

## Conquest of Sindh

The first and only Arab invasion coincided in date with two other signal successes in distant parts of the globe. Gothic Spain was shattered at the battle of the Guadalete in 710; the standards of Islam were carried from Samarkand to Kashghar in 711-714 ; and the valley of the Indus was invaded in 712. These three steps mark the apogee of the power of the Omayyad caliphate, and coincide with the administration of one of the ablest and most relentless of all Muslim statesmen. Al-Hajjaj, the governor of Chaldea, sent Kutaiba north to spread Islam over the borders of Tartary, and at the same time

dispatched his own cousin Mohammad Kasim to India. The reigning caliph consented unwillingly; he dreaded the distance, the cost, the loss of life. Even in those days, to adapt modern phrases, there were the opposing policies of 'Little Arabians ' and 'Imperialists.' Hajjaj was imperialist to the core, and to him the Arabs owed the impulse which gave them all they ever won in India. The story of Mohammad Kasim's adventures is one of the romances of history. He was but seventeen, and he was venturing into a land scarcely touched as yet by Saracen spears, a land inhabited by warlike races, possessed of an ancient and deeply rooted civilization, there to found a government which, however successful, would be the loneliest in the whole vast Mohammedan empire, a province cut off by sea, by mountains, by desert, from all peoples of kindred race and faith. Youth and high spirit, however, forbade alike fear and foreboding. The young general had at least six thousand picked horsemen to his back, chosen from the caliph's veterans, with an equal number of camelry, and was supplied with a baggage-train of three thousand Bactrian camels. Marching through Mekran, along the Persian coast, he was joined by the provincial governor with more troops ; and five stone-slings for siege-work were sent by sea to meet him at Daibul, the great mediaeval port of the Indus valley, the forerunner of Karachi. There in the spring of 712 Mohammad Kasim set up his catapults and dug his trench. A description of this siege has come down to us from an early historian from which it appears that the Arab spearmen were drawn up along the trench, each separate company under its own banner, and that five hundred men were stationed to work the heavy catapult named ' the Bride.' A great red flag flaunted on the top of a tall temple, and the order came from Hajjaj, with whom the general was in constant communication, to 'fix the stone-sling and shorten its foot and aim at the flagstaff.' So the gunners lowered the trajectory and brought down the pole with a shrewd shot. The fall of the sacred flag dismayed the garrison; a sortie was repulsed with loss; the Muslims brought ladders and scaled the walls, and the place was carried by assault. The governor fled, the Brahmans were butchered, and after three days of carnage a Mohammedan quarter was laid out, a mosque built, and a garrison of four thousand men detached to hold the city.

After the storming of Daibul, the young general marched up the right bank of the Indus in search of the main body of the enemy. Discovering their outposts on the other side, he tied a string of boats together, filled them with archers, made one end fast to the west bank, and then let the whole floating bridge drift down and across, like an angler's cast of flies, till it touched the opposite side, where it was made fast to stakes under cover of the archers' arrows. The enemy, unable to oppose the landing, fell back upon Rawar, where the Arabs beheld for the first time the imposing array of Hindu chiefs, mounted on armoured war-elephants, and led by their king Dahir. Naphtha arrows, however, disordered the elephants and set fire to the

