavour by the Tchetchens, so that when he returned the following year he found them anything but peaceable. This, however, only confirmed him in his ideas, and he set to work without delay to build his "menace" in stone.[2]

A strong force was collected, and encamped on the present site of Grozny, and on the 10th June 1818 the foundations of a six-bastioned fortress were solemnly laid, with the usual accompaniments of prayer and cannon-firing. There could no longer be room for doubt as to the Russian commander's intentions, and the natives at once broke out into open, if unorganised, hostility. The camp was "sniped" each night, the soldiers worn out by hard work and watching, and "Yarmoul" determined to give the Tchetchens a lesson. It was arranged that an escort of fifty chosen men should make pretence at nightfall of abandoning a gun at a certain spot, the distance of which had been carefully measured and all the remaining guns trained upon it. The ruse succeeded; the Tchetchens in numbers rushed out of their hiding-places and took possession of the gun in triumph, to be mown down a few moments later by a storm of grape and canister. Those who remained unhurt stood for a minute or two lost in astonishment; then, recovering themselves, took up their dead and wounded

[1] Potto, vol. II. i. p. 83.

[2] Though Grozny as the soubriquet of the Moscovite Tsar Ivan IV. is correctly enough rendered "The Terrible," the primary meaning of the word is "menacing," and it was in this sense that Yermóloff, who might justly have claimed the epithet in its intensified form for himself, applied it to his new fortress on the Soundja.

comrades, and attempted to carry them off. But the delay had been fatal; again the Russian guns poured in their hail of bullets, and with the same deadly effect. "Two hundred dead and as many wounded, abandoned on the scene of the catastrophe, served as a good lesson, and for a long time took away the appetite for night attacks." The lesson was a good one, but what it taught was a fierce and relentless hatred of the infidel invader; for forty years the Tchetchens remained the irreconcilable enemies of Russia, and during all that time and longer Yermóloff's fortress, so appropriately baptized with fire and blood, stood out grimly on the left bank of the Soundja, a "menace" to the foe, and a safe refuge and gathering-place for the regular troops and Cossacks of the Line. Here were the headquarters of the Russian army facing Tchetchnia, and from this point countless expeditions set forth with varying success to punish raiders, harry their fields and villages in turn, avenge defeats, establish new posts, relieve beleaguered garrisons, or rescue retreating bands and armies. In Grozny Yermóloff dwelt in his zemlianka—a semi-underground hut—now the pride of the town; at Grozny General Freitag gathered his forces, to burst like a thunderbolt on the Tchetchens near Gherzel aoul, and save from annihilation the remnant of Prince Vórontsoff's army in 1845. From Grozny Yevdokeemoff set out on the Argoun expedition of 1858. Truly the fort on the Soundja deserved its name; yet at times the position was reversed, and Grozny itself threatened and even bombarded. It exists to this day, but its vocation is gone, and the name of Grozny has now a far other and most peaceful significance in the ears not only of Russian and Tchetchen, but of people in distant countries who never even heard the name of its founder.[1]

[1] The Grozny oil-fields come next in importance to those of Baku.

In the midst of modern Grozny, railed off from one of the side streets and overshadowed by trees, with a tablet and inscription protected from the rain by a machicolated parapet, stands Yermóloff's zemlianka, and on it a square pedestal surmounted by his bust in bronze. From an artistic point of view the monument is not very satisfactory, but it was a happy idea to preserve this rough dwelling of one of Russia's greatest soldiers.

Veliameenoff's name has been mentioned more than once—it will recur again and again—and no history of the conquest of the Caucasus would be complete without a biography, however brief, of this remarkable man, who was chief of the staff to Yermóloff during his ten years' command, and, as the latter himself said, his *alter ego*. Russian military writers, even Yermóloff's eulogists, confess that it is difficult, impossible in fact, to distinguish the merits and services of the two, so perfect was their friendly collaboration. But it may safely be said that while Yermóloff was the greater man, the more commanding personality, Veliameenoff surpassed him in ability, culture, and military knowledge.

One year younger than Yermóloff, he never achieved one-tenth of the latter's popularity or fame; yet his career was almost equally brilliant, and his merits in some respects greater. The reason is not far to seek. A man of great parts, assiduously cultivated; a zealous student of military history, who brought the teaching of the past to bear on the problems of the day, yet with a mind ever ready to profit by the circumstances of the moment and adapt tactics and strategy to immediate requirements; prompt to conceive and quick to strike; of an iron will and invincible determination; an able organiser; absolutely fearless in battle and no less richly endowed with moral courage,

he possessed in a superlative degree all the qualities that command the respect of soldiers, but few that excite their enthusiasm, none that enlist their affection. Calm, cool, silent, impenetrable, he was inexorably severe to his own men, merciless to the foe; and he was feared, admired, and hated by both. Yet there is not wanting testimony that under this cold and callous exterior a human heart was beating, rarely as he allowed it to influence his actions. He did seek favour or protection now and again for another, for himself never.

Like Yermóloff, Veliameenoff was an artillery officer, though when or where he studied that branch of arms is unknown. He entered the army at a still earlier age—fourteen—in the Semiónovsky regiment of foot-guards, but was a sub-lieutenant of artillery at sixteen. A year later he won his spurs at Austerlitz; was at the siege of Silistria in 1810; wounded in the forlorn hope at the storming of Rustchuk; and in the "War of the Fatherland" (1812) fought with distinction at Borodinó and Krasnoe, where he gained the coveted St. George, then rarely granted. The following year we find him at Lutzen and Bautzen, and in 1814 at the siege and taking of Paris. All this time he was fighting side by side with Yermóloff, and two years later than the latter he was transferred to the Caucasus, where, after many lesser fights, the twin heroes divided between them the glory of the capture of Gandja. When Yermóloff was made commander-in-chief in the Caucasus, Alexander I. at his request appointed Veliameenoff chief of the staff.[1] In the war of 1828–29 Veliameenoff, who was naturally no friend to Paskiévitch, served in European Turkey; but in 1831 he returned to the Caucasus with the rank of lieutenant-general. His

[1] Pogódin, 192: Yermóloff's diary.

actions there will come before us in due course—they were uniformly successful; but his fame amongst military students rests less on his leadership in the field than on his masterly administrative and organising work; the able regulations for the service of the Line; the prophetic Memoir he drew up in 1828;[1] and the luminous adverse Commentary[2] on Prince Paskiévitch's proposals[3] (6th May 1830) for the conduct of the war in the Caucasus, which, careless of offence to that brilliant commander, who had just brought his third successive campaign to a happy conclusion, he wrote in July 1832 at the Emperor's command. The ideas contained in this Memoir and Commentary are held to have been at the base of all that was successful in the long struggle, and it is certain that when the principles Veliameenoff so eloquently advocated and so brilliantly put into practice were departed from, disaster dogged the heels of his successors. But it does not follow that Paskiévitch was wrong. A system that never had a fair trial cannot be condemned unconditionally, and it must ever be remembered that when Paskiévitch and Yermóloff are compared in modern times, the former meets with scant justice. Yermóloff's system, as is forcibly pointed out by the Emperor Nicholas, broke down when put to the test, and of a certainty neither he nor Veliameenoff gauged correctly the latent forces of the twin passions, religious fanaticism and love of liberty—in other words, of Muridism;[4] and the latter insisted as a *sine quâ non* on the total disarmament of the mountaineers, a measure attempted

[1] *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, vol. xv. p. 522.

[2] Given in full in *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, vol. vii. pp. 78–144. The preceding pages furnish many details as to Veliameenoff's career.

[3] *Ibid.*, vol. xii. p. 64.

[4] This is admitted even by their panegyrists: *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, vol. xv. p. 569.

in vain on various occasions, and still, after a lapse of more than three-quarters of a century, unaccomplished.

Veliameenoff in his Memoir[1] took his stand on the total inefficacy of conciliatory measures, and, as a corollary, insisted on the absolute necessity of subduing the mountaineers by force of arms. He attributed their persistent hostility to their ignorance of the power and resources of Russia, to the occasional success of their raiding expeditions and corresponding Russian failures, and to that cast of thought which led them to interpret all friendliness and generosity as a proof of weakness unless accompanied by constant success in the field. . . . "Armed force is the chief means of bridling the peoples of the Caucasus. The only question is how to employ it in order to attain this end?"

"*The Caucasus,*" he continues, "*may be likened to a mighty fortress, marvellously strong by nature, artificially protected by military works, and defended by a numerous garrison. Only thoughtless men would attempt to escalade such a stronghold. A wise commander would see the necessity of having recourse to military art; would lay his parallels; advance by sap and mine, and so master the place. The Caucasus, in my opinion, must be treated in the same way, and even if the method of procedure is not drawn up beforehand, so that it may be continually referred to, the very nature of things will compel such action. But in this case success will be far slower, owing to frequent deviations from the right path.*" Memorable words!

The Line, as it existed up to 1816, that is, up to Yermóloff's arrival on the scene, Veliameenoff counted the first parallel, and it followed, broadly speaking, the line of the Térek and Koubán, which with their confluents turn respectively east and west after issuing from the mountains, and cover nine-tenths of the distance between the two seas.

[1] What follows throws so much light both on the forest warfare now about to become chronic and on Yermóloff's policy and methods, that it has been thought better to insert it here rather than at the end of the Yermóloff period, to which in point of time it belongs.

The second parallel was commenced, as we have seen, by Yermóloff, but, owing to a variety of circumstances, was carried by him only as far west as the river Malka, and therefore affected only the eastern Caucasus.

The further progress of the siege, the laying of the third parallel, the gradual sapping and mining, and the final assault it is the object of the following pages to describe; while of those deviations from the right path which prolonged the war for more than a quarter of a century, ample illustration will not be lacking.

In the Commentary Veliameenoff begins by objecting most decidedly to the purely defensive policy advocated by Paskiévitch, pointing out that not only was it vicious in principle, as shown by the military history of the past, but that as applied to the "Line" of the Caucasus it involved various special disadvantages, such as the impossibility of rapid concentration of large forces or their transference to the scene of action, the necessarily complicated nature of all operations, and the irresponsible action of various subordinate commanders, few of them competent, inevitable on such a length of line along which the troops were scattered in driblets.

It followed that the mountaineers must be subdued and disarmed, but that would demand considerable means, and this leads him to a very interesting comparison between the Cossack and his native opponent.

"The mountaineers in their raids on stanitsas and villages and marauding expeditions in small parties are

always mounted; there are very rarely any Tchetchens on foot in the smaller bands.

"The mounted natives are very superior in many ways both to our regular cavalry and the Cossacks. They are all but born on horseback, and being used to riding from their earliest years, become extremely expert in this art, and accustomed to covering great distances without fatigue. Having an abundance of horses not pampered in stables, they choose those only which are noted for their swiftness, strength, and activity. Amongst them animals are by no means rare that on a summer's day can carry their rider 150 versts (100 miles) between dawn and sunset. In Europe, of course, this will sound untrue, but throughout Western Asia it will surprise no one. Selecting one horse out of many, the native takes care of him when on the move; never employs him on any considerable journey (*i.e.* other than raiding), and for a raid uses absolutely no animal under eight years old.

"The mountaineers' weapons are their personal property, handed down from generation to generation. They value them very highly, carefully preserve them, and keep them in excellent order. The military class consists of the *koriazi* ("princes") and *ouzdens;* the *yassiri* are occupied in field work or the pasturing of horses, sheep and cattle; very few of them accompany the princes and *ouzdens* in their expeditions. (This applies to the tribes west of the Georgian road.) Amongst those races (such as the Tchetchens) who have neither princes nor *ouzdens*, the land is cultivated by a small number of slaves; all domestic work is performed by the women; while those of the men who are sufficiently well off do hardly any work at all. Their only occupation is raiding, and, therefore, it is not to be wondered at if they become very adroit riders, use

their weapons most skilfully, have a close acquaintance with the topography of the country and use it to advantage, all their undertakings being cleverly planned.

"The Cossack, on the other hand, is an agriculturist as well as a soldier. Being very often withdrawn from his military occupations by field work at home, he cannot use either horse or arms with the same skill as the mountaineer; nor, being for the most part of the time near his own house, is it possible for him to become acquainted with topographical details over a wide area. His attention is not constantly fixed on military affairs, and therefore he has neither the knowledge nor the capacity for taking advantage of the lie of the country, so noticeable in the mountaineer. His arms are worse than those of the natives, and he has far fewer really good horses. The custom of centuries makes success in military undertakings a matter of necessity for the native. Without it he will find amongst his own compatriots neither friendship nor confidence nor respect. He becomes a laughing-stock and an object of contempt even for the women, not one of whom would join her fate to his. From this it follows that there are always amongst the natives men remarkably qualified for raiding warfare. Thirst for gain is also one of the powerful inducements at the bottom of all their enterprises. And these considerations suffice almost to drive the mountaineer altogether from his house during the season suited to raiding expeditions. He is continually on the look-out for something to seize upon, and has all the advantages that fall in every kind of warfare to the attacking side. The Cossack, on the contrary, being on the defensive, spends most of his time in vainly awaiting his enemy. If he does hear of his appearing at any spot, he frequently has to gallop a long way before he can reach

him. His mind is not influenced by any one of the considerations enumerated above. In pursuing the enemy he has not even spoil in view. Work and danger are almost his only lot. Against these disadvantages we have discipline alone—an insufficient compensation.

"Finally, it must be admitted that the anarchy prevailing amongst the natives, so fatal in all other respects, has one serious advantage in their raiding warfare, namely, that any man endowed by Nature with the necessary qualities finds the road open to fame and leadership.

"To prevent misunderstandings that might arise from my remarks on the field-marshal's [Prince Paskiévitch's] letter, I must explain how the mountaineers carry out their raids, both on a large and on a small scale. As above stated, they make attacks in force on stanitsas and villages. To this end, all who wish to take part in such an enterprise meet at some appointed place and take up their quarters in the neighbouring aouls. The meeting lasts never less than two weeks, and nearly always longer. The nearest commanding officer on the line invariably receives news through spies of the gathering, as does the chief of the line if not far from the spot. But where and when the blow will be struck there is no means of knowing. The natives always keep their intentions a profound secret, and in such undertakings no one but the leader knows what he actually proposes to do.

"As the only object of the raids is loot, the enemy attacks any stanitsa or village that for one reason or another seems most convenient. For this reason it is impossible to foretell with certainty where the blow will fall. One may guess, from the gathering-place, what part

of the Line will most probably be chosen, but even this much is not always certain. Hence the necessity of having everywhere a sufficient force for local defence. But as the number of troops in the Caucasus is decidedly unequal to the demand, and what there are must not be over-divided, the majority of the stanitsas and villages remain without immediate protection, and the mountaineers of course choose these for their attacks. The best way, in my opinion, to prevent their raids is to collect a sufficient force, march out to meet the hostile band, and disperse it. But this means is also not sure: it often happens that the enemy, hearing of the movement of the troops, take another direction, deliver their attack, and return with their spoil, each man to his own home, before the troops seeking them can reach the point in question and cut off the retreat. The experience of many years shows that in such affairs the natives almost invariably attain some measure of success.

"I have said that the gathering of the enemy for important raids lasts a considerable time, but the attack itself, or final execution of the project, is of extreme rapidity. It seldom happens that an attack lasts more than two hours. Then the enemy, with prisoners and loot, retreats hurriedly, but hardly ever by the way he came, especially if meeting the least resistance. Here it may be remarked that the natives, being all mounted and absolutely unencumbered with heavy loads, scarcely require any roads, but ride over the fields without the least difficulty. In this way they can always avoid infantry, even if they do happen to meet it on their way. In retiring, they have no need to keep any given direction. Once across the frontier, they find shelter and food wherever they go. At the first opportunity they divide the spoil obtained

during the raid, and then each returns to his own home with the share that has fallen to him.

"During my service in the Caucasus I tried more than once to think out a sure means to ward off these attacks, and must confess that I can find no satisfactory solution. Watchfulness, activity, a strict surveillance to ensure that instructions are carried out, and topographical information, help, more or less, to counteract the enemy's enterprises, but give no certain guarantee of success.

"On the line of the Caucasus the mountaineers rob and harry in small parties, preferably in spring and autumn, *i.e.* from April to July and from September to January; during the rest of the year these attacks are rare. In winter, they are prevented by the cold and the want of pasturage; in summer, by the great heat, the horseflies, and the spates in the rivers, which leave few fords, and even those mostly difficult. In the Black Sea district, on the contrary, attacks both in force and by small parties take place mostly in winter, when the Koubán is frozen over. At other seasons the depth of the river prevents crossing, and for this reason the attempts of the mountaineers are infrequent and less successful.

"It will not, I think, be superfluous to speak here of the method of training horses for raids in general, and especially for those on a small scale. Two months or more before the beginning of the convenient season the owner begins to feed up his horse, letting him rest the while. During five or six weeks the animal fattens to an extraordinary degree and his belly swells. Then the amount of food is diminished little by little. The horse is ridden lightly and put to stand up to his middle in water every day. The first few days he is ridden only at a walk, and then more and more, and when the layer of

fat begins to disappear and the animal grows accustomed to exercise, he is made to trot more and more and faster and faster each day, wearing down the fat until he is quite lean and able to gallop long distances at ease. It takes two or three weeks to train a horse in this way, but in that time the fat disappears, the swollen belly subsides, the muscles become firm, and the animal is fit for hard and prolonged work. The Cossack being always on the defensive seldom has the chance of training his horse in such a fashion, and this fact in itself not infrequently helps the raiders to distance their pursuers.

"Setting out on any expedition, the mountaineer burdens himself with nothing heavy. On the road he obtains food from his 'kounakhs';[1] it rarely happens that any one takes millet enough for even two or three days, and then only when the journey is long and no means of procuring supplies in view. Up to the point of attack the band rides quietly, saving the horses' strength for the return journey. As near as possible they halt and put up with their friends, sometimes for several days, getting information and spying out all the time the safest route, and where the carelessness of the inhabitants or of the troops gives the best chance of success. If neither condition is present, the band retires or finds some other enterprise. In this way the raiders nearly always attack unexpectedly and in places where defence is wanting. If they succeed in getting hold of anything they retreat in haste. In the event of pursuit they try to escape, even abandoning their spoil when absolutely necessary, and fight their pursuers only in extreme cases, that is, when escape is otherwise impossible.

[1] "Kounakh" means a friend, one whose hospitality you have experienced. It was, and is, a point of honour with a "kounakh" to be faithful unto death.

"In this kind of warfare, if we can call it by that name, all advantages are with the attack, all disadvantages with the defence. Napoleon experienced this in Egypt. Having driven out the Mamelukes, he was placed by circumstances in that very position of defence in which we are now on the Line and in the Black Sea district. The expelled Mamelukes and nomad Arabs of the desert very frequently attacked his couriers, his convoys, and the villages whence the French drew their supplies. They drove off horses and cattle, robbed the inhabitants, killed them or took them prisoners. This lasted the whole time the French were in Egypt, and if Napoleon failed to find a satisfactory means of dealing with this kind of war, one may be allowed to think that the Caucasus will not be entirely peaceful until the mountaineers are definitely conquered and disarmed."

Coming to Paskiévitch's recommendation to occupy "strategic points," Veliameenoff discusses with wealth of historical illustration, from Alexander the Great down to Napoleon, the nature and characteristics of such points, and turning to the Caucasus, shows that in respect of the mountain tribes none exist—an opinion true at the time, but one he would doubtless have modified to some extent had he lived to see the later phases of the war. He was dealing, it must be remembered, with a "war of raiders" carried on over a vast extent of country by numberless independent leaders, with no common aim but that of loot. Even the junctions of the roads or paths were deprived of their importance by the fact that the enemy, being mounted, and without artillery or wheeled transport, was no more confined to beaten tracks than the beasts of the forest.

Another of Paskiévitch's suggestions, the forming of

native cavalry regiments,[1] he disposes of by arguments drawn from the latter days of the Byzantine Empire, by references to the disloyalty of the Kizliar Cossacks—Tartars—and objection on the score of expense, while the Emperor's favourite idea of sowing dissensions by egging on the natives to fight each other he puts aside with uncompromising decision. How often, he asks, have we not employed the Koumuiks against the Tchetchens, the Tchetchens against the Kabardáns, the latter against the trans-Koubán Nogais, these in turn against the Abadzekhs and Shapsougs, yet all this had not given rise to the slightest enmity amongst them. All were ready to join against Russia the moment they saw a chance of overthrowing her rule. What hatred did result from this policy was directed not against any tribe or nation, but against individual leaders in the service of Russia, such as Prince Békovitch-Tcherkásky, Moussa Khasayeff, &c. &c.

Having disposed in this way of Paskiévitch's proposals one after another, Veliameenoff reverts to his dictum that the natives must be subdued and disarmed. In a separate memorandum, dated 20th May 1833,[2] he proceeds to unfold his own matured plan for the attainment of this end.

"The gradual occupation of the hostile territory by means of forts and Cossack settlements would, of itself, little by little, bring about the exhaustion of the mountaineers, who would be cramped in their movements and deprived of the means of carrying out their raids. But this alone would take too long, thirty years, and another means is at hand. The enemy is absolutely dependent on his crops for the means of sustaining life. Let the standing corn be

[1] Such regiments were raised by Paskiévitch in Transcaucasia, and rendered valuable service in the Persian and Turkish wars of 1826–1829.

[2] *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, viii. 145.

destroyed each autumn as it ripens, and in five years they would be starved into submission. In order to carry out this plan, six columns must be formed, consisting each of 6000 infantry, 1000 Cossacks, 24 guns, and 2 companies of pioneers, besides a spare park, and 500 carts for provisions and for the carriage of the sick and wounded. These columns to be formed each year, and never to open a campaign except at their full strength, for the resistance would be very obstinate; the troops occupying the forts, and even some unfortified places, should not form part of the columns, which, as a rule, should act independently, and therefore must be commanded by men of sufficient military capacity, otherwise no amount of instructions would be of any good—the gain would be small, and the losses might be very severe." With which words of warning we may take leave for the present of Veliameenoff, whose death in 1838, at the comparatively early age of forty-nine, deprived him of the chance of proving in person the correctness of his views.[1] Had he lived, he would have had to modify his opinions and plans in some respects; but Russia would doubtless have been spared many a disaster, and the war would probably have ended much sooner than it did.

[1] Raiding expeditions, systematically carried out on the lines laid down by Veliameenoff, might, in conjunction with the further measures he suggested, have proved successful. As it was, they did little but exasperate the Tchetchens, and were finally abandoned after Bariátinsky's failure in 1852.

CHAPTER VIII

1819

Building of Vnezápnaya—Native revolt in Karakaitagh—Russian defeat—Russian successes—Large increase of the Russian army—Organisation of the Caucasian infantry regiment—Madátoff—Submission of Tabassarán, Karakaitagh, Shekeen, Avaria—Yermóloff's cruelty—The Akousheens beaten

GROZNY built, Yermóloff's next step, in 1819, was to erect a similar fortress, Vnezápnaya—"Fort Surprise"—farther east, opposite the aoul of Andreyevo (Enderee) on the Aktash, near the eastern border of Tchetchnia, connecting the two by a chain of smaller forts. Vnezápnaya, at the foot of the Salatáu range, barred the way to the warlike tribes of central Daghestan and covered the Koumuik plain; Bournaya, built a little later (April 1821) on the rocks overhanging Tarkou, completed the chain of fortified posts from Vládikavkáz to the Caspian.[1]

Meantime there had been serious trouble in Daghestan, presaging the long struggle to come. The building of Grozny, together with what was known of Yermóloff's further intentions, alarmed not only the Tchetchens, but their neighbours to the south and south-east. The rulers of Avaria—a major-general in the Russian service with a pension of Rs. 5000—of Mekhtoulee, of Karakaitagh, of Tabassarán, and of Kazi-Koumoukh, together with the

[1] An interesting description of the building of Vnezápnaya, of the surrounding conditions, and of Yermóloff's character and way of living, will be found in the "Narrative of Don Juan van Halen's Imprisonment in the Dungeons of the Inquisition," &c. (vol. ii. chap. viii.), one of the best of the early books of travel and adventure in the Caucasus. The Spanish edition omits the whole of the Russian part.

powerful community of Akoushá, understood clearly the danger that threatened them. They conferred together, and determined to take common action in defence of their interests. Thus from the very beginning Yermóloff's policy laid the foundation of that union, perfected later on by Shamil, which alone made native resistance to Russia effectual. But as yet Muridism was unborn; and the flames of patriotism and religious fervour, which were to eventuate in so vast a conflagration, burnt low. Yermóloff, informed of what was taking place, ordered Colonel Pestel with two battalions and some native cavalry to occupy Karakaitagh, and himself on the 25th October 1818 set out from Grozny with 5 battalions, 300 Cossacks, and 14 guns for Mekhtoulee, this being the first Russian campaign in mountain Daghestan, as distinguished from the eastern declivities, and the narrow strip of flat land forming the Caspian coast.

Pestel, chosen for his command by Yermóloff himself, proved unworthy of his confidence. Against orders he advanced to Bashli, chief town of Karakaitagh, was there surrounded by the allies in vast numbers, and attacked in the narrow streets, where artillery could not operate. It was thanks only to the valour and ability of Colonel Meeshtchenko and others that, with a loss of 12 officers and 500 men, the Russians secured their retreat to Derbend. All Daghestan went wild with joy; and in distant Tabriz Abbas Mirza celebrated the victory with feasting and cannon-fire.

The triumph, however, was of short duration. Yermóloff moved by way of Tarkou on Mekhtoulee, sacked Paraoul, the capital, which was found abandoned, and stormed Djengoutai. The ruler fled, in company with Seyid Effendi, a learned Mussulman teacher, who had taken a leading

part in stirring up the conflict, and the Avar Khan. At the same time Bashli, at Yermóloff's command, was retaken and destroyed by Meeshtchenko, who forced Pestel's hand. The people of Mekhtoulee made their submission; the khanate was abolished; the success of the Russians, on both sides, complete.

Yermóloff admitted frankly, even cynically, the part played by the artillery in this short campaign. The natives had none, nor had they ever heard the sound of cannon. "Such a convincing proof of our rights could not fail," he wrote, "to give me the advantage. It is very interesting to see the first effect of this innocent means on the heart of man, and I learnt how useful it was to be possessed of the one when unable all at once to conquer the other."[1] Such cynicism was habitual with him; but to do justice to the contradictory nature of this remarkable man, it is right to add the following instance of his behaviour on the same occasion. Going the round of the camp at night, alone and wrapped in his cloak, Yermóloff overheard, without being noticed, the strictures passed by the soldiery on his apparently over-cautious movements. One officer in particular, Captain Gognieff, abused him in the coarsest and most ribald terms. Next day when, thanks entirely to Yermóloff's forethought, a dangerous ridge, the key of the enemy's position, had been taken with little loss, he addressed his astonished detractor as follows: "Thanks, Gognieff! You, with your company, were the first over the breastworks; I congratulate you on winning the Cross of St. Vladeemir. But have a care, my friend, not to abuse me again as you did last night."

Yermóloff retired to the Line, postponing his next advance

[1] See Yermóloff's letter of 10th February 1819 to Davueedoff, the famous poet-partisan: Pogódin, p. 297.

to the following year, and busied himself with the increase of the army of occupation.

In April 1819, at his request, the Emperor agreed to the following establishment for the Georgian army corps, *i.e.* for the regular troops in the Caucasus, not including the Cossacks: "The number of regiments to remain as before, that is, 8 infantry, 4 chasseurs, 2 grenadier, and 1 carbineer regiment, 15 in all. Each of these regiments I order to to be raised to 3900 men, meaning 300 non-commissioned officers, and 3600 privates. Each battalion will consist of 100 non-commissioned officers and 1200 men. If with this number of men you consider it necessary to increase the complement of officers, you are permitted to add one for each company, which means 12 additional officers for each regiment; the already existing number of staff-officers—7 to each regiment—I consider sufficient.

"In this way the army corps entrusted to you can, certainly, always have under arms more than 50,000 efficients."[1]

The additional 26,000 men required to carry out this order were sent in fully-formed regiments armed with a new musket. It was intended that the *cadres* of these regiments should return to Russia after filling up the ranks of the Georgian army corps, but some of them remained permanently in the Caucasus.

The strength of several of these Caucasian regiments was raised, a few years later, to five battalions, *i.e.* more than six thousand officers and men. Such were the Ápsheron, Koureen, Kabardán, Shirván, Navagheen, and one or two more, which served throughout the coming war and achieved undying fame on many a hard-fought field. Their organisation is worthy of note, as it had much to

[1] Akti, vi. i. 487.

do with the subjugation of the Caucasus, and was unlike anything known to Western Europe—in modern times, at least.

"The fundamental idea (Yermóloff's or Veliameenoff's) was to establish the staff-quarters of these permanent regiments of the Caucasus at points of strategic importance, protected by fortifications, the defence of which was to be entrusted to the married companies, who were also to undertake, develop, and steadily improve the economy," in its original sense of housekeeping, "of the whole regiment, a matter of much import to the soldier's welfare, especially when campaigning. At the same time, in the event of war or an alarm of any kind, the country being but newly subjugated, and the people not yet to be trusted, these places would serve as rallying-points under the protection of the said married companies, who were to form their permanent garrison, and might be expected to defend them to the utmost as being their very house and home. All these staff-quarters were founded and built by the soldiers themselves. It was they who cut down the trees and hauled the timber from the nearest mountains; who quarried the stone, and made the bricks and cement; who were their own carpenters, and masons, and painters. The soldier of the Caucasus was a labourer as well as a fighting man, and the construction of huge buildings and the erection of whole staff-quarters was effected by him at an incredibly small cost."[1]

Another writer (M. Kazbek) says: "The regiment of the Caucasus in the 'thirties was not only a fighting force, but an independent administrative unit, having in itself all that was necessary for service, for permanent existence, and 'economy' (including clothing, commissariat, &c.). Each

[1] Potto, ii. p. 638.

company formed in turn a small but highly developed unit of 300 men, with its own 'economy,' owning sometimes 4 troikas (threes) of horses, 4 pairs of bullocks, and having 25 tailors and bootmakers in its ranks. The necessity for such a system arose from the conditions of life obtaining at the time. A company of soldiers shut up in a fort and left to take care of itself—without markets, craftsmen, or traders—had perforce to be self-contained. The Government gave only the raw material of food and dress, besides money, with which nothing could be purchased. In these circumstances, the staff-quarters became, in point of fact, military colonies, the married men inhabiting sort of suburbs, and practising regimental 'housekeeping' on a large scale. In truth it was the beginning of military colonisation, and was adopted at the time not as a means of civilisation, but out of financial considerations."

To this it must be added that those were days of long service, twenty-five years, and often enough men remained with the colours much longer, so that father and son might be seen fighting side by side. The result was that the regiment became one huge family or clan, in which the feeling of *esprit de corps* reached an extraordinary development, and this fact, coupled with continual fighting, made these famous regiments a military force of the very highest class.[1]

The Cossacks of the Line at this time or soon after formed nine regiments of about 15,000 officers and men, without counting the reserves.

In the summer of 1819 the allies, who had recovered their courage during the winter, gathered their forces to attack the Russians both north and south. Communica-

[1] In the above brief description points of resemblance to the Roman legions are sufficiently obvious. A comparison between the Térek and Koubán in the first half of the nineteenth century and some of the Roman frontiers at the dawn of Christianity would possibly prove of very great interest.

tions with Derbend were broken; the Kioureen khanate, Koubá, threatened.

Pestel, the incompetent, had been sent back to Russia in disgrace, and in his place Yermóloff, better inspired this time, chose Major-General Madátoff, a native of Karabágh, who had distinguished himself in the Napoleonic wars. Paskiévitch, who never spared any of Yermóloff's men, stigmatised him afterwards as a mere cavalry leader. But Madátoff was a *beau sabreur* and something more, and to him Yermóloff owed more of his success than to any one save Veliameenoff.[1] Himself a native, Madátoff understood, as no Russian could, the native mind and character, while his knowledge of local languages was an additional advantage. It was these qualifications that enabled him to raise and organise a large body of native cavalry, which proved of inestimable service in the ensuing campaigns.

But even with this addition, Madátoff's force, comprising but 2 battalions of infantry, 300 Cossacks, 6 field and 2 horse artillery guns, was so weak, that Yermóloff gave strict orders to do no more than keep watch on Tabassarán. Madátoff, however, whose ideas of subordination were somewhat loose, seeing his opportunity, made a dash with part of his troops into the heart of that province, took the enemy by surprise, and routed them completely. Tabassarán submitted and swore allegiance to the Tsar. Yermóloff, magnanimous as usual, awarded his lieutenant unstinted praise, but repeated his caution in still more positive terms; again, however, with like results. Madátoff retiring to Derbend, and turning his attention to Karakaitagh, in October marched on Bashli, retook that town, and followed up this feat by capturing

[1] "If I could rely on each of my other lieutenants as on you, my position would not be so difficult."—Yermóloff to Madátoff, 22nd August 1819: Pogódin, p. 285.

Yanghi-kent, the residence of the outsmi. The latter fled over the mountains to Akoushá; his subjects renounced him, and, like their neighbours, took the oath of allegiance to Russia.

While these events were taking place the Khan of Shekeen, who had followed Madátoff in the field, died, leaving no direct heir. At Yermóloff's orders Noukhá, the capital, was at once occupied by his troops, and the khanate proclaimed a Russian province (29th August 1819).

At the end of August the Avar Khan (Akhmet), collecting 6000 men, made his appearance at Vnezápnaya, but was routed by Yermóloff with great loss. Akhmet was then deposed and his khanate handed over to his illegitimate son, Sourkhai, who ruled it until 1828.

About this time, while Vnezápnaya was building, a number of troop horses were driven off by the Tchetchens, and Yermóloff, finding that the guilty parties belonged to a clan which had long been established on the Koumik steppe, determined to punish them for their raid and, at the same time, rid the lowlands of their presence once for all. To attain this end he deemed it necessary to read them such a bloody lesson as would drive them to a voluntary abandonment of their existing settlements, and chose Dadi-Yourt, a rich and populous aoul on the banks of the Térek, as the scene of his experiment. The inhabitants were reputed robbers all, but so skilled in covering the traces of their nefarious proceedings that it was seldom possible to prove their guilt. General Sisóyeff was ordered to make a secret approach, surround the village, and summon the population to retire forthwith to beyond the Soundja. In case of refusal—and nothing else could be expected—he was to take the place by assault and give no quarter.

"On the 15th September, at dawn, Sisóyeff drew near. Six companies of the Kabardá regiment and 700 Cossacks, with six guns, were drawn up in battle array, waiting for an answer. The villagers refused to accept the proffered conditions, and the infantry soldiers were ordered to attack. The Tchetchens on their side prepared to defend themselves, and a desperate, sanguinary struggle began, such as the Russian troops had never up till then experienced in the Caucasus. . . . Each house, surrounded by a high stone wall, and forming a kind of petty fortress, had first to be battered by the artillery and then taken by assault. The soldiers dragged the guns about by hand from one house to another, and put them in position under a heavy point-blank musketry fire, large numbers of the gunners being killed or wounded. But their places were taken by linesmen and Cossacks, and the firing maintained. No sooner was even the smallest breach effected than the soldiers dashed through it, and then, in the dark, close houses, a bloody and viewless fight took place between bayonets on one side and *kindjals* on the other. Not a single soldier once entangled in the labyrinth of houses could hope to retreat; still less the Tchetchens, who were attacked for the first time in a village from which they had had no time to remove their families. The exasperation on either side increased with every fresh victim. Some of the natives, seeing defeat to be inevitable, slaughtered their wives and children under the eyes of the soldiers; many of the women threw themselves on the latter knife in hand, or in despair leaped into the burning buildings and perished in the flames. The losses on both sides grew rapidly. Finally it was necessary to dismount the greater part of the Cossacks and send them to the aid of the Kabardá men, and even then

the terrible slaughter was prolonged for some mortal hours. The aoul was only captured at last, when of the numerous inhabitants of Dadi-Yourt only fourteen men remained alive, and these sorely wounded. One hundred and forty women and children were taken prisoners, spared by the soldiers when all defence was at an end and they cried for mercy. Many of the women, and even some of the children, were wounded; but double the number had been killed or burnt. The soldiers took a rich booty, for the villagers, who lived mainly by brigandage and lost no occasion of harrying the Russian settlements, were rich. The aoul was, in the literal sense of the words, destroyed to its foundations."[1]

Such were Yermóloff's methods; and it cannot be denied that, as in the present case, they were immediately effective. The remaining villages of the clan were deserted, the inhabitants seeking refuge in Tchetchnia proper. But they took a bloody revenge during the next thirty years, and it is strange that Russian writers, so far, fail to see any connection between the vaunted "Yermóloff system" and the Murid war.

It was now the turn of Akoushá, and against that warlike and powerful confederation the commander-in-chief, early in November, moved in person with nine battalions and many guns, Madátoff from Karakaitagh being ordered up in support.[2] Crossing the frontier of Akoushá, Yermóloff found farther progress barred by a lofty ridge occupied in strength by the enemy. The notables of the confederation came into camp with the

[1] Potto, vol. II. i. pp. 108–9.

[2] Yermóloff in his report to the Emperor of the 12th February 1819, asking urgently for three more regiments of infantry and two companies of light artillery, declared that the Akoushintsi were "the cause of all the trouble": Akti, vi. i. p. 486.

ostensible object of preventing hostilities. They were well received, treated with every hospitality, while of military action not a word was said. They rejected, however, according to the Russians, the most moderate terms, and Yermóloff saw that force alone would bring about their submission. But to storm the ridge would, even if successful, involve heavy loss, such as the Russian commander-in-chief had no mind to suffer if it could by any means be avoided. A path existed by which the seemingly impregnable position held by the Akoushintsi could be turned, if only they could be taken by surprise. Yermóloff gave orders to receive the elders with considerable politeness, feast them generously, display for their benefit all the pearls of Oriental eloquence, but not to let them go home before midnight. So said, so done. Returning late at night, they at once called a *djamat* or council, and recounted their impressions. They stated that the Russian troops were few in number, the soldiers worn out, and, generally speaking, in such a condition that it would hardly be dignified to use arms against them. This comforting news spread rapidly, and the Akoushintsi, secure in their power, went quietly to sleep without a thought of what waited them on the morrow. Yet that terrible morrow had already begun.[1]

No sooner had the elders left the camp than the troops stood noiselessly to arms, and cautiously and in silence moved towards the enemy's position, seven or eight versts off. It was a moonlight night and very clear; but the advance was unobserved by the foe, whose camp-fires were dying down when the whole of the Russian detachment arrived within gun-fire of their entrenchments. In the distance was visible the large village of Lavashee,

[1] Potto, vol. II. ii. p. 257.

in front of it a series of steep entrenched acclivities. The left flank ended in a fortified mound, the right abutted on an abyss, in the bottom of which ran the little river Manass. Through this chasm at night Prince Madátoff led his troops, forded the river, and, by the path discovered by the Cossacks, mounted the opposite ridge, whence fire could be opened along the whole of the enemy's position. The road to Akoushá and even communications with the village of Lavashee were cut off. Meantime the main division, under Yermóloff, deployed in front of the enemy, having on its right the native cavalry of the Shamkhal, recruited by him in Tarkou and Mekhtoulee for reasons of a purely political character. "I have absolutely no need of these scoundrels," wrote Yermóloff, "but had them collected in order to sow enmity between them and the Akoushintsi and bring about dissensions that might be useful in future."

On the 19th December was fought the battle of Lavashee, of which the issue, considering the force of the Russians and the success of their flanking movement, could never be in doubt. The Akoushintsi were totally defeated and Lavashee taken. Yermóloff praises these people for their morality, good-nature, and industry, and attributes their superiority over their neighbours to the fact that with them idleness was a vice. "But dissoluteness has already made its appearance in the wake of strong drink," for which of course they had to thank Russian "civilisation." Akoushá, the chief village, was found abandoned, and the confederation, which had fed its pride for three-quarters of a century on the memory of Nadir Shah's defeat, bowed to the Russian yoke, and kept faith with the conqueror for some seven years.

CHAPTER IX

1820–1825

Kazi-Koumoukh conquered — Shirván absorbed — War between Persia and Turkey — Annexation of Karabágh — Devastation of Kabardá — Ammalat Bek — Growth of Muridism — Grékoff — Tchetchen rising — Beiboulat — Ameer-Hadji-Yourt destroyed — Gherzel Aoul besieged — Assassination of Grékoff and Lissaniévitch

Not only in the Caucasus, but throughout Russia, and, above all, in distant St. Petersburg, this rapid series of triumphant campaigns had an overpowering effect. Yermóloff's name was on all men's lips, Yermóloff's heroic figure filled all men's eyes. He had many enemies, indeed, in the higher ranks of the army and at Court, but Alexander I., always well disposed towards him, was now more than ever impelled to support one who, to all appearance, so completely justified his confidence and favour. If any misgivings were felt as to the ultimate result of the Persian mission they were as yet faint, while, in regard to the Caucasus proper, Yermóloff's policy and actions seemed to presage unqualified and permanent success. One by one the khanates and other independent States, by policy or by arms, were being brought within the fold of the empire. Even internal Daghestan, hitherto inaccessible, was apparently no more able to resist the might of Russia than the outlying territories. Russian bayonets glittered on the mountain passes; Russian cannon reverberated in the valleys and defiles. Victory followed victory, and the conquered peoples not only bowed their necks to the yoke, but, in

many cases, rendered willing service against the still recalcitrant tribesmen, fighting gallantly in the ranks of the Infidel invader. What was left of Daghestan, Yermóloff threatened to make short work of; nor was he less confident of success in Tchetchnia and the west. It is abundantly evident that to him the complete and permanent conquest of the Caucasus was a matter of a few short years at most, so overweening was his belief in his own power and genius, so blind his ignorance of the latent forces that even now were gathering head against him, gaining strength, indeed, with every seeming success of his vaunted policy, every step in advance of his victorious armies. The mighty edifice he was rearing had its foundations in the sand, and before long was to come tumbling about its builder's ears.

Meantime, however, as far as could be seen, all went well. There was peace with Turkey and Persia; Georgia was quiet; Shekeen had been annexed without fighting; Grozny, Vnezápnaya, and the intermediate forts, built to contain the Tchetchens; Mekhtoulee, Tabassarán, Kaitagh, Akoushá, Avaria, had submitted to force of arms. It was now the turn of Kazi-Koumoukh, and in June 1820 Madátoff, exceeding, as usual, Yermóloff's expectations, though not, this time, his instructions, added this important khanate to the list of conquests in a campaign that lasted only two weeks.[1]

Madátoff, starting from Shirván, sent his cavalry, consisting of one sotnia of Cossacks and 1000 native horsemen, round by the sea-coast provinces, while the infantry and artillery—five battalions with fourteen guns—under his own command, marched straight to the objective over

[1] Of this campaign Van Halen has left a very interesting description: *op. cit.*, vol. ii. chap. xix.

the main chain of the Caucasus, a remarkable feat, unequalled at that time in the annals of Caucasian warfare. Descending into Koubá, he entered the capital of that name, where he was joined by Aslan Khan, the loyal ruler of Kioureen, with 800 native cavalry; and, continuing his march, traversed that country, and on the 11th June, at Tchirag, crossed the frontier of Kazi-Koumoukh. The enemy were gathered to the number of 20,000 near Khosrek, and defended themselves gallantly, but were beaten in the field, after which Khosrek was taken by storm. The khan, Sourkhai, fled to his capital, Koumoukh, but the inhabitants shut the gates against him, and, all opposition having ceased, Madátoff's little army marched in. Aslan was solemnly invested, and, in the name of the Tsar, proclaimed Khan of Kazi-Koumoukh; he, on his part, undertaking to guard his frontiers and march his troops whither the Russian authorities might bid him; to allow the construction of forts and roads through his dominions; to pay a yearly tribute of Rs. 3000; and to appoint a separate naib to govern Kioureen under him.

The Russians left Koumoukh on the 19th June, and on the return journey received the voluntary submission of the free community of Koubatchee, a remarkable people dwelling 5000 feet above the Caspian in the mountains of Kaitagh, and famous throughout the Caucasus as workers in metal, more especially as makers of guns, pistols, swords and daggers, notable less, perhaps, for their excellence as weapons than for their artistic workmanship.

Yermóloff thanked Madátoff once more for his brilliant conduct of yet another campaign, and reported to the Emperor that "the subjugation of Daghestan, begun last year, is now complete; and this country, proud, warlike,

and hitherto unconquered, has fallen at the sacred feet of your Imperial Majesty." As a matter of fact, the inner western strip of Daghestan, more remote and inaccessible even than Kazi-Koumoukh, remained untouched, and many communities knew the Russians only by name; but by far the larger and richer portion of the country had now sworn allegiance to Russia, and Yermóloff felt justified in disregarding the little that remained. In this he was wrong, as the sequence proved; but he could hardly be expected to realise that such sledge-hammer blows were but forging the weapons wherewith certain men of Avaria, whose very names were as yet unknown, would, within a few years, destroy the greater part of his work, and thereafter defy the power of Russia for nearly half a century. It is a most pregnant fact that Yermóloff prepared the way for Shamil as surely as that great leader for the final success of Russia. The one by his ruthless methods aroused that fierce spirit of fanaticism and independence which alone made political union possible amongst the turbulent tribesmen of Daghestan and Tchetchnia. The other, the very incarnation of that spirit, by a despotism no less ruthless, rendered them amenable to discipline, and willing, at the end of their long and heroic struggle for freedom, to accept the yoke of a somewhat milder and more civilised generation of Russians. It is the lessons to be drawn from such facts as these that give the study of military history its highest value, compared to which the deductions of the mere soldier are of little importance. It is not, in the long run, the battles and sieges that signify, but the permanent effect on the human race of the changes they help to bring about.

Yermóloff had, to use his own words, obtained possession of the Shekeen khanate "by interpreting treaties

as Mussulmans interpret the Koran, that is, according to circumstances." He was now to acquire Shirván by his "understanding of the khan's character." Moustafa, an old man, "whose natural timidity had been intensified by hypochondria," having lived through many troubles and vicissitudes of fortune, had acquired a profound distrust of the Russians. Count Zóuboff in 1796 had transferred the throne of Shirván to his cousin, Kasim, but no sooner had the Russians retired than Moustafa recovered possession, and retained his independence until the fall of Gandja and conquest of Karabágh in Tsitsiánoff's time. He had then submitted to Russian suzerainty, but foreseeing, as Yermóloff's policy developed, the fate in store for him, endeavoured in a feeble way to avert it. The catastrophe was precipitated by Colonel Pestel's dubious conduct in showing friendly deference to the fugitive Kasim. Moustafa's suspicions became certainties; no assurances could allay them. He at first determined on resistance, and gathered his armed forces, such as they were; but when Yermóloff seized the occasion to remonstrate and threaten with his habitual violence, the old khan's courage evaporated, and abandoning even his wives and children, he fled to Persia. On the 30th August 1820 Shirván was proclaimed a Russian province.

So the process of absorption went on, and with such unvarying success that the record may seem monotonous and even wearisome. But the tale is nearly complete, and it cannot well be omitted if we would rightly understand what is to come. Bournaya, the fortress already mentioned, overhanging Tarkou where the northern mountains break on the Caspian, was built in 1821 by Veliameenoff, and its construction so alarmed the natives that a short campaign was necessary to "quiet" them. Aimiakee was

destroyed, and Akhmet, Khan of Avaria, who had taken the lead in the disturbances, wounded.

During the whole of the year 1821 Yermóloff was absent from the Caucasus, in European Russia or at Laibach, where the seemingly brilliant success of his four years' command won him the warm personal commendation of his Imperial Master.

Peace reigned throughout the Caucasus, or what counted as peace in those regions, and Yermóloff's absence was little felt, for the reins of government were in the strong hands of Veliameenoff. But beyond the Russian border unlooked-for hostilities compelled the attention of more than one European Power.

It were idle, perhaps, to inquire what effect the religious differences of Muhammadans have had on the history of the world, but there can be no doubt that the hatred and bitterness cherished by the followers of Ali against the Sunnites have at various times exerted a very considerable influence on the fortunes of Christian and Mussulman alike. Racial difference would, in any case, have barred a condition of permanent alliance or friendship between Turk and Persian. Racial difference, in all probability, lay at the very root of their religious antagonisms. But the latter, renewed and strengthened from year to year through the centuries by the poignant ceremonies commemorating the deaths of Hassan and Husayn, rendered difficult even such temporary co-operation as political expediency must otherwise from time to time have determined. Russia's earliest successes in Transcaucasia were due to the quarrels between Persian and Afghan, Turk and Persian; nor ever once did the Muhammadan Powers make any serious effort in common against the northern invader. When for a moment they did combine, it was

with no such sincerity as alone could promise any large measure of success, and, in fact, nearly all Russia's wars with Persia and Turkey were waged against one or other Power singly. On the rare occasions when, as in 1808–9, she fought both at once, it was not for long, nor was there any effective co-operation against her.[1] Towards the end of the sixteenth century the Shah offered the provinces of Baku and Derbend to the Tsar, Feodor Ivanovitch, in return for Russian aid against the Turk, but as the latter was already in possession, and not easily to be ousted, nothing came of it, and Shah Abbas afterwards recovered these territories for Persia. Later, Sultan Husayn sought Peter's help against Mahmoud, the Afghan. When, on the contrary, Russia's southern neighbours threatened to combine against her, she found it easy, as a rule, to keep them apart, so that each might be dealt with in turn; and now, in 1821, her intriguing agent, Mazaróvitch, against the will, indeed, of the Tsar, succeeded, thanks to misplaced zeal, in bringing about an armed conflict between Persia and Turkey.

Yermóloff was away, and Mazaróvitch, meantime, received his instructions from far-off St. Petersburg only, his information sometimes from nearer sources. He knew of the strained relations between Russia and Turkey, and learning through a sure channel that the Tsar had withdrawn his ambassador from Constantinople, he concluded, naturally enough, that a declaration of war would speedily

[1] Monteith declares that "the only means of inducing them to act effectually in a common cause would be to assign different lines of attack to their armies. The rehearsal of the Muhammadan prayers would suffice to set two armies fighting. When I served with the Persian army, at a time when the Persians and Turks were both at war with Russia, it was always found necessary that the two encampments should be at some distance from each other, and even that was not always sufficient to prevent quarrels and bloodshed:" *op. cit.*, p. 155.

follow. In these circumstances, thinking to render his country a signal service, he pushed Abbas Mirza into war with the Turk. That prince, young, ambitious, and full of vainglory, with an army drilled and officered by Englishmen, with artillery supplied and served by them, was only too willing to seize the opportunity to extend his dominions and win fame and treasure at the expense of his western neighbours, who, expecting nothing less, were taken quite unprepared. The British officers were forbidden by their country's representative to cross the frontier, and withdrew from Abbas Mirza's camp covered with contumely; but the Pasha of Moush alone made any show of resistance, and the provinces of Bayazid and Kars were soon overrun, and to a great extent devastated.[1]

Now, a conflict between Persia and Turkey would only have suited Russia, at this time, in the event of her declaring war against the latter Power; but Alexander I., so far from being desirous of such a contingency, was bent on averting it if possible. The withdrawal of his ambassador was meant as a warning, and as such had the desired effect. The Porte gave way, the peace was not broken. Meantime, Abbas Mirza's proceedings came singularly *mal à propos*, and seriously embarrassed the Court of St. Petersburg, which hastened to instruct its agents accordingly. England, however, had already intervened with decisive effect. Her emissary found his way to Abbas Mirza's camp, and succeeded in persuading the latter that Russia was not in a position to declare war against Turkey without the consent of the other European Powers, who in this matter were at one with England.[2] The prospect of fighting Turkey single-handed, against the will of both England

[1] Mazarόvitch to Yermόloff, 7th November 1821: Akti, vi. ii. 251.
[2] Mazarόvitch to Yermόloff, 11th October 1821: Akti, vi. ii. 250.

and Russia, alarmed the Persian prince, or, at least, his advisers, and the Persian army retired to its own side of the border. Meantime, Abbas Mirza's elder brother, Mahmed (who died soon after), for once in agreement with him, sacked some villages in the neighbourhood of Bagdad, and fought an inconsiderable engagement with the Turks; nor was peace concluded (at Erzeroum) until the summer of 1823, but there was no more fighting.

The British Government, on the information of its representative, Willock, complained through Prince Lieven of Mazarόvitch's conduct, and Alexander I., while professing disbelief in the accusations brought against him, wrote to Yermόloff, who had meantime returned to Tiflis, to the effect that it would be as well to make some inquiry.[1] Yermόloff, who had much reason to be grateful to Mazarόvitch, made a vigorous though far from convincing defence, and the matter was allowed to drop.[2] But we have Mazarόvitch's own naïve admission that he had egged on the Persians, and there can be little doubt that he was mainly responsible for the outbreak of hostilities.[3]

Of Yermόloff's prejudice against England we have more than one proof in his correspondence at this period; and on the 9th November 1821 he wrote to Nesselrode in regard to English efforts to mollify Abbas Mirza's rage against the Turks: "Of course Abbas Mirza, a Muhammadan ruler, could not have in view to avenge the followers of Christ (the pretended object of the war), nor need one doubt that in the calculations of the British Government commercial advantages outweigh the blood of slaughtered Christians."[4]

The year 1822 is chiefly memorable for the transference

[1] Nesselrode to Yermόloff, 10th March 1822: Akti, vi. ii. 258.
[2] Yermόloff to Nesselrode, 27th March 1822: Akti, vi. ii. 259.
[3] Mazarόvitch to Yermόloff, 11th October 1821: Akti, vi. ii. 250.
[4] Akti, vi. ii. 252.

of the central part of the Line to the left bank of the Térek, that is, into the Kabardán country, followed by local disturbances and the inevitable punitive expedition, in the course of which Yermóloff "ruined and dispersed all Kabardá, so that at the present time not more than 10,000 of them remain,"[1] and for the annexation of Karabágh, or Shoushá, that naturally rich province, ruined by misrule and constant warfare, falling an easy prey to Yermóloff's policy in much the same way as Shirván. A quarrel between the khan and a pretender led to threats on the part of Russia. The khan took alarm and fled; his enemy was exiled, and towards the end of 1822 the dominions of the Tsar were by mere proclamation enriched by one more province. Of all the khanates, Talish, the most distant, alone remained independent, for the reason that its rulers were implacably hostile to Persia.

The following year was troubled by a series of intrigues leading to the treacherous murder of Colonel Verkhóvsky by Ammalat Bek, nephew of the Shamkhal, whose reward was to be the hand of the beautiful Princess Saltanette, daughter of Akhmet Khan. Ammalat, who, though a State prisoner, had acquired the complete confidence and friendship of Verkhóvsky, killed him while out riding, and fled to Khounzakh, the capital of Avaria, but only to find that his crime had been not less vain than cruel. The khan was dead, and his widow spurned the unhappy lover from her door.[2]

[1] Prince Shakhovskoi's report to Baron Rosen, 24th November 1834: Akti, viii. 635. The proud and once powerful Kabardáns had been wofully ravaged by the plague, which broke out early in the nineteenth century and lasted fourteen years. They were treated by Yermóloff with gross cruelty and injustice.

[2] Bestouzheff's (Marlinsky's) novel, based upon this romantic episode, was for many years a favourite with Russian readers. It has quite recently been published in an English translation from the French version of Dumas, the elder, under the title of "The Snow on Shah Dagh and Ammalat Bek," London, Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co., Ltd. (no date).

Ammalat found many sympathisers, and again it was thought necessary to send an expedition against the turbulent tribes dwelling between the Shamkhalate and Avaria. Major-General Krabbe destroyed Karanai, but was repulsed from Erpelee (30th July 1823), and retired to Kafir-koumuik, leaving Colonel Yevréinoff in command. The latter was there attacked by a strong force of the enemy, but routed them completely with a loss of 3 officers and 45 men on the Russian side. Yermóloff, disquieted, nevertheless, at the news from Daghestan, himself arrived in October, when the presence of grim "Yarmoul," though with only a small additional force, sufficed to bring the rebels to their knees. The troops went into winter quarters, for the first time, in mountain Daghestan, occupying various villages of Mekhtoulee, where for the officers, at least, the commander-in-chief setting the example, the time passed pleasantly enough in the company of native wives.

Not, however, that Yermóloff was idle. He began to comprehend dimly the danger to be apprehended from the growth of religious fanaticism, which could now no longer fail to attract his attention. At his instance the Shamkhal procured a visit from Seyid-Effendi, whom Yermóloff, at more than one secret interview under cover of night, sought to win over to Russian interests, seemingly with success.[1] He enjoined, moreover, on Aslan Khan, of Kazi-Koumoukh and Kioura, the duty of watching the movement most carefully, and by various measures endeavoured to secure the loyalty and devotion of influential men throughout Daghestan, or to rid himself of them. To this policy was due, amongst other results, a sanguinary episode, which drew forth a somewhat feeble remonstrance from the humane Alexander I.

[1] Pogódin, p. 337.

In Kaitágh dwelt at the time a certain Abdoulla, brother-in-law of Shaykh Ali, the deposed ruler of Derbend. Minor disturbances had not yet ceased in that country; brigandage was rife, and Abdoulla was pointed out as the chief culprit. All endeavours to secure his person failed, and Krabbe, who commanded in the district, put a price on him dead or alive. Then Mahmed-Khan, son of the late outsmi, Adil-Ghirei, undertook to compass Abdoulla's destruction on condition that his father's personal domains should be settled upon him. Yermóloff's consent having been obtained, Mahmed, with a few companions, made his way by night to his victim's dwelling, and laid a mine in the lower storey, utilised, as is customary in Daghestan, for storage and stabling. When the explosion followed, Abdoulla, his wives, his children, and his servants, were blown to pieces, with the exception of his eldest son Zoal, who was absent, and his youngest, an infant in arms, who escaped by a "miracle." "The news of a house being blown up wherein sixteen innocent persons perished for one guilty," wrote Alexander to Yermóloff, "is extremely disagreeable to me." To which his faithful lieutenant retorted: "There was no other way to destroy the villain, and one cannot call those who gave refuge to Abdoulla, and assisted him in his acts of brigandage, entirely innocent."

Peace reigned in Daghestan, and lasted until the commencement of the Turkish war in 1828; but the Caucasus was hydra-headed, and Yermóloff, for all his strength and energy, no Hercules. The mountains were conquered—finally, he thought—the forests defied him. Tchetchnia, harassed, harried, but never subdued, driven to desperation by Russian encroachments and Yermóloff's avowed determination to extinguish its independence, broke out, in

1824, into open hostility. Mussulman fanaticism, roused in Daghestan by his "conquests," but driven, temporarily, to concealment through fear of his cannon and bayonets, found a ready outlet in Tchetchnia, and focussed there all the hatred and discontent that had long been gathering head amongst the forest-dwellers. The Russians, be it noted, assign religious fanaticism as the primary cause of this and all similar outbreaks; but in truth it was only secondary. It was in the rôle of invaders, oppressors, conquerors—or, to use the current euphemism, civilisers—that they excited such bitter resentment; nor, to do them justice, did they ever attempt to proselytise. On the other hand, zeal for the religion of Muhammad, though mighty the part it played henceforth, was but as air in a blow-pipe feeding a flame that already existed. The Ghazavát would never have been preached in the Caucasus had the Russians been peaceful and friendly neighbours.

Yermóloff had divided the Line into two separate commands, the right flank and the left; the latter, comprising the countries watered by the Térek and its affluents, being entrusted to General Grékoff, a man of talent and energy, but even more cruel and unscrupulous than his chief. For six years, from the building of Grozny in 1818, Grékoff devoted himself heart and soul to the carrying out of Yermóloff's policy and instructions. Forts were built, forests either cut down or penetrated by broad alleys giving access to the more important aouls in the interior,[1] hostile villages raided and destroyed, and Russian legal procedure forced on a people who clung with extreme tenacity to their customary law. In short, Grékoff seems to have acted in strict conformity with Yermóloff's ferocious threats "to

[1] This effective means of warfare was due, like so much else, to the initiative of Veliameenoff.

destroy aouls, hang hostages, and slaughter women and children."[1] Whatever the faults of the Tchetchens, no impartial reader of the Russian accounts of this period—and we have no other—can doubt that they were cruelly oppressed. The immediate outward result was the rising of 1824, for which the signal was given by a prophet, a mere tool apparently of Beiboulat, the popular leader, who claimed to have been honoured by the visit of an angel, bearing him credentials from Allah! The farce was so gross that it could have found acceptance, even amongst the Tchetchens, with none but those willing to be deceived; and herein we have further proof, if any be wanted, of the fact that religious fanaticism was at first but a means to an end, and that end a secular one, namely, deliverance from an enemy whose one merit was complete tolerance in matters of religion. The Russian commander resorted to all his usual methods, but in vain. One of the popular leaders was publicly flogged to death, others within an inch of their lives.[2] But no punishment he was able to inflict made any serious impression on the enemy; or rather, his cruelty served only to exasperate them. The rebellion spread from the Soulák to the Upper Soundja, and involved the people of Aksai, a section of the Koumuiks. The troops at Grékoff's disposal were insufficient in numbers to cope with so extensive a movement; yet reinforcements were not to be had, for Yermóloff's many conquests gave ample occupation to the army distributed in Daghestan and Transcaucasia; while, to the west, Kabardá was in insurrection,

[1] Doubróvin, vol. vi. p. 302.

[2] *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, x. p. 81: "Totoush and Erezhakoff received each, at Kostek, the people being assembled, 2000 blows, and Beiboulat's trusty support and hope amongst the Ingoosh, Djemboulat Tchetchoyeff, terror of the road and brigand unmatched, passed six times through the ranks, a thousand strong, without medical help, and when, under the last blows, he fell dead, was strung up on a gallows as an example to others."

and the Koubán harassed by the Tcherkess and kindred tribes. Grékoff marched hither and thither, but the Tchetchens evaded him or suffered only minor defeats, and on the 9th July 1825 achieved a success of which the moral effect was overwhelming. The Russian commander had, that day, reached Aksai with a small force of all arms. The inhabitants professed submission, but the majority fled soon afterwards and joined the insurgents in the neighbouring forest. The same night a mixed band, 2000 in number, made a descent on Ameer-Hadji-Yourt, a small fort, 25 versts away, on the banks of the Térek. The garrison was taken by surprise, and of 184 officers and men, two-thirds were killed or captured.[1] Next day the victors made their appearance before the fortress of Gherzel aoul, and, with numbers swollen to 5000 as a consequence of their success, proceeded to lay siege to that place.[2] The garrison consisted of about 500 men under Major Pantelié-yeff, a brave and energetic officer, and though the defences were weak and the enemy succeeded in diverting the course of the Aksai, thus depriving the defenders of all water except the little they could obtain at night with difficulty and danger, they held out against repeated assaults until relieved on the 15th by a force of about 1500 men under Generals Lissaniévitch and Grékoff, the former, who, as chief of the Térek province, was Grékoff's superior officer, having arrived in hot haste with such troops as he could collect. The following day the Russian commanders invited the remaining inhabitants of the adjoining village of Aksai, whose behaviour during the siege had been more than doubtful, though they had not actually joined the enemy, to come in and make their submission. Lissanié-

[1] *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, x. 98.

[2] *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, x. 106 and following pages, where the capture of Ameer-Hadji-Yourt and subsequent events at Gherzel aoul are related in full.

vitch had obtained a list containing the names of the more influential villagers, and especially of those amongst them who were disaffected to the Russians, and his object was to arrest and punish them. Grékoff, who knew the native character better, pointed out the impolicy of a course of action which could only disturb the Koumuik population and destroy all confidence in the good faith of the Russian authorities; but his superior refused to be guided by any such argument. On the afternoon of the 16th the men of Aksai, to the number of 300, made their appearance and were conducted into the fort, where no precautions had been taken, though the greater part of the garrison was outside foraging and cutting wood. The two Russian generals came down from the roof of their temporary quarters, and, accompanied by a few subordinate officers, went up to the crowd of natives, many of whom were armed. Lissaniévitch at once begun abusing them in Tartar, a language he spoke fluently, using insulting terms, and accusing them of the grossest treachery. He threatened to destroy the most guilty amongst them, and proceeded to call them out by name from the list in his hand. The first two stepped forward and gave up their *kindjals*[1] without a word; but when it came to the third, a certain Outchar Hadji, who was considered the chief culprit, he refused to budge. When in addition to this he failed to throw down his weapon at command Grékoff himself lost his temper, and, ordering his men to disarm the rebel by force, struck him in the face. In the twinkling of an

[1] The two-edged, pointed, dagger of the mountaineers, often large and weighty enough to merit the appellation "short sword." To stab was considered unmanly. The arms of the Caucasus were so famous that in 1831 men were sent from the Russian Government works at Zlato-oust to Tiflis to learn the art of steel-making from a certain Eliazaroff (Akti, vii. 343). Yet the most treasured blades were of foreign make—mostly Italian.

eye Outchar had drawn his *kindjal* and plunged it into Grékoff's stomach, killing him on the spot; then turning to Lissaniévitch he dealt him two wounds, of which that unfortunate general died a few days later, and severely hurt two other officers before he was finally hacked to pieces by the horrified bystanders. It is evident that there was no conspiracy, for his compatriots made no attempt at rescue or to overpower the small guard, but ran out of the fort in utter consternation. Lissaniévitch, however, reeling against the wall, called out, "Kill them!" The soldiers inside the fort ran after them, firing their guns, and those outside, seeing the flying crowd pursued by their comrades, attacked them in turn and destroyed them almost to a man, though they had committed no crime, and were, some of them, staunch adherents of Russia.

CHAPTER X

1826–1827

Yermóloff returns to the Line—Death of Alexander I.—Persian war—Russian disasters—Yermóloff's inaction—Paskiévitch—Madátoff's victory at Shamkhor—Paskiévitch's victory—Yermóloff leaves the Caucasus—His career and policy

THE news of this tragic event reached Yermóloff in Tiflis. He at once sent instructions to Veliameenoff, who was away on the Koubán, to take Lissaniévitch's place, and a few days later crossed the mountains to Vládikavkáz. Here he was laid up with sickness for a short time, but early in August made his appearance at Grozny, having dismantled on his way some of the minor forts built by himself or Grékoff, lest they should fall into the hands of the enemy. Continuing his march to Vnezápnaya, he reduced that fortress to more modest dimensions; and after a second visit to Grozny, threatened by Beiboulat, he proceeded to build a new fort and a new village opposite Tash-Kitchou in place of Gherzel aoul and Aksai, which he destroyed. The position now chosen was on the Koumuik plain, away from the hills and forests; less accessible, therefore, to the Tchetchens, easier to defend, and better situated to contain the Koumuik population. Ameer-Hadji-Yourt was rebuilt on stronger lines.[1]

Reinforcements to the extent of 7000 men were drawn

[1] The Emperor was much disturbed at the state of affairs in Tchetchnia, but he wrote to Yermóloff (18th August 1825) that as there were now 60,000 men under arms in the Caucasus, a number never before equalled, he hoped and believed that they would prove sufficient to restore order: *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, x. p. 221.

from Transcaucasia, an unfortunate necessity as it turned out; and the remainder of the year 1825 was spent in this work of destruction and reconstruction, but little or no fighting took place. In December, however, an event occurred which was destined before long to exercise a fatal influence on Yermóloff's fortunes and career: Alexander I. died, unexpectedly, at Taganrog, and was succeeded, not by his next brother, Constantine, but by Nicholas I. The result was the Decabrist rising in St. Petersburg; and though Yermóloff, who in error had proclaimed Constantine, promptly corrected his very natural mistake, and though the troops under his command accepted the change without a murmur, it appears that Nicholas' suspicions were roused. It is certain at least that from the beginning of his reign, or very soon afterwards, he showed neither favour nor liking for his lieutenant in the Caucasus, whose many enemies were soon able to give effect to their hostility.[1] Yermóloff, however, retained his command for the present, and in 1826 made his last campaign in Tchetchnia and the Caucasus.

Successful, as ever, in the field, he "punished" the rebellious Tchetchens, burning their villages, destroying their forests, beating them in skirmishes that never developed into battles, and, occasionally, even seeking to win them over by an unwonted display of clemency.[2] To outward appearance his success was complete. There was once more peace on the Line, and for a time no more was heard of the Ghazavát. Yermóloff returned to Tiflis, disturbed in mind, yet little thinking what Fate had in store for him.

[1] "Excuse me, but I trust Yermóloff least of all": Emperor Nicholas to Diebitsch in 1826.

[2] One of his measures, approved by his friend General Davueedoff, was capturing a lot of Tchetchen women, giving away the comeliest in marriage, and selling the rest at one rouble apiece: Pogódin, 333.

It was now the summer of 1826. The frontier disputes with Persia, originating in the treaty of Gulistan, and only aggravated by Yermóloff's seemingly successful mission, had lately become so embittered that those best qualified to judge deemed a rupture probable, if not inevitable.[1] The Russian commander-in-chief himself was of this opinion, and, for some time past, he had urged it in St. Petersburg, pressing for reinforcements.[2] But neither the Emperor, nor his Foreign Minister, Count Nesselrode, could be brought to believe that Persia would so soon again risk an encounter with Russia;[3] in any case, they considered the army of the Caucasus ample for all purposes, and, in lieu of additional troops, sent Count Menshikoff with rich presents on a mission to Teheran to announce the accession of Nicholas and strengthen friendly relations between the two Courts. They were wrong, Yermóloff right; but this, naturally enough, served but to aggravate his default in the eyes of his master when, on the 19th July, the invasion of Karabágh by a Persian army under Prince Abbas Mirza took him, hardly by surprise, but totally unprepared. It is true that there was no declaration of war and that the Russian special ambassador was still within the dominions of the Shah. But no one knew better than Yermóloff the ways of Oriental rulers and what value they attached to the observance of international comity. To recall his warnings was but to bring down on him the obvious retort, "If you were so sure that Persia meant war, why did you

[1] Vatsenko (Russian consul in Teheran), 30th May 1825: "All here talk of war with Russia": Akti, vi. ii. 314, and see Mazaróvitch (Russian agent in Teheran) to Yermóloff, 29th July 1825: Akti, vi. ii. 320.

[2] Pogódin, 252.

[3] Nicholas I. to Yermóloff, 31st August 1825: Akti, vi. ii. 321. Kaye's account of the rupture is very unfair to Russia: "Afghan War," i. 147.

fail to adopt the most obvious measures of precaution?" Menshikoff on his way back to Russia was detained by the Sirdar of Eriván, and only allowed to proceed, thanks to the interposition of the British Minister, who is charged by the Russians with having instigated the war.[1] The border provinces, Bombak and Shouraghel, were overrun by the hordes of Eriván, Karabágh by the army of Abbas Mirza. The Russian forces, distributed in small detachments over a vast and difficult country, were surprised and, in many cases, exterminated. Goumri (Alexandropol) was blockaded, but the garrison managed to escape. On the other hand, a force numbering nearly 1000 men, forgetful of the traditions of Kotliarévsky, laid down its arms on the banks of the Akh-Kara-Tchai. Shoushá was besieged, but under its gallant commandant, Colonel Reout, ably seconded by Major Kluke von Klugenau—a name we shall hear again and again in Daghestan—held out for six weeks until relieved, and thereby, in all probability, saved Georgia from the fate of Karabágh, which was devastated and well-nigh depopulated. Elizavétpol opened its gates to the invaders. Distant Lenkorán was abandoned by its small garrison, which took refuge on an island; and Baku was besieged, but successfully defended. Nor was it only the Persians who carried fire and sword through Russian territories on this occasion. Russia was at peace with Turkey, and officially no breach occurred; but the Kurds, admirable horsemen and fierce fighters, in the course of a raid, winked at if not instigated by the Turkish authorities, utterly destroyed the German colony of Ekatereenenfeld, carrying off those of the inhabitants who were not mas-

[1] Akti, vi. ii. 361; but see Menshikoff's thanks to Macdonald (Kinneir), *ibid.*, p. 376.

sacred to be sold into lifelong captivity at Constantinople and other Turkish centres.[1]

It will be asked, where all this time was Yermóloff, and what was he doing? And the answer is one that his best friends can only give with regret. He remained at Tiflis, sending orders, it is true, to Reout to hold Shoushá at all costs, and to other commanders in similar strain, condemning at the same time in severe terms those who had failed to stem the tide of invasion. But his chief preoccupation seems to have been the hopelessness of defending the border provinces with the 35,000 men under his command in Transcaucasia,[2] and the urgent necessity of reinforcements. Nicholas I., who was in Moscow for his coronation, found it impossible to comply with the demand for two divisions of infantry, but sent one, the 20th, from the Crimea, and six regiments of Don Cossack cavalry; at the same time calling upon Yermóloff categorically to gather the 15,000 men already in Georgia and on the frontiers of Eriván, and occupy that khanate. The commander-in-chief, however, held it impossible to advance in that direction until order was restored in Karabágh, lest Tiflis itself should be exposed to attack by Abbas Mirza. He reported that the war, brought about, he considered, by religious fanaticism, had roused against the Russians the whole of the Mussulman population, and that Georgia alone remained intact.[3] The Emperor, deeply mortified at the course of events, held

[1] Yermóloff reports that, in spite of specious assurances, the Pasha of Akhaltsikh himself held captive thirty colonists in December 1826, and actually sold three of them to a compassionate Armenian, who restored them to liberty: Akti, vi. ii. 360.

