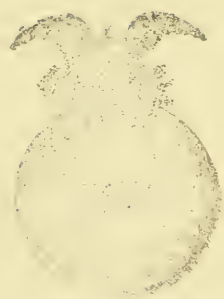


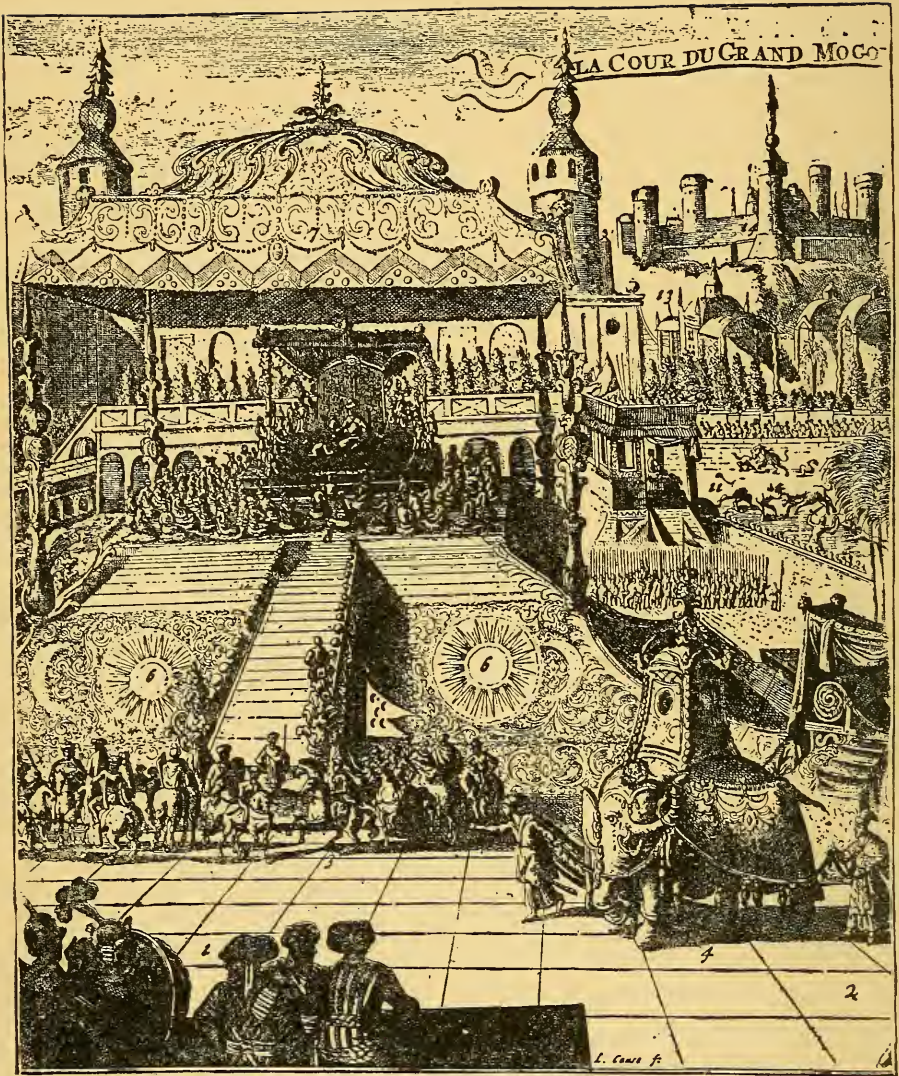
THE
WARRIORS
OF THE
CRESCENT



W. H. DAVENPORT-ADAMS



WARRIORS OF THE CRESCENT.



COURT OF THE GREAT MOGUL.— (After an engraving of the time.)

1. Guard of Omrahs.—2. Guard of the Derani Khas.—3. Cavalry guard.—4. Elephant of the Padichah.—5 and 6. Balustrades of silver.—7. Tent called the Aspek.—8. The Omrahs.—9. The imperial throne.—10. Gallery of the Am-Khana.—11. Park of the Gladiators.—12, 13, and 14. The Citadel.