howdahs; the king was slain, the Hindus fled, and 'the Muslims were glutted with slaughter.' The Indian women showed the desperate courage for which they were famous. The king's sister called them together, on seeing the defeat of their men ; and, refusing to owe their lives to the 'vile cow-eaters,' at the price of dishonour, they set their house ablaze and perished in the flames. Another victory at Brahmanabad opened the way to Multan, the chief city of the upper Indus, which surrendered at discretion, but not without an exhausting siege. The fighting men were massacred; the priests, workmen, women, and children made captives. The fall of Multan laid the Indus valley at the feet of the conqueror. The tribes came in, 'ringing bells and beating drums and dancing,' in token of welcome. The Hindu rulers had oppressed them heavily, and the Jats and Meds and other tribes were on the side of the invaders. The work of conquest, as often happened in India, was thus aided by the disunion of the inhabitants, and jealousies of race and creed conspired to help the Muslims. To such suppliants Mohammad Kasim gave the liberal terms that the Arabs usually offered to all but inveterate foes. He imposed the customary poll-tax, took hostages for good conduct, and spared the people's lands and lives. He even left their shrines undesecrated : 'The temples,' he proclaimed, 'shall be inviolate, like the churches of the Christians, the synagogues of the Jews, and the altars of the Magians.' There was worldly wisdom in this toleration, for the pilgrims' dues paid to the temples formed an important source of revenue, and the puritanical Muslims found it expedient to compound with idolatry, as a vain thing but lucrative, in the interests of the public fisc. Occasional desecration of Hindu fanes took place, —we read of 'a cart-load of four-armed idols' sent as a suitable gift to the caliph, who no doubt preferred specie — but such demonstrations were probably rare sops to the official conscience, and as a rule the Mohammedan government of Multan was at once tolerant and economic. The citizens and villagers were allowed to furnish the tax-collectors themselves ; the Brahmans were protected and entrusted with high offices, for which their education made them indispensable; and the conqueror's instructions to all his officers were wise and conciliatory ' Deal honestly,' he commanded, 'between the people and the governor; if there be distribution, distribute equitably, and fix the revenue according to the ability to pay. Be in concord among yourselves, and wrangle not, that the country be not vexed.' The young general's fate was tragic. A new caliph succeeded who was no friend to the conqueror of Sind. Hajjaj was dead, and there was none to oppose factious intrigues at the distant court of Damascus. In spite of his brilliant achievement, Mohammad Kasim was disgraced and put to death. The story runs that he had made too free with the captive daughters of Dahir before presenting them to the caliph's harim, and that he was punished for the presumption by being sewn up alive in a raw cow-hide.' Three days afterwards the bird of life arose from his body and soared to heaven'; and the hide with its noble burden was sent to Damascus. The young hero had made no protest, never questioned the death-warrant, but submitted to the executioners with the fearless dignity he had shown throughout his short but valiant life. But when the sacrifice was accomplished, the Indian princesses, moved perhaps by the courage of a victim brave as their own devoted race, confessed that their tale was deliberately invented to avenge their father's death upon his conqueror. The caliph in impotent fury had them dragged at horses' tails through the city till they miserably perished, but the second crime was no expiation for the first.

The Arabs had conquered Sind, but the conquest was only an episode in the history of India

and of Islam, a triumph without results. The Indus province, it is true, is as large as England, but it consists chiefly of desert, and the Arabs made no attempt to extend their dominion into the fertile plains beyond. It has been supposed that the crude civilization and austere creed of the Muslims stood paralyzed in face of the rich and ancient culture, the profound philosophy, and the sensual ritual of the Hindus; but these contrasts did not check the later successes of Islam in the same land. The more obvious explanation of the Arabs' failure is found in the as yet unbroken strength of the Rajput kings on the north and east, and in the inadequate forces dispatched by the caliphs for so formidable a project as the conquest of India. After the first expedition under the ill-fated Mohammad Kasim we hear of no reinforcements, and twenty years after his death the Arabs were still so insecure on the Indus that they built a city of refuge as a retreat in times of jeopardy. The province was not only imperfectly subdued but extremely poor, and the caliphs soon abandoned it in all but name as too unremunerative to be worth maintaining. The Arab settlers formed independent dynasties at Multan and at the new city of Mansura which the conqueror's son founded in lower Sind ; and when the traveller Mas'udi visited the valley of the Indus in the tenth century he found chiefs of the Prophet's tribe of the Kuraish ruling both the upper and the lower province. A little later another traveller, Ibn-Haukal, explored Sind, where he heard Arabic and Sindi spoken, and observed much friendly toleration between the Muslim and Hindu population. Soon afterwards Multan became a refuge for scattered bands of Karmathians, when the power of these anarchists waned before the rising ascendancy of the Fatimid caliphs of Egypt, and Arabia was delivered from the Karmathian reign of terror. But the meagre annals of this limited and ineffectual occupation of an unimportant province need not detain us. The Arab conquest of Sind led to nothing, and left scarcely a vestige save in the names of certain Arab families and in the ruins of the buildings they destroyed. The Arab cities have perished, but the wrecks of the castles and cities of their predecessors, which formed as usual the quarries for their conquerors' buildings, still bear witness to the civilization which they uprooted.