[2] The full list of these troops, together with their dispositions at the outbreak of the war, is given by Potto, vol. III. i. p. 115, *note*.

[3] Yermóloff to the Chief of the General Staff, 30th June 1821: Akti, vi. ii. 358.

none the less to his opinion that the forces at Yermóloff's disposal were not inadequate, and again demanded an energetic offensive.[1] Dissatisfied, moreover, with the delay that had already occurred, predisposed to take an unfavourable view of Yermóloff's conduct, and doubting seriously his military capacity, he offered Kotliarévsky the opportunity of gaining fresh laurels on the scene of his former exploits, and when that hero, owing to his wounds, was compelled to refuse the invitation, sent his favourite, Paskiévitch, instead.[2] Yermóloff's fate was sealed.

The final excuse put forward by Yermóloff himself for his truly inexplicable delay in taking any but the most perfunctory action against the invaders was that his energies were paralysed by the knowledge of his imperial master's mistrust.[3] Meantime the alarm and discontent in Tiflis itself grew to a head, and was finally voiced by a woman. The Princess Béboutoff, an aged lady, undertook the task, shirked by the sterner sex, of expounding the fears and grievances of her fellow-countrymen. She had witnessed the horrors of Agha Muhammad's invasion and the Daghestani raids, all Georgia trembled at the imminent prospect of having those horrors repeated, yet the Russian commander-in-chief sat as if spell-bound in his capital, he whose boast it had been that his very name struck terror into the hearts of his enemies. Yermóloff was at last roused, and Prince Madátoff arriving opportunely from Piátigorsk, he despatched him with an advanced corps against the enemy, but, as usual, with strict injunctions not to risk a battle against greatly superior numbers. The result was what might have been expected, and served

[1] Akti, vi. ii. p. 361: Nicholas to Yermóloff, 11th August 1826.

[2] Akti, vi. ii. p. 361.

[3] Yermóloff's letter to Nicholas I. asking to be recalled: Pogódin, 377.

to strengthen the universal condemnation of Yermóloff's previous conduct. Madátoff, on the 2nd September, with 2000 men gained a brilliant victory over five times that number of Persians at Shamkhor; the siege of Shoushá was raised; the Russians re-entered Elizavétpol, and confidence was in some degree restored. On the 10th Paskiévitch arrived, and took over the command of the troops in the field under direct instructions from the Emperor. The arrival of reinforcements from Russia set free the pick of the Caucasian regiments, and with an army, including Madátoff's forces, numbering 8000 men, with 24 guns, Paskiévitch on the 13th September, just a fortnight from the date of his arrival in Tiflis, engaged and routed , 8 miles S.E. from Elizavétpol, the main Persian army, estimated at 60,000 men, with 26 guns, the latter, it is said by the Russians, directed by English officers.[1] The losses on both sides were small; those of the Persians 3000 men, one-third of whom were taken prisoners. The Russians lost 12 officers and 285 men killed and wounded. But the moral effect was all-important. The days of Kotliarévsky and Kariághin had returned. The Russians were once more invincible; the Persians lost heart, and the ultimate result of the war could no longer be in doubt.

Yermóloff's position had now become untenable.[2] He lingered on, however, in Transcaucasia, nominally in supreme command, though virtually limited in his jurisdiction by the fact that Paskiévitch, as commander in the

[1] As a matter of fact Dawson, a sergeant of the Royal Artillery, who had entered the Persian service, saved fourteen of the guns after the defeat of the Persian army and flight of several of the artillery officers. Apparently there were no other Englishmen present. See Monteith, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

[2] Nicholas in a despatch of 24th October 1826 severely reprimands Yermóloff for not reporting to him every four or five days as ordered: Akti, vi. ii. 384.

field, held his appointment from the Emperor himself. In these circumstances it is no wonder that relations between the two grew daily more embittered. In Yermóloff's Diary under date 26th December 1826 he writes, after saying that he had found Paskiévitch at Tiflis: "At our first meeting it was not difficult to note his dissatisfaction, which increased the more that he claimed the right of being informed as to my intentions and plans: to which I replied that I had no need of his advice; that I knew of one case only when the counsel of subordinates was asked, and then the opinion not only of an officer of his high rank, but of one infinitely lower was listened to with respect. Such occasions, however, were rare, and this was not one of them. . . . He asked me to explain my plan of campaign, assuring me that the Emperor would be glad to have the opinion of each of us on it. I replied that I would send in my plan, and he could send in his; his Majesty would then see how each of us understood the business in hand. This answer increased his anger against me."[1]

Paskiévitch, who was in direct communication with St. Petersburg, laid to Yermóloff's charge the whole blame for the lamentable condition of affairs in the Caucasus, and more especially for the disaffection in the former khanates, and the exasperation that drove Persia to war.[2] He accused him, moreover, of intrigue and obstruction, and finally declared that either he or Yermóloff must go. The Emperor,

[1] Pogódin, p. 351. In view of the above it is difficult to accept the statements of Davueedoff and others that Yermóloff, in the noblest spirit of patriotic self-sacrifice, voluntarily furnished Paskiévitch with all his plans, information, &c., and sent him to gather the laurels due in reality to his own genius and labours.

[2] It is impossible to acquit Yermóloff of bad faith towards Persia in regard to the frontier delimitation. See correspondence between him and Veliameenoff: Akti, vi. ii. 245; also on this subject, *ibid.*, 277, 283, 284, 286, 288.

unwilling to act hastily, sent Count Diebitsch to investigate matters, with full power to decide between the rival commanders. Yermóloff had still some hope of justification, but, understanding at last that all was indeed over, he bowed to fate and sent in his resignation. It was accepted, but on the eve of the day (29th March 1827) that, in St. Petersburg, Nicholas appointed Paskiévitch commander-in-chief, Diebitsch, in virtue of the authority entrusted to him, deprived Yermóloff of his command. He had already, on the 6th, written Yermóloff a cruel letter, in which he said: "H.I.M. finding, to his great regret, in your report (as to execution of Tartar rebels) confirmation of the rumours that had reached his Majesty, has deigned to order me to declare to your excellency that the measures for keeping in subjection the people of this country arbitrarily chosen by you in contravention of the imperial will duly made known to you have entirely failed of their purpose, as is clearly evidenced by the fact of this rebellion taking place the moment the Persians crossed the frontier. For which abuse of power I am commanded to severely reprimand your excellency in H.M.'s name."[1]

On the 28th March 1827 the once all-powerful proconsul—to use his own term—left the Georgian capital with an escort he had to beg for,[2] and a few days later the Caucasus, never to return. At Taganrog he turned aside to visit the spot where Alexander I. had died—"with whom was buried all my good fortune."[3]

The remainder of his long life was spent in modest retirement, at first in Ariól (Orel), afterwards in Moscow,

[1] Akti, vi. i. 527.

[2] "The new authorities bestowed on me not even so much attention as to provide the convoy given to all who leave. In Tiflis I asked and obtained it myself; at the military post-stations on the road the officials in charge supplied it from the habit of obeying me."—Yermóloff's Diary: Pogódin, p. 353.

[3] Pogódin, p. 354.

and, as time went on, he became more and more the idol of the army and the nation. His faults and failings were forgotten, his mighty deeds alone remembered. Outliving most of his contemporaries, the hero of Borodinó, of Kulm, of Paris, became for the new generation the living embodiment of a glorious past, the incarnation of that devoted patriotism which in 1812 gave Russia the most cherished page of her history. And when he died in 1861, at the age of eighty-five, Russia mourned in him her darling son.

In dealing with his career in the Caucasus, it is difficult to arrive at any certain judgment of his merits, at any sure estimate of his achievements. His faults and failings, on the other hand, are obvious enough.

He gained brilliant victories at slight cost, and brought for a time the greater part of Daghestan under Russian dominion; he did not conquer Tchetchnia, but repeatedly and severely "punished" its inhabitants, and built Grozny, Vnezápnaya, and other forts on its confines, thereby strengthening very considerably the base whence the coming war was to be waged. He absorbed the Persian and Tartar khanates, and treated Persia with astonishing arrogance. But it was these very measures and successes that led, on the one hand, to the Persian war and the revolt of the newly acquired provinces, on the other, to that great outburst of religious and racial fanaticism which, under the banner of Muridism, welded into one powerful whole so many weak and antagonistic elements in Daghestan and Tchetchnia, thereby initiating the bloody struggle waged unceasingly during the next forty years. Daghestan speedily threw off the Russian yoke, and bade defiance to the might of the northern empire until 1859. In Tchetchnia mere border forays, conducted by independent partisan leaders, brigands, as the Russians with some justice termed them, with a view

to loot and nothing more, developed into a war of national independence under a chieftain as cruel, capable, and indomitable as Yermóloff himself. It may be that the long struggle was inevitable, and in that case Yermóloff must, together with Veliameenoff, be credited with having laid the foundation for the ultimate success of Russia, but that he himself never dreamed of what was to come is evident from the representations he made to his imperial master. "Sooner or later, your Majesty, it will be necessary to undertake the work (the occupation of the line of the Soundja), and the present universal peace and quietness offer a favourable opportunity. The Line of the Caucasus must be protected, and it is my desire that in your reign it may enjoy safety and repose." With no little trouble he obtained the permission he sought, and the forts were built, but what kind of "safety and repose" the Line enjoyed for the next few decades will presently be seen. It is quite certain that neither Yermóloff nor Veliameenoff foresaw the ultimate development of Muridism, though its birth and early growth took place under their very eyes, and of necessity forced itself on their cognisance.

It is Yermóloff's supreme merit, in Russian eyes, that he recognised from the beginning the necessity of extending Russian dominion over the whole of the Caucasus, including the independent and semi-independent States and communities up to the borders of Persia proper and the northern limit of Turkey in Asia. But the means he adopted to attain this end were at least questionable.[1] Probably Moscovite patriotism will never admit that milder

[1] Even Nicholas I., a very severe ruler, was made uneasy by the cruelty exercised on the natives under Yermóloff's rule. On 29th July 1826 he wrote to the latter in angry strain, ordering General Vlásoff to be tried by court-martial for gross cruelty and injustice to the Tcherkess, repeating emphatically his intention of following his brother, Alexander I.'s, humane policy: Pogódin, p. 358. And in another letter to his commander-in-chief a little later (16th September) he declares, "It is better to have mercy than in revenging injuries to take on the semblance of our villainous enemies": *ibid.*, p. 363.

and juster treatment, such as was dreamt of by the philanthropic Alexander I., by Paskiévitch himself, by Admiral Mordóvin, General Rteeshtcheff, and others, would have won over the fierce and lawless tribes of the Caucasus to submission and orderly conduct. It may be so; but from the Christian and moral point of view, that is no justification of such a ruthless policy as Yermóloff's, in reference to which, however, let it be emphatically repeated that, while individually any man may have the right to condemn it, collectively, as nations, it is a case of glass houses all round.[1]

[1] "Yermóloff's time, when the mountaineers were looked upon not as one side in a war but as personal enemies, not to be spared even in misfortune; when the humane maxim of the popular generalissimo, 'one doesn't hit a man lying down,' was forgotten, as if after Souvóroff we had been obliged to go backwards instead of forwards, and become more cruel instead of more humane": *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, x. p. 437.

CHAPTER XI

1827–1828

Paskiévitch blockades Eriván—Enters Nakhitchevan—Takes Abbas-Abad—Battle of Ashtarák—Krasóvsky—Serdar-Abad taken—Eriván—Tabriz—Urmia—Ardebil—Treaty of Turkmentchai—Anglo-Persian relations from 1800 to 1827

WITH Yermóloff's disappearance from the scene Paskiévitch, though invested with all his predecessor's authority, was still for a time hampered by Diebitsch, who, it is supposed, would not unwillingly have taken over the command himself. Diebitsch lingered on in Tiflis until the last day of April 1827, and twelve days later Paskiévitch, free at last, save for the distant control of the Emperor, set out from the Georgian capital, and on 15th June joined forces with the advanced guard which, under Benckendorff, had on the 27th April invested Eriván, after occupying without resistance the monastery of Etchmiadzin. Eriván, a fortified city of some strength, was the main objective in the Russian plan of campaign, the details of which, elaborated in St. Petersburg, considerably altered owing to Yermóloff's many objections, and again modified by Diebitsch, were found, after all, impracticable in execution, owing mainly to difficulties of food and transport. Paskiévitch, who had already been delayed on this account, when he arrived before the walls of Eriván found Benckendorff's force so weakened by hunger and sickness, and some loss sustained in a cavalry attack on the Persian camp at Aiglanli late in April,[1] that he decided to replace it by a fresh body of

[1] Monteith, *op. cit.*, p. 134, says "300 of the Russians were killed." Benckendorff himself wrote, expressing his conviction from what he had seen, that the Don Cossacks were no match for the Kurdish horsemen: Potto, III. ii. 301.

troops under Krasóvsky. This done, he concentrated the rest of his forces on the Garni-tchay River some 50 versts (33 miles) to the south; and on the 21st June set out for Nakhitchevan, the capital of the khanate of that name, 72 versts (48 miles) farther on the road to Tabriz. His object in undertaking this expedition was twofold — to threaten the last-named city, Abbas Mirza's capital, and to prevent any attempt to relieve Eriván from that direction. His purpose had been kept secret until the last moment even from his own generals, and though the route proved extraordinarily difficult owing to the intense heat and the nature of the country—a waterless desert—he had the satisfaction of entering Nakhitchevan unopposed on the 26th June.

His next move was on Abbas-Abad, a "new and regular European fortress"[1] of no great extent, but built from the designs of a competent French military engineer,[2] and important inasmuch as, commanding the passage of the Aras, it protected the whole khanate against invasion from the south. The commandant, a brother-in-law of Abbas Mirza, having refused a summons to surrender, siege was laid in due form; and, an attempt made by that prince to relieve the beleaguered fortress having resulted in his defeat at Djevan-boulak, Abbas-Abad, with its garrison of 2700 men, capitulated on the 7th July.[3] Nakhitchevan became a Russian province, and has remained one ever since. The road to Tabriz now lay open, and Paskiévitch, flushed with victory, wrote to the Emperor that if the convoys arrived in time, and sickness made no further ravages in the ranks of his army, he would march on that capital forthwith. He has been condemned for not having done so,

[1] Monteith, *op. cit.*, p. 134.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 81.
[3] Akti, vii. 551: Paskiévitch to Nicholas I., 7th July 1827.

but the provision trains were slow in coming, sickness increased, and, rightly or wrongly, he retired in the vain hope of finding a healthier station for the troops at Kara Babá, at the foot of the mountains of Salvarty.

Meantime events farther north had taken a turn none too favourable to the Russian arms. The summer of 1827 was exceptionally hot and dry in the plains round Eriván. The blockading force under Krasóvsky suffered terribly, and on the 21st June, no rain having fallen for two whole months, that commander was constrained to retire. He did so with the less reluctance in view of the fact now patent that the heavy siege-train could not arrive before August.

Krasóvsky halted at Etchmiadzin; but, after collecting food supplies and arming the monastery with field guns, he retired farther on the 30th, leaving in garrison one battalion of infantry and a small body of Armenian volunteer cavalry. This force was far too weak in the circumstances, and the result was disastrous. The Khan of Eriván, encouraged by the unhoped-for abandonment of the siege, sallied out and attacked the monastery on the 4th July; but Krasóvsky was still at hand, and relieved it without loss. Far otherwise was it when, a month later, the Persians under Abbas Mirza himself suddenly made their appearance before Etchmiadzin in overwhelming force. Abbas Mirza's plan was, taking advantage of Paskiévitch's inactivity, to capture the monastery and march by way of Goumri on Tiflis, devastate that capital, and return through Karabágh. Krasóvsky has left on record his conviction that this daring conception was quite practicable, and only defeated by his own action; but he was smarting under the reproaches of his irascible commander-in-chief, and though his opinion may be correct, it is difficult now to decide whether he or Paskiévitch was to

blame, or, possibly, the mere force of circumstances. In any case, Etchmiadzin, with its priceless relics, its band of monks headed by Narses V., and its small Russian garrison, was now in imminent danger. To hold out many days was clearly impossible; urgent appeals therefore were sent to Krasóvsky; and that general, whose courage at least was beyond all question, collecting a force of 1800 infantry, 500 cavalry, and 12 guns, set out from Djengoulee on the 16th August. The distance to Etchmiadzin was but 35 versts (23½ miles), but the road lay over rugged mountains and through narrow defiles; the heat was terrible, and 30,000 Persians barred the way. The story of the fight, known as the battle of Ashtarák (or Oushakán), is one of the most stirring in the annals of Caucasian warfare. Officers and men fought on and on with stubborn bravery—many with unsurpassed heroism—and none more so than Krasóvsky himself, who charged and fought hand to hand here, there, and everywhere, as danger threatened now one group, now another of the broken, straggling line. He was wounded in the arm by a bursting shell; two horses were killed under him; the annihilation of his whole force seemed inevitable. Etchmiadzin must then fall, and Georgia could not escape at least a terrible devastation. But inspired by their heroic commander the Russians fought on, and eventually on the 17th cut their way through—"all that were left of them." There was a panic at the last moment, and it was a disorderly rabble that rushed madly to the sheltering walls of the monastery, where the venerable patriarch throughout the fight had held aloft the Roman spear stained with the blood of Christ, praying to the God of Victories. But the garrison sallied out; the Persians, losing heart, retired to Azerbijan; and Etchmiadzin was saved, though at a heavy cost. Of

the little army, 2300 strong, that had started from Djengoulee the day before, less than half remained. Twenty-four officers and 1130 men had fallen; by heroic efforts the guns were saved; but all impedimenta had been abandoned. The Persian loss was no more than 400.

It was disputed at the time whether the battle of Ashtarák was a Russian victory or defeat; but Krasóvsky had accomplished his purpose, and even those who condemned his generalship could not but admire his devoted, heroic courage. In his own opinion he had saved Georgia; but it is difficult to agree with him in this when we consider that had Etchmiadzin been evacuated after the retreat from Eriván, he would have stood across Abbas Mirza's path in a position at his own choice, unweakened by the garrison left at the monastery, and reinforced by the whole strength of the Kabardá regiment, which was within four days' march of him. After Ashtarák the demoralisation of the troops was, according to Paskiévitch, so great that two companies engaged in cutting forage ran away at the sight of a dozen friendly Tartars, abandoning a gun.[1] It is to the honour of Nicholas I. that, devoted as he was to Paskiévitch, he, on this and other occasions, put aside that ungenerous if brilliant commander's strictures on his subordinates, choosing to reward their successes, however qualified, rather than censure their shortcomings.

Information of what had befallen Krasóvsky's force was slow in reaching Paskiévitch at Kara Babá, one hundred miles away, with communications interrupted by Abbas Mirza's army; but when, towards the end of August, the news did filter through, soon to be confirmed by official reports, the commander-in-chief saw that to relieve Krasóvsky was imperative. He abandoned, therefore, the

[1] Akti, vii. 485: Paskiévitch to Diebitsch, 3rd March 1828.

contemplated invasion of Azerbijan and marched on Etchmiadzin, which place he reached on the 5th September, intending now to resume the siege of Eriván, the capture of which had become urgent owing to the growing danger of a rupture with Turkey. It was first necessary, however, to reduce Serdar-Abad, a large fortified village situated a little to the south of the road between the two last-named places, and defended by 1500 men under Husayn, brother to Hassan, the brave and energetic Khan of Eriván, "the worst officer that could have been entrusted with that duty."[1] The siege lasted four days, from the 16th to the 20th September, when the garrison attempted to escape, but, over 500 having been killed and many made prisoners, the remainder surrendered at discretion.[2] Three days later the Russian army once more made its appearance before Eriván. The siege was now pushed with all energy under the able direction of Poushtchin, a former engineer officer reduced to the ranks for complicity in the Decabrist outbreak, and on the 2nd October Eriván at last fell into Russian hands. Hassan was captured; the sword of Tamerlane, his most treasured possession, was presented by Krasóvsky to the Emperor; 4000 Persian regular infantry were among the prisoners; 49 guns were taken, and many other trophies.[3] Like Nakhitchevan, Eriván, the khanate, became, and remained, a Russian province. Paskiévitch received the St. George of the 2nd Class and the surname of Erivansky; others of the principal officers were rewarded in due proportion; but Poushtchin, to whom much of the credit was due for the rapid reduction of so strong a fortress with so little loss,

[1] Monteith, *op. cit.*, p. 137. According to this authority, "2000 of the garrison were killed," but the above figures are Paskiévitch's own.

[2] Akti, vii. 563: Paskiévitch to Nicholas I., 21st September 1827.

[3] Akti, vii. 564: Paskiévitch to Nicholas I., 3rd October 1827.

was promoted merely to the rank of non-commissioned officer, for with Nicholas political crimes were never to be forgotten or forgiven.

Lieutenant-General Monteith on this and other occasions bears witness to Paskiévitch's humanity: "The assault was scarcely resisted, but the place was treated as having been taken by storm; however, General Paskiévitch, to his honour, at once entered and put a stop to the horrors which always follow the capture of a place without a capitulation."[1]

It will not have escaped notice that the war under consideration had so far been carried on in more or less haphazard fashion. Plans were made both in St. Petersburg and locally, treated to reciprocal criticism, altered for better or worse without requisite knowledge, and invariably found impracticable when it came to being put in execution. Yermóloff's destructive criticisms have been adduced by his partisans to prove that, after all, he was in the right; but in view of his strange inactivity during the earliest stage of the operations, it may well be doubted whether he would have proved successful in the field against such an enemy as the Persians on this occasion proved themselves to be. Paskiévitch suffered from lack of local knowledge and from quick temper and other faults of character that deprived him of the services of men whose experience could have supplied his own deficiencies. But to military genius of a high order he added a sublime faith in himself, a no less sublime contempt for his enemy; and the latter, usually a most dangerous quality, was, when accompanied by dauntless valour, the one thing necessary in fighting with greatly inferior numbers against such a foe as the Persians.

[1] Page 139.

Russian commanders, from the time of Peter the Great up to and including Paskiévitch himself, had proved over and over again that when this spirit prevailed no odds were so formidable, no mere superiority in numbers so great, as to preclude the chance, the certainty almost, of victory over the undisciplined or semi-disciplined hordes of the Shah. It may reasonably be doubted whether Yermóloff's extreme caution would have achieved the same success as Paskiévitch's rashness; whether, in fact, he would have brought Persia to her knees, as the latter did, in time to allow of Russia's whole strength in Transcaucasia being concentrated against Turkey, a more dangerous foe, in the war already imminent. Be this as it may, planned and conducted as it was, the present campaign could hardly fail to be fruitful in surprises agreeable or the reverse. To the commander-in-chief himself, and still more to Nicholas in St. Petersburg, the latter category had been filled already to overflowing by the unforeseen difficulties of obtaining and transporting provisions, by the consequent delays that had occurred in the movements of the troops, by the retirement from Eriván, and by many other untoward incidents. A surprise of another kind was now to bring joy to the Tsar if not, for reasons sufficiently obvious, to his jealous, arrogant lieutenant. We have seen how often Yermóloff obtained the credit of victories won in defiance of his orders by the brilliant Madátoff. Paskiévitch in turn was to profit by a success gained in similar circumstances by one of his ablest subordinates. But in strong contrast to his predecessor, he displayed none of Yermóloff's magnanimity, condemning without reserve a contravention of his instructions that deprived him personally of a justly anticipated triumph.

When Paskiévitch, hastening to the relief of Krasóvsky, left Nakhitchevan, he entrusted the command in that quarter to Prince Eristoff, a Georgian, with Mouravióff as his principal lieutenant. The duty he laid upon them was the defence of that important frontier province, with permission to make certain movements beyond the Aras, but in no great strength, and merely with the object of diverting attention from his own operations against Eriván, and, being fully aware of Eristoff's headlong bravery and Mouravióff's ambitious character and iron will, he made use, in thus limiting their rôle, of unequivocal language. But in vain. Abbas Mirza, who, after the failure of his attempt on Etchmiadzin, had retired to Azerbijan, now thought to profit by Paskiévitch's absence, retake Nakhitchevan, destroy Eristoff's comparatively small force, and, falling upon the main line of communication, cut off the Russian convoys. As before, the plan was a sound one; indeed, if Abbas Mirza had been fortunate enough to command a more disciplined army, there is no saying what results he might not have achieved.[1] But with the troops at his disposal, of which the best were ever the irregular cavalry, his chances of success were never great, and on this occasion Fortune again failed him. He crossed the Aras unopposed, but before reaching Nakhitchevan learnt that Eristoff was in front of him with 4000 men and 26 guns, a force larger than he had been led to expect. He retreated hastily, attempted to entrench himself on the Persian side of the Aras, but fled the moment the Russians succeeded in effecting the passage of that river. Eristoff pursued him as far as Tchors, but learning there that he

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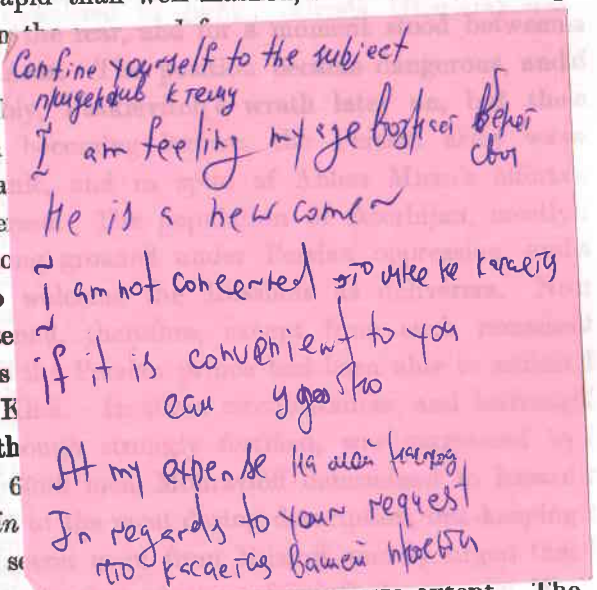

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the city. There was then little more wavering, for, indeed, retreat was out of the question, especially for myself. Without taking Tabriz, I dared not show my face to my superiors; taking it, I foresaw Paskiévitch's displeasure. But the thing was decided on; my honour demanded it." The 13th October the Russian advanced guard under Mouravióff came to a halt at a distance of less than a couple of miles from the suburbs of Tabriz. The troops of the garrison fled in disorder along the Teheran road, frightened, it is said, by the threats of the inhabitants, who indeed set upon the few who remained, and killing some, incarcerated the rest. Other accounts put all the blame on the commandant, Agha Meer Futta, who is accused of deliberate treachery. Later in the day, Eristoff with the main army having arrived, the gates were opened, and this ancient and wealthy city of 60,000 inhabitants, the birthplace of Zoroaster, fell into the hands of the adventurous Russians without opposition.[1] Eristoff had no sooner entered Tabriz than he received news of the taking of Eriván. With his congratulations on that event he sent word to Paskiévitch that Abbas Mirza's capital had likewise fallen. This astounding and unwelcome information reached the commander-in-chief at Marand on the 16th October, and three days later he entered Tabriz at the head of his army (15,000 men, 52 guns) in company with Macdonald and the other members of the British Legation.

It might well be supposed that Persian resistance was now at an end, and as a matter of fact negotiations for peace were at once set on foot, and carried on through

[1] "The works, though not strong, had recently been put in a state of defence, and consisted of a double wall and deep ditch, and there was also the reserved park of field artillery, and gunners enough to man them; it was therefore perfectly capable of resisting everything but a regular siege": Monteith, p. 144.

the intermediary of Dr. (afterwards Sir John) McNeil, who enjoyed the full confidence of the Shah and personal acquaintance with the ladies of his harem, a potent factor in the Muhammadan East.[1] But Feth Ali's reluctance to part with the large money contribution demanded, coupled with the renewed hopes inspired by the approaching rupture between Russia and Turkey, delayed matters until 8th January 1828, when, Abbas Mirza having taken leave of Paskiévitch after an abortive interview, warlike operations were resumed. The Persians, however, were too thoroughly demoralised to fight. Urmia (Urumia) was occupied by General Laptieff without resistance. Ardebil, by previous arrangement with Abbas Mirza,[2] opened its gates on 25th January to Count Soukhtelen, who sent to St. Petersburg the priceless library housed in the mosque of Shaykh-Sophi-Edeené, under pretence that the precious manuscripts would be faithfully returned as soon as copies had been taken. Needless to say they are still in the Imperial Library at St. Petersburg.[3] Persia was now wholly

[1] Colonel Volkhovsky, who was sent to Teheran to hasten the despatch of the money indemnity, in his reports to Paskiévitch bears emphatic testimony to McNeil's extraordinary influence with the Shah, and attributes it not more to the confidence inspired by the English Government than to McNeil's personal qualities and the fact that he had all along foretold the disasters that would follow on a war with Russia (Akti, vii.: Volkhovsky to Paskiévitch, 19th December 1827). The services of Macdonald, McNeil, and the other members of the British Legation were warmly acknowledged by Paskiévitch, on whose recommendation Nicholas I. conferred Orders and presents on all of them (*ibid.*, 612: Nesselrode to Paskiévitch, 12th April 1828).

[2] Akti, vii. 586: Paskiévitch to Abbas Mirza, 7th January 1828.

[3] See Soukhtelen's own report in the matter to Paskiévitch of 9th February 1828 (Akti, vii. 589), and Count Tchernisheff to Paskiévitch (*ibid.*, 616), 25th April, wherein Paskiévitch is told to find some plausible pretext for avoiding the return of the books if demanded. It was Paskiévitch himself who had ordered Poushtchin to take possession of the manuscripts (*ibid.*, vii. 635: Paskiévitch to Tchernisheff, 6th June 1828), the idea having arisen from a memorandum drawn up by the learned Orientalist, Senkovsky, urging the inclusion of manuscripts as part of the war indemnity. This document was forwarded to Paskiévitch by Diebitsch (7th November 1827), who stated that

at the mercy of the conquerors. Teheran itself must fall an easy prey to the victorious Russians should they advance. Turkey had not yet moved, and Feth Ali, who had been led into the war by Abbas Mirza, who in turn, if we may believe the Russians, was instigated by England, sued for peace, which was signed at midnight between the 9th and 10th February (1828) by Abbas Mirza at the village of Turkmentchai. Russia by this instrument was confirmed in the possession of the khanates of Eriván and Nakhitchevan, and secured the sole right of navigation on the Caspian Sea. Persia, moreover, undertook not to interfere with the exodus of the Armenians from Persian to Russian territory, and agreed to pay an indemnity of twenty million roubles. Paskiévitch had recommended the retention of Azerbijan, saying that in that event the English might as well take ship at Bushire and retire to India.[1] But the Emperor preferred, if the renewal of the war made it impossible to restore the province to Persia, to divide it into several independent khanates, lest the European Powers should suspect, and justly, that Russia aimed at exclusive domination in Asia.[2] On the 20th March Paskiévitch, then within one day's march of Eriván, received despatches from St. Petersburg informing him that war had been declared against Turkey.

The story of the Russo-Persian wars would be incomplete without further reference to British intervention in Persia, the history of which may be summarised as follows.

Towards the close of the eighteenth century Tippoo

the Emperor, while holding that no such clause could well be included in the treaty, wished Paskiévitch to make it known to the Persians that, as gifts, old manuscripts would be very welcome.

[1] Akti, vii. 572: Paskiévitch to Nicholas I., 29th October 1827.

[2] *Ibid.*, 574: Nicholas I. to Paskiévitch, 29th November 1827.

Sultan sent a mission to Persia seeking an alliance, and Marquis Wellesley followed suit, his envoy being a native of Persian extraction. Tippoo fell at Seringapatam in 1799, but the value of Persian friendship once recognised, the Indian Government determined to secure it if possible, and in 1800 Captain (afterwards Sir John) Malcolm arrived from India at the Court of the Shah on a mission, of which the origin and object are thus stated by the envoy himself: "The power possessed by its (the Persian) sovereign of checking the Afghans, who threatened to invade India, and of repelling the ambitious views of France, if ever directed to that quarter, led the governor-general of the British possessions in the East to form an alliance with Feth Ali Khan immediately after he was raised to the throne. This policy had the temporary success which was desired, of diverting the Afghans from their meditated invasion of India, and an impression was made of the power of the English nation, both on the King of Persia and his subjects, favourable to the performance of the engagements into which he had entered, to oppose, if ever required by circumstances to do so, the European enemies of Great Britain."[1]

That the contingency thus provided against was not entirely visionary is shown by the fact that Malcolm's first visit was followed almost immediately (1801) by an abortive attempt on the part of Napoleon to establish relations with Persia through the medium of an Armenian merchant. Malcolm meantime had concluded a treaty providing that Persia should lay waste Afghanistan if the latter attacked India, but "remarkable, chiefly, for the bitterness with which it proscribed the French."[2] Four years later, war

[1] "History of Persia," vol. ii. p. 215. This "success," however, is scouted by Rawlinson: "England and Russia in the East," p. 8, *note*, London, 1875.

[2] Kaye's "Afghan War," i. 9, London, 1867. This treaty was never formally ratified.

having broken out between France and Russia, Napoleon sent Colonel Romieu to Teheran with definite proposals for an alliance. Romieu died, but in 1806, the Shah having in turn sought his friendship, the Emperor despatched Joubert on the same errand with happier result; for the latter, after suffering detention and imprisonment on the road, eventually reached Teheran, and returned thence to Europe accompanied by a duly accredited Persian envoy, who followed Napoleon to Tilsit, and there concluded a treaty with him, afterwards ratified at Finkenstein (May 1807). Russia and France were now allies, and the former Power could, of course, offer no objection when General Gardanne was sent with seventy commissioned and non-commissioned officers to drill and instruct the Persian army. In England and in India, however, this proceeding, naturally enough, roused great uneasiness.

Meantime Field-Marshal Goudóvitch had begun a correspondence with the French envoy in a letter dated the 25th March 1808 (received at Teheran 21st May). Gardanne's answer was dated 2nd June, the Persians having till then refused him permission to write. He sought to act as mediator between Russia and Persia, and wrote, "I have obtained formal assurances from his Majesty that neither Jones nor Malcolm, nor any English agent, will be admitted to his Court, and firmans have been despatched to all parts to prohibit their entry into Persia."[1] On the 2nd July Gardanne wrote, "Malcolm has been unable to reach the Persian Court," and, in fact, the Anglo-Indian representative had sailed away from Bushire in a huff. But all the French agent's efforts were vain, as Russia resolutely refused to agree to an armistice, or to the transfer of the negotiations to Paris, conditions insisted on by the Shah.

[1] Akti, vol. iii. pp. 471 *et seq.*

In October hostilities were resumed;[1] the French, who had undertaken to procure the evacuation of Georgia, had lost caste with the Persians, and Gardanne, finding his position untenable, left Teheran a few days before the arrival of Sir Harford Jones (afterwards Brydges), who had been accredited independently by the British Home Government. By March 1809 the French mission was at Tabriz in a condition of honourable detention,[2] and English influence once more paramount.

According to Malcolm, "The King of Persia had listened to the overtures of Bonaparte in the hope that his mediation or his power would enable him to recover Georgia; but when changes in the conditions of Europe compelled the French Emperor to abandon his designs in Asia, he (the Shah) reverted to his alliance with the English."[3]

Sir Harford Jones concluded a second treaty with the Shah, Feth Ali, soon after his arrival at the capital (12th March (N.S.) 1809), providing, amongst other things, that in the event of any European forces invading Persia a British force or equivalent subsidy, besides guns, munitions of war, and officers, to an amount and in numbers to be settled later on, would be furnished from India. The Indian Government was furious at Jones' success and Malcolm's failure, and "anxious to accept the thing done and to disgrace the doer was thrown into a state of ludicrous embarrassment."[4] Eventually, in 1810, Malcolm was sent to Persia a third time, accompanied by Monteith, Lindsay (afterwards Sir Henry Lindsay-Bethune), Christie, Willock, and other officers, who entered the Persian service, wherein all those named distinguished themselves greatly.

[1] Akti, vol. iii. p. 496.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 512.
[3] Malcolm, vol. ii. p. 216.
[4] Kaye, i. 71.

These double missions, however anomalous, were highly flattering to the Shah, but, not unnaturally, gave rise to no little friction between the representatives of London and Calcutta.[1] Sir Harford Jones was succeeded in 1811 by Sir Gore Ouseley, who brought with him more officers, including D'Arcy (afterwards D'Arcy-Todd), and returned to England in 1814, leaving the treaty of Teheran to be finally concluded by Ellis and Morier in November of that year. This, the third, Anglo-Persian treaty renewed the agreement as to subsidy, the supply of officers and men, of arms and munitions of war, &c., and most gratuitously provided that "the limits of Russia and Persia should be determined according to the admission of Great Britain, Persia, and Russia." But quarrels soon arose in regard to the payment of the subsidy, and in 1815 all British non-commissioned officers were ordered by their Mission to leave the country. D'Arcy, Hart, and some other commissioned officers remained, and the last-named acquired and maintained a position of extraordinary influence in Persia, until his death by cholera in 1830.[2]

Meantime the rupture between France and Russia in 1812 had materially altered the position of affairs. England, though still desirous of maintaining her friendship with Persia, could no longer openly aid the latter in her disputes or conflicts with Russia, and the British officers in the service of the Shah were forbidden to take any part in actual warfare. How Captains Lindsay and Christie interpreted these instructions has been seen,[3] and it can

[1] For the unseemly conduct of all concerned—the Indian Government, Malcolm, Jones, and even the Persians—see Kaye, I. iv.

[2] Curzon's "Persia," i. 578–9. By a curious coincidence Macdonald, D'Arcy, Lindsay, and Jones all took other names — Kinneir, Todd, Bethune, and Brydges.

[3] *Ante*, chap. v. p. 88, *note*.

hardly be denied that Russia had more than once ample ground for distrust and anger based upon the presence and activity of English agents, avowed or unavowed, at the Persian Court and in the ranks of the Persian army. Nevertheless we have Paskiévitch's emphatic testimony in favour of English policy. "I care not to inquire into the motives which led the late commander-in-chief in Georgia to misrepresent during ten years to H.I.M. and the Ministry our relations with Persia, and even with England in those parts. But if the English have enormous influence in the East, it is because they have constantly and warmly taken to heart the interests of those who have sought their protection, politically. I see by the official correspondence, now before me, that since our embassage of 1817, so meagre in useful results, and up to the last rupture, it was imputed as a crime to the English that they sought the friendship of that one of the Shah's sons who has always shown partiality for Europeans; and it was a matter of offence that Abbas Mirza failed to prefer ourselves, who refuse him even the title of heir to his father's throne, solemnly guaranteed to him by the treaty,[1] to a nation which supplied him with money and arms, and with officers to drill his troops."[2]

[1] Abbas Mirza died at Meshed 10th October 1833, a year all but two days before his father, Feth Ali Shah, who was succeeded by Abbas Mirza's son, Mahmoud (8th October 1834).

[2] Akti, vii. 541: Paskiévitch to Nesselrode, 12th May 1827. The opportunity of dealing a back-handed blow at his *bête noire* Yermóloff was one Paskiévitch could never resist. For much fuller information on the subject of Anglo-Persian relations see Rawlinson's work, already quoted, and the yet more complete account in Kaye, I. i., iii., iv., and viii.

CHAPTER XII

1828

War with Turkey—Russian aims—Siege and capture of Kars—Of Anápa—Plague—Siege and capture of Akhalkaláki—March on Akhaltsikh—Defeat of Turkish relieving force

THE fact that peace had been concluded with Persia and, further, that the Persian army was too demoralised to inspire alarm of itself, even in the event of the treaty of Turkmentchai not being ratified,[1] relieved to some extent Russia's anxiety on the outbreak of the Turkish war; yet the situation was a serious one.[2] Turkish generalship might, and did, as it turned out, compare unfavourably with that of Abbas Mirza; but on the other hand the Turkish soldiery were superior to the Persian, and more numerous;[3] the Russian army was for the most part still engaged in mountainous Armenia, and could not possibly be concentrated without considerable delay at the strategic points indicated by the new state of affairs; and meantime the whole frontier, stretching from Mount Ararat to the Black Sea and up the coast to Soukhoum-Kalé, lay open to hostile attack. For there was no field force immediately available, and the Russian garrisons were weak and widely scattered. Moreover, war with Turkey involved the northern Caucasus as well: in the west directly, for the Turks held the Black Sea coast; in the east indirectly, owing

[1] It was ratified on the 29th July 1828 under the walls of Akhalkaláki.

[2] See Paskiévitch's secret despatch to Nesselrode on the coming campaign, 26th May 1828: Akti, vii. 747.

[3] Mouravióff's opinion: Potto, IV. i. 50.

to Turkish influence over the Sunnite population of Tchetchnia and Daghestan. Fortunately for the Russians, Oriental inertness and inefficiency once more stood them in good stead. "It allowed them to remount the cavalry and recruit the transport service, and more than 14,000 horses and bullocks were received from the line of the Caucasus before a single Turkish soldier had taken the field. Vast quantities of provisions were found in the magazines of the Persian Government. . . ."[1]

The task set the army of the Caucasus by the Emperor, whose confidence in Paskiévitch and the forces entrusted to him never wavered, was twofold: to divert pressure from the Danube, the seat of war in Europe, and to obtain possession of such places as would round off and make safe the Russian frontier in the Caucasus and in Asia Minor. For this purpose it was deemed sufficient to make conquest of the pashaliks of Kars and Akhaltsikh, and the maritime fortresses of Poti and Anápa. To begin with, however, the danger threatening not merely the outlying forts, but Goumri, Mingrelia, Imeritia, and even Georgia proper, must be met, and to this Paskiévitch now directed his whole energies.

The troops at his disposal in Transcaucasia were in all 51 battalions of infantry, 11 squadrons of cavalry, 17 regiments of Cossacks, and 144 guns. But of this total force, after deducting the various items requisite for garrisoning the many provinces between the two seas, and the small army (6 battalions, 2 Cossack regiments, and 16 guns) left in Persia to ensure payment of the war indemnity, there remained only 15 battalions of infantry, 8 squadrons of cavalry, 7 Cossack regiments, and 58 guns, not counting siege artillery, available for the

[1] Monteith, p. 152.

main field army—a total fighting force of not more than 15,000 men.

"The Russian army," says Monteith,[1] "never mustered more than 25,000 men of all arms, and seldom had more than 12,000 in action." To which absolute minimum Paskiévitch, having to conduct a war of invasion against an enemy vastly superior in numbers in a most difficult country, had reduced his forces rather than weaken his base or imperil the security of Russia's extended territories in and beyond the Caucasus. Two separate detachments operated on the two wings; the one along the littoral of the Black Sea towards Batoum, the other through Armenia towards Bayazid; the main army was concentrated, during the month of April, at Goumri, with a small flanking column to guard the defiles of Borzhom and Tsalki, thus securing communication with the reserves at Gori; and Paskiévitch, having thus taken up the strongest possible strategical position, spent the month of May in improving the roads to Eriván in the south and Tiflis in the north, and on 14th June set out for Kars, 40 miles distant. Five days later his cavalry had the best of it in a sharp skirmish with the Turks, in full view of that fortress.

Kars at this time was less formidable as an object of attack than later on—in 1855 or in 1877—for its lines were less extensive, its walls weaker, its whole system of defence less elaborate, its garrison smaller. But it was, none the less, a very strong position, and, properly defended, might well be deemed impregnable against so small an army as Paskiévitch disposed of.[2] It had defied Nadir Shah with

[1] Page 299.

[2] Infantry, 8561; cavalry, about 3000, of whom one-third regulars, the rest Cossacks and natives; artillery, 40 field and mountain guns, besides 18 horse-artillery guns: Potto, IV. i. 29.

90,000 men in 1735, and the Russians in 1807. It was now garrisoned by 11,000 men, and mounted 151 guns; was well provisioned, and commanded, by a covered way, an unlimited supply of water. Moreover, Kios Pasha, Seraskier of Erzeroum, the Turkish commander-in-chief, had now had nearly three months wherein to complete his preparations, and, urging a valiant defence, he promised relief. Paskiévitch was fully aware of all this, and one cannot therefore but admire the audacity of his movements. Not only did he confidently undertake the siege, but, anticipating the attempt to relieve Kars from the south-west, and the consequent probability of having to fight a pitched battle beneath the walls against superior numbers, he established the bulk of his forces on that side of the city, astride the road from Erzeroum.

The siege lasted but three days in all, occupied for the most part in the laying of the first parallel and the placing of the siege guns, in which operations Poushtchin, the Decabrist, now promoted to the rank of lieutenant, again showed unsurpassed skill and bravery.[1] A sortie of 5000 cavalry, headed by the Pasha of Kars, failed to make any impression, and but few of these men regained the town. At dawn on the 23rd the batteries of this, the first, parallel were ready to open fire from their twenty-six guns on the besieged fortress; at 10 A.M. Kars had fallen! How this wholly unforeseen result came about is clearly enough to be gathered from the various accounts extant, but it remains none the less one of the most astounding events of the kind in military history. In the natural course of such

[1] Paskiévitch on this occasion recommended him for the St. George, and not for the first or last time; but Nicholas was inexorable, and it was thirty years after that this remarkable man received the coveted reward at the hands of Alexander II.

a siege the enemy would have first been beaten back from his outlying works, the second parallel would then have been laid, the main walls breached, and only after the lapse of many days would the final assault have been undertaken. As it was, a mere skirmish in the advanced trenches against the fortified Armenian suburb led to an unauthorised forward movement by a company of riflemen under a rash young lieutenant, Labeentseff. When this handful of men was in danger of annihilation, other companies hurried to the rescue; these in turn were imperilled, and more and more troops thrust forward, until at last, unexpected success having crowned the heroic efforts of individual leaders and their men, the commander-in-chief sanctioned the assault on the main position.

The Turks sallied out against Labeentseff in overwhelming numbers, whereupon Colonel Miklashévsky, who afterwards died heroically in Daghestan, hurried to the rescue with three companies. The fight raged desperately among the tombstones in a Mussulman cemetery, but at last the Turks gave way, and the Russian riflemen, turning deaf ears to the commands and even entreaties of some of their officers, followed Labeentseff and others, and on the heels of the flying enemy entered the fortified camp on the outlying line of heights separated from the walls of the city by a deep ravine. Prince Vadbolsky, a veteran officer commanding the infantry, seeing that the troops already involved must be overwhelmed unless reinforced, and that on the other hand a totally unexpected opportunity had arisen to obtain possession of the whole Armenian suburb, ordered up Reout, the gallant defender of Shoushá, in support with five more companies. Before, however, Reout, coming from the right, and having to climb a precipitous hill, could reach the scene of action, the Turks to the number of 2000 had driven the

greater part of the attacking force back to the cemetery, Miklashévsky himself with a handful of men being cut off and driven to defend themselves in a hand-to-hand fight with their backs to a wall of rock. Vadbolsky then in person led the remaining companies of the Rifle Brigade to the rescue, and the whole of his available forces became desperately engaged.

Paskiévitch, who had now galloped up to the main battery, whence he could view the whole scene, was furious at the premature development of the attack, threatening as it did to end in serious disaster. He gave vent to his feelings in no measured terms, speaking of "intrigues" and menacing trial by court-martial of the guilty parties.[1] Meantime, however, immediate action was necessary, and reluctantly he gave permission to Count Simónitch to hurry to the assistance of Vadbolsky with three companies of his Georgian regiment. At this moment an incident, not without parallel in Russian warfare, before and since, changed the whole aspect of affairs. The pope or chaplain of the Armenian regiment, holding high the Cross, threw himself in front of the fleeing riflemen, shouting, "Stop, children! Is it possible that you will abandon here both me and the Cross of our Saviour? If, indeed, you are neither Russians nor Christians—run. I shall know how to die alone!" The flight was arrested, order restored, the Turks driven back, and Miklashévsky saved. Reout's column and Vadbolsky's reserves now came up, and the united forces, after a desperate engagement, re-occupied the suburb. Its chief defence, the tower of Temirpasha,

[1] Mouravióff is the authority for this statement, and generally for the description of the capture of Kars as more or less accidental. He is a witness impossible to ignore; but it is well to bear in mind his strong animus against Paskiévitch: see Potto, vol. iv. chap. iv.

was stormed, and immediately armed with two field guns. General Gillenschmidt, chief of the artillery, established a 6-gun battery on the heights, where, in after times, the fort of Tchirn-tabia was built. At the same time Colonel Boródin, storming some trenches opposite the citadel, found emplacement for two more guns; and the three batteries, thus accidentally forming a second parallel,[1] proceeded to bombard at short distance the main walls and citadel of Kars, effectually preventing the arrival of any more Turkish reserves. The whole of the Armenian suburb was then cleared, and the victorious Russians, streaming down the ravine, mounted the opposite height under the very walls of the town. Paskiévitch, seeing the turn affairs had taken, ordered the assault of the remaining outworks, Orta-kepi and Karadágh. Nearly the whole besieging army was now engaged, and these positions having been stormed, the troops, we are told, at one and the same moment, without any command having been given, and from various points invisible one from the other, rushed to the final assault.[2] In a very short time the whole fortress was in Russian hands, with the exception of the citadel, where the Turkish commandant had taken refuge. Some delay ensued, but after considerable negotiation the gates were opened, and at 10 A.M. the Russians marched in.[3] Kios Pasha, who, with his 20,000 men, was within an hour's march of Kars, on learning its surrender retired on Ardahán.

The spoils of war included on this occasion 151 guns and 33 standards; 1350 prisoners were taken, including the

[1] Potto, IV. iv. p. 65.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 69.

[3] Paskiévitch's last word was, "Quarter to those who surrender; death to those who do not—one hour's grace to decide!" See his full account, Akti, vii. 751. It is only fair to add that he ignores the "accidental" features of the storming, as do Fonton and Monteith.

Pasha and his staff. The Russians lost but 400 officers and men killed and wounded, the Turks 2000 killed and wounded.

To Paskiévitch's honour be it said that there was no pillage or massacre. His proclamation ran: "The fortress of Kars has fallen before the victorious arms of Russia. The rights of war justify the punishment of the inhabitants of a town taken by storm; but vengeance is quite foreign to the rules by which the Russian Emperor is guided. In the name of that great sovereign I pardon the citizens, and offer all the inhabitants of the pashalik the high protection of Russia, promising them inviolability in matters of religion, customs, and rights of property . . ."[1]

Paskiévitch had many detractors, for his character was not such as often availed to secure the affection or respect of his immediate subordinates, whom he treated in many cases with arrogance, suspicion, and jealousy. But his brilliant qualities as a leader are undeniable; he was almost invariably successful even in the most difficult of his undertakings; and, admitting that the storming of Kars took place as and when it did in anticipation of his plans, and thanks to excess of zeal and even to insubordination on the part of certain officers and men, it must not therefore be concluded that had not his hands been forced the result would have been less successful, though it would certainly have been somewhat retarded.

Meantime in the northern Caucasus success less dazzling though hardly less important had crowned the combined efforts of Russia by land and by sea against Anápa, which,

[1] To this may be added Monteith's emphatic testimony: "The author can attest, from personal experience, the strict justice of Prince Paskiévitch, and the excellent discipline preserved by him in all ranks of the Russian army, both in Persia and Turkey": *op. cit.*, p. 167, *note*.

after a siege lasting from the 7th May to the 12th June, surrendered to Prince Menshikoff, who had been detached for this purpose with a sufficient body of troops from the army of the Danube. The co-operating fleet was commanded by Vice-Admiral Greig. Anápa, as we have seen, had already more than once changed masters; it was now to remain in permanent possession of Russia, thus depriving Turkey of her one stronghold in the northern Caucasus. Her emissaries continued for many a year to excite the Tcherkess and other tribes against Russia, but she could no longer land armies to help them, and their ultimate fate was assured.

To return to Paskiévitch, that commander was not the man to let the grass grow under his feet if he could help it; and the unexpected rapidity of his success at Kars, coupled with the fact that he had suffered, comparatively speaking, but trifling losses, would undoubtedly have urged him to still greater promptitude. But a new enemy had now to be contended with, and one more dangerous and difficult to cope with than either Persian or Turk. Hardly had Kars fallen when plague made its appearance in the Russian camp, and for a time threatened to put a stop to further campaigning. Fortunately in this matter, too, Paskiévitch proved himself far in advance of his age or country. Owing to the admirable measures adopted by him the disease made no great ravages, and on the 12th July he was able to resume his march.[1] Kios Pasha, misled by information that the Russian objective was his own capital, Erzeroum, had retreated in haste to cover that position almost immediately after the fall of Kars, and he had remained inactive ever since. Making a feint in that

[1] Again we have Monteith's personal testimony, *op. cit.*, p. 170. And see Fonton, *La Russie dans l'Asie Mineure*, pp. 555-8. Paris, 1840.

direction, Paskiévitch, after one day's march, took the more northerly of two roads to Akhaltsikh, that by way of Akhalkaláki (distant 60 miles from Kars), as being less open to flanking movements and nearer the Russian frontier, whence reserves would be forthcoming. Moreover, it was desirable that the last-mentioned fortress should be reduced and left in charge of a Russian garrison. Akhalkaláki twenty years back had repulsed Count Goudóvitch with heavy losses. Three years later Kotliarévsky had stormed it. It was now defended by a band of Turks, a thousand strong, who, unhampered by women or children, had sworn to die rather than surrender. The town itself was little better than a ruin, but the fortifications were still formidable, and to take them by storm might cost many valuable lives. Paskiévitch determined to reduce them by bombardment, and the garrison, brave as it was, and ready to die fighting hand to hand in defence of the walls, soon became demoralised under the terrible fire poured in upon them, to which they could make no reply. More than half of them fled, letting themselves down by ropes into ravines, where they were destroyed almost to a man. The Russians, led by General Osten Sacken and Colonel Boródin, then scaled the walls by means of the very same ropes, which had been left dangling, and the remnant of the garrison (300 men) laid down its arms (24th July[1]). A small but almost inaccessible fort, Khertviss, situated 25 versts farther on, surrendered three days later to a score of Tartar horsemen under Colonel Rayevsky after firing three shots,[2] and gave the Russians command of the line of communication through the valley of the Kour between Ardahán and

[1] Paskiévitch's despatch: Akti, vii. 755 (28th July).
[2] *Ibid.*, 759 (27th July).

Akhaltsikh, on which important stronghold Paskiévitch now marched.

The pashalik of Akhaltsikh had in the days of the great Queen Tamára, at the end of the twelfth century, formed part of the Georgian kingdom; but, overwhelmed by the Tartar invasion, its remaining Christian inhabitants had been forced to apostatise, and in the course of centuries the population, recruited from many sources, had developed into a race apart, under its own hereditary rulers, famous for turbulence and warlike spirit. Acknowledging the supreme authority of the Sultan, the Pashas of Akhaltsikh nevertheless maintained a semi-independence, and when the Ottoman Porte strove to enforce a stricter allegiance, defied its authority and defeated its armies.

Akhaltsikh, the town and fortress, occupied an almost impregnable position on the river Koura, and was now garrisoned by 10,000 men, who, superbly confident in their courage and strength, refused Kios Pasha's proffered reinforcements, and laughed to scorn the Russian threat. The seraskier, none the less, prepared to move to their assistance, and Paskiévitch had, in any case, to reckon with his forces in the coming struggle; information, indeed, from native sources led to the conclusion that the Turkish army was rapidly approaching Ardahán, and it became a question whether to deal with it there beforehand or march by the shortest route on Akhaltsikh and, if possible, storm the fortress before Kios could arrive. The Russian commander-in-chief chose as usual the bolder alternative. The one route, by Ardahán, was over 100 miles long, but comparatively easy; the other lay over a rugged, wooded, mountain chain without road of any kind, but the distance was only 40 miles. The Russian army, counting but 8000 bayonets, left Akhalkaláki on the 31st July, and,

overcoming extraordinary difficulties on the way, reached Akhaltsikh three days later towards sunset.[1] The following day (the 4th August) salutes from the fortress announced the arrival of the Turkish army, which encamped four miles from the town at the junction of the Koura and Akhaltsikh rivers; and on the 5th a brilliant cavalry affair enabled the Russians to take up a strong position before the walls on the eastern side of the town. But with a fortress to take considered impregnable by its 10,000 defenders on the one side, and a Turkish army of 30,000 men in position to attack him at any moment on the other, it must be conceded that the risk of something worse than defeat was indeed great, and that even Paskiévitch's dauntless courage and sublime self-confidence can never have been put to a severer test.

On the 7th the expected reinforcements arrived from the north, but even then the Russian force numbered but 10,000 men, and on the 8th a council of war was called to decide whether to remain and fight or retreat by way of the Borzhom defile. Poushtchin, as the lowest in rank of those present, first gave his opinion in favour of a night attack on the Turkish camp, and this valiant advice was unanimously adopted. The battle that ensued, lasting from dawn till evening, ended in the complete rout of the Turkish army. Kios, wounded, entered Akhaltsikh with 5000 infantry, the rest fled in disorder to Ardahán; but before this happy consummation was reached there were moments, even after eight hours' fighting, when the chances of battle seemed to favour the enemy. Three separate Turkish attacks in force had been beaten back, but the Russians had made no progress; and a ravine, on the possession of which all turned, defied every effort. It was Poushtchin, once more,

[1] See Potto, IV. i. 124, where dates, however, are confused.

who came to the rescue. A hazardous reconnoitring expedition showed him that the key to the ravine was a masked lunette, and when this had been stormed, the Turks at last gave way. The Russian losses included one general, the valiant Korolkoff, 30 other officers, and 500 men. Akhaltsikh was now left to its own defences, and the siege began.

CHAPTER XIII

1828

Siege of Akhaltsikh—Its capture—Poti capitulates—Gouria occupied—Paskiévitch's plans for the second year's campaign—Murder of Griboyédoff—Turkish attempt to recover Akhaltsikh

AKHALTSIKH had three lines of defence—the town, the fortress walls, and the citadel within them; and, as it proved, the fate of all hung on the possession of the town, strong in itself owing to the steep and rocky nature of its site; scarred by deep ravines; strengthened by bastions connected by palisading 16 feet high, with a ditch on each side; and presenting, like so many Asiatic dwelling-places, a very labyrinth of narrow crooked streets eminently favourable for defence, eminently difficult and dangerous to attack. And this town contained a population of 25,000 people, of whom, if the Armenians and Jews, a minority, were ready to favour the Russians, the native Muhammadans were a fierce and warlike race, bent, both men and women, on defending to the last extremity their homes, their lives, and their property. They had, too, the support of the garrison and the protection of the fortress. The latter was not a place of great strength, for the heights around it commanded every point of the works; but the broken nature of the ground afforded good cover for determined men,[1] and the confidence of its defenders was expressed in the saying, "You may snatch the moon from heaven rather than the crescent from the mosque of Akhaltsikh." We have Paskiévitch's own

[1] Monteith, p. 213.

statement that the troops at his disposal numbered only 12,792 all told; of these 3287 were required to guard the camps, 2959 to man the siege batteries, leaving an assaulting force of only 6546 officers and men, of whom 4016 were infantry. The besiegers, however, were flushed with victory; they had stormed Kars and Akhalkaláki, they had routed the seraskier's army of thrice their strength, and they were led by Mouravióff and many another hero under the eye of Paskiévitch himself.

The siege works made rapid progress. Battery after battery was established, mainly on the northern heights, where had stood the Turkish camp, until all the resources of the besiegers were disposed to the best advantage and employed in battering the unhappy town. The enemy, however, showed no signs of yielding; time pressed; it was reported that Kios Pasha was again advancing; and Paskiévitch on the 14th August, a breach having been torn in the palisading, decided to storm the town the following day.

The hour chosen for the assault was 4 P.M., for Kars and Akhalkaláki had been assailed at dawn, and the Russian commander-in-chief knew that the vigilance of the defenders of Akhaltsikh was greatest at that time and least in the after part of the day. They were accustomed, moreover, to the relief movements in the Russian lines that took place daily at 4 P.M., and would therefore be less apt to take alarm at the final preparations for the assault if made at that hour. The calculation was a shrewd one, and the audacious decision to storm such a stronghold with greatly inferior numbers in the full glare of a southern summer's day was justified by the result. The Turks were taken by surprise, and the Shirván regiment, to which the honour of leading the attack had been given, overwhelming one of the bastions, broke through the breach in the palisading and was soon engaged in the

town itself. Here the key of the position was an ancient Christian church, and round this sacred structure, on the anniversary of the Blessed Virgin's Assumption, specially chosen for this bloody attempt, the battle raged furiously between her votaries and the worshippers of Allah. Little by little the Russians gained on the defenders; guns were brought up and placed in position; but the evening was already setting in when at last the church was taken, blood stained and heaped with dying and dead. Then just as oncoming darkness began to hinder the attack some neighbouring buildings caught fire, and, the flames spreading rapidly, fighting went on with unabated fury throughout this night of horrors. The inhabitants, young men and old, defended their wretched houses with the energy of despair; women threw themselves into the blazing ruins of their homes rather than fall into the hands of the Giaours; in one mosque 400 men were burnt alive. The Russian soldiery, as usual when exasperated by a stubborn defence, showed little mercy, and, above all, to the deserters of their own race, who were present in considerable numbers; but Paskiévitch states that nevertheless the honour of the women was spared. It was only at dawn on the 16th that the town was at last fully occupied; the ruins were still burning, but resistance had ceased; and, in justice, it must be stated that, according to our authorities, the victorious troops now showed their "natural" kindness of heart, helping women and children to places of shelter and safety. It is so often the unpleasant duty of the historian to record their savage cruelty, that it is a relief to bring forward instances such as this when possible; the fact being, as all who know the Russians are aware, that their nature is compounded of the most opposite qualities. Quiet, good-humoured in the extreme at ordinary times, when

roused they are as brutal and merciless as any race on earth.

With the whole town in the hands of the Russians, enabling them to bring all their artillery to bear at point-blank range on the walls of the fortress, the latter became untenable; and on the 17th August Kios surrendered on the condition wisely and humanely agreed to by Paskiévitch, that he and the 4000 of his own men left him should be allowed to withdraw with their arms and property. So fell Akhaltsikh, which had witnessed the defeat of Goudóvitch and discomfiture of Tormázoff, and for more than three centuries had maintained itself inviolate.[1]

The Russian loss included 62 officers and over 600 men. The defenders lost some 6000 in killed and wounded, of whom 100 were women. The Imperial Library at St. Petersburg was again enriched by the addition of priceless manuscripts. The Turkish loss amounted to not less than 5000 men: "Of 400 artillery only 50 remained; of the 100 Janissaries the chief alone; of 1800 Lazes 1300 were killed, and of the inhabitants 3000."[2]

The capture of Akhaltsikh excited the highest admiration on all sides. Monteith writes: "Thus fell this hitherto unconquered city, celebrated as much for the dauntless courage of its inhabitants as for the atrocities committed by them, and for their inveterate habits of slave-dealing and plunder. The siege of the place, and the assault under which it had at last succumbed, are very remarkable, scarcely to be surpassed, indeed, by any recorded in history; and the boldness and talent of Prince Paskiévitch were on this occasion eminently conspicuous and well worthy the study of every military man."[3]

[1] See Paskiévitch's report, Akti, viii. p. 763.
[2] Monteith, p. 210.
[3] Page 211.

It was next necessary to take Ardahán and Atskhour; the latter, a castle commanding the passage of the Borzhom defile of the river Koura, surrendered the day after Akhaltsikh, the former on the 22nd August, both without fighting. Bayazid was entered on the 27th by Tchavtchavadze, prince and poet,[1] who by the middle of September had occupied the whole pashalik of that name, encountering hardly any resistance. As Paskiévitch wrote to the Emperor, "The banners of your Majesty float over the headwaters of the Euphrates." The Russians were, in fact, only 60 miles from Erzeroum, but for various reasons it was impossible to continue the campaign, and the army went into winter quarters. Far to the west, meantime, yet another important success had been attained with heavy loss, due almost entirely to sickness. Poti capitulated after a three weeks' blockade on the 15th June. There had been but little fighting; the fever, however, for which that neighbourhood is so notorious, carried off some 1800 men, the greater part after the return to Koutaïs.

On the last day of September a Russian expedition entered Gouria, and occupied that turbulent country without trouble or fighting.

The war, so far, had proved a brilliant success for Russia, and Paskiévitch in the south, Menshikoff in the north, had already more than fulfilled the Tsar's programme in so far as it related to the Caucasus. But the enemy, though beaten, was not yet cowed, and a second campaign was called for, to secure what had already been won, and to

[1] Griboyédoff wrote to Paskiévitch on the 30th October 1828 from Tabriz: "My father-in-law (Tchavtchavadze) has made prizes in Bayazid of some oriental manuscripts. Pray do not send them to the Imperial Library, where there is no one who can do more than read and write (if that), but to the Academy of Sciences, where Professors (Christian Martin von) Frähn and Senkovski will make the best use of this acquisition for the world of learning": Akti, viii. 770.

keep up the pressure in Asia Minor so important to the army of the Danube. To make this the more effectual, it would now be necessary to advance to Erzeroum at least, and Paskiévitch, urged by the Emperor to make the second campaign decisive, resolved in his mind a plan of action in which the capture of that important city would be but a step by the way. He would then march on Sivas, and through Tokat to Samsoun on the Black Sea coast, whence, in co-operation with the fleet, he could threaten even Scutari itself. But in order to make possible an advance such as this the Kurds must be won over, and the army increased by some 6000 to 8000 Russian infantry of the line, to be landed at Poti and marched through Koutaïs, Akhaltsikh, and Ardahán. If it were deemed necessary to reduce Trebizond it must be done by sea, and the expeditionary corps should number at least 10,000 men. In any case a naval demonstration was necessary in order to keep at home the warlike Lazes and the regular troops of the pashalik of Trebizond, while in the event of any advance beyond Erzeroum, the co-operation of the fleet would be no less indispensable.

The army would march on Erzeroum in two columns, moving by way of Toprak Kalé and Kars respectively, with Hassan Kalá as the point of junction.

Later, in mid-July, if all went well, it might be possible to undertake a further advance towards the Turkish capital, 1000 miles distant from Erzeroum, but there being no wheeled roads communicating with the seashore all that long way, it would be necessary either to occupy in strength the principal points along the line of march, which would involve the employment of a great many more men, or the army must abandon entirely its bases in Georgia and in Russia proper, a proceeding of which the danger was

obvious. "However, if circumstances allowed it, there was much to be said for an advance to Sivas, 235 miles from Erzeroum, through which ran almost the only roads between Constantinople, Diarbekir, and Bagdad, so that all the Asiatic provinces (of Turkey) would be cut in two, or nearly so. Between Sivas and Diarbekir lie the most important of the Turkish silver and copper mines, the capture of which would deprive the Porte of a considerable revenue.

"But I venture to repeat that so distant a movement can be undertaken only when the ranks are filled up, when our left flank is made secure by the Kurds taking sides with us, and when Van and Moush are occupied, or we have acquired political influence over them. To protect our right flank against the troops of Trebizond, we must make a strong diversion by sea."[1]

The Emperor could spare no reinforcements for the Caucasus beyond the 20,000 raw recruits who would be due there in the course of the summer of 1829, too late to take part in the advance on Erzeroum,[2] and though the Kurds were in appearance won over, their fidelity could never be counted on for more than the briefest period in advance. Meantime events took place which for a time threatened most serious consequences: at Teheran, the slaughter of the Russian special ambassador and suite; at Akhaltsikh, the sudden approach of

[1] Akti, viii.: Paskiévitch to the Emperor, 21st November 1828.

[2] Paskiévitch wrote to the Emperor (21st November) that the recruits took a whole month to cover the distance between Stávropol and Tiflis. Two months was the minimum requisite for drilling them into some semblance of soldiers, and distributing them as required. If, as in 1827, they only reached Stávropol from the interior of Russia in March, they could not be available for fighting purposes before July at the earliest. Meantime he could count on no more than 16,883 all told for his field army (12,837 bayonets, 3100 sabres, and 966 artillerymen, serving 68 guns): Akti, vii. 770.

a Turkish army bent on recovering that important stronghold. The former untoward event threatened to bring about a renewal of the war with Persia; the latter made it necessary to undertake a winter expedition for the relief of the Russian garrison, thus interrupting the preparations for the coming campaign, the success of which would have been gravely imperilled by the loss of Akhaltsikh.

Griboyédoff, the author of *Górië ot Oumá*,[1] had been attached to Yermóloff's staff in diplomatic capacity, and his immortal comedy had first been played by an amateur company at Eriván in 1827. Paskiévitch, fully appreciating his abilities and character, had continued to employ him, and in the autumn of 1828, after a journey to St. Petersburg, he had been sent to Persia on a special mission with a view to hastening the payment of the war indemnity and the due execution of other terms of the Turkmentchai treaty. At the end of February 1829, having conducted the negotiations with Abbas Mirza at Tabriz to a satisfactory conclusion, and made a ceremonial visit to the Shah at Teheran, where he was received with much honour, he was on the very point of leaving that capital on the return journey when in an outbreak of popular violence the whole Russian mission, with the exception of Maltsoff, the secretary, was barbarously destroyed. The story of the massacre[2] is as simple as it is stirring; nor need we seek elsewhere than in Griboyédoff's own tactless conduct for its origin, notwithstanding the vile insinuations of English complicity, voiced by Paskiévitch in ignorance, and repeated by living Russian historians in full possession of the truth.[3]

[1] "Grief from wit."

[2] Potto, III. iv. 619. A detailed account of the massacre is to be found in *Blackwood's Magazine*, September 1830, No. 171.

[3] The assertion that Paskiévitch believed in English complicity is based on nothing more than the following passage in his letter to Nesselrode of the 23rd February 1829, written in great perturbation of mind, long before he had received any authentic account of the tragic occurrence: "In ignorance of the true circumstances and drawing various inferences, one may suppose that the English were not altogether foreign to participation in the disorders that broke out in Teheran (though, perhaps, they did not foresee the fatal results)." Griboyédoff himself had written to Paskiévitch so recently as the 30th November 1828 (Akti, vii. 660): "Macdonald . . . avec lequel nous vivons dans la plus grande intimité, car en privé c'est l'homme le plus loyal et le plus estimable que j'ai rencontré depuis longtemps." After the murder Macdonald wrote to Paskiévitch from Tabriz: "Poor Madame Griboyédoff (a daughter of Prince Tchavtchavadze, and only just married) is still ignorant of the irreparable loss she has suffered by the death of the most amiable and affectionate of husbands. She is at present living with us, and your Excellency and her afflicted parents may rest assured that she will receive every care and attention" (*ibid.*, 671, 8th February). A little later Paskiévitch's suspicions had dwindled. Writing to Nesselrode on the 9th March he says: "The English mission in Persia has at all events observed all outward decency since the unfortunate affair of Griboyédoff. Macdonald's care for Maltsoff's safety and return to our borders does him great honour, and in my letter to him I have expressed my sincere gratitude." Again on the 15th: "In Tabriz all is very quiet, Russian subjects are very well treated, and Macdonald, to whose care they were entrusted by Amburger (Russian Consul-General) on leaving, takes the greatest interest in them" (*ibid.*, 682). It was not until the 18th March that Paskiévitch at last received Maltsoff's full report of the occurrence, and from that moment we hear nothing more of "English participation." Nesselrode in his instructions to Prince Dolgoroukoff (5th April 1829), Special Envoy to the Shah, writes: "The influence of the British mission in Persia has remained favourable to us, as previously, since the treaty of Turkmentchai, in the conclusion of which, as you know, it did us good service. In view of our existing political agreement with England and of Macdonald's high personal character, it may be hoped that this state of things will continue" (*ibid.*, 693). Finally, Dolgoroukoff wrote (28th November 1830): "Since the death of Macdonald, who was a very well-intentioned man, &c. &c." (*ibid.*, 731). There is thus abundant evidence, even on the Russian side, that this British soldier and minister was a man not only of the highest honour and integrity, but of the kindest nature. Sir John Macdonald Kinneir, to give him his full name and title, died of cholera the same day as Major Hart in June 1830.