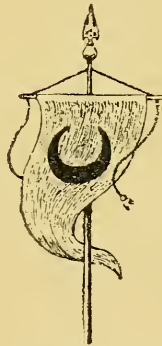
[Frontispiece.]

WARRIORS OF THE CRESCENT

Allen
copy
BY THE LATE

W. H. DAVENPORT ADAMS

AUTHOR OF A BOOK OF EARNEST LIVES
BATTLE STORIES FROM ENGLISH HISTORY, ETC.



NEW YORK
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1892



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BOOK I.

THE SULTANS OF GHAZNI.

CHAPTER I.

MAHMUD THE SULTAN.

ONE thousand years after the birth of Christ there reigned, in the eastern provinces of the land of Iran, a great prince named Mahmud.

He was the son of Subuktigin, a prince who, from the low condition of a slave, had raised himself, by his courage and conduct, to the throne of Ghazni. It was pretended that this man, in his early years of servitude, had received an intimation from Heaven of future greatness. One day, when enjoying the pleasures of the chase, and riding fast and far over hill and dale, he succeeded in hunting down a fawn, and was carrying off his prize when he saw that the dam followed him with painful signs of distress. His heart was touched; and he released the trembling little captive—to be rewarded by the evident gratitude of the mother, who frequently turned and fixed

her gaze upon him as she trotted back to the forest with her offspring. That night the prophet appeared to Subuktigin in a dream, and informed him that in recompense of his humanity, he would be raised to rule over a kingdom, adding, that he must then display the like humanity towards his fellow-men.

It was in Subuktigin's reign that the first collision occurred on the north-west frontier of India between the Moslems and the Hindus. Infuriated by the constant forays of the Afghan tribes, Jaipal, the Hindu chief of Lahore, marched through the wild mountain passes to besiege Ghazni. He was encountered and defeated by Subuktigin, who pressed the pursuit with such ardour that he overtook the Hindus before they gained the mountains, and compelled Jaipal to ransom himself and his army for fifty elephants and a sum of one million dirhams (or about £25,000). Jaipal, on his return to Lahore, held a council, and explained to his nobles and priests the pledge he had given. Said a Brahman on his right, "And wouldst thou degrade thyself by paying ransom to a barbarian prince?" Said a noble on his left, "Greater the degradation to break thy plighted word!" Unfortu-

nately for himself, Jaipal listened to the Brahman, and sent neither elephants nor money. Subuktigin resolved to fetch them, and, followed by a shining array of cavalry, broke through the passes, and swept the land of the Five Rivers with fire and sword. Jaipal drew forth his host to meet him—a host so immense that, to Subuktigin, looking down upon it from the crest of a high hill, it seemed boundless in extent like the ocean, and in number like the ants or locusts of the desert. But the old warrior was in no wise dismayed: he felt himself like a wolf (says the historian) about to attack a flock of sheep. He knew the slow and languid Hindus were no fit adversaries for his stern and irresistible horsemen; and detecting a weak point in their line of battle, he hurled against it in swift succession squadrons of five hundred men, and as soon as a gap was made charged with his entire force, drove through the Hindu masses, and put them to flight with terrible carnage. Then he placed one of his lieutenants in charge of Peshawar, and returned in triumph to Ghazni.

Such was Subuktigin, the father and predecessor of the great Mahmud.

Mahmud was a man of great capacity, of lofty ambition, and inflexible will. Nature had endowed him with extraordinary vigour of mind and body, which he sustained by temperance and frequent exercise. He was not comely in person, however, for he was deeply marked with the small-pox,—a calamity which he openly regretted; “for the sight of a king,” he said, “should brighten the eyes of those who look upon him, whereas Nature has treated me so unkindly that my appearance is positively forbidding.” He possessed all the qualifications of a successful prince and ruler; and during his reign the boundaries of the Ghaznevide kingdom were extended from the shores of the Caspian to the mouth of the Indus.