### **THE IDOL-BREAKER: MAHMUD OF GHAZNI (997-1030)**

The Arab invasion was a failure. It attacked from the wrong quarter, entered on the least productive province, and was too feebly supported to spread further. We hear no more of the Arabs as conquerors in India. The role devolved upon the Turks, and when we speak of the Mohammedan empire in India we mean the rule of the Turks. Their invasion was no part of the expansion of Islam as a religious movement. It was merely the overflow of the teeming cradle-land of Central Asia, the eastern counterpart of those vast migrations of Huns, Turks, and Mongols, which from time to time swept over Europe like a locust cloud. Huns, Scythians, and Yavanas had poured into India in prehistoric ages through those grim north-western passes which every now and then opened like sluiceways to let the turbid flood of barbarians down into the deep calm waters of the Indian world. Their descendants still muster in tribes and clans on the borders of Hindustan, and have brought strange customs and beliefs to mingle with that old religion of the Vedas which the Aryan forefathers of the Brahmans and Rajputs bore with them through the same narrow entry. Following in their track Alexander led his armies to meet Porus on the Hydaspes; and after him came Grseco-Bactrian legions to inspire new ideas of art and civilization, and to learn perhaps more than they taught. Finally the Muslim Turks discovered the same road, and once familiar with the way, they came again and again until all

India, save the very apex of the south, owned their sway. The southerly migration of the Turks was the master-movement in the Mohammedan empire in the tenth and eleventh centuries. Hitherto the caliphate had remained undisturbed by armed invasion. On the fall of the Omayyad line, the seat of government had been moved from Damascus to the new capital founded by their successors the Abbasid caliphs at Baghdad, and the change had been followed by a large influx of Persian ideas into the Arab system. Persian officials, better educated and shrewder men of affairs, replaced Arabs in many of the chief posts of government, and as the central authority grew weaker and more effeminate, Persian governors acquired almost independent power in the more distant provinces and began to found hereditary dynasties, one of the most powerful and enlightened of which was that of the Samanid princes in the country about the Oxus. The increase, peaceful as it was, of Persian influence, combined with the constant jealousies and truculence of the Arab tribes settled in Mesopotamia, induced the caliphs to provide themselves with a guard of mercenaries closely attached to the throne, and for this purpose the warlike and handsome young Turks captured on the northern frontier supplied all that was desired in valour and ability. Surrounded by such praetorians the caliphs indulged their love of luxury free from the dread of Persian usurpation or Arab revolt. But it was introducing the wooden horse into the Muslim Troy. The Turkish guard became the masters of the caliphs; Turkish officers gradually acquired the control of provinces; and throughout the Mohammedan empire, from Egypt to Samarkand, the Turks became the dominant race. Their success attracted others of their kind. Like Joseph they soon invited their brethren to come and share their prosperity. Turks overflowed into Persia from their native steppes; the Samanid kingdom, after two centuries of power well employed, fell to a scramble among Turkish adventurers, and this scramble led to the invasion of India. Among the Turkish condottiere who rose to high office in northern Persia was one Alptagin, who, falling out with his Samanid lord, established himself with a couple of thousand followers in the fortress of Ghazni ' in the heart of the Afghan mountains (a.D. 962). Here, in a kind of no-man's-land, secure from interference, he made his little kingdom, and here after an interval his slave Sabuktigin reigned in his stead (976). The new ruler was not content with the original stronghold of his master. He gathered under his banner the neighbouring Afghan tribes, added whole provinces to his dominions,— Laghman to the east in the Kabul valley, Sistan on the Persian side;— and, when called in to support the tottering Samanid prince of Bukhara against the encroaching Turks, he turned the occasion to his own advantage and placed his son Mahmud in command of the rich province of Khurasan. Sabuktigin was the first Muslim who attempted the invasion of India from the north-west. He went but a little way, it is true; his repeated defeat of Jaipal, the Brahman raja of the Panjab, in the Kabul valley, ended only in the temporary submission of the Indian king and the payment of tribute ; but it pointed the way into Hindustan. Sabuktigin died (997) before he could accomplish any larger scheme, but his son more than realized his most daring dreams. Mahmud had all his father's soldierly energy and spirit of command, joined to a restless activity, a devouring ambition, and the temper of a zealot. Zeal for Islam was the dominant note of the tenth-century Turks, as of most callow converts. The great missionary creed of Mohammad, which to the Arabs and Persians had become a familiar matter of routine, was a source of fiery inspiration to the fresh untutored men of the steppes. To spread the faith by conquest doubled their natural zest for battle and endowed them with the devoted valour of martyrs. Mahmud was a staunch Muslim, and if his