By the convention of Turkmentchai Persia, as we have seen, agreed not to hinder the emigration of those Armenians who opted for Russia. On the eve of Griboyédoff's departure a certain Mirza-Yakoub, a eunuch of that race, who had for more than fifteen years been employed as treasurer in the Shah's harem, expressed his desire to leave Teheran in the ambassador's train. The latter, after some hesitation, consented, and Yakoub took up his quarters at the

Embassy. The Shah's indignation knew no bounds. The fugitive was in possession of those secrets of which, above all, the Mussulman is inordinately jealous. It was almost as if one of his wives had taken a similar step. When Griboyédoff sent to Yakoub's house to fetch his personal property, Feth Ali's *farrashi* made their appearance and led away the already laden mules. Every means of persuasion was used to induce the Russian to abandon his purpose, but threats and entreaties were alike vain, and rushing blindly on his fate he further demanded the surrender of two captive Armenian women from the harem of Alli Yar Khan, one of the chief notables, and an irreconcilable enemy of Russia. Worse still, the women, sent to the Russian mission for purposes of identification only, were forcibly detained. This filled the measure of Persian patience. Instigated, possibly, by the highest in the land,[1] the chief moullás and other spiritual leaders proceeded to inflame the mob from the pulpits and in the streets. Roused to fury, the people rose in thousands, and on the 30th January 1829, attacking the house where the mission was lodged, overwhelmed the small Cossack guard, and, in spite of the most desperate resistance, massacred it and all others within. Yakoub was the first to perish. Griboyédoff fell sword in hand, and his body, treated with every contumely, was dragged about the streets for three days. Thirty-seven Russians perished in all, and Maltsoff alone found shelter and safety in the house of a friendly Persian; the Legation was pillaged and destroyed.[2]

Griboyédoff's body, only recognised by a wound received

[1] Monteith emphatically denies Feth Ali's participation (p. 227). Probably, however, he did instigate, or at least approve of, the attack on Yakoub without intending harm to the Russian mission.

[2] The above account is taken mainly from Maltsoff's report to Paskiévitch of the 18th March 1829: Akti, vii. 688.

in a duel some years before, was afterwards recovered and sent to Tiflis. Poushkin met it on his way to Erzeroum, and has left us the following strange reflections: "I know nothing happier or more enviable than the last days of his stormy life. Death itself, coming in the heat of a gallant, unequal fight, was neither terrible nor wearisome, but, on the contrary, sudden and beautiful."[1]

[1] *Poutieshestviē v Arzroum.* Works, 3rd ed., vol. v. p. 285.

CHAPTER XIV

1829

Akhaltsikh relieved—Hessé's victory at Limáni—Danger of war with Persia—Paskiévitch's successful diplomacy—Abbas Mirza sends his son to St. Petersburg—Plague at Akhaltsikh—Russian victory at Digour—March on Erzeroum—Crossing of the Saganloug—Defeat of the Seraskier—Of Haghki—Hassan-Kalá taken—Erzeroum occupied—Poushkin—Baibourt—Death of Bourtseff—Paskiévitch's victory—Peace of Adrianople—Unnecessary bloodshed—Hessé's repulse—Migration of 90,000 Armenians—Paskiévitch—Persian and Turkish troops

THE attempt to recover possession of Akhaltsikh took the Russians by surprise; they had not given the Turks credit for the spirit of enterprise requisite to such an undertaking, nor could they foresee by whom the blow would be struck. In pursuance of a policy dictated by the numerical weakness of his own army, Paskiévitch had striven hard to seduce from their natural allegiance the Mussulman tribes inhabiting the newly conquered districts or their immediate neighbourhood, and amongst them the Adjars, a warlike and numerous people, whose homes lay close to Akhaltsikh itself. Their chief had entered, readily, into negotiations, and had expressed with seeming sincerity his willingness to accept for himself and his people Russian sovereignty. But either he was playing false or the pressure from the other side was too great, and on the 21st February 1829 he suddenly appeared before Akhaltsikh with an army or horde estimated at 15,000 men, occupied the town which had so recently been the scene of Russian triumph, butchered the Christian inhabitants, and after a vain attempt at storming, blockaded Prince Béboutoff and his small garrison in the

fortress and citadel. A siege ensued lasting twelve days, during which the defenders suffered some loss and much privation; but on the approach of a small body of men under Bourtseff, who with great hardihood forced the Borzhom defile and advanced to the attack without waiting for the main relieving force coming from Ardahán under Mouravióff, the undisciplined Adjars broke and fled, anxious only to secure the booty plundered at Akhaltsikh from Christian and Mussulman alike.[1]

At the same time 1200 Russians under General Hessé, together with some 1500 Gourians, attacked and destroyed a large body of Turks occupying a fortified camp at Limáni on the shores of the Black Sea, to the south of Poti; a victory that did much to save Gouria from invasion, and noteworthy for the gallant part played by the Gourians themselves, who so recently as the siege of Poti had fought not for but against the Russians.[2]

This twofold success of the Russian arms relieved for the moment Paskiévitch's most pressing anxieties, but left him, none the less, face to face with a situation graver, more critical, than had occurred in Transcaucasia since 1812. Trustworthy information showed that the seraskier was employed in making preparations on a large scale for the renewal of the war in spring.[3] The forces at the

[1] Akti, vii. 778: Paskiévitch's report to the Emperor of 15th March.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Paskiévitch to Nesselrode, 27th February: Akti, vii. 675. He writes that the Turks are collecting 100,000 men, that the Persians are in communication with the Sirdar at Erzeroum, and he demands urgently a reinforcement of one division of infantry, &c. Four days earlier he had written (*ibid.*, 673), "with the present number of troops in Transcaucasia it is quite impossible to begin a new war against Persia. . . . I have not enough even to act against the Turks with full confidence of success." And on the 30th March, again speaking of the impossibility of waging war against Turkey and Persia at once, he declares that in that case Daghestan would rise, and it would be difficult for the Russians to maintain themselves at all in Transcaucasia (*ibid.*, 689).

Russian commander-in-chief's disposal could not reasonably be held more than adequate to cope with the Turkish army in the field while containing the turbulent tribesmen of the Caucasus proper. Yet a renewal of the war with Persia seemed inevitable, and, to crown all, the calling out of the Georgian militia, a measure wise and natural in itself, led, thanks to pedantic regulations and a singular disregard of native susceptibilities, for which Paskiévitch himself can hardly be blamed, to widespread disorders, and threatened not merely to defeat the end in view, but to involve the whole country in armed rebellion. To deal successfully with such a concurrence of hostile circumstances demanded not only military genius, with which, as we have seen, Paskiévitch was plentifully endowed, but a rare combination of courage, tact, and energy; and it is not without astonishment that we find this arrogant soldier displaying when necessity arises the suppleness and restraint of a trained diplomatist, the moderation and firmness of a born administrator.[1]

At any other time such an outrage as the murder of Griboyédoff would have demanded and ensured exemplary punishment. The Russians would have marched on Tabriz, and, failing complete satisfaction, on Teheran itself. Now, however, no such movement could be undertaken without seriously compromising the coming campaign against Turkey and even endangering not only the frontier provinces in that direction, but Georgia itself. None the less Paskiévitch made, as far as possible, all the dispositions called for by such an eventuality, knowing well that the war he was so eager to avoid hung in the balance, and that

[1] His diplomatic qualities, it is true, had already been shown to some advantage at Constantinople during the abortive peace negotiations after Tilsit (1807).

diplomatic action alone would not in any case suffice to avert it. Feth Ali, indeed, showed no inclination to offer either redress or apology, and it can hardly be doubted that the Porte at this time made strenuous efforts to secure his alliance, and so neutralise, to say the least of it, one-half of Russia's available strength. Luckily, in Abbas Mirza Paskiévitch found one who appreciated more fully than his father did the danger of such a course, who realised that it meant ruin to himself if not to his country; for his capital, Tabriz, lay close to the Russian frontier; his fair province of Azerbijan marched with the Russian possessions; and, whatever success he might hope for in the initial stage of the war, recent and most bitter experience told him that in the long run Russia would once more prove victorious, when the brunt of her vengeance would fall upon him. His position, however, was one of extreme difficulty and danger; for opposition to his father and the war party at Teheran might involve him, personally, in consequences more immediate and no less disastrous than would compliance with their wishes. Thus embarrassed, he applied secretly to Paskiévitch for advice, and the latter to a verbal message delivered by a trusty Armenian replied, in a letter aptly worded to work upon his personal fears and ambitions no less than on his patriotism, suggesting as the only means of averting war the despatch of one of his brothers or one of his sons to St. Petersburg on a mission of excuse and reconciliation.[1] To this Abbas Mirza gave his consent without waiting for the Shah's approval, his decision being hastened by the threatening concentration of Russian troops on the Persian frontier. But the negotiations had taken time, and it was only towards the end of April that Khosroff Mirza reached Tiflis; nor was it until the Persian prince was well

[1] The text of the letter is given by Fonton in full, p. 405.

on his way to the north that Paskiévitch at last, having meantime pacified the troublesome Georgians, felt justified in once more turning his attention to the Turkish campaign.

Hostilities had meantime been renewed, and this time by the Kurds, who raided certain villages on Russian territory, but were pursued and defeated on their retreat and deprived of their booty. Akhaltsikh, where the sorely-tried garrison was now being decimated by the plague, was again threatened by Akhmet Bek and his adjars, and again relieved by Bourtseff after a difficult march and a somewhat hazardous night attack at Tsourtskabi. The frontier district was now completely devastated, and any forward movement of the Turkish army thereby rendered less practicable. The initiative, nevertheless, lay with the seraskier, for Paskiévitch, hampered by the difficulties and dangers above described, was not yet ready. Moreover, the Persian frontier even now required watching in force, since little reliance could be placed on a ruler of so unstable a character as Feth Ali; and this necessitated serious modifications in the Russian commander-in-chief's original plan of campaign. He had intended to march against the enemy from two sides—from Kars and from Bayazid, with Erzeroum as his main objective. But Bayazid lay close to the Persian frontier, and could no longer serve as a base for operations against Turkey. On the contrary, its own situation called for defensive measures, and in the sequel, this far-away stronghold, being completely isolated, was besieged by the Pasha of Van, and only held out until relieved, thanks to the heroic and stubborn defence of the garrison under Generals Popoff and Panyoutin.[1]

[1] Paskiévitch to the Emperor, 14th July: Akti, vii. 806.

By the middle of May, while the mountain passes and defiles were still deep in snow, the Turkish advance declared itself in various directions. An army corps under the Kiaghi Bek, the seraskier's master of the horse, approached Ardahán, but, headed off by Mouravióff's column, retreated into the impenetrable fastnesses of Adjaria and thence threatened Akhaltsikh. The advance guard of the main Turkish army under Osman Pasha crossed the Saganlong mountains and debouched on Akh-Boulakh, while the Pasha of Van marched on Bayazid. Thus the Russian centre and both flanks were threatened at once. Paskiévitch now hastened to the front, and reached Akhalkaláki on the 19th May. Twelve days later, having ordered Mouravióff to join Bourtseff with his whole division at Digour, he left for Kars accompanied by the Neezhni-Novgorod dragoons, some Cossacks, and two and a half battalions of infantry, with fourteen guns;[1] and reaching that stronghold two days later, the 1st June, added to his command General Pankrátieff's division. On the 5th news reached him of the total defeat of the Kiaghi Bek by the combined forces of Mouravióff and Bourtseff at Digour.

This, the first great success of an astounding campaign, was due mainly to Bourtseff's promptitude and energy. That commander was absent at this juncture on a punitive expedition in the Sandjak of Koblian with a small part only of his forces, three companies of the Kherson regiment, 200 Cossacks and 4 guns, and Paskiévitch's messenger conveying the order for the junction with Mouravióff, finding his way already barred by the enemy, succeeded in delivering his despatches only after serious delay, a delay that might well have proved fatal. But Bourtseff, grasping at once the critical position in which

[1] Paskiévitch's report to the Emperor: Akti, vii. 788.

Mouravióff might find himself with the kiaghi's army to face and without the expected reinforcements, sent on the whole of the men with him at a moment's notice under Colonel Hoffmann, and himself galloped back to Akhaltsikh to bring up the rest of his troops. Hoffmann, starting at midnight, reached Digour at ten o'clock the next morning, to find that the Turks had already debouched from the Potskhoff defile, whereupon straddling the little river of that name he withstood, from noon to 3 P.M., the onslaughts of 6000 Turks, some of whom even penetrated the Russian square, though only to be beaten back with heavy loss. Soon afterwards Bourtseff came up with two battalions, and almost simultaneously Mouravióff's advanced guard made its appearance from the south. The Turks retreated to their camp, where next day they were attacked and finally routed after a desperate battle, in which a decisive part was played by the Mussulman irregular cavalry so recently organised by Paskiévitch. The Turkish loss in killed alone was 1200 men out of a total of 15,000 engaged. The Russians lost only 8 officers and 60 men killed and wounded. The Turkish camp with all impedimenta fell into the hands of the victors, and amongst the kiaghi's papers was an unfinished letter beginning with the words, "As I write this the Russians, totally defeated, are in full flight!"

The right wing of the Russians having now become completely disengaged, Mouravióff and Bourtseff joined forces with the main army in front of Kars, and on the 13th June Paskiévitch began his march on Erzeroum at the head of an army numbering some 18,000 men (12,340 bayonets, 5785 cavalry, 70 guns). With such a force, vastly as it was outnumbered by the enemy, a commander-in-chief of Paskiévitch's calibre might well feel confident of success against the brave but undisciplined and badly-

led Turks. Yet the undertaking was at best an arduous one, and any mistake might prove fatal.

The main Turkish army lay at Hassan Kalá; an advanced corps of 20,000 men under Haghki Pasha held a well-nigh impregnable position at Milli-diouz, on the north-east edge of the Saganloug mountain chain, commanding the Medjinghert road, one of two leading from Kars to Hassan Kalá. Paskiévitch with his usual daring determined to advance by the other road leading to Zevin and take Haghki in the rear, thus cutting off his retreat but putting his own army between two hostile forces each superior in numbers—one, according to all information received, vastly so. He would then fall upon Haghki, take his camp by storm, destroy his army, and turn to face the seraskier.[1] Owing to circumstances which no one could have foreseen, the sequence of events was reversed; but the result in the end was the same. The hazardous nature of such an undertaking was sufficiently obvious, though the actual extent of the danger incurred only became apparent when retreat without fighting was already out of all question. Breaking camp on the 13th June towards evening, Paskiévitch, after detaching Bourtseff on his left flank along the Medjinghert road to mask his movements, advanced by night with the main army by the Zevin road, and, covering a distance of 26 miles (39 versts), over rugged mountains partly clothed in dense forest and still under snow, succeeded in reaching, unobserved, a position in rear of the Turkish camp, where he was rejoined by Bourtseff. The Russians thus crossed the Saganloug without loss, a feat compared by General Monteith to Napoleon's passage of the Alps.[2] Haghki,

[1] Salegh, who had succeeded Kios.
[2] Monteith, *op. cit.*, p. 247. Akti, vii.: Paskiévitch to the Emperor, 19th June.

much to his astonishment, realised next morning what had taken place, but knowing that the seraskier was approaching from Hassan Kalá with 30,000 men, and holding that his own position was impregnable, he looked forward with grim complacency to the final result of what must have seemed to him a fatal strategy. And in truth the fortified camp at Milli-diouz proved on closer inspection to be so well defended by the triple range of snow-clad hills and deep, stony ravines impassable for artillery, which lay between it and the Russian army, that Paskiévitch, with the capture of Erzeroum and even more ambitious projects before him, was unwilling to incur the heavy losses that must inevitably attend its storming from the position he had now reached. Three whole days (the 15th to 17th June) were spent in a careful examination of the vicinity before this conclusion was definitely arrived at, during which time the huge baggage and ammunition train was safely brought to camp. It was then decided to continue the turning movement towards the south and east, so as to reach a more favourable position, though this would involve, owing to the difficult nature of the ground, a detour of more than thirty miles. But before the march was resumed an affair took place of happy omen for the success of the campaign. Information was brought that a body of the enemy detached by Haghki, and numbering, as it afterwards proved, 1600 men, had taken possession of a strong natural position commanding the road to Erzeroum. A sufficient force of horse, foot, and artillery was sent to dislodge them, while a still stronger detachment cut off their retreat to Milli-diouz. The result was a complete victory for the Russians, and again, as at Digour, an important part was played by Paskiévitch's newly-formed

Mussulman cavalry, who dealt, indeed, with their co-religionists so ferociously that the Russian officers had difficulty in saving the lives of any. On this occasion, as on so many throughout the long wars for the conquest of the Caucasus, the reflection is forced upon us that had the religion of Allah formed a stronger bond of unity amongst its adherents, the success of Russia would have been at least doubtful.

More than 300 of the Turkish infantry were cut to pieces; many others were taken prisoners; but Osman Pasha, their commander, with most of the cavalry, succeeded in effecting his escape.[1]

A reconnaissance carried by Mouravióff but a short way along the Erzeroum road now led to a discovery of the utmost importance. The head of the Russian column soon came in contact with a body of Turkish cavalry; a sotnia of Cossacks, pushing on, caught sight of the white tents of regular infantry; a scout sent forward under promises of a large reward brought back news that they belonged to the advance guard of the seraskier's army. Mouravióff, acting under orders, returned to camp.

Next day, the 18th June, Paskiévitch, undeterred, resumed his march. During the past three days he had each morning occupied the heights overlooking Haghki's camp in force. To screen his turning movement from the pasha's observation the same manœuvre was now again made use of, the troops employed being six battalions of infantry, a Cossack brigade, and twenty guns, all under the command of General Pankrátieff. At the same time a smaller force was sent forward to screen the front, as Pankrátieff did the left flank, of the advancing army. When, towards midday, the latter was at last in motion, Paskiévitch, turning to his

[1] Akti, vii.: Paskiévitch's report.

suite, exclaimed: "Now my army is like a ship: I have cut the cable and am making for the open sea, leaving no return possible." Owing to the narrowness and dangers of the road only 10 versts (6½ miles) were made that day, and towards night Pankrátieff, having fulfilled his mission, rejoined the main army, of which next day his column formed the rear-guard, Mouravióff's the advance. As the Russians made their way down the Khan defile on the morning of the 19th they came in touch with the enemy's pickets, and it soon became evident that a battle was imminent. Information was wanting as to the nature and composition of the hostile forces, and even now Paskiévitch believed them to form part of Haghki's army. As a matter of fact he had in front of him the seraskier himself with 12,000 men, and no sooner had Mouravióff's column debouched in the valley and formed front, than the Turkish cavalry in their thousands rushed to the attack. The Russian infantry deployed, the guns unlimbered, and a heavy fire so cooled the courage of the assailants that the contest in this part of the field took, and thereafter maintained, the form of an artillery duel. But on the left wing Bourtseff, with only the Kherson regiment and twelve guns, isolated and without reserves, had to bear the brunt of an attack by overwhelming numbers — from 5000 to 6000 cavalry from the camp at Milli-diouz, backed by as many more from the main Turkish army. For some interminable moments Paskiévitch and his staff held their breaths. It seemed impossible that the Russian square should survive such an onslaught, but when the smoke of the guns rolled away Bourtseff's little force was seen to be intact, the Turkish cavalry already far away. Paskiévitch seized the moment to make a decisive attack on the enemy's centre, which had gathered opposite the Russian left flank beyond

the river Zaghin-kala-sou. The movement was completely successful; the Turkish centre was broken, the Turkish left wing cut off and thrown back against the mountains. Both fled in disorder to the village of Kaïnli under cover of their reserves. But meantime the seraskier's right wing in consort with Haghki's cavalry made another desperate attempt to overwhelm Bourtseff. Once more the Russian square held firm, but the Turks had already taken it in the rear, and were making havoc of the pack-train and ammunition reserves, when help arrived in the shape of two Cossack regiments despatched in haste by Pankrátieff. Almost simultaneously a relief column under Baron Osten-Sacken made its appearance from the opposite direction, and the enemy, threatened on both sides, turned and fled.

The battle it seemed was at an end, and it being now five o'clock, orders had been given to bivouac on the banks of the Kaïnli-tchai, when news arrived which changed at once the whole aspect of affairs. It became known that the Turkish commander-in-chief had had no intention of giving battle that day. No better informed than his opponent, he had no idea that the Russian force that thrust itself so unexpectedly between him and Haghki Pasha was Paskiévitch's whole army. He had summoned only the cavalry from Milli-diouz, and the major portion of his own forces—18,000 men—were but now approaching Zevin, one march away. He was engaged in entrenching himself on the wooded hills, there to await the rest of the army, and intended next day, supported by Haghki's 20,000 men, to offer decisive battle. This was precisely what Paskiévitch had meant to avoid; the combined Turkish forces would outnumber him by three to one, and even victory in such circumstances might be won at a cost that would compromise, if not altogether frustrate, his advance on Erzeroum

and beyond. The moment was a critical one: there was no time to be lost; and the decision was immediately taken to make a night attack on the Turkish camp. By seven o'clock all the dispositions were made; the enemy, who expected nothing less, finding himself attacked in front and outflanked on both sides, offered hardly any resistance, but fled in disorder, hotly pursued by the Russian cavalry for 20 miles. At Zevin were gathered 18,000 men who had taken no part in the fighting, but the arrival of the fugitives and the stories they told of Russian numbers and prowess struck panic, and they also beat a hasty retreat. Thus, unexpectedly, the 19th of June saw the complete dispersal of the seraskier's army; the key to Milli-diouz was in the hands of the Russians, and Haghki and his army doomed.

After the fatigues of such a day it might have been expected that Paskiévitch would grant some respite to his troops and to himself. But such was not his view. No commander was ever more imbued with the determination to strike while the iron was hot. Worn with fatigue, he nevertheless spent the first hours of the night in making arrangements for the attack on Milli-diouz next morning, and amongst his victorious troops there were none to question the wisdom of his decision, none to murmur at the burdens laid upon them.

At dawn on the 20th Paskiévitch, having divided his army into five columns, himself led one directly against the enemy's camp, while a second took it in flank, and the other three occupied all roads by which escape might be attempted. Before midday Haghki himself was a prisoner, his 20,000 men dispersed in full flight throughout the neighbouring country, save some 2000 who fell fighting, and 1200 who were taken prisoners. The victory was

decisive; 19 guns and 12 standards were among the spoils; Haghki's army no longer existed, and the Russians could pursue their way to Erzeroum without fear of attack from flank or rear.[1] But the great majority of these 20,000 men had escaped, thanks to Osten-Sacken's blundering conduct of the pursuit. The regular cavalry failed to come up with the flying enemy, though eminently favoured by the line of retreat, and only the native horsemen again distinguished themselves.[2] Paskiévitch was bitterly disappointed, and Osten-Sacken, after an inquiry insisted on by himself, was severely reprimanded and relieved of his command. The army had covered a distance of 37 miles in 25 hours, and totally defeated hostile forces numbering in all 50,000 men.

Next day, the 21st June, the Russian army set forward on its way to Erzeroum, and passing Hassan Kalá, which, in spite of its strength, offered no resistance, on the 26th reached the gates of the great city, and on the 27th, the anniversary of Poltáva, the cowardice of the citizens having paralysed his measures for defence, the seraskier capitulated with all his men. The Russians entered unopposed the capital of Anatolia, which had not seen Christian soldiers within its gates for at least five centuries, and amongst those who participated in the triumphant entry, though in the quality of a mere spectator, was the poet Poushkin.[3]

[1] Paskiévitch's report to the Emperor, 23rd June, wherein, however, not a word is said of Osten-Sacken's failure: Akti, vii. 792.

[2] Paskiévitch draws the Emperor's special attention to this fact: "In all the fighting they behaved most valiantly. They were to the front in every attack, and threw themselves with gallant determination even on the enemy's infantry. The greater part of the guns, colours, and prisoners were taken by them." And Monteith (p. 300) writes: "A body of Circassians also appeared in the Russian ranks, all these being people who a few months before had been in revolt and the bitter enemies of Russia, but who had been gained over by the just, kind, and liberal conduct of the Russian commander."

[3] The following is too characteristic to be omitted: "The well-known writer of poetry, retired 10th Class Tchinovnik Al. Poushkin, left St. Petersburg in March for Tiflis, and by imperial command he is under secret sur-

"In fourteen days the troops of your Imperial Majesty had, since passing the limit of last year's conquests, *i.e.* from the 13th June, crossed two lofty mountain ranges, still partly covered with snow; destroyed the Turkish army; captured two camps and the fortress of Hassan Kalá, so important a place in this country; taken from the enemy all his field artillery and parks; and, having thus put an end to all possibility of resistance, compelled him to abandon to us the centre of his power in the East—a citadel and fortress which might have withstood the longest siege. Finally, they had taken prisoners the seraskier himself, commander-in-chief of the Turkish army and ruler of all Asiatic Turkey, as well as his four senior pashas." [1]

The further progress of the campaign may be summed up in a few words. Bourtseff with a small column occupied on the 7th July, without opposition, Baibourt,[2] 80 miles on the way to Trebizond, while Paskiévitch at Erzeroum gathered his strength for the contemplated advance on Sivas. But twelve days later, in an abortive attack on the neighbouring village of Kart, Bourtseff, one of the bravest and most successful of Paskiévitch's subordinates, fell mortally wounded, and the Russian losses included 13 other officers and more than 300 men killed and wounded. This unfortunate reverse raised once more the hopes of the Turks, and added greatly to the difficulties

veillance, of which, by order of General Paskiévitch, I have the honour to inform your excellency, most respectfully begging you to take without fail the requisite measures for establishing the said surveillance on Poushkin's arrival in Georgia."—Akti, vii. p. 954: Major-General Baron Osten-Sacken to General Adjutant Strekáloff, 12th May 1829.

Poushkin followed the army to Erzeroum by Paskiévitch's express permission, but the authorities in St. Petersburg were not a little disturbed at the fact.

[1] Paskievitch's report to the Emperor, 28th June: Akti, vii. 802.

[2] Beyond this fortress the road to Trebizond was impassable for wheeled vehicles. Baibourt was necessary to the Russians to protect their right flank on the march towards Sivas.

of Paskiévitch's position, though it abated not a jot his determination to carry out his plan of campaign. Preceding his main body to Baibourt, on its arrival he took and destroyed Kart (28th July), at the same time routing a considerable body of troops gathered in the neighbourhood by Osman Pasha,[1] a very brilliant performance.

The road to Sivas lay open, but disquieting news received from many quarters as to the gathering of hostile forces in his rear on either flank forced even Paskiévitch to abandon for the present any such distant movement. He made a demonstration in that direction nearly as far as Kara Hissar, 250 versts from Erzeroum, and led a reconnaissance in person far enough along the road to Trebizond to prove its impracticable nature, and the hopelessness of attempting to win over the warlike Lazes; but, autumn approaching, he withdrew the army to Erzeroum after blowing up Baibourt, thus ending a campaign of which the troubles and failures of the last few weeks somewhat dimmed the glory of its initial stages. Yet in the course of four months Paskiévitch's army had traversed 350 miles of hostile country, one of the strongest in the world; beaten and dispersed an enemy's force of at least 80,000 men with 200 pieces of cannon; killed some 10,000, taken prisoners two commanders-in-chief and not less than 5000 men; entered Erzeroum, and captured 262 cannons, 65 standards, 10 banners, and the seraskier's bâton.

On the 2nd September 1829 was concluded the treaty of Adrianople, but the news took nearly a month to reach Paskiévitch at Erzeroum, and during that interval much blood was shed unnecessarily at Baibourt[2] and else-

[1] Paskiévitch's report to the Emperor, 28th July 1829: Akti, vii. 810.

[2] Paskiévitch himself led his troops to Baibourt once more in consequence of large gatherings of the enemy calling for decided measures. He retook that place on the 26th September, gaining a brilliant victory over the Turks, who lost 800 killed and 1200 prisoners.

where.[1] The war, however, was at an end. Early in October the troops began their homeward march, and for a quarter of a century peace reigned between Russia and Turkey. Paskiévitch, now forty-seven years of age, was received in St. Petersburg with extraordinary honours, but of all Russia's conquests in the present war in and beyond the Caucasus, nothing was retained but Anápa, Poti, Akhalkaláki, and a part of the pashalik of Akhaltsikh, including the town and fortress of that name. Even Kars and Ardahán were restored to Turkey, and the safety of Georgia was sacrificed to the exigencies of European politics. In 1855 and 1877 Paskiévitch's work had to be done again, and once again.

But if, territorially, Russia profited little by Paskiévitch's conquests, in the matter of population it was quite otherwise. In a despatch dated the 4th December 1828 Nesselrode had asked Paskiévitch to bear in mind the desirability of winning over the Christian population of the conquered provinces, with a view to furthering the colonisation of Imeritia, Mingrelia, and other districts.[2] Paskiévitch, who knew the disabilities of those countries, readily agreed to fall in with Nesselrode's suggestion, though with quite other ends in view. He was strongly in favour of retaining a very large portion of Turkish territory—the frontier line he aimed at was practically that of to-day[3]—and in a despatch to the Emperor of the 11th January 1829 he wrote: "We can defeat the enemy

[1] On the 17th September General Hessé lost 600 killed and wounded in an abortive attempt on a small fortress, Tsikhis-dsiri, on the edge of the sea. Paskiévitch's report to the Emperor, 14th November: Akti, vii. 829. The town and whole pashalik of Moush were occupied by Colonel Reout likewise after the conclusion of peace; but there was little resistance and hardly any bloodshed: Fonton, p. 532.

[2] Akti, vii. 772.

[3] Paskiévitch to Nesselrode, 26th July 1828: Akti, vii. 757. Paskiévitch to the Emperor, 3rd June 1829: Akti, vii. 787.

by the help of our troops; we can only retain our conquests by inspiring confidence in the population."[1] From motives of policy, then, he encouraged to the utmost the very natural hopes and aspirations of the Armenians of Turkey, with the result that the end of the war saw these unfortunate people utterly compromised with their Muhammadan neighbours and masters, and doomed, if left at their mercy, to a cruel and relentless persecution. Paskiévitch's humanity is beyond all doubt; it distinguished him, indeed, most honourably from the majority of great Russian commanders, and on the present occasion it was conspicuously displayed. Employed by Nicholas I. some years previously to do justice in the affair of some hundreds of rebellious peasants at Lipetsk, Paskiévitch pleaded for mercy, saying, "to show humanity and sympathy has never yet done harm," and now, knowing full well the weighty arguments that might be urged against such a policy, he nevertheless obtained permission from the Emperor to take with him on his retreat all those who feared to remain; and further, to distribute to the necessitous the unspent, and by far the greater, portion of the 100,000 tchervontsi (*c.* 300,000 roubles) which had been assigned for payment of the Kurds, on the supposition that large numbers of them would take service with the Russians. He was soon embarrassed by the multitude of would-be refugees, practically the Armenian population *en masse*, but he could not bear to leave any of them to Turkish vengeance. An Emigration Committee was appointed, money lavishly spent, and when his army recrossed the Turkish frontier it was accompanied by some 90,000 men, women, and children, fleeing "the wrath to come."[2]

[1] Akti, vii. 775.

[2] The number has been variously given. Lynch ("Armenia," vol. ii. p. 206, *note*) says: "It is generally supposed that not less than 60,000 Armenians,

The campaigns of Paskiévitch beyond the Caucasus differ from those of his predecessors by reason of the extent of country traversed, the number of troops employed, especially on the Turkish side, the admirable discipline and good conduct of the Russian soldiery, but, above all, by the uncommon measure of success attained. To inquire more particularly into the causes of this success would take us beyond the scope of the present work—those who would do so may be referred to the volumes already quoted—but, briefly, it may be said that the field-marshal's victories were due, in the first place, not to the soundness of his strategy, sound as it was, nor to the novelty and brilliance of his tactics,[1] but to the unusual care he bestowed on the preparations for a campaign, which enabled him, when the right moment came, to give full play to his audacious military genius, and strike with the utmost force and rapidity.[2] Speaking of the Turkish war, Monteith says: "Thanks to the excellent arrangements that had been made, the army was well supplied with provisions, and the strength of the troops had never been overtasked by unnecessary haste, even when circumstances appeared to call for it. Arrangements having once been completed, no subsequent delays ever took place, nor did the troops suffer by those irregular exertions which often ruin an army, or tend to retard rather than expedite its movements. The numerical strength of the army employed in the conquest

headed by their bishop, accompanied the retirement of Paskiévitch's army." Monteith says 90,000 (p. 300), Paskiévitch the same, but explains that the figures are only known accurately as to families, of which there were 14,044, including 7298 from the pashalik of Erzeroum (Paskiévitch's despatch to the Emperor: Akti, vii. 845). For further information see the reports of the Emigration Committee (*ibid.*, 833, 843, 847, &c.)

[1] Fonton, 537–545. It was to Paskiévitch that the Archduke Charles wrote: "Il faut savoir transiger avec les principes."

[2] For Paskiévitch's arrangements *re* commissariat, hospitals, artillery, and engineers, see Fonton, pp. 254, 257, 258, and 260 respectively.

of Erzeroum was not half what the service required, yet, through the genius of Prince Paskiévitch, it was brought to a glorious termination."[1]

In after years, during the Polish insurrection (1831–32), the Hungarian campaign (1849), and the initial stages of the Crimean war, he displayed, though ever successful, what his detractors were pleased to call an exaggerated caution, whereby it is held that his military fame was to some extent dimmed. He was severely contused by a shell under the walls of Silistria (27th May 1854), and had to retire from the command-in-chief. He died two years later. In endeavouring to form an impartial estimate of his character, endowments, and exploits, it must never be forgotten that, thanks to the enmity existing between him and Yermóloff, dating from so far back as 1815, he has always been treated with gross injustice by the latter's many worshippers. Thus M. Bergé, editor of the valuable series of State papers so frequently cited in the present work,[2] in his introduction to vol. vii. (p. 11) writes: "Without entering into the questions of Paskiévitch's own part in the happy issue of those events which happened during his time in the Caucasus, we will say in conclusion that 'with the good order in which the country found itself after Yermóloff, and that spirit of Catherine and of Souvóroff by which Paskiévitch found the soldiers inspired, it was easy to reap laurels'—so, at least, Count Diebitsch expressed himself to General Sabaneyeff, whom he met on the Line when returning from Georgia into Russia." To which the retort is obvious: "If it was easy to reap laurels in 1826–27, why did not Yermóloff do so himself?" But Diebitsch was no well-wisher to Paskiévitch, and it is conjectured that, as already stated, he would willingly have taken Yermóloff's place himself.

[1] Monteith, p. 300.

[2] Akti, &c.

The same writer[1] says: "The war with Persia and Turkey ended happily for us, thanks to the excellent discipline imparted to the troops by Yermóloff, and to the officers and officials so well chosen by him." And the same prejudice is very noticeable in other Russian writers on the Caucasus.

To quote Monteith once more,[2] an important witness who accompanied the Russian army in 1828–29, "General Paskiévitch possessed an instinctive knowledge of character, and he completely trusted those whom he employed. In his attention to the civil administration he was indefatigable, and he put a stop to the abuses which had so long disgraced and ruined Russian affairs. Men of every rank and class had free access to him; they might bring their own interpreter, and be sure of having justice quickly administered. His loss was deeply felt in Georgia, which he was rapidly getting into order, and he had nearly succeeded in bringing the tribes of the Caucasus into pacific relations with the Russian Government by employing a portion of their troops and not interfering with their internal government—the only system of policy, as I often heard from his own lips, that he thought likely to succeed. . . ."

To this, of course, Yermóloff's admirers will never agree, and unfortunately the matter is one which can now never be proved. But in view of Paskiévitch's success in winning over the populations of the provinces on both sides of the border, his successful employment of native troops, and the fact that during the whole period of the Persian and Turkish wars the northern tribes remained tranquil, a state of things Paskiévitch attributed directly to his policy of non-interference,[3] it may at least be permitted to enter a

[1] Akti, viii. p. xxi. [2] Monteith, 301. [3] Akti, viii. 340.

caveat against the dogmatic assertions of the Yermóloff school, that force of arms alone could bring about the submission of the mountaineers.

Paskiévitch's personal character, no doubt, had something to do with the dislike he inspired in certain quarters. Monteith tells us that, "In his outward deportment he was hasty, and sometimes even violent, which appears to be a fashionable piece of affectation among Russian officers—perhaps from a desire of imitating the eccentricities of Souvóroff; but in his actions Paskiévitch was as remarkable for his cool deliberation as for the rapid execution of whatever he had decided upon. It has been said of him (reversing the epigram on Charles II.), that he seldom said a wise thing, and never did a foolish one."[1]

To go back, for a moment, to the Persian and Turkish campaigns, it is obvious that the last word has not yet been said. Taking into consideration all the circumstances of the case—the comparatively small numbers of the Russian troops, the distance from their real base in Russia proper—for reinforcements, supplies, and munitions of war had all, to a great extent, to come from the European provinces of the Empire—the very great difficulties presented by the physical nature of the theatre of the wars, the turbulent, unsettled, and even rebellious character of the population of the Caucasus itself, both Christian and Mussulman, and, finally, the fact that the plague broke out twice during two years in the army itself—it must be acknowledged that no amount of talent, or even genius, in the leader, of courage and endurance in the troops under his command, could have availed to bring the two great Muhammadan Powers successively to their knees in so brief a period had they not been weakened abnormally by internal causes, had their

[1] Monteith, 303.

armies, in short, been such as even in those days might be expected.

Now the Persian army contained excellent raw material in the sturdy Tartars of Azerbijan, the fierce hillmen of Kermanshah, and many others, but it lacked nearly everything else that makes for efficiency in the field. Some of the Persian regular troops had been drilled and organised successively by French and English officers. The artillery, contemptible before, had recently been strengthened by British guns and British gunners. But, strange as it may seem, the effort to impart European discipline to the Persian army had not only failed altogether of its purpose, but had actually had the contrary effect.[1] In the words of Sir Henry Rawlinson, "in presenting Persia with the boon of a so-called regular army, in order to reclaim her from her unlawful loves with France, we clothed her in the robe of Nessus."[2] The rest of the army, ill-paid, was made up of raw levies, unaccustomed to any discipline, belonging, many of them, to semi-independent khanates, and unwilling to serve for more than a few months at a time. On the approach of winter they expected to be disbanded and return to their homes, and when it was sought to detain them they took French leave. The men were brave enough, but the subordinate officers were greatly inferior to their Russian opponents, and though Abbas Mirza occasionally displayed no little capacity as a leader, the higher direction of the war was, as a rule, greatly defective.

As to the Turkish army, the same deficiencies existed, and the same criticisms hold good; besides which the Kurds, Adjars, and other warlike tribes were ever a doubtful quantity. Then, too, the allegiance of some of the

[1] See the weighty evidence to this very remarkable fact collected by Lord Curzon: "Persia," vol. i. pp. 579 *et seq.*

[2] "England and Russia in the East," p. 31.

great feudal beys sat lightly upon them, "their lands had been resumed by the Government, no substitute had been provided for their perfectly trained and well-appointed horse, and they were really more inclined to join the enemy than to take service under the Government from which they had received such affronts and injuries,"[1] while those pashas who had already been defeated feared the bowstring, and were, likewise, willing to take service with their conquerors. Thus on the 11th January 1829 Paskiévitch wrote to the Emperor that the Pashas of Kars and of Bayazid, being prisoners in his camp, sought permission to march against the Turks in the coming campaign; while Moustafa, who had been second in command of the Turkish army before Akhaltsikh, promised to come in at the first opportunity.

But apart from all this, there was a very special reason for the weakness of the Turkish army—the janissaries had just been destroyed (1826), and the newly formed *nizam*, or regular infantry, were not yet qualified to take their place; "the new levies were incomplete in number, dissatisfied, and undisciplined."[2]

Yet with all allowances and deductions, the campaigns of 1826–29 must ever remain memorable in military annals, nor can they fail to confer lasting fame on Paskiévitch himself and the army he commanded.

[1] Monteith, 154.

[2] *Ibid.*

PART II

THE MURID WAR

CHAPTER XV

Muridism—Kazi Moullá—Shamil—Development of the movement—Blood-feuds—Adat and Shariat—Number of Murids—General signification of Murid and Muridism

THE defeat, in succession, of the two Muhammadan Powers left Russia free for many years to devote the whole of her military strength in the Caucasus to the subjugation of the mountain tribes. Persia never again ventured to oppose her in arms; Turkey, not until 1854; and the Crimean war, in so far as concerned the Caucasus, served to hasten rather than to retard Russia's final triumph. From the treaty of Adrianople onward the conquest of the Caucasus means the conquest of Daghestan and Tchetchnia, and of the country of the western tribes; and as the present work, for reasons already given, concerns itself hardly at all with the desultory warfare waged, with varying success, against the last-named until their final defeat and expatriation in 1864, the remaining chapters will be devoted almost exclusively to the narrative of the long struggle known, owing to the religious spirit imparted to it by the native leaders, as the Murid war. And to begin with, let us see what is meant by Murid and Muridism.

According to Mussulman mystics Islam consists of three parts—Shariat (= the Law), Tarikat (= the Path), Hakikat (= the Truth)—the one worldly, the other two

spiritual; the one for the necessities of ordinary people, the others for those who would lead the higher life. In other words, the Shariat is the whole body of written Mussulman law as delivered in the Koran by Muhammad; the Tarikat, the Path leading to the knowledge of the Most High, to be learnt from the Prophet's life and deeds, which knowledge, when fully attained, is called in Arabic Marifat, in Persian Dá'nish; Hakikat, though by some authors accorded a place between Tarikat and Marifat, is generally acknowledged as on the highest plane of all. It may also be said that Shariat represents the words, Tarikat the deeds, Hakikat the qualities of Muhammad.[1] The Shariat was introduced into Daghestan by the Arab conquerors in the eighth century, but here, as in other parts of the Caucasus, failed signally to displace the Adats, or customary law of the mountain tribes, which will be reverted to later on.

There are several systems to explain the Tarikat, each with its followers, but four principal ones, supposed to be derived from the first four Khalifas, who received them from Muhammad, who received them from God; so that all originated from one source, and that the Highest, and all lead to one end, which end is to be attained by constant prayer and the renunciation of worldly good. Moullá Jami, the Persian poet, goes farther. He writes: "He who by this means acquires the knowledge of God is called Wali, that is, one who has ceased to live for himself and has attained to immortality by the contemplation of the Divinity. . . . If thou desirest to reach the rank of Wali, renounce the good things of both worlds (this and the World to come), and make thyself free to receive worthily the love toward God."

[1] Aziz-Ibn-Muhammad-Rasáfi in the "Maksadi Aksa," part ii., folio 4, as quoted by General Khánikoff, *Sbornik Gazéti Kavkaz* (1847), i. 139.

All these systems differ much one from another in practice, and their respective followers are often at daggers drawn. Each system or sect is divided into Orders, of which the members are Murids, the head a Murshid.[1] The latter is one who has reached perfection, and he alone can put his disciples on the right Path; without his blessing neither prayer, nor fasting, nor almsgiving, nor renunciation can avail to Salvation. Every Murshid has several Khalifas or Murids who have made more or less progress towards perfection; these attend to the spiritual development of the ordinary members. A Khalifa who attains perfection is consecrated by his Murshid as Shaykh or Murshid in turn, and returns to his native place or goes elsewhere to found a new Order. Each Murshid is succeeded at death by one of his Khalifas. In spite of Muhammad's express dictum that there is no monkery in Islam, each Order is supposed to have its khankah or monastery, where the Murids live on the offerings of the pious, though this has never been the case in Daghestan, where, however, all the members of these Orders had to be unmarried men, or such as had renounced their families. Moullá Jami writes in the "Nafahát" that the first Sufi was Abu Hashim, who died A.H. 161; the second, Dhu'n-Nún al-Misri (died A.H. 245); the third, Junayd, who died A.H. 297, and is buried at the village of Hazri, in the province of Baku. It was Junayd's contemporary, Shibli, who first openly preached Sufi'ism or Muridism, but until the fifth century after the Flight the mystics were looked on askance, and sometimes

[1] Murshid = "one who shows" the way; Murid = "one who desires," *i.e.* to find the way. The religious education of a Murid consisted in a course of prayer and study divided into five sections, representing successively the spiritual teaching and influence of the five great Prophets—Adam, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad—religious evolution being a fundamental idea in Sufi'ism.

persecuted by those in authority. Thus Husayn-ibn-Mansur (al Halláj—"the wool-carder"), Junayd's pupil, was scourged with a thousand stripes, mutilated, and his body burned by the Vizier of the Khalifa Muktadir at Bagdad. Tradition says that his severed head repeated several times "I am God," and that the drops of his blood formed the same words on the ground where they fell.[1] From the fifth century (after the Flight), however, Sufi'ism or Muridism acquired great influence, and not only many of the greatest Persian poets, but many rulers of that country were Sufis.

It seems, therefore, that, strictly speaking, Muridism and Sufi'ism are one, and that the mystic teaching found its way at a very early period to the Caucasus, where it became firmly established in the province of Shirván, now the Shemakhá and Gheok-tchai districts of the province of Baku. It was possibly introduced by the Arabs, whose presence is still attested by many names of places with the prefix "Arab," as Arab-Shamlee, Arab-Kadim, &c., where the people to this day are noted for their dark skins, guttural pronunciation, and by their occupation as breeders of camels, though they now speak the Turkish or Tartar dialect of Azerbijan. In the ninth century of the Hijra the Sayyid Yahyá, a pupil of Sadru'd-dín, lived at Baku in great favour with the Shah of Shirván, who built the palace, still existing, at that place. Yahyá is said to have had 10,000 Murids under him, and to have spread his teaching far and wide. But on the extinction of the Shirván-Sháh dynasty in 1538 the country became the scene of frequent struggles between the Turks and the Persians, Shiites and Sunnites, which lasted up to the Russian invasion, while

[1] The oldest and most authentic accounts of him are to be found collected in Professor Browne's "Literary History of Persia," vol. i.

from time to time the mountaineers came down and harried the country of one or other sect with strict impartiality. In these circumstances Sufi'ism seems to have lost its influence, and we find during this long period no names of any celebrity amongst the Shaykhs of Shirván, not indeed until Ismail Efendi at the end of the eighteenth century made Shirván once more the centre of Tarikat teaching, of the sect known as Nakshabandi, founded by Muhammad of Bukhara (died A.H. 791). Ismail Efendi was forced by the Russians to emigrate to Turkey; his chief disciples were exiled to the interior of Russia; and Muridism quieted down in Shirván, only, however, to reappear in Daghestan, whither it was transplanted by one of his followers, another Muhammad of Bukhara, and accepted by Moullá Muhammad of Yaraghl, a village in the Kioureen district, who joined to it a political character quite foreign to its real nature. Moullá Muhammad may therefore justly be considered as the founder of the politico-religious movement which, under the name of Muridism, united for a time in the great struggle for freedom a majority of the Mussulman inhabitants of Daghestan and Tchetchnia; but he never took upon himself the actual leadership, and is wrongly counted by some as the first Imám.[1] This title belongs properly to Moullá Muhammad of Ghimree, better known as Kazi (Ghazi) Moullá, who was succeeded in turn by Hamzad Bek and by Shamil.

Such, in brief, were the religious antecedents of the movement we are investigating;[2] a rapid retrospect of the

[1] For Moullá Muhammad and his connection with Muridism, see memoir by Captain Prouzhanovsky, *Sbornik Gazéti Kavkaz* (1847), ii. 22.

[2] A good deal of the above will be found collected in an article on Muridism in the Caucasus by Mahmoudbekoff in vol. xxiv. (1898) of the *Sbornik Materialoff dlia opisania miestnostei ee plemen Kavkaza*. The reader who wishes to know more of Sufi'ism than is contained in the above very imperfect account is referred to the special works on the subject. Also to Brown's "Oriental Spiritualism" (or The Dervish Orders of the Turkish Empire); Professor E. G. Browne's "Literary History of Persia"; R. A. Nicholson's "Literary History of Arabia," and the Introduction to the last-mentioned author's "Selected Odes from the Divan-i-Shams-i-Tabriz" (Cambridge University Press). Also see Whinfield's *Gulshan-i-Ráz* ("Rose Garden of Mystery," text and translation).

history of Russia's early relations with Daghestan will give the clue to its political origin.

We have seen that Russia a century back had temporarily acquired possession of the Daghestan littoral, but had abandoned it in the reign of the Empress Anne. In 1786 the Shamkhal of Tarkou, the Koumuik ruler of north-east Daghestan, voluntarily accepted Russian sovereignty, and a few years later his example was followed by the Khan of Mekhtoulee, whose dominions lay between the free communities of Darghee and Koisoubou on the south and west, and those of Tarkou on the east and north.

In 1796 the Russian army under Zóuboff, marching against Persia, once more obtained possession of the Caspian shore, and Russia, taking advantage of the dissensions and jealousies obtaining amongst the petty rulers and tribes of Daghestan, gradually, with small means and little fighting, made good her footing in the greater part of that country. Artillery was quite new to the mountaineers, and its effect was so great that a round or two of grape-shot often sufficed to put to flight their most numerous hordes. The petty rulers of the various khanates and free communities were in turn induced to swear allegiance to Russia, and when, as invariably happened, they or their subjects after a while attempted to regain their independence, the cry of treachery was raised; Russian troops marched against them; they were beaten in the field, and their principal towns or villages ruthlessly sacked. On the capture of Derbend, in 1796, neighbouring Tabassarán had submitted; in 1803,

Avaria, the most important of the khanates of Daghestan; in 1806 the khanates of Baku and Koubá were permanently annexed; in 1813, by the treaty of Gulistan Persia formally recognised Russia's right not only to these but to many others.[1] In 1819 several of the more important free communities of Daghestan[2] acknowledged Russian suzerainty; in 1820 the Khan of Kazi-Koumoukh instigated a rising amongst his neighbours, but was beaten at Khozrek, his capital taken, and his khanate incorporated with Kioureen. Finally, in 1824, the community or confederacy of Koisoubou, including Ghimree, gave hostages for good conduct. Thus in little more than a quarter of a century the greater part of Daghestan, as well as the provinces immediately to the south of it, were absorbed by Russia. The means employed were not highly moral, but probably a close parallel might be drawn with the conquest of India proceeding contemporaneously, and, if great cruelty were exercised and little good faith shown, we must remember that Russia was then only half civilised, her opponents almost wholly barbarous. Russia's great advantage lay in her own system of government, that autocratic power which, coupled with the existence of serfdom, enabled her to fill the ranks of her armies at will, and, yet more important, to secure her conquests by a vast system of land settlement on the Cossack principle of military tenure. Daghestan itself was too poor and too rugged for the Russian immigrant, but at the northern foot of the mountains, from sea to sea, lines of Cossack stanitsas occupied and guarded the broad belt of fertile land; the plough followed the sword, often indeed accompanied it; and a solid and permanent base

[1] The khanates of Derbend, Kioureen, Talish, Shekeen, Shirván, and Karabágh.

[2] Akoushá or Darghee, Siourgheen, Rougoul, and Koubatchee.

was furnished for the outlying posts in the mountains, or for any farther advance that might become necessary.

Thus the religious revival in Daghestan coincided with the Russian conquest; the infidel neighbour became the foreign oppressor, and to the desire for spiritual reformation was added the yet stronger desire for temporal liberty. The Russians, moreover, made the cardinal mistake of confirming and supporting with their moral prestige, and by force of arms when necessary, those native rulers who, in reliance on such backing, oppressed more than ever their unhappy subjects. They drew down on themselves in this way not only their own full share of obloquy as tyrants-in-chief, but much of the odium directly incurred by the khans and beys and other petty chieftains of feudal Daghestan. The law of Muhammad, on the other hand, proclaimed equality for all Mussulmans, rich and poor alike; the new teaching was therefore essentially popular, and from this time onward Muridism was a political movement grafted upon one in itself purely religious. Both were perfectly genuine and, on the whole, perhaps of equal force, though Russians are, naturally enough, apt to dwell rather on the latter characteristic, foreign writers, equally naturally, on the former. To these it is an heroic struggle for freedom, intensified by still loftier considerations; to those an outbreak of religious fanaticism, for which the cry against Russia's mild and beneficent rule was a mere excuse.[1] The religious revival had originally nothing political in it,[2] and

[1] So Omároff, in the preface to his translation of an Arabic treatise on Muridism, in *Sbornik Sviédenii o Kavkazskikh Gortsakh*, vol. iv. (Tiflis, 1870), says, "Patriotic and national feelings were far in the background."

[2] As Count Gobineau has well said, "Si l'on separe la doctrine religieuse de la nécessité politique qui souvent a parlé et agi en son nom, il n'est pas de religion plus tolérante, on pourrait presque dire plus indifférente sur la foi des hommes que l'Islam."—*Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale*, p. 24. Ed. Paris, 1866.

throughout the long war there were many Murids, "of the Tarikat," who took no part in the fighting, and though sometimes respected for their learning and godliness, were looked on with disfavour by those "of the Ghazavat," afterwards called "of the Náïbs" from Shamil's lieutenants, whose main object became more and more political independence. But it was closely followed by the loss of liberty, and Moullá Muhammad found no difficulty in persuading numbers that the new doctrine was quite compatible with the ordinary Mussulman teaching, which focussed in one point hatred of the foreigner and hatred of the Giaour,[1] the alien in race and the infidel in religion—which promised the highest good in this life, freedom, and eternal happiness in the world to come. In theory Muridism was absolutely incompatible with bloodshed, for the Tarikat was of its essence; on the other hand, the words of the Koran and the example of the Prophet, as interpreted by the leaders of the movement, alike inculcated the invitation to the infidel to accept Islam (Da'vat), or, in case of refusal, his conversion by force of arms, with death as the alternative (Jihád). The followers of Muhammad, like the Jews of old, were the chosen people, and like them they were called upon to war with the unbelievers. That they, the orthodox, should not only fail in the work of proselytism, but actually submit to infidel rule, was a glaring contradiction of the sum and substance of the Prophet's teaching, in precept and still more in practice. The mystical Path was all very well while the Moscovite kept to his own side of the border, but now that by force and by fraud he had taken possession of the land, a rougher road must be trodden. The only weapon of

[1] *Gyâwur* in Turkish, but the form popularised by Byron must stand.

the Tarikat was the sword of the Spirit; the only liberty it promised, spiritual freedom. But the wild dwellers in the mountains of Daghestan may be pardoned if they found little consolation for loss of temporal liberty in the vague mysticism of dwellers on the Persian plains or dreamers on the banks of the Ganges. Inevitably, their first and most ardent inspiration became freedom from Russian servitude, and they understood very well that this could only be achieved by the sharp, bright steel they loved so well and could handle to such terrible purpose. If the Tarikat prohibited a recourse to arms, then the Tarikat must, for the time at least, be modified in this respect and brought into line with the Koran; nor, according to Moullá Muhammad, was there in this any real contradiction, for who could walk freely in fetters or tread the Path with neck bowed to the infidel yoke? Political freedom was obviously the indispensable condition of religious reformation, and the enslavement of Mussulmans the supreme justification of a holy war; and so it happened that at the close of the first quarter of the nineteenth century, just when the Russians were congratulating themselves on their easy conquest of Daghestan, the people of that country, animated at once by religious enthusiasm and love of freedom, the two most powerful motives that sway mankind in the mass, were ripe for the struggle which was to make that conquest doubtful for many a long year to come. There only wanted a leader, and, as usual, the hour brought forth the man.

Kazi Moullá was born at Ghimree about the year 1793.[1] He learned Arabic at Karanai, and completed his

[1] The actual date is uncertain, and on this point, as on so many others, Russian writers are very confusing. Thus Tchitchagóva, "Shamil in the

education at Arakanee, under Sagheed Efendi, with whom, however, he afterwards quarrelled. He combined in a rare degree the silver and gold of speech and silence. Shamil said of him that he was "silent as a stone," others, that men's hearts were glued to his lips; with a breath he raised a storm in their souls." A Russian writer states that he possessed to a high degree the gift of oratory, but no great theological learning or political talent; a native, Hadji-Ali of Tchokh, declares, on the other hand, that he swayed the people by his knowledge and mental powers, adding that he neither spilt the blood nor pillaged the property of Mussulmans, but contemned worldly goods, and held his own life cheap. All agree that he was heroically brave, single-minded, and fanatically devoted to the cause, but grave, sombre, and merciless.

His companion and fellow-villager, Shamil, lived almost next door to him as a child, and the two boys, who were destined to make the name of Ghimree famous, were inseparable companions. The younger of the two had been named Ali at birth, but being for the first six years of his life thin, weakly, and often ill, local wisdom or superstition prescribed a change of name, and henceforth he was called Shamil.[1] From this moment it is said he began to mend, and soon became noted for an uncommon degree of strength and activity, which he took every possible means to develop. He practised fencing, running, jumping, and various gymnastic exercises to such effect that at twenty he had no rivals in these pursuits. It is related of him

Caucasus and in Russia," states on p. 13 that Kazi Moullá was four or five years older than Shamil, who was born in 1797, and on p. 24 states that he was seventy-five years old when killed in 1832!

[1] "All-embracing," one of the hundred and one names of Allah, says M. Bergé.

that he could jump with ease over a ditch twenty-seven feet wide (!), or over a rope held by two men of ordinary stature above their heads. He went barefooted and with breast uncovered in all weathers, and excelled in daring and hardihood even amongst the brave and hardy mountaineers of Daghestan. He was quick, energetic, eager for knowledge, proud and masterful, but somewhat gloomy, and abnormally sensitive. His father, Dengan, was a drunkard, and Shamil at the age of fourteen felt bitterly the sneers and mockery to which he was subjected by his fellows on this account. Seven times, it is said, he tried to turn Dengan from his evil ways, even making him swear on the Koran to renounce strong drink. Finding that this had no permanent effect, the boy declared that the next time he was gibed at for his father's drunkenness he would stab himself to death before his eyes. Now Dengan loved his son, and this threat had such an effect on him that from that moment he gave up drink and lived soberly to the end of his days—so, at least, the story goes. Shamil's first teacher was his companion Kazi Moullá, and in after life he used to say that he learned more from him than from any one else; but both lads studied under several of the most learned teachers in Daghestan, and finally paid a visit to Yaraghl,[1] and were there initiated into the principles of the new Muridism. The first evil against which they set themselves was drunkenness. Kazi Moullá, when he began to preach, caused Shamil to give him forty blows with a rod in public for having tasted wine before he had realised the enormity of such a sin, and Shamil in turn submitted to the same punishment. The temperance crusade thus strangely begun had a great and lasting success. The

[1] The plural, Yaraghlar, is sometimes used, there being an upper and a lower village of the name.

people of Ghimree groaned, kissed the hem of Kazi Moullá's robe, and many beat themselves.

Meantime, while the glittering circle of Russian bayonets closed in on every side, Moullá Muhammad's influence had been growing steadily year by year. Intangible, immaterial, it passed surely and silently through the hedge of bristling steel as a miraged ship through opposing cliffs, or as a moss-bog fire creeps up against the wind. The two forces, material and moral, moving in concentric rings of opposite direction, kept equal pace, and just when to outward seeming the last spark of liberty was trampled under foot in central Daghestan by the soldiers of the Tsar, the sacred flame was ready to burst forth and illumine the land on every side, even to its utmost borders.

There seems no reason to doubt that Moullá Muhammad had adopted Muridism originally as a means to spiritual perfection, but as he looked round and saw his country defiled and enslaved, other thoughts took root in his mind; the zeal of the patriot grew up side by side with the fervour of the devotee, and the seed of later sowing sprang up apace and rapidly overtopped the spreading branches that had sheltered its early growth; or perhaps the Russians would prefer the simile of a noxious parasite overspreading a goodly tree. For many years people had flocked to the holy man of Yaraghl for ghostly comfort and advice, and the humble house was now more than ever a place of pilgrimage, but no longer for none but peaceful seekers after the knowledge of the Most High. Other and sterner faces were seen there than in earlier days, and of those who came as before to satisfy a spiritual need, the majority went back to their homes imbued with quite other views and feelings.

There is much obscurity as to the exact dates of the

events marking the early progress of Muridism in Daghestan, but it seems that Moullá Muhammad was consecrated Murshid by Hadji Ismail in 1822–23, and from that time preached the new doctrine in the mosque at Yaraghl, though not at first in its ultimate form. Now Kazi Moullá began to preach openly at Ghimree in 1827, and as he studied the Tarikat under Jamalu'd-dín, who was taught by Moullá Muhammad, we may safely assign to the interval between those dates the last phase of his religious education and his own consecration by Moullá Muhammad as Murshid and Imám.

Jamalu'd-dín, though he gave his daughter, Zeidat, in marriage to Shamil, and was ever after the latter's best friend and wisest counsellor, refused at first to countenance the Ghazavát, and even forbade Kazi Moullá to undertake it. The latter thereupon journeyed once more to Yaraghl, and addressed Moullá Muhammad as follows: "God the Most High in His Book commands us to fight the infidel and the atheist, but Jamalu'd-dín refuses his sanction. Whose commands shall I obey?" "We must obey the commands of God rather than those of men," was the answer, and from that moment, it may be said, the die was cast. Returning to his native aoul he commenced to preach, insisting mainly on the necessity of restoring the Shariat, and as a requisite corollary abandoning the Adats;[1] at the same time impressing on his hearers the political equality of all true believers, who owed no allegiance, he maintained, to any but holy men obviously worthy of the favour of Allah and the confidence of their fellow-countrymen. It followed that submission to the Russians was neither obligatory nor laudable, though permissible as a

[1] Customary law—in some communities embodied in written statutes, but more frequently handed down orally from generation to generation.

temporary measure where resistance appeared hopeless. But he wisely refrained at first from openly preaching the holy war, for which the auspicious moment had not yet come, though rapidly drawing near. Kazi Moullá was certainly not only eloquent but learned, for he knew by heart over four hundred of the Ahádis, or sayings attributed to the Prophet, and quoted these, with ready application, to the confusion of all opponents. Keeping his real aim in the background, he posed as a religious reformer only, and soon acquired so great a reputation that the old Shamkhal of Tarkou, a major-general in the Russian service and loyal vassal of the Tsar, invited him to his capital, and allowed him to preach in the mosque at Kazaneeshtchi and nominate the judge at Erpelee. Arslan Khan, of Kazi-Koumoukh, more doubtfully loyal to Russia, likewise received him with open arms, and his fame spread far and wide in Daghestan. As the number of his followers increased he gradually threw off his reserve, but it was not until the end of 1829 that he openly called on his hearers at Ghimree to gird themselves for the holy war. Long before then, however, it must have been evident to close observers that his preaching could have no other end, and it may well be asked what the Russians were doing all this time, and why they took no steps to avert the danger that threatened them. The answer is that though they had a shrewd suspicion of what was preparing under the guise of religious reform, their attention was taken off by the Persian and Turkish wars, both of which favoured the views of the revolutionaries in Daghestan, not only indirectly but directly, for Persians and Turks in turn sent emissaries to stir up the mountaineers against the Russians in the hope of diverting part of the army of the Caucasus from the scene of conflict. The Persians furnished their agents

with money, and sought to achieve their end by an appeal to their cupidity. The Turks, better inspired, or more sagacious, were content to work upon their religious feelings, and to the honour of the Daghestanis, be it said, they proved far more susceptible to moral than material inducements. No doubt also the fact that the Persians were Shiites had much to do with their non-success.

Now let us turn to that measure of religious reform which from the time that the movement took a practical direction replaced the higher but vaguer teaching of the Tarikat. In preaching the restoration of the Shariat Moullá Muhammad and his followers had a double object in view. As comprising the civil and religious laws embodied in the Koran it was an essential part of the religion of all true Mussulmans, and no genuine religious reformer who hoped to influence the people as a whole, and not merely the few whose minds were open to mystical allurements, could fail to insist on its observance. But it had a political significance in Daghestan of the weightiest kind, for the greatest difficulty in the way of the liberators was not the power of Russia, but the weakness of their own country, and that weakness arose mainly from internal discord. Daghestan was split up into numerous khanates and free communities of many different races and languages, and for the most part bitterly hostile one to another. Strife and bloodshed were chronic, and not only between those various entities, but between village and village, between house and house, as it had been from time immemorial; and of many contributory causes none had operated so powerfully in originating and perpetuating this state of things as the elaborate system of blood-feud and vengeance, not only sanctioned but insisted upon by the Adats. The subject is one of very great interest, and

might be illustrated by many striking instances, but for the present it will suffice to mention two or three cases to show the lengths to which this primitive custom extended in Daghestan.

Three hundred years ago, as Shamil himself told the story, a villager of Kadar, in Mekhtoulee, stole a hen from his neighbour, who retaliated by taking a sheep. The first paid himself back with two sheep, whereupon the second helped himself to a cow. The original thief now stole his neighbour's horse, which so exasperated the latter that, finding no property sufficiently valuable to compensate such a loss, he killed him and fled. Blood demanded blood, but the murderer was not to be found; so the relations of the murdered man in default of the guilty one, and in strict accordance with the local Adat, slaughtered his next of kin. The blood-feud was now in full swing, and was kept up for three centuries, during which scores, some say hundreds, of innocent victims were sacrificed in the name of honour to this terrible custom, and all for a hen![1]

Another case, also recorded by Shamil, occurred at Tchokh, 25 versts south of Gouneeb, an aoul celebrated as the scene of Nadir Shah's defeat (1742) and an unsuccessful siege by the Russians under Argouteensky-Dolgoroukoff in 1849. This time it was not a domestic fowl but that commoner object of dispute, a pretty girl, who gave rise to the quarrel. A young man at Tchokh being violently in love paid a visit to his desired father-in-law and demanded his consent to the marriage. Meeting with a decided refusal he lost his temper, and whipping out his *kindjal* dealt a mortal blow, which, however, did not prevent his opponent from drawing a pistol and killing his murderer in turn. At

[1] Rounovsky's article "Rousskië lyoudi na Kavkazye" in the *Zaryá* for 1870, No. 11, p. 62.

the noise of the shot and cries of the women the neighbours came running in, and being related, some to one, some to the other, of the two victims, promptly took up the quarrel; from words they came to blows, and fought with such deadly determination that in a very short space of time not less than twenty-five were killed and wounded.[1] Again, at the sheep-cotes of the village of Tseebilda, in Andee, some 180 years ago, a quarrel arose between the shepherds while engaged in the favourite amusement of firing at a mark. Presently one of them killed, whether by accident or not is unknown, another, and a battle followed in which even old men and women joined, and eventually of the whole community only four persons were left alive. In 1826 at Velikent, in the district of Kaitago, a fight took place in a room containing fourteen persons, and all were killed but one. The cause of quarrel on this occasion was a blood-feud which had already cost life.[2] The Adats bearing on this subject, like all others, vary considerably in detail from village to village and tribe to tribe, but in principle they are identical, and this holds good not only of Daghestan but of all the mountain districts of the Caucasus, and as in many respects they are diametrically opposed to the teaching of the Koran, it is evident that they must have existed before the Muhammadan conquest. General Komaróff holds that the population of Daghestan up to then was mostly pagan, though the opposite opinion has been widely maintained. He points out that some of the tribes accepted Islam without demur, whilst those which were recalcitrant

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 63.

[2] The last two cases are given by Komaróff in his very interesting and learned article on the Adats of Daghestan: *Sbornik Sviédenii o Kavkazskikh Gortsakh*, i. pp. 44, 45. Malcolm ("History of Persia," vol. ii. p. 328, *note*; London, 1829) gives details of a Persian blood-feud which in 1814 had lasted seventy years, and still continued.

were treated by the Arabs with great cruelty, and in either case the presumption is against the existence of Christianity.[1] Rounovsky, to whom we are indebted for many interesting details regarding Shamil, whose warder he was at Kalouga, thinks that the Mussulmans from climatic and other causes chose out the Old Testament law of "an eye for an eye," &c., and neglected what he calls the New Testament recommendation to mercy with which it is mixed up in the Koran, and adds that the Daghestanis from natural perversity improved upon the Jewish law of retaliation by demanding two or more eyes for one. But this is a very superficial view, the fact no doubt being that they never abandoned their primitive customs on the subject, or, if they did, reverted to them as soon as the grasp of the Arabian conquerors relaxed, just as they did in 1859 on the surrender of Shamil.

Moreover, the passages in the Koran are as follows: "And whosoever shall be slain unjustly, we have given his heir power to demand satisfaction, but let him not exceed the bounds of moderation in putting to death the murderer in too cruel a manner, or by revenging his friend's blood on any other than the person who killed him;" and "Oh, true believers! the law of retaliation is ordained you for the slain; the free shall die for the free, and the servant for the servant, and a woman for a woman; but he whom his brother shall forgive may be prosecuted, and obliged to make satisfaction according to what is just, and a fine shall be set on him with humanity. This is indulgence from your Lord and mercy. And he who shall transgress after this, by killing the murderer, shall suffer a grievous punishment." So that there is no recommendation, but, at most, a permission to be merciful.[1]

[1] Komaróff, *op. cit.*, p. 43, *note*. As to the early introduction of Christianity into Albania, identified with Daghestan or the country immediately south of it, see Coneybeare, "The Key of Truth," p. lviii, Oxford, 1898.

Shamil enforced the Shariat with fire and sword, and therefore was bound to allow full sway to the *lex talionis* of Muhammad. But taking advantage of its limitations, as above stated, he punished any act of vengeance executed on other than an actual murderer, and it will be understood without difficulty what an immense improvement this was on the state of things evidenced by the cases above quoted. Moreover, he is credited with having inculcated a resort to forgiveness and pecuniary compensation as more pleasing to Allah. Custom, however, was too strong even for Shamil. When at the height of his power the blood-feuds continued, though by no means to the same extent as formerly; and from the day of his fall "the whole population of Daghestan immediately restored the customary law, choosing in each village people whose duty it was to decide all contentions by the Adats, while of Shamil's Shariat nothing remained but its memory in the name given to the period of his power, "the time of the Shariat," as distinguished from that which preceded it, called the time of the Adats.[2] At the present day the Adats are in full force in many departments of jurisprudence under the countenance of the Russian Government, and in the less accessible parts of the Caucasus the blood-feud and blood-vengeance exist in all their pristine severity. But in Daghestan, where civilising influences are more felt, considerable modifications have taken place; murderers are punished by Russian law, and praiseworthy efforts are made to effect reconciliation; while in other parts, Tchetchnia, for instance, Hadjis returning from Mecca have quite

[1] Sale's *Koran*, chapter xvii. 11.
[2] Komaróff, *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 7.

recently turned their attention with considerable success to the same desirable object.

The actual number of Murids was probably never great. We know that in the days of Shamil's power the fighting Murids were merely the immediate bodyguards of himself and his naïbs, who horsed, armed, and maintained them. Shamil himself had no more than 132 Murids attached to his person. But just as Muridism was adopted by the Russians as a convenient word to describe the movement underlying the hostility of the mountaineers, so the designation of Murid was accepted and extended to all the tribesmen of Daghestan who took up arms against them, and it must be understood that, unless otherwise specified, the two words in these pages bear this loose and general signification.

CHAPTER XVI

1829–1832

Kazi Moullá takes the field—His various successes and defeats: Andee, Khounzakh, Tarkóu, Bournaya, Derbend, Kizliar, Agatch-Kalá—Plans for subjugation of the tribes—Nazrán—Galgai expedition

KAZI MOULLÁ'S career from the date of his open revolt was brief and stormy, marked by notable successes and not less notable failures, and ending with defeat and death, but a death that retrieved and enhanced his waning popularity, a defeat that was worse than a Pyrrhic victory to the Russians.

His first general appeal to the people of Daghestan in favour of a holy war was written in 1829;[1] his first open move (in 1830) was directed against his former teacher, Sagheed of Arakanee.[2] Coming suddenly upon that picturesque aoul at the head of a large body of fanatical adherents, he destroyed Sagheed's house, burnt all his valuable books and manuscripts, the work of a lifetime, and caused all the wine in Arakanee to be poured out on the ground. The villagers would have opposed the outrage, for Sagheed was their pride; but they were overawed by the Murids, who forced them to submit, and took hostages for their good behaviour, Sagheed himself having escaped at

[1] See translation from the Arabic of this important document, *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, xi. p. 146.