The most prominent event in his career was the “holy war,” as he entitled it, which he waged against the followers of Brahma, who, as worshippers of idols, were especially hateful to the Muhammadan, the believer in one God, “not made with hands.” Having spent four years in strengthening and confirming his sway to the west of the snow-capped peaks and pinnacles of the Hindu Kush, he entered

upon his scheme of Indian conquest, and carried it out with the energy and persistency which were such marked features of his character. It is said that he invaded India no fewer than *seventeen times*. He spent thirteen campaigns in subduing the Punjab, one in overrunning the beautiful valley of Kashmir, and one each was directed against the great fortified cities of Kanauj, Gwalior, and Somnath. "A volume," says the historian Gibbon, "would scarcely suffice to recapitulate the battles and sieges of his various expeditions. Never was the Muhammadan hero dismayed by the inclemency of the seasons, the height of the mountains, the breadth of the rivers, the barrenness of the desert, the multitude of the enemy, or the formidable array of elephants of war. The Sultan of Ghazni surpassed the limits of the conquests of Alexander; after a march of three months over the hills of Kashmir and Tibet, he reached the famous city of Kanauj, on the Upper Ganges; and, in a naval combat on one of the branches of the Indus, he fought and vanquished four thousand boats of the natives. Delhi, Lahore and Multan were compelled to open their gates; the fertile kingdom of

Guzarat attracted his ambition and tempted his stay ; and his avarice indulged the fruitless project of discovering the golden and aromatic isles of the Southern Ocean. On the payment of a tribute, the Rajas preserved their dominions ; the people, their lives and fortunes ; but to the religion of Hindustan the zealous Mussulman was cruel and inexorable ; many hundred temples, or pagodas, were levelled with the ground ; many thousand idols were demolished ; and the servants of the Prophet were stimulated and rewarded by the precious materials of which they were composed."

It would weary the reader, and prove very unprofitable, if I told in detail the story of each of those seventeen campaigns. Let us confine ourselves to such of the principal incidents as may illustrate the character of Mahmud or the manners and habits and peculiarities of the peoples and the times.

His first campaign brought death and ruin to his father's old antagonist, Jaipal, ruler of Lahore. In a decisive battle, Jaipal and fifteen of his chiefs were taken prisoners. They were admitted to ransom ; and the sums they paid poured a Pactolus of gold

into the treasury of Ghazni. As for the unfortunate Jaipal, having been twice defeated, he was pronounced, according to Hindu custom, unworthy to reign; and, putting on his royal robes, he solemnly transferred his sceptre to his son, mounted a gorgeous funeral pile—composed of aromatic and fragrant woods—and passed away in a chariot of fire (1001).

In the campaign of 1004 Mahmud invaded the province of Multan and laid siege to a town called Bhutia, which for three days successfully resisted the furious attacks of the Muhammadans. Their losses were so heavy that some among them lost heart, and began to talk of retreat. The Sultan, however, with his usual iron resolution, declared that he would lead the next attack in person—"To-day," he exclaimed, "I will conquer or die!" In order to arouse the religious ardour of his soldiers, he appeared on the field in a robe of white, and turning towards Mecca, the sacred city of Islam, prostrated himself on the ground in the face of the whole army. Intense silence prevailed. In two or three minutes he sprang to his feet, and, his countenance flushed with triumph, cried aloud,—“Advance! advance! my prayers have

found favour with God!" And believing themselves favoured by Heaven, the warriors of the Crescent rushed forward with a tremendous shout—like the roar of ocean—and the Hindus, terror-stricken by their victorious aspect, broke in confusion, and fled.

A SUCCESSION OF VICTORIES.

When he entered upon his sixth campaign, in 1008, he found himself confronted by a league of the Hindu princes under Anangpal, son and heir of Jaipal. So strong a spirit of patriotism had been awakened that the Hindu ladies, to raise funds for the maintenance of the army, melted down their ornaments of gold and silver; while the females of the lower orders, to help in the same cause, toiled day and night at the spinning-wheel. The united forces of the confederate chiefs formed such a host that even Mahmud hesitated to commit his fortune to a pitched battle, and he began to entrench himself strongly in the neighbourhood of Peshawar. He considered that if he were attacked his position would enable him to make a successful defence; while he saw that if the Hindus refrained from any movement, their irregular and