campaigns against the idolaters brought him rich store Of treasure and captives, it was in his eyes no more than the fit reward of piety; and in the intervals between his forays into heathendom he would sit down and copy Korans for the health of his soul. The caliph of Baghdad, who had probably outgrown such illusions, was not the man to baulk a willing sword. He sent Mahmud his pontifical sanction and the official diploma of investiture as rightful lord of Ghazni and Khurasan, and in the height of satisfaction Mahmud vowed that every year should see him wage a Holy War against the infidels of Hindustan. If he did not keep the letter of his vow, he fell little short. Between the years 1000 and 1026 he made at least sixteen distinct campaigns in India, in which he ranged across the plains from the Indus to the Ganges.' His first attack was of course upon the frontier towns of the Khaibar pass. His father's old enemy Jaipal endeavoured in vain to save Peshawar. Mahmud threw out 15,000 of his best horsemen and utterly routed him, despite his larger forces and his 300 elephants. Jaipal and fifteen of his kindred were brought captives before the conqueror. Their jewelled necklaces, worth, it is said, ninety thousand guineas ' apiece, were torn off, and half a million of slaves, and booty past counting, according to the florid statements of the oriental historians, fell into the hands of the Muslims. Mahmud was not cruel; he seldom indulged in wanton slaughter ; and when a treaty of peace had been concluded, the raja and his friends were set free. With the proud despair of his race Jaipal refused to survive his disgrace. Preferring death to dishonour, he cast himself upon a funeral pyre. There were many other kings besides Jaipal, however, and when—after a successful raid upon Bhira, where 'the Hindus rubbed their noses in the dust of disgrace,' and another to Multan, whose Mohammedan (or rather Karmathian) ruler fled aghast—Mahmud appeared again at the mouth of the Khaibar in 1008, he found all the rajas of the Panjab, backed by allies from other parts of Hindustan,'a measureless multitude,' mustered to resist him, with Anandpal the son of Jaipal at their head. Mahmud had never yet encountered such an army, and he hastily intrenched his camp and waited forty days facing the constantly swelling forces of the enemy. His first move, probably a mere reconnaissance, was disastrous. The thousand archers he sent forward were chased back into the camp followed by a charging mob of wild Gakkars—a fierce Scythian tribe whose outbreaks troubled the peace of the northwest frontier as late as 1857, and whose savage aspect, bareheaded and barefoot, and barbarous habits of infanticide 'and polyandry, struck terror and disgust among the Muslims. These frantic hillmen rushed the trenches and slashed right and left ; man and horse fell before their onslaught, and it almost came to a panic among the Turks. The Rajputs were already advancing under cover of the Gakkars' charge, and Mahmud was about to sound the retreat, when one of those lucky accidents happened which have often turned the fortune of a day. Anandpal's elephant took fright ; the rumour ran that the raja was flying from the field ; vague suspicions and distrust spread about, and a general stampede ensued. Instead of retreating before a victorious army, in the turn of an instant Mahmud found himself pursuing a panic-stricken crowd. For two days the Muslims slew, captured, and despoiled to their hearts' content.' They had come through fire and through water, but their Lord had brought them into a wealthy place.' On a spur of the snow mountains, surrounded by a moat, stood the fortress of Kangra (Nagarkot), deemed impregnable by mortal power. Here the rajas and wealthy men of India were wont to store their treasure, and hither the triumphing Muslims came, hot with pursuit and victory. The panic that had dissolved the hosts of the Panjab seized also upon the garrison of the fortress, weakened as it must have been by the general levy to oppose the