[2] An authentic summary of Kazi Moullá's career is to be found in Captain Prouzhanovsky's memoir, *Sbornik Gazéti Kavkaz* (1847), ii. 22; and the history of the years 1824–32 is to be found at very great length in the *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, x–xx. The article is entitled "1824–1834 in the Eastern Caucasus," compiled by various hands from official documents, but left unfinished.

the last moment and taken refuge with Aslan Khan.[1] Encouraged by this success, the new leader proceeded to Karanai and Erpelee, whose devotion to the cause he had reason to suspect, and again taking hostages sent them to Ghimree, and imprisoned them in underground pits, such as were afterwards used by Shamil for his Russian captives at Dargo, Vedén, and elsewhere. His next move was to Miatli, on the Soulák, below Ghimree, and here he shot the kadi for refusing to obey his commands.[2] In fact, from the moment that he took the field he inaugurated, in spite of what has been said to the contrary, that system of terrorism more fully enforced by his successor Hamzad Bek, and carried to the most ruthless extreme by Shamil. But Kazi Moullá had more wisdom than to rely on force alone. The Kadi of Akoushá, for instance, as head of the powerful free community of Darghee, was too strong for the Murids to attack with their present restricted forces, and Kazi Moullá confined his efforts in this direction to persuasion. The Avar khanate, which, be it remembered, included at this time only a portion of the Avar tribes and territories, might well have been thought too strong to attack, but after a public meeting at Ghimree, attended by religious leaders from nearly all parts of Daghestan, who with one voice acclaimed Kazi Moullá "Imám," and accepted his call to the Jihad, it was determined to make the attempt. The khan at this time was a minor, but the government was in the hands of his mother, Pakhou-Beekhé, a woman of exceptional wisdom and great courage, who furnishes us with one of many instances proving that, contrary to the opinion current in Christian countries, Muhammadan women are not necessarily excluded from positions of power in this

[1] *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, xi. 153.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 155.

life, any more than they are shut out from Paradise in that to come.

On the 4th February 1830, with a gathering of some 3000 men, Kazi Moullá marched to Andee, where he was eventually joined by as many more, though at first the people of that country, fearing for their important trade in *bourkas* (felt cloaks[1]) with the Russians, and with the Tchetchens living within the Russian lines, showed considerable reluctance to join the movement against the Khan of Avaria, who was in receipt of a subsidy from the Russian Government.

On the way he met with armed opposition from his neighbours of Irganai and Kasatli, but defeated them easily with a loss of twenty-seven killed and many wounded, after which he sent sixty hostages to join those from Arakanee and elsewhere already immured in the prison pits of Ghimree and Ountsoukoul.

The story of his coming throws out in high relief his ignorance and fanaticism, and one detail is very suggestive when taken in connection with the supposed Jewish origin of these people. He came all the way from Ghimree on foot, for he had not yet raised the standard of the Ghazavát, and was so humble that he feared it might be a sin to ride. From time to time he stopped and leaned forward, with his hand to his ear as if listening, though silence reigned on the mountains. When his followers questioned him he answered: "Do you not hear? Methinks it is the clanking of the chains in which the Russians are brought prisoners before me!" Then, seated on a stone, he would develop his ideas and form plans for the future glory of Islam.

[1] Bourka (Burka) is an Arabic word usually applied to the face veil worn by women, hence to that part of the covering of the Kaaba which hides the door: Burton, "Arabian Nights," vol. vi. p. 113.

"When we have driven the Giaour from the Caucasus and taken Moscow, we will go to Stamboul, and if we find the Sultan a religious man, strictly obeying the commands of the Shariat, we will not molest him; if not, woe be unto him; we will bind him in chains, and his empire will pass to the Faithful!" When he drew near to Andee all the people came out, and "a very great multitude spread their garments in the way." Probably if there had been any trees within reach "others" would have "cut down branches from the trees and strewed them in the way." But Andee and its neighbourhood grows nothing bigger than a thistle, though tradition says that the forests of Tchetchnia once stretched over this now treeless region.

This episode had a salutary effect on the waverers in many places. In Avaria itself the greater part of the population took sides with the Imám, but Khounzakh, the capital, a town of over 700 houses, was inhabited chiefly by refugees from all parts of the Caucasus, desperate men for the most part, and little inclined to submit themselves to the austere rules of Muridism. Built on the edge of a precipice 5544 feet above sea-level, whence a vast gully leads down to the Avar Koisou, Khounzakh had been fortified in good time with breastworks and towers, and Pakhou-Beekhé, finding that the inhabitants could be trusted, determined to defy Kazi Moullá and defend her capital to the last. On the 14th February 1830 the Murids advanced to the attack in two bodies, commanded respectively by the Imám himself and by Shamil, with shouts of "Allah-Akbar, lia-il-allahou!" ("God is great, there is no God but God!") The outlaws of Khounzakh had never yet seen or heard anything so imposing; their arms fell involuntarily to their sides, and the desultory fire they had opened suddenly ceased. At this moment, as an

apparition risen from the ground, the majestic figure of Pakhou-Beekhé stood before them, terrible in her wrath, with drawn sword in hand, cheeks aflame, and eyes on fire. "Avars," she cried, while all looks were fixed upon her, "you are not worthy to bear arms. If you are afraid, give them to us women and take refuge behind our robes!" Stung by this bitter taunt the defenders rallied just as the enemy were about to climb the breastworks, and drove them off with great slaughter. Seeing this, those Avars who had taken part with the Murids withdrew, and the latter were put to flight, leaving 200 dead, many wounded, and 60 prisoners in the hands of the victorious khansha. Shamil was for a time in danger of being killed by his own incensed followers, but was saved by the intercession of a Dervish, the first of many narrow escapes, which to the superstitious mountaineers seemed to mark him out as one predestined for the work of Allah upon earth. Hadji Mourád, afterwards so celebrated, gathered up the banners and pennons left on the field of battle by the Murids and sent them to Tiflis to prove the loyalty and devotion of Avaria to Russia, and Kazi Moullá retired in confusion to Ghimree, giving out that this signal defeat was God's punishment on the people for their want of faith and impurity of morals.[1]

It had been his intention, after taking possession of Khounzakh, to invade that part of Tchetchnia called Aoukh and attack the Russians in their fort of Vnezápnaya, and, knowing this, the Russian commander, Baron Rosen, had hastily marched to the defence of that place with a small but compact force. Hearing of the events at Khounzakh, Rosen hurried on to Mount Kharakhs, and there received the submission of all the Koisoubou villages

[1] *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, xi. p. 171.

except Ghimree. Content with this he retired, and Kazi Moullá took advantage of this fact to persuade his dispirited followers that the Russians dared not attack him. In a few weeks he was again at the head of a large gathering, in a very inaccessible position at Agatch-Kalá ("the wooden tower"), otherwise known as Tchoumkeskent, in the thickly wooded mountain to the south of Erpelee. An attempt was made to dislodge him by the Russians under Major-General Prince Békovitch, but without success, and with added numbers and prestige he marched against Atli-Bouyoun, a village between Petrovsk and the pass leading to Shourá, defeated there another Russian commander, Baron Taube,[1] next destroyed Paraoul, the residence of the Shamkhal, captured Tarkou under the guns of the Russian fort Bournaya, and besieged and nearly took the latter.[2] But reinforcements arriving at the critical moment, he was defeated with heavy loss,[3] and, forced to retreat, took refuge once more at Tchoumkeskent. This was at the end of May 1831, and after ten days' rest he marched on Vnezápnaya, and with splendid audacity laid siege to that stronghold. A Russian army, under General Emanuel, came hurriedly to the rescue, and the Imám, taught by his experience at Bournaya, retreated in time into the neighbouring forests, where the Russians following him, he inflicted upon them a sanguinary defeat, capturing one gun, and wounding Emanuel himself, in consequence of which the latter handed over the command to Veliameenoff.[4]

[1] *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, xiii. 207.
[2] Journal of the defence: Akti, viii. 528.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 530: Pankrátieff to Paskiévitch.
[4] The site of this battle was Aktash Aktchee (in Aoukh). There was at this time no commander-in-chief in the Caucasus, Paskiévitch having left in May to direct operations against the Polish rebels. Rosen was appointed to succeed him on the 13th September 1831.

On the other side of the mountains Hamzad, afterwards second Imám, succeeded in stirring up rebellion amongst the Djáro-bielokánis, and in the course of its suppression the Russians, under General Strekáloff, suffered a severe defeat at Zakatáli, losing 6 officers and 243 men killed, 10 officers and 139 wounded, out of a total force of little more than three battalions. Four guns were lost, and, to the bitter grief of Paskiévitch and of the Emperor Nicholas, both battalions of the Eriván regiment were seized with panic and fled.[1]

Kazi Moullá once more retired to Tchoumkeskent, where in August he received a deputation from the people of Tabassarán, who invited him to come and lead them against the Russians in the holy war. Nothing loth, he at once set out for Derbend, which, owing to a false rumour of war with Persia, had been left in charge of two battalions only, and for eight days, 12th to 20th August 1831, kept this fortress in siege;[2] but a week later Pankrátieff wrote to Nesselrode in St. Petersburg, "du côté du Daghestan il n'y a rien qui puissent nous donner de grandes inquiétudes et nos affaires y prennent une tournure favorable."[3] Yet on the 1st November Kazi Moullá, driven off by General Kakhánoff, made a daring and successful raid on the town of Kizliar on the lower Térek, known, it is said, both to him and to Shamil from a visit they had paid there to certain learned moullás when still mere students of theology. The town was taken and sacked, and Kazi Moullá returned to Daghestan with 200 prisoners, mostly women, and booty said to have been valued at four million roubles, no doubt a

[1] *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, xii. pp. 151 *et seq.*
[2] Pankrátieff's report to Tchernisheff, 5th September 1831: Akti, viii. p. 534; and *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, xiii. pp. 311 *et seq.*
[3] Akti, viii. 740.

very gross exaggeration.[1] Against this success the Russians could only put the storming of Erpelee, during his absence, by General Pankrátieff; but the tide was about to turn. General Kakhánoff determined to destroy the stronghold of Tchoumkeskent at all hazards, and after an abortive attempt on the 26th November Colonel Miklashévsky led his troops to the assault on 1st December. The place was stormed in spite of obstacles, natural and artificial, of such a kind that, according to Bestouzheff, the Decabrist, "the affair cost us 400 men, though we had but to take a wooden tower defended by 200. The Russians performed miracles of bravery in vain. Eight of our best officers fell, including Miklashévsky." He adds that the affair at Tchirkéi, soon after, ended more happily, "for we took back the cannon captured from Emanuel, but it cost us eighty men."[2] General Pankrátieff in reporting the storming of Agatch-Kalá, states that "owing to the great exasperation of the troops not one man of the enemy's force was taken prisoner."[3]

Since Paskiévitch's departure the command of the troops had been shared by General Pankrátieff, who failed altogether to gauge the significance of the Murid movement, and General Emanuel, whose action, to say the least of it, was not eminently successful. On the 8th October 1831 Lieutenant-General Baron Rosen[4] took over the succession

[1] Rosen to Tchernisheff, 26th November: Akti, viii. p. 671; and see *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, xiv. p. 118.

[2] Veliameenoff was in command. See his report, Akti, viii. 539.

[3] Akti, viii. 549. Pankrátieff in his official report gives the number of natives killed as 150; but in his proclamation to the people of Daghestan he says, "300 bodies were left on the field." See also *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, xiv. p. 144.

[4] There were at this time no less than four Barons Rosen in the army, of whom two were generals serving in the Caucasus; just as there were three Veliameenoffs, two of them also Caucasian general officers. The result is somewhat confusing.

to Paskiévitch as commander-in-chief of the Georgian army corps, and knowing nothing of the country, found himself plunged almost immediately into a very sea of difficulties. Paskiévitch had formed comprehensive plans for the subjugation of the tribes, but, occupied with the Persian and Turkish campaigns, and with the subsequent readjustment of affairs in Transcaucasia, absent during part of 1830 in St. Petersburg, and called upon early in 1831 to assume the command in Poland, he had found time only for "the occupation of the Abkhasian coast as far as Bombor, the pacification of the Djáro-bielokáni districts, and the firm establishment of Russian authority in Ossetia both north and south of the central chain. The latter was of course of extreme importance, as it cut off the eastern from the western Caucasus."[1]

But there was still much to do, and in Daghestan and on the Line the condition of affairs was grave indeed. As Rosen wrote to Tchernisheff (13th December 1831): "I arrived here at a time of very great disturbance. Never were the mountain tribes so insolent or so persistent in their undertakings. They are exasperated by what has taken place, and the fact that our actions either resulted in failure or, when successful, were not followed up, has emboldened them and given scope to Kazi Moullá's false teaching. If he was not killed (at Tchoumkeskent, as rumoured), they will be on the move again in spring."[2]

Now began that interchange of views between the local authorities and headquarters in St. Petersburg as to the means of subjugating the tribes, which ended in the prevalence of Veliameenoff's opinions. Rosen, frankly ignorant, fell more and more under the influence of the

[1] *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, xv. p. 507.

[2] Akti, viii. p. 342.

latter, who, when called upon to give an opinion, contented himself at first, owing to the fact that he was engaged in military operations against the Tchetchens, with forwarding a copy of his memoir drawn up in 1828.[1] This was early in the spring of 1832. Subsequently Veliameenoff wrote a commentary on a project drawn up by a staff-officer, Colonel Burnod, and on the 27th July his commentary on Paskiévitch's letter.[2] Meantime, on Christmas Eve, he had sallied out from Grozny, and in spite of the Emperor's repeated injunctions against isolated expeditions or raids, as distinct from any general plan or movement, raided Aoukh and part of Salatau with the usual accompaniments of fire and sword,[3] destroying, literally, everything in his way. A month later he treated the country between Kazakh-Kitchou and Grozny in the same fashion.[4] This brought him in direct collision with his autocratic master, who was little used to disobedience or even to any show of independence on the part of his subjects; and it speaks eloquently for Veliameenoff's intellect and character that he came through the ordeal in triumph. The Emperor was very angry at first,[5] but Veliameenoff defended himself so ably and with so much dignity that in the end it was Nicholas who gave in.[6] Raiding expeditions were, henceforth, expressly allowed, though with certain definite restrictions; but the forces at the disposal of the commander-in-chief were never sufficient to carry out Veliameenoff's proposals in full, and it is, therefore, impossible

[1] See *ante*, chapter vii.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Rosen to Tchernisheff, 11th February 1832: Akti, viii. p. 672.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] Tchernisheff to Rosen, 5th April 1832: Akti, viii. p. 674. "His Majesty having seen with extreme dissatisfaction that in spite of his repeated injunctions," &c.

[6] *Ibid.*, vol. xv. pp. 548–76, where the original documents are quoted.

to say definitely whether or not they would ever have had the complete success he so confidently predicted.

In 1832 Kazi Moullá again appeared in Tchetchnia and obtained several small successes on the Line, and, hoping to rouse Kabardá, even threatened Vládikavkáz and besieged Nazrán. General Baron Tornau, author of "Recollections of the Caucasus and Georgia,"[1] who arrived in Vládikavkáz just at the critical moment (the beginning of April), writes: "The eyes and ears of all in Vládikavkáz were turned towards the beleaguered fort, which was defended only by two weak companies; there was but one thought in all minds—what would be their fate and what the consequences should they fail to make good their defence? Kazi Moullá's first success at Nazrán would be the signal for a general rising round Vládikavkáz, communications with Georgia would be interrupted, and the fortress itself in great straits. From Nazrán we had no news whatever, for the enemy had cut off all communications. The commandant, the officers, and even the soldiers who were off duty remained constantly on the parapets striving to see or hear what was going on, but in vain. The fog limited our range of vision to the glacis, and no sound reached our ear but the dull roar of distant gun-fire, which told us little or nothing. Ossetines and Cossacks sent out as scouts returned without any definite intelligence; once they came suddenly on a strong party of the enemy, and instead of news brought back the dead bodies of several of their comrades. . . . Next day the guns were still heard; the third day a violent cannonading began at dawn and was renewed about two o'clock, but towards evening all was still. Fear seized on every one. Had Nazrán fallen. The commandant sent

[1] Printed in Katkoff's *Rousski Viestnik* in 1869.

off a strong party of Ossietines to find out what had happened, and at the same time, for a large sum of money, engaged a couple of spies. Before daylight they galloped back with the joyful news that the fort was intact, that the Russian soldiers had beaten off two attempts at storming, and that after the second the local Ingoushee had unexpectedly fallen on the retreating Tchetchens and killed their wounded! By evening Kazi Moullá had retired across the Soundja."[1]

In the mountain regions due south of Nazrán yet another expedition resulted from Kazi Moullá's endeavours to fuse the tribes of the Caucasus into one vast Muhammadan power. To this end he sent a strong force of Daghestanis to procure the submission and conversion of the mountain Tchetchens[2] dwelling in the high valleys between the vast limestone range and the central chain east of the Georgian road. With these pagan tribes the mission was a complete success; but their neighbours to the south, the nominally Christian Khevsours, beat back his emissaries and sturdily maintained their religious faith, such as it was, their independence, and their friendship with the Russians.

The visit of the Murids was followed by an outbreak on the part of their new converts, who, after murdering the Russian preestaff[3] and a couple of orthodox missionaries, signalised their zeal in the cause of Muridism by a series of highway robberies on the Georgian road. This was more than Russia could bear. The murder of her representatives, both lay and clerical, must be avenged and safety restored to the main Line of communication

[1] *Rousski Viestnik*, vol. lxxix., 1869; Tornau's "Recollections," section ii. p. 26.

[2] Kists, Galgais, mountain Ingoushee, &c.

[3] District police-officer.

with her possessions south of the snowy range. An expedition was therefore decided on, and Baron Rosen, to whom Veliameenoff as chief of the staff was now even more indispensable than he had been to Yermóloff, determined to lead it himself.

It seems probable that all these Ingoushee of the mountains were at one time Christians, at least in so far as concerned their outward religious forms and worship. All along these valleys are the remains of Christian churches, and the pagan rites now obtaining are in many cases strangely intermingled with undoubted vestiges of Christian belief. The towers so frequently met with also point to a civilised and Christian origin, for the emblem of the Cross is frequently worked into the masonry; while as to the many tombs around them the present inhabitants agree in repudiating all connection with the race that built them and whose bones they contain, though they treat them with respect and even veneration. What hold Christianity really had over these people we have no means of ascertaining, nor do we know at what period they relapsed into paganism; but it must have been very long, doubtless several centuries, ago, and probably as a result of the Tartar or Mongol invasions of Georgia, which put an end to that country's domination over the wild tribes of the north.

The Galgais were too few in number and too poor to offer any very serious resistance; but relying on their mountain fastnesses, which they fondly imagined to be inaccessible to Russian troops, they met all demands for submission with insolent defiance, and refused to deliver up those guilty of murdering the preestaff and missionaries. A flying column was therefore formed at Balta, 14 versts from Vládikavkáz, consisting of 3000 regulars, with four

mountain guns and 500 Ossietine militiamen. There being no roads the troops took with them neither tents nor knapsacks, each man carrying, besides his arms, merely a bag of biscuits, enough for six days, this being supplemented by a ten days' supply carried on pack-horses, while a few oxen lagged behind the column. Even the officers' tents were left behind after the second day, with the exception of three, for the commander-in-chief, his chief of staff, and chancery respectively. Crossing the Térek at dawn by a temporary bridge, the little army began its march in column; but "at the fourth verst already we came to dangerous abysses, the path grew narrow, the troops had to stretch themselves out in single file, and the guns had to be transferred from wheels to pack-saddles, so that in spite of its smallness the column was a long one, no less than five versts from front to rear."

It was not until the fifth day that, on the banks of the Assá, near the village of Zoti, shots were fired for the first time. There was no serious fighting, however, either now or during the whole time the expedition lasted. Villages were destroyed, towers blown up, crops cut, and occasional shots exchanged; but the enemy knew better than to face the Russians in such force, and contented themselves with picking off stragglers or showering down rocks and stones on the invaders at convenient spots, of which there is no lack between Djerakh and Tsori.

The destruction of the last-named populous aoul was the final aim of the expedition, and the whole army now directed its march towards it. But so narrow was the only path, cut in the face of precipitous rocks, that the troops had to keep their single file, and if one man halted all those behind him had to stop too. This led to a laughable incident, for not far from Tsori a square tower

of great strength commanded the path, and, garrisoned by men evidently very determined, stayed the advance for three whole days. When at last, with enormous difficulty, a covered way had been driven through the solid rock to the base of the tower and a mine laid, the garrison surrendered, and was found to consist of two ragged, dirty Galgais, and two only! Next day Tsori was destroyed, no further attempt being made to defend it, and the little army returned to Vládikavkáz.[1]

[1] Tornau, *op. cit.*, section vi., gives a vivid narrative of this expedition. See also Rosen's reports to Tchernisheff of 15th, 21st, and 29th July 1832: Akti, viii. pp. 677, 678, 681; and *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, xvii. pp. 395 *et seq.*

CHAPTER XVII

1832

Tchetchnia expedition—Defeat and death of Volzhinsky—Dargo taken—Ghimree—Death of Kazi Moullá

A LITTLE later Rosen and Veliameenoff set out from Nazrán with 9000 men and 28 guns to harry all lower Tchetchnia. Tornau, who accompanied the expedition, has left us the following description—the best extant—of forest campaigning in those days, from which it is easy to see how dangerous it was, and how much would necessarily depend on the officer in command.[1]

"At that time (1832) we had not yet cut avenues through the forests. In the early 'twenties, indeed, Yermóloff had cleared a distance of a musket shot on either side of the road through the well-known Goiten forest, but this had already become overgrown by an impenetrable thicket of underwood, so that we had to face warfare in Tchetchnia under the most difficult conditions. As opponents the Tchetchens merited the fullest respect, and amidst their forests and mountains no troops in the world could afford to despise them. Good shots, fiercely brave, intelligent in military affairs, they, like other inhabitants of the Caucasus, were quick to take advantage of local conditions, seize upon every mistake we made, and with incredible swiftness use it for our own destruction.

[1] *Op. cit.*, section vii. p. 131.

"Veliameenoff's plan for the Tchetchen expedition[1] was very simple. Never doubting a successful result to a campaign cautiously conducted, but expecting nothing more from it than a temporary repression of the Tchetchens such as would give the Russians on the Line a respite from the troubled life of the past few years, he proposed to pass through the low country, ruining settlements, destroying harvests, raiding herds and flocks, and attacking the enemy wherever they had the audacity to collect in any force. Any further steps must be determined by circumstances.

"Next day (6th August), we left Nazrán and crossed the Soundja by a trestle bridge, as that river is fordable only in its upper reaches. Once across we were in hostile territory, and after one day's march found ourselves engaged in ceaseless fighting. In war with the Tchetchens one day is like another. Only at rare intervals some unexpected episode—the meeting with a large band, the storming of a fortified aoul, or a side raid—varied the deadly monotony of the proceedings. The length of the day's march was determined by the distance between the clearings along the river banks large enough to allow of the camp being pitched a musket shot from the nearest wood. The road lay for the most part through dense forests of lofty trees, interrupted here and there by glades, streams, and gullies. Fighting went on from beginning to end of each march: there was the chatter of musketry, the hum of bullets; men fell; but no enemy was seen. Puffs of smoke in the jungle alone betrayed their lurking-places, and our soldiers, having nothing else to guide them, took aim by that.

"After a march the troops camped for one or more days according to the number of aouls in the neighbourhood

[1] An account of this expedition from the official sources is given in *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, xviii. pp. 310 *et seq.*

that were to be destroyed. Small columns were sent out on all sides to ravage the enemy's fields and dwellings. The aouls blaze, the crops are mown down, the musketry rattles, the guns thunder; again the wounded are brought in and the dead. Our Tartars (native allies) come in with severed heads tied to their saddle-bows, but there are no prisoners—the men take no quarter; the women and children are hidden beforehand in places where none care to seek them. Here comes the head of a column returning from a night raid; its rear is not yet in sight; it is fighting in the forest. The nearer it comes to the open space, the faster grows the firing; one can hear the yells of the enemy. They surround and press on the rearguard from all sides; they rush in, sword in hand, and wait only the moment when it debouches on the clearing to pour in a hail of bullets. A fresh battalion and several guns have to be hurried forward to disengage it; the running fire of the infantry and canister from the artillery arrest the onslaught, and enable the column to emerge from the forest without useless sacrifice.

"Men are sent out to cut grass, and at once a fresh fight begins. Fuel for cooking purposes or for the bivouac fires is only obtained by force of arms. If on the far side of the rivulet there is brushwood or any semblance of a hollow the watering-place must be covered by half a battalion and artillery, otherwise the horses will be shot down or driven off. One day is like another; that which happened yesterday will be repeated to-morrow—everywhere are mountains, everywhere forests, and the Tchetchens are fierce and tireless fighters.

"The order of march and disposition of the camp were just such as best suited the circumstances and character of the war, and never varied. The column was arranged as

follows: one battalion marched in front, one in rear, each with a few light field pieces, or, if the roads were unsuitable, mountain guns. The cavalry, reserves, artillery, and transport occupied the centre, and were covered by infantry marching in line on either side. In front of the advance guard, behind the rearguard, and on both flanks of the column for its full length went the sharpshooters, with their reserves and mountain guns. On the level or on open places these flanking lines or chains kept at a good musket shot from the column, but on entering a forest they marched as the ground permitted, striving as much as possible to keep the enemy's fire at a distance, for it was too deadly when directed at a compact body of troops. The soldiers called this 'carrying the column in a box.' On the march the whole of the fighting went on in the covering lines—in front when advancing, at the rear when retreating—and nearly all the time on either flank, where the hardest work and greatest danger lay. The sharpshooters, who went in pairs,[1] often lost sight of each other in the forest and strayed; then the Tchetchens would rise as it were out of the ground, rush at the isolated couples and cut them to pieces before their comrades could come to the rescue. The movements of these skirmishers were seldom visible from the road followed by the column, as they were hidden by the trees and inequalities of the ground, so communication was kept up with them by means of horns, signal numbers being given to the detached bodies of troops, rear, front, or flank, and these numbers frequently changed, lest the enemy should learn to distinguish them. When it was required to know the whereabouts of any particular detachment or detail, a pre-arranged interrogatory signal was

[1] Later, Veliameenoff increased the number to four; General Freitag by 1845 had brought them up to twenty and more.

blown and the signallers of all the parties answered with their numbers; then, judging by the sound, orders were given to increase the pace, halt, or close in, as the case might be. It sometimes happened that the enemy's bullets found their way into the midst of the troops, but the mountaineers rarely succeeded in breaking through the chains of skirmishers and falling on the column itself. During the whole of the expedition of 1832 I can only remember four such occasions.

"The camp was always disposed in a square, the infantry and artillery on the sides, the cavalry and transport in the middle. When the force was a small one, a laager was formed with the baggage carts. By day a thin chain of pickets was posted all round the camp, a musket shot from the tents. By night the number of sharpshooters was increased, the reserves were advanced, and in front of all, in dangerous spots, secret pickets were set after dark, lest the enemy should know their whereabouts. The strictest silence was enjoined on them, and they were not allowed to challenge any one except by whistling, and they had orders to fire at the least rustling, even if uncertain as to its cause. On each face of the square parties were told off to reinforce the pickets in case of a real attack. These men lay down in front of the tents with their guns and cartridge pouches. The remaining soldiers and officers slept undressed and troubled themselves little about the bullets with which the Tchetchens favoured us nearly every night, creeping up to the camp in spite of all precautions."

On the 18th Kazi Moullá scored his last success against the Russians. Appearing suddenly in the neighbourhood of Ameer-Hadji-Yourt, on the Térek, he succeeded in drawing 500 of the Grebénsky Cossacks

some 20 versts away into the forest, then, falling upon them suddenly from all sides, he completely defeated them, killed the Russian commander,[1] another officer, and 104 men, and wounded 3 officers and 42 men.[2]

Six days afterwards Baron Rosen—or rather Veliameenoff, for the commander-in-chief left everything to him—stormed with little loss the aoul of Ghermentchoug, at that time the largest and richest in Tchetchnia, containing, as it did, over 600 houses. Kazi Moullá is said to have been in the neighbourhood, but beyond sending a small party of Murids to help in the defence, he appears to have left the Russians unmolested. As the unfortunate inhabitants had no guns, the attempt to defend the village in a nearly flat country against a well-appointed army furnished with artillery was of course hopeless. But the defence was conducted with the most desperate heroism, especially on the part of the little band of Murids and a few of the inhabitants. The greater portion of the aoul was taken as soon as Veliameenoff gave the word, but that admirably cool commander, to the disgust of those who did not know him well, insisted, when once the troops were all in position, on giving them ample time to eat their dinner in peace, calculating that the fiery natives would lose their nerve under the ordeal of waiting, while the more phlegmatic Russians, like Lord Howe's sailors, would fight the better with their bellies full. At one end of the village, however, there were three *saklias*[3] occupied by a devoted band of Tchetchens and the Daghestani

[1] Colonel Volzhinsky.

[2] Rosen to Tchernisheff, 22nd August 1832: Akti, viii. p. 683. Rosen to Tchernisheff, 27th August, 1832: Akti, viii. p. 685.

[3] Native houses.

Murids. General Tornau must tell the story of what followed.

"Hearing that the Tchetchens, who had shut themselves in the three houses and refused quarter, were firing hard, and had already killed a lieutenant-colonel and wounded several soldiers, Vólkhovsky (chief of the staff) set out with Colonel Brümmer, commanding the artillery, Vsióvolovsky, and Bogdanóvitch to settle the affair in person. I was to guide them by the road I had already found through the village. The houses were surrounded by a triple chain of sharpshooters, lying down, behind the wattled fences and trees. No one dared to show himself to the enemy, for the unwary were punished by bullets directed with unerring aim; and we too lay down behind the fence, seeing no profit in exposing ourselves as targets. A light gun was brought up, and the shot ploughed through the three houses from end to end. After the second round, however, people ran to say that we were hitting our own people on the other side. If we cleared even one side of the sharpshooters and reserves it would open a way of escape to the enemy, and this was not to be thought of, so orders were given to cease firing and set fire to the houses, if only from one side. More easily said than done! In the first place, a layer of clay a foot thick protected the inner wattled walls, and, secondly, the walls themselves were loopholed all over and bristling with deadly rifles. However, two sappers were found willing to undertake the job. Pushing in front of them an oaken board by way of shield, and carrying bundles of straw and brushwood, they crawled to the narrow side of the end house, broke through the clay foundation with great difficulty, and fired the wall, which began to smoulder

under its fireproof covering. The Tchetchens continued to fire even from this side until the heat drove them from the burning wall. The sappers were now joined by a couple of artillerymen, also volunteers, who climbed on to the flat roof by the burnt wall, took the hand grenades from the sappers, lighted the tubes, and threw them down through the wide chimney into the building, crowded thickly with the defenders. We heard the first two grenades burst but not the rest, and learnt later that the Tchetchens sat upon them and put them out before the powder caught fire. Little by little the fire extended to the remaining two *saklias;* there was nothing left for the enemy but to surrender or burn. Vólkhovsky was sorry for the brave fellows, and ordered an old Mozdók Cossack, Atárshtchikoff, who served as interpreter, to propose that they should lay down their arms, promising them in that case, in the name of the commander-in-chief, not only their lives, but the right of exchange with Russian prisoners, thus giving them the hope of some day returning to their families. The firing ceased when Atárshtchikoff went forward and called out in Tchetchen that he wanted to parley. The defenders listened to the proposal, conferred together for some minutes, and then a half-naked Tchetchen, black with smoke, came out, and made a short speech, followed by a volley from all the loopholes. What he said was to this effect: 'We want no quarter; the only grace we ask of the Russians is to let our families know that we died as we lived, refusing submission to any foreign yoke.'

"Orders were now given to fire the houses from all sides. The sun had set, and the picture of destruction and ruin was lighted only by the red glow of the flames. The Tchetchens, firmly resolved to die, set up their

death-song, loud at first, but sinking lower and lower as their numbers diminished under the influence of fire and smoke. However, death by fire is terrible agony, such as not all had strength to bear. Suddenly the door of a burning house flew open. On the threshold stood a human being. There was a flash; a bullet whistled past our ears, and, brandishing his sword, the Tchetchen dashed straight at us. Broad-shouldered Atárshtchikoff, clad in chain mail, let the raging desperado come within ten paces, quietly took aim, and put a bullet in his naked breast. The Tchetchen sprang high in air, fell, rose again to his feet, stretched himself to his full height, and, bending slowly forward, fell dead on his native soil. Five minutes after the scene was repeated; another sprang out, fired his gun, and, brandishing his sword, broke through two lines of sharpshooters, to fall bayoneted by the third. The burning *saklias* began to fall asunder, scattering sparks over the trampled garden; from the smoking ruins crawled six wounded Daghestanis, alive by some miracle; the soldiers lifted them up and carried them to the ambulance. Not one Tchetchen was taken alive; seventy-two men ended their lives in the flames!

"The last act of the bloody drama was played out; night covered the scene. Each one had done his duty according to his conscience; the chief actors had gone their way into eternity; the rest, together with the mere spectators, with hearts like stones, sought the refuge of their tents; and maybe more than one in the depth of his being asked himself, why must such things be? Is there no room for all on this earth without distinction of speech or faith?"

If any such feelings stirred the Russian commanders,

they did not allow it to interfere with the carrying out of Veliameenoff's plan of campaign. Greater Tchetchnia, in turn, was devastated with fire and sword, and a hatred sown and watered with blood, the traces of which are still visible after seventy years.

Amongst those who distinguished themselves in this affair were Baron Zass and Captain Albrandt, the latter a victim of unrequited love, who sought death in vain. They will both be met with again. Brümmer commanded the artillery at the siege of Kars in 1855; the mere name of Zass grew to be a terror to the tribes across the Koubán; Albrandt, by a rare combination of tact and courage, succeeded in the dangerous and delicate mission of bringing back from Persia (in 1838) a whole battalion of Russian deserters. It will be noticed that all these, like Klugenau, Rosen, and Tornau himself, bear foreign names.[1]

The wounded were sent back to Grozny, and when the convoy returned, Veliameenoff, with half the little army (about 4500 men), penetrated the heart of Itchkéria, recovered at Benoi the cannon taken from Volzhinsky,[2] and destroyed Dargo. That aoul, in after years a lure to Russian commanders, was not then the residence of the Imám, nor did the men of Daghestan take part in its defence, but otherwise the conditions were much the same, and the complete success of the earlier expedition, so strikingly in contrast with subsequent failures, must be attributed almost wholly to the military genius of Veliameenoff, who minimised the danger by reducing his transport as much as possible, and refusing to be drawn beyond the limits of what he considered safe for the mere sake of glory.

[1] See Rosen's report to Tchernisheff, 27th August 1832: Akti, viii. p. 684.
[2] Rosen to Tchernisheff: Akti, viii. p. 690.

The results obtained by the expedition were the "submission" of 80 villages, the total destruction of 61; the Russian losses 1 officer and 16 men killed, 18 officers and 333 men wounded.

Kazi Moullá now retired to Daghestan, and with Shamil's aid set to work to prepare for the defence of Ghimree, for he knew that the end was at hand, and determined to die worthily.

By the beginning of October the Russian commander-in-chief, having finished for the time with Tchetchnia and entered Daghestan, made ready for the attack on the Murid leader's last stronghold.

The winter had set in unusually early, and the snow lay thick on the heights, while the grapes hung ungathered in the vineyards below. Then, as now, there were two paths leading from Shourá to Ghimree, both involving an abrupt descent of nearly 5000 feet, the one through Erpelee over the mountain of that name, the other, also through Erpelee, but then turning to the right past Karanai, and, after reaching the crest of the ridge, zigzagging diagonally down the south-western face of the mountain to a junction with the Erpelee path in the great ravine above Ghimree. Neither route was, at the time in question, fit for the passage of an army, even according to the very heroic ideas on such matters obtaining in Daghestan, but that by Karanai was the less precipitous of the two, and was therefore chosen for the main line of approach. The natives, generally, deemed it next to impossible for the Russians to achieve a descent in force, and jeeringly asked if they were coming down like rain from the clouds. Veliameenoff in reply reminded them, grimly enough, that other things—stones, to wit—were apt to come hurtling down the mountain side; and, taking advantage of a thick mist, he

pushed forward his advanced guard as far as the ravine unmolested, the soldiers climbing in places from ledge to ledge by means of ropes or ladders. The next thing to do was to make the road passable for the bulk of the army, and in a couple of days this was done, though the artillery, all but the mountain guns and some very light mortars, had to be left behind.

Klugenau, meantime, with one battalion of the Ápsheron regiment, a mountain battery, and some squadrons of irregular native horse, was holding the crest of the ridge, away to the left, whence he could command the Erpelee path; and Akhmet Khan, with native militia, which for want of provisions and warm clothing dwindled rapidly from desertion, was set to watch the road from Irganai. These operations had taken from the 10th to the 13th October, and on the 14th Baron Rosen, with the rest of the army, marched from Shourá to Karanai. During the next two days the whole of the troops successfully accomplished the first part of the descent, and were concentrated in or near the ravine, with the exception of those left to guard the guns at Karanai or the lines of communication. By the 17th all was ready for the assault.

Kazi Moullá and Shamil, after their recent experience, knew the Russians too well to trust entirely to natural defences. Some five or six versts above Ghimree, but below the junction of the paths, they had built a triple line of wall across the ravine, flanked and commanded on either side by breastworks of stone. The spot was well chosen, and full advantage taken of the natural strength of the position. Near the outer wall were two small stone-built *saklias* or houses, to which the Russians paid little heed, not guessing that in them would centre the main interest of an historic day.

Veliameenoff's plan of attack was to drive the defenders from the breastworks on the left, thus gaining a position commanding the rear of the outer wall, which was then to be stormed from the front. But the movement failed owing to an error made by the leader to whom it was entrusted. Missing his way in the wood, he came out in front of the wall itself, and endeavoured to carry it by direct attack. Other regiments seeing what had happened moved forward in support, but vainly. The storming party was beaten back with heavy loss.

At this moment Hamzad Bek, with a large body of Murids, was seen in the act of descending by the road from Irganai, and it seemed as though the Russian van under Veliameenoff would be cut off from the main body under Rosen. Luckily, however, Klugenau's detachment appeared at the right moment at the top of the Erpelee path; Hamzad in turn was in imminent danger of being caught between two fires, and hastily retreated, leaving Kazi Moullá to his fate.

Relieved of anxiety in this direction, Veliameenoff, who saw that the attack had failed solely through faulty execution, ordered its repetition in strict accordance with the original plan, a decision fully justified by the result. First one of the breastworks was taken, then the outer wall, and the men of the Tiflis regiment pursued the flying enemy so rapidly that they had no time to man the remaining two walls, which were captured one after the other almost undefended. At one or two places, however, there was fierce fighting. A battalion of the 41st Rifle regiment drove the defenders of one of the uppermost works on to a ledge "where there was no alternative but to die sword in hand, or throw themselves over the rocks to almost certain destruction. They fought desperately; more than sixty

were killed on the spot, and the rest threw themselves down, and for the most part were dashed to pieces." The Russians gave no quarter, and according to another account hurled the unfortunate Murids over the rocks, the reason given being that they had lost their regimental commander, Bogdanóvitch, for whom they had a great affection. His monument stands in Shourá to this day.

The surviving Murids were now in full flight, and it was already dark, so the army bivouacked where it stood, without attempting an advance on Ghimree. Meantime the two stone *saklias* already mentioned had been the scene of a desperate defence, recalling that of Ghermentchoug, but much more momentous in its consequences. They were occupied by a band of some sixty Murids, who had either purposely remained to die, or had been cut off unexpectedly when the outer line of wall was taken. The main force of the Russians had swept onward, but two companies of sappers and other details were there with a couple of mountain guns and Veliameenoff himself, who, not knowing who was in them, ordered the *saklias* to be cleared. After a few rounds from the guns the troops rushed to the assault. The defenders neither asked nor received any quarter, but sallying out one by one and two by two, died fighting. Of the whole number only two escaped, but of these one was Shamil, whose marvellous strength, agility, and swordsmanship served him in good stead. With an Alvarado's leap he landed behind the line of soldiers about to fire a volley through the raised doorway where he stood, then turning and whirling his sword in that terrible left hand he cut down three of them, but was bayoneted by the fourth clean through the breast. Undismayed, he grasped the weapon in one hand, cut down its owner, pulled it out of his own

body, and escaped into the forest, though in addition to the bayonet wound he had a rib and shoulder broken by stones.

After hiding for three days he managed to reach Ountsoukoul, and there lay for twenty-five days more between life and death, for the Russian bayonet had passed right through one lung. Then his father-in-law, Abdoul Aziz, a renowned leech, who had also been in hiding, returned, and applied to the wound a mixture of wax, tar, and butter in equal parts. Very soon Shamil was convalescent, but a visit from his sister Fatima brought on a relapse, and again for months his life was in danger. The cause assigned, and implicitly believed by Shamil himself, was the momentary presence in his sick-room of the jewels and articles of gold and silver saved by Fatima from Ghimree; for, according to the superstition current in Daghestan, precious stones and metals exert a maleficent influence on wounds and diseases of all kinds, and should never be allowed in the same room with a sick or wounded person.[1]

Shamil's escape, even if known, would at that time have seemed a matter of little weight in the light of a discovery made ere the sun went down on the scene of carnage that chill October evening. Amongst the dead who lay so thick in front of the two stone huts, attention was drawn to the majestic figure of a man who in death had assumed the Mussulman attitude of prayer, with one hand grasping his

[1] The medical knowledge of the natives was, as might be expected, of the most primitive nature; but it was far otherwise with surgery, in which their skill was quite remarkable. They amputated limbs without hesitation, and very often at the joint, with no other instrument than the *kindjal*, and no medicaments but some such mixture as that of Abdoul Aziz; yet the patient generally recovered, and that so completely as to feel no after effects. Indeed, the success of the natives in treating wounds was so well established that Russian officers frequently sent for them, and were cured after their own surgeons had given up hope. The explanation is, presumably, that though they knew nothing of microbes, their treatment was antiseptic.

beard, while the other pointed to heaven. When some natives were called to identify the dead they recognised to their horror the features of their Imám, Kazi Moullá, the leader of the holy war, the chosen of Allah! The news spread rapidly, to the unbounded joy of the Russians, to the deep dismay of the Faithful. Many of the latter refused to believe it possible that God had allowed His representative on earth to fall by the bayonet of a Giaour, so to convince them and procure their submission the body was exposed for some days and then taken to Tarkou, the Shamkhal's capital, and buried above at Bournaya. In after years Shamil sent a body of 200 horsemen by night, exhumed the corpse, and brought it back to Ghimree.

A face covered with spots [illegible]
crush out cigarette [illegible]
don't interfere in my affairs
I am prone to prompt action
I give you the toast of Queen
bully for you

General Fornau, who was not present but had his account from those who were, tells some characteristic anecdotes of Veliameenoff.[2]

[1] *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, vol. xx. p. 121. See also Veliameenoff's report to Rosen of the 21st October 1832: Akti, viii. p. 558; and Rosen's to Tchernisheff of the next day: *ibid.*, p. 561.

[2] *Op. cit.*, section viii. p. 687.

When told that the Karanai road was impassable for troops he asked, "Could a dog pass that way?" When told, "Well, yes, a dog might," he said, "That's enough! Where a dog can pass, a Russian soldier can!"

When the first attack on the wall failed he called for a drum, sat down on it, and began calmly inspecting the enemy's position through his telescope. His presence was soon noticed, and the bullets whistled round. Presently Captain Barténieff, of the staff, was hit, and fell against him. Veliameenoff, in his usual quiet way, said, "My very dear friend might have fallen somewhere else," and once more put the glass to his eye. A little later the Dadian, or Prince, of Mingrelia, who commanded the Eriván regiment, seeing the danger his general was in, implored him to move farther back. Veliameenoff said quietly, "Yes, Prince, this is indeed a dangerous spot, so will you kindly lead your regiment at once against those breastworks on the right?"

Albrandt again failed to meet the death he sought for an obdurate fair one's sake. A bullet struck him on the breast, but was turned by a brass eikon he wore. It is satisfactory to know that the lady eventually gave way, and married him.[1]

[1] The *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, vol. xx. pp. 107 *et seq.*, gives an account of the taking of Ghimree from official sources, but it lacks completeness. Shamil's escape, for instance, and the finding of the Imám's body are not mentioned.

CHAPTER XVIII

1832–1837

Hamzad, the second Imám—Slaughter of the Avar Khans—Lanskoi takes Ghimree—Klugenau takes Gherghébil and Gotsatl—Death of Hamzad—Shamil, third Imám—The affair at Ashiltá bridge

HAMZAD was born in 1789 at New-Gotsatl, 12 miles north-east of Khounzakh, of *djanka* stock.[1] His father, Alexander, noted for his courage and talents, raided Kakhetia many times, and was held in high honour by Akhmet Khan. Hamzad learned Arabic and studied the Koran first at Tchokh and afterwards at Khounzakh, where, in consideration of his father's services, Pakhou-Beekhé took him into her house and treated him as a son. When his education was completed he returned to Gotsatl, and for some years led a life of idleness and gave way to drink. In 1829 his uncle, Imám-Ali, reproached him, and pointed to the example of Kazi Moullá, who, though of low birth and of no better education than himself, had become a leader among men. Hamzad was so struck by this reproof that he set out immediately for Ghimree, and, joyfully welcomed by Kazi Moullá, became one of his most zealous and valued supporters. After the defeat of the Murids at Khounzakh he undertook an expedition to the Djar district south of the main chain, and achieved some slight successes against the Russians, but was afterwards completely defeated, whereupon that country was annexed to the empire. Hamzad offered his submission on condition of receiving a pension, and was sent to

[1] The *djankas* were the children of khans or beks by morganatic marriages.

Tiflis, where he was promptly arrested. He owed his release to the intercession of Aslan, Khan of Kazi-Koumoukh, a fact that had very serious consequences; for the latter, owing to Pakhou-Beekhé having broken off a marriage arranged between him and her daughter, Sultanetta, for what she considered a better match with the son of the Shamkhal of Tarkhou, had vowed vengeance on the khansha, and saw in Hamzad an apt instrument to execute it. He artfully suggested that Muridism would never succeed so long as this detestable old woman ruled in Avaria, and at the same time excited his cupidity and ambition by describing her wealth and the power necessarily attaching to the possession of the khanate. Hamzad was not in a position to undertake any movement against Pakhou-Beekhé just then, but the insinuations of Aslan Khan sank deep into his mind and bore bloody fruit later on. He undertook another and still less successful expedition against Zakatáli, and in 1831 was in command at Tchoumkeskent when that place was stormed by Miklashévsky. In 1832, as stated, he failed to relieve Kazi Moullá at Ghimree; but soon after, that leader being dead and Shamil at death's door from his wounds, he was elected Imám. During the next two years he was engaged with Shamil's help in spreading the new doctrines and consolidating his own power, in which he succeeded so well in spite of one or two checks—he was beaten off by the inhabitants of Golotl and wounded in the neck by a bullet—that by August 1834 not only the Koisoubou and Andalal communities had recognised his authority, but all Avaria, except the capital, which he now proceeded to invest.[1]

[1] Following the example of Kazi Moullá, he punished himself for a failure against the Akoushintsi by twenty-five days' imprisonment and 101 strokes with the rod: Akti, viii. p. 584.

Pakhou-Beekhé had succeeded in beating off the Murids in 1830, but now, seeing that resistance was useless, she agreed to accept Muridism, though not the Ghazavát, and sent her younger son, Boulatch Khan, a boy of eight years, as a hostage to Hamzad. The latter next demanded that her remaining sons, Abou-Noutsal and Oumma (Omar), should come into his camp for further negotiations. At first Oumma was sent alone, and he not returning, his mother asked her remaining son to follow and protect him. When he refused, knowing well what would be the end, the fiery khansha upbraided him as a coward. Abou-Noutsal, who was anything but that, cried, "You want, then, to lose your last son; very well, I go!" and with twenty of his *noukkers*[1] set out for Hamzad's camp, which was pitched some two versts from the royal palace. He was received with due honour by the Imám, who professed complete submission to his will, and led him into the tent where his younger brother was; but after a while, having disarmed suspicion, he made some excuse, and with his Murids left the tent. It is said that at this moment, moved by some remnant of compunction or loyalty, he wavered in his determination; but that Shamil nerved him to the deed of treachery with the words, "Strike while the iron is hot, otherwise you will repent it."[2] He then gave orders to shoot down the *noukkers*. Oumma Khan, hearing the firing, came out of the tent and was

[1] Personal attendants of Daghestan rulers and beks.

[2] The assassination of the Avar Khans shows the darker side of Shamil's nature. It was necessary, indeed, to the success of his cause, and for him that was enough. Throughout his career he hesitated at no deed, however bloody, when that was in question; and in this particular case he found ample justification in his own eyes and probably in those of most of his followers in the fact that the ruling family at Khounzakh was not only friendly to the Russians, but actually in their pay.

immediately killed; Abou-Noutsal, seeing this, drew his sword and rushed on his enemies "like a raging lion," as eye-witnesses related, killing right and left; but though he is said to have disposed of no less than twenty of the Murids, he received many terrible wounds, and finally sank and died on the body of his last victim. Hamzad now took possession of Khounzakh, had Pakhou-Beekhé's head struck off, and proclaimed himself khan. Abou-Noutsal's widow was spared on account of her pregnancy, and bore a son who became Khan of Avaria. Aslan Khan, on hearing what had happened at Khounzakh, sent two letters to Hamzad, one for publication, threatening him with dire vengeance for killing his relations; the other, accompanied by a gold watch, ran as follows: "Thanks, Hamzad Bek! you have kept your promise faithfully. Would to God there were more such brave fellows in these degenerate days; henceforth you are my son. The next thing to do is to subdue the Tsoudakhar community, and if necessary I will help you secretly." Hamzad took his advice and attacked Tsoudakhar, but was driven off ignominiously. He then returned to Khounzakh.

On 13th September 1834 General Lanskoi, with Klugenau under his command, made a raid by the Erpelee path to punish Ghimree for treachery, that is, for not keeping to the agreement forced upon them in 1832. The inhabitants, thinking that the intention was to invade Avaria, retired across the bridge to some entrenchments they had prepared with a view to disputing the passage. Seeing this, Klugenau sent Captain Tarasévitch with two companies to storm the bridge. The operation was carried out gallantly and with complete success, and, the bridge being destroyed, the Russians proceeded to sack the aoul and

devastate the rich and extensive vineyards, fields, and orchards.[1]

In October of the same year Klugenau make an expedition into Avaria, took Gherghébil without opposition, and stormed Gotsatl.

Soon afterwards Hamzad met the fate he richly deserved. After the manner of perverts, from an idle, dissolute fellow he had become as fanatical as any of the Murids. He made his followers cut close their mustachios to distinguish them from the unregenerate, and strictly forbade the use of tobacco and strong drink. This prohibition of smoking, a comparatively trifling matter, was the immediate cause of his assassination. One day his treasurer entering a workshop where several men were employed, smelt, unmistakably, the forbidden weed. He tried to discover the guilty one, but in vain, and left uttering sundry threats. Amongst those present were two brothers, Osman and Hadji Mourád, to whose father Oumma Khan had been entrusted as a child, after a custom widely spread in the Caucasus and elsewhere. According to local ideas, this made Hadji Mourád and Osman his foster-brothers, and imposed on them the obligations of blood-vengeance. They had been deeply moved at the murder of the khans, and now one of their companions, some say their uncle, turned to them and reproached them with having allowed their deaths to pass unavenged. Irritated by the threats just heard, and remembering the wrong done them, Osman and Hadji Mourád professed their readiness to kill Hamzad, and a conspiracy was at once formed for that purpose. As usual

[1] Bodenstedt, whose book, though containing much that is of interest, is full of mistakes and rendered quite untrustworthy by his blind hatred of Russia, states that Shamil now came up and retook Ghimree by storm, putting Lanskoi to flight; but this is quite at variance with all the Russian accounts, and is not borne out by the official figures of their losses, forty-four killed and wounded: *Die Völker des Kaukasus*, Frankfurt-am-Main, 1848.

there was a traitor in the camp, and Hamzad received timely warning from a Murid to whom the secret was divulged. But he met it with the question, "Can you stop the Angels of Death when they come for my soul? If not, go home and leave me in peace. What is decreed by God cannot be avoided: if I am to die to-morrow, to-morrow I shall die." Friday, the 19th September, was a religious festival, and Hamzad as chief of the Faithful would go, of course, to the mosque. Once more his faithful Murid urged him to beware, giving positive information of the conspirators' intentions, and even mentioning the more dangerous of them by name. Hamzad contented himself with forbidding any one to come to the mosque in a *bourka*, so that weapons might be seen, and those carrying them disarmed. At midday the Muezzin called the Faithful to prayer, and the doomed Imám, accompanied by twelve of his principal adherents, entered the sacred building. The mosque was low and dark within. Hamzad had reached his place, and was about to pray, when he perceived several kneeling figures wrapped, in spite of his prohibition, in *bourkas*, and turned towards them. Osman, who was of them, thereupon stood up, and calling in a loud voice to his companions, "Why do ye not rise when your great Imám comes to pray with you?" drew a pistol and fired, wounding Hamzad severely. Other shots followed, and the assassin of the khans fell dead, pierced by many bullets. Osman was immediately killed by the Murids, who in turn were attacked and slain by the conspirators and many others who came running up on hearing that Hamzad was dead. The wretch who had betrayed the secret was pursued to a small tower, where he was surrounded and burnt alive.[1]

[1] For the death of Hamzad, see Rosen's report to Tchernisheff: Akti, viii. p. 588. Khounzakh was the scene of many other bloody episodes, of which the most striking, the death of Khotchbar of Ghedatl, is the subject of a very characteristic song (Appendix I.).

Shamil was away from Khounzakh at this moment, but on learning what had occurred collected a force and went to Gotsatl. Here he seized on the treasury, and forcing Hamzad's uncle to surrender the boy-prince Boulatch Khan, caused him to be strangled and thrown over a cliff into the Avar Koisou, or, as some say, from the bridge above Ghimree. He then went to Ashiltá, and was proclaimed Imám.

In the first week of March 1837 disaster overtook a portion of Klugenau's command. That general with the troops in northern Daghestan had been placed by Baron Rosen at the disposal of General Fésé, commanding the left flank of the Line, and the latter, in order to withdraw Shamil's attention from his operations against Tchetchnia and Andee, had ordered Klugenau to make a demonstration in force without delay in whatever direction he considered best for the attainment of that object.

Klugenau chose the "Ashiltá" bridge[1] as his objective, and leaving 495 men, including invalids, to garrison Shourá, he sent off the 1st battalion of the Ápsheron regiment, 480 strong, under Colonel Avraménko, on the night of the 27th February, to Karanai, where he joined them next day with the rest of the expeditionary force, 363 bayonets, making 843 in all.

Rather more than half-way, some 2500 feet, down the zigzag path from Karanai to Ghimree there is a space of ground under cliffs of sandstones showing horizontal layers

[1] Early Russian writers on the war, be it noted, gave it that name, to which we must perforce adhere, for the somewhat inadequate reason that the road over it led to the aoul so called, which, however, lies several miles up the Andee Koisou. Recent authors, misled by the name, evidently imagine that the bridge and aoul are close together, and give confused accounts of events connected with them.

of delicate colours—red, green, yellow, and white. Here for a little way the slope is comparatively gentle, and, as usual in Daghestan, advantage has been taken of it to create by means of terraces a small area of arable land, on which in autumn ripe golden maize stands in strange contrast to the snow above. A copious spring of clear, fresh water wells from the rock and falls plashing from one to another of a series of wooden drinking-troughs at the roadside.

This spot, known as "the Spring of Ghimree," Klugenau reached that night; here on the 1st March the whole of his little army assembled, and here he was visited by elders from Ghimree, whom he reassured as to his intentions, in so far as concerned their aoul. They informed him that their neighbours from Ountsoukoul had arrived to the number of 500, offering to help them against the Russians, but that they had forced them to retire.

Klugenau lost no time in making arrangements for seizing the bridge, by which the Avar Koisou is spanned at its narrowest, a few yards only above its junction with the Andee Koisou coming from Ashiltá.[1] The position was known to him from a daring reconnaissance made not long before by his faithful adjutant Yevdokeemoff, under whose guidance Avraménko, with two companies and a couple of light mortars, was now sent forward by a mere track down the mountain side. At dawn he took up a position commanding both the passage of the river and the road from Ghimree, and half-an-hour later the enemy appeared in

[1] The bridge is of the usual native construction, *i.e.* on the cantilever principle. Onward from the junction of the Koisous to the Caspian the river is known as the Soulák, a Georgian word meaning "altogether," or, in Avar, Or-Shobai, *i.e.* "mingling of the waters," being formed of the junction of the Kára, or Black, the Kazi-Koumoukh, the Avar and the Andee Koisous, but the word Soulák is commonly enough applied to the two last named by the natives living on their banks.

force on the opposite heights. Klugenau himself now followed by the road, leaving one company to guard the spring, and another lower down to bar the approach from Ghimree in case of a movement on the part of the hostile people of Ountsoukoul. When still some way from the bridge he heard the firing, and, judging that the left bank was in possession of the enemy, sent two natives to Avraménko with a note, asking whether the main body of troops could join him at the bridge without serious loss, instructing him, in the contrary event, to hold his position till night, and then retreat to Karanai by a path known to Yevdokeemoff lower down the Soulák. It will be understood that between Avraménko with the advanced guard and Klugenau was a stretch of some mile or two of river bank, completely commanded by the enemy on the opposite heights.

Major-General Count Ivélitch, colonel of the Ápsheron regiment, who had brought the instructions from Fésé, and accompanied the present expedition out of curiosity, begged leave to run the gauntlet and join Avraménko at the bridge. His request was categorically refused by Klugenau, notwithstanding which he gradually edged away from the latter, and, once out of sight, ran to the scene of combat. Here he was promptly wounded in the left hand, but, binding it up, sent a lieutenant with a note to Klugenau asking permission to remain. This was granted, but with strict injunctions that, as already ordered, the retirement was not to begin before nightfall.

Finding that it would be impossible to reach the bridge without the risk of very heavy losses, and hearing that the people of Ountsoukoul, to the number of a thousand, were again marching on Ghimree, Klugenau determined to retire to the spring, and the troops were at once set in motion.

The path led round at the back of Ghimree, and was both long and difficult. It was highly probable that, seeing the Russians retreating, the people at Ghimree would be tempted to join their neighbours, and take the opportunity of attacking the small Russian force at a disadvantage; and knowing the native character, and their respect for personal courage and coolness, Klugenau determined now on one of those many acts of daring which have made his name imperishable in the military annals of the Caucasus. As the troops marched past the aoul the inhabitants, fully armed, poured out in their hundreds, and took up a position on either side of the path. A mile or more away those of Ountsoukoul were hastening across the river, eager for the fray. It was a critical moment, but Klugenau, telling his men to march on, dismounted, and calling to the elders, quietly sat down on a stone. They came, followed by the rest of the villagers, and the Russian general was at once surrounded by an ever-growing crowd of armed men. Calmly puffing at his cigar,[1] he reminded the people of Ghimree that he had saved them from famine in 1832, when, after the death of Kazi Moullá, all their crops had been destroyed by these same men of Ountsoukoul, who were now urging them to a deed of treachery that would inevitably lead to the most terrible revenge on the part of the Russian Government. His attitude and arguments sufficed with the elders, and they assured him that they would neither attack the Russians themselves nor permit others to do so. Klugenau then, seeing that his men had reached the comparative safety of the ravine, and that the people of Ountsoukoul were almost within musket shot, asked for his horse, and, quietly mounting while one of

[1] Klugenau seldom had a cigar out of his mouth, and at Ishkartee in 1840 smoked one all the time whilst fighting his way with six companies through Shamil's horde of 10,000 men which had completely surrounded him.

the elders held the stirrup, he spoke a few words of friendly farewell, and rode after his command. When the Ountsoukoul men came running up it was too late. Klugenau was already in safety. A man of Ghimree, firing his gun at the stone where the intrepid general had sat, called out in disgust, "Why, he was absolutely at our mercy, and we let him escape!" The Ountsoukoul men were furious and dashed on in pursuit, but they could do nothing, and the Russians, bivouacking on the way, reached Karanai in safety on the 3rd of March. Here Klugenau found Yevdokeemoff wounded, and from him learnt the disaster that had meantime overtaken the advanced guard.

It appeared that Ivélitch had taken command at the bridge by right of seniority, and learning from Lieutenant Peesareff, in charge of the detachment on the Ghimree side, that the enemy were pressing him hard, gave orders to retreat at once, notwithstanding Colonel Avraménko's entreaties and Klugenau's instructions. The result had been foreseen by all but Ivélitch himself. The enemy promptly seized the bridge, placed planks across where it had been damaged, and crowded over to the right bank. With their superior mobility they soon overtook the Russians, and swarming up the cliffs, attacked them in flank and rear. A most desperate encounter took place, in which Ivélitch, Avraménko, and Peesareff were killed, the first named being shot, the others cut to pieces with swords and *kindjals*. Not one man would have escaped to tell the tale had not Ivélitch, earlier in the day, sent Captain Kosteerko with forty-five men to cover a ford whence danger threatened the line of retreat. This was the only instance in which the unfortunate major-general showed any military judgment, and it saved the remnant of the force from annihilation. Kosteerko had already dispersed a small party of

natives who had intended to cross by the ford, when he heard shots coming nearer and nearer. He was soon joined by refugees in twos and threes, and learned what had taken place. As all his superior officers were dead he took command, and, assisted by Yevdokeemoff, beat off the enemy; and presently, when the latter received the bullet wound through his face, from left to right, which earned him his soubriquet of "three-eyed" in after years, sent him on with the wounded to Karanai, and after more fighting eventually made good his retreat by a roundabout way, without meeting the troops Klugenau had sent off from Karanai to help him.[1]

In the summer of this year (1837) Rosen decided to send an expedition against Ashiltá, and at first intended to entrust Klugenau with the command, but the relations between the commander-in-chief and his subordinate were somewhat strained, and eventually General Fésé was selected. With the latter the sturdy Austrian was at this time at daggers drawn, owing to his report on the affair at the bridge, in which he put the blame on Klugenau, who, rather than serve under him, pleaded sickness, and took leave of absence for the summer.

This Avar expedition of 1837[2] was the result of an intrigue on the part of Akhmet Khan, of Mekhtoulee, the temporary ruler of Avaria, and, reading the authorised accounts, it is difficult to acquit the Russians of deliberate treachery. Akhmet Khan, fearing the growing influence of Shamil, wrote secretly to Fésé, asking him to take the initiative in offering to garrison Khounzakh with Russian troops. The latter, nothing loth, sent a proclamation for

[1] *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, viii. pp. 20–30.

[2] The army in the Caucasus, including Cossacks on service, now numbered on paper 88,536 men, but on the 1st January 1837 the actual strength was less by 26,662: *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, viii. p. 5.

public use, offering help in friendly terms, and at the same time wrote to Akhmet stating that in the event of the inhabitants consenting he would immediately start for Khounzakh with a column. A mass meeting was called 5 versts above the capital, on the river Tobot; Akhmet read Fésé's proclamation and letter, and then returned to his "palace," saying that he had no wish to see the Russians there, for the Avars were strong enough and brave enough to defend themselves; but the matter was one of such importance, that he left it to their decision. No doubt he had arranged matters beforehand; in any case the meeting, carried away by the pithy eloquence of Husayn Youssouf Ogli, Elder of Akhaltchee, decided in favour of inviting Russian help. "Avars!" exclaimed Husayn, "rather than that these dogs of Murids should rob and ruin us, will it not be better to call in the Russians? They will not occupy our houses nor take away our last crust of bread. They are brave and generous, and so far have never been ashamed to have to do with poor, simple folk like us. Why should we avoid them? For whose sake? Will it not be better to dwell in the closest alliance with them? We shall be rich, peaceful, and then let us see who will dare to insult us!"

"Hearing on the 25th of January what had happened, and receiving from Akhmet Khan a request that a military force might be despatched, the commander-in-chief decided to take advantage of the favourable occasion and plant himself firmly in Avaria. . . . The object of the proposed expedition was twofold; in the first place, the annihilation of Shamil's influence, and in the second, to establish ourselves in Avaria" (secret instructions of the commander-in-chief to Klugenau on

6th February 1837, No. 153[1]). "The first was necessary for the maintenance of quiet amongst both the semi-independent tribes and those which had submitted, as Shamil, like Kazi Moullá, would not delay as soon as he grew strong enough to invade their country and even the territories of the Shamkhal. The best means to achieve this end Baron Rosen considered the destruction of Ashiltá, the headquarters of the Murids, either by a sudden movement across the bridge below Ghimree, or by an open advance in force by way of Gherghébil" . . . but the Avar expedition was to be carried out in any case. On reaching Khounzakh, Klugenau proposed to explain to the people that the occupation of the capital took place at their own request, as the Russian Government, no matter what the expense and trouble involved, was always ready to defend those who remained loyal, and that, finally, "our troops would remain in Khounzakh only for a time, just so long as might be necessary to ensure peace and establish the authority of Akhmet Khan."[2]

[1] *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, viii. pp. 40-41.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 42.

CHAPTER XIX

1837

Fésé's Avar expedition of 1837—Klugenau's interview with Shamil—Nicholas I. visits the Caucasus—Rosen dismissed—Albrandt's mission

THE expeditionary corps, numbering 4899 bayonets, 18 guns, 4 mortars, and 343 Cossacks, left Temir-khan-Shourá in the beginning of May, and marching by way of Djengoutai and Kaka-shourá reached the river Ourma, a distance of 40 versts (27 miles), in five days; then past Lavashee, through the dark, narrow defile of Khodjal-Makhee, with its perpendicular sides of 1400 feet, where the column was benighted, but fortunately with no enemy near to molest it; over the Kazi-Koumoukh Koisou, 4 versts beyond Khodjal-Makhee, and across the mountain ridge between that river and the Kara Koisou. Marching on under the greatest difficulties by a road that for the most part had to be made for it, the column reached the Avar Koisou at Karadagh in eleven days, and crossing that river entered the khanate of Avaria. Three days later, the 29th of May, the troops reached Khounzakh without having encountered any serious opposition, but the difficulties of the route may be imagined from the fact that it had taken this picked corps—with heavy transports, it is true—twenty days to cover 100 miles.

The old palace of the khans, unapproachable on two sides owing to the precipice on the edge of which it stood, was soon converted into a fortified citadel, connected with a reservoir by a sheltered way 584 yards

long with a blockhouse half way, defended by a tower strong enough to bear a cannon on its third storey. Leaving a garrison of four companies with all but six of the guns and the heavy transport, and taking only two weeks' rations, Fésé on the 5th June set out for Ountsoukoul and Ashiltá.

The people of Ountsoukoul submitted on the approach of the Russians, gave hostages, and promised to return all captives and deserters. In all such cases a great point was made of obtaining the surrender of these two categories, and throughout the war desertion from the Russian ranks was very frequent. The natives made little difficulty in promising the surrender when pressed, but seldom kept their word.

There was still no proper road, so that it was the 8th June before the rearguard reached the northern slope of the Betl plateau overlooking Ashiltá; and, meantime, Fésé, learning that the combined Russian and native forces[1] were confronting Shamil in the fortified aoul of Tilitl, and fearing that the Murids might prove too strong for them, sent another battalion under Lieutenant-Colonel Boutchkeeyeff by forced marches from Tsataníkh with orders to pick up a company at Khounzakh on the way, take over Touleensky's command, and blockade the aoul closely. The reinforcement came just in time. On the night of the 7th, Shamil, Tashoff Hadji, and Keebeet Mahomá[2] made a sortie with the object of breaking the blockade, and a desperate fight ensued, in

[1] A battalion of infantry with some Cossacks and three mountain guns under Captain Touleensky supporting the levies of the Khans of Kasi-Koumoukh and Mekhtoulee.

[2] Keebeet Mahomá had made himself master of Tilitl in 1833 by the treacherous assassination of the native beks and their families, thirty-three persons in all. He remained to the end of the war (1859) one of Shamil's chief supporters.

which the Russians lost 2 officers and 92 men killed, and 3 officers and 183 men wounded, but succeeded in driving the enemy back. The Murid loss was apparently about the same, as the Russian account gives it at 100 killed and "a mass of wounded." Considering the total Russian forces in Daghestan the above figures were very serious, as after events amply proved.

On the 9th Fésé brought his troops down the mountain on to the plateau above Ountsoukoul, and led them to the attack on Ashiltá. The Murid army had taken up a strong position on the left bank of the Betl, with its right flank protected by a precipitous mountain wall, its left by the abyss already mentioned. They were driven from this first line of defence at the point of the bayonet, and retreated slowly towards the village, contesting every inch of ground as they fell back from ledge to ledge and terrace to terrace, sprinkling the vines with their blood. For three hours the contest went on in the vineyards and orchards, and then, at last, the Russians found themselves face to face with Ashiltá, in which, it is said, 2000 Murids had taken their stand after swearing on the Koran to die if need be in its defence. Collecting his men, Fésé made the necessary preparations for storming the aoul, the whole of the troops being divided into three columns, with the exception of one battalion and three companies retained to act as a reserve and cover the artillery, which had fallen behind owing to the difficult nature of the ground. Two mountain guns, however, were soon brought up, and took part in the attack. The left column was the first to reach the village, but was met by a withering fire, and for some time had hard work to hold its own, with its back to a wall of rock on the extreme left; but meantime the

right column, under a very gallant officer, Major Fuchs, fought its way up the terraces to the extreme right of the aoul, and seeing the enemy's reserve on a kourgán,[1] drove them off in confusion along the Tchinkat road, and turning to the left commenced to fight its way through the streets. This relieved the pressure on the left column, and Fésé himself now coming up in the centre, the battle resolved itself into the usual hand-to-hand fight between groups of men on either side in and about each separate *saklia*. "The direction of the fighting slipped altogether from the hands of the commanding officers, and personal bravery and strength alone decided the matter. The maddened, exasperated mountaineers rushed desperately on our soldiers and died on the bayonets. More especially heart-rending was the scene of slaughter in the houses. No quarter was asked, no prisoners taken. General Fésé followed in person all the incidents of the fight; he was seen, now here, now there, amongst the fighters, sword in hand. At last, towards 2 P.M., Ashiltá was taken and set on fire, but in some of the *saklias* the butchery lasted till evening. Driven from the village, the natives gathered beyond it on the ridge, and encouraged by the cries of the moullás, six times in succession flung themselves against us, hoping to retake the aoul; but all their efforts were baffled by the iron firmness of our troops." The enemy now retreated, part over the Andee Koisou by the bridge of Tchinkat, which they burned behind them, putting a stop to pursuit, part up the right bank of that river, while a third body took refuge on Old Akhoulgó. After the terrible description given in the Russian account of the battle, it is somewhat surprising to read that the loss on

[1] A barrow or grave mound.

both sides was comparatively insignificant: of the victors, only 28 men killed, 9 officers and 107 men wounded, 1 officer and 39 men contused; of the vanquished, 87 dead were found, not counting the bodies burnt in the ruins, but many dead and wounded are said to have been carried away. "No prisoners were taken, which is explained by the obstinate nature of the defence and the exasperation of our soldiers."[1]

Fésé now turned his attention to the fugitives on Old Akhoulgó, which contained a fortified castle, but, as Sourkhai's rock-tower, which commanded the position, had been left unoccupied, a battery was soon in position which completely dominated the enemy's stronghold, and on the 12th, after a heavy bombardment, it was rushed by way of a razor-edged path, the only means of access.[2] The Russian loss was insignificant; of the natives, it is only said that many bodies were found, 78 were taken prisoners, and 60 hostages were released. It is stated that Shamil's family and treasure were in Old Akhoulgó, but they were certainly not found, and, as there was no escape, it is doubtless a mistake on the part of the narrator. After completely destroying the aoul of Ashiltá and all the beautiful vineyards and orchards, then in their summer glory, Fésé intended to take up his position at Gherghébil, but he had not even started when a fresh horde of the enemy, said to number 12,000, which had collected at Igalee, swooped down on the Russians and threatened to surround them. Fésé succeeded in beating off several attacks on the 15th, and at night retired to a stronger

[1] The chief available source of information for the years 1837-38 is the article already quoted in volumes viii. and ix. of the *Kavkazsky Sbornik*. This article is compiled mainly from official documents in the military archives of the Caucasus, but the writer's own contributions leave much to be desired.

[2] See plan, chapter xx.

position, followed, however, by the enemy. The fighting was so close that when the flintlocks became useless owing to the heavy rain, both sides used stones. It was only at midday on the 16th that this "strategic movement to the rear" was completed, and the army concentrated in its new position after an uninterrupted fight of twenty-four hours. On the arrival of three fresh companies, which had left for Ghimree but had been recalled in hot haste, the enemy retired to Igalee and disappeared. The Russians had lost in this affair 1 officer and 32 men killed, 3 officers and 93 men wounded, and 3 officers and 35 men contused, within 10, that is, of the total on the first day.