undisciplined masses would break up and melt away like masses of snow. The Hindus rushed forward in furious onset, and at first the warriors of the Crescent suffered severely; for thirty thousand Ghakkars, bare-headed, bare-footed, and armed with various deadly weapons, broke through their lines, and committed such havoc that in a few minutes the ground was strewn with the dead and dying. Mahmud, silent and apparently impassive, made no sign. At length, Anangpal's colossal elephant, terrified by the incessant storm of arrows and fire-balls, swerved aside, and began to hurry his rider off the field of action. The Hindus, thinking that their monarch was abandoning them, lost heart, and fell back; immediately Mahmud ordered his warriors to charge, which they did with so much impetuosity that the Hindus broke and fled. Then the Mussulmans waved their scimitars in triumph and rode down the fugitives with terrible ferocity, the number of the slain on this lost battle-field being very great.

Mahmud proceeded to gather up the spoils which this victory placed at his disposal. He was influenced, perhaps, as much by religious zeal as by

avarice in his advance upon the fortress-temple of Nagarkot (now known as Kangra), which was equally famous for its opulence and its sanctity, the latter being attested by a mysterious flame which sprang spontaneously from the earth. The garrison of the fort had been withdrawn to take part in the recent battle ; and the Sultan, on his approach, was met by a crowd of suppliant priests, who, with wild gestures and strange cries, implored his compassion. He spared their lives, but carried off their treasures—which, perhaps, they valued more than their lives,—treasures consisting of 700,000 dinars of gold, 700 maunds of gold and silver plate, 200 maunds of pure gold in ingots, 2,000 maunds of unwrought silver, and 20 maunds of pearls, rubies, diamonds and corals. As the dinar was worth nine shillings and the maund weighed eighty pounds, it is probably true that, as Ferishta says, so vast a spoil was never before poured into the treasury of any prince on earth.

The victor, on his return to Ghazni, held a three-days' festival. The neighbouring plain was crowded with costly pavilions and tents for the accommoda-

tion of his guests. On thrones and tables of gold and silver were displayed his trophies,—the scene surpassing anything ever conceived by the fertile imagination of Oriental poets and tale-tellers. Dainty viands and cool delicious beverages were supplied without stint or cost to thousands and tens of thousands of spectators ; and while magnificent presents were bestowed on the warriors who had earned them by their valiant deeds, the poor were made happy with generous alms.

In 1017, having collected an army of 100,000 foot and 20,000 horse, the Sultan prepared to cross the frontier of the Punjab and descend the valley of the Ganges into India. From Peshawar he proceeded in the shadow of the mountains until he struck the Jumna ; crossing that noble stream, he wheeled southward, and with the clash of cymbals and the pomp of silken banners startled out of its propriety the great city of Kanauj, the raja of which, by right of its wealth and populousness, took precedence of all other Hindu Rajas. On the appearance of Mahmud, he went forth with his family, and prostrated himself with a humility so absolute and abject that

it propitiated the mighty Sultan, and he was induced to spare the city. Muttra, against which he next advanced, met with no such good fortune. The spectacle of this famous sanctuary of Buddhism, with the white walls and domes of its many monasteries and temples rising high above the shining waters of the Jumna, stimulated the Sultan's fanaticism, and he abandoned it to the plunder and rapine of his soldiery, who for twenty days committed every atrocity which the lust and cruelty of man can devise under the cover of religious zeal. While this human tempest raged, and the air resounded with the shrieks of outraged women, the cries of tortured children, and the groans of the dying, Mahmud calmly contemplated the splendour of the numerous buildings, and reflected on the immense sums which their erection must have cost. In a letter addressed to his lieutenant at Ghazni he said :—" Here are a thousand edifices as stable as the faith of the faithful, most of them of marble ; besides innumerable temples. It is not probable that this city has attained to its present condition but by the expenditure of many millions of dinars ; nor could such another be con-

structed in a lesser period of time than two centuries.”*

Mahmud's last campaign, in the year 1024, was directed against the famous temple of Somnath, in Guzarat, near the shore of the Arabian Sea. The march from Ghazni lay across a sandy desert, and taxed to the utmost the conduct of the commander and the endurance of his soldiers; but it was accomplished without disaster; and the army safely emerged upon the open, sunny plains round about Ajmere. There, the Hindus were wholly unprepared for resistance. The Sultan's designs against Somnath were known; but it had never been suspected that he would advance by a route so difficult and dangerous. Ajmere fell into his hands without a struggle, and was given up to plunder. Entering Guzarat, he passed by its capital, Anhalwara, and moved rapidly against the sacred city, which was as venerable and precious to the Hindu as Mecca to the Muhammadan.