invaders. At Mahmud's blockade the defenders 'fell to the earth like sparrows before the hawk.' Immense stores of treasure and jewels, money and silver ingots, were laden upon camels, and a pavilion of silver and a canopy of Byzantine linen reared upon pillars of silver and gold were among the prizes of the Holy War. The booty was displayed in the court of the palace at Ghazni, 'jewels and unbored pearls and rubies, shining like sparks or iced wine, emeralds as it were sprigs of young myrtle, diamonds as big as pomegranates.' The eastern chroniclers tell of seventy million silver dirhams, and hundreds of thousands of pounds' weight of silver cups and vessels ; and, with every allowance for exaggeration, the spoils must have been colossal. All the world flocked to Ghazni to gaze upon the incredible wealth of India. Such rewards were incentives enough to carry on the pious work. Year after year Mahmud swept over the plains of Hindustan, capturing cities and castles, throwing down temples and idols, and earning his titles of 'Victor' and 'Idol-breaker,' Ghazi and Batshikan. Little is known of the political condition of India at the time of these raids, but it is evident that after the great rout in the Panjab there was no concerted resistance. The country was split up into numerous kingdoms, many of which were at feud with one another. There were the Brahman kings of Gandhara on the Indus, the Tomaras at Delhi and Kanauj, the Buddhist Palas of Magadha on the lower Ganges, the survivors of the Guptas in Malwa, the Kalachuris on the Narbada, the Chandillas of Mahoba, and many more, who united might have stemmed any invasion, but whose jealousies brought their ruin. Internal division has proved the undoing of India again and again, and has sapped the power of mere numbers which alone could enable the men of the warm plains to stand against the hardy mountain tribes and the relentless horsemen of the Central Asian steppes. To the contrasts of union and disunion, north and south, race and climate, was added the zeal of the Muslim and the greed of the robber. The mountaineers were as poor as they were brave, and covetous as they were devout. The treasures of India, heaped up round the colossal figures of obscene idols, appealed irresistibly to these hungry fanatics. It was no wonder that they carried all before them, devoured the rich lands like a cloud of locusts, and returned to their frozen homes with a welcome such as meets the mooring of an argosy. Each campaign made them stronger and more terrible. They brought home not treasure only but recruits, and to the volunteers who flocked to the spoil from the Oxus and Iaxartes, and to the unrivalled cavalry of their native steppes, they gradually added a powerful force of elephantry fit to confront the heavy arm that formed the first line in an Indian battle. Mahmud's success, however, was not won without hard fighting and sore privations. Man was more easily overcome than nature, and the endurance of the hardy and vigorous northmen was often tested almost to the breaking-point. When they set out in 1013 to invade 'the capital of India,' whose king had failed to pay his annual tribute of fifty laden elephants and two thousand slaves, they were checked at the frontier by deep snow ; the mountains and valleys appeared almost level under the treacherous white mantle, and the army was forced to protect itself in winter quarters. Moving onwards in the warmer weather, they wandered for months 'among broad deep rivers and dense jungles where even wild beasts might get lost.' At last they found 'the king of India'—probably one of the Sahi dynasty of Gandhara — posted in a narrow pass with his vassals at his back. The veterans from the Oxus and those 'devilish Afghan spearmen bored into the gorge like a gimlet into wood,' but it took several days of hard fighting before the place was carried. Then followed a weary march across the stern desert of Rajputana to Thanesar, a day's journey from Delhi, and here again a local raja had to be dislodged from a steep pass where he waited with