Fésé retired to Ountsoukoul, whence, after receiving fresh supplies, he reascended the Betl mountain, and marching by way of Khounzakh and Golotl, reached Tilitl on the 26th, and joined the forces still holding Shamil at that place. Tilitl was a yet larger aoul than Ashiltá—600 houses—and far stronger. Built on a stony platform, backed on one side by a cliff, while on the other three the only approach is up steep and lofty rocks, it possessed in an uncommon degree the usual facilities for defence of a Daghestan aoul, including no less than nine fortified towers, and was not altogether without artillery in the shape of light falconets. After a few days the towers and many of the houses were knocked to pieces by the superior artillery fire of the Russians, and a storming party took possession of the smoking ruins, with a loss of 1 officer and 27 men killed, and 1 officer and 49 men wounded. As fresh hordes were reported to be gathering for the relief of their Imám, Fésé ordered a general attack for the 5th July. At daybreak the attack began, and when the troops reached the village all the horrors of Ashiltá were repeated. The Russians had obtained possession of the upper portion

of the aoul, while the Murids still held the lower part. It would seem that victory was certain, but, on Shamil sending envoys to treat for peace, Fésé withdrew his men from their hard-won position and concentrated them on the heights above. In the fighting from the 3rd to the 6th July he had lost 4 officers and 60 men killed, 3 officers and 203 men wounded, besides some contused. Negotiations continued during two days, and ended in Shamil, Tashoff Hadji, and Keebeet Mahomá, with others, offering their submission, and swearing to it in the presence of delegates named by Fésé, signing some sort of document and giving up three hostages. Shamil also sent a letter to Fésé, but couched in such terms that the Russian commander, though not until already on the retreat, sent a request that it might be replaced by one more suitably worded. Shamil complied in so far as to write another letter, but he was obviously master of the situation, and the contents of the second missive differed little from the first either in matter or tone. "The acceptance by General Fésé of such letters, recording the conclusion of peace with Shamil, was a political mistake; it confirmed in the eyes of the hostile communities his title as their civic and religious chief, whereas up till then no one recognised his sovereignty but himself.[1]

"On the 7th July, in consequence of an intimation that the Murids could not make up their minds to leave Tilitl, as it were, under the muzzles of our guns, the army returned to Khounzakh by (the roundabout) way of the Kouada defile and the Karadágh bridge, reaching the Avar capital on the 10th."

If the reader has taken the trouble to follow with any attention this brief summary of the campaign of 1837, he will hardly be unprepared for the picture of

[1] *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, p. 71.

its immediate results contained in the following naïve admission :—

"This, however, was merely the pretext seized by General Fésé; as a matter of fact he was compelled to retire by the total material disorganisation of the expeditionary corps, the enormous loss in personnel, and the want of ammunition.[1] From the beginning of the campaign he had lost in killed and wounded and in sick or dead of disease 4 staff and 26 other officers, including 14 company commanders and about 1000 men.[2] The loss in horses had also been considerable, and half those remaining could hardly drag one leg after another. Of 10 mountain guns, 5 were rendered useless. The wagons, and even the two-wheeled carts (*arbas*) obtained from the natives for use in the mountains, had nearly all disappeared. The troops had worn out their clothes and boots and went in rags."

General Fésé was a great master of the pen, and his report of the campaign was such as to gain him much brief renown and lead the authorities in distant St. Petersburg to think him a heaven-born commander, and once more to imagine that Muridism was scotched and Russian dominion in Daghestan firmly established. Klugenau must have smiled grimly when he returned to Shourá and learnt the truth, and we can imagine his feelings when in consequence of Fésé's "victorious" campaign he was called upon shortly after to induce Shamil to proceed to Tiflis and throw himself at the Emperor's feet.

Khounzakh, it is true, remained in Russian hands,

[1] *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, p. 73. Fésé himself wrote (to Rosen) that he had agreed to an armistice with Shamil because it was necessary to improve the road between Shourá and Khounzakh, and to provision that place of arms : Akti, viii. p. 618 (30th August 1837).

[2] The news of these losses reached the Emperor at first through private channels, and Rosen was sternly ordered to report more promptly and fully in future : Akti, viii. p. 359.

but the glorious victory of Ashiltá, calmly examined, looks very like a defeat; Akhoulgó had to be taken again at terrible cost just two years later; and the retreat from Tilitl was obviously effected but just in time to escape complete disaster. The result of the vaunted campaign, as clearly evidenced by subsequent events, was not to destroy Shamil's influence, but to increase it tenfold; for the Russians left behind them a legacy of hatred in the ravaged gardens and smoking ruins of Ashiltá, and a conviction in the native mind that, however brave, they were not by any means invincible. The one solid gain from the whole expedition was the improvement of communications between Shourá and Khounzakh, and an increased knowledge of the hostile country.

SHAMIL'S LETTERS TO FÉSÉ

I

From SHAMIL, TASHOFF HADJI, KEEBEET MAHOMÁ, ABDOURRAHMAN of Karakhee, MAHOMET-OMAR-OGLI, and other honourable and learned men of Daghestan. Giving hostages to Mahomet Mirza Khan, we concluded a peace with the Russian Emperor which none of us will break, on condition, however, that neither side should do the slightest wrong to the other. If either side breaks its promises it will be considered as treacherous, and traitors are held accursed before God and the people. This letter of ours will explain the complete exactitude and fairness of our intentions.

II

This letter explains the conclusion of peace between the Russian Emperor and Shamil. This peace is marked by the delivery as hostages to Mahomet Mirza Khan—

on behalf of Shamil, of his cousin, pending the arrival of his nephew; on behalf of Keebeet Mahomá, of his cousin; and on behalf of Abdourrahman of Karakhee, of his son—so that this peace may be lasting, on condition that neither side does any wrong or treachery to the other; for traitors are held accursed before God and the people.[1]

That Fésé withdrew from Tilitl when already in possession of half the aoul on receipt of the first of these letters, and by a route dictated by the enemy, speaks eloquently of the straits to which he was reduced; for whatever his faults as a general, his daring and energy were such that his name still lives in native songs, one of which declares that there was only one refuge from Fésé—the grave!

Shamil returned to Ashiltá, and his feelings may be imagined as he gazed on the desolate scene—the once flourishing aoul a mass of blackened ruins; not a house of the five hundred left standing, not even the mosque wherein he had been consecrated Imám but three years ago: "I beheld, and lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled . . . and the fruitful place was a wilderness." The vines torn up, the trees cut down, the maize trampled under foot, the conduits broken! What wonder if the iron entered his soul and the thirst for vengeance waxed fierce within him? For all this horrible ravage was not for anything he had done against the Russians, but lest he should attempt anything against them in future; Ashiltá with its beautiful orchards and vineyards had been laid waste, forsooth, that Shamil's growing influence might cease. Well, they should see,

[1] *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, viii. p. 241.

these men of blood, who gave no quarter, who battered down the house of God, who destroyed the growing crops, whose fury was on the fruit of the ground—the end was not yet! And the stern Imám turned him to Akhoulgó and, profiting by experience, set to work with all the energy of his nature to make it impregnable, a place of safety for his wives and his children, his gold and his silver, whilst he harried the Russians far and wide; or a refuge and a defence for himself as well if the storm clouds gathered once more in the mountains.

The Emperor Nicholas was to visit the Caucasus in the autumn of this year, and so little did the Russians dream of what was before them that it was thought the Emperor's coming might be made the occasion of celebrating the pacification of the Caucasus. To this end, however, it was necessary to procure Shamil's submission; and secret and most urgent instructions were sent to the commander-in-chief, General Fésé, to use all possible means to persuade the Imám to meet Nicholas at some point on the route, preferably Tiflis, ask forgiveness for past offences—which would immediately be granted—and offer guarantees for his future good behaviour. Fésé, who was now in southern Daghestan, entrusted the conduct of the negotiations to Klugenau, who was not more distinguished for his personal bravery and military skill than for his intimate knowledge of the natives.

It is probable that Klugenau had no illusions as to his chance of success in so delicate and difficult an enterprise, but the Emperor's commands must be obeyed. He despatched, therefore, a letter by the Beks of Karanai demanding an interview with Shamil, and the latter appointed a meeting next day but one at the spring. On the morning of the 18th September accordingly,

Klugenau, accompanied only by Yevdokeemoff, an escort of fifteen Cossacks of the Don and ten natives from the friendly aoul of Karanai, rode down to the spring, where he found the Imám already awaiting him with over 200 horsemen fully armed. The Russian leader, leaving his escort behind, took up his station on a little mound accompanied only by an interpreter, and asked that Shamil should advance to meet him. The latter did so, surrounded by a number of the Murids chanting to wild and dirge-like music verses from the Koran; but on nearer approach the latter halted, and Shamil advanced with three only of his most devoted followers.

The scene at this moment must have been singularly impressive. On the one side were the Russians, with their native allies—a mere handful of men under the command of the youthful adjutant, his cheeks scarred by the bullet wound received not far from this very spot a few months previously; on the other, ten times their number of fiercely fanatical horsemen, dressed in robes of many colours, with tchalmas (turbans) on their heads, and here and there a pennon fluttering from a leader's lance. Between these hostile bands sat Klugenau, square and erect on his charger, face to face with Shamil and the three Murids.[1] The scenery, as befitted the occasion, was wild and savage to a degree; the place of meeting, a mere strip of broken ground with two or three thousand feet of cliff above and as many more below; while across the narrow valley, or rather cleft, of the Soulák rose an opposing wall of nearly equal height.

For a moment there was silence, broken only by the murmur of the water as it flowed over its bed of many-

[1] General Okólnitchi says that Klugenau was "very tall, stoutly built, brusque in manner, and fiery-tempered to the verge of insanity, but good-natured withal, honest and generous."

coloured stones, the débris from the cliffs above, while Christian general and Muhammadan chieftain, equally proud and equally fearless, eyed one another with the knowledge that peace or war hung on the words they were about to utter. Then they dismounted; a *bourka* was spread on the ground; they took their seats upon it, and the parley began.

Long and earnestly the Russian emissary spoke, exerting all his powers of persuasion, meeting all his adversary's weightiest arguments by others he deemed more weighty still, until at last it seemed that his eloquence was to have the desired effect; but Shamil, while professing to be seriously moved, stated that he could give no final answer without first consulting certain of his friends.[1]

About 3 P.M., finding Shamil inflexible on this point, Klugenau rose to his feet; the Imám did the same, and the Russian stretched out his hand to bid him good-bye; but, before Shamil could take it, his arm was seized by Sourkhai Khan, one of the fiercest and most fanatical of the Murids, who, with flashing eye and knitted brow, exclaimed that it was not fitting for the leader of the Faithful to touch the hand of a Giaour. At this insult Klugenau, already irritated at the non-success of his mission, lost self-control, and, raising the crutch he used,[2] was about to strike off the Murid's turbaned head-dress, the worst outrage that could well be offered to a follower of the Prophet. A moment more and the blow would have fallen, and beyond the shadow of a doubt the Russian general with all his men would have been sacrificed to the fury of Sourkhai and his friends. It is idle, perhaps, to speculate on the conse-

[1] Keebeet Mahomá of Tilitl, Tashoff Hadji, and Abdourrahman, Kadi of Karakhee.

[2] He had been severely wounded in 1830 at the storming of Zakatáli, a bullet smashing his right instep and laming him for life.

quences; but Shamil too and the nearest of his followers would possibly have been killed in the mêlée; and, with some of the principal actors removed, the great drama of the ensuing war might have run a very different course.

Shamil, however, on this occasion showed that it was in him to be chivalrous. Seizing the crutch in one hand, and with the other holding back Sourkhai, whose *kindjal* was already half out of its sheath, he called in menacing tones to the rest of his band, who were rapidly closing round, to fall back, and begged Klugenau to retire without delay. The latter, beside himself with rage, heeded neither entreaty nor persuasion, but, careless of danger, continued to shower on all the mountaineers, without distinction, the choicest epithets of abuse. At this moment Yevdokeemoff, fearing for his commander's life, ran up, dragged him back by the skirt of his coat, and, exchanging a few words with Shamil, at last persuaded Klugenau to retire. The latter slowly mounted his horse and rode off at a foot's pace towards Shourá, paying no more heed to the Murids, who, scowling and muttering and with many a backward glance, retired with Shamil to Ghimree.

Whether Shamil ever thought seriously of the Russian proposal or not, we shall never know. It appears that he did send messengers to his chief supporters telling them what had occurred and asking their opinion; but, judging from his conduct on other occasions, it is quite possible that this was merely to try them. Klugenau, desirous to leave no stone unturned, wrote Shamil a long letter urging compliance with the Emperor's wishes; but, this time, the answer was brief and decisive. "From the poor writer of this letter, Shamil, who leaves all things in the hand of God—28th September 1837. This to inform you that I have finally decided not to go to Tiflis, even though I were

cut in pieces for refusing, for I have ofttimes experienced your treachery, and this all men know."

Many thousands of lives were lost on both sides before Shamil, twenty-two years later, stood submissive at the feet of a Russian sovereign, and then it was not Nicholas but his son and successor, Alexander II., and the scene of the historic event not the capital of Georgia, but a Russian camp at the autumn manœuvres 25 versts from Kharkoff.

Nicholas I. meantime had landed (21st September) at Ghelendjik, and at Anápa (23rd September), whence he returned to the Crimea. Setting out once more he reached Redout Kalé on the 27th, and thence made the round of Koutaïs, Akhaltsikh, Akhalkaláki, Goumri, Serdar-Abad, Etchmiadzin, Eriván, and Tiflis (8th October); on the 12th October he left for Vládikavkáz by way of the Georgian road, and reached Moscow on the 26th November.

This visit had in two respects very definite results. Baron Rosen, failing to explain satisfactorily various matters as to which the Emperor's discontent had been roused, was dismissed, but permitted to retain his command until the end of January 1838;[1] and the Persian Government at last gave way in the matter of the Russian deserters. This had long been a very sore point. Yermóloff had used very strong language to the Persian minister Bazurg about it in 1817, but without result. In 1820 Mazaróvitch reported "nos soldats désertent plus que jamais."[2]

At the close of the Persian war of 1826–27 Paskiévitch endeavoured to obtain the surrender of the so-called Russian battalions, but the Persian negotiators obstinately withstood him, and the matter dropped.

[1] Bergé states (Akti, viii., Introduction) that he was dismissed on the 30th November, but he was still in command on the 25th January: *ibid.*, p. 390.

[2] Akti, vi. ii. p. 233: Mazaróvitch to Yermóloff, 18th December.

Nicholas I. now took occasion to interfere personally. Meeting the Emir-i-Nizam, he asked him: "Can we call that Power friendly which welcomes Russian deserters and organises them in bodies called Russian battalions? I beg you to transmit what I say to the Shah, adding that I ask the return of the two Russian battalions[1] within three months' time; and if on your representations my demand is not complied with, then without declaring war I will recall my mission from Teheran and break off all relations with you."[2]

This ultimatum had the desired effect. The Shah agreed to the surrender, provided that the men themselves consented, but that was far from certain. Albrandt was sent to Tabriz and to Teheran with full powers to treat both with the Persian authorities and with the deserters; and after months of exertion, marked by the display of extraordinary tact and courage, he succeeded in accomplishing the difficult and dangerous task laid upon him, and on the 11th February 1839 crossed the Russian frontier at the head of this strange battalion with band playing and colours flying.[3]

[1] It appeared subsequently that there was only one battalion of 450 men, engaged at this time with the Persian army at the siege of Herat.

[2] Rosen to Simónitch (Minister at the Court of the Shah), 15th October 1837: Akti, viii. p. 952; and Simónitch's reply, *ibid.*, p. 957.

[3] Albrandt left a narrative of his mission, which was printed in the *Rousski Viestnik*, 1867, No. 3. The whole episode is full of interest, and brings into high relief some of the most characteristic qualities, good and bad, of the Russian people.

CHAPTER XX

1838–1839

Shamil's success—Russia takes the alarm—Russian plan of campaign—Grabbé's expedition—Siege and capture of Argouáni—The Andee Koïsou crossed—Siege of Akhoulgó

It is claimed for Fésé that his expedition, if it did nothing more, kept Shamil quiet during the whole of 1838, but this result is surely not much to boast of. He was quiet indeed, deadly quiet, for he was engaged in a double work of construction, moral and material, that absorbed every faculty, engrossed all attention, claimed each waking hour—the building up of his authority and power amongst the tribes, the building up of his fortresses on the cliffs of Akhoulgó—and to such good purpose did he work in both directions that early in 1839 the Russian Government came to the conclusion that "it was necessary at last to take the most effectual measures against the growing might of Shamil, and to that end ordered a decisive campaign in northern Daghestan."[1]

Shamil's authority was now recognised by all the free communities lying round Avaria, including Andee and Goumbet, with the exception of Andalial and the unruly people of Ountsoukoul, whose policy seems to have been dictated mainly by a hatred of their neighbours of Ghimree. When

[1] Milioutine, *Opisánië voyénnikh dyéstvii 1839 Goda v Siévernom Daghestanye*, p. 20, an admirable little monograph on this 1839 expedition by Milioutine, afterwards General Count Milioutine, War Minister at the close of the reign of Alexander II., and still (1908) living in the enjoyment of all his faculties. Golóvine wrote to Tchernisheff, 31st March, "Shamil's power in mountain Daghestan augments notably": Akti, ix. p. 325.

the latter aoul was submissive to Russia, Ountsoukoul became hostile; when Ghimree rose in arms, Ountsoukoul hastened to submit. In Tchetchnia his lieutenant, Tashoff Hadji, had succeeded in bringing over to his cause whole districts. Salatau and Aoukh declared themselves openly for the Imám, except such aouls as lay dangerously near the Russian lines, Tchirkei, for instance, and these only waited the favourable moment to follow suit. In southern Daghestan the communities on the Upper Samour were openly hostile to Russia. On the northern plain the peaceful tribes, such as the Koumuiks, trembled for their lives and property, and the "submitted" aouls of Lower Tchetchnia were in still worse case, for they were between the hammer and the anvil, certain to be raided whether they took either side or none. It was time for the Russians to be up and doing.

Baron Rosen had been succeeded (21st March 1838) as commander-in-chief by General Golóvine, whose plan of action, as modified by the Emperor Nicholas, comprised (1) a descent on the Black Sea coast; (2) the final subjugation of the Upper Samour communities; (3) the conquest of Tchetchnia and northern Daghestan.[1] For each of these three objects a separate campaign was planned and a separate army organised. With the first of these campaigns the present work has, for reasons already stated, nothing to do; the results of the second will be summarised in a few words. But the operations of the army led by General Count Grabbé, Veliameenoff's successor, and aiming directly at the capture of Shamil's stronghold, Akhoulgó, and the

[1] The Emperor disapproved Golóvine's proposals as to building of roads and forts within the hostile territory, furnishing the latter with strong garrisons, and making expeditions on a large scale every year—an obvious mixture of Paskiévitch's and Veliameenoff's ideas: Akti, ix., Introduction iv.; and Tchernisheff to Golóvine, 15th January 1839, *ibid.*, p. 236.

final destruction of his power must be dealt with at greater length.

At Count Grabbé's disposal were placed the whole of the military forces of the eastern flank and of northern Daghestan, the former to the number of 6000 concentrated by the 1st of May at Vnezápnaya, on the river Aktash, the latter to the number of 3000 a fortnight later at Temir-Khan-Shourá. The intention had been to make first a combined movement against Shamil in Daghestan, and attack Tchetchnia in the autumn; for campaigning in the lofty and barren mountains was attended by far less difficulty in summer than at any other time of the year, whereas the contrary held good of Tchetchnia with its densely-wooded hills and valleys. But the skilful dispositions of the enemy compelled the Russian commander to alter his plans.

Tashoff Hadji, reinforced by a party of Daghestan Murids under Sourkhai and Ali Bek, had built himself a small but strong wooden blockhouse at Akhmet-Kalá in the depth of the forest near Miskeet, an aoul on the river Aksai, and, gathering the Tchetchens from near and far, he threatened the Koumuik plain and the rear of any force marching from Vnezápnaya towards Daghestan. Shamil himself fortified Argouáni in Goumbet, and promised the people of Bourtounai to advance and meet the Russians in their district of Salatau. In these circumstances it would have been madness for the latter to advance without first securing the line of communication to the north and ensuring the safety of the loyal inhabitants of the Koumuik plain, for which purpose it was essential, in the first place, to destroy Tashoff Hadji's new stronghold and disperse his large, if undisciplined, force.

The preliminary campaign undertaken for the purpose

was very brief and entirely successful. The troops left Vnezápnaya on the 9th May, and by the 15th were back again, having destroyed Akhmet-Kalá and also a similar structure, together with the aoul of Sayasáni higher up the Aksai, defeating on each occasion considerable bodies of the enemy. The Russian losses were not serious, and, as usual in forest fighting, caused chiefly on the line of retirement.[1] The Tchetchens do not appear to have suffered severely either, thanks to the density of the woods, but Tashoff Hadji's prestige was gone, and Grabbé could now march forward without anxiety for his rear. Six men who had been caught firing, and proved to belong to "submitted" villages of the territory of Aoukh, were "passed through the ranks"[2] as a warning to others.

If Akhoulgó had been the only objective Grabbé would now have crossed the Soulák and followed the longer but more convenient route through Shourá, Ziriánï, and Khounzakh, but that would have left untouched Goumbet and Salatau, whose inhabitants were amongst Shamil's chief supporters, and would have ensured the latter a safe refuge even in the event of Akhoulgó being successfully assaulted. Moreover the danger to the Koumuiks would have been as great as ever. For these reasons he decided to advance directly through Salatau and Goumbet, subdue these districts on the way, and reach Ashiltá through Tchinkat. Once there, his base would be transferred to Khounzakh, whence to Shourá the communications were now comparatively safe and easy. Of the Daghestan troops, commanded in Klugenau's absence by Pankrátieff, three battalions were to join Grabbé by the Miatli ford over the Soulák and one was to protect the Khounzakh route, along which

[1] Count Milioutine was severely wounded in this affair, but refused to retire: Akti, ix. p. 241 (Grabbé's order of the day, 16th May).
[2] *i.e.* made to "run the gauntlet."

stores and provisions had to be carried in large quantities to supply the army on its arrival before Akhoulgó.

A start was made from Vnezápnaya on the 21st May, and the following day two of the three battalions from Shourá joined the main force. On the 24th the remaining battalion came up during a fight with a large number of the enemy under Shamil himself at Bourtounai, and the expeditionary corps now amounted in round numbers to 8500 men. The resistance so far was feeble in the extreme; nor did it become serious until the Russians reached the fortified aoul of Argouáni, though they had to cross the lofty ridge between Salatau and Goumbet, make their descent into the latter district by precipitous slopes,

I submit that material fact has been passed over
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It beat everything I ever heard Невероятно
I knew what was imply

tier above tier, in the form of an amphitheatre, usual flat roofs, square towers, and narrow, tortuous streets. Shamil had collected some 16,000 men to confront the Russians, but the actual garrison was much less numerous, as large numbers, notably the men of Andee, preferred to

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Argouani, like Tilitl and so many of the Daghestan aouls, was a formidable place to take by storm, yet for an army provisioned and equipped for a few days' march only a formal siege was out of the question; it was impossible, however, to leave such a stronghold behind untouched, and Grabbé, who, though no general, was a man of great courage and determination, after a reconnaissance in force gave orders for the assault. The aoul occupied a lofty ridge in the fork of a small river, the lowest line of houses, built on the very edge of an almost perpendicular cliff, presenting an unbroken wall of stone, pierced by a triple row of loopholes. Behind these rose other houses, tier above tier, in the form of an amphitheatre, with the usual flat roofs, square towers, and narrow, tortuous streets. Shamil had collected some 16,000 men to confront the Russians, but the actual garrison was much less numerous, as large numbers, notably the men of Andee, preferred to

play a watching game on the neighbouring heights, and took little part in the fighting.

At five o'clock in the afternoon of the 30th May the Russian batteries opened fire on the aoul, but, according to Milioutine, without much effect. Meantime a column under Colonel Labeentseff was approaching the enemy's position by a long detour on the right, and another under Colonel Pullo was feeling its way over the rocks on the left to the road leading from Tchinkat (Tchirkat); each of these columns consisted of two battalions (of about 750 men each) and a couple of mountain guns, besides native militia. A battalion of the Ápsheron regiment moved to the right to keep up communication with Labeentseff's column, and speedily reaching the summit of the ridge, carried, at the point of the bayonet, a detached fort between which and the aoul was a deep fosse. The transport was left out of rifle fire under protection of one battalion of infantry and a couple of guns; another battalion and the dismounted Cossacks guarded the batteries; and yet a third made a feint to draw the enemy's attention and fire in the centre.

It was now dark, and the flanking columns were still drawn out in long lines on the steep mountain sides, along which they had great difficulty in dragging the guns. Colonel Pullo on reaching the Tchinkat road followed it up a desperately steep incline almost to the houses, but found the aoul on this side absolutely impregnable, for the only approach was under the cross fire of two bastions, between which a concave line of stone *saklias* served as a curtain, above and behind which rose the loftiest part of the village. Colonel Labeentseff on completing his turning movement was able to convince himself that on that side the western corner of the aoul alone could be assailed with any chance of success, and as it was impossible to

storm Argouáni at night with one battalion—his other had been left in columns of companies to keep watch against the enemy on the heights—he retired out of range. With the information thus obtained, Grabbé made his final arrangements for the assault next morning. Labeentseff's column was strengthened by two battalions, so that, still leaving one to protect his rear, he had three battalions to hurl at the western corner of the aoul. Colonel Pullo, with his two battalions and two mountain guns, was brought round to the right and ordered to move along the ridge where the outlying fort had been captured, and take over the command of the troops on that spot. Here also, then, there would be three storming battalions. To complete the disposition, a battalion was placed on the Left Flank with orders to draw the enemy's attention to that side, and in case the main attack succeeded, to occupy the Tchinkat road and cut off retreat in that direction, while the only other exit from the aoul, on Labeentseff's right, was guarded by the mounted Cossacks and native militia.

The troops were on the move before daybreak, and as soon as they were in position the aoul was heavily bombarded on all sides, after which at a given signal the storming parties dashed forward with a courage and determination that carried them quickly over the outer line of defences. Then began the usual hand-to-hand fighting and butchers' work in the houses and streets, but Milioutine, who led one of the columns, shall tell the story himself: "At 9 A.M. our troops were already in occupation of the greater part of the village, and even of the flat roofs of those houses where the Murids still defended themselves; but the bloodshed continued the whole day through until dark. The only way to drive the Murids out of the *saklias* was to break holes through the roofs and throw down burning substances, and

so set fire to the beams. Even then they remained many hours in the houses, though sometimes they found means to break through and secretly pass from one dwelling to another, but many bodies were found completely charred. In spite of their disadvantageous position they continued to do our men a great deal of harm; the most fanatic amongst them were satisfied if they could destroy even some of the 'infidels'; they defended themselves man by man with their swords and *kindjals* until they died on our bayonets; some even threw themselves against a dozen soldiers at a time without any weapon whatever. Only fifteen men, who were being suffocated by smoke in one of the *saklias* into which we had thrown hand grenades, consented to surrender. Many soldiers perished owing to their own carelessness in entering the houses; but the enemy's loss was far heavier—the streets were blocked with corpses.

"When the day ended a considerable part of the village was still in the hands of the enemy. One tower in particular, which rose to the height of several storeys at the eastern end of the aoul, gave a great deal of trouble; there all the efforts of our infantry were in vain, and when evening fell we had to drag up with enormous difficulty two mountain and two Cossack guns, and place them on the flat roofs of the nearest houses in order to batter a breach. Even then the mountaineers did not surrender; and at nightfall it became necessary to take the most strenuous measures to prevent all egress from the aoul, especially from those houses still occupied by the enemy. It was night, indeed, that they waited for. As soon as it was dark and all quiet in the camp they came out by secret passages and fled in various directions. Some were met by the fire of our men and fell; others engaged in hand-to-hand fighting, and were

bayoneted; others again tumbled over the cliffs in the darkness and were killed; few indeed succeeded in crossing our lines unharmed, and these owed their almost miraculous salvation partly to the nature of the ground, which they alone knew well, partly to the darkness and the rain.

"Thus the fighting at Argouáni lasted almost uninterruptedly from 4 P.M. on the 30th May to daybreak on the 1st June, and, taking into consideration all the difficulties our troops had to overcome during a day and a half, one can only be surprised that our losses did not exceed 146 killed (including 6 officers) and 500 wounded (including 30 officers). The enemy, on the other hand, suffered a great defeat; 500 bodies remained in our hands, of which 300 in a single gully where the fugitive mountaineers were attacked by our cavalry. According to information subsequently gathered they lost altogether in killed and wounded some 2000 men, and of certain villages not a single man returned."[1]

The wounded were sent back to a little fort called Oudatchnaya, which had been hastily constructed on the march a few miles north of Argouáni, and left in charge of Tarasévitch. The rest of the army, while waiting for the return of the conveying battalions, occupied itself in the endeavour to complete the destruction of the aoul. This was no easy matter, and when, four days later, Grabbé set forward once more, by no means all of the 500 houses of which Argouáni had consisted were demolished, though the wooden beams of most had been burnt.[2]

On the 5th June a flying column under Labeentseff, promoted with Pullo to the rank of major-general, entered

[1] Milioutine, pp. 62–65. See also Grabbé's report, Akti, ix. pp. 328–31.

[2] The burning of native dwellings, like the destruction of orchards, fields, and vineyards, was systematically practised by the Russians in Daghestan, and owing to the great scarcity of timber few measures more disastrously affected the inhabitants.

Tchinkat opposite Ashiltá, and found it deserted; but the bridge over the Andee Koisou had been burnt by the inhabitants, and the position of Grabbé's army threatened to become grave if not desperate, for it was now cut off from its original base at Vnezápnaya, yet unable to effect communication with the new one at Shourá, and meantime the provisions were nearly at an end, the country all round absolutely hostile. It can hardly be doubted that the Russians on this occasion were within measurable distance of a great disaster, but courage and determination, added to the blunders or laches of the enemy, saved them. Nor must it be forgotten that the barren mountains of Daghestan, formidable as they appeared, were less dangerous to regular troops than the fatal forests of Tchetchnia.

It was not until the 7th that the main force entered Tchinkat, for the road, as usual, had to be made. The transport from Shourá with full supplies was waiting on the Betl mountain across the river under convoy of one Russian battalion and the native militia of Tarkou, Mekhtoulee, and Avaria, but neither the Shamkhal nor Akhmet Khan dared descend in such close proximity to Shamil's army at Akhoulgó, and the various missives despatched by Grabbé to the officer in command of the battalion seem not to have reached him. The Shamkhal was ordered to come down and take possession of the right bank of the river opposite Tchinkat to facilitate the rebuilding of the bridge; Akhmet Khan was urged to seize the bridge at Igalee, 10 versts higher up; but neither moved. Attempts were also made to open up communication with Shourá through Tchirkéi on the north, but the people of that aoul, professedly friendly, were really hostile, and managed to render these attempts abortive. In this emergency Colonel Katénine with two battalions, two mountain guns, and the whole

of the cavalry was sent on the morning of the 8th to seize the bridge at Sagritl, 3 versts nearer than Igalee, but extremely difficult of approach. He succeeded in reaching it at 3 P.M., only to find it broken down by the natives. Luckily there were houses near, and with beams torn from them the bridge was soon made passable again. It is characteristic of the Murids that they made no attempt to hinder this proceeding, though the whole issue of the campaign may have depended on it. By night both banks were in possession of the Russians, and next day Katénine marched boldly on to Ashiltá, seeing which Akhmet Khan took heart and joined him. On the 10th some dozens of sacks of biscuits were slung across the river on ropes to the hungry soldiers on the left bank, and by the evening of the 11th the bridge of Tchinkat was rebuilt in native fashion, the beams being taken from the houses, and, for want of ropes and nails, bound together with vines. Grabbé, with the greatest part of his command, now crossed the river and occupied the terraces of Ashiltá; the remainder took up positions on the left bank opposite Akhoulgó, except those who were told off to guard the bridge, and thus on the 12th of June began the most famous siege of the war.

Shamil was now shut up in Akhoulgó with a population of about 4000 men, women, and children, including many hostages from various tribes, communities, and villages. Of this large total, housed mostly in *saklias* built wholly or partly underground, and even in caves, not more than one-fourth were fighting men, and herein lay the chief weakness of his position. For all must be fed, and as the siege went on provisions grew scarce, while from the beginning water had to be obtained from the rivers at the base of the rocks, which could only be reached by breakneck paths down cliffs many hundreds of feet deep. The position will

best be understood from the accompanying plan and sections taken from Milioutine. It will be seen that the Andee Koisou here makes a bend enclosing, roughly, three sides of a square. This square is irregularly bisected by the river Ashiltá after its junction with the Betl. The right half of the square—New Akhoulgó—is considerably higher than the left—Old Akhoulgó—but both are several hundred feet above the Andee Koisou, which washes them on three sides at the base of steep, in places perpendicular or even overhanging, cliffs. Access to New Akhoulgó is barred, and the whole promontory completely dominated by Sourkhai's tower. Old Akhoulgó could only be reached from Ashiltá by a razor-edged path, or from New Akhoulgó across the narrow chasm bridged by planks at a great distance below the double plateau. Sourkhai's tower, or rather collection of strong buildings on the summit overlooking the rock, was in charge of Ali Bek, one of Shamil's bravest and most skilful lieutenants, with a garrison of about one hundred men, chosen for their desperate courage and fanatical devotion to the cause of Muridism from a host of others certainly not lacking in either respect. Some of these brave men had to descend each night to the brink of the Ashiltá and bring back water for their comrades under the fire of the Russian sharpshooters. Sourkhai himself was at Igalee, endeavouring to maintain the people of that important aoul in their allegiance to Shamil; Akhverdi Mahomá was in the Bogoulial district, Galbats in Andee, on similar missions, for many of these people, alarmed at the successes of the Russians, were already wavering, and left to themselves would doubtless submit.

With the battalion sent from Shourá to guard the convoy of provisions, guns, and stores, Grabbé now had nine battalions under his command, but so great had been the

drain from battle and sickness, that the total in the fighting line, including a company of sappers, amounted to no more than 6000 men, without counting the undisciplined militia of the khanates, whose numbers varied continually, but averaged about 3600. With this force the Russian commander soon saw that he could not hope to maintain the blockade on all sides. Moreover, the position of the three battalions on the left bank of the Andee Koisou was one of considerable danger, one being practically isolated at the bridge of Tchinkat, while the other two were down the river opposite Akhoulgó. On the 14th, therefore, he withdrew them all to the right bank, and for a time carried on the siege operations from that side only.[1] Shamil's position was thereby much improved, for the Koisou at one spot was so narrow that he was able to bridge it roughly with a few planks, and, during the first and second periods of the siege, renew his provisions, replace his losses in men and materials, and keep open his communications with Akhverdi Mahomá, Sourkhai, and others of his adherents outside.

In these conditions speedy success could hardly be hoped for, and Grabbé appealed to Golóvine for reinforcements. Luckily the Samour expedition was already at an end, so that the commander-in-chief was in a position to comply with the request of his subordinate by despatching to Akhoulgó three fresh battalions with four guns and a quantity of stores. When these joined the blockading force, which was not until the 12th of July, the total reached 8500 fighting men, without counting natives.

Meantime Akhverdi Mahomá, Sourkhai, and Galbats had succeeded in collecting large forces for the relief of

[1] Golóvine calls attention to this "very grave mistake." See his memoir reprinted in Akti, ix. p. 287, *note*.

the Imám hoping that their mere appearance would compel Grabbé to raise the siege. The latter had entrusted the protection of his rear to the native militia, and had ordered Akhmet Khan to take possession of the bridge at Sagritl, but the cautious Akhmet, as before, kept to the safety of the heights, and so it happened that on the night between the 18th and 19th of June Akhverdi Mahomá quietly took possession of the ridge of Ashiltá and set to work to entrench himself there, while the unconscious Russians were occupied in making a reconnaissance in force of Shamil's stronghold, and the headquarters staff remained for the moment almost unprotected. The danger was very great. Had Akhverdi Mahomá seized his opportunity, it is possible that he might have inflicted a serious if not fatal reverse on the Russians, first destroying the staff, and then, in conjunction with Shamil, overwhelming the Russian soldiers while entangled in the deep ravines and separated into comparatively small bodies by intervening ridges of great height and steepness. But the natives, brave as they were and skilful in defence, were nearly always weak in the attack, and, as a rule, had little idea of combined movements. Akhverdi Mahomá let the favourable moment slip; his fault counteracted that of Akhmet Khan on the Russian side, and the danger was past. When the Murids on the morning of the 20th prepared for the attack, it was with loud chanting of verses from the Koran, and they began firing the moment they moved, thus giving the Russians the alarm and enabling them to concentrate in time. As soon as Grabbé had collected a portion of his forces he took the offensive; the ridge was stormed, the natives gave way, and fled to Sagritl and Igalee. Not satisfied with this, the Russian commander, having spent the 21st in preparation, left General Galaféyeff to contain Shamil, and himself

marched with four battalions, the Cossack and native cavalry, and four guns, towards Sagritl. There he surprised and routed the enemy, driving some as far as the bridge near that place, and pursuing the remainder to Igalee. At these two points the Murids kept some forces in observation throughout the siege, but they did not again attempt any actual interference. Shamil profited, as expected, by the absence of part of the blockading army to make a sortie, but it was not pressed home, and was repulsed with little loss to the latter. By the evening of the 23rd all the troops were back in their old positions. The same day Oudatchnaya, which had served its purpose, was evacuated by Captain Tarasévitch, who retired to Shourá by Miatli and eventually rejoined his commander.

The siege was progressing slowly, but useful work was being done. Six batteries were erected, and saps advanced along the rivers Betl and Ashiltá. Moreover, a new and shorter route was opened up with Shourá through Ountsoukoul and Ghimree. A path had existed between these mutually hostile aouls, but had recently been destroyed where it passed under some cliffs overhanging the Avar Koisou. Grabbé sent a company of infantry to repair and enlarge it, but so great were the difficulties that it took them from the 27th June to the 21st August to complete the work. The people of Ghimree at this crisis in Shamil's life did little to help him. As long as communications were open by way of the left bank of the Andee Koisou they encouraged him, and some even joined his forces, but the greater number refrained from actual hostilities, and towards the end, when Grabbé appointed Oullou Bek preestaff over them with full powers, they submitted to his authority and allowed uninterrupted communication with Shourá.

CHAPTER XXI

1839

Siege of Akhoulgó continued—Sourkhai's castle taken—Failure of general assault—Siege operations resumed—Progress of the Russians—Shamil surrenders his son—Final assault and capture of Akhoulgó—Shamil escapes—Golóvine's Samour expedition—Its results

NEW AKHOULGÓ was connected with Sourkhai's rock, just as Old Akhoulgó with the Ashiltá terraces, by a ridge only wide enough for one man to pass at a time. The siege works on this side were gradually advanced, until one night a company under cover of darkness succeeded in occupying a sheltered position at the near end of this ridge, and the rock was then surrounded on all sides. But the brave defenders continued each night to descend to the Betl for water, and as nothing decisive could be hoped for while this key to the whole position held out, Grabbé determined to storm it.

At dawn on the 29th June three batteries opened fire on Sourkhai's tower, but with little effect, for the buildings were masked by masses of rock from the chief battery on the south; the western battery, from its position on the ridge opposite Old Akhoulgó, could only fire at an elevation too great for any serious effect; while on the east there were only a couple of very light mountain guns, of little avail against the strong walls of the castle.

"At 9 o'clock A.M. two battalions of the Koureen regiment marched to the foot of the rock; volunteers gallantly dashed forward up the steep hillside (at an angle of 45°), and rapidly climbed it in spite of a hail of stones

and wooden beams hurled down upon them by the mountaineers. But the top of the rock consisted of a huge overhanging mass several fathoms high. The undaunted sharpshooters, however, did not stop even there; climbing on each other's shoulders, one by one they endeavoured to reach the summit; but every brave fellow who came into sight of the defenders over the edge, under the very walls of the castle, paid for his temerity with his life. Meantime the storming party was exposed to a flanking fire from a breastwork constructed on the left-hand side, a part of the defences our artillery entirely failed to destroy.

"In the hopes of lightening the task of the stormers the batteries from time to time renewed their fire in volleys; every discharge brought down vast fragments, stones and beams fell on the attacking party; but the thick columns of dust rising over the castle hid for a short time only the heroic figures of the desperate Murids. The moment our volunteers rushed once more at the steep ascent the mountaineers sprang out of the castle, and with the same energy and the same wild yells showered down their stones and beams. This desperate fighting had already lasted several hours; one company had succeeded another, and at 4 P.M. two battalions of the Kabardá regiment were sent to the attack; . . . but the difficulties were insuperable, and all efforts were in vain. Only at nightfall and at the word of command did our troops retire from the blood-stained rock. The fight, which had lasted all day, had failed, after costing us a loss of over 300, including 2 officers and 34 men killed. Nevertheless one must do full justice to the truly heroic valour of the troops."[1]

[1] Milioutine, pp. 92, 93.

There were 3 officers and 165 men actually wounded, 15 officers and 96 men contused, many of them by stones lightly; these latter were soon able to resume their service.

The attack had failed, but at heavy cost to Shamil, for the heroic Ali Bek was killed together with many of his gallant hundred, and the Russians had learnt a lesson by which they afterwards profited.

Tarasévitch, now a major, was on the way from Shourá with his battalion convoying a transport with fresh supplies including ammunition for the field guns, and, pending his arrival, a new battery was constructed on the eastern side of the rock, armed with four of these more powerful weapons. On the 4th July the castle was again bombarded, and, with the guns better placed and of larger calibre, it was soon reduced to a mass of ruins, in which the heroic defenders seemed literally buried. But whenever the stormers attempted to reach the summit the dauntless Murids leapt once more on to the broken fragments of the wall and again hurled stones and beams upon them. To avoid a useless sacrifice of valuable lives the volunteers, who to the number of 200 had been gathered from the whole army, were brought back under cover and ordered to wait for night.

Meantime the batteries continued their work of destruction until the greater part of the defenders were killed or buried under the ruins; the few who remained alive realised that further efforts were useless, and under cover of darkness tried to reach New Akhoulgó through the Russian lines. They were seen by the pickets and fired at, with what result we are not told. But the stormers at last penetrated the ruins of the castle, and found there only a few wounded men. The Russian loss

this time was only 12 killed, including 1 officer, and 95 contused.[1]

The besiegers' task was now much lightened, for, no longer harassed by the fire from the castle, they were able to advance their works in various directions, especially towards New Akhoulgó, and draw their lines much closer. New batteries were constructed, from which even the mountain guns could be brought to bear on the enemy's fortifications. The upper part of the ridge in front of Sourkhai's rock was occupied by a whole battalion with two guns; another battalion with two fresh batteries was advanced nearer to the Koisou on the east, and on the promontory between the Betl and the Ashiltá two battalions were placed with a new four-gun battery. The position of the troops at this moment is shown on the plan under the letter B.

The greatest difficulty was experienced in continuing the roads or paths to the new positions, especially to the ridge in front of the rock. At two points (*b*) ladders had to be used, and at another (*a*), where there is a sheer drop of 140 feet, tackles were rigged by which the guns were lowered and men in baskets. All this time the enemy under cover of darkness made continual sorties, to check which artillery fire was kept up all through the night. On the 12th the reinforcements had arrived from southern Daghestan, and allowing them three days' rest after their long march, Grabbé, judging that the siege had now reached a stage when Akhoulgó might with advantage be stormed, gave orders to that effect for the 16th July. He was strengthened in this determination by the reports of spies, who pictured the state of the garrison in the

[1] Amongst those who distinguished themselves at the taking of Sourkhai's castle were Yevdokeemoff and Major Marteenoff, who two years later (15th July 1841) had the misfortune to kill the poet Lérmontoff in a duel at Piátigorsk.

most lurid colours. Reduced in numbers, exposed to the midsummer sun on this barren rock, without cattle—for there was no forage—unable to cook their food for want of fuel, driven by the storm of shot and shell to take refuge in caves and holes, worn by fatigue and privation, exposed to continual danger, and breathing an atmosphere contaminated by decaying corpses, it might well be that, as stated, the dwellers on Akhoulgó were no longer able to offer any serious resistance, and that Shamil himself had thoughts of flight. But the event proved that both the native spies and the Russian commander had underestimated the courage and determination of their foe.

The attack was made in three columns, of which the strongest, three battalions, under Baron Wrangel, was directed against New Akhoulgó; the second, one battalion, under Colonel Popoff, against Old Akhoulgó; while the third, a battalion and a half, under Tarasévitch, was to descend the gorge of the Ashiltá, enter the chasm between the two halves of the promontory, and thence endeavour to prevent any junction of the enemy's forces, and in the event of success on the part of the other columns, to scale if possible the cliffs, and help to get possession of the main position.

From dawn till 2 P.M. was devoted to an artillery preparation; the troops were then moved into position, but it was 5 P.M. before the signal was given for the assault. Wrangel's column at once made its way down the narrow ridge in single file under a deadly fire, and with scaling ladders stormed the platform occupied by the first of the enemy's outworks, but here an unexpected obstacle confronted them in the shape of a second deep cutting across the ridge, swept by a cross fire from two concealed blockhouses or kaponiers. In a moment the position of the column

became desperate. Exposed to a galling fire, crowded to the number of 600 on a very small space of level ground, with an impassable cutting in front, a precipice on either side, behind them a passage so narrow that only one could pass at a time, and this already crowded with wounded men, they could neither advance nor retreat. It was impossible for the sappers to bring even one fascine to protect them with, and they were soon without a single officer; every one had been killed or wounded, or had fallen down the rocks. Thus they remained, perforce, until merciful darkness covered them, and lucky it was that the attack had taken place so late in the day, for otherwise not a man could have escaped.

The remaining columns, which were intended rather to draw the enemy's attention than press home an attack, did little or nothing. That under Tarasévitch, after penetrating some way down the gorge, was met by a withering fire from Old Akhoulgó on the left, while showers of rocks and stones came toppling down from the cliffs on the right; in these circumstances, and seeing that the main column had failed, it retreated. The third column seems to have made no serious attempt on Old Akhoulgó. At dark all three returned to the starting-point. The attack had totally failed, and the Russians had lost heavily—156 killed (including 7 officers), and 719 wounded and contused[1] (including 45 officers), while the defenders' loss was comparatively small—150 all told, but it included some of their bravest men. It is stated that when Wrangel's column entered the outwork the Murids lost their heads and were about to run, but the women and children threw themselves forward and arrested their flight. "Many of

[1] In this mountain warfare rocks and stones were often used with great effect, hence, in part, the frequent entries under this heading, which included as a matter of fact some very serious wounds.

these heroines, dressed as men, fought obstinately in the advanced posts."

The siege divides itself naturally into three periods, of which the first ends with the storming of Sourkhai's castle, the second with the failure of the general assault on the 16th July. We now enter on the third and final period, during which the dramatic interest grows more and more intense, until the final catastrophe.

The Russian commander had suffered a grievous rebuff, but not for a moment did he think of abandoning his enterprise. Wounded pride, defeated ambition, and such like personal considerations may have helped in some degree to strengthen his determination to carry on the siege, even through the winter if need be; but infinitely more weighty were the military and political aspects of the question. To retire now would be to acknowledge the whole expedition a failure, its heavy cost in blood and money a mere waste. What was far worse, Shamil's power and influence would be enormously increased; Muridism would reign triumphant in all Daghestan and Tchetchnia; the efforts of past years would have been in vain; and the struggle for supremacy would have to be renewed, almost from the beginning.

Meditating the causes of his defeat, Grabbé saw that success was hopeless so long as the garrison could keep open its communications with the outside world. His spies brought him information that the day after the assault 100 fresh men from Tchirkéi and other bands from various aouls had joined Shamil; he could see for himself that new supplies of powder and provisions were being brought in daily, and that, what was almost equally important for the garrison, the sick and wounded were being got rid of across the Koisou. On the other hand,

in spite of recent losses, the Russian army, thanks to reinforcements, was considerably more numerous than at the commencement of the siege, the works stronger and more advanced, and Sourkhai's castle no longer existed. He decided to recross the river and complete the investment; but to do so was no easy matter, for the bridge at Tchinkat was destroyed, that at Sagritl in the hands of the enemy, even if near enough to be of use.

Some days were spent in reconnoitring, a pretence was made of building a new bridge just above Old Akhoulgó, and the enemy's attention having thus been drawn away from the real objective, three companies were thrown across at Tchinkat on the evening of the 3rd August. The piers of the old bridge remained, and the river was soon spanned by a rough-and-ready structure strong enough for the immediate purpose. On the 4th, two battalions, together with the Avar and Mekhtoulee militia, crossed to the left bank, drove off the Murids, and took up a position opposite Akhoulgó, which was now for the first time completely surrounded. At dark a few shells were fired from a couple of mountain guns at Shamil's stronghold by way of announcing to friend and foe that the feat had been successfully accomplished.

The end was now in sight, though still a long way off. On the lower ridge in front of New Akhoulgó (No. 11) two mountain guns, hitherto in a position where from their great elevation they could do little damage, were added to four mortars already there; a new battery was constructed a little to the left (No. 12), armed with four field guns brought from the promontory between the Betl and the Ashiltá; No. 13, also with four field guns, was so placed as to rake the advanced works of the enemy on New Akhoulgó, and also throw shells into the chasm between the two halves

of the promontory. But the most important work, and one that cost infinite trouble, was the construction of a covered gallery from the lower ridge to the counterscarp of New Akhoulgó, with the double object of diminishing the loss in passing that exposed position and allowing the stormers at the next assault to concentrate secretly under the counterscarp and carry that work by surprise. This gallery, devised and executed in circumstances of extraordinary difficulty by the two young engineer officers attached to the besieging forces, Count Neerod and another, was a new departure in the art of war, and has perhaps remained unique. It was composed of a series of wooden shields made of planks and tightly fastened together, and was hung by ropes over the edge of an almost perpendicular cliff. A ledge here and there helped to support it, and afforded space sufficient for sentinels to guard the work while in progress. On the night of the 20th July it was partly destroyed by the mountaineers in a daring sortie, after which the ropes were replaced by chains.

A whole month passed in this way—from the 16th July to the 16th August—during which not more than 100 men were killed or wounded; but the sanitary conditions were bad, and by the middle of August the army had dwindled again to little more than 6000 men, the battalions averaging no more than 450 bayonets. Meantime, however, Shamil's position was growing desperate. There was now no safety for any one on any part of the promontory unless in the caves, where some of the women and children took refuge. Water could only be brought from the rivers far below under fire of the Russian sharpshooters; provisions were bad and scarce; there was little or no fuel; and the air was contaminated by the bodies of those who were killed or died of disease. The August sun beat down

fiercely on the barren rock, and day and night the Russian batteries from all sides poured in their iron hail, nor was there now any hope of relief.

No wonder then that even Shamil lost heart. Djamala, Starshiná[1] of Tchirkéi, had long before proffered himself as intermediary, but had been informed by Grabbé that he would listen to nothing unless Shamil offered his submission to the Russian Government, and in proof of his sincerity gave up his son, Jamalu'd-din, as a hostage. On the 27th July negotiations were opened, and for a few hours the batteries ceased firing. But the Imám's haughty spirit was not yet tamed, and his tone was such as "it ill-befitted a Russian general to listen to." In the beginning of August Keebeet Mahomá, the well-known Kadi of Tilitl, made offers of mediation, which were disdainfully rejected by Grabbé. On the 12th August Shamil himself sent an envoy to the Russian headquarters, and firing was more than once stopped for a few hours; but it became evident that all the Imám wanted was to gain time to repair his fortifications, and on the 16th an ultimatum was sent him, to the effect that if his son were not surrendered by nightfall Akhoulgó would be stormed the next morning. The storming columns were got ready, and Jamalu'd-din not having appeared, on the morning of the 17th, for the second time during the siege, Grabbé gave the signal for a general assault.[2] As before there were three columns, directed, one against each half of the promontory, the third against the chasm bisecting it, and the result was only less disastrous; for though by means of the hanging gallery the troops on the right reached the first outwork and there effected a lodgment, they were met, when they attempted to reach the second work, by the same obstinacy and the same deadly fire as

[1] Headman, or elder.

[2] See his report to Golóvine, 24th August: Akti, ix. p. 331.

before, and only suffered less terribly because the gallery enabled them to bring up fascines and build some sort of protection. The Russian loss was already 102 killed (including 2 officers), 162 wounded (6 officers), and 293 contused, the remaining troops worn out with their exertions, and the whole of the enemy's position was practically intact. Failure once more stared them in the face, but fortune smiled at last. The Murids, exposed this time to an all-round fire, had suffered far more heavily than at the former assault; Shamil had again lost some of his bravest and most devoted adherents, and amongst them Sourkhai, the fierce Murid who had figured so ominously at the interview with Klugenau at the spring of Ghimree, and who in all military matters had since been the Imám's right-hand man. The sun-scorched rock was covered with dead and dying and wounded; the survivors were cumbered with the care of a miserable crowd of half-starved women and children. Further resistance seemed hopeless even to the heroic mountaineers. Shamil gave way at last, and raising a white flag sent his son, Jamalu'd-din, a boy of twelve years, as a hostage to the hated foe. What it cost him to do so may best be gauged by the persistence with which, long years after, he negotiated the return of one who had then become a stranger to him and his country, a uniformed servant of the Russian Tsar. Whatever Shamil's faults, none can deny that he was a most devoted husband and father.

Grabbé now consented to negotiate for the surrender of Akhoulgó, and on the 18th General Pullo, with a small suite, was admitted to the rock, and had an interview with Shamil, whose conditions, however—that he should continue to dwell in his native mountains, and that Jamalu'd-din should remain at Tchirkéi in charge of the starshiná, Djamala—were unacceptable. Pullo returned, but negotia-

tions continued for three days, during which it gradually became evident that Shamil had changed his mind as to surrender, and on the 21st the assault was renewed. For the third time the Russians endeavoured to make good their entry into New Akhoulgó, and for the third time they failed. The Murids held out as obstinately as ever, and when night fell their position was still intact. Next morning (22nd August), however, at dawn, when the attack was renewed, the soldiers to their astonishment met no resistance, the outwork so long and gallantly defended was empty, and swarming into and beyond it they were soon in possession of the greater portion of New Akhoulgó. At the village they found a few of the inhabitants who had remained behind while the rest tried to make their escape across the chasm. "A desperate fight ensued; even the women defended themselves with fury, and hurled themselves unarmed against whole rows of bayonets."[1] Meantime two mountain guns were brought up and trained on Old Akhoulgó, which large numbers of the fugitives had not yet reached. Crowds of them were seen climbing the opposite cliff, or still descending the narrow and dangerous paths to the bridge of planks which, deep down as it was, spanned the chasm seventy feet above the channel of the stream. The Russians on the plateau above dashed on in pursuit, and, at the same time, Tarasévitch's column advancing through the defile, scaled the rocks, got possession of the bridge, and reached the surface of Old Akhoulgó before the garrison was aware of its presence. Waking to the fact that the enemy was upon them they fired a volley, but it was too late; the victorious Russians came pouring up, and the western half of the promontory which, had the bridge been destroyed in time, might yet have held out,

[1] Milioutine, p. 117.

though not for long, was won. In the two days' fighting the Russians had lost 150 killed (6 officers), and 494 wounded and contused (15 officers). Akhoulgó was taken at last, but the fighting continued for a whole week, accompanied by the usual horrors of Caucasian warfare. "Every stone hut, every cave, had to be taken by force of arms. The mountaineers, though irretrievably lost, refused all surrender, and defended themselves fiercely—women and children, with stones or *kindjals* in their hands, threw themselves on the bayonets, or in despair flung themselves over the cliffs to certain death.[1] It is difficult to imagine all the scenes of this terrible, fanatical struggle; mothers killed their children with their own hands, so only that they should not fall into the hands of the Russians; whole families perished under the ruins of their *saklias*. Some of the Murids, exhausted by wounds, sought none the less to sell their lives dearly; pretending to give up their weapons, they treacherously killed those about to take them. It was thus that Tarasévitch died. Enormous difficulty was experienced in driving the enemy out of the caverns in the cliffs overhanging the Koisou. It became necessary to lower the soldiers there with ropes. Not less trying was it for our troops to bear the stench with which the numberless corpses filled the air. In the chasm between the two Akhoulgós, the men had to be changed every few hours. More than a thousand bodies were counted; large numbers were carried down the river. Nine hundred prisoners were taken, mostly women, children, and old men, and notwithstanding their wounds and exhaustion, even these did not refrain from the most desperate deeds. Some gathering up

[1] The exact scene described by Xenophon in the *Anabasis* over 2000 years ago: "A terrible sight was now opened to their eyes, for the women flung their children over the cliffs and then leapt after them, and the men followed their example." Book iv. chap. 7.

their last strength, snatched the bayonets from their guards and attacked them, preferring death to a degrading captivity. These outbursts of fury were in strong contrast to the stoical heroism of other of the Murids. The weeping and wailing of the children, the physical sufferings of the sick and wounded, completed the sorrowful scene."[1] By the 29th August there remained not a single mountaineer on Akhoulgó.

The siege had lasted eighty days, and had cost the Russians in killed, 25 officers and 487 men; in wounded, 91 officers and 1631 men; and contused, 33 officers and 601 men: a total of nearly 3000, besides heavy losses from disease. The siege was over, the drama played out, the curtain rung down, but what had become of the chief actor, who to the infinite surprise of the spectators had taken no visible part in the closing scene? It may be imagined with what ardour the Russians searched high and low for their arch-foe, Shamil. Every hole and cavern and corner was ransacked again and again, and every body examined, but living or dead he was nowhere to be found, nor could any information be obtained from the survivors that threw light on his disappearance. Had he flung himself over the cliffs like his sister Fatima and many another? Or, incredible as it seemed, had he effected an escape more miraculous even than that at Ghimree seven years before? It was not for some days that the truth became known, and even then for a time it was hardly believed.

It appeared that on the night of the 21st, seeing that all was lost, Shamil, with one wife and child—another wife had perished in the siege—accompanied by a few faithful followers, took refuge in one of the caverns in the cliff above the Koisou. The following night the little party

[1] Milioutine, pp. 118–19. Grabbé's official reports are to be found in Akti, ix. pp. 331–38.

descended to the river bank, and constructing a raft out of a few logs, sent it floating down the river loaded with dummies to distract the attention of the Russian pickets. The ruse succeeded; the freightless raft was quickly seen and made the target for many a bullet. Meantime the fugitives crept cautiously along the bank downstream until they came to a ravine. Here they turned inland, but stumbled across a picket, and a fight took place, in the course of which Shamil himself and his little son, slung across his mother's back, were wounded, and the Russian lieutenant in command killed. But the line was broken, and hurrying on as best they could, the forlorn little band gained the upper valley, and, in what desperate plight may well be imagined, climbed the pass, and scrambling down the mountain side, reached the river bank once more at a spot a little above the junction of the Andee with the Avar Koisou—close, that is, to the bridge of Ashiltá, already mentioned. The bare sandstone here projects in huge slabs from either side so as to all but meet over the foaming waters, and the fugitives hastily bridging the intervening space with a plank, crossed to the left bank and proceeded to scale the mountain side. They had not gone far when they were observed by a party from Ghimree who, under Oullou Bek, had been set to watch the bridge. Several shots were fired at them but without effect, and Shamil, seeing who they were, turned in bitterness and anger to his faithless fellow-villagers, and shaking his fist at them, cried out, "We shall meet again, men of Ghimree!" then followed his companions up the rocks and disappeared from view.

Once more the Russians triumphed; once more the Government in St. Petersburg congratulated itself on the destruction of Shamil's influence and the extinction of Muridism; and once more they were fooled. Vanquished,

wounded, a homeless fugitive, without any means, with hardly a follower, it may well have seemed that nothing was left the indomitable chieftain but the life of a hunted outlaw until death should put an end to his sufferings, or betrayal crown them. Yet within a year he was again the leader of a people in arms; within three he had inflicted a bloody defeat on his present victor; yet another, and all northern Daghestan was reconquered, every Russian garrison there beleaguered or destroyed, and Muridism triumphant in the forest and on the mountain from the Samour to the Térek, from Vládikavkáz to the Caspian. Truly the end was not yet!

In strong contrast to the northern campaign, the Samour expedition, led by Golóvine in person, achieved valuable and permanent results with very little fighting and quite insignificant loss. The whole valley of the Samour was occupied; a chain of forts built, including strong defensive works at the important aoul of Akhtee; and from the upper waters of the river a road was commenced over the main chain, past Sheen, by which communications between Daghestan and Georgia would be shortened some 300 versts (200 miles). The many free communities of Samour were brought together administratively by the establishment of a native divan at Akhtee presided over by the Russian commandant, care being taken to maintain and safeguard the local laws and customs. Thanks to these wise measures, political and military, the inhabitants of the populous valley grew prosperous and peaceful, and though trouble arose more than once, notably in 1848, when Shamil made a great effort to capture Akhtee, southern Daghestan henceforth not only caused little anxiety to Russia on the whole, but served more than once as a useful base for military operations against the enemy.

CHAPTER XXII

1840–1842

Apparent pacification of Tchetchnia—Pullo's administration—Shamil again—England and Egypt—Shamil's rapid recovery of power—His cruelty—Akhverdi Mahomá—Shamil in Daghestan—Hadji Mourád—Russian plan of campaign for 1841—Bakounin's death—Dissensions between Grabbé and Golóvine—Fésé takes Klugenau's command and is again replaced by him—Grabbé's Dargo expedition—Disastrous results of his operations—Grabbé recalled—Golóvine succeeded by Neidhardt

COUNT GRABBÉ was so satisfied with the immediate result of his efforts that he thought little of Shamil's escape. Indeed, the price he set upon the fugitive's head was no more than Rs. 300 (£30).[1] But the Emperor Nicholas, who followed closely the affairs of the Caucasus and sometimes saw farther than either his Ministers or his generals, was not without misgivings. On the margin of Grabbé's report on the taking of Akhoulgó he wrote with his own hand: "Very good, but it's a pity that Shamil escaped, and I confess to fearing fresh intrigues on his part, notwithstanding that, without a doubt, he has lost the greater part of his means and of his influence. We must see what happens next."[2]

[1] By November Shamil had risen tenfold in Russian estimation: "The harm caused by this troublesome man (Shamil) justifies any means that can be used to destroy him. Without doubt brave men are to be found amongst the mountaineers devoted to us, who for a solid money recompense will undertake to deliver us the head of this disturber of the peace. I hereby instruct you to try this means, secretly proposing to those of the mountaineers you know, and whose valour, loyalty, and enterprise you are assured of, to kill Shamil, offering them a reward of not more than 1000 tchervontsi (c. £300), which, in case of success, will be sent you." General Golóvine, Russian commander-in-chief, to Colonel Pullo, 17th November 1838 (secret): Akti, ix. p. 321.

[2] *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, vol. ix. p. 91.

The state of things in Tchetchnia, however, during the winter months of 1839–40 seemed amply to justify even Grabbé's optimism. By his orders General Pullo in December and again in January marched through the greater part of Lower Tchetchnia, meeting no resistance. On the contrary the Tchetchens for once seemed thoroughly cowed; they accepted without a murmur the conditions imposed by the Russian commander, gave up outlaws, surrendered a few Russian deserters and prisoners, handed over a considerable number of muskets, and even received with honour the preestaffs now appointed to govern them. Grabbé complacently attributed this marvellous change to his success at Akhoulgó, and reported both to Golóvine and to the War Minister in St. Petersburg the re-establishment of absolute peace in the whole country. "Although we have not succeeded in taking Shamil, yet the death or capture of all his adherents, his own shameful flight, and the terrible lesson read to those tribes which supported him, have deprived him of all influence and reduced him to such a condition that, wandering alone in the mountains, he must think only of the means of subsistence and his own personal safety. The Murid sect has fallen, with all its adherents and followers." Dealing, moreover, with the plan of operations for 1840, he wrote: "Considering the present position of affairs in Daghestan and Tchetchnia it is highly probable that the expeditionary forces will meet no resistance, and that the building of the fort at Tchirkéi will be accomplished without the necessity of fighting. In Tchetchnia no serious unrest, no general rising, need be anticipated."[1] The intention had been to build two forts only, at Tchirkéi and Gherzel aoul. Grabbé proposed now to add a third

[1] *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, vol. x. p. 270; and see *ibid.*, ix. p. 25 of Appendix.

at Datcha-Barzoi, at the entrance to the lowest defile of the river Argoun, thus initiating the construction of the so-called Tchetchen advanced line, Veliameenoff's third parallel. But as it turned out, only one of the forts was built—at Gherzel aoul—and the spring had not set in when all Tchetchnia was once more up in arms. The Russians indeed played into Shamil's hands in a way that even he could hardly have anticipated. Pullo was a brave and skilful officer, but, as characterised by General Galaféyeff and by Grabbé himself, he was a man of most cruel nature,[1] and what that must have meant in the Caucasus we can well imagine. He was, moreover, quite unscrupulous. The Tchetchens feared and hated him, and when, failing to find Russians sufficiently acquainted with the native language to fill the office of preestaff, he proceeded to appoint renegade natives, who treated those subordinated to them with shameful cruelty and injustice, the measure of their patience was soon filled. Discontent grew rife, and when the rumour spread—whether set about by the disaffected natives themselves or invented by the preestaffs for their own ends—that the Tchetchens were to be disarmed, converted into peasants on the Russian pattern and subjected to conscription, it only wanted a spark to set the whole country once more in a blaze; the people were ripe for action; there lacked but a leader —and Shamil was at hand.[2]

Six months had passed since the flight from Akhoulgó, and already a great change had come over the fortunes of the fugitive Imám. Received with open arms by the faithful Shouaïb Moullá and Djevat Khan, Avars like him-

[1] *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, vol. x. p. 272.

[2] With the mountaineers to be disarmed was to be dishonoured, and the attempt, often made, seldom succeeded even on a small scale—hardly ever without bloodshed.

self—as indeed were all the great Murid leaders—Shamil had settled quietly in one of the smaller Tchetchen communities, where his influence soon became paramount. The fame of his wisdom and holiness spread rapidly far and wide; deputations arrived from various quarters to ask his guidance or offer him rule; and, sending to Daghestan for Akhverdi Mahomá, he accepted the lordship over Little Tchetchnia on condition of absolute obedience to his commands, and rode from village to village preaching the Shariat.[1] By the middle of March (1840) the inhabitants were up in arms, General Pullo had taken the alarm, and a collision had occurred on the Soundja, not far from Grozny, between his troops and the growing horde of Shamil. The Tchetchens were defeated, but the die was cast. A month or two of Russian rule had sufficed to exasperate them beyond endurance; and encouraged by news of the disasters that had befallen their enemies on the Black Sea coast,[2] and wild rumours of foreign intervention, they drew the sword once more. Until the end of 1840 the war thus renewed raged with even more than its former violence, and before long embraced not only the whole of Tchetchnia, but a large part of Daghestan as well.

At this time, thanks to the machinations of the noto-

[1] Grabbé's report to Tchernisheff, 31st March: Akti, ix. p. 248.

[2] Where more than one fort had been stormed by the local tribesmen and their garrisons put to the sword: *ibid.*, p. 249. Fort Lázareff was taken, February 7; Fort Veliameenoff, February 29; Fort Mikhail, March 23; and Fort Nicholas, April 2; but Fort Abeen (May 26) repulsed the enemy, who thereupon dispersed: Golóvine's Memoir, Akti, ix. p. 289. The garrison of Fort Mikhail (Mikhailovskoë) agreed to blow up the powder magazine and perish rather than surrender. This heroic determination was actually carried through, and to this day the name of Arkheep Ósipoff, the private who fired the train, comes first on the roll of the Tengheen regiment, to which he belonged. Whenever it is called the answer comes, "He died for the glory of Russian arms at Mikhailovskoë."

rious David Urquhart and his emissaries, Bell and Longworth, the English were a thorn in the side of the Russians, stirring up the Tcherkess and kindred tribes of the Black Sea coast; encouraging them with false hopes of British intervention; furnishing them with arms and munitions of war. The native successes were undoubtedly largely due to these efforts, but the unhappy mountaineers had no reason in the long run to thank their would-be benefactors. Meantime, strangely enough, the overt actions of Great Britain had, quite unintentionally, the opposite effect, and saved Russia very probably from disasters in comparison with which the loss of a few small forts would have been as nothing.

In 1839, to quote M. Bergé, "Transcaucasia was threatened by a special danger on the side of Asiatic Turkey, which was ready to rise *en masse* in favour of the Pasha of Egypt at the first movement of his son Ibrahim, who had crossed the Taurus and occupied with his advanced guard Orfa and Diarbekir. In our Mussulman provinces were distributed Mehemet Pasha's proclamations addressed to all the influential persons in Daghestan, as follows:—

"'May God send down His blessing on you!

"'I have waged war with seven sovereigns—English, German, Greek, French, the Sultan, and others, who, by the grace of God, have submitted completely to me. Now I turn my arms against Russia, wherefore, appointing Shamil-Efendi your Shah, and sending him two seals, I command you to yield him full obedience, and to help me in my undertaking. At the same time I promise to send you speedily a part of my forces. Those who fail to carry out my commands will have their heads cut off, like the infidels.'"

Affixed are the seals of Mehemet and Ibrahim.

"Luckily," adds M. Bergé, "the rapid successes of the English on the coast of Syria, and the deposition of Mehemet, averted the danger from us."[1]

Shamil, who had won his early fame on the barren mountains, now proved his mastery in that forest fighting of which the Russians had already had such bitter experience. Avoiding whenever possible the danger of pitched battles with the disciplined troops of the Tsar, he moved hither and thither with marvellous celerity, raiding the settlements of Cossack and "peaceable" Tchetchen alike; punishing with ruthless severity those of the natives who hesitated to join his standard; threatening, himself, within twenty-four hours, points 70 or 80 miles apart, while his lieutenants carried out the same tactics to the borders of Daghestan on the east, to the neighbourhood of Vládikavkáz on the west, thus keeping the enemy on the alert, and wearing them out by the most harassing of all warfare. Grabbé at first refused to believe that his predictions could be so utterly falsified. He remained, far away, at Stávropol, leaving Pullo to cope with a state of things brought about mainly by that officer's own cruelty and folly; and, later on, transferred himself to Piátigorsk, sending General Galaféyeff to supersede Pullo. But soon all the forces of the eastern flank were engaged, and its chief was constrained to take the command in the field himself.[2]

It was now that Akhverdi Mahomá acquired fame as a partisan leader, raiding the western portion of the Left Flank far and wide. He ventured even to attack Mozdók, but

[1] Akti, ix., Introduction, vi. See also for the effect on the western Caucasus, Grabbé's report to Tchernisheff, *ibid.*, p. 252.

[2] Grabbé to Tchernisheff, 19th April 1840: Akti, ix. p. 258.

was beaten off somewhat ignominiously, and to appease Shamil presented him with one of his captives, the beautiful Armenian Shouanet. When it came to actual fighting the Russians seem generally to have had the best of it, notably in the affair on the river Valerik (11th July 1840), immortalised by Lérmontoff, who was present, in his poem of that name.[1]

But the net result of the year's campaigning was much in Shamil's favour, and prepared the way for his marvellous successes in the near future. In the month of June, however, he came near to losing his life as a result of his own merciless severity. In an outlying aoul of the Ingoushee, not far from Nazrán, whose inhabitants hesitated to accept the Shariat, he demanded the surrender of two Tchetchen prisoners held by one of the villagers, Goubeesh. When the latter refused, Shamil had him seized by his Murids and his right eye gouged out. The same night the victim of this savagery, who had been bound and imprisoned, managed to escape, and snatching a *kindjal* from the belt of a sleeping sentinel, entered Shamil's room and dealt him three severe wounds before being cut down by the Murids. Goubeesh's two brothers, who had attempted to defend him, were also killed, and the rest of his family, to the number of eight, shut up in their dwelling and burnt alive.

Early in 1840, not content with his successes in Tchetchnia, Shamil extended his operations to Daghestan, where thousands flocked to his standard; but for the present the Russians, though greatly outnumbered, held their own, thanks mainly to Klugenau and his gallant subordinates,

[1] Valerik in Tchetchen means "the river of death." The hero of this fight was Colonel, afterwards General, Freitag, whose brilliant services render him one of the most conspicuous figures in the Murid war. Lérmontoff was mentioned in despatches for his conduct on this occasion: *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, x. p. 305.