* It is pretended that the city-walls were one hundred miles in circuit, that the population included 30,000 betel-vendors and 60,000 singers and musicians; and that its army comprised 80,000 men in armour, 300,000 mail-clad horsemen, 300,000 infantry, and 200,000 archers and battle-axes.

It stood upon a narrow windy promontory, which a fortified isthmus connected with the mainland. On approaching it, the Sultan was met by a herald, who defied him in the name of the god Krishna, and threatened him with destruction. His reply was a storm of arrows, which drove from their ramparts the Hindu warriors, and sent them to kneel before their god, piteously soliciting its assistance. When the Muhammadans, pressing the attack, with exultant shouts of "Allah Akbar!" had almost effected an entrance, the Hindus, encouraged by their act of devotion, suddenly appeared in the breach, and fought with a desperate energy which baffled the assailants. On the second day the attack was renewed, and again repulsed. On the third, a vast army, consisting of the combined forces of several neighbouring rajahs, advanced to the relief of the beleaguered city, compelling Mahmud to draw off his troops to meet this new foe. The contest was bitter and protracted; and was going against the Muhammadans, until Mahmud, repeating the device which on a former field had proved successful, prostrated himself on the ground in the presence of his followers; and then,

exclaiming that Allah, in answer to his prayers, had promised him victory, leaped on his horse, and with a loud shout of defiance dashed into the thickest of the battle. The fervour of his fighting-men was rekindled by this heroic example of their chief: they renewed the charge with a fury which would not be denied; the victory was complete. Then the Hindu garrison, leaving behind them five thousand dead, embarked on board their boats and sailed away to some haven of safety.

The temple, seated on the topmost height of the breezy headland, was the most magnificent in India. The spacious interior was lighted by a great lamp of gold, which hung suspended from the centre of the roof by a golden chain, and was supported by half a hundred columns, richly wrought, and profusely encrusted with precious stones. The revenue of two thousand villages was appropriated to its maintenance. Two thousand Brahmans were consecrated to the service of its deity, whose image they washed, night and morning, in sacred water brought from the great river, a distance of one thousand miles. The subordinate ministrants included three hundred

musicians, as many barbers, and five hundred dancing girls, chosen for their birth and beauty. Mahmud strode into the holy place where rested, says the legend, the image of Krishna. With his heavy iron mace he aimed a blow at its head. The trembling Brahmans, it is pretended, offered ten millions sterling for its ransom; and his wisest counsellors advised him to accept the splendid bribe, on the ground that the destruction of their idol would not soften the hearts of the Gentors, while the money would carry relief to thousands of true believers. "Your reasons," exclaimed the Sultan, "are strong and specious; but I will be remembered as the image-breaker, and not as the image-vendor!" So saying, the Iconoclast clove the figure open with his mace, and from its ample belly poured forth such a torrent of jewels as fully explained the anxiety of the Brahmans for its preservation. This story of the idol and its fate travelled to Baghdad; and the khalif bestowed upon the pious (and lucky) image-breaker the title of "Guardian of the Faith and Fortune of Muhammad."

But, alas! there is not a word of truth in this picturesque fable, which was invented long after

Mahmud's death. There was no jewelled image at Somnath ; nothing but a linga, or phallic emblem of stone, one of twelve such emblems erected in various parts of India. Mahmud carried it away in four pieces ; one of which he set up in the Mosque at Ghazni, and another at his palace-gate ; a third he sent to Mecca, and a fourth to Medina. He also carried away the temple-gates, made of sandal-wood and curiously carved, which were afterwards among the trophies piled upon his tomb.