his splendid troop of Ceylon elephants behind a rapid river. But Mahmud was no novice in tactics. He forded the river and crowned the heights on either side, and while two detachments fell upon the enemy's flanks the sultan's main battle flung itself into the ravine and the position was stormed. The river ran blood, the pass was a shambles; but the Hindus fled, their famous elephants were captured, and their town gave up its spoil. There was no lack of volunteers to aid in the Holy War. Mahmud's victories were known all over the East, and twenty thousand warriors came to him from the country beyond the Oxus, praying to be granted the privilege of fighting for the faith and so perchance attaining the crown of martyrdom. With a large army, stiffened by these zealots, the sultan fought his greatest campaign in 1018, and pushed further east than ever before. He marched upon Kanauj, the capital of the Tomara rajahs and then reputed the chief city of Hindustan. The march was an orgy and an ovation. Everywhere envoys waited on the conqueror bearing proffers of homage and welcome. The chief who held the passes of Kashmir, which immemorial jealousy had guarded with infinite precaution from foreign footsteps, tendered his fealty and his service as a guide. One after the other the rivers of India were crossed, Indus, Jehlam, Chenab, Ravi, Sutlej, with scarcely a check. Forts and cities surrendered as the great sultan passed by; abject chiefs placed their followers at his disposal; through the thick jungle he penetrated 'like a comb through a poll of hair,' fighting when necessary, but more often triumphing by mere prestige. Early in December he reached the Jumna and stood before the walls of Mathura, an ancient home of Hindu worship, filled with temples 'not built by man but by the Jinn,' where colossal golden idols flashed with jewels, and silver gods of loathly aspect stood so huge that they had to be broken up before they could be weighed. Pressing eastwards, Kanauj was reached before Christmas. The raja had already fled at the mere bruit of the sultan's coming, and the seven forts of the great city on the Ganges fell in one day. Of all its gorgeous shrines not a temple was spared. Nor were the neighbouring princes more fortunate. Deep jungles and broad moats could not protect Chandalar of Asi; and even Chand Rai, the great lord of Sharwa, when he heard the ominous tramp of the Turkish horsemen, gathered up his treasures and made for the hills: for it was told him that 'Sultan Mahmud was not like the rulers of Hind, and those who followed him were not black men.' Flight did not save Chand Rai; the enemy tracked him through the forest, and coming up with him at midnight attacked in the dark, routed, plundered, and revelled for three days, and carried home such booty and mobs of prisoners that the slave markets of Persia were glutted and a servant could be bought for a couple of shillings. Two years later the sultan met the evasive raja of Kanauj. It was at the 'Rahib,' — probably the Ramaganga, — a deep river with a black bituminous bottom, 'fit to scald a scabby sheep.' Forging was out of the question, and Mahmud ordered his advance-guard to swim the river on air-skins, plying their bows as they swam. The men plunged in, the Hindus scurried away, and once more victory declared for the -men of the north. In the next two campaigns Lahore, Gwalior, and Kalinjar surrendered to a conqueror who would take no denial, and in the winter of 1025-6 the sultan made his final march into Gujarat, crowned with the capture of Somnath, its costly temple and its wondrous god. There a hundred thousand pilgrims were wont to assemble, a thousand Brahmans served the temple and guarded its treasures, and hundreds of dancers and singers played before its gates. Within stood the famous linga, a rude pillar-stone adorned with gems and lighted by jewelled candelabra which were reflected in the rich hangings, embroidered with precious stones like stars, that decked the shrine. So long as this worshipful emblem stood inviolate,

Mahmud could not rest from his idol-breaking, nor his treasury boast the finest gems in India. Hence his arduous march across the desert from Multan to Anhalvvara, and on to the coast, fighting as he went, until he saw at last the famous fortress washed by waves of the Arabian sea. Its ramparts swarmed with incredulous Brahmans, mocking the vain arrogance of the foreign infidels whom the god of Somnath would assuredly consume. The foreigners, 'nothing daunted, scaled the walls ; the god remained dumb to the urgent appeals of his servants ; fifty thousand Hindus suffered for their faith, and the sacred shrine was sacked to the joy of the true believers. The great stone was cast down, and its fragments carried off to grace the conqueror's palace. The temple gates were set up at Ghazni," and a million pounds' worth of treasure rewarded the iconoclast. The sack of Somnath has made Mahmud of Ghazni a champion of the faith in the eyes of every Muslim for nearly nine centuries, and the feat, signal enough in itself, has been embellished with fantastic legends. The difficulties of the outward march were renewed on the return ; the army was led astray by treacherous guides and almost perished in the waterless desert, from which it escaped only to fall into the hands of the predatory Jats of the Salt Range, who harrassed the exhausted troops as they toiled homewards laden with spoils. It was to punish their temerity that before the year was over Mahmud led his army for the last time into India. He is said to have built a fleet at Multan, armed it with spikes and rams, and placed twenty archers with naphtha bombs on each of his fourteen hundred boats, which engaged the vessels of the Jats, four thousand in number, and by rams and naphtha sank or burned their craft. Whatever really happened, we may be sure that there were never five thousand boats on the upper Indus, and that mountain tribes do not usually fight naval battles. Having chastised the Jats, whether by land or water matters little, Mahmud retired to Ghazni, where he died four years later (30 April, 1030). In all these laborious though triumphant campaigns the thought of their home-coming must have been uppermost in every man's mind, from sultan to bhisti. There was no dream of occupying India. The very disunion and jealousy of the Hindu rajas, which smoothed the way to wide and successful forays, offered obvious obstacles to permanent annexation. Each victory meant no more than the conquest of one or more princes ; the rest were unaffected, and, since there was no single supreme head to treat with, the most complete success in the field did not imply the submission of the country. The mass of the people, no doubt, did submit, just as they have patiently submitted to a series of foreign rulers with immovable indifference ; but so long as there were chiefs in arms, followed by bands of desperate Rajputs, an occupation of India was beyond the means of the forces of Ghazni. But Mahmud did not aim at permanent conquest. The time had not yet come when the Turks could think seriously of living in India. Their home was still beyond the passes, and in the latter years of his reign Mahmud had extended his rule over the greater part of Persia, as far as the mountains of Kurdistan, —a land of Muslims and in every way, save wealth, infinitely preferable in Turkish eyes to sultry Hindustan, though not perhaps to the climbing terraced villages among the sweet green valleys and familiar crags of the Afghan hills. Mahmud had overrun northern India from the Indus to the Ganges, but his home was still Ghazni, his patria was among the mountains. Here he stored his immense treasure, and here he presided over a stately and cultivated court. Like many a great soldier he loved the society of educated men. The man of action is every whit as inapt to 'suffer fools gladly ' as the man of culture ; and this restless adventurer, after sweeping like a pestilence for hundreds of miles across India, and pouncing like a hawk upon Khwarizm beside the sea of Aral, and then coursing south to