Passek, Yevdokeemoff, and Belgard. On the 10th July Shamil and his old antagonist once more measured strength at Ishkartee, where Klugenau, reinforced just in time from Shourá, cut his way through greatly superior numbers.[1] Shamil, for some unknown reason, now retired across the Soulák, just when Shourá and all northern Daghestan lay apparently at his mercy.[2] On the 14th September Klugenau led his men down the 5000 feet of precipitous road, past the well-known spring, to Ghimree, and took by storm that birthplace of the first and third Imáms. The blow was a severe one to Shamil; his prestige suffered greatly, and for a time the Murid cause in Daghestan made little progress. But in November an event occurred in Avaria, the results of which in the long run far more than compensated Shamil for the defeats he had suffered.

Hadji Mourád, who in 1834 killed Hamzad in revenge for the murder of the Avar princes, had ever since kept faith with the Russians, and had even donned their uniform. Thanks mainly to his influence, Shamil's advances had been coldly received at Khounzakh, and Klugenau was fully alive to the value of such a service. But a deadly feud reigned between Hadji Mourád and Akhmet, Khan of Mekhtoulee, who had been entrusted with the government of Avaria, and the latter now saw his opportunity to deal his enemy a mortal blow. On the pretence that Hadji Mourád was secretly in communication with Shamil, he denounced him to the Russian commander

[1] He was for a time in an almost desperate position; his note to Colonel Simborsky, who had been left in command at Shourá, ran as follows: "*Very urgent.* Having lost a large number of officers and men, I ask you to send off instantly Major Voleensky with three companies and one gun, telling him to join me without fail on the road to Ishkartee; do not forget to send officers. 7 P.M., 10th July." (Akti, ix. p. 338.) This reinforcement left Shourá bare, save for invalids and a few recruits.

[2] Golóvine to Tchernisheff, 6th August 1840: Akti, ix. p. 340.

and had him arrested. Klugenau, who had at the same time received similar information—inspired apparently by Akhmet—from Major Lázareff, commanding the Russian detachment at Khounzakh, was greatly disturbed; and, not knowing what to believe, ordered Hadji Mourád to be sent to Shourá under escort, and put to death immediately if any rescue were attempted on the way. Accordingly, on the 10th November the prisoner, who had been kept chained to a gun for ten days, was sent off from Khounzakh in charge of an officer and forty-five men of the Ápsheron regiment. The snow lay deep on the mountains, and as the main road was reported impassable, a roundabout way was taken, and near the aoul Boutsro the path alongside a precipice was so narrow that Hadji Mourád and his escort could only pass in single file. His position, with two score armed men in front and behind, seemed to preclude the possibility of escape, but for greater safety a rope was tied round his middle, the ends being held by the two men nearest him. At the narrowest place he suddenly seized the rope in both hands, wrenched it away from the soldiers, and threw himself over the precipice. At any other season he must have been killed outright; as it was, none thought it possible that he could have survived the fall. Hadji Mourád, however, had counted on the snow, and not in vain. One leg was broken and he was otherwise hurt, but managed nevertheless to crawl to a neighbouring sheep farm, and lived to become the scourge of the eastern Caucasus—Shamil's most daring and successful follower.

Meantime, however, after nine months of uninterrupted warfare, during which the unhappy lowlands of Tchetchnia had been devastated as never before, both sides were at the point of exhaustion. Shamil dispersed his mobile

hordes; the Russian troops went into winter quarters; and, though fighting still continued sporadically, the year closed quietly enough. But there could be no question as to the results of the campaign. Russia on the whole had been successful in the field, but had nevertheless lost ground; while Shamil, who had entered Tchetchnia twelve months earlier with only seven followers, was now at the head of a people in arms, his iron rule firmly established from the borders of Daghestan almost to within sight of Vládikavkáz.

Golóvine's plan of campaign for 1841, approved by the Emperor, included the building of a fortress on the Soulák, opposite the important aoul Tchirkéi, the inhabitants of which were to be severely "punished" for treachery.[1] The defences of Shourá were to be strengthened, a new citadel built at Neezovóe, and the old one at Khounzakh reconstructed. All this in Daghestan, where an army numbering some 12,000 men was to take the field. In Tchetchnia a slightly less numerous force was to march to and fro, "devastating the land with fire and sword," and having brought the inhabitants to their knees, the long-talked-of fortress at Datcha-Barzoi at the entrance of the Argoun defile was to be built. The troops in the northern Caucasus were reinforced by the 14th Infantry Division, comprising sixteen battalions,[2] and the Emperor, whose misgivings after Akhoulgó had proved only too well founded, made known his expectation that the means thus put at the disposal of General Golóvine "would produce corresponding results." But Nicholas,

[1] These unhappy people, like other borderers, turned now to Shamil, now to the Russians, as the chances of the war seemed to favour one or the other, and in the sequel were cruelly maltreated by both.

[2] Golóvine's Memoir: Akti, ix. p. 293. The field army, in four separate columns, comprised this year 37 battalions and 77 guns, besides Cossack and native cavalry.

whose military pride had been flattered to the height by Paskiévitch's victories during the first years of his reign, was destined for the remainder of his life to little else than disappointment. Tchirkéi, indeed, was taken,[1] and the projected fortress (Evghénievskoe) built;[2] Tchetchnia ravaged. But when, after eight months' desultory fighting, the troops went once more into winter quarters, Shamil's position was stronger than before, the danger to Russia increasingly grave. Especially was this the case in Daghestan, where the evil consequences of Hadji Mourád's defection were not long in showing themselves.

That daring leader had no sooner recovered from the effects of his fall than he established himself at Tselméss, not far from Khounzakh, and, being appointed naïb by Shamil, devoted all his energies and influence to furthering the cause of Muridism amongst his countrymen, the Avars.

Already in January (1841), after repeated attempts to win back Hadji Mourád to his allegiance, Klugenau found it necessary to take serious steps against him. A force numbering nearly 2000 men, of whom half were native militia (irregular cavalry), left Khounzakh for Tselméss under the leadership of no less a personage than General Bakounin, commandant of the Imperial Russian artillery, who happened to be in the Caucasus on a tour of inspection, and thinking that his experience would be not without benefit to the expeditionary corps,[3] took over the command. Passek led the attack on the aoul (February 6th); all but one tower was taken, but that held out stoutly, and in the fighting that ensued Bakounin was mortally wounded. The native militia held aloof, the

[1] Grabbé's report: Akti, ix. p. 272.
[2] It was finished and dedicated 25th September 1841: *ibid.*, p. 346.
[3] His own words.

Russians lost nearly a third of their number; and, the enemy being heavily reinforced, Passek, on whom the command devolved, effected a brilliant retreat to Khounzakh. Hadji Mourád's father and two brothers were killed, himself wounded.[1]

By 2nd July 1841 Golóvine had come to the conclusion that "we have never had in the Caucasus an enemy so savage and dangerous as Shamil. Owing to a combination of circumstances his power has acquired a religious-military character, the same by which, at the beginning of Islam, Muhammad shook three-quarters of the globe. Shamil has surrounded himself with blind executants of his will, and inevitable death awaits all who draw down on themselves the slightest suspicion of a desire to overturn his rule. Hostages are killed without mercy in the event of the families they are taken from proving false; and the rulers he has put over the various communities are his slaves, blindly loyal, and endued with power of life and death. The suppression of this terrible despotism must be our first care."[2] But by the end of October the state of things in Daghestan was such that a large part of those forces with which Grabbé was about to make a final effort in Tchetchnia had to be detached to strengthen Klugenau, and the projected campaign was abandoned.[3]

Count Grabbé paid a visit to St. Petersburg at the close of 1841 and succeeded in persuading the Emperor, with whom he was in high favour, to place at his disposal, independently of Golóvine, the whole of the forces in northern Daghestan in addition to those of his own Left

[1] Akti, ix. p. 344: Golóvine to Tchernisheff.
[2] Golóvine to Tchernisheff: Akti, ix. p. 346.
[3] Grabbé's report on the year 1841: *ibid.*, p. 277.

Flank. As a natural consequence the tension already existing between the two commanders soon eventuated in a bitter and lasting quarrel. At the beginning of 1842 General Fésé was sent by Golóvine to Daghestan, where he captured the important aoul, Gherghébil (20th February), and recovered for Russia the greater part of Avaria and Koisoubou.[1] But when Grabbé returned he replaced Fésé by Klugenau, his old enemy, who in Golóvine's eyes could do nothing right.[2] Meantime on 21st March Shamil raided Kazi-Koumoukh in force and carried off the ruling family, together with the Russian resident and his small escort of Cossacks.[3] He was well beaten here, however, by Argouteensky-Dolgoroukoff in June.[4] The operations in Tchetchnia were resumed on the 30th May, when Grabbé set out from Gherzel aoul with an army of over 10,000 men and twenty-four guns. General Golóvine, then still commander-in-chief in the Caucasus, shall tell us what follows in his own words:—

"Grabbé's intention was to reach Dargo[5] quickly, destroy that aoul, then cross the range dividing Tchetchnia from northern Daghestan and subdue Goumbet and Andee. It must be noted that he undertook this movement at a time when he knew already that all Shamil's forces had been directed against Kazi-Koumoukh, and when he might clearly see that by leaving Daghestan unprotected

[1] Ountsoukoul was occupied by a detachment commanded by Yevdokeemoff. The villagers took the Russian side, and when a fanatical Murid stabbed Yevdokeemoff, they killed him, his wife and sister, and destroyed his dwelling. They arrested, moreover, seventy-eight Murids, and delivered them as prisoners to the Russians: Golóvine's official report, Akti, ix. p. 355; and Fésé's report, *ibid.*, pp. 363–72.

[2] Okólnitchi has nothing but praise for Fésé, and tells us that when Shamil heard of his recall he made several extra prayer-bows, so rejoiced was he at the news.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 300, 362.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 386–90.

[5] Shamil's residence.

and abandoning Prince Argouteensky's small division to its own resources, he exposed the whole of that country to the greatest danger.

"At the same time the very magnitude of the force he collected for this movement served to impair its efficiency. He had with him, to carry his military stores and provisions, a large number of carts and some 3000 horses. On the march this baggage train, owing to the difficult nature of the roads, covered a distance of several versts, and to protect it even by a thin line of soldiers took nearly half the column. With a couple of battalions told off for the advance guard and as many for the rear, and the rest broken up to form the protecting lines on each side or help the train along, the whole force became extremely weak, having no men free to support the various units; besides which it had to overcome very great difficulties, presented not only by Nature but by the efforts of the mountaineers, who quite understood that the march through the deep forests of Itchkeria gave them their one chance of success, and that once the column emerged from the difficult defile they would be unable to work it any harm.

"The 30th May the column made only 7 versts, though no enemy was met. All that night rain fell heavily, making the roads still worse, and delaying progress to such an extent that up to the evening of the 31st, after a fifteen hours' march, fighting all the time, the column had only made 12 versts more, and was forced to bivouac for the night on a waterless plain.

"Next day the number of the enemy had increased, though according to trustworthy accounts it reached less than 2000 owing to their main forces being with Shamil in Kazi-Koumoukh; the road was yet more difficult, bar-

ricades more frequent, and for the second day the troops were without water. There were already several hundred wounded, and the general confusion increased hourly.[1]

"In this way the column made only 25 versts in three days, and General Grabbé saw that it was already impossible to continue the advance. On the night of the 1st June, abandoning his enterprise, he gave orders to retreat by the same road.

"If the advance was unfortunate, the retirement was infinitely more so.

"The troops who had overcome manfully all the difficulties of the advance, seeing that they had failed, and not being accustomed to failure, lost spirit; the confusion and want of control became extreme; no one made the proper dispositions, and no one troubled about keeping the column together. The retreat, which necessitated the abandonment or, when time allowed, the destruction of everything that could impede movement, if only to save the wounded, the guns, and perhaps some portion of the impedimenta, assumed the appearance of a complete rout; there were battalions that took to flight at the mere barking of dogs. In these conditions the losses were bound to be excessive.

"This picture, however sad, presents unfortunately the simple truth, without any exaggeration whatever. But in painting things as they were one must not forget the meritorious deeds that shone out with greater brightness amid the surrounding gloom. Such was the saving of five field-guns already in the hands of the enemy,

[1] In the narrow wooded defiles the naïb of Upper Tchetchnia, Shouaïb Moullá, ordered his men to occupy some of the gigantic beech-trees. Room was found in each for from thirty to forty men, who poured a deadly fire on the approaching Russians. The volleys of whole battalions failed to dislodge the garrisons from these improvised towers of defence.

which cost the life of the gallant commander of the third battalion of the Kabardá regiment, Lieutenant-Colonel Triaskin.

"At last, on the 4th June, the Tchetchen column got back to Gherzel aoul, having lost in killed, wounded, and missing 66 officers and more than 1700 men, besides one field-gun and nearly all the provisions and stores."[1]

Not satisfied with this lesson, General Grabbé undertook a second expedition soon afterwards, this time in Daghestan. Marching by way of Tsataníkh, he took Igalee, not far beyond Ashiltá; but it had been burnt by the Murids. "On the night of the 28th June," says General Golóvine, "General Grabbé set out on his return and reached Tsataníkh with a loss, in this fruitless attempt, that from its inception promised no advantage, of 11 officers and 275 men. The night-retreat from Igalee was accompanied by the same disorders as that through the Itchkerian forest, while the enemy, according to Akhmet, Khan of Mekhtoulee, did not this time exceed 300 men."[2]

In the course of four years, 1839–1842, the Russians lost in expeditions, mostly under the direct command of Grabbé, 64 officers and 1756 men killed, and 372 officers and 6204 men wounded, contused, or missing, or a total of 436 officers and 7960 men, and had accomplished little or nothing.[3]

[1] See map at end of chapter xxiv.

[2] Golóvine's Memoir, Akti, ix. p. 302; and Golóvine to Count Kleinmikhel, *ibid.*, p. 395.

[3] Golóvine's Memoir, *ibid.*, *note*. The depletion was such, that in June 1842 battalions of the Kabardá and Navagheen regiments mustered only 576 and 526 men respectively, of the Ápsheron regiment 556, of Paskiévitch's, 4 battalions in all, 1450. Eleven battalions totalled 5555, *i.e.* not half their full strength. Four regiments of the 19th and 21st Divisions had not one commanding officer between them: *ibid.*, 394, Colonel Wolff's secret report.

It is not too much to say that the disasters that overtook Russia in the Caucasus at this time were largely due to the rivalry and bickerings between Grabbé and Golóvine; and that such a state of things was allowed to exist must be laid to the sole charge of the Emperor Nicholas.

Grabbé was now, at last, recalled at his own request, and on the 21st December Golóvine was replaced by General Neidhardt.

CHAPTER XXIII

1843–1844

Shamil's military organisation—His 1843 campaign—Loss of the Russian forts in Avaria—Passek at Ziriáni—Siege of Neezovóe—Of Shourá—Freitag to the rescue—Death of Akhverdi Mahomá—Shamil and his mother—Nicholas I.'s demands—Large reinforcements—Russian success in Kazi-Koumoukh—And at Ghillee—Death of Shouaïb Moullá—Shamil's cruelty—Defection of Daniel Sultan—Fort Vozdveezhenskoe built

By the autumn of 1843 Shamil had completed his preparations for a decisive campaign. In order to obtain the nucleus of a standing army, and at the same time keep control over the rest of the inhabitants, he had raised a body of armed horsemen, called mourtazeks, chosen one from every ten households, whose duty it was to be ready at any moment to obey his slightest command, in return for which they were quartered on the villagers, who besides had to feed their horses, cultivate their land, and reap their crops. Nothing more admirably adapted to the end in view could possibly have been devised. Shamil had henceforth in every aoul a select band of devoted followers, whose duties and privileges were equally to their taste. The mourtazeks were divided into tens, hundreds, and five hundreds, under leaders of corresponding rank and importance. They were dressed, the men in yellow, the officers in black, *tcherkesses*,[1] and both wore green turbans.[2] Leaders

[1] The *tcherkess* is the long robe, the distinguishing dress of the peoples of the Caucasus, with cartridge cases, generally of silver, sewn across both breasts. It takes its name from the patronymic of a small tribe which has likewise through the Italian supplied the much-abused word "Circassian."

[2] *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, vi. p. 43. Another account says the moullás wore green turbans, the naïbs yellow, the centurions variegated, the criers red, hadjis brown, executioners black, and all others white: Tchitchagova, p. 48, "Shamil."

of hundreds and five hundreds, the latter generally naïbs, wore medals on their breasts[1] with the inscription, "There is no stronger help than that of God." Other marks of distinction were devised for those who were especially conspicuous for courage or good conduct; thus the famous Akhverdi Mahomá, first of the naïbs, wore a sword inscribed, "No braver man, no sharper blade." The mourtazeks were supplemented in time of need by a levy of one man from each household, who were placed under temporary leaders, and divided in the same way; while in great emergencies the call was made on every man in the aoul, or the district, capable of bearing arms.[2] Those who swore to die for Shamil if need be received from him two bags of flour a month, and bore on the front of their sheepskin hats a square piece of green cloth; those who showed cowardice in fight were distinguished by a metal ticket on their backs, if, indeed, they escaped mutilation or death. For Shamil knew no pity where his principles or authority were at stake, and accompanied, after the fashion of Oriental despots, by his executioner, bearing aloft a huge long-handled axe, lopped off hands and heads, not only whenever prescribed by the Shariat, but at the slightest suspicion of disloyalty to himself. It follows that his rule was now far from popular, especially in Avaria, which had been divided as to the acceptance of Muridism from the beginning—where Kazi Moullá had been defeated, Hamzad

[1] Shamil professed that the patterns for these medals had been sent him by the Sultan of Turkey. Written patents were given for them, but for want of means each recipient had to procure the medal itself at his own expense.

[2] This account of Shamil's military organisation differs very considerably from that given by Rounovsky, as he declares, on Shamil's authority; see "Shamil's Code" in *Voyenny Sbornik*, 1862; but as the above was published twenty years later in the *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, it may stand. Similar contradictions meet us at every step, and it says little for Russian historians of the war that they are allowed to remain unsolved.

killed, and where Shamil's share in the slaughter of the royal family was neither forgotten nor forgiven. But these unfortunate people were "between the devil and the deep sea," for if Shamil's severity made them go in terror of their lives, Russian exactions rendered those lives hardly worth having. "One cannot help noticing that the position of the natives in those parts of Daghestan which had submitted to us was extremely burdensome; weighted with our demands, they murmured against us, and went over to the enemy at the first opportunity. For instance, the supply of fuel to our forts in Avaria was for the most part imposed on the people of that khanate and of the Koisoubou community, and they were paid only twenty kopecks per donkey-load of brushwood gathered with the greatest difficulty in forests 30 and 40 versts off. When donkeys failed, it frequently happened that women brought in the fuel on their backs, and received the same payment."[1] It was some consolation, no doubt, to the natives that "when nearly all Koisoubou and Avaria rebelled, our forts suffered from a terrible dearth of firewood, and consequently of warm food. . . . The transport of provisions was no less burdensome for the natives, the payment being only one and a quarter kopeck per verst at first, afterwards two kopecks. . . . All this enforced labour bore heavily on the native population, exciting strong discontent. . . ." On the other hand, "the position of our own troops was no better, and such as only Russian soldiers would submit to with such truly heroic abnegation."[2] They had, in fact, to build forts and barracks, cut and carry forage and firewood and timber, convoy transports, and mend roads, in addition to their field and garrison service, and this in a bad climate and on

[1] Okólnitchi, *Voyenny Sbornik* for 1859, p. 169.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 171.

inferior food, the latter owing to the deep-seated petty peculation of those days. This, perhaps, accounts for the frequent mention throughout the war of Russian deserters, who, according to Bodenstedt's solemn affirmation, formed Hamzad Bek, the second Imám's, entire bodyguard, as they certainly did Abbas Mirza's in Tabriz.

One great advantage of Shamil's military system was that it enabled him to gather or disperse his forces at will, and in an incredibly short space of time; it allowed him also to dispense with any elaborate commissariat. His strategy at the time we are speaking of may be called masterly. From his central position at Dileem he threatened the enemy north, east, and south, kept them continually on the move, dispersed his commandos to their homes, gathered them again as if by magic, and, aided by the extraordinary mobility of mounted troops, who required no baggage, nor any equipment or supplies but what each individual carried with him, swooped down on the Russians continually where least expected. The word commando is used purposely, for not only does it apply accurately to the forces led by his naïbs, but Shamil's whole system of warfare recalls in many respects that of the Boers; nor is this surprising, for the circumstances in both cases were often similar, and not unnaturally produced like effects.

In the present instance he had fully grasped the weakness of the enemy's position in Daghestan, where the Russian forces were broken up into small bodies, holding numerous poorly-fortified places, scattered over a vast extent of extremely difficult country seething with discontent; and it is admitted that he turned it to the fullest advantage. Ably conceived and brilliantly executed, his plans were crowned with a success even he could hardly

have dared to anticipate. His old antagonist, Klugenau, failed completely to fathom them.[1] On the 16th August he reported that the Murid gathering had dispersed, and that all was quiet; yet on the 27th Shamil set out from Dileem at the head of an army, and in less than twenty-four hours appeared before Ountsoukoul, 50 miles away, where he was joined the same day by Keebeet Mahomá from Tilitl, and Hadji Mourád from Avaria, each with a large party, the united forces amounting to 10,000 men. The rapidity of this long march over a mountainous country, the precision of the combined movement, and above all, the fact that it was prepared and carried out under Klugenau's very eyes, without his even suspecting it, place Shamil's military abilities before us in a more favourable light than anything in his previous career, and entitle him to rank as something more than a guerilla leader, even of the highest class.

Ountsoukoul had openly declared against him, had surrendered seventy-eight of his Murids to Yevdokeemoff the previous year, and had admitted a Russian garrison. It was of vital importance to show that such things could not be done with impunity, and for this reason his first object was to punish the inhabitants and enforce their submission, his next to destroy the garrison. Thanks to his opponents' blunders, he effected both, and more.

[1] General Okólnitchi gives a table showing all these forces and their dislocation at the moment when Shamil commenced his operations. He says of Klugenau: "He understood very well how to carry on the war, and was successful in command of expeditions; but he was quite incapable of directing affairs in such a crisis as that of 1843."—*Voyenny Sbornik*, 1859, "Review of Recent Military Events in Daghestan," third article. And Golóvine, after saying that the unfortunate state of things in Daghestan in 1842 was due mainly to Klugenau's mistakes, writes: "Without denying the military qualities of Klugenau on the field of battle, I have acquired the conviction by long experience that he is not sufficiently to be trusted as administrator of the country confided to his care."—Golóvine to Tchernisheff, 15th February: Akti, ix. p. 348.

When Colonel Vesselitsky, at Ghimree, heard of the enemy's approach, he hurried out without waiting for instructions, with the laudable object of saving Ountsoukoul. He was joined on the way by Major Grabóvsky, who, equally without authority, had brought with him part of the garrison of Tsataníkh on the same errand. Two more companies were picked up at Kharatchee, and with this combined force of rather more than 500 men with two guns, Vesselitsky marched on Ountsoukoul. On the morning of the 29th, leaving his guns on the height above the aoul, he descended into the gardens, and tried to gain possession of them, but was driven back with heavy loss. Meantime the enemy had outflanked him, stormed the height, and taken possession of the guns. The unhappy remnant of the Russians was immediately surrounded, and in spite of an heroic attempt by Captain Schultz at the head of the grenadier company of the Ápsheron regiment to carve a way out, they were driven in disorder to the river bank. Vesselitsky was taken prisoner, Grabóvsky, Schultz, 9 other officers and 477 men were killed; of the entire force a few men only escaped by swimming across the Koisou. Yevdokeemoff, who had been sent off in hot haste by Klugenau to effect a concentration at Tsataníkh, was prevented in this object by the rash movements of the above-mentioned officers, and witnessed their destruction from afar without being able to help them. Two days later the garrison of the Russian fort surrendered, after a very gallant defence, to Shamil, who had already stormed and captured the aoul from the natives.[1]

Klugenau, meantime, had reached Tsataníkh, and had gathered there a force of 1100 men, but misfortune pursued him. The important position of Kharatchee had been entrusted to Major Kossóvitch with 210 regulars and some native militia, with instructions not to leave it on any consideration. Nevertheless, on the approach of Shamil he abandoned his post without waiting to be attacked, and retired to Balakháni. The first result was a gallant but unsuccessful attempt to retake Kharatchee, wherein the leader, Major Zaitseff, 8 other officers, and 110 men were killed, 3 officers and 68 men wounded. Klugenau's communications with Shourá were now endangered, and, having to choose between retiring to Balakháni to guard them and attempting to save the garrisons in Avaria, he decided in favour of the latter course, and, abandoning his base, made his way to Khounzakh. There he was surrounded and besieged by Shamil until relieved on the 14th September by Major-General Prince Argouteensky-Dolgoroukoff, who fought his way up most gallantly from southern Daghestan on hearing what desperate straits his superior officer was in.[1] The combined forces at Khounzakh now amounted to over 6000; but owing, apparently, to Klugenau's indecision, nothing of importance was attempted; and meantime, within twenty-five days from his sudden appearance before Ountsoukoul (27th August to 21st September), Shamil had taken all the Russian fortified places in Avaria except the capital,[2] together with 14 guns; and the Russians had lost in the same short space of time in killed, wounded, and prisoners 65 officers and 1999 men. Akhaltchee had

[1] Shamil allowed Lieutenant Anósoff, the commander, to retain his sword as a mark of respect for his valiant conduct: Akti, ix. p. 769, *note*.

[1] Klugenau's letters to Neidhart tell of his determination to die fighting, but show no hope of salvation: Akti, ix. p. 760. Neither he nor Rennenkampf, in command at Shourá, believed it possible for Argouteensky to make his way to Khounzakh.

[2] Ountsoukoul, Kharatchee, Tsataníkh, Moksokh, Balakháni, Akhaltchee, and Gotsatl.

been surrendered in cowardly fashion by the officer in command without firing a shot; Kharatchee shamefully abandoned, as we have seen; at all the other places the honour of the Russian army was gallantly maintained against overwhelming odds—at Tsataníkh and Gotsatl heroically.[1]

Shamil did not venture to attack the Russians at Khounzakh, though Hadji Mourád urged it; and in this he was right, for defeat with heavy loss was all but certain, and the prestige won by his phenomenal successes would be gone. The withdrawal of the Russians from Avaria could be achieved in another way with no such risk, and Shamil was too good a general not to know it.

He retired to Tchinkat, and thence to Dileem, and on the 30th September made an attack on Andreyevo and the adjoining fort, Vnezápnaya. The attempt failed owing to the courage and resourcefulness of the Russian commander, Colonel Kozlóvsky, and Shamil then dismissed his men to their homes; but his reappearance at Dileem had made it impossible for the Russians to keep the bulk of their forces shut up in Avaria, and Klugenau, therefore, returned to Shourá on the 28th September, leaving Passek in garrison at Khounzakh with 4 battalions, and Argouteensky at Balakháni with as many more and his Koubá native militia, to guard the defile. Two weeks later the last-named general retired to southern Daghestan, leaving, apparently, only 1½ battalions distributed between Balakháni and Ziriáni, but the accounts are contradictory. All told, there were now in northern Daghestan at the disposal of Lieutenant-General Gourko, who had taken over the supreme command, 17 battalions counting 9000 bayonets,[2]

[1] Klugenau's report of 29th September to Gourko gives a full account of all the above events: Akti, ix. pp. 767–74.

[2] This again shows how the Russian forces had dwindled.

and 8 sotnias of cavalry (*c.* 800); the main body of the enemy had dispersed, and the period of disaster, if not of danger, was thought to be at an end. But two fatal mistakes had been made, and Shamil's eagle eye failed not to note them. The important post of Gherghébil, at the junction of the Avar and Kazi-Koumoukh Koisous, was garrisoned by only 306 men of the Tiflis regiment, with a few artillerymen; Bouroundouk Kalé, the watch-tower on the height between the Irganai defile and Shourá, with its handful of men, was by some strange oversight completely forgotten! Yet these two points commanded the only available routes between Shourá and Avaria, and, once occupied, Passek's force and the garrisons at Balakháni and Ziriáni would be completely isolated.

In the middle of October Shamil at Dileem gave orders that every man who possessed a cow and pair of bullocks—that is, all but the very poor—should also provide himself with a horse. This seemed to point to an invasion of the Koumuik plain and valley of the Térek, but at the same time Keebeet Mahomá and Hadji Mourád were ordered to assemble their commandoes at Tilitl and Karáta respectively. Thus all points were threatened, and Gourko was nonplussed. Finally, he came to the conclusion that the danger was greatest in the north, and on the 22nd October left Shourá, and by well-concerted movements with Freitag, commanding the Left Flank, rendered the invasion on that side, if really contemplated, abortive. Probably Shamil meant to carry it out, provided that it could be done without too great a risk, but was quite satisfied with his success in drawing Gourko away from Shourá, and thereby ensuring the capture of Gherghébil, and eventually of Khounzakh. Acting on interior lines against an enemy not strong enough to guard himself at all points, he was

sure of being able to strike with success somewhere; and, once more, his strategy was fully justified by the event. On the 30th October Gourko, satisfied that the danger to the north was averted, returned to Shourá, but on the way learnt that Gherghébil had been invested by Keebeet Mahomá two days previously. He gathered his immediately available forces—some 1600 bayonets—and marched to the rescue; but on the 6th November, when in sight of the beleaguered fort, which lay below him at the bottom of a vast mountain, after reconnoitring the position and holding a council of war, he decided that the task was impossible, and with a heavy heart retired to Shourá, abandoning the garrison to the fate which overtook it on the 8th, after a most heroic resistance. Many were killed, the rest taken prisoners—often a worse fate still; but the bitterest moment was when, after seeing the flash of their comrades' bayonets on the mountain top above them, and nursing for one short hour the hope of safety, no help came, and the exulting shouts of their savage foes told them that they were abandoned. Yet they fought on to the end with the courage of despair.[1]

The day that Gherghébil fell, Gourko sent orders to Passek to evacuate Khounzakh, but the message only reached him on the 11th, and compliance was for the time impossible, Tanous and Irganai being occupied in force by the enemy. On the 16th, however, finding that Hadji Mourád had gone to join Shamil, he hastily made his preparations in the greatest secrecy, executed a brilliant retreat through the dangerous Balakháni defile, with all his many sick and wounded, and, picking up the garrison,

[1] "Of the brave garrison only two officers and a few soldiers remained alive." Gourko to Neidhart, 12th November 1843: Akti, ix. p. 784; and see narrative of the defence, p. 786.

reached Ziriáni—not the aoul, but the Russian fort on the opposite or right bank of the river—on the 17th, almost unmolested. He was immediately surrounded, however; Bouroundouk Kalé was occupied the same day, and for a whole month Passek stood a siege which became legendary in the army of the Caucasus, for the privations endured.[1]

Meantime, on the 9th November, the enemy had crossed the Soulák and invaded the Shamkhal's territories, destroying a guard of fifteen men on the seashore near Tarkou, simultaneously making an appearance in the neighbourhood of Shourá itself. Next day the small garrison at Ghimree retired to the capital, without orders—an act of prudence which saved it from certain destruction; but was imputed unjustly to lack of courage in the commanding officer. On the 11th Shamil in person appeared at Kazaneeshtchi, sixteen versts from Shourá, and, taking possession of the villages on all sides, blockaded Gourko in his capital. The eight days' siege of Neezovóe had then already begun, and Fort Evghénievskóe was surrounded by the enemy; so that on the 17th, when the Khounzakh force was

[1] The siege still lives in a soldiers' song, said to have been composed by Passek himself, of which the following is an extract:—

"When the cattle, eaten,
Left us not a steak,
Straight we took to horseflesh—
Boil, roast, or bake;
Served for salt gunpowder—
Not a grain was left;
Stuffed with hay for baccy
Pipes with fingers deft.
When from off our shoulders
Fell our coats in rags,
Prompt, we requisitioned
Commissariat bags;
Basten mats for blankets,
Sleeping gear supplied;
And for shoes the horses
Gave us up their hide."

hemmed in at Ziriáni, every Russian in arms in northern Daghestan was shut up within the entrenchments at one or other of these four places.

The position was indeed serious. At Neezovóe 346 men were manfully holding out against 6000; at Ziriáni Passek's larger force was hampered by many sick and wounded, who would have to be abandoned to a merciless enemy if he attempted the desperate feat of cutting his way out and forcing the Irganai defile; Shourá could defy assaults for some time to come, but could not hope to hold out indefinitely. In a word, without outside help further disasters were inevitable, involving the loss of all northern Daghestan; yet outside help could only be looked for from two quarters, and doubtfully from them—from the Left Flank, where, fortunately, Freitag was in command; or from Argouteensky-Dolgoroukoff in southern Daghestan. Urgent messages were sent to both; but the latter had dismissed his troops to their winter quarters on the Samour to recruit after their arduous campaign for the relief of Klugenau at Khounzakh, and by the time that he had collected them again and received necessary reinforcements[1] deep snow had fallen on the intervening mountains, so that to reach Shourá he would be constrained to go round by Derbend.

The only hope was in Freitag, whose forces were barely adequate to contain the Tchetchens; but the year's recruits were due, and some reinforcements were on the way from Kabardá. Pending their arrival he made a dash for the relief of Neezovóe, a feat brilliantly accomplished on the 19th November after a cavalry fight in which the enemy were completely routed.[2] The Koumuik

[1] Neidhardt to Tchernisheff: Akti, ix. p. 792.

[2] See Freitag's report, dated 23rd November 1843, in *Rousskaya Stariná*, vii., June 1873.

plain meantime was left exposed; but before the enemy had realised their opportunity, Freitag was back at Kazi-Yourt with the rescued garrison and such stores as he could carry, the rest, with the half-ruined fort, being destroyed.[1]

Freitag now set to work to organise a force sufficiently strong for the relief of Gourko at Shourá, and on December 14th entered that place at the head of six and a half battalions, besides 1350 recruits and 1400 Cossacks, with eighteen guns, and next day marched out to Kazaneeshtchi, where he gave Shamil a sound drubbing.[2] This enabled Gourko to set out at last on the 16th to the relief of Ziriáni, and on the following day he met Passek's van in the middle of the Irganai defile, that officer with his usual promptitude having prepared to start the moment he heard of Freitag's arrival. Ziriáni was safely evacuated; and the starving garrison reached Shourá on the 19th, fighting a rearguard action at Bouroundouk Kalé with the enemy, who had pursued them in hot haste up the defile on finding that Passek had after all given them the slip.[3] Shamil now retired to Avaria, the local gatherings dispersed, and Gourko and Freitag left Shourá on the 22nd for their respective headquarters. Christmas Day, 1843, saw not "peace on earth" but a cessation of hostilities, though little indeed in northern Daghestan of "goodwill amongst men." The Russian losses since the 27th August had swollen to 92 officers and 2528 men, besides 12 fortified places and 27 guns.

[1] To replace Neezovóe the fort, now the town, of Petrovsk was built the following year on the seashore, three versts away. The natives christened it Andji Kalá, "Flour Fort," as the flour for the use of the Russian army was mostly landed there.

[2] "An eye-witness's story," in the number already cited of *Rousskaya Stariná*, that valuable storehouse of historical information.

[3] Passek's relation: Akti, ix. pp. 798–805.

It was indeed a year of disaster to Russia, of unexampled success for Shamil, clouded only by the threatened defection of the lowland Tchetchens and the death of his favourite lieutenant, Akhverdi Mahomá, naïb of Little Tchetchnia, a leader only less famous than Hadji Mourád, and unlike him ever loyal. At the head of a force numbering some thousands Akhverdi had marched against Shatil, the Khevsour stronghold on the upper waters of the Tchanti Argoun. The place was valiantly defended, and on the third day of the siege the Avar leader fell mortally wounded. The Murids retired, taking with them two prisoners, one of whom escaped. The other was sacrificed on Akhverdi Mahomá's grave.[1]

As to the Tchetchens, Shamil's attention being almost entirely absorbed by his victorious campaign in Daghestan, those of the foot-hills and plains were left to protect themselves as best they could, with the result that they suffered more than usual from the devastating effects of partisan warfare. Reduced to despair, they determined to ask from Shamil either adequate protection or permission to make their peace with the Russian Government. But the difficulty was to find any one daring enough to approach the dreaded Imám with a proposal so likely to involve the death or, at least, mutilation of the bearer. Finally, when no one could be found willing to volunteer for such an errand, it was decided to choose four deputies by lot, and the mission fell to some men of the aoul Gounoi, who, true to the character of their race, accepted the decree of fate without a murmur rather than incur

[1] The Khevsours were rewarded by the Russian Government with several St. George's Crosses and medals, 300 quarters of wheat, five poods of gunpowder, and ten poods of lead. The aoul was ordered to be surrounded by a strong wall, on which was placed a suitable inscription.

the charge of cowardice. But before despatching them on their perilous journey the Tchetchens, knowing the power of gold, supplied them with a considerable sum of money. Shamil, of course, was not to be bought; the mere suggestion of a bribe would be fatal to their hopes. But others in his entourage were known to be less rigid in their ideas of honour, and mediators might be found who for a solid consideration would secure at least a hearing for the petition and for the deputies a safe return. With this line of action in view the latter set out for Dargo, and talking over matters by the way agreed, at the suggestion of their leader Tepi, to put their trust in Shamil's mother, a venerable old woman renowned for her piety and goodness of heart, and known to enjoy the devoted love and respect of her son. Arrived at the Imám's residence, Tepi accordingly addressed himself to one of his friends, Khasim Moullá, who stood high in favour with the khanoum. When, after the first greetings had been exchanged, the Tchetchen deputy cautiously hinted at the object of his visit, he was met with a show of virtuous indignation that would have utterly dismayed him had he not been fortified by the knowledge of a weighty argument in reserve. Giving his friend the moullá time to cool down, he, as if by accident, let fall a bag out of which there rolled a score or so of glittering gold pieces. The effect was magical. The moullá's eyes glistened; he stooped down and picked up a handful of the coins, and with a pleasant smile and altered voice asked his friend how he came to have so much wealth with him. Tepi, encouraged by this change in the moullá's demeanour, told him frankly all his hopes, and, to make a long story short, succeeded in securing his intervention with the khanoum, who in turn

undertook to speak to her son in favour of the Tchetchen petition. The consideration was a present of some two thousand roubles.

That very evening the old lady paid a visit to Shamil, and after a long interview in private came back, her eyes red with weeping. What had passed between mother and son can only be guessed. What Shamil did in the matter is related as follows:—

Knowing well that the death or mutilation of the four deputies, so far from overawing the Tchetchens, would in all probability throw them into the arms of Russia—the consummation of all others most to be dreaded—he made public the desire of the Tchetchens, and announced his intention of retiring to fast and pray until such time as the Prophet himself should condescend to make known his will in the matter. Accordingly he shut himself up in the mosque, round which, at his command, the Murids and inhabitants of Dargo collected that they might join their prayers to his. Three days and nights the door remained closed, and the crowd outside, worn out by prayer and fasting, and worked to the highest pitch of religious fervour, in vain awaited the reappearance of their Imám. At last a movement was heard inside the building: a quiver of expectation ran through the people; the door slowly opened, and Shamil appeared on the threshold, pale, exhausted, with bloodshot eyes, as from much weeping. Accompanied by two of his Murids he silently ascended the flat roof of the mosque, and at his command his mother was brought there, wrapped in a white shawl. Led by two moullás, with slow, uncertain steps she approached her son, who for some minutes gazed upon her without speaking. Then, raising his eyes to heaven, he exclaimed:—

"O Great Prophet Muhammad! Sacred and unchangeable are thy commands! Let thy just sentence be fulfilled as an example to all true believers!"

Then, turning to the people, he explained that the Tchetchens, unmindful of their oath, had determined to submit to the Giaour, and had sent deputies who, not daring to come directly to him, had addressed themselves to his mother, hoping to secure her intervention.

"Her insistence and my boundless devotion to her inspired me with boldness to inquire the will of Muhammad, the prophet of God. And lo! here in your presence, aided by your prayers, I have after three days of prayer and fasting obtained the grace of his answer to my presumptuous questioning. But this answer has smitten me as would a thunderbolt. It is the will of Allah that whoever first transmitted to me the shameful intentions of the Tchetchen people should receive one hundred severe blows, and that person is my own mother!"

Then at the Imám's command the Murids tore the white shawl from the miserable old woman, seized her by the hands, and began beating her with a plaited strap, while a shudder of mingled horror and admiration went through the crowd. But at the fifth blow the victim fainted, and Shamil, moved beyond endurance, stayed the hands of the executioners and threw himself at his mother's feet. The scene was dramatic to the highest degree, and its effect on the spectators may be imagined. With tears and groans they implored mercy for their benefactress; and Shamil, rising after a few moments without a trace of his former emotion, once more raised his eyes to heaven, and in a solemn voice exclaimed, "There is no God but the one God, and Muhammad is His Prophet! O, dwellers in Paradise, ye have heard my heartfelt prayer, and have allowed me to take upon myself the remaining strokes that

were allotted to my unhappy mother. These blows I accept with joy as the priceless gift of your loving kindness!" And with a smile on his lips he took off his red robe and beshmet,[1] armed the two Murids with thick nogai whips, and assuring them that he would kill with his own hand him who dared to trifle with the will of the Prophet, silently, and without betraying the least sign of suffering, received the ninety-five remaining blows. Then, resuming his outer garments and coming down from the roof of the mosque, Shamil strode into the midst of the awestruck crowd and asked, "Where are those villains through whom my mother has suffered so shameful a punishment?" The trembling deputies were instantly dragged forth and hurled at his feet, no one doubting their fate. But to their amazement and that of the silent, gaping crowd, instead of the swift and terrible doom all expected, Shamil addressed them in the following words: "Go back to your people, and in reply to their foolish demand tell them all you have seen and heard."

To what extent this was a carefully prepared piece of acting, to what extent Shamil himself believed in his inspiration from above, it is impossible to say.[2] The Russians look upon it as a comedy admirably conceived and no less admirably acted. But though in the way it is told there is evidence of the story having been worked up with a

[1] Under-robe.

[2] "From enthusiasm to imposture the step is perilous and slippery; the demon of Socrates affords a memorable instance how a wise man may deceive himself, how a good man may deceive others, how the conscience may slumber in a mixed state between self-illusion and voluntary fraud." The character of Muhammad serves to illustrate that of Shamil, and any interest inspired by the latter will be enhanced by a re-perusal of Gibbon's famous fiftieth chapter. Even the epileptic fits stigmatised by the historian as "an absurd calumny of the Greeks" were paralleled by a mysterious sickness that overtook Shamil at critical moments of his career.

view to effect, the central incident is so eminently characteristic of the mingled astuteness and fanaticism of Shamil that one may well believe it, and undoubtedly the scene thus described was well calculated to inspire a superstitious people with a belief in the sanctity of their leader's person and the Divine approval of their cause. Nor must we forget that he had already submitted to a public scourging, after inflicting the same punishment on Kazi Moullá, and that Hamzad, his predecessor, had sentenced himself to imprisonment and flogging.

Read by the light of after events, there is a note of pathos in the Emperor Nicholas's orders to his commander-in-chief in the Caucasus, General Neidhardt, at the end of 1843. His proud spirit had been deeply mortified by the events of the preceding months, and in his palace in St. Petersburg he seems to have been quite unable to measure the difficulties with which his generals had to contend. Shamil to him was little more than a brigand on a large scale, and his success the more exasperating. In a rescript to Neidhardt[1] he ordered him to enter the mountains and "defeat and scatter all Shamil's hordes, destroy all his military institutions, take possession of all the most important points in the mountains, and fortify those the retention of which may seem necessary." For this purpose he ordered the army of the Caucasus to be reinforced immediately by 26 battalions, including sappers, 4 regiments of Cossacks, and 40 guns—from Russia—besides filling up the ranks already on the spot by 22,000 time-expired men and properly-drilled recruits. "As to your plan of action, the War Minister will give you full instructions; these, without in any way cramping you, will explain my views of the

[1] Dated 18th December 1843, No. 130: *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, vii. 158.

position and the forces I assign for the attainment of the desired end. It will be for you to accept these views wholly or in part, but remembering always that (1) from such gigantic means I expect corresponding results; (2) the operations must be decisive and straight to the point, with no diversion to any side issues; (3) in no case have I any intention of leaving the reinforcements now entrusted to you in the Caucasus beyond the month of December 1844."

The Emperor had, in 1832, pointed out the advantage of setting the neighbouring tribes on the recalcitrant Tchetchens by promising them all the spoil they might take, for this, he thought, would establish a rooted hatred between them, and prevent a combination against Russia. On the same principle, *divide et impera*,[1] he now called General Neidhardt's attention to political means, "the essence of which lies in attracting to our side, regardless of expense, some of Shamil's supporters, particularly his former teacher (and father-in-law), Jamalu'd-din, the Kadis of Akoushá and Tsoudakhár, and Keebeet Mahomá of Tilitl, and also in sowing dissensions and disagreements amongst the rest of those nearest to the Imám, and, finally, in calming and encouraging the submitted and wavering tribes." The negotiations with the leaders were entrusted to Argouteensky-Dolgoroukoff; the mountaineers in general, his Majesty thought, would be sufficiently impressed by the appearance in Daghestan and Tchetchnia of armies more numerous than they had ever seen before; but to heighten this impression proclamations were to be distributed, to the effect that nothing whatever was intended against the religion, property, or customs of the natives, but only "the punishment of Shamil and of the adherents of that deceiver."

[1] *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, xv. 541.

Shamil's success in 1843 had not been confined to the scene of his military operations. Kaitago and Tabassarán, districts occupying the rugged declivities facing the Caspian, revolted. Southward the anti-Russian movement embraced the Kazi-Koumoukhs, spread across the main chain to the Djaro communities, and disturbed the neighbouring Mussulman provinces. To the north even the loyal and peaceable Koumuiks became restless, and warlike Kabardá, west of Vládikavkáz, showed signs of disaffection.

To cope with this state of affairs, to recover the lost territory, and to restore Russia's prestige and authority throughout the Caucasus, demanded not only all the material forces so freely granted by the Emperor, but action prompt and energetic, a plan of campaign not only capably conceived, but ably conducted. General Neidhardt counted amongst his subordinates many brave and skilful officers—Freitag, Argouteensky-Dolgoroukoff, Klugenau, Passek, Yevdokeemoff, and others—but the commander-in-chief himself was hardly equal to the occasion, and he was hampered as usual by interference from above. Nicholas, truly autocratic, still thought that to command was to be obeyed, nor could his vanity admit any doubt as to his own knowledge and wisdom. He assigned twelve months for a task that was to take more than that number of years, and pressed upon his representative operations impossible at that time to carry out. Thus the valley of the Andee Koisou was to be occupied in the summer of 1844, a feat quite visionary then, and accomplished only fifteen years later when fighting had all but ceased.

The idea of appealing to the natives by proclamation proved equally futile, for Shamil countered it by threatening death to all who took part in meetings of any kind unauthorised by himself or his naïbs, and proclamations none

dared discuss could have no serious effect even if widely distributed, of which there was little chance.

According to the plan of operations finally decided on, the first half of 1844 was to be devoted to offensive movements on a large scale, covering all the theatres of the war, the remaining six months to the construction of forts and fortresses wherever necessary for the safeguarding both of the territories already in Russian possession and of those new acquisitions to which the Emperor so confidently looked forward. To this plan, so peremptory were the instructions from St. Petersburg, General Neidhardt and his subordinates adhered as far as possible, even when a departure from it promised better results; but during the first few months of the year the Russians, perforce, kept the defensive, the fighting being confined to the Caspian littoral. The Murid hordes for a time occupied even the coast-line between Derbend and Tarkou, but eventually were driven back to the mountains by Argouteensky-Dolgoroukoff, who by the 17th April had reached Kazi-Koumoukh, and with 6000 men routed, four days later at Marghee, a hostile force estimated at 20,000. The losses on either side were quite insignificant, but the result was important, for Kazi-Koumoukh quieted down, and the Russians were relieved of anxiety in that quarter. The summer campaign in Daghestan opened on 2nd June, and the following day Passek, with only 1400 men, won a brilliant victory over the enemy, 27,000 strong, at Ghillee, leading a desperate attack in person, and killing with his own hand two of the Murids.[1] The result was to save the Shamkhalate and Mekhtoulee from ruin, restore Russian prestige, and bring

[1] Passek's full report, Akti, ix. p. 834. His losses were 2 officers and 39 men killed, 8 officers and 141 men wounded. The enemy were said to have lost 750.

back the Akoushintsi to their allegiance. On the 9th June Argouteensky-Dolgoroukoff was again victorious in an engagement in the Upper Samour district. A little later (11th June) the Daghestan and Tchetchnia columns co-operated successfully against Tchirkéi, which was destroyed, and in July the Daghestan and Samour columns similarly united to defeat Shamil in Akoushá. But the Karadagh bridge over the Avar Koisou, by which it was intended to invade Avaria, was so strongly defended that General Lüders, who was in command, did not venture to attack, and in September an attempt made by Argouteensky-Dolgoroukoff on Keebeet Mahomá's stronghold, Tilitl, failed. In Tchetchnia, as elsewhere, there was a good deal of desultory warfare, in which the Russians had somewhat the advantage in actual fighting, but there were no encounters of serious importance, and Shamil enhanced his authority for the time being by one of those bloody deeds that eventually contributed to undermine it. His trusty friend Shouaïb was killed at the aoul of Tsonteree as the result of a blood-feud. Shamil sent 200 men of Andee to take prisoners several of the principal inhabitants for not having prevented the murder. This was quite contrary to the Adat (customary law), and the villagers repelled the Murids by force of arms. Shamil then swooped down on the hapless aoul, persuaded the people to surrender, and massacred every living soul from the infant in arms to the oldest inhabitant, one hundred families in all.[1]

But the event of the year was the defection of Daniel, Sultan of Elisou, an influential native ruler, and a major-general in the Russian service, who, though promptly beaten out of his capital, made his escape to the mountains, and

[1] Freitag's report, Akti, ix. p. 881.

secured to Shamil for many years to come the loyalty of whole districts in south Daghestan.[1]

Daniel had for many years been a faithful vassal of Russia, and if he now joined forces with Shamil, it was only that General Neidhardt drove him to it. Not content to let well alone, he began by limiting the sultan's jurisdiction, and then sent an emissary to his capital with a view to finding some pretext for abolishing his authority altogether —a very gross instance of Russian injustice and folly.[2]

Against this the Russians could put only the long delayed building of the fortress on the Argoun, christened, by order of the Emperor, Vozdveezhenskoe,[3] the improvement of communications between Daghestan and Transcaucasia, and the pacification of Akoushá and Kazi-Koumoukh.

Beyond this, at the close of 1844, no permanent results of any importance had been attained in spite of the colossal efforts made, so that the various campaigns undertaken must, in spite of successes in the field, be counted on the whole as failures. The reverses of the previous year had neither been avenged nor made good: Shamil's position and prestige remained unshaken.

[1] Only a few months previously General Golóvine had written to Grabbé, "Daniel Sultan is one of the Russian Government's most devoted adherents": Akti, ix. p. 378.

[2] *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, vii. p. 618.

[3] "Elevation" (of the Cross), from the fact that an ancient cross was found on the site of the fortress, proving that at some long-forgotten epoch Christians had dwelt there. Tchernisheff to Neidhardt, 1st October 1844: Akti, ix. p. 752.

CHAPTER XXIV

1845

Vórontsoff—The Dargo expedition—Disastrous result—Freitag to the rescue once more

THE Emperor Nicholas, though disappointed with the meagre results obtained in 1844, saw no reason to alter his opinion as to what might, and should, be done with the means he had placed at the disposal of his generals in the Caucasus. At the end of that year he called on General Neidhardt to prepare a plan of campaign for 1845, on receipt of which he wrote with his own hand a memorandum approving in general what was proposed, and declaring that (1) Shamil's hordes must be routed if possible; (2) the expedition must penetrate to the centre of his dominions; and (3) establish Russian authority there. Further, he mentioned Andee as the possible objective, and decided that the Samour division, instead of co-operating, as suggested, in the main movement, should confine itself to an attack on one of the hostile communities in southern Daghestan, with the object of being in a position later on to build a fort at Gherghébil. The Emperor repeated emphatically that the 5th Army Corps, which did not belong to the Caucasus, could not be allowed to remain there for more than another twelve months, and declared that only the attainment of the results he had specified could justify its presence in the Caucasus at all. He held that the Daghestan and Tchetchnia columns should move simultaneously on Andee, and that, having taken and destroyed

"that nest," the latter force should be employed in completing the fort at Vozdveezhenskoe and, if time allowed, building a new one at some other point on the same parallel—the former in fortifying Andee, and perhaps a line of posts between that place and the Soulák.[1]

To ensure the success of these plans General Neidhardt was replaced by Count Vórontsoff, a brilliant commander in the Napoleonic war, and an aristocrat in the best sense of the word, who was not only entrusted with the chief command in the field, but appointed Viceroy of the Caucasus.

Vórontsoff on his arrival in that country found that the proposed expedition was looked on with little favour by those most competent to judge. Prince Argouteensky-Dolgoroukoff and General Freitag, in particular, opposed it; and their opinion, as that of experienced and uniformly successful commanders, was entitled to grave consideration; but the new commander-in-chief, fresh from the council chamber in St. Petersburg, and pledged to carry out the Emperor's wishes, overruled their objections, as indeed they had already been overruled by his predecessor. But by the time that the expeditionary forces had been gathered together, it is evident that personal acquaintance with the local military authorities and conditions had instilled some doubt into his mind as to the prospects of success. On the 25th May he wrote to the War Minister: "If, even, the orders I received to take the offensive this year, before resuming the construction of the Tchetchen advanced line, were at variance with my own opinion, as they are with those of all the local generals, I should still carry them out with the same zeal; but I tell every one

[1] *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, vi. pp. 235–39, where the Emperor's memorandum is given word for word as written by his own hand.

here frankly that it is not so, and that it seems to me unwise to avoid meeting Shamil and doing him harm if possible, which would help us more than anything else. If God is not pleased to bless us with success we shall nevertheless have done our duty, we shall not be to blame, and we can then turn, somewhat later, to the methodical system which will bear fruit, though of course not so quickly as a victory over Shamil himself." When the leader of an expedition talks of possible failure, and all his chief subordinates anticipate it, the chances of success are already imperilled; and the reflection is forced upon us, not for the first time, that the subjugation of the Caucasus was more often hindered than helped by the personal interference of the Autocrat in his distant capital. On the 30th May doubt has already deepened into discouragement, and Vórontsoff writes: "I dare not hope much success from our enterprise, but I will do, of course, all I can to carry out the Emperor's desire and justify his confidence." Next day he set out from Vnezápnaya with the Tchetchnia column, consisting of 12 battalions of infantry, 2 companies of sappers, 13 sotnias of Cossacks, over 1000 native militia,[1] and 28 guns; and on the 3rd June was joined at Ghertmé by the Daghestan column, numbering 9 battalions, 2 companies of sappers, 2 of sharpshooters, 3 sotnias of cavalry, and 18 guns. The total force was probably not less than 18,000 strong.[2]

Shamil, as usual, based his strategy on a complete and masterly appreciation of all the conditions affecting either himself or his foe. He knew that, as Argouteensky had pointed out, the Russians, in present circumstances, could

[1] Irregular cavalry.

[2] Vórontsoff's preliminary reports to the War Minister, now Prince Tchernisheff, are to be found in Akti, x. pp. 364–76, 380, 388; his full narrative, *ibid.*, pp. 397–412.

penetrate the mountains but could not maintain themselves there. He knew also that he had no earthly chance of beating such an army as this in the open, nor even of harassing it seriously on the outward march, while men and horses were fresh, munitions plentiful, and supplies adequate. His opportunity would come later on when Nature, his great ally, had done her work, and the invaders, worn with toil, weak from privation, uninspirited by successes in the field, would have to face the homeward march over the barren mountains of Daghestan or through the forests of Itchkéria. Then indeed he would let loose on them his mobile hordes, break down the roads in front of them, seize every opportunity of cutting off front or rear guard, of throwing the centre with its weary baggage train and lengthy line of wounded into confusion, and give the men no rest by day or by night. At best they would succeed in fighting their way back to their base on the Soulák or Soundja, but he would take care that it should be in such plight as would lower them in their own eyes and in the eyes of every native from the Caspian to the Black Sea, from the Térek to the Persian frontier. Meantime he would show just enough force to lure them on, and if, with the help of Allah and His Prophet, he succeeded in enticing them to his forest stronghold, Dargo, there was a chance, at least, of his serving Vórontsoff as Grabbé had been served in 1842.

The Russian columns having united on the 3rd June, resumed their march the same day, and crossing the Terengoul gully, which had defied an expedition sent against it the previous year, took possession of Old Bourtounai, without opposition, to the disappointment of those who had hoped that Shamil would here give them a chance of beginning the campaign with a victory. On the 5th a

reconnaissance in force of the Kirk Pass (8070 feet), between Salatau and Goumbet, developed into a forward movement of the whole army. The pass was undefended, and the Russian advance guard under Passek streamed down the other side to the abandoned fort Oudatchnaya, built by Grabbé on his way to Argouáni and Akhoulgó in 1839, and stormed the opposite height, Antchimeer (7396 feet), in the face of a half-hearted opposition from a force of the enemy estimated at 3000, with 1 gun.[1] Vórontsoff described this affair in his report as one of the most brilliant he had ever witnessed, and it was undoubtedly a daring feat to attack so strong a position in the face of not much inferior numbers (Passek had 6 battalions, besides cavalry and artillery), but as the Russian loss in these circumstances was only 17 wounded, it is evident that the enemy made no strong defence. Now came the first blunder of the campaign, resulting in the first serious loss. On the morning of the 6th Passek, with characteristic impetuosity, continued his forward movement, without waiting for instructions, to the Zounou-Meer,[2] 15 versts (10 miles) farther on. Here he was for some time practically isolated; the weather changed suddenly from summer heat to the severest cold, and for five days the unhappy troops, in wind, frost, and snow, and without provisions, suffered terribly. No less than 450 were frost-bitten, and 500 horses died. Leaving large forces to guard his communications, Vórontsoff joined Passek on the 11th, and on the 12th took up ground near the aoul of Tilitl in sight of the Andee gates or gap, a strong position which, according to spies, Shamil

[1] Prince Levan Melikoff led the attack at the head of his Georgian volunteers. Count Benckendorff also greatly distinguished himself. He was twice wounded during the expedition, of which he has left an account, *Souvenir intime d'une Campagne au Caucase pendant l'été de l'année* 1845, Paris, 1858; a rare work.

[2] Meer in Avar = mountain.

meant to defend to the last. Next day orders were given for the assault, but again the invaders were disappointed. The gates were undefended, though walled up and flanked by breastworks. Shamil had prepared to hold them when still uncertain what force would be brought against him, but seeing how strong the enemy were in artillery, he was much too wise to court certain failure. He retired, set fire to Andee and the surrounding aouls, and forced all the inhabitants to join him. On the 14th the Russians took possession of the ruins of Gagatl and Andee, driving out a small number of mountaineers, probably engaged in attempting to save their own property or loot that of others, as there was no attempt to defend either of these aouls; but beyond Andee, on the terraced slope of the mountain called Aval, Shamil had taken his stand with some 6000 men and 3 guns, hoping to harass the enemy down below, and Bariátinsky, with 2 companies of the Kabardá regiment and the Georgian and other native troops, following up the fugitives from the aouls with too great eagerness, was for a time in a position of some danger. Reinforcements, however, arrived, the mountain was taken, and Shamil retired, saving his guns.[1]

So far the expedition had been successful, though nothing very remarkable had been achieved. It had penetrated the mountains, it had taken Andee, but it had not beaten Shamil, for the good reason that Shamil had given it no opportunity to do so; and it was already

[1] The Emperor, overjoyed at the success so far attained, wrote: "God has crowned you and your heroic troops with deserved success, and shown once more that nothing can stop the Russians—the Orthodox Russians—when with firm reliance on His help they go where the Tsar bids them; . . . what further consequences the present success may bring I cannot foresee, but I doubt not its effect will live long in the mountains, and shake the hitherto invincible belief in Shamil's power."—Nicholas to Vórontsoff, 9th July 1845: Akti, p. 311.

evident to Vórontsoff that there could be no question of establishing Russian authority so far away from his base. On the 17th he wrote: "It is evident that if ever we are to establish ourselves firmly in Andee, it is not from Tchirkéi or Vnezápnaya that we can draw our supplies, a proceeding nearly impossible in summer, and quite out of the question during the rest of the year." Argouteensky and Freitag were right; at best the columns would return without having accomplished any permanent result; it would be well if they returned without serious loss or disaster. Already the difficulty of provisioning the army was making itself felt, and during the first four days at Andee the men were on very short rations, though more than a third of the expeditionary corps had been left behind on the lines of communication, and Prince Béboutoff, commander of the Daghestan column, had been specially detailed to hurry forward the convoys. It would have been better to recognise the force of circumstances and retire before matters grew worse; but with Dargo only 10 miles away, it is not to be wondered at that Vórontsoff, with a brilliant army of 10,000 men still available for the purpose, should have determined to attack Shamil in his stronghold. The word brilliant is used advisedly, for no Russian force that had ever been seen in the Caucasus could compare with this in outward lustre, in all that goes to make up the "pomp and circumstance of glorious war." Count Vórontsoff's name and fame had attracted round him a galaxy of aristocrats from St. Petersburg and Moscow anxious to serve under so renowned a commander, and take part with him in the anticipated defeat of Shamil and final conquest of the Caucasus. His staff and suite included Prince Alexander of Hesse-Darmstadt, Prince Wittgenstein, the Prince of Warsaw, and many a scion

of illustrious Russian houses; his personal convoy, a band of Kurds in picturesque national costume. Then General Lüders, commander of the 5th Army Corps, Klugenau, Passek, and others had each a numerous staff, and to distinguish their positions in the camp or field each general had a pennon fastened to a lance—the commander-in-chief, red and white with a horse-tail tuft; Lüders, red and black, like the ribbon of St. Vladeemir; Gourko, chief of the general staff, red; Passek, white with a silver cross; and so on.[1] The number of non-effectives—body-servants, grooms, cooks, &c.—was naturally large, and the amount of camp furniture, officers' stores, sumpter horses, and tents out of all proportion to the fighting force—at least according to local ideas. The men of the permanent regiments of the Caucasus—though Mouravióff, Vórontsoff's successor, stigmatised them as "luxurious" until they won him victories and fame, because they no longer lived in zemliankas as in Yermóloff's time—looked with good-natured contempt on the battalions from Russia, and with contempt unqualified on the pampered menials of the staff officers. The latter, with their smart uniforms, dandified ways, and complete ignorance of Caucasian or any other warfare, were little to the taste of the local officers, soldiers and nothing more; and, in turn, felt little sympathy, though they could not but feel respect, for men who, though they spoke pure Russian instead of beginning every sentence with "Écoutez, mon cher!" and wore uniforms made by the regimental tailor, had, none the less, fought many a desperate action.

All this added nothing, we may well suppose, to the chances of bringing the expedition to a successful

[1] General Heimann's Recollections: *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, iii. p. 276. Passek's standard was embroidered by fair hands, "an emblem of love and hope": Benckendorff, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

issue. When it came to the pinch it was the local battalions, needless to say, that bore the brunt of the fighting.

The provision trains came in slowly, and brought so little that it was impossible to accumulate more than a few days' rations, though Vórontsoff waited three weeks in Andee for that and nothing else. As to getting local supplies, the army might as well have been in the middle of the Sahara. Shamil knew his business, and had taken or destroyed everything eatable by human beings for miles round.[1] The sun had done the rest, for the grass was burnt up, leaving the horses worse off than the men.

On the 18th a considerable force was sent in the direction of Botlikh, and bivouacked near the lake Ardjiam; but it returned, having accomplished nothing but the destruction of a few dozen trout, and was dubbed in consequence "l'expédition détruite."

On the 4th July, finding that he had but a few days' rations—some say eight, some less—and that the next convoy could not arrive before the 10th, so that he would be no better off in this respect and would have wasted another week, Vórontsoff made arrangements to start for Dargo on the morning of the 6th, with the intention of sending back part of his force to bring on the provisions when they arrived—a fateful decision.

At 3 A.M. on the 6th a native in attendance on Count Vórontsoff stole his favourite charger and galloped off to warn Shamil that the Russians were coming. An hour later the march began, and by nine o'clock the

[1] Baron Delvig, who has left a very interesting account of the whole expedition, mentions an incident illustrating the relations between the Murids and the native "Peace Party." Riding out one morning, he found two shaven heads with a Tartar inscription, "Thus are punished the adherents of the Russian Government": *Voyenny Sbornik*, 1864.

whole of the troops had reached the edge of the forest. Here a few hours' halt was called while the men rested and ate their dinner preparatory to the attack. The view to the north was one of absorbing interest to Russian eyes. Hostile Tchetchnia lay at their feet, stretching in one unbroken mass of undulating hills, covered with dense forests and intersected by deep and gloomy gorges, to the plains beyond, 40 versts away, through which the Térek ran its silver thread. Beyond, in the blue distance, a mere streak beneath the horizon, was Russia, Holy Russia, upon which many gazed for the last time. The road to Dargo, now only 4 or 5 miles distant, lay along the crest of a steep wooded spur of the Retchel ridge, nowhere very broad, and in places narrowed to a few feet, and consisting of a series of long descents with shorter intervening rises. Abattis of giant trunks with branches cunningly interlaced barred the way every 400 or 500 yards, and the densely wooded ravines on either side swarmed with hidden foes.

Towards 1 P.M. General Lüders, who had begged permission for the Litovsky regiment to lead the attack so that they might wipe out a recent stain on their honour,[1] addressed them in a few stirring phrases. The men brandished their muskets above their heads, and vowed they would prove that there were no more cowards amongst them. The moment the advance was sounded, headed by their own officers and many of the staff they rushed forward and surmounted one after the other the first six barriers, meeting with no very strong opposition, and suffering little loss. Behind them came the sappers

[1] A company of this regiment was ambushed by some fifty natives on the 17th June at the Andee gates. The men ran, leaving their captain to be butchered.

to clear the way for the rest of the column. The impetuosity of the advance just suited the tactics of the natives, ever on the look-out to separate the enemy's column and endeavour to destroy it in detail. And thus it happened that when the commander-in-chief, riding quietly along with General Lüders, followed by his staff and Prince Alexander of Hesse, reached the narrow neck between the second and third obstacles, he was met by a heavy fire of musketry, and for a time was in imminent danger. The van by this time was far ahead, and the intervening space reoccupied by the enemy. All stopped; as many as forty officers were crowded together, exposed to a heavy fire. A mountain gun was sent for, and on arrival turned sideways to sweep the wooded ravine on the right flank whence the shots came thickest; but after the second discharge every man serving it was killed or badly wounded; it was manned again, and in a few minutes the result was the same. For a brief space of time the gun was alone but for the dead and dying round it; no one dared to cross the neck. Then an ensign ran forward; an officer followed and came back unharmed; but the piece was not served. At this juncture General Fok made his way to the gun and loaded it himself, but before he could fire it fell mortally wounded. Vórontsoff then sent some Georgian militia and dismounted Cossacks into the wood, and in a few minutes "we were as safe on the road as at home."

Meantime the Kabardá battalion which had followed the Litovsky men came up with them at the sixth obstacle, and the latter then continued their victorious onset till they reached an elevated space of open ground and saw Dargo far below them, about a mile distant. Here they halted until Vórontsoff arrived, late in the

evening, and ordered General Bieliavsky, in command of the advanced guard, to take possession of the aoul, which by that time was in flames, fired by Shamil himself. At 11 P.M. the commander-in-chief reached Dargo and bivouacked for the night; but it was not until the morning of the 7th that the whole of the troops came in. The losses were not great, though greater than need be: 1 general, 3 other officers, and 32 men killed, 9 officers and 160 men wounded.

Shamil's capital was taken; so far, good. But again he had given no opportunity of inflicting any serious loss; it was impossible to remain at Dargo, and the army had before it 41 versts (27½ miles) of forest, every yard of which would be vehemently disputed by a relentless yet almost invisible foe. If Grabbé in 1842 with the same strength had suffered defeat and disaster in retreating about half the distance to Gherzel aoul with only 2000 men against him, what might not happen to Vórontsoff with 41 versts to go, and Shamil with all his hordes at hand, bent on his destruction? The situation, foreseen by the veterans of Caucasian warfare, was in any case one of very great danger; the mistakes that were about to be committed rendered disaster inevitable.

There were still provisions for five days, and undoubtedly it would have been wisest to push on to Gherzel aoul as fast as possible, sending orders to the commanders in Daghestan to retire on the Soulák. But Vórontsoff decided to keep to his plan and wait the arrival of the expected convoy.

Much interest was excited, meantime, by that part of Dargo which had been inhabited by the Russian deserters.[1]

[1] Delvig, *Voyenny Sbornik*, p. 207. A terrible memory connected with Dargo was that of the thirty-three Russian officers and men confined in the neighbourhood in one dark prison pit after the disasters of 1843, nearly naked, in filth and misery, with the barest pittance of food and water. When it became known that the present expedition was preparing, Shamil had them all massacred. Negotiations were in progress for their ransom, but an intercepted letter told them of the coming expedition and bade them be of good cheer. Shamil regarded this as an act of treachery, and in after years said, "It was not I who killed them, but Prince Vórontsoff": Akti, xii. p. 1420 (Rounovsky's Journal).

The walls were covered with idiotic inscriptions, such as "guard-house of the King of Prussia," "tailor to the King of Saxony," &c., and the feelings of the army may be imagined when at sunset these graceless children of the White Tsar, to the number of 600, marched to and fro on the lofty left bank of the Aksai playing the Russian tattoo.[1] On this same height Shamil placed four guns, and, as their fire caused considerable annoyance, an expedition was sent against them on the morning of the 8th under General Labeentseff. The attack was carried out gallantly, and seemingly with complete success. The enemy disappeared, and the Russians, watching from the camp below, applauded their comrades and envied them their luck. But when it came to retiring, their joy was turned to grief. The way lay through fields of maize, where it was difficult to keep order or touch. On either side there was broken, wooded ground, and from behind each tree and stone "sprung up at once the lurking foe." Men dropped on all sides; the column returned to camp with a loss of 187 killed and wounded; the enemy reoccupied their former position, and morning and evening played the Russian tattoo.

"The moment when the column, which had so gallantly driven off the enemy, began to retire was, as it were, the turning-point of the whole campaign. We felt this instinctively, and an inexplicable depression pervaded the army. Faces that a few minutes before had been cheerful became

[1] Heimann's Recollections, *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, iii. p. 317.

serious and sad. It was not the sight of nearly 200 killed and wounded, we were most of us used to that kind of thing, but the conviction that the sacrifice was in vain."[1]

The men of the Lioublin regiment lost their colonel, Korneeloff, cousin of the hero of Sevastópol, but bayoneted those who had killed him and hacked off their heads. The Tousheens, too, the bravest of the many brave races of the Caucasus, who contributed a small body to the native contingent, kept up their time-honoured custom of cutting off the right hand of a slain or wounded enemy,[2] and in condemning the cruelty habitually practised by the semi-savage warriors of Daghestan and Tchetchnia it is only fair to remember that their Christian foemen, who were also the invaders of their country, frequently stooped to similar practices.

The ceaseless chanting of the funeral service by the Orthodox priests, and volley-firing as the bodies were lowered into their graves, deepened the general feeling of depression, and told Shamil the number of the killed; moreover, powder was already none too plentiful. Orders were given to bury the dead in silence.

On the evening of the 9th rockets sent up from the edge of the forest, where the troops had rested on the 6th, told that the convoy had arrived. Obviously it could not reach Dargo unaided, and the unhappy enterprise known ever since as the "Biscuit Expedition" was organised.

Whether Vórontsoff himself or Gourko or who else was responsible for the arrangement is not recorded, though

[1] Heimann's Recollections, *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, iii. p. 209.

[2] Shaté, a celebrated Tousheen warrior, who accompanied Vrevsky's Deedo expedition in 1857, had no less than seventy of these ghastly trophies nailed to his walls, and no Tousheen could obtain a bride who had not at least one severed right hand to show. The Tousheens were Christians, of Georgian extraction.

we know that Klugenau grumbled at it, but the idea struck some one that as the provisions were for all units alike, each should send half its strength to bring in its own share. Thus the column which was entrusted to Klugenau, with Passek in command of the advanced guard, Victoroff of the rear, and amounted probably to some 4000 men, was about as heterogeneous a force as could well be imagined, a fact that in itself augured ill for success if it came to close fighting, of which there could be little doubt. Then Klugenau, who had all his life followed Souvóroff's maxim, that "the head doesn't wait for the tail," was not perhaps the best selection for the business in hand, especially with the fiery Passek in his van. As to Victoroff, he was a veteran of Caucasian warfare, over sixty years old, but enamoured of fighting.