Mahmud returned to Anhalwara, which for a time he thought of adopting for a new capital. Eventually he contented himself with setting up a puppet raja in Guzarat ; one on whose complete submission he believed he could rely. Another scion of the old stock pressed his claims so pertinaciously that, to prevent a disputed succession, he threw him into prison. When Mahmud was leaving Guzarat, the new raja earnestly begged for the custody of his rival, which, with some reluctance, the Sultan yielded, on condition that no blood should be shed. The raja, to keep his promise to the letter while he gratified his vengeance, caused a pit to be dug under his

throne, in which he immured his prisoner alive ; but revolutions come swiftly in Oriental countries ; and the raja, suddenly deposed, was buried in the dungeon which he had intended for his victim.*

In re-crossing the sandy desert at the head of the Arabian Sea, Mahmud's army suffered terribly. He had engaged Hindu guides, who for three days and nights kept the soldiers wandering in a region destitute of water and forage, until numbers perished from heat and thirst. Suspecting that his guides had wilfully led him astray, he put them to the torture, and extracted a confession that they were priests of Somnath, who had hoped, by the destruction of the army, to secure a noble revenge for the desecration of his temple.

The actual result of Mahmud's seventeen invasions and twenty-five years' fighting, with their wholesale loss of human life, was the annexation of the Punjab to the Ghazni kingdom. He made no attempt to establish his rule over all India : his expeditions beyond the Indus were simply fanatical adventures—

* This striking story is told by D'Herbelet, in the *Bibliothèque Orientale*, from the original sources.

“the adventures of a religious knight-errant” (with a thirst for gold)—directed against some celebrated idol-shrine or wealthy temple-city.

Mahmud died at Ghazni on the 29th of April, 1030, in the sixty-third year of his age and the thirty-third of his reign. His strong and remarkable individuality made a deep impression on his contemporaries; and for generations the name of Mahmud of Ghazni carried as much terror to the Hindus as that of Marlbrook (or Marlborough) to the ears of the peasantry of France, seven centuries after. Numerous stories have been handed down to us in illustration of his devotion, his thrift, and his courage. One day a poor woman, who had obtained admission to his presence, complained that her son had been murdered by robbers in a remote desert of Irak. The Sultan expressed his regret, and remarked that it was difficult to prevent such misfortunes at so great a distance from the seat of government. The crone's reply was swift and sharp: “Keep no more territory than you can govern rightly.” Mahmud was too wise and too magnanimous not to acknowledge the force of the rebuke: he rewarded the wise old woman

liberally, and ordered soldiers to be stationed for the security of the caravans that crossed the Irak wilderness.

A pathetic incident reveals to us the rigid justice and magnanimity of this remarkable man. He was sitting in his divan one day when an unhappy petitioner, with haggard face and tearful eyes, suddenly threw himself on his knees before him, and sighed and stammered forth a tale of woe. "A soldier," he exclaimed, "has driven me from my house and home—a fiend—one of thy officers—

. . . . he comes, the abhorred,
And takes possession of my house, my board,
My bed. I have two daughters and a wife :
And the wild villain comes, and makes me mad with life."

The Sultan bade him be still. "Inform me of the man's next visit, and I myself will judge and punish him." Three days later the complainant reappeared, his face more shrunken than before, his eyes red with weeping. Then Mahmud called his guards, followed his guide, surrounded the house, and, causing all the torches to be extinguished, arrested the criminal, and immediately pronounced the doom of death upon

him. When the sentence had been executed, and the torches re-lighted, Mahmud fell prostrate in prayer: then, rising from the ground, demanded some food, of which he partook with eagerness.

The poor man, whose injuries had so promptly and sternly been avenged, stared in astonishment and curiosity at his sovereign's strange proceedings, and at length ventured humbly to inquire what was the motive and the meaning of it.