Hamadhan almost within call of Baghdad itself, would settle down to listen to the songs of poets and the wise conversation of divines. If Mahmud is to Muslims for all time a model of a god-fearing king, zealous for the faith, his court has not less been held a pattern of humane culture, and it deserved its reputation. Napoleon imported the choicest works of art from the countries he subdued to adorn his Paris ; Mahmud did better, he brought the artists and the poets themselves to illuminate his court. From the cities of the Oxus and the shores of the Caspian, from Persia and Khurasan, he pressed into his service the lights of oriental letters, and compelled them, not unwillingly, to revolve round his sun like planets in his firmament of glory. The ruin of the Samanid dynasty, who had been noble fosterers of Persian literature, left many scholars and poets unprovided, and these came eagerly to the new home of learning. The names of the many luminaries who shone at the court of Ghazni may not convey very definite ideas to Western readers, but they are among the leaders of Eastern literature and science, and some have a reputation outside the circle of orientalists. Biruni, the astronomer, chronologist, and even student of Sanskrit ; Farabi, the philosopher, whom Mahmud prized the more since Avicenna himself refused to be lured to Ghazni ; Utbi, the historian and secretary to the sultan ; Baihaki, whose gossiping memoirs have earned him the title of 'the oriental Mr. Pepys ' ; Unsuri and Farrukhi and Asjudi, among the earliest poets of the Persian revival, and above all Firdausi, the Persian Homer, in whose 'Shah Nama' the heroes of old Persian legend live for ever—these were among the men to whom Mahmud was gracious and who in return made Ghazni and its master renowned beyond the fame of glorious war. There is no need to repeat here the oft-told story of Firdausi's wrath at the silver guerdon with which the sultan crowned the famous epic. Sixty thousand pieces of silver— even though the poet had been promised gold — represent something like 2500 pounds, and would be a welcome remuneration for a library of epics in the present day. Milton had to be content with the two hundred and fiftieth part of such a sum for ' Paradise Lost.' The notable part of the story is, not that the poet indignantly spurned the gift, threw it loftily among the menials, and then rewarded Mahmud's kindness and support by a scathing satire—such outbreaks belong to the genus irritable —but that the great sultan at last forgave the insult and sent a second lavish gift, of 50,000 guineas, to appease the offended poet in his exile. It was the usual irony of fate that the reward reached Firdausi's home in Khurasan just at the moment when his body was being borne to the grave. Though one must acquit the sultan of any want of appreciation of Firdausi's great work, or indeed of literary and scientific achievement in general, tradition will have it that he was avaricious ; and there is a quaint anecdote in Sadi's ' Rose Garden' —a tedious but renowned Persian classic—in which it is related how a certain king of Khurasan dreamed that he saw Mahmud a hundred years after his death, and perceived that, whilst his body had crumbled to dust, the eyes still rolled in their sockets, as if seeking the wealth that had vanished from their sight. Yet it is hard to reconcile this reputation for avarice with what is recorded of the sultan's gifts ; with his annual grant of two hundred thousand guineas to men of letters ; his foundation of a university at Ghazni, endowed with a great library, a museum, salaried professors, and pensions for scholars ; his sumptuous mosque of marble and granite, furnished with gold and silver lamps and ornaments and spread with costly carpets ; or the aqueducts, fountains, cisterns, and other improvements with which he enriched his capital. If Mahmud was fond of money, assuredly he knew how to spend it wisely and munificently; and the splendour of his courtiers' palaces, vying with his own, testified to the liberal encouragement of the arts which