The column started on the morning of the 10th to cover the 4 or 5 miles of pathway already described, along which every barrier, destroyed with so much toil on the 6th, had meanwhile been rebuilt more strongly than before, and others added. Passek with two battalions of the Kabardá regiment, a company each of sappers and sharpshooters, and two mountain guns, dashed on ahead, storming one barrier after another, and Klugenau went with him. The natural result followed. The centre became separated from the van, the rear from the centre, and the enemy swarmed in between, firing from every point of vantage, from behind every tree trunk—even from the branches overhead, for, as in Grabbé's expedition, the giant beech-trees gave shelter to numerous Tchetchen sharpshooters—and, wherever confusion ensued, rushed in to complete it with sword and *kindjal*. The narrow ridge was the scene of confused and desperate fighting all the long summer's day, and only at nightfall, with the help

of part of the vanguard sent back for the purpose, did the remains of the column reach the open. General Victoroff and many officers and men had been killed, large numbers wounded, two guns had been lost, and the body of General Fok, which was being taken for transmission to Shourá, torn from its coffin and thrown down a ravine.

The position was now a deplorable one, but worse was to follow. Klugenau rightly thought that it would be better to retire through Daghestan, leaving Vórontsoff to fight his way with his remaining forces to Gherzel aoul, rather than risk for the third time the passage of that terrible ridge, encumbered as he now was with the supplies and the wounded; faced, too, by a triumphant enemy. He sent word to the chief to this effect, asking his assent; but unfortunately the strain on his moral courage was too great, or perhaps he gave way to the fierce eloquence of Passek. Be this as it may, he changed his mind; an ensign was found daring enough to carry a second missive to Vórontsoff, telling him that the column would start on its return to camp at dawn, and we can judge how falsely the commander-in-chief viewed the situation from the fact that he received the messenger with joy, and promoted him on the spot.

On the morning of the 11th the convoy started. Three cannon shots gave notice to those at Dargo that it was in movement, and soon the line of smoke above the trees showed where it fought its way down the bloodstained ridge. The enemy were in greater numbers than before; the barriers had once more been renewed, and a heavy rainfall had added greatly to the difficulties of the march. Passek again commanded the advance guard, and fought his way to the narrow neck already mentioned. Here he found a breastwork of trees faced with the Russian

dead of the day before, stripped, mutilated, and piled one on top of the other. There were no defenders behind this ghastly obstacle, but it was enfiladed from smaller breastworks on either side, and until these were taken no progress was possible. Men were falling thickly, and already the column was in confusion. Passek sent two companies of the Lioublin regiment against the right-hand breastwork under Valkhovsky, a young guardsman, who led them gallantly, and was the first to surmount the obstacle, but fell dead the moment after. The companies lost many men and fell back in disorder. Meantime Passek himself led the two remaining companies of the same regiment against the left-hand work. What happened is variously related. Certain it is that Passek was killed, and that at the moment no one was near him. Then it became a *sauve qui peut* with the Lioublin men and the militia, though individual officers and men displayed the utmost bravery.[1]

The sappers, meantime, thinking that the position had been won, went to work to clear a way through the main barrier, and were set upon and cut to pieces. They were followed by the straggling line, composed of details of all regiments and of all arms, encumbered with the fatal "Biscuits" and an ever-increasing number of wounded. Somehow or other with Klugenau's help, who led companies to the attack like any captain, they struggled along the ridge step by step, fighting all the way, in groups, in handfuls, by threes, and twos, and ones. The enemy's fire never ceased, and from time to time they dashed right into the Russian line, cutting down wounded and unwounded alike. The gallant Kabardá battalion held together at

[1] Heimann's Recollections, *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, iii. 325. Another account changes "Lioublin" to "Navagheen," *ibid.*, vi. 339.

the extreme rear, and when ammunition gave out formed square, as well as the ground would allow, and stood waiting for the final onslaught. But help was at hand. Vórontsoff had realised, though late, what was happening, and had sent off another battalion of this regiment to the rescue, followed by other detachments. The Kabardá men, learning the plight of their comrades, forced their way through the struggling mass of fugitives and fighters, relieved them, and, keeping the place of honour at the rear, got back to camp late at night with all their wounded, when many had given them up for lost. An officer of the regiment who was badly hurt on the way out has left an interesting account of the whole expedition, and incidentally we get a glimpse of Klugenau, when all his staff had fallen, sitting his charger, pale, stern but calm, and looking in his light grey dress, riddled with bullets, not one of which had touched him, "like the statue of the commander in Don Juan."[1]

Then—alas, for "love and hope"—Passek's body with bloodstained, peaceful face passes by, tied into a hollow sheet of bark, and dragged along sledge-wise through the mud and blood. Later, in one of the numerous panics, it was pushed over the edge of a ravine, and the mortal remains of the bravest of the brave, "whose name was worth battalions," were never seen again. The narrator himself, in a similar contrivance, was likewise hurled down a precipitous bank, but found and brought in to Dargo at night. The local battalions saved their wounded, most of the others were lost.[2]

The losses of the 10th and 11th were 2 generals, 17 officers, and 537 men killed, 32 officers and 738 men

[1] W. A. Heimann's Recollections in *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, vol. iii. p. 322.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 321.

wounded; 3 guns were lost; and of the provisions for which all this sacrifice was made, hardly any reached Dargo. Vórontsoff, with a force reduced to 5000 bayonets, burdened with the care of over 1100 wounded, with little or nothing to eat, and surrounded by a victorious enemy, had still to cut his way through the 41 versts of forest that separated him from Gherzel aoul.

The task was all but a hopeless one, and he knew it. Of itself the column could hardly win through by any possibility. As with Shourá in 1843, there was one chance of salvation, and one only. Freitag was at Grozny, and at a word would fly to the rescue. Five separate messengers were sent speeding through the forest to warn the commander of the Left Flank that his chief, in desperate straits, was marching on Gherzel aoul, and that total disaster could only be averted by his hurrying to that place with all the troops he could gather. If the message got through, there was still hope. Otherwise, not a man of that once gallant array would reach the plain alive.[1]

Vórontsoff had written to Freitag somewhat earlier asking his opinion as to the proposed march on Gherzel aoul, to which the commander of the Left Flank replied on the 5th July:

"Amongst the Tchetchens it is already no secret that your Excellency intends to come down to the plains from Dargo. 'We have not yet begun to fight the Russians,' they say. 'Let them go where they will, we know where to attack them.' And indeed they do know; in the forests all advantages are on their side, and they understand well how to make the most of them.

"Your Excellency has given me permission to express my opinions. I cannot justify such flattering confidence

[1] *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, vi. p. 343.

better than by being absolutely frank. On the downward march you will meet in the forest such difficulties and such opposition as, probably, you do not anticipate. I will not attempt to prove that the operation is well-nigh impossible; on the contrary, I feel sure that your Excellency will win through; but the losses will be enormous. You will find that the Tchetchens know how to fight when necessary."

Freitag goes on to advise that formation on the march called "carrying the column in a box"[1] as the best in forest fighting, and continues:

"I promised to be frank, and frank I must be. Judging from your Excellency's letter, you seem to expect important results from the march through the forest to the plain. Allow me to say, simply, you are being deceived. However successful your movements, they will have no influence on the subjugation of Tchetchnia. . . . From the fears I have expressed you may feel assured that I view your march far too seriously to allow of my remaining quiet, and I will do all I can not to have to blush for the confidence you have shown me. I hope to receive news when you start from my spies, but it is desirable that I should be informed in good time."

We need not follow in detail the miserable story of the next few days. Suffice it to say that the 12th was spent in preparations for the march, including the melancholy business of arranging for the transport of the wounded, and destroying all tents and such stores as were not absolutely wanted. On the 13th a start was made at dawn; there was not much fighting, but progress was terribly slow, and the column bivouacked at Tsonteree for the night, having made only 5 versts. On the 14th the march was continued to Shouáni, where the road or path branched in one direction

[1] See *ante*, chapter xvii.

to Mayortoup, in the other to Gherzel aoul. Here Shamil had determined to make his stand and bring matters to a conclusion if possible, and it is said that his naïbs had sworn not to let the Russians pass this spot. There was much hard fighting, but by evening the column had won a position near Issa Yourt, on the left bank of the Aksai, opposite Sayasáni, 12 versts from Tsonteree, and halted, having lost in the two days 7 officers and 70 men killed, and added 24 officers[1] and 225 men to its already vast train of wounded. The mistake of the 6th instant had once more been repeated; the vanguard had hurried on; the enemy had at once taken advantage of the fact, and rushing on the centre, composed of the less sturdy regiments of the 5th Army Corps with their huge convoy of stores and wounded, had committed much havoc that ought never to have been possible. On the 15th the men, exhausted by the previous day's fighting, were incapable of marching any distance, and though the enemy gave little trouble, Vórontsoff bivouacked at Alleroi, only 4 versts farther on. The loss was 15 men killed, and 3 officers and 63 men wounded. The 16th was a disastrous day; the enemy were very determined, and the Russians played into their hands, repeating, incredible as it may seem, the fault that had already cost so much blood and suffering. The maxim of Souvóroff was adopted apparently throughout the campaign not only by Klugenau, but by any and every commander who happened for the time being to lead; but perhaps to some extent it was inevitable. No sooner had the men surmounted one obstacle than they found another confronting them. The way was along the thickly wooded left bank of the Aksai, up and down hill, and across many

[1] Albrandt amongst them, who, as Heimann tells us, quietly smoked his pipe whilst his arm was being amputated: *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, p. 336.

deep gullies, in addition to which there were the usual barriers of felled or fallen trees at every convenient spot. The fighting was of the closest kind, often hand to hand; each step in advance led naturally to the next, besides which every soldier knew that the only chance of safety lay in reaching Gherzel aoul or its neighbourhood within the next two or three days at most, and pressed on with feverish haste. The usual consequences ensued—the column became broken; and the former scenes were repeated so exactly, that in reading them one is inclined at first to think that by mistake one has turned back to a former page—sappers cut to pieces because the troops, who had taken the barriers they were to clear a road through, had gone on ahead, and the enemy had closed in after them; artillery left uncovered, and every man killed or wounded; then the hideous scenes of slaughter when the savage swordsmen broke in amongst the wounded. By evening the miserable, worn-out column had dragged itself to the aoul of Shaukhal-Berdee, a distance of about 5 versts, and there stopped, like a wounded stag that wolves have hunted down and brought to bay. On this, the fourth day, the losses were 2 officers and 107 men killed, 15 officers and 401 men wounded; the total losses since leaving Dargo were over 1000, and Gherzel aoul was still 15 versts away—that is, the column had covered only 26 versts in four days, or at the rate of a little over 4 miles a day. There were now more than 2000 wounded altogether, and setting off the numerous sick against those whose hurts did not wholly incapacitate them, it is evident that there could not be more than three sound men to lead, carry, or guard each sick or wounded comrade through that terrible forest, and do all the scouting and fighting in the van, the rear, and on either flank. Added to this, the provisions

had come to an end, the men were already suffering from hunger, and were rapidly becoming demoralised—and small blame to them! The best troops in the world, and some of them were there, could hardly be expected to come through such an ordeal with courage unimpaired. Even the Caucasian regiments gave signs of breaking down once and again, but they could never resist an appeal to their honour. At one moment, on the 14th, a mixed rabble of Ápsheron and 5th Army Corps men, to the number of 400, lay down and refused to move. General Lüders turned to them and said, "Boys, what did you sing at Voznesensk?" A grey-haired sergeant stepped out and sang, "We are heroes, sons of glory: children of the great White Tsar." The men leaped to their feet, and, taking up the song in chorus, marched to the attack. But they were met by a deadly fire, and fell back once more. Then General Bieliavsky turned to them, raging, and cried, "Is it possible that there's not one honest man amongst you to die with his general!" At that the handful of Ápsheron men sprang up, the rest followed, and the barrier was taken.[1]

Vórontsoff saw that to march any farther was impossible; he decided to await the arrival of Freitag, not knowing, however, whether his message from Dargo had reached that general or not. The whole of the 17th was spent in this terrible uncertainty; the men had nothing to eat but a small amount of maize found in the fields round the aoul, small-arm ammunition was getting low, and the artillery had hardly a round left to answer the guns from which Shamil bombarded the camp at intervals the livelong day. The 18th came, and no news. The long agony was drawing to a close. The army was now actually starving, and a day or two at

[1] Delvig, *op. cit.*, p. 219.

most must bring the end. One writer who was present declares that Vórontsoff had determined, if no help was forthcoming that day, to abandon the wounded and cut his way through to Gherzel aoul. But he is so hopelessly wrong as to what did take place that his statements as to intentions are not to be credited.[1] Other accounts picture Vórontsoff as behaving heroically throughout this trying episode, and his popularity throughout the Caucasus to the end of his period of office is in flat contradiction to a charge which, according to its author, was current in the camp. The Viceroy was a brave man, a soldier and a gentleman; with him were Klugenau, Bariátinsky, Bieliavsky, Labeentseff, and many more—men of heroic mould; we may be sure that no such deed of shame was contemplated by the chiefs, though wished, perhaps, by many below them.

Moreover, we have Vórontsoff's order of the day addressed to the troops on the 17th, in which he says: "About ourselves we need not trouble our heads; we can always make good our way; our main care must be to get through our sick and wounded; that is our duty as Christians, and God will help us to fulfil it."[2]

The 18th July, the sixth day since the column left Dargo, passed like its predecessor without a sign from Freitag; hunger grew more intense; the guns were without ammunition; the troops had only fifty rounds left; Shamil kept up his bombardment; the Murids and their followers swarmed on every side and sniped the camp from every place of vantage. The actual loss occasioned was not large, but it kept all on the strain and added annoyance to suffering. The sun was already low, and the night that all felt must be the last drew near, when suddenly through

[1] *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, ii. p. 133.
[2] *Ibid.*, vi. p. 356.

the forest to the north came the muffled boom of a cannon shot, then another and another, the most welcome sound, surely, that ever fell on a listening army's ear. Like magic the camp was all astir; hope took the place of despair; the wounded for a moment felt no pain; the sick were well; those who were whole shouted for joy, and "Freitag" was on every tongue. Never was name more fervently blessed, seldom more deservedly.

Five separate messengers, three natives and two Russians, had been sent off from Dargo to summon his aid. Strange to say, all five performed their perilous mission unscathed. But one message was enough. It reached Grozny at midnight between the 15th and 16th. Freitag had foreseen something of the sort, and had already made his arrangements, echeloning his available troops between Grozny and Gherzel aoul. He set out without a moment's delay, rode 160 versts in two days, gathering his forces on the way, and at 9 P.M. on the 18th his advanced guard debouched on a small open space in full view of the beleaguered camp. Next day Vórontsoff moved out to meet him, and on the 20th the remnant of the expeditionary force was safe at Gherzel aoul. Shamil, after measuring strength with Freitag, retired, growling at his naïbs for letting their prey escape them after all.

But the final retreat was not made without loss. The rear was brought up by the gallant men of the Kabardá regiment, and the last opportunity for the display of heroism below and incompetence above was not wasted. One company was left behind, forgotten and destroyed, only three men escaping. The loss to the expeditionary column this day was 3 officers and 2 men killed, 8 officers and 139 men wounded. Freitag lost 2 men killed, 1 officer and 27 men wounded.

Yermóloff in a long and interesting letter to Vórontsoff, dated February 1846,[1] writes: "I do not dispute that if Freitag had not come up with fresh troops you would none the less have fought your way through. But how many of you?" And he rightly corrects Vórontsoff's statement that the Russians had never been at Dargo before, whereas Rosen and Veliameenoff had been there in 1832.

The total losses of Vórontsoff's army were 3 generals, 195 officers, and 3433 men killed and wounded. Three guns were lost.

The local battalions covered themselves with glory, and certainly without them not a man would have escaped. The battalion of the Koureen regiment, which had been used for flanking service, the most dangerous in forest warfare, lost 603 men and 23 officers out of 850, the Kabardá in the same proportion.

So ended the memorable Dargo expedition of 1845.[2]

[1] Akti, x. p. 314.

[2] The *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, vols. vi. and vii., contains a lengthy account of the whole of the operations of this year. It says much for Nicholas's loyalty to his friends and high spirit that he thanked Vórontsoff in warm terms for his efforts and devotion, and even conferred on him the title of Prince: Akti, x. p. 313. On the margin of Vórontsoff's report he wrote, "Read with greatest interest and with respect for the splendid courage of the troops": *ibid.*, x. p. 397.

CHAPTER XXV

1846

Shamil's invasion of Kabardá—Freitag's pursuit—Shamil checkmated—His flight—Hadji Mourád's raid—Shamil enters Akoushá—His defeat at Kouteshee—Russian losses

THE only consolation Vórontsoff could offer the Emperor for the heavy loss sustained was that "the mountaineers have now learnt that we can reach them in places hitherto deemed inaccessible."[1] He determined in future to advance systematically, cautiously, and to seize only what could permanently be held; but he had yet more than one sharp lesson to learn, and it was left to his successor, Prince Bariátinsky, a whole decade later, to carry out at last, in its entirety, Veliameenoff's sage advice. Meantime the year 1846 was to be devoted mainly to constructive work, the strengthening of existing forts and fortresses, the addition of new ones, the improvement of barrack accommodation, the building of a military road from Akhtee into Georgia over the main chain, and the better co-ordination and disposition of the various forces constituting the army of the Caucasus. The 5th Army Corps as such was to return to Russia, leaving its second battalions as the nucleus of a whole new division, to consist of four five-battalion regiments of infantry, with a proportionate increase of artillery and engineers. No offensive operations on a large scale were contemplated, and if any serious fighting took place it could only be as a result of hostile

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movements on Shamil's part. From him, at the beginning of the year, the greatest danger seemed to threaten the valley of the Alazán in Georgia, which lay open to incursion from the north at more points than one. Happily the Lesghian Line, guarding it, was in the strong hands of General Schwartz, with whom, from the Samour district, Argouteensky vigilantly co-operated, so fully occupying the attention of the Murid leaders that their plans were rendered abortive and the peril to Georgia averted.[1] Baffled in this direction, Shamil threatened ostentatiously the territories of the Darghee confederacy while secretly preparing for the invasion of Kabardá, the most audacious and unexpected of all his military enterprises, the one that in case of success promised most profit to himself and his cause, most trouble and danger to Russia.

To understand the full significance of this episode it is necessary to recall the conditions obtaining in the central and western Caucasus north of the mountains, and the connection, or more often want of connection, between the tribes there inhabiting and those dwelling farther east, with whom, of late, the present narrative has almost exclusively dealt. For whereas so long as the Turks had a footing in the Tamán peninsula it was necessary to treat the struggle for the possession of the Caucasus as a whole, from the final capture of Anápa by the Russians (1828) that necessity ceased. But it must ever be borne in mind that the desultory warfare against the western tribes continued, practically without inter-

[1] The Lesghian Line, established to protect the valley of the Alazán (Kahhétia) and ultimately all Georgia, had a length of 200 versts at the foot of the abrupt southern declivities of the main chain from the village of Lialis-Keuri to the town of Noukhá in the khanate of Shekeen. It acquired great importance from the moment of Daniel Sultan's defection; and, strictly speaking, the troops disposed along it date, as a separate corps, from that time (1844).—*Kavkazsky Sbornik*, vii. pp. 614 *et seq.*

mission, until 1864, and that from time to time efforts were made, though with scant success, to co-ordinate the armed resistance to Russia in both spheres of conflict. Emissaries were now and again despatched by the Tcherkess and kindred tribes to seek aid or advice from Shamil, who in turn sent agents amongst them to stir up the embers of resistance when its flames burnt low, or to congratulate them on the success that from time to time crowned their efforts against the common enemy.[1] Information as to what took place at any point, however distant, spread throughout the Caucasus with that celerity which, in the absence of any organised means of communication, has always astonished civilised people in barbarous and semi-barbarous countries; nor could the changing fortunes of the belligerents, whether on the eastern or western flanks, fail of mutual influence, however indirectly exerted. As victory declared alternately for one side or the other the pressure from the north automatically increased or diminished, and this not only at the actual scene of operations, but to the farthest extremities of the Line. Thus the destruction of the Russian fortresses on the Black Sea coast in 1840 was a factor of some importance in Shamil's recovery of power after Akhoulgó; his own similar successes in Daghestan, three years later, were not without effect in the distant west; and so too with reverses. So long, indeed, as both the eastern and western native population continued the struggle, each section benefited or suffered, as the case might be, by the action of the other; but if either were to make peace with Russia, the latter would be able to concentrate in overwhelming force against the remaining foe. It was therefore a matter of vital im-

[1] By far the most prominent leader in the western war was Muhammad Ameen, a Murid sent by Shamil from Daghestan.

portance to Shamil that the western war should continue, of which at this moment there was some doubt; and, cheered by his successes over Grabbé, he decided that the time had come to put in execution a plan long secretly cherished, and extend his influence and authority, if possible, from sea to sea.

In the east, from the neighbourhood of Vládikavkáz and the Georgian road almost to the Caspian, Muridism triumphed. In the west, from the upper waters of the Koubán to the Black Sea coast, where the religious factor was less prominent, the fight for independence continued, though with abated vigour. But in between lay Kabardá, inhabited by a warlike race, related in blood to the Tcherkess, which had accepted Russian rule, and since 1822 had abstained from open revolt, though of late increasingly restless. There was thus a gap in the very centre of the fighting line which, unless bridged over, must ever keep separate the two main areas of conflict. If, however, the Kabardáns could be induced to take up arms, not only would east and west be linked together, but Shamil's fighting strength would be greatly increased, and Russia would find herself face to face, in the northern Caucasus, with a hostile coalition more formidable than any she had yet encountered. The danger would indeed be great, the efforts demanded, the sacrifices entailed, strenuous and costly.[1] And now, early in 1846, dazzled by Shamil's phenomenal successes, some of the leading princes of feudal Kabardá invoked his presence, and he, nothing loth, prepared to enter their country in force.

The gathering of the Murid hordes could not, of course, be kept dark. Owing to local conditions there were

[1] Vórontsoff himself admitted as much in his subsequent report to the War Minister: *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, xvii. p. 178.

always too many spies in either camp to allow of any such secrecy. Every hostile movement was known to the opposing side as soon almost as initiated, its progress watched and reported daily, if not hourly. But it was not always so with intentions, though these, too, in many cases, leaked out with strange celerity. The Russians, indeed, holding exterior lines could seldom hope to conceal their designs. The concentration of their troops at any given point indicated pretty clearly the object in view. But with Shamil it was otherwise. Completely surrounded by hostile territory, and acting from within, he could gather his forces, and threaten the enemy in more directions than one, leaving them in doubt up to the last moment as to where the blow would fall. Nay more, having puzzled his antagonists and completed his own preparations, he could choose where to strike in accordance with the defensive measures they had seen fit to adopt. On the present occasion he succeeded in convincing Argouteensky and Vórontsoff himself that his chief aim was Akoushá in central Daghestan, and so satisfied was the Russian commander-in-chief on this head that, remaining himself at Shemakhá, in the south, he sent orders to Freitag expressly forbidding him to delay the homeward march of the 5th Army Corps battalions.

It was early in April that Freitag, at Grozny, got wind of the Murid gathering in Tchetchnia, where already during the month of March several daring attacks had been made on bodies of Russian troops,[1] and on the 11th of that month, convinced already that the enemy had in view some enterprise of quite unusual scope and importance,

[1] Thus on the 2nd March Colonel Kulmann with four companies and two guns was surprised between Grozny and Vozdveezhenskoe, and lost several men; while on the 17th, near the latter fortress, a column engaged in wood-cutting lost sixty-seven killed and wounded.

he sent a message to General Hasfort at Mozdók requesting him, despite the positive orders received from St. Petersburg, and confirmed so recently by Vórontsoff, not only to stay the homeward march of the two battalions, part of the 5th Army Corps, already at that place, but to divert them to Nikoláievskaya, a Cossack stanitsa on the Térek, 30 miles north-west of Vládikavkáz. At this time Freitag had no positive knowledge of Shamil's intentions, but this movement, together with the simultaneous retention of another of Hasfort's battalions at Kizliar, and the suitable disposal of his own command, provided as far as possible, in the circumstances, against all contingencies. For Nikoláievskaya covered, without actually guarding, the ford on the Térek opposite the minaret of Tatartoub, a strategic point of great importance already mentioned as the scene of Tamerlane's victory over Toktamuish and of Shaykh Mansour's defeat in 1785. If Shamil meditated any movement to the west of Vládikavkáz it was here that he must cross the Térek, and it is evident that Freitag's suspicions in this direction had already been roused. Vládikavkáz itself was sufficiently garrisoned by 1300 men, and covered, moreover, by General Nésteroff's small but compact force at Nazrán. If, on the other hand, the enemy's objective was Kizliar and the Koumuik plain, the additional battalion there would strengthen the local garrison very considerably. In either case Freitag's own little army of the Left Flank, being in a central position, could be concentrated at short notice ready to strike where needed. The contingency of a direct attack on himself was not, of course, worth consideration, and the only other possibility, that so firmly credited by Vórontsoff, of a movement on Daghestan, was already provided for locally.

It was no light thing to disregard, on little more than

more surmise, the commands of such a ruler as Nicholas I., who had only with the greatest reluctance allowed the 5th Army Corps to remain in the Caucasus beyond the term originally assigned, *i.e.* the end of 1844, and had now issued positive orders for its return. Prince Vórontsoff dared not incur so grave a responsibility, and from this we may measure the moral courage of his subordinate, who, on account, possibly, of his German name, holds so small a place in the memory and affections of the Russians of to-day.[1]

Freitag's strategy was thoroughly sound, as events soon proved, but his position, none the less, was one of great anxiety; for information received left no doubt that Shamil's levies would on this occasion outnumber by at least two to one the whole of the forces at his disposal, and being possessed of extraordinary mobility, could be hurled in overwhelming numbers on the units necessarily detached to the east or west of the Russian position.[2] Freitag, it is true, would be on their heels within a few hours at most, but any start was a long one for such rapid movers as the Murids, and there were hardly any limits to the moral, even more than to the material, harm that might ensue for Russia, after recent misfortunes, from any further considerable success of the Murid arms.

However, he had done all that could be done with the means at his disposal; he had even augmented those means by an act involving enormous personal responsibility. He could now only await the result.

[1] *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, xvi. p. 315. The present writer recently asked a fairly well-known Russian general for further information about Freitag. His answer was: "Freitag? Freitag? Never heard of him."

[2] The actual numbers of the native levies were seldom if ever accurately known, and were generally exaggerated. On the present occasion it would seem that Shamil crossed the Soundja with at least 14,000 men, for the most part mounted, and eight field-guns, well horsed and abundantly supplied with ammunition.

The Murid rendezvous was Shalee, 15 miles south-east of Grozny. Hearing on the 12th April that Shamil was there in person, Freitag sent again to Hasfort, who was not under his command, urging that the two battalions should proceed by forced marches to Nikoláievskaya, at the same time ordering his own Mozdók and Grebénsky Cossack regiments to be ready to take the field at a moment's notice. On the 13th the enemy crossed the Argoun, and Freitag, almost assured that the invasion of Kabardá was really intended, completed his measures accordingly. Orders were sent along the line to concentrate at Grozny; but on the evening of the 14th, though one battalion only of the Samour regiment had arrived, Freitag, allowing these men three hours' rest, set out at 10 P.M. with 17 companies of infantry,[1] a sotnia of Don Cossacks, and 8 guns for Zakan Yourt, which was reached at dawn on the 15th. Here three sotnias of the Grebénsky Cossacks joined, and 300 men of the Samour regiment, worn out by rapid marching, were replaced by two companies of a Cossack line battalion. At 7 A.M. the march was resumed, and the fort at Kazakh-Kitchou reached four hours later.

Shamil was now on the Fortánga, and Freitag, still fearing a possible dash on Kizliar, did not dare to advance farther, and even stopped the troops behind him at Zakan Yourt, for, east of Grozny, the Left Flank was completely exposed.

At 2 P.M. the enemy made another step to the westward as far as the Assá, but returned to their former position, and only that evening resumed the advance, marching this

[1] The 1st and 4th battalions, three companies of the 3rd battalion, two companies of the 5th battalion—all of the Vórontsoff rifle regiment, and a battalion of the Samour regiment of infantry.

time up the Soundja as far as the inflow of the Indeerka. Freitag received the news at midnight, and next day, the 16th, at 2 A.M., left Kazakh-Kitchou for Soundjenskaya stanitsa.[1] Here he borrowed various units from Nésteroff's command, to be replaced by the men he had left at Zakan Yourt, and learning that Shamil had crossed the Soundja and was heading for the Térek, followed at midday with $5\frac{1}{2}$ battalions, 10 guns, and 7 sotnias of Cossack cavalry, leaving all impedimenta behind. At 8 P.M. the pursuers reached Atchalouk and learnt that Shamil had passed Fort Constantine three hours earlier; thus all doubt as to Greater Kabardá and the west being the points threatened was set at rest, and Freitag made his dispositions accordingly, sending urgent messages to Tiflis, to the Central Line, and to Nésteroff, to warn all concerned of what was coming. He was still disturbed by the danger to the Left Flank should Shamil double back upon him, but he was determined to dog his opponent's heels and bring him to action at the first possible opportunity. At 2 A.M. on the 17th he left Atchalouk and soon after learnt that Shamil had bivouacked for the night on the river Koupra, after which, leaving three of his naïbs to compel all the inhabitants of Lesser Kabardá[2] to quit their aouls and follow him, he had made for the minaret with his main forces. Freitag called a short halt in sight of Fort Constantine, and then, not deceived by reports, purposely spread, that Shamil had turned down the Térek, hurried on to the Koupra, and there bivouacked for the night.

At two in the morning of the 18th he moved forward again, and at 10 A.M., some 4 miles from the ford, came on

[1] Afterwards and still known as Slieptsovskaya, from a celebrated Cossack leader, Slieptsoff, killed in the neighbourhood in 1851, who now took a prominent part in Freitag's pursuit of Shamil.

[2] Greater and Lesser Kabardá were divided by the Térek.

the three naïbs convoying the long line of *arbas* crowded with the wives and children and household goods of the unfortunate people of Lesser Kabardá, whom they now hastily abandoned, crossing the river under fire of Freitag's guns. Shamil himself watched the operations from the opposite bank of the Térek and then took up his position, a very strong one, almost impregnable, on the wooded spur, furrowed by deep ravines, abutting at this point on the river. Freitag, whose chief concern was to prevent Shamil recrossing the Térek, faced the Murid army on the right bank, and Shamil the same day defeated and drove back to the Ouroukh stanitsa, with a loss of 120 killed and wounded, a force of 1600 bayonets belonging to the army of the Central Line, under Colonel Levkóvitch, who, acting quite independently, had rashly attacked him. Freitag then sent forward in haste a small column under Colonel Baron Meller-Zakomélski, which drew off Shamil's troops and saved Levkóvitch from complete disaster.

Shamil had now reached the commanding position whence he had hoped in security to rouse all Kabardá, and organise such a force as would hold the Russians in check while he continued his march to join the western tribes. The enterprise was undoubtedly one of great daring, but, ably conceived, and, on Shamil's own part, no less ably conducted, it might well have proved successful. An integral part of his plan, however, was the occupation of the celebrated Dariel defile by a force under Nour Ali, marching from Tsori to Djerakh, and raising the Galgais and other clans on the way. The Georgian road would then be completely blocked, and no reinforcements could reach the north from Tiflis in time to save Kabardá. This part of the combined operations failed, owing partly to mere accident, and the failure, coupled with the unexpected vigour

and promptitude of Freitag's movements, soon brought the whole undertaking to ruin.[1]

The bargain between the Kabardáns and the Imám was that he on his part would sweep away every Russian fort and settlement on the banks of the Térek and its affluents, provided that they joined forces with him; but seeing the Russians already at Shamil's heels, and led by a commander whose prowess they knew and feared, they hesitated to take up arms, though in fact they had thrown off their allegiance. What each party to the compact now said was, "You do your part and we will do ours," with the natural result that neither did anything at all. Freitag's position meantime was no enviable one. The danger to the exposed Left Flank in case Shamil did double back was greater than ever. The Russian force, too, had arrived in light marching order; the want both of ammunition and of food supplies was already felt; the chief of the Central Line, Prince Golitsine, proved himself utterly incompetent, and the store depôts throughout his command were found to be depleted. The enemy was numerically far the stronger, and the Kabardáns, a brave and warlike race, might yet be induced to fight. But Freitag did not lose heart. He called up Nésteroff from Nazrán, who not only supported him at a short distance, but supplied to some extent the much-needed provisions.

The Russian commander's intention was to attack Shamil, regardless of odds, on the evening of the 19th; but before dawn he learnt that the Murid army, panic-stricken at the idea of being made to fight where no retreat was open, had abandoned its strong position in the night in such haste that 1000 iron kettles and various other

[1] It should be noted also that the Ossietines remained loyal to Russia throughout this campaign, a fact of no slight importance in view of their geographical position and numbers. See map at end of this chapter.

articles were left behind. Ignorant of the topography of the neighbourhood, without maps, and lacking for the moment all indication as to Shamil's actual whereabouts, Freitag joined Nésteroff at Nikoláievskaya, and spent the day of the 19th in endeavouring to obtain the necessary information. At 10 P.M. he learnt that Shamil had gone up the Ouroukh, and had sent emissaries to rouse the more distant Kabardáns and their western neighbours, the Balkarians,[1] and to encourage the Trans-Koubán tribes with news of his coming. There was no time to be lost, and ordering Levkóvitch to move towards Naltchik, and sending Nésteroff back to Nazrán, so that he might be in a position to intercept Shamil should the latter return the way he came, Freitag, starting at 2 A.M. on 20th April, moved westward as far as the river Tchérek[2] to the fort of that name, where he arrived at 6 P.M., joining forces with Levkóvitch. Prince Golitsine, meantime, alive at last to the seriousness of the situation, had summoned to Naltchik, now the key of the position, a battalion of infantry and three sotnias of Cossacks under Colonel Beklemeesheff; and Hasfort, conforming to the movement of his brother commander, was on the way there with a force of the same strength. Shamil's forces were said to be at Kazeeyeva, some 12 miles higher up the Tchérek than Freitag, who, requesting Golitsine to keep watch on the Naltchik side, detached Meller-Zakomélski across the Ouroukh to intercept the enemy in case of retreat, meaning himself to wait events at Fort Tchérek. At the time his anxiety was very great. He wrote: "I fear for the Left Flank. The rising in Kabardá will affect the minds of the Koumuiks and shake still more

[1] Abich attributes far too much importance to the refusal of the Balkar chiefs (Tartars) to join Shamil. See his *Aus Kaukasischen Ländern*, Wien, 1896.

[2] An important affluent of the Térek, not to be confounded with it.

their already wavering loyalty, and the Line is bare; on the Left Flank there are no troops, nor any one in command." He thought it better to wait events rather than be lured still farther to the west.

So passed the 21st and 22nd, and again provisions had nearly run out. On the 23rd Shamil moved his cavalry on to the abandoned Fort Ourván on the river of that name, threatening Freitag's communication with Naltchik, whence alone he could hope to obtain further supplies. Seeing this, the Russian commander made a challenging counter-move, but the enemy, refusing battle, retired again up the Tchérek, pursued by Slieptsoff. On the 25th Shamil, finding that the Kabardáns were still undecided, hearing, moreover, that troops were beginning to arrive at Vládikavkáz from Georgia, which told him that Nour Ali's movement had failed, and fearing that his own retreat would be cut off, lost heart and, abandoning his tents, made in all possible haste and secrecy for the Térek.

As afterwards known it was the accidental passage of Lieutenant-General Gourko, recently chief of the staff to Vórontsoff, and now on his way home to Russia, that led to the frustration of Shamil's well-planned attempt on the Dariel defile. Reaching Vládikavkáz from Tiflis on the 17th, and realising at once the danger of the situation, Gourko sent a letter, written for greater security in French, to his successor in the Georgian capital, urging the immediate despatch of reinforcements, and meantime took command himself at Vládikavkáz. This, coupled with the sagacious measures he adopted for the protection of the road, caused Nour Ali first, on the 20th, to abandon the movement on Djerakh, and two days later, after threatening Balta from Tars, to retire altogether.

On the morning of the 26th the sound of cannon firing

from the direction of the ford indicated that Meller-Zakomélski was engaging the enemy at or near that spot, and Freitag at once moved back as far as Fort Tchérek, sending on to learn whether Shamil himself was concerned or only some detached band, possibly sent back on purpose to deceive him. The moment the answer came he hurried forward, but it was too late. Through no fault of his own his prey had escaped him.

From the beginning he had never been more than a few hours behind Shamil, and since coming up with him on the 18th had been ready to strike the moment the chance came. He should now by rights have reaped the full reward of his vigilance, courage, and dogged pertinacity, for Meller-Zakomélski had absolutely at his disposal Shamil's own former position near the minaret, commanding the ford, and it should have been impossible for the Murids to recross the Térek before Freitag came up and joined battle, when the result could hardly be in doubt. In all human probability the Murid horde would have been totally routed, its leader either killed or taken prisoner. Never before or since had the Russians such an opportunity to finish the war at a blow, for here were no forest depths to hide in, no mountain fastnesses to hold indefinitely. A battle fought in the open, with the Térek ford commanded by the Russian guns, must have meant defeat irretrievable to the Murids.

But once more Shamil's marvellous good fortune served him. Meller-Zakomélski had occupied, indeed, the wooded spur overlooking the river, but on Shamil's approach came down to meet him. Shamil saw the error, and profiting by it, seized the position himself, and, ably seconded by Hadji Mourád, rapidly passed the whole of his forces to the right bank with insignificant loss from Meller-Zakomélski's fire. The latter followed, and Freitag himself crossed the river in pursuit a few hours later (4 P.M.). But the great opportunity was lost. Shamil and his host, now in full flight, made considerably more than 100 versts (67 miles) in little over twenty-four hours, retracing at first the line of their outward march but, from the river Tsidakh, keeping right on for 60 miles through the waterless valley between the Térek and Soundja ranges of hills. Crossing the latter opposite the Mikhailova stanitsa and the Soundja itself near Kazakh-Kitchou on the morning of the 27th, they drove back into the fort the garrison of 400 men who had sallied out to intercept them, and from that moment were safe from pursuit. Meller-Zakomélski kept on the Murid's heels to beyond the Koupra, but not daring to face the desert space where some even of the natives died of thirst, turned south through Atchalouk, and at 7 P.M. on the 27th reached the Soundja at Soundjenskaya. Nésteroff's chance of intercepting the fugitives had likewise been frustrated by the northerly route chosen for the retreat; and when Freitag, marching day and night, reached Kazakh-Kitchou at 8 P.M. on the same day, it was to find that his prey had escaped him.

Shamil, it is true, had failed utterly in his main enterprise, but he had suffered little material loss, and so well did he manage things, that even morally it is doubtful if, amongst the Tchetchens and Daghestanis at least, his reputation was not rather enhanced than the reverse by this daring adventure, the failure of which could plausibly be put down to the faint-heartedness of the Kabardáns themselves. On the other hand, Russia had been saved from the peril of a great disaster, and, as the Emperor himself admitted, the chief merit belonged to Freitag.[1]

[1] Count Adlerberg to Vórontsoff, 15th May 1846 : Akti, x. p. 586.

Vórontsoff, who had left Shemakhá post-haste on the 23rd, arrived in Vládikavkáz on the 28th when all was over. He too acknowledged, generously enough, and for the second time within ten months, his indebtedness to Freitag.[1]

The remainder of the year was marked by great activity on the part of the natives, who gave the Russians no peace in either Daghestan or Tchetchnia. In the latter country there were continual alarms, and the audacity of the Murids may be judged from the fact that they bombarded Grozny itself (July 24th) and Vozdveezhenskoe (August 28th). Nevertheless by the end of the year Russia could claim to have made substantial progress, for forts had been built at Khassaf Yourt, to support Vnezápnaya and give additional security to the Koumuik plain, and at Atchkhoi on the Fortánga to serve as a link between Nazrán and Vozdveezhenskoe, thus completing the "advanced Line" of the Soundja; while considerable progress had been made with the construction of the Akhtee military road.

In Daghestan Hadji Mourád on the 26th May, coming from Ghimree, raided 158 horses and 188 head of cattle belonging to the garrison of Shourá, killing 20 men; and in December (13th and 14th) with 500 men he entered Djengoutai, the capital of Mekhtoulee, by night, and carried off under the noses of a strong Russian garrison the widow of his old enemy Akhmet Khan. But the only serious fighting took place in October, when Shamil, who had entered the territories of the Darghee confederacy and occupied the capital, Akoushá, was defeated in person at Kouteshee with the loss of one gun,[2] whereupon the whole

[1] See the full account of this affair in *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, xvi. pp. 327–51; but above all, Freitag's own narrative, Akti, x. pp. 579–83.

[2] *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, xiv. pp. 511, 538.

district once more submitted to the Russians. This was a serious blow to Muridism, since the recovery of this populous and flourishing portion of Daghestan was a matter of very great importance to the cause, one, indeed, on which Shamil had set his heart.

It may be added, in proof of the constant drain upon it, that the army of the Caucasus lost in the course of this comparatively quiet year nearly 1500 officers and men in killed, wounded, and missing.[1]

[1] *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, xvii. p. 255.

CHAPTER XXVI

1847–1848

Russian assault on Gherghébil—Saltee taken—Gherghébil surrendered—Defence of Akhtee

DURING the first three months of 1847 Shamil lay quiet at Vedén, or Dargo-Vedén,[1] as he called it, in memory of the Dargo which had been destroyed two years previously, and it appeared quite uncertain whether he would take the field or not. But on the 28th March a brilliant meteor was seen there, and the same night the suburb or quarter occupied by the Russian deserters was burnt to the ground. Shamil interpreted these events to his followers—the first as Allah's command to renew the war, the second as an indication of the fate in store for the infidels—and promptly put his forces in motion. Vórontsoff meantime, having learnt his lesson in 1845, had been building forts and roads, for which he had real talent, instead of undertaking operations in the field, for which, it would seem, he had little or none. The first half of the year passed in preparation on both sides, enlivened only by Daniel Sultan's desperate but unavailing efforts to regain possession of his territory, Elisou. The Russian plan of campaign was comparatively modest, consisting mainly of the capture of Gherghébil, Saltee, Sogratl, and Ireeb,[2] and

[1] Vedén, in the Tchetchen language, means a flat place, and is applied to many of the small plateaus or flat-bottomed valleys in the mountains of Tchetchnia, generally with some distinguishing word before it, as Dishne-Vedén, Benoi-Vedén, Djanoi-Vedén, &c.

[2] Vórontsoff to Tchernisheff, 13th February 1847: Akti, x. p. 442.

the building of a fort at the first-named aoul, to which Vórontsoff attached great importance. From Shamil's dispositions for the defence of these places it is quite evident that he was at this time, as usual, very well served by his spies or by his own penetration—probably by both.

Gherghébil, like other aouls already mentioned, had an admirable defensive position, strong by nature, and made stronger still by art. Rising in the form of an amphitheatre on the face of a hollow cone of rock at the foot of the Aimiakee defile, it was unapproachable on the north-west, where it overlooked a precipice, and on every other side was defended by fortified stone *saklias*, rising tier above tier to a kind of citadel in the middle. It was surrounded by a wall 14 feet high and 5 feet thick, pierced by embrasures and surmounted by *chevaux de frise* of thorns. There were two flanking towers, each with a small cannon—the only artillery in the place—and the houses were loopholed in such manner that each tier might be swept by a cross-fire from that above it. Within the aoul, wherever possible, there were barricades, earthworks, traverses, &c. All this was known to the Russians beforehand through their spies, and also that the place was defended by a chosen band sworn by a tenfold oath on the Koran to die rather than to yield. But one detail they did not know until the day of storming.

Prince Vórontsoff reached Gherghébil on the 1st June, and took command of the united Daghestan and Samour divisions, numbering together ten battalions of infantry, besides a large miscellaneous force of cavalry, artillery, and native levies. Batteries were placed in position the same day, and a heavy fire directed on the salient southern corner of the aoul, which seemed to promise the easiest entry. On the 2nd the terraced gardens were taken pos-

session of without a shot being fired in their defence, owing, as was afterwards known, to the fact that cholera had broken out among the Murids detailed for that service. By the night of the 3rd a sufficient breach had been made, and Vórontsoff, misled by feeble opposition into thinking that the garrison was after all but a weak one, gave orders for the assault.

Meantime an event of some significance had occurred. On the heights above the left bank of the Kara Koisou, a well-nigh impregnable position, native troops were seen to be arriving in large numbers. For a time there was much running to and fro, much bustling about, and then it was noted that in the centre of the position several white tents were being pitched, a proceeding that could only, in the circumstances, admit of one interpretation. As to the Roman circus the Cæsar came last, so was it here. There had been no lack of spectators from the beginning, for the surrounding mountains were lined with Murid forces; the champions, too, had long taken their places, but the imperial tribune had remained empty. It was now filled, for Shamil had come in person to grace the final act, in which his valiant followers, encouraged by his presence, were to hurl back the flower of the Russian army from the walls of Gherghébil or die in the attempt. Across the river, at his feet, like a half-opened fan, the orchards sloped upward to the grim aoul perched high on its cone of rock; immediately beyond rose the opposite and parallel range of mountains, scarred and worn by the weather during æons of centuries, and split asunder by the chasm of Aimiakee, through which, for a distance of 5 miles, the torrent of that name, leaping from ledge to ledge, forced its way between walls of rock from three to four thousand feet high. On his right hand, where the three

rivers met, he could see in the angle between the Aimiakee and the Kazi-Koumoukh Koisou, the Russian batteries on the crests of the broken foot-hills, the Russian camps in their hollows. On his left, the mingled waters flowed silently down between mountainous banks to join the Avar Koisou, and eventually the Soulák. The patch of cultivated land lay thousands of feet below him; all else around was bare and brown and desolate.

On the morning of the 4th June, at six o'clock, the Russian troops stood to arms. One column, under Yevdokeemoff, marched off at once. The duty assigned to it was to take up a position at the western side of the aoul, and at a given signal make a feigned attack in order to draw part of the garrison away from the real point of assault. The storming column under Prince Orbeliáni, consisting of the 1st battalion of the Ápsheron regiment and one of the Prince of Warsaw's (Paskiévitch's), with a forlorn hope provided with ladders, and sappers with entrenching tools, was to make straight for the breach. Another battalion of Paskiévitch's and one of the Samour regiment were held in reserve; and Argouteensky-Dolgoroukoff's whole division was directed to keep watch on the enemy outside, and checkmate any attempt to aid the defenders. There was considerable delay, during which the batteries kept up a furious cannonade to widen the breach and daunt the foe, who, except for the petty return they could make from their two pieces of artillery—one of which was soon silenced—gave no sign of life, but that now and again, in the intervals of the bombardment, the listening Russians heard the melancholy long-drawn notes of the death-chant rising from behind the wall as from an open grave. More than ever convinced that he had to do with a mere handful of self-devoted braves, such as those who

had fought and died in vain—if the brave ever die in vain—at Ghermentchoug and Ghimree, Vórontsoff at 9 A.M. ordered the signal rocket to be fired. The forlorn hope rushed forward, but losing its way amongst the trees, eventually scaled the wall far from the point intended, and suffered severely; the rest of the column, with drums beating and trumpets blaring, kept the proper direction; and the Ápsheron men, led by their gallant commander, another Yevdokeemoff, strove to mount the breach. Their comrades of the Warsaw regiment followed, but a withering fire from hundreds of rifles mowed the troops down like grass. Yevdokeemoff fell dead, pierced by a dozen bullets; Vinnikoff, captain of the grenadier company, strode over his body and gained the top of the breach, to fall in turn; the men were exasperated rather than daunted; a Danish officer, more fortunate than his predecessors and not less brave, led them forward, and the wall was won. The losses were already heavy, but there was as yet no thought of failure. In front was the first row of low stone *saklias*, and, climbing their walls, the attackers rushed forward, when to their horror the ground gave way beneath their feet, and amid shouts of demoniac laughter they fell on to the swords and *kindjals* of the Murids lurking below. The flat roofs had been taken off the whole of the lower row of houses and replaced by layers of brushwood, thinly covered with earth. Every house, in fact, was a death-trap, into which the unhappy stormers must fall, there to be butchered by a merciless foe. Some of their comrades saw and shuddered, but still the column came on, and soon nearly the whole of it was within the wall. Many officers, however, had fallen; the men, fighting their way into the aoul, singly or in small parties, became scattered and entangled amongst the houses or in the narrow tortuous streets, and no

loading was possible. It became necessary to retreat, and, saving with difficulty the wounded officers, the remnant of the column retired through the breach. Here, supported by the reserve, they formed up, and, mad with rage, demanded to be led forward once more. The second attempt was a repetition of the first; the place was impregnable; and the victorious Murids, driving the broken columns a second time before them, followed until stopped by the bayonets of the reserve. In spite of heroic bravery the assault had failed, and the survivors returned to camp. The losses were great: 36 officers had been killed or wounded, and 581 men—the Ápsheron battalion alone losing 249 of the latter total, the Warsaw battalion 146, the rest being distributed between the scaling party and the reserves.

For four days more a pretence was made of maintaining the siege, but beyond keeping up a desultory artillery fire, nothing was done. Each night the enemy stole down from the hills and harassed the Russians till they were well-nigh worn out. Then cholera made its appearance, and Vórontsoff, glad of the excuse, abandoned his position and retired up the Kazi-Koumoukh Koisou.[1]

Perhaps the best that can be said for that commander is that he never despaired, and was not above learning a lesson, however rude. Dargo had taught him, in 1845, not to waste his strength in military processions that could do no good and might prove disastrous; Gherghébil, the folly of attempting to take mountain aouls by storm without adequate artillery preparation. It is astonishing indeed that the Russians so long treated this arm with comparative neglect, when, as a matter of fact, in it alone lay their chance, or rather certainty, of success; for it seems abun-

[1] Vórontsoff's report to Tchernisheff: Akti, x. p. 450.

dantly evident that without their superior artillery they were no match either for the Tchetchens in their forests or the Daghestanis in their mountain strongholds, though as disciplined troops, they could always beat either in the open field. Vórontsoff said little, but turning his attention to Saltee, ordered vast quantities of siege material to be got ready by the 1st July, and after a regular siege of seven weeks, during which both sides displayed great heroism, took that aoul by storm at the third attempt, though far stronger even than Gherghébil. The Russian loss on this occasion amounted to 2000 killed and wounded.[1]

Next year (1848) in June he sent Argouteensky-Dolgoroukoff with 10,000 men back to Gherghébil, which the Murids this time abandoned by night after a twenty-three days' siege, culminating in a terrific bombardment from forty-six guns of various calibre.[2] The Russian commander had on this occasion as his immediate assistants men destined like himself to become famous—Wrangel and Orbeliáni, brilliant and successful leaders; Yevdokeemoff and Bariátinsky, who between them were to end the war; Brümmer, who was to command the artillery at the siege of Kars in 1855 and bring away the shattered battalions after the ghastly failure of the assault; and last, but not least, a modest staff-captain of engineers, who on this occasion received his "baptism of fire" during a reconnaissance in the Aimiakee chasm, through which at the close of the siege he built a road. The defence of Sevastópol and the capture of Plevna, after Skobeleff's heroic failures, have secured from oblivion the name of Todtleben.

[1] For Saltee, see Vórontsoff's official report: Akti, x. pp. 463–68. For the events of 1847 generally, *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, vi. pp. 477–682.

[2] Argouteensky-Dolgoroukoff's reports: *ibid.*, pp. 474 *et seq.*

In the course of the siege the Russians fired 10,000 shot and shell into this mountain village or against the Murids outside. Their losses were 4 officers and 76 men killed, 14 officers and 257 men wounded, besides a great many contused. The enemy are supposed to have lost 1000, mostly during the struggle that took place between Prince Bariátinsky and Hadji Mourád for possession of the orchards. The victors gained little enough by their efforts, for they were not in a position to retain possession of Gherghébil, and retired, closely pursued by the Murids, to Khodjal Makhee. They afterwards fortified Aimiakee at the other end of the chasm, which for many reasons was a better position, while Shamil replaced Gherghébil by a strong fort, known as Oullou Kalá.[1]

The year 1848 was rendered further memorable in the annals of the Russian military history by the defence of the fort of Akhtee on the Samour, where 500 men, under Colonel Roth, and afterwards, when he was wounded, Captain Novoséloff, in the month of September, held out for more than a week against many thousands under the command of Shamil and his chief lieutenants, Daniel Sultan, Keebeet Mahomá, and Hadji Mourád. Half the garrison was killed or wounded, the chief powder magazine blown up, the walls breached, water ran short, no food could be cooked, and the enemy, urged on by their leaders, made repeated and desperate efforts to storm the fortress; but the garrison, and even the soldiers' wives and Roth's young daughter, whom Shamil it was known had promised to the first of his naïbs to plant his banner on the walls, agreed to blow themselves up rather than fall into the hands of the enemy. As at Gherghébil in 1843, the defenders had the cruel experience of seeing a relieving

[1] *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, vii. pp. 483–538.

force, under Argouteensky-Dolgoroukoff, approach, and even come within hail, but after vainly attempting to cross the Samour from the north, retire out of sight. At last, however, when further resistance was all but hopeless, that gallant commander, having made a wide detour, relieved Akhtee from the opposite side, after beating Keebeet Mahomá and Hadji Mourád brilliantly at neighbouring Meskendjee.[1]

[1] *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, vi. pp. 683–727; vii. pp. 542–612. Roth's journal of the siege: Akti, x. p. 487. A pleasant anecdote is told of a soldier who in after years was present at a parade before the Emperor Nicholas, and attracted the latter's attention by the gold cross of St. George on his breast. Asked where he had won it he replied, in some confusion and very much to his Majesty's astonishment, "Akhvuee" (in Russian, "Oh, you!"). An explanation being demanded, it turned out that the brave fellow had particularly distinguished himself at the siege of Akhtee (in Russian, "Oh, thou!"), but had not dared to address the Emperor in the second person singular!

CHAPTER XXVII

1849–1856

Shamil at the zenith of his power—Argouteensky fails at Tchokh—Hadji Mourád—His raid on Shourá—He is sent by Shamil to Kaitago—His raid on Bouïnakh—Shamil's jealousy—He compasses Hadji Mourád's death—The latter surrenders to the Russians, but escapes—His death—Slieptsoff killed—Bariátinsky chief of the Left Flank—Forest cutting—Raids—Depopulation of lowland Tchetchnia—The Crimean war—Operations in Asia Minor—Danger of war with Persia—Secret convention—Shamil's invasion of Kakhétia—Argouteensky's march—Shamil's second invasion of Kakhétia and capture of the Georgian princesses—Their captivity—Shamil at home

SPEAKING generally, it may be said that from 1848 to 1856 in the eastern Caucasus both the Russians and Shamil stood on the defensive; there were comparatively few engagements of note, none involving very serious losses to either side. Shamil was left in undisturbed possession of western Daghestan, including Avaria, and of the greater part of Tchetchnia; but, on the other hand, the destruction of Saltee and Gherghébil, the building of forts at Aimiakee, Tsoudakhár, and other places, and the establishment of permanent staff quarters, with ample barrack accommodation at suitable strategic points, had greatly lessened the danger of invasion for Russia and the native states subject to her. Prince Vórontsoff, realising that he was not strong enough to deal Muridism a mortal blow in existing conditions, contented himself for the most part with strengthening his lines on all sides pending the advent of a favourable moment for resuming a more active policy, and otherwise devoted his very great abilities and energy to the reform of the civil administration. In this field, necessarily extensive and varied in a country like the

Caucasus, he achieved great and lasting success, and on this his fame as viceroy of the Caucasus must rest. But his military attitude was by no means one of merely passive defence, particularly in Tchetchnia, where the ruthless partisan warfare went on as before, varied from time to time by raiding expeditions on a large scale.

Nor was Shamil inactive. In 1849 his authority and influence over the tribes reached their culminating point; his rule was pure despotism, enforced by the sword and by the executioner's axe, without which grim instrument borne in his train the dreaded Imám now never stirred abroad. His word was law, and none dared question it, not even the blood relations of his many victims. Men in thousands were ready to give their lives at his bidding, and his trusty lieutenants were at hand to lead them against the foe in any undertaking however hazardous, conspicuous above all being Hadji Mourád. But to the discerning eye it must have been evident that this state of things could not last; that the end, though veiled, and still perhaps distant, had come appreciably nearer; that the final conquest of the Caucasus by Russia, inevitable from the first, could not now be delayed much longer.

The Russian successes at Saltee and Gherghébil in 1848, dearly bought, were to some extent balanced the following year, in so far as they affected the prestige of either side, by the failure of Argouteensky's attempt on Keebeet Mahomá's new fortress near Tchokh, occupying an unusually strong position, even for Daghestan, on a mountain some 12 miles south-east of Gouneeb. After a long bombardment, during which Todtleben developed those talents which subsequently made him famous, and 22,000 shot and shell were fired at the place, the Russian commander retired rather than risk an assault, and Tchokh remained a virgin

stronghold to the end of the war. Against this, in turn, the Russians could set the completion of the Akhtee military road, shortening communications between Tiflis and Shourá by more than 250 miles, and remarkable, amongst other things, as comprising the first tunnel ever made in Russia. Earlier in the same year (14th April) Hadji Mourád set the crown to his fame as the most daring of all the Murid leaders by a raid on Shourá, the capital and chief military centre of Russian Daghestan, an event that called forth strictures from the Emperor himself. Entering the town by night he attacked, by mistake apparently, the hospital, and the story still runs, told with zest by the natives, that having killed all the sick and wounded, Hadji Mourád had *shashliks*[1] made of their flesh, and so left them, that the Russians entering might think he and his men had been surprised at their dinner and unwittingly devour their own slaughtered comrades. The truth is, however, that only one hospital patient was wounded, none killed, for the rest had barricaded themselves in one of the wards. The alarm was quickly given, and Hadji Mourád fled after a sharp skirmish, in which the Russians lost 13 killed and wounded, the raiders 20. There was obviously no time for the preparation of any such horrible meal, nor need we add this to the many misdeeds of that celebrated partisan leader. It was on this occasion that he resorted to the well-known device of reversing the shoes of his horses to baffle pursuit.

The following year he made an incursion into eastern Georgia and put to the sword the small Russian garrison at Babaratminskaya, a deed destined to result tragically for its perpetrator in the near future.

In 1851 Shamil sent Hadji Mourád into the coast

[1] Bits of meat skewered and roasted.

provinces of Kaitago and Tabassarán to rouse once more the inhabitants against their Russian masters, and again he signalised himself by one of those daring escapades that have rendered his fame imperishable in the annals of Caucasian warfare. With 500 horsemen he entered by night Bouïnakh, a rich aoul on the military road between Derbend and Shourá, killed Shakh Vali, brother of the Shamkhal of Tarkou, on his own threshold, and carried off captive his wife and children, for whom Shamil subsequently obtained a heavy ransom; on this occasion Hadji Mourád and his men rode 100 miles in less than thirty hours, and though hotly pursued, escaped scot-free.[1] There were, indeed, no bounds to his daring, and it is not surprising that he became the terror of all those districts whose inhabitants had submitted to Russia, and to such an extent that on one occasion 1500 native militia under command of a Russian officer fled before a score or so of Murids who attacked them shouting "Hadji Mourád! Hadji Mourád!"[2]

But on the whole the expedition was a failure. The Russians had the advantage in such fighting as took place, and the natives, though their sympathies were with the Murid cause, were dissatisfied with a conduct of operations which exposed them to the vengeance of Russia without bringing any compensating advantage. They complained bitterly of Hadji Mourád, whose many enemies at home lost no opportunity of blackening him in Shamil's eyes; and at last that chieftain, whose jealousy had been thoroughly roused, determined to rid himself of one whose popularity might endanger plans dictated by family ambition, for the

[1] 1st July 1851.

[2] Just as the British merchant captain induced a French privateer to surrender by assuming the name of Sir John Lockhart Ross.

Imám had recently proclaimed his son Kazi Muhammad his successor.[1] Hadji Mourád was condemned to death in secret conclave at Avtouree in Tchetchnia, and nearly fell into the trap laid to capture him. Warned, however, at the last moment, he made his way to Vozdveezhenskoe and gave himself up to the Russians.[2] The commander of the fortress, Colonel Prince Vórontsoff, sent him on to his father, the viceroy, at Tiflis, who received him with joy, and obtained the Emperor's consent to his remaining in the Caucasus, in view of the services he might undoubtedly be expected to render; but Nicholas, who wrote on the margin of Vórontsoff's letter announcing the surrender, "Thank God, a good beginning!" pointed out with characteristic distrust that a man who had once turned traitor might do so again, and threw the whole responsibility on Vórontsoff. Hadji Mourád was kept in a sort of honourable captivity at Tiflis, but his family was at Tselméss, in Shamil's power, and their possible fate troubled him to such an extent that he spent whole nights in prayer and became quite ill. He was sent, therefore, to Grozny to see if he could effect their rescue. Failing in this, he returned to Tiflis, and thence at his own request was sent to Noukhá, on the pretence that there he could observe more strictly the rites of his religion pending Argouteensky-Dolgoroukoff's consent to his joining him in Daghestan. Brooding over his wrongs, irritated at the surveillance exercised over him, missing the wild excitement of his former life, and filled with the gloomiest forebodings as to the fate of his wife and children—for like Shamil and others of these blood-thirsty semi-savages Hadji Mourád was a devoted husband

[1] Levan Melikoff's narrative of the principal events in Hadji Mourád's career, put together from that leader's own statements: Akti, x. pp. 525–30.

[2] Akti, x. p. 525.

and father—he determined once more to effect his escape. Riding out one evening with the four faithful followers allowed him, and escorted by only five or six Cossacks of the commander-in-chief's convoy, Hadji Mourád suddenly drew a pistol, killed the non-commissioned officer in command, one of his men killed a Cossack, and the little party made off at full gallop. Captain Boutchkeeyeff, who was responsible for them, hearing what had happened, quite lost his head, and jumping into a *tarantass*, drove off to Tiflis. His reception by Vórontsoff may be imagined. The latter had undertaken a great personal responsibility towards his stern master, and through the gross carelessness of his subordinate had now to face the unpleasant duty of informing Nicholas of Hadji Mourád's escape. Moreover, serious trouble might be expected in the mountains. Luckily, however, for the Russians, the commandant at Noukhá, Colonel Korgánoff, was a man of energy and judgment. Knowing that the defiles were guarded, he gave orders to the militia to follow the road to the plains taken by Hadji Mourád in 1850 in the raid on Babaratminskaya. The result was entirely satisfactory. Two days later, on the 23rd April 1852, the fugitives were discovered and surrounded in a wood by a large party of militia, who were soon joined by other troops and by the inhabitants of the district, led by a blood-enemy of Hadji Mourád's. And now took place one of those dramatic scenes so frequent in Caucasian warfare. Seeing escape to be impossible, the Murids dug a pit with their *kindjals*, killed their horses, made of them a rampart, and intoning their death-song,[1] prepared to sell their lives as dearly as possible. As long as their cartridges lasted they kept their enemies, a hundred to one, at bay; then Hadji Mourád, bare-headed, sword in

[1] Appendix II.

hand, leapt out and rushed on his death. He was cut down, and two of his men with him; the other two, sore wounded, were taken prisoners and executed. So, on the 24th April 1852, in Vórontsoff's words, "died as he had lived Hadji Mourád, desperately brave. His ambition equalled his courage, and to that there was no bound."

When his body was brought back to Noukhá the whole population came out with music and shouts of exultation, for Hadji Mourád had for years past kept them in terror of their lives. To completely reassure Prince Vórontsoff the raider's head was cut off and despatched to Tiflis, whence it was afterwards sent to the great Russian surgeon Pirogoff, in St. Petersburg, though his heart would have been more to the purpose if, as commonly held, that organ is the seat of courage. The Russians were rid of one of their most formidable enemies; Shamil, through his own fault, had lost the most valiant and enterprising of his lieutenants. It will be long, indeed, ere Hadji Mourád's name and fame are forgotten on the mountains he defended or on the plains he ravaged; and if, as reported, Tolstoy has written a work, to be published after his death, having Hadji Mourád for hero, the world at large will one day be possessed of the Avar raider's full-length portrait drawn by a master-hand.

General Okólnitchi says of Hadji Mourád: "He had not, like Shamil, the talent requisite for directing large and serious military undertakings; but, on the other hand, none ever excelled him in daring and enterprise as a leader of raiding parties. He was a skilful partisan, after the style of the once famous Polish Pans, Lissóvsky and Sapiéha. It was a light matter for him, with a party of 400 or 500 horsemen, to appear suddenly at the rear of our troops, far inside our own boundary; to ride 70 versts

to-day, 100 to-morrow; draw off attention by false alarms, and, profiting by the general panic, escape unhurt. These qualities obtained for Hadji Mourád, in the course of time, such renown in the mountains as no other naïbs enjoyed, and, from time to time, alarmed even Shamil, in spite of his remarkable skill in keeping his people in hand."[1]

Four months earlier (10th December 1851) the Russians suffered a grievous loss by the death of General Slieptsoff, the most celebrated of their own partisan leaders, who was killed in one of the petty raids, the successful conduct of which had rendered him famous.

In 1852 Prince Bariátinsky became chief of the Left Flank, and at the head of 10,000 men once more devastated the lowlands of Tchetchnia with fire and sword; but the permanent results to Russia were by no means commensurate with the efforts put forth, nor could they be held to justify the misery caused. It is probable that these considerations and the experience now gained led to the final adoption of more rational plans when four years later Bariátinsky, after a short absence, came back to the Caucasus as viceroy and commander-in-chief. Nevertheless, some progress had been made. Forest-cutting on a large scale, resumed by Freitag in 1846, and continued since by Yevdokeemoff, had made the Russian lines safe, and at the same time given increased facilities for gaining access to such native strongholds as still remained intact.

The Tchetchens inhabiting the debatable land now found their position intolerable, for the war tended more and more to become a struggle between Shamil and his opponents for the bodily possession of these unhappy people. Those of them who submitted to the Russians when the

[1] *Voyenny Sbornik*, 1859, Okólnitchi's third article, p. 16.

latter advanced were branded as traitors by the Murid leaders; while if, on the retreat of their new masters, they returned, perforce, to their former allegiance, the Russians stigmatised their act as rebellion to the Tsar. To Shamil their loss would mean a serious diminution, both of productive force and of fighting power; they were necessary to him, both as subjects and as soldiers; and so it happened that neither party being in a position to afford them protection in their own country, both Russians and Murids adopted the only practical policy open to them, namely, their transference *en masse* with their wives and their children, their flocks and herds and household goods, whenever possible, in the one case to the vacant lands north of the Soundja, in the other to the innermost recesses of Tchetchnia. The result was the gradual formation of a broad belt of uninhabited land between the Russian and Murid lines, and the advantage lay undoubtedly with the invaders from the north; for the desert thus created was of itself fertile, and had served as a granary not only to the wilder and more barren parts of Tchetchnia, to which Shamil's hold over that country was now reduced, but in great measure to Daghestan as well. Nor did the matter end there; for the ties of blood were strong amongst the Tchetchens, and the transference of whole villages to the security of the northern plains led to the defection of many of Shamil's nearest adherents, including even some of his trusted naïbs. At the same time the line of Cossack colonies was strengthened and advanced, while the felling of the forest trees was supplemented by the construction of strategic roads.

It was at this time that Count Leo Tolstoy, serving as an officer in the 20th Artillery Brigade, gained that knowledge of Cossack life and Caucasian warfare so brilliantly

set forth in some of his military stories. "The Cossacks," a tale of 1852, gives a vivid picture of life on the Line in those days, facing Tchetchnia. Tolstoy was transferred to Sevastópol at the beginning of the Crimean war.

Bariátinsky, as we have seen, had not yet learnt the futility of mere raiding and punitive expeditions, but to his honour be it said that he to some extent humanised the methods hitherto in vogue. It had been the custom to rush the aouls by night, when, taken by surprise, the women and children had no time to escape, and the horrors that ensued under cover of darkness when the Russian soldiers made their way by twos and threes into the houses were such as no official narrator dared describe. Under Bariátinsky the villages were still, it is true, approached and surprised by night, but "they were then bombarded. The inhabitants, roused by the firing, ran out from their houses, and the contest that followed in the streets or outskirts of the aouls was an open, honest fight. The women, children, and helpless old men were no longer ruthlessly slaughtered on their own hearths; they were taken prisoners under the eyes of the Russian leaders as soon as the village was in our hands; and if, in some of the *saklias*, the defence continued, these were battered down by artillery fire or taken by storm, and this was always accompanied by less loss in men than the former system under which the troops penetrated two or three at a time into unknown, half-lighted, or even wholly unlighted houses. *And the morals of the soldiers improved.*"[1]

As already stated, Russia's attitude in the Caucasus at this time was mainly defensive, and this was largely due to the fact that she was engaged elsewhere, first against the Turks alone, and later against the formidable coalition of

[1] *Kavkazsky Sbornik*, ix. p. 437. The italics are the present writer's.

the Porte and the Western Powers. War was not actually declared by Turkey until 5th October 1853 (N.S.), but since the middle of the summer it had become inevitable. France and England declared war on the 28th March 1854 (N.S.), and peace was not concluded until 30th March 1856.

Now, the Crimean war, so called, might undoubtedly have given the Muhammadan population of the Caucasus an opportunity to score heavily against Russia, though in the end with the same result; but neither Shamil nor the Allies half realised the chance thus offered, and, luckily for their enemy, neither made any serious effort to profit by it. In Asia the operations of war were almost uniformly favourable to Russia. Kars held out under General Williams until the 16th November 1855, when it surrendered to Mouravióff, who had played a great part in its capture twenty-six years earlier, and on 29th November 1854 had succeeded Vórontsoff as viceroy and commander-in-chief. Before this, during November 1853, the Turks had been beaten back successively from Akhaltsikh, Akhálkaláki, and Atskhour, and their army, 37,000 strong, had been totally defeated by 10,000 Russians under Prince Béboutoff at Bash-Kadikliar (19th November). The following June (4th) Prince Andronnikoff gained a victory over an enemy's force, 34,000 strong, on the river Tcholok; and on July 24th Prince Béboutoff, with 18,000 men, routed the main Turkish army, more than three times as numerous, at Kouriouk-dar, taking 15 guns and 2000 prisoners, while 3000 Turks were left dead on the field. But England and France confined their attention to the Crimea; the Turks, under Omar Pasha, landing late in the day in the Caucasus, showed even more than their usual incompetence;[1] and

[1] See "The Transcaucasian Campaign under Omar Pasha," by Laurence Oliphant. Edinburgh, 1856.

Russia, though, directly, she gained little or nothing by the war, might well, in so far as concerned her hold on the Caucasus, view the nett result with complacency. For she had undoubtedly escaped a very great danger, the greatest she had ever incurred in these regions. With Shamil at the height of his power, the Crimean war in progress, England, France, and Turkey combined for her destruction, it was thanks only to the folly of the Allies that she came through the ordeal unscathed. Failing this, neither the courage and ability of the Russian commanders, nor the heroism of their troops, could have availed to avert disaster.