raised Ghazni, under the rule of the Idolbreaker, from a barrack of outlaws to the first rank among the many stately cities of the caliphate. The man who could so create and develop a centre of civilization was no barbarian. Like some other ugly men, Mahmud is said to have devoted himself to the cultivation of his mind in order to efface the impression of his physical defects ; but it was no ordinary mind that he had to work upon, and no mean genius that could expand a little mountain principality into an empire that stretched to the Caspian and Aral seas and almost to the Tigris, and that covered, at least for the time, half the vast plains and teeming population of Hindustan. Brief as was the occupation of most of this immense territory, it was a stupendous feat of acquisition. He was aided, no doubt, by the dissensions of his neighbours ; the break-up of the Samanid kingdom and the divisions of the Buwaihid princes in Persia opened the road to annexation in the west, just as the jealousies of the Indian rajas favoured aggression in the east. But it must not be forgotten that Persia was full of Turkish chiefs of the same warlike temper as Mahmud's forefathers, and that his northern frontier was perpetually menaced by the vigorous and aggressive tribes of Central Asia, against whom, nevertheless, he was always able to hold his own. When Ilak Khan, the chief of the Turks on the laxartes, came south to invade Khurasan in 1006 with a great host of his dreaded horsemen, Mahmud did not evade the shock. He led his army in person against the troopers of the steppes, and after bowing to the earth in prayer, reciting his Muslim 'Vater, ich rufe Dich' which he never forgot before a battle, he mounted his elephant and smote the enemy hip and thigh back to their own land. A great soldier, a man of infinite courage and indefatigable energy of mind and body, Mahmud was no constructive or far-seeing statesman. We hear of no laws or institutions or methods of government that sprang from his initiative. Outward order and security was all he attempted to attain in his unwieldy empire ; to organize and consolidate was not in his scheme. He left his dominions so ill knitted together that they began to fall asunder as soon as he was no longer alive to guard them by his vigilant activity. But so long as he lived he strove to govern every part with even justice. The most sagacious and high-minded Asiatic statesman of the Middle Ages, the famous Seljuk vezir Nizam-al-mulk, in his treatise on the art of government, cites many anecdotes of Mahmud's conscientious exercise of justice and the pains he took to protect his widely scattered subjects. ' Mahmud,' wrote the great vezir, 'was a just sovereign, a lover of learning, a man of generous nature and of pure faith.'

Authorities differ as to the number and order of these campaigns. The following is Sir H. M. Elliot's arrangement :

- Frontier towns, A.D. 1000
- Peslawar and Waihind, 1001
- Bhira (Bhatia), 1004
- Multan, 1006
- Against Nawasa, 1007
- Nagarkot, 1008
- Narain, 1009
- Multan, 1010

- Ninduna, 1013
- Thanesar, 1014
- Lohkot (perhaps = 14), 1015
- Mathura, Kanauj, 1018
- The Rahib, 1021
- Kirat, Lohkot, Lahore, 1022
- Gwalior, Kalinjar, 1023
- Somnath, 1025-6
- The Jats, 1026

Peshawar was taken in 1179, and Khusru Malik, the last of the Ghaznawids, a feeble gentle soul, utterly unequal to the task of mastering the anarchy which was ruining the remnant of his fathers' kingdom, hastened to give his son as a hostage and to offer deprecatory presents to the invader. The final catastrophe was thus delayed for a few years. In 1184, however, Mohammad Ghori ravaged the territory of Lahore and fortified Sialkot.