Even Persia, egged on by England, was at one time about to join the coalition, and Persia, weak as water in herself, might well have turned scales so nearly balanced. So at least thought General Read, civil governor of the Caucasus in the absence through ill-health of Prince Vórontsoff, who in April 1854 proposed, in view of Persia's attitude, to withdraw all the Russian garrisons from Daghestan, leaving the whole of the eastern Caucasus from the Soulák to the Aras to Shamil! This cowardly suggestion was rejected with firmness and dignity by Nicholas I., who refused to regard the position as hopeless, even with the Persians arrayed against him. He remembered the glorious deeds of Paskiévitch in the early days of his reign, nor ever lost faith in his valiant army of the Caucasus. But the doubtful attitude of the Shah gave cause for great anxiety until September 29th, when a secret convention was concluded at Teheran, by the terms of which Persia was to remain absolutely neutral while the war lasted in return for the abandonment by Russia of her claim to the balance of the old war indemnity. The Shah's neutrality, in short, was bought for money, and the agreement thus made

was kept in perfect secrecy and perfect faith on both sides.[1]

To return to Shamil, that leader made skilful use of the war to maintain his waning influence amongst his compatriots, but, after some negotiation, took offence at Omar Pasha's attitude towards him, and vowed to have nothing more to do with the Turks. He invaded the Djáro-Bielokáni districts, east of Georgia, in August 1853 with 15,000 men, but was easily driven back, thanks mainly to Argouteensky's march from Akhtee by bridle-paths or none over five successive ranges of the snow-covered main chain, a march described by the commander-in-chief in a general order as "historical and unprecedented."[2] A second attempt the following year was more successful; the fertile valley of the Alazán was devastated; but on the 3rd July the invaders were well beaten at Shildee, with a loss of 500 dead, by Prince Tchavtchavadze. The next morning, unhappily, a small party under Kazi Muhammad, Shamil's son, penetrating to Tsinondál, the prince's country residence, carried off his wife and sister-in-law, Princess Orbeliáni, together with their children and some others.[3]

But, after all, this incursion into Georgia was a raid and nothing more, and could have no effect on the progress of the war or on the future of the Caucasus, while at the same time it laid bare to all who had eyes to see the utter hopelessness of Shamil's cause. For if now, when Russia was engaged in a struggle against the combined power of England, France, and Turkey, he could do no more than

[1] Akti, x. pp. 745–52, where the history of Russo-Persian relations at this time is given in detail.

[2] *Voyenny Sbornik*, 1862, pp. 157–84.

[3] General Williams on hearing of the raid on Tsinondál wrote to Shamil from Kars, strongly remonstrating with him for warring on defenceless women and children.

harry a few villages and carry off a score of helpless women and children, how could he expect to maintain himself against Russia when that Power should once more be free to give undivided attention to the Caucasus? It does not appear that Shamil saw things in this light, but it must be remembered that his knowledge of Russia's strength was extremely limited, and events so far had conspired to deceive him most egregiously in that respect. It is certain, however, that had not the Allies so totally failed to take advantage of the situation created by Muridism in the Caucasus, the Crimean war might have proved much more disastrous to Russia than was actually the case. A French or English force landed at Batoum might very possibly have driven the Russian armies back north of the mountains. But, even so, there were but slight elements of civilisation among the mountaineers; the Christians of Georgia could never have been left permanently at the mercy of their Mussulman neighbours on either side. Russia's work of conquest must have begun again sooner or later, and, whatever her shortcomings, it is undoubtedly well for civilisation and for humanity that the Allies blundered.

But though of actual co-operation between Russia's enemies in the Caucasus there was at this time little enough, much mutual influence was exerted, sometimes quite involuntarily. Shamil gained a respite, but failed to make the most of it; the Allies, on the other hand, had the very great advantage of being arrayed mainly against unseasoned troops. It may be left to impartial military critics to say what might have happened had Russia been able to send 20,000 or 30,000 of the battle-hardened veterans of the Caucasus to the heights of the Alma or of Inkerman.

The moving story of the captivity of the Georgian princesses was told at length after their release by M. Verderevsky, editor of the Tiflis paper *Kavkaz*.[1]

The unhappy ladies were taken across the mountains on horseback in circumstances of great cruelty, and interned at Vedén. They were grand-daughters of the last Tsar of Georgia, George XII., both of them young and beautiful, and the Princess Orbeliáni had recently lost her husband and child after a very short period of married life. In fording the Alazán, Princess Tchavtchavadze, who was carrying in her arms her daughter Lydia, aged four, and had nothing on but her night-dress, stumbled and fell, and was in danger of being carried away by the current. A Murid seized her, and drawing her up all wet on to the crupper of his horse, thrust her arm through his belt in front lest she should fall off and escape. With her other hand she still held the child, but, numb with cold, her grasp relaxed, her barbarian captor paid no heed to the most frantic appeals, and, in spite of her efforts, the child at last slipped from her fingers and fell to the ground, to be immediately ridden over and killed by others of the band. When a halt was called, another child, Tamára, three years old, was rescued from a saddle-bag into which she had been thrust head downwards by the brutal raiders. A baby boy was alive and well, but his nurse, being unable to keep up on foot, and not being thought worth mounting, had been cruelly murdered.

The unfortunate ladies were not actually ill-treated after their arrival at Vedén, but they were ill-fed and kept in durance for eight long months in horrible uncertainty as to their ultimate fate, Shamil cruelly reminding them, by

[1] In a book, translated and published in English by Mr. Sutherland Edwards.

way of warning against any attempt to escape or to hold clandestine communication with their friends, that the thirty-three officers and men had been killed (in 1845) only for receiving a letter baked in a loaf of bread. But in reality the danger was not great; the prisoners were much too precious to be killed, for their capture was to serve a special purpose which would be defeated by their death.

Shamil had never forgotten the son, Jamalu'd-din, who had been taken from him at Akhoulgó in 1839, and kept in Russia ever since, a most cruel and unjustifiable proceeding. He had always clung to the hope of effecting his release, and the capture of the two high-born ladies seemed an opportunity too favourable to be neglected; nor in this was he mistaken. The fate of the princesses necessarily aroused the greatest commiseration not only in Russia, but throughout the civilised world. Negotiations were entered into for their release, and the Emperor consented to give up Jamalu'd-din in exchange, but a difficulty was created by Shamil's demand for an exorbitant ransom as well. To this, no doubt, he was forced by his followers, who were willing enough to see their chief made happy by the recovery of his long-lost son, but at the same time had an eye to the replenishing of the State exchequer, and perhaps of their own pockets. The amount of the ransom was for weeks and months a matter of bargaining of the closest, not to say the most niggardly, description, considering who the parties were and the interests at stake; but at last Shamil's original demand of a million roubles was reduced to 40,000, and on the 10th March 1855 the exchange was effected with much solemnity on the banks of the little river Mitchik, the scene of many a bloody encounter.

Jamalu'd-din, now a lieutenant in a Russian Lancer regiment, was accompanied by Prince Tchavtchavadze, husband of the princess, and Baron Nicolai, commanding the Russian forces. These three, with an escort of thirty men and a cart carrying the ransom, came forward to the river-side; Kazi Muhammad, with an equal number of Murids, advanced on the opposite bank with the *arbas* (two-wheeled carts) containing the captives. Then Jamalu'd-din, accompanied by two Russian officers and the cart with the money, crossed the river to the left bank, the princesses to the right, where they took their places in the carriages that had been brought from Grozny for them.

Jamalu'd-din was made to change his Russian uniform for native dress, and then rode up the hill to where Shamil sat, with Kazi Muhammad and Daniel Sultan on either side, surrounded by his Murids, under a huge blue cotton umbrella. He was wearing a green woollen robe, with red silk under-garment (*beshmet*), huge white turban, and yellow boots, which, seeing the importance of the occasion, and the fact that he was exposing himself to the regard of his enemies, may be taken to represent his idea of full dress.[1] When his son drew near he embraced him, weeping; but the event he had so longed for and brought about at last by such violent means had in it the seeds of a bitter disappointment.

The fate of Jamalu'd-din was indeed a sad one. Brought up from the age of twelve years in St. Petersburg and entered in the Russian army, he was now a stranger to his own father, an alien in the land of his birth, and totally unfitted to resume his place amongst a semi-barbarous people. He had looked forward to his return with the

[1] Akti, x. p. 60: Narrative of the exchange drawn up by order of Mouravióff.

gloomiest forebodings, which were fully justified by the event. As a matter of fact, there could be little real sympathy between his fellow-countrymen and himself, and they soon began to look upon him with suspicion and dislike. Even Shamil was estranged when he found his son imbued with Russian ideas and convinced of Russia's might to an extent that led him to counsel surrender. After a short time Jamalu'd-din was sent to live in Karáta, the chief village of the community of that name, the residence of his younger brother, Kazi Muhammad, and noted for the comeliness and love of finery of its women. But neither female charms nor his brother's loving care could reconcile him to the change from civilisation to barbarism; he grew melancholy, fell into a decline, and within three years died.

The ruins of Shamil's residence at Vedén, where the Georgian princesses were confined, are still visible on the right bank of the stream.[1] In those days it was a place of considerable size, Shamil's own quarters consisting of several buildings, surrounded by a ditch and palisade, of which one was occupied by the harem, with a wing for his own special use. Here each wife had a suite of three rooms, which were always kept clean and in good order; but they were seldom there except when they expected the visit of their lord and master, who, in conformity to the Muhammadan law, treated them with strict impartiality, devoting to each a week in turn. The rest of their time was spent by these ladies in the apartment of the children's governess. Access to the Imám's own room was allowed only to his sons, his treasurer, Hadjio, his secretary, Ameer Khan, and a few others of his most intimate adherents. All other visitors were received in the guest-room.

[1] The Khoulkhoulau.

Of those who were admitted to the Imám's table the most notable was Daniel, ex-Sultan of Elisou, whose daughter was married to Shamil's son, Kazi Muhammad; but the only guest who never failed was a very plain black and white cat, the gift of a Russian deserter. For this animal Shamil had a great affection, and, when at Vedén, he never dined without his four-footed friend nor began his own meal until he had prepared hers. The table was small and low, and pussy and her master sat on the floor on opposite sides. During the siege, while Shamil was in the neighbouring forest, the cat grew melancholy and, in spite of all Kazi Muhammad could do for her, died. He buried her with much honour, even pronouncing a funeral oration over her grave; but Shamil, when he heard that his little favourite was dead, took it much to heart, exclaiming, "Now it will go badly with me."

The domestic servants at Vedén were prisoners of war, both Mussulman and Christian, the former continuing to serve voluntarily, though Shamil, out of respect for their religion, gave them their liberty. Abdurrahman, son of Shamil's old friend Jamalu'd-din, writes of him: "He was very good and kind to common people, to servants, beggars, and even prisoners. He was convinced that the prayers of the poor were acceptable to God, and when setting out on a campaign he would call them together, give them money, cotton cloth, &c., and beg them to pray for the success of his enterprise." But his ideas of good treatment for prisoners of war left much to be desired. The Russian officers, we have seen, were kept in a loathsome pit, half-starved, and eventually massacred. In after years, when himself a captive and treated with every consideration, he remembered with shame the miserable lot of his prisoners, especially of the unhappy sisters.

Shamil had eight wives in all, but with one of them lived only three days, and with another, whom he married but to please the Tchetchens, and *pro forma*, only three hours. Of the rest Fatima, daughter of that Abdoul Aziz who cured him of his wounds at Ountsoukoul, was the mother of his three sons;[1] another, Djavgarad of Ghimree, was killed by a Russian bullet at Akhoulgó, together with her infant son; Zeidat was the daughter of Jamalu'd-din of Kazi-Koumoukh, Shamil's teacher and friend; Aminal was a pretty Kist (mountain Tchetchen); and Shouanet, the handsome Armenian who had been taken captive during Akhverdi Mahomá's raid on Mozdók in 1840. Of all Shamil's wives she was the one he loved best, and his affection was returned with interest, showing once more how strange a lottery marriage is. Here was a civilised Christian woman, young and beautiful, seized with violence, carried off from a luxurious home, from family and friends, married willy-nilly to a middle-aged semi-barbarous chieftain, speaking another tongue, professing another Faith, a man of blood, who put others to death for the slightest infringement of his own arbitrary laws and regulations, who, to crown all, was already provided with several wives; and yet there is no doubt that Shouanet loved Shamil with that whole-hearted, lasting devotion many men think themselves entitled to but few inspire. For him she abandoned the religion of her fathers and became a sincere and zealous Mussulman. When her brother, a rich merchant, offered 10,000 roubles ransom for her, Shamil replied that he would not take a million, and Shouanet would not have abandoned him for as much or more. In the difficult position of a pretty and foreign wife, introduced into a harem whose presiding genius, Zeidat, was ill-favoured

[1] Jamalu'd-din, Kazi Muhammad, and Shafee Muhammad.

physically but of superior rank and of native birth,[1] she conducted herself with so much tact and temper that the peace was seldom broken; and, as Shamil's strict sense of justice would not allow him to make any outward difference in the treatment of his wives, all benefited in turn by the increased gentleness and condescension to innocent feminine vanities inspired in the austere breast of their master by his love for Shouanet.

When the dreaded day came and Shamil was surrounded on Gouneeb by the victorious Russian soldiery, the fate of his family was for a short time doubtful. The very worst might happen. But Shouanet trembled only for him, and when permission was given to share his captivity she did so without hesitation, though she might have regained her freedom and returned to her own home and people.

[1] Zeidat was a direct descendant of the Prophet.

CHAPTER XXVIII

1857–1859

Bariátinsky appointed viceroy and commander-in-chief—Milioutine his chief of the staff—Their plan of action—Campaigns of 1857 and 1858—Aoukh, Salatau, and the Argoun gorges occupied—Forts built at Bourtounai and on the Argoun—Vrevsky's expeditions from the Lesghian Line—His death—Revolt at Nazrán—Shamil's abortive attempts at relief—His defeat by Meeshtchenko—1859—Capture of Vedén—Advance of the three armies—The *débâcle*—Flight of Shamil—Gouneeb—The end.

With the signature of the Treaty of Paris Russia was once more free to devote her energies and resources to the subjugation of the Caucasus. The war just concluded had opened her eyes widely to the danger and disadvantages inseparable from the existence of a hostile power within her own borders. She determined to put an end, once for all, to a position which had become intolerable. Prince Bariátinsky was appointed commander-in-chief and viceroy of the Caucasus (22nd July 1856), Milioutine his chief of the staff; and, for the first time, a definite and feasible plan was worked out between them of combined operations, the result of which was to exceed their most sanguine expectations; for not even they had any idea of the extent to which Russia's position had improved in Daghestan and Tchetchnia during the comparatively quiet period of the great war. That improvement was due to two causes—the strengthening of the military lines by the building of forts, the improvement of roads, and the cutting of vast avenues through the forest districts, all of which, of course, they knew very well; but much more to the gradual waning of

Shamil's authority and influence with the tribes, the full extent of which they by no means realised.

Veliameenoff, we have seen, had likened the Caucasus to a fortress which must be taken by regular siege, but neither he nor his successors had been able to follow this dictum in action. Prince Vórontsoff had come nearest to it after his first failures, but even he had never got beyond a mere blockade, which could not of itself reduce a whole country producing all its own necessaries of life, though it might, and in the present case did, prepare the way for the ultimate triumph of the besieging forces. For success in the field was the breath of life to the Murid cause. A long period of even comparative stagnation, marked by no brilliant feat of arms, no serious loss inflicted on the enemy, was sufficient of itself to turn the tide in favour of Russia, thanks to the demoralising effect on the undisciplined hordes of Shamil.

Prince Bariátinsky, who arrived at Petrovsk from Russia in the middle of October 1856, finding the blockade established, devoted his first efforts to drawing the lines of investment closer, and, meantime, planned out with Milioutine the dispositions and the successive approaches which were to lead to the final assault. There had hitherto been no rational distribution of military authority. The armies in the field were, for administrative purposes, dependent on chiefs who were sometimes far away from the scene of action, and themselves subordinate to the viceroy or commander-in-chief. Thus the all-important Left Flank of the army of the north was within the jurisdiction of the general in command at far-away Stávropol. Bariátinsky's first care was to divide the whole of the forces in the Caucasus into five separate armies under chiefs who were entrusted with full power, under himself, each in his own

district. Of these armies only three concern the eastern Caucasus, namely, the army of the Left Flank, facing Tchetchnia; the Pre-Caspian, including all the troops in Daghestan; and that of the Lesghian Line at the south-east foot of the main chain. From these three bases three separate columns were eventually to start for the heart of Daghestan, the first two joining hands in north-east Tchetchnia, and advancing to meet the third in the valley of the Andee Koisou; but this plan was subsequently modified owing to Yevdokeemoff's unexpected successes, which enhanced the importance of his command and enabled him to keep it apart until a later period in the advance.

The year 1857, in accordance with the plan of campaign, saw the final occupation of Lower Tchetchnia by the army of the Left Flank—Yevdokeemoff's—and of Salatau and part of Aoukh by that of Daghestan under Prince Orbeliáni, while Baron Vrevsky from the Lesghian Line crossed the main chain and harried the wild and savage Deedo country.[1] In all these directions roads were made or improved, and, where necessary, avenues cut in the forests; but the most important step forward was the capture of Bourtounai and transference thither from Ishkartee of the staff quarters of the Daghestan infantry regiment. In the course of this operation Orbeliáni beat the enemy on the 24th June near Evghénievskoe, inflicting on them a loss of over 400 dead, including two naïbs.[2] By the middle of November the new fort at Bourtounai was ready and garrisoned by four battalions, a wide avenue having been cut through the forest to Dileem.[3]

[1] In this expedition the Russians were for the first time armed with rifles, a fact not to be forgotten in estimating their successes from this time forward. The natives had been in possession of rifled firearms to a small extent from early times.

[2] Akti, xii. p. 1041.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 1259.

In 1858 Bariátinsky, inspired by Yevdokeemoff, saw that the time had come to deal the enemy a fatal blow by taking military possession of the upper Argoun valleys and gorges, a proceeding which would not only deprive Shamil of almost his last stronghold, but cut him off once for all from the whole of the Caucasus west of the Sharo Argoun. The country remaining in his *de facto* possession would then be confined to a portion of northern Daghestan and the adjoining districts of Andee and Itchkeria; the Ingoushee and other Tchetchen tribes, west of the Argoun, hemmed in between that river and the Térek, would have no choice but submission; and the seat of war in the western Caucasus would be separated from that in the east more widely than ever. Shamil's position would have become hopeless, and his final defeat a matter of months.

The enterprise, however, was by no means an easy one. Shamil had lost heavily in the field, and his best lieutenants had been killed off one by one or had gone over to the enemy; while whole districts, wearied of constant warfare, had gladly submitted to the Russians as soon as they saw that the latter were in a position to protect them against the wrath of the fanatical Murids. But Shamil was at Vedén close by with a still considerable army, and the forest-clad mountains enclosing the gorges of the Argoun presented physical difficulties which might well prove insuperable if fully taken advantage of by a determined enemy, adequate in numbers, and with all the resources of the country placed at their leader's disposal by a devoted population.

Fortunately for Russia, it was just the latter element, so incalculably important, that failed Shamil at the last; and there can be no doubt that Yevdokeemoff was

thoroughly informed as to the discontent of the tribes, and took this element into consideration in planning his campaign. For the "three-eyed" general was not merely a gallant soldier but a wise leader, who planned with the highest intelligence what he carried into execution with skill and daring.

But if the Russian Intelligence Department at this period was well organised, Shamil had likewise ample means of knowing what went on in the enemy's lines, for he was in constant communication with the conquered tribes, a fact that rendered it impossible to prepare any considerable expedition against him in secret. In the present case it was soon known at Vedén that an important movement was on foot, but, thanks to the elaborate precautions taken by Yevdokeemoff, Shamil was completely deceived as to its destination, being firmly convinced that the point threatened was the almost impregnable aoul of Akhtouree, some 30 versts east of the Argoun, beyond Shalee. Only the Russian leader and his immediate subordinates knew the real objective, and so well was the secret kept, that the two columns which set out from Berdikel on the night of the 15th January knew nothing of their destination until, after an all-night march through snow so deep that the cavalry had to trample a way for their comrades on foot, they reached a tower on the right bank of the Argoun opposite Vozdveezhenskoe, and, entering the defile, saw a third column under Yevdokeemoff's personal leadership moving parallel to them up the left bank of the river. The latter was met at the entrance to the gorge by a hot fire from a horde of Tchetchens, who defended their position valiantly, until suddenly becoming aware of the columns marching on the opposite bank, so complete was the surprise that they broke and fled in

utter consternation. The Russians then advanced a couple of versts to beyond the point of junction of the two confluents of the river, the right (eastern) or Sharo Argoun and the left (western) or Tchanti Argoun; one of the two columns on the right bank bivouacked east of the Sharo Argoun; the other, crossing that river, took possession of the rich village of Datcha Barzoi on the high land between the two confluents; while the main column under Yevdokeemoff remained on the left bank of the Tchanti Argoun.

Yevdokeemoff wrote to Bariátinsky: "Your Excellency may judge the difficulties overcome by the troops from the fact that General Kempfert's column took seven hours to cover the 8 versts (less than 5½ miles) from Vozdveezhenskoe to the end of the gorge."[1]

Having thus penetrated the defile and taken up a line of positions astride both branches of the river, the Russian troops proceeded to make good their holding, first burning to the ground every aoul within reach.

The news that the "impregnable" defile of the Argoun was at last in the hands of the Russians soon reached Vozdveezhenskoe and Grozny, and so great was the interest it excited that even ladies came out to visit the camp, and in a short time, in spite of the severity of the frost, the defile became the scene of the greatest activity. "Thousands of *arbas* belonging to the 'peaceful' Tchetchens were requisitioned to carry away the timber; the inhabitants of Vozdveezhenskoe hastened out to buy it and sell their own produce, or whatever was wanted by the troops; shops were opened, and booths set up by vendors of food and drink and every sort of petty trader. In a word, the gloomy, wild, and inaccessible defile acquired in a very short time the busy aspect of a vast and varied market, people moving

[1] Akti, xii. p. 1068.

everywhere, crowds of buyers and sellers, and on all sides long lines of carts laden with different commodities."[1]

It was reported by spies that Shamil on hearing of the loss of the Argoun defile burst into tears, and well he might: it was the beginning of the end, and he was far too astute not to know it.

It is the more difficult, therefore, to understand his inactivity at this critical moment. It is true that the Tchetchens dwelling on the banks of the Argoun were strongly disaffected and ready to submit to the Russians as soon as it was safe to do so, and this must have greatly discouraged him; but Shamil still had with him a host of devoted adherents, chiefly Daghestanis, several thousands strong, and if a final effort were to be made to retain a hold over any part of Tchetchnia, now was the time before the enemy had securely established themselves in their present position. Yet Shamil did little or nothing to oppose this fatal consummation. Few shots were fired, no serious attacks were made, while day by day and week by week the Russian axes rang through the frosty air—a sound more ominous far than the rattle of their musketry or the thunder of their guns—and the forest trees by thousands bowed their heads and fell crashing down the mountain sides beneath the sturdy blows of the soldiers of the Tsar. There were beeches amongst them more than 280 feet in height and 35 feet in girth. To fell these forest giants was difficult enough, to remove them afterwards quite impossible, so they were burnt or blown up where they lay. Gradually a clearing 1400 yards wide was made to the summit of the Dargan Doukh, the ridge

[1] Deedimoff, an eye-witness. See his articles, "Expeditsia v Argounskoe Oushtchélie, 15th January to 18th April 1858," and "Expeditsia v Tchanti Argounskoe Oushtchélie, 1st July to 19th August 1858," in *Voyenny Sbornik* for 1859, from which much of the above information is taken.

6000 feet above sea-level on the right bank of the Sharo Argoun, and lo! the plateau of Vedén, the home of Shamil, lay visible to the Russians less than 10 miles away![1]

In other directions, likewise, the work of securing and strengthening the newly-won position went on uninterruptedly. There, too, woods were cut down, bridges constructed, roads made, and a fort (Argounskoe) built in the fork of the rivers and rendered impregnable to Shamil's feeble artillery, till, by the middle of April, the Russian commander was satisfied for the time being, and, leaving a sufficient garrison in the fort, retired to Vozdveezhenskoe and Grozny to complete his preparations for a farther advance and give the troops a much-needed rest after their short but arduous winter campaign.

By the end of June all was ready, and on the 1st of July the columns once more entered the Argoun defile, but this time what a difference!—forests cut down, ravines and rivers bridged, excellent roads in all directions, and no enemy at hand to contest the passage. The contrast with the first entry into the defile only six months earlier was indeed striking, and enough in itself to justify full confidence in the commander and a belief in his further success.

Beyond the limit of the former advance the Tchanti Argoun again ran between steep and lofty banks intersected by gullies hundreds of feet deep and covered with a tangle of forest trees. Through this difficult country lay the direct path to the more open ground at Shatoe, some 10 miles distant, and so great were the natural obstacles that in face of a determined enemy an advance by this route might well be pronounced impossible. Yevdokeemoff's spies brought word that the enemy swarmed in

[1] Akti, xii. p. 1073.

the forest in front of him, working with feverish energy at earthworks, *abattis*, and *chevaux de frise*, in the hope of rendering absolutely impassable what Nature had made nearly so. But the Russian general was not of the school with whom frontal attacks are the alpha and omega of strategy. Masking his intentions by ostentatious movements during three days on the right bank of the Tchanti Argoun, he suddenly threw the bulk of his forces across that river, and, storming with little loss the lofty heights known as the Miskin Doukh, descended into the circular valley occupied by the aouls of Lesser Varanda, the inhabitants of which for the most part gladly gave in their submission. The next move was to recross the river opposite the village of Zonakh, build a temporary fort there, and convert the path between this point and Fort Argounskoe into a passable road. One-half of the gorge leading to Shatoe was now held by the Russians, and a precisely similar movement was soon to make them masters of the remaining portion. Crossing to the left bank once more, siege was laid to the ridge between Lesser and Greater Varanda. Again recourse was had to the axe, the pick, and the spade, while more martial weapons were called into requisition only in so far as they were needed to guard the working parties from the half-hearted attacks of the enemy. The labour was very great, for the mountain was steep and high, the forest dense, the trees of gigantic size, nor was the heat of summer less trying than the frost and snow of the preceding winter. But with a seasoned army and such a leader there was no flagging. By the end of July all was once more ready, and on the 30th of that month Shamil's son, Kazi Muhammad, who had been left in command, had the mortification of seeing the Russians cross the ridge, drive the defending force from the aouls of Greater Varanda,

and storm the heights which separated them from the valley in which lay the numerous villages collectively known as Shatoe.

After this there was practically no resistance. The Russian advanced guard crossed the Tchanti Argoun and occupied the promontory on which stands the present fort and settlement of Shatoe; they next proceeded to establish direct communications through the fort at Zonakh with Fort Argounskoe, so that they now held both banks of the Tchanti Argoun all the way to Shatoe. The Murids burnt all the neighbouring aouls still in their hands, compelling the inhabitants, whenever possible, to join their ranks, and soon afterwards retreated to Vedén, leaving behind them a legacy of hatred, which effectually removed all further difficulty from the path of the invaders. One after the other all the aouls on either side of the Tchanti Argoun right up to the snowy range volunteered their submission. They even attacked Shamil's lieutenants and drove out such Murids as remained. The inhabitants of Eetoum Kalé, at the point where the Tchanti Argoun, after running east for some miles, turns abruptly north, took prisoner the naïb, Hamzad, killed his brother, and sent urgent messages to the Russians to come and take possession of the fort and its one piece of ordnance. Two paltry companies of infantry marched quite unmolested to the spot through the most savage of all the Argoun gorges, and were hailed by the people as deliverers! Thus the whole of the Upper Argoun fell without a blow struck or a shot fired into the hands of the invaders, who thereby acquired, in addition to the advantages already enumerated, a new line of communication with Transcaucasia, a new line of approach to Daghestan. To this day the "three-eyed" general's name remains identified with the conquest

of the Argoun valley, where Shamil's fort at Eetoum Kalé has ever since borne the name of Yevdokeemovskoe.[1]

Wrangel, who had replaced Orbeliáni, meantime made another step westward from Daghestan and occupied part of Goumbet and the rest of Aoukh, while Vrevsky repeated his last year's incursion and brought the Deedos to such ruin that all heart was taken out of their resistance. Vrevsky was mortally wounded at the storming of the aoul of Keetouree, but his work was done, and his successor, Prince Levan Melikoff, when in 1859 he took part in the general advance, found his chief difficulties in the wild and mountainous nature of the country.

It was during the second Argoun expedition, in the summer of 1858, that Shamil for the last time took the offensive. The people of Nazrán were under the immediate rule of a Russian preestaff, and the high privilege of bearing the banner of St. George had been conferred upon them in reward of their former conspicuous loyalty. But now, just when the native cause was finally lost, they revolted, and, as usual in the many insurrectionary movements that have taken place in the Caucasus, the fault lay with the Russians, who for greater ease of administration had decided to gather the Ingoushee from many small aouls and scattered farms into a few large settlements.[2] The necessary orders were given, with the natural result of rousing the strongest discontent and opposition. Messengers were despatched to offer Shamil allegiance and beg his help, while at Nazrán itself the inhabitants rose in open rebellion, killed several straggling soldiers, and made more than one fruitless attempt on the fort. Shamil eagerly seized the opportunity for a diversion thus unexpectedly offered, crossed the Tchanti

[1] Akti, xii. p. 1110 : Yevdokeemoff's Journal.
[2] Akti, xii. p. 1082.

Argoun under the fire of Yevdokeemoff's guns, and plunged boldly down towards the plains. But at Atchkoi on the 9th June he was defeated with some loss, and, failing to reach Nazrán by a more circuitous route, retired across the Argoun. Meantime Slieptsóvskaya on the east and Vládikavkáz on the west had heard the alarm guns at Nazrán at noon, and by evening of the same day six sotnias of cavalry, two battalions of infantry, and six guns were concentrated at the beleaguered fort, the garrison relieved, and the rebellion repressed. The four chief ringleaders were hanged on the kourgán crowning a conspicuous hill some 2 versts away, and forty children were taken to Vládikavkáz as hostages for the good behaviour of their parents. Here they were kept in a house which was practically a prison, and both crowded and dirty, with the natural result that when after long absence the survivors returned to their own country it was with minds debauched and hearts filled with hatred of their oppressors.

Six weeks later Shamil, still hoping that such a diversion would constrain the Russians to retreat, made another dash at Nazrán at the head of 4000 horsemen, but Yevdokeemoff had timely notice of the movement; the garrison was again reinforced, and Shamil and his band, on debouching from the hills into the valley of the Soundja, instead of surprising the Russians, as they expected, were immediately attacked and completely defeated by Colonel Meeshtchenko, the same day that Yevdokeemoff stormed the heights of Varanda and thereby gained Shatoe (30th July). The Murids left 370 dead on the field of battle, together with 1500 weapons of various kinds, whereas the Russian loss was only 16 killed and 24 wounded.[1]

[1] After Shamil's fall large numbers of the Ingoushee, and notably the clan known as the Karaboulaks, who have left their name to a Cossack stanitsa,

The first quarter of 1859 brought with it for the Russians a success as great as it was unexpected. The lines of investment were drawing closer, and the approaches to the mighty fortress, whose walls were mountain ranges, whose trenches were abysmal chasms, were nearing completion. The final assault was to be delivered in the course of the summer. All three columns were to set out simultaneously though independently in the middle of July, but the main attack was to be delivered by the united forces of Wrangel and Yevdokeemoff advancing from Bourtounai through Goumbet, leaving Vedén untouched on their right. The way was to be prepared to some extent by winter expeditions against the northern fringe of Shamil's remaining dominions in Tchetchnia, but the "Three-eyed One," whether led on by the fortunes of war or of deliberate intent, none knew, did that which had found no place in Bariátinsky's plan of campaign. Moving cautiously from his base at Vozveezhenskoe, he took with ease the heights of Tauzen, and advanced to Vedén. Still acting with the greatest circumspection, he gradually completed the investment of that place, and on the 1st of April, after a two months' siege, took it by assault with quite insignificant loss.[1] Shamil, who had been hovering in the neighbourhood, retired southward—an easier way was now open than through Goumbet; and Yevdokeemoff, raised by his grateful sovereign to the dignity of a count of the Empire, instead of merely joining hands with Wrangel at Bourtounai, had the honour of leading the main attack by way of Khorotchoi and the Andee lakes.

Prince Bariátinsky's report to the Emperor at the conclusion of the war gives in the following passages some insight into Yevdokeemoff's character and methods, and the reasons for the success of the present operations compared with the failures of the past. He writes: "Yevdokeemoff never once gave the enemy a chance of fighting where they meant to and where the advantage might have been on their side. The strongest positions held by Shamil and his hordes fell almost without resistance as a result of well-planned movements only. In contrast to Akhoulgó, Saltee, Gherghébil, and Tchokh, the sieges of which, some of them not even successful, cost us thousands, the capture of Vedén, where Shamil had concentrated all his means for a most determined resistance, cost us only twenty-six killed and wounded. . . . Three things—a systematic conduct of the war, the able dispositions of the chief leaders, and the arming of the troops with rifles—reduced our losses in the Caucasus to a minimum, and this, in turn, coupled with the fact that engagements were decided by tactical movements, was the chief cause of our success. The mountaineers were not to be frightened by fighting. Constant warfare had given them such confidence, that a few score men would engage without hesitation a column several battalions strong, and firing one shot to a hundred would occasion us more loss than we them. Fighting implies some sort of equality, and, so long as they could fight, the enemy had no thought of submission. But when, time after time, they found that, in fact, they could never come to blows, their weapons fell from their hands. Beaten, they would have gathered again on the morrow. Circumvented and forced to disperse without fighting, while their valleys were occupied without opposition, they came in next day and offered their submission. Shamil's power was undermined by nothing so much as by

took part in the emigration of the Muhammadan tribes to Turkey, while those who remained have since acquired an evil reputation as the most daring highway robbers and assassins in the Caucasus.

[1] Akti, xii. p. 1136: Yevdokeemoff's Journal.

fruitless gatherings of men who had to disperse to their homes without anywhere offering serious defence. These last three years, in spite of constant campaigning and the subjugation of numerous populations, count among the least costly in the blood of your Majesty's faithful soldiers of all the war."[1]

The results of the fall of Vedén were even greater morally than materially. The final preparations for the summer campaign were only completed during the first fortnight of July, up to when there had been little more fighting; but by that time the invaders had none the less made most significant progress; for, one by one, as they became convinced of Russia's power to protect them, the remaining Tchetchen communities gave in their submission, and were, according to circumstances, either left in their homes or deported wholesale to the northern plains. In this way Tchaberloi, Itchéria, and the upper portion of Aoukh—the former inhabited by the most savage and inaccessible of the Tchetchen tribes—fell away from Shamil. In the far south the Avars dwelling in Antsoukh and some other districts on the northern slopes of the main chain likewise surrendered. Many of Shamil's most prominent naïbs submitted with the peoples over whom they ruled; Daniel, Sultan of Elisou, was negotiating his second act of treachery, this time in favour of Russia; and to crown all, even Keebeet Mahomá, the sturdy Kadi of Tilitl, had realised the utter futility of further resistance. He not only proffered his own submission, but in proof of sincerity arrested Aslan, Kadi of Tsoudakhár, the most fervent preacher still left to Muridism. On the 14th July Prince Bariátinsky joined Yevdokeemoff in his camp beyond Vedén, and the final advance began. The total strength

[1] Akti, xii. p. 1275.

of the three columns, not yet united, was 38 battalions, 7 squadrons, and 40 sotnias, with 48 guns—altogether about 40,000 men.

Shamil meantime had not been idle. His attitude in this hour of trial commanded the admiration even of his enemies. The rapid and numerous successes of the Russians, the defection of his own people, the loss of whole provinces, the vastness of the military preparations against him, and the patent fact that they were guided at last by one who had the will and the power to crush him, must have convinced all but the wilfully blind that the end was at hand. But, as ever in the day of adversity, his spirit rose to the occasion, his courage remained undaunted. All that could be done to avert disaster he did. Driven from the forest-clad hills of Tchetchnia, his sure refuge in 1839 and chief abode ever since, he took once more to the bare and lofty plateau of his native Daghestan, and set to work with undiminished energy and sagacity to stem the tide of invasion. Taking his stand at Itchikalee, he fortified that place and others north of the Andee Koisou, and prepared to defend the passage of that river both against Wrangel's column and Yevdokeemoff's, calling for a levy *en masse*. But all was in vain. Yevdokeemoff mounted the Andee range and camped successively at the little lake of Yani-am, the large one of Esen-am,[1] and again the small one of Ardji-am, on the slope of the range overlooking Botlikh; and no sooner were the Russian bayonets seen glittering above the valley of the Andee Koisou than a veritable *débâcle* set in. Those of the Tchaberloi who had been transplanted by Shamil to Avaria sent a deputation to Bariátinsky begging to be allowed to return to their homes under Russian protection, and offer-

[1] Retlo, Forélnoe Ozero, Trout Lake.

ing unconditional submission. On the 25th July they were safely brought across the river by a mixed detachment of Russians and their own tribesmen, already enrolled as militia in spite of an attempt to prevent it by Shamil's naïb, Debeer. Next day the same thing was repeated with the exiles from Andee, this time under the very eyes of Shamil's incompetent son, Kazi Muhammad, who, hearing, no doubt, that Wrangel had crossed the river to the east and threatened his line of retreat, abandoned Itchikalee with its new-made fortifications and eleven guns, and likewise the vast fortified camp on the left bank of the river at Konkhidatl, the remains of which are still visible. Without a blow he retired to Karáta, leaving Avaria open.

Wrangel's advance guard had reached the Andee Koisou on the 15th July and secured the passage at Sagritl between Tchinkat and Igalee. Crossing the river, he fought his way against slight opposition up the heights of Akhkent on the 22nd, and no sooner was he established there than the whole of Koisoubou and Avaria, where no Russian save prisoners or renegades had been seen since the dark days of 1843, submitted without a murmur.

To the east a subsidiary column, leaving Shourá on the 14th, had captured the tower of Bouroundouk Kalé, and lay encamped on the right bank of the Avar Koisou between Irganai and Ziriáni.

Finally, Levan Melikoff, after some fighting, had compelled the submission of the Deedos; and on the 5th August, undeterred by the most formidable natural obstacles, he joined Bariátinsky at Botlikh.

The three armies were now in touch, and all opposition had ceased. Oullou Kalá, the strong fort near Gherghébil, had surrendered voluntarily on the 24th July, impregnable Tchokh the same day. On the 28th Keebeet

Mahomá appeared at Golotl, and himself led the Russian advance guard under General Rakous to his native stronghold Tilitl, seeing which all the communities of the upper Avar Koisou made haste to tender their submission. On the 7th August Daniel Sultan, who had already surrendered Ireeb and his other fortresses, rode in to Bariátinsky's camp at Botlikh to beg, and receive, pardon.

Shamil meantime seeing that all was lost, the fabric of his power falling about him like a house of cards, his warrior hosts melted away like the snow from their native mountains, fled from Karáta with his wives and children, escorted only by a small band of his most intimate and devoted adherents, and by a roundabout way reached his last refuge, Gouneeb. On the road, as if to emphasise his fallen condition, the baggage and treasure train of the dreaded Imám, now once more a homeless fugitive, was attacked and partly pillaged by the women of Akhvakh, a community noted for its gross and savage customs.[1] The fugitives were again attacked near Roudja before reaching their destination, and deprived of all but what they carried on their persons;[2] but the dwellers on Gouneeb were still loyal, and with them and his own little band, amounting together to no more than 400 men, the indomitable chieftain set to work to render that mountain stronghold as far as possible impregnable. But remembering the past, he declaimed sorrowfully the verses of an Arab poet: "I had brothers whom I looked upon as coats of chain mail: lo! they have become mine enemies: I counted them as sharp arrows: such indeed they were, but arrows that have pierced my heart." On the 9th August Wrangel arrived, and the

[1] Including a predilection for raw meat and an unmentionable complaisance in the matter of hospitality.

[2] At the instigation, it is said, of Keebeet Mahomá.

siege began. The following day Prince Bariátinsky with Yevdokeemoff and his staff, escorted by a small body of Russian and native cavalry, left Botlikh on a tour of inspection through the submitted territory, which rapidly assumed the aspect of a triumphal progress. Crossing the river near Tlokh, where Hadji Mourád's widow was presented to him, he visited Igalee, Sagritl, Tchinkat, and Ashiltá. Passing the night of the 13th at that aoul, he rode on to Ountsoukoul and Ghimree. There he parted from his Russian escort, and so great was the change wrought in the last few days, that he continued the tour accompanied only by his staff and some natives of Koisoubou and Avaria. Ascending the heights of Akhkent, on the 14th he was at Tanous, on the 15th at Khounzakh, where he confirmed the restoration of the Avar Khanate. Two days later he met Keebeet Mahomá at Golotl, and graciously accepting his invitation, accompanied him to Tilitl and dined in his house. That night he bivouacked at the foot of the Saddle or Portmanteau (Tchemodan) Mountain, and on 18th August, after visiting Roudja and Tchokh, joined Wrangel in his camp on the Kegher heights overlooking Gouneeb, having everywhere met, not merely with submission, but with a hearty and even enthusiastic welcome.[1]

The nature of Shamil's last refuge will best be gathered from the accompanying plan (p. 478). The contour lines bring out clearly the perpendicular escarpments that crown its rocky walls, rising abruptly on every side to a height of from 3000 to 5000 feet, while the western extremity is no less than 7718 feet above sea-level. Within these walls the surface is more or less deeply hollowed out, with a

[1] Bariátinsky's report to the War Minister of the 22nd August : Akti, xii p. 1172.

central ridge running down from the culminating point. Completely isolated from the chaos of mountains around it, abundantly supplied with fresh water, and capable of growing barley, oats, hay, and garden produce to a considerable extent, Gouneeb, in days when long range guns were unknown, was a natural stronghold, wanting only an adequate garrison to be as nearly impregnable as can be, and Russian writers may be forgiven for expatiating on the difficulties it presented. But a moment's consideration must convince any one of the utter hopelessness of Shamil's attempt to defend it with no more than 400 men. As a matter of fact it was scaled by companies, and even by whole battalions, in ten different places at once, and it is enough to point out that counting every man of the garrison there would only be forty to each of the storming columns, or parties, if all of them had been stationed on the outer ridge: they would have been scattered, moreover, round a perimeter of 20 versts in ten groups, each isolated from all the rest. With 4000 men Gouneeb might well have been impregnable; with 400, a successful defence was out of all question. One of the columns at least was bound to succeed in gaining the crest, and then the whole defending force would be required at one point, leaving the rest exposed.

Shamil's tent was pitched on the middle plateau facing the narrow eastern extremity of the mountain overlooking the Kara Koisou, and, when Bariátinsky rode in, he must have seen the stir in the Russian camp and heard the ringing cheers of the soldiery as they welcomed their beloved and triumphant chief. Dark and bitter, doubtless, were his thoughts, yet not without some mitigation. Thirty years had passed since, fired by religious enthusiasm and love of liberty (or, as the Russians have it, of fanaticism and

license) he had raised with Kazi Moullá the standard of the Holy War. During all that time, through good and evil fortune, he had remained faithful to the Cause and to himself. While the first Imám lived he had served him with a rare devotion, and it was only by little less than a miracle that he had failed to share his fate. During Hamzád's brief rule he had shown equal fidelity, though he might justly have claimed the succession himself. Chief of the Faithful since 1834, he had achieved an astonishing measure of success, and the merit was mostly his own. Now, when three decades of ceaseless strife against the colossal might of Russia had brought him face to face with complete and final failure, his conscience acquitted him of blame, and with that verdict the impartial historian must agree; for though the one grave fault we must lay to his charge, that of cruelty, contributed immediately to his downfall, the main and ultimate causes were beyond his control.

Muridism, we have seen, began in a movement aiming at religious reform, based on the mystic doctrines of the Tarikat. But mysticism is for individuals, and can never shape the faith or control the destinies of nations. As the movement spread, its leaders soon saw that for the mass of their followers they must restrain their teaching to the practical rules of the Shariat; and from the moment that they aimed at political independence it was inevitable that the worldly element should gradually dominate the spiritual, and the law of Muhammad become, as indeed with its author, the instrument of earthly desires and ambitions. The process was a natural one, and Russian writers are no more justified in accusing the Murid leader of hypocrisy on this account, than they are in denying patriotism to the mountaineers because their conception

of it was limited for the most part to the narrow bounds of the communities into which from time immemorial they had been divided.

Shamil had failed because success was impossible. He had to contend from the beginning not only against Russia but against a far worse foe—internal dissension; and from the nature of the circumstances he could overcome neither the one nor the other. Had the whole of the Caucasus been inhabited by one people, it would, doubtless, under such a leader have withstood any external force that could be directed against it. As it was, the partial success that rewarded his efforts towards unity was due almost solely to the fact that he was all the time carrying on the heroic struggle for independence; for nothing else would have constrained the fierce mountaineers to bear with so dark a tyranny. Yet in the end, by the irony of Fate, Russia alone benefited by all that he wrought and suffered. Shamil himself was the first to see this, and in after years, when a captive at Kalouga, he claimed the merit of having, by his administrative measures and their merciless enforcement, made it easy for his conquerors to hold in peace what it had cost them so much to win; for he had to some degree accustomed the tribes to habits of discipline, teaching them to fight together in a common cause while rigorously repressing their mutual hostility. It follows that in the long run—paradoxical as it must sound—Muridism was the instrument, not the enemy, of Russian domination.

To what extent personal ambition inspired Shamil's actions it were idle to inquire. His avowed object was to achieve national independence, and to bring this within the bounds of possibility he saw, with the comprehensive glance of true statesmanship, that the only means was the union of all the tribes in blind obedience to the law of

the Shariat and to his own commands. To compass this he spared no effort, neglected no opportunity, stopped short at no measures, however severe. He attained a measure of success great indeed, yet less in reality than in appearance; for even at the height of his power, when brilliant victories in the field had thrown a temporary glamour over his rule, the elements of discord were still present, though hidden for the moment under a seemingly untroubled surface. To maintain his authority he was driven to acts of the most merciless cruelty, and the apostle of Liberty became, as elsewhere, the most despotic of Tyrants. Even this might have been borne had he retained all the power in his own hands, but, delegated to a large extent to his son, Kazi Muhammad, to his favourite naïbs and to others of his creatures, it was abused beyond the limits of human endurance, at least that of the wild and savage mountaineers. Add to this the strain of the long war—not an aoul, not a house but had lost husbands, fathers, brothers; whole families exterminated, whole villages destroyed, whole communities decimated—the fields untilled, the vines undressed, the fruit-trees untended—all this in Daghestan, his own country, where at last his mandate ran unchallenged; and in the lowlands of Tchetchnia it was worse, for there the unhappy people were harried and despoiled alternately by friend and foe. If we consider, finally, the effect of Shamil's severity, of the blood feud, and of the lavish use of gold in furnishing Russia with an unlimited supply of native auxiliaries—scouts, guides, light cavalry in the field; spies and traitors in the enemy's camp—we shall have no difficulty in realising that Shamil's was indeed a lost cause; nor shall we wonder that in the course of thirty years of foreign warfare and domestic tyranny Muridism, losing first its religious influence, lost also in the long run its political attraction;

that men and women through the length and breadth of Daghestan and Tchetchnia, driven to despair by penury and oppression, threw off at last with joy a burden above their strength, and bent their necks contentedly to the Russian yoke.

Standing on the rocky brow of Gouneeb that August day Shamil knew that the end had come, that this time he was lost past redemption; but his proud spirit could not brook the thought of surrender, and, rejecting the proffered mediation of Daniel Sultan and others, he prepared to defend himself to the last and die sword in hand.

But it was not to be. On the eve of the Emperor's birthday, the 25th August, Bariátinsky, having completed his preparations, gave orders for the assault, and in the grey of early morning, favoured by the mist, the eager battalions led by native guides swarmed over the mountain parapet on every side, and joined hands on the upper plateau. Shamil retreated to the aoul. In one place a hundred of the Murids, surrounded by the triumphant Russians, fought like heroes and died to a man; in another a handful of them who attempted to stop the onward rush of the Ápsheron men were all killed, and with them three women, who showed more than the fury of their husbands and brothers. The end had come; but Bariátinsky, anxious, if possible, to take Shamil alive, gave orders before proceeding to storm the aoul to make every effort to induce surrender. It is probable that had Shamil been alone he would have defied his enemies to the last, and died as Kazi Moullá died at Ghimree; but with him were his wives and his children, and those of the faithful villagers. If an assault took place he knew well that most, if not all, of them would perish. He was daunted at last. He sent out two of his adherents to treat for terms; the answer naturally enough

was a demand for unconditional surrender; then Colonel Lázareff, who knew him personally, made his way to the aoul, and promising that his own life and the lives of all those with him should be spared, persuaded him to give in. In a tumult of conflicting emotions he mounted his horse and rode forth, but had gone but a little way when the Russian soldiers, seeing their lifelong enemy at last in their hands, set up a ringing cheer. Shamil blenched, drew rein, and turned to regain the aoul; but the wily Armenian dashed after him, and calling out, with ready wit, that the cheering was only a mark of honour, induced him to turn again. Followed by about fifty of the Murids, the sole remnant of his once mighty hosts, he rode towards the wood where Bariátinsky, surrounded by his staff, sat waiting on a stone. Shamil dismounted and was led to the feet of his conqueror, who, addressing him by name, told him that he answered for his personal safety and that of his family; but he had refused terms when offered, and all else must now depend on the will of the Emperor. The stern Imám bowed his head in silence, and was led off captive. Next day he was sent to Shourá, and thence to Russia, where, later on, his family was allowed to join him.[1]

[1] The Russian losses in the assault and capture of Gouneeb were 21 killed and 159 wounded and contused. Of the Murids, 50 were left alive out of 400. Shamil dwelt at Kalouga in honourable confinement until 1869, when at his own request he was transferred to Kief. The next year he was allowed to make the pilgrimage to Mecca. He died at Medina on the 4th February 1871

APPENDIX

I

The Song of the Death of Khotchbar

(From General Uslar's Russian version[1])

"A MESSENGER came from the Avar Khan to summon Khotchbar of Ghedatl.[2]

"'Shall I go to Khounzakh, oh, my mother?'

"'Go not, my darling, go not! The grief for blood that is spilt lasts long; the Khans—may they perish!—set traps for men.'

"'Not so, I will go; or the vermin of Khounzakh will think that I fear them; the despised Noutsal will call me a coward.'

"So Khotchbar rode to Khounzakh, driving before him an ox, a gift for the Khan; a ring he took with him to give the Khan's wife.

"'Hail! Noutsal of Avaria!'

"'Khotchbar of Ghedatl, hail! Thou art come at last, oh wolf that rendest the sheep! Thou art here, oh enemy of the Avars!'

"While the Noutsal and Khotchbar were talking, the crier cried aloud—

"'Let him who has a cart bring pine-wood from the forest

[1] The present writer heard this song recited in a robber castle deep in the wild country of the Kists, to the east of the Georgian road.

[2] Ghedatl, or Gheed, was an Avar community to the south of the khanate, and, owing to its favourable situation in a wide basin surrounded on all sides by mountains, with a comparatively good climate and fertile soil, one of the strongest and most flourishing. The inhabitants were frequently at war with their cousins of Akhvakh and of the khanate, and extended their frontier at the former's expense. They were noted for their horned cattle and farm produce, which they sold to their neighbours and to the Russian garrisons. The name is now only given to a small aoul near the left bank of the Avar Koisou, at the foot of the Bogos range, having three peaks of over 13,000 feet. Kazi Moullá's paternal grandfather was a native of Ghedatl.

above the aoul; let him who has none load his ass with it; let him who has neither arba nor donkey carry it on his own back! Our enemy Khotchbar has fallen into our hands; let us build a pyre and burn him!'

"The crier ceased, and six men sprang upon Khotchbar, and bound him. On the long hill-side of Khounzakh they made such a blaze that the very rock grew red-hot beneath it. They brought Khotchbar to the fire; they brought to it his gallant bay steed; they slaughtered it with their swords; they broke in twain his sharp-pointed spear, and threw the pieces into the flames—the hero winked never an eye!

"'Come now, Khotchbar, sing us something; it is said thou art a master of song. Play us somewhat on the lime-wood cithern; it is said thou playest well!'

"'Well indeed can I sing; but my mouth is gagged. Well indeed can I play; but my hands are bound.'

"The young men cried that Khotchbar should be loosed; but the old men said, 'Wolf-deeds we fear from a wolf!'

"The young men had their way; the hero was unbound.

"'Listen now, men of Khounzakh; I will sing you a song; and thou, oh Khan, interrupt me not.'

(*He sings to the cithern.*)

"'Who but I clambered in through your window, and carried off the silk trousers of your favourite wife? Who but I took the silver bracelets from the white arms of your complaisant sisters! Who but I cut the throat of your tame Tour![1] There, above, are the sheepfolds; who drove the sheep away? why are they empty? There, below, is the stable; who drove the horses off? Where are they now? Lo, on the housetops, the widows! Who killed their husbands and made them such? Orphans I see around me! Who slew their sires and orphaned them? None can count the number of those who have died by my hand, in the fields! in the forest! I have slaughtered no less than three-score men of your tribe! These are deeds, oh Noutsal, worthy of Fame; but to take a man by fraud and kill him—what shall we say of that?'

"While Khotchbar sang and played, the two little sons of

[1] Mountain goat, *Capra Caucasica*.

the Khan came round and sat at his feet. Snatching them up suddenly, one in each hand, the hero leapt into the flames.

"'Why shriek, ye Noutsal cubs. Do not *I* burn with you?

"'Why squeal, ye piglings. Did not *I* too love the Light?

"'Alas! for my gallant bay, that trampled so oft the heels of the flying Avars! Alas! for my pointed lance, that pierced full oft the breasts of the Noutsal's henchmen!

"'Weep not, mother mine—not vainly your darling dies!

"'Let not my sisters greet—I perish gloriously!'

"There was scraping of viols and beating of drums, from morn till noon; Khotchbar of Ghedatl was taken!

"There was weeping and wailing when noon was past; the Avar princes had perished in the flames!"

The date of this occurrence, historical, no doubt, as to the main facts, is unknown. The reference to a pine-wood in close proximity to Khounzakh argues considerable antiquity; for not a tree of any sort grows near, nor has done in the memory of man. The barrenness, indeed, of the neighbourhood is, after the chasm into which the Tobot plunges just below the aoul, its most striking feature. The whole song is highly characteristic—Khotchbar's pride and courage; his stoical firmness when his favourite horse is killed, his trusty spear broken; the vaunting strain of his death-song, with its string of insults, based on truth, but purposely exaggerated—are all of a nature to excite to the utmost the admiration of the mountaineers, and at the final catastrophe their enthusiasm knows no bounds. It is not difficult to imagine Hadji Mourád in similar circumstances behaving exactly as Khotchbar is said to have done.

II

What Hadji Mourád and his companions sang on this occasion is unknown, but the following "Song of the Death of Hamzad" gives a vivid picture of a similar

scene, and is interesting as a specimen of Tchetchen poetry:

"The white hawk, flying, overtakes her prey and seizes it with her talons. She seizes it—and straightway bathes her beak in blood.

"The spotted panther, swift of foot, overtakes his quarry and tears it with his mighty claws.

"The bold Hamzad, with the gallant horsemen of Ghikh, crosses to the left bank of the Térek and leaves the river behind him.

"The brave Hamzad has crossed the Térek and entered the Nogai Steppes. He has captured a herd of white horses and recrossed the Térek, driving it before him.

"At the dawn of day he crossed it and drove the herd into the brushwood of Shirván, on the Hill of the Tcherkess.

"There was danger by day, and the riders were tired. They halted at Shirván-Koulee and hid their spoil in the thicket.

"When he had hidden his booty and his companions in the wood, Hamzad ascended a high Kourgán, and looked through his glass to see if the Russians were coming.

"Hamzad looks and sees a numerous band darkening the place where he had forded the Térek. As fast as black clouds driven by the wind that band comes galloping on his traces.

"Seeing the multitude he went down from the Kourgán and said to his companions: 'They follow as fast as the wind follows the clouds. Be not afraid, we will fight like famished leopards.'

"And again he said unto them: 'We will slaughter the horses and the cattle, and surround ourselves with them as with a rampart. So shall we be able to defend ourselves.'

"His companions joyfully gave their consent. They cut the throats of the horses and stabbed the horned cattle and made a strong fence round about them.

"And again Hamzad spoke to his companions and said: 'The Naïb of Ghikh, Akhverdi Mahomá, stands likewise no doubt with his men on the hill-top.

"'When he hears the noise of our fighting with the Russians he will fly to our aid like a bird of the air.' But this he said but to hearten his companions.

"Hamzad sat down with his riders behind the bloody breastwork and ordered one to keep watch on the enemy. The sentinel stands gazing earnestly.

"And lo! a horseman gallops out in front of the crowd—Prince Kagherman—and coming within hail cries out, 'What Prince's people are you?'

"The warder answers never a word, but transmits the question to Hamzad: 'Prince Kagherman wishes to know what prince's people we are.'

"Brave Hamzad went out from behind the breastwork and drew near to the horseman. 'What do you want of us?'—'To know what prince's people you are!'

"Hamzad laughed. 'We know no princes nor want to; we are riders from Ghikh, and came for spoil.'—'Art thou not Hamzad?' asked Kagherman.—'I am Hamzad!'

"'It's a pity, Hamzad, that you came here. A Russian band has overtaken you—overtaken and surrounded you. Unless you can grow wings as of migrant birds and fly up in the air, you cannot escape. The Russian commander has sent me: he will spare you, if you surrender without fighting.'

"To this Hamzad answered: 'I came not here, oh Kagherman, for want of money: I came to win the death of the Ghazavát. And were I to surrender to thee, all the people of Ghikh would laugh me to scorn.

"'As a wolf tired and hungry longs to reach the forest, as a horse unfed and mettlesome the fresh clean meadow—so do my companions thirst for the fight unto death. Nor do I fear thee, Kagherman: I laugh at all thy force: for our hope is in God, the all-powerful.'

"And again Hamzad said to Kagherman: 'Ever we sought booty and gold, but for such a day as this there is nothing so precious as the beautiful black powder.'

"And again he said: 'Gold is not money to-day; to-day the trusty Crimean flint is pure gold.'

"Kagherman went back to the Russian commander and told him that Hamzad refused to surrender. And Hamzad returned to his rampart and sat down with his companions.

"Then the troops came up and began firing; and Hamzad and his riders fired back.

"Thick was the smoke of their firing, and Hamzad said: 'May this day be accursed! So hot it is, that we have no shade but that of our swords.'

"And again he said: 'How thick is the smoke, how dark the day! Our only light is the flash of our guns.'

"And again Hamzad said to his companions: 'The Houris of Paradise look down on us from their windows in Heaven and wonder: they dispute together whose they shall be; and she who falls to the braver of us will vaunt it before her friend—and she who falls to the less brave will blush for shame; she will close the lattice on him and turn away; and if any of you plays the coward this day may his face be black when he stands before God!'

"But Hamzad thought in his heart the while that death was upon him; he could hope no more.

"High in the heavens he saw the birds flying and called to them: 'Oh, birds of the air! Give our last greeting, our ultimate salutation, to the Naïb of Ghikh, Akhverdi Mahomá. Greet also from us the beautiful ones, the damsels fair, and tell them that our proud breasts serve to stop Russian bullets—tell them that our wish was to rest after death in the graveyard at Ghikh, where our sisters would have wept on our tombs, and all the people would have sorrowed—but God grants no such grace. Not the sobbing of our sisters will be heard above us but the howling of famished wolves. Not relations in troops will gather round, but a flock of ravens swart.

"'And tell them too, on the Tcherkess hill, in the land of the Giaour, bare blades in hand, we lie dead. The ravens pick out our eyes, the wolves tear our flesh.'"

The Russian translator tells us that he has more than once seen tears in the eyes of even the most staid amongst the Tchetchens when listening to the song of Hamzad, who was an Abrek (outlaw) from one of the aouls on the Térek. He fled to the mountains in the early years of Muridism, and as leader of small raiding parties continually troubled the Cossack Line, where, thanks to his dauntless courage and thorough knowledge of the locality, his raids were nearly always successful.

Another Tchetchen death-song may be rendered as follows:—

"The earth will dry on my grave,
Mother, my Mother!
And thou wilt forget me!

And over me rank grasses wave,
Father, my Father!
Nor wilt thou regret me!
When tears cease thy dark eyes to lave,
Sister, dear Sister!
No more will grief fret thee!

But thou, my Brother the Elder, wilt never forget,
With vengeance denied me!
And thou, my Brother the Younger, wilt ever regret
Till thou liest beside me!

Hotly thou camest, oh death-bearing ball that I spurned,
For thou was my Slave!
And thou, black earth, that my battle-steed trampled and churned,
Wilt cover my grave!

Cold art Thou, oh Death, yet I was thy Lord and Master!
My body sinks fast to earth; my Soul to Heaven flies faster."

The supreme confidence in the brother as the avenger of blood is worthy of note.

III

SHAMIL'S PSALM

COMPOSED BY HIM TO REPLACE ALL PROFANE SONGS

Translated from the Russian version of Professor Mirza Alexander Kazem-Bek, who is also responsible for the notes

Oh, servants of God, people of God!
Help us, in the name of God[1]
Give us your help.
Maybe we shall succeed by the mercy of God
For the sake of Allah, servants of God,
Help us for the sake of God.

[1] Those addressed are the Spirits of the Just (Awliyá); many names are mentioned in the Taríḳat, and collectively they are known as Rijálu 'Uáh = God's people.

O ye Aḳtáb, O ye Audat,
Ye Abdál, ye Asiad,[1]
Help us, help us,
And intercede before God
For the sake of Allah, &c., &c.

To whom shall we turn, but to you?
We have none but you;
We look for happiness from you alone,
O sainted ones, people of God.
For the sake of Allah, &c., &c.

We prayed to the people of God.
They increased the sufferings of the enemy;
They are the true Gate of the Path
And that is the Gate we seek.
For the sake of Allah, &c., &c.

Oh God, for the sake of thy saints
Grant the end we desire:
That happiness may smile upon us
That we may rest in God.[2]
For the sake of Allah, &c., &c.

Oh, Tá-Ḥá, oh, Yá-Sín,
Oh, Ḥá-Mím, oh, Tá-Sín![3]

[1] Aḳtáb=the poles, Audat=links, connections, &c. The name Abdál is given in the Tarikat to the seventy chosen by God out of the number of those who have attained perfection. Without them the world cannot exist; it is they who govern the invisible world of Spirits, in relation to which the physical is but a mere expression. Forty Abdál were allotted to Syria alone; the remaining thirty to the rest of the world. The number of seventy must be full for the world to be happy. This is a Buddhist belief adopted by Islam. No Mussulman understands it, but they believe it, only unconsciously. The character of the Dalai Lama is more defined, more clear, because the Buddhism prevailing in Central Asia is not manifested in secondary forms. A Mussulman may disbelieve the ravings of Fakirs and Dervishes, as indeed most do; but in Thibet belief in the Dalai Lama is obligatory. The Abdál sometimes appear in the character of the Russian Yourodeevui.

[2] This has a double meaning; that we, attaining our ends, may glorify God in peace and quietness, or that falling in the Path of God we may rest in the *bosom of the Saints*.

[3] Twenty-nine chapters of the Koran begin with mystic letters often enough, forming whole words without any meaning, such as those in this song.

We are thy unhappy servants,
To thee alone we send up glory
For the sake of Allah, &c., &c.

Thy will, oh God, has been heard,
That is our desire and our aim.
Thy name is our device,
Thy glory our weapon!
For the sake of Allah, &c., &c.

We besought you as to our needs,
Now we turn to you for their fulfilment.
To you again, oh ye Saints!
Oh, beseech God, pray to God,
For the sake of the names and attributes
For the sake of the Most High Being,
For the sake of the Saints, for the sake of the Most Honourable One,
For the sake of the Prophets, for the sake of their deeds!
For the sake of Allah, &c., &c.

For the sake of Tá-Ḥá, the sovereign of the worlds,[1]
For the sake of 'Alí the most holy:
You, the light of the eyes of truth,
Lead us to the wished-for end.
For the sake of Allah, &c., &c.

In the name of the Lord, who chose you out,
Who endowed you with the light,
Who gave you power in this world,
Come, come and help us!
For the sake of Allah, &c., &c.

So far the hymn has referred to the holy steps of the Tarikat. Shamil now addresses it directly to the Murids.

Orthodox Mussulmans do not venture to explain them or express a definite opinion about them. Many see in them a hidden meaning; some interpretations, however, are but too simple, as, "Oh man! pay heed, oh man! Oh, Muhammad," &c., &c. The mystics generally like to attempt the explanation of these letters, and have whole volumes on the subject called 'Ilmu'l-Hurúf, the science of letters. Only on this account are they introduced into Shamil's song, and because they are sanctified by the Koran.

[1] That is, for the sake of the Prophet Muhammad.

Make bare the sword, oh people!
Come to our help:
Bid good-bye to sleep and quietness,
I call you in the name of God!
For the sake of God, &c., &c.

To the rescue, zealous ones,
Come, come and conquer,
Conquer, oh friends,
Conquer, oh chosen ones,
For the sake of God, &c., &c.

Zaynu'l-'Abidín [1] is in your midst,
Lo, he stands at the door.
He shivers on account of your want of steadfastness,
And prays to God the Only One,
For the sake of God, &c., &c.

You are the Gates to Allah,
Come, save, make haste,
Those who have strayed, have fallen away,
Have fallen away from the people of God.
For the sake of God, &c., &c.

Not once only have we conquered,
Not once only have we prayed with the friends,[2]
Not once only have the cups gone round amongst us,[3]
Not once only have we drunk from them remembering the name of Allah.
For the sake of God, &c., &c.

We went round about, we came in good time,
We made pilgrimages, we turned again;
Everywhere we saved our brethren,
And we found the people of God.
For the sake of God, &c., &c.

[1] This is the proper name of the 4th Imám of the Shí'ites, and has a great importance in mysticism.

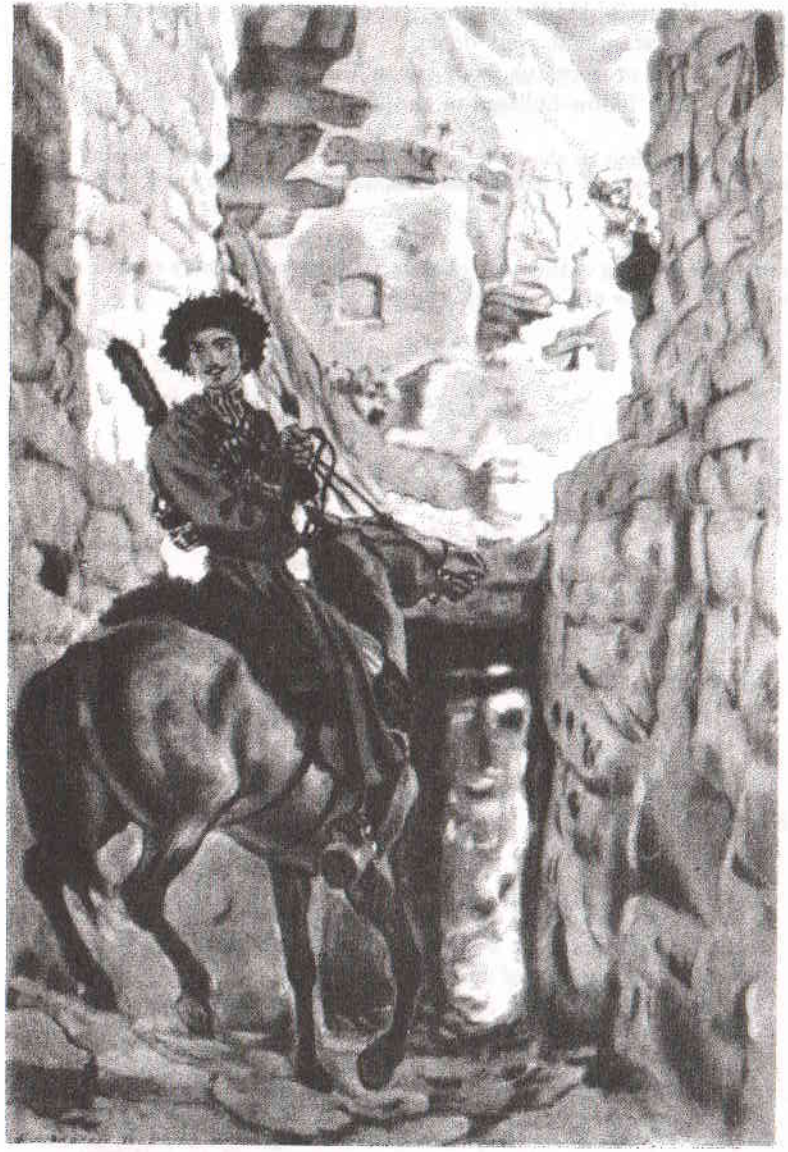
[2] That is, we overcame by persuasion our Mussulman brothers, who had submitted to the Russians, and prayed with them, and rejoiced in their salvation.

[3] The cup means, as with Ḥáfiẓ, according to the mystics, Divine Love. Wine is forbidden, and Shamil never drank it.

Zaynu'l-'Abidín inspires you,
He stands at your doors,
God preserve us from backsliding.
On! fellow-fighters in the cause of God![1]

[1] This song was sung in chorus by all the Murids accompanying Shamil, who rode almost always at a foot's pace, except, of course, when engaged in military operations.

NOTE.—The spelling of the Arabic words has been most kindly revised by Prof. E. G. Browne of Cambridge.



E. Lansère. "Hadji Mourád" by L. Tolstoy

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THE END

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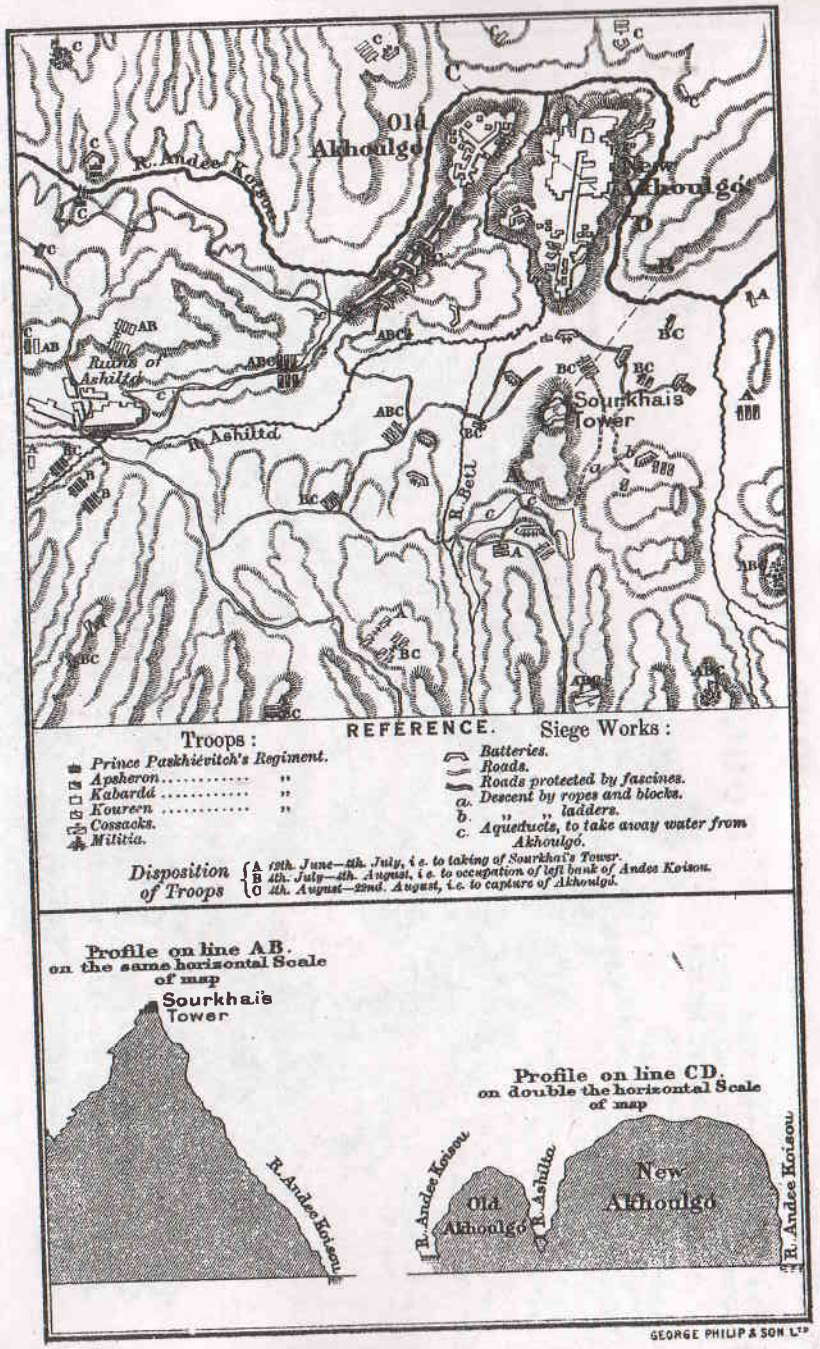

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G. 2 ,, Kazi Koumoukh ,,
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M. 21st Rifle Battalion.
O. 1st & 4th Battns Apsheron Regt
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K. 4 Guns No 5 Mountain Batty
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÷ ,, Guns.

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