“The Sultan said, with a benignant eye,
 ‘Since first I saw thee come, and heard thy cry,
 I could not rid me of the dread, that one
 By whom such daring villanies were done
 Must be some lord of mine—aye, e’en, perhaps, a son.
 Whoe’er he was, I knew my task; but feared
 A father’s heart, in case the worst appeared.
 For this I had the light put out; but when
 I saw the face, and found a stranger slain,
 I knelt and thanked the Sovereign Arbiter,
 Whose work I had performed through pain and fear;
 And then I rose, and was refreshed with food,
 The first time since thy voice had marred my solitude.’”*

Mahmud having declared war against the sovereign of Persian Irak, the Sultana-mother made an appeal to his generosity. “During my husband’s life,” she

* Leigh Hunt.

wrote, "I was ever apprehensive of your ambition, for he was a prince and a soldier worthy of your arms. He is now no more ; his sceptre has passed into the hands of a woman and a child, and you *dare not* attack their weakness. How inglorious, if you conquered us ! how shameful, if you were defeated ! And yet the issue of battle is in the hand of the Almighty." Mahmud replied that he would delay his invasion until her son had attained to manhood.

The worst vice ascribed to Mahmud is avarice. It was one which, at all events, he had ample opportunities of gratifying ; though the Oriental tales of his stores of gold and of gems of enormous size are evident exaggerations. In the last years of his life he felt deeply the transitoriness of his hold upon the treasures he had amassed with so much labour. When we read of his lonely wanderings through the chambers of the treasury at Ghazni, and of his bursting into tears at the thought that he must soon part with them for ever, we are reminded of Cardinal Mazarin, who, just before his death, was seen standing before the masterpieces in his picture-

gallery, and sighing that he must leave them behind him.

Mahmud was a liberal patron of poets and a genuine lover of poetry. The fame of Ferdusi, the great Persian minstrel, having reached him, he sent him a flattering invitation to his capital. Taking with him the opening cantos of his *Shah Namah*, or Book of Kings, he reached Ghazni one day as the twilight shadows were falling, and found his way into a garden, where the poet Ansari, and some brother poets and friends, were engaged in converse. Ferdusi saluted them; and they, not knowing who he was, proposed to rid themselves of his intrusion by extemporising three verses of a quatrain, of which he was to compose the finish. He performed the task in such a way as to convince them of his right to a place in their harmonious fraternity. The episode of "Rustan and Isfurdjar," from his great poem, was read to the Sultan, who, as well as all who heard it, was captivated by its melodious verse and graceful imagery. He was admitted to an interview with Mahmud, who promised him a *dirham*—meaning a *dirham* of gold—for each verse in the

Shah-Namah on its completion. But having failed to propitiate the wazir, the latter became his enemy, and when the immortal epic was finished, after thirty years of labour, persuaded the Sultan to pay for it in silver *dirhams*.

Irritated at this evasion, Ferdusi distributed the money between the bearer, the owner of the bath where he was making his ablutions at the time, and the vendor of a beverage called *fillan*. This insult, together with the wazir's assertion that Ferdusi was an infidel, so angered the Sultan, that he condemned the poet to be trampled to death under the feet of elephants, and when, at Ferdusi's earnest prayer, he recalled this terrible sentence, ordered him instantly to leave his kingdom. Ferdusi, before departing, repaired to Ayaz, Mahmud's favourite Sultana, and placing in her hand a sealed packet, requested her to hand it to the Sultan on a day he named. He then set out, was received very cordially by the prince of Kohistan, who gave him 80,000 *dirhams*, and helped him on his journey; and eventually he reached Baghdad, where he purposed to spend the remainder of his life, revising his *magnum opus*,

the *Shah Namah*. Meanwhile, Mahmud had received the sealed packet, which proved to contain a bitter invective against him, reproaching him with his manners and his low birth. The wrathful Sultan instantly despatched an angry letter to the Khalif, demanding the person of the satirist, and threatening to lay Baghdad waste with fire and sword. But with time came wiser counsels and gentler thoughts. He recalled the charming conversation, the brilliant wit and exquisite fancy of the great poet, who, for so many years, had been the glory of his court. He discovered, moreover, that he had been deceived by false reports; and, his better nature prevailing, he sent to Ferdusi his entire forgiveness: which, as the poet, in allusion to the Sultan's low birth, had said that "a raven could breed nothing but a raven," was an act of some magnanimity. But, forgetting the satirist, he remembered only the poet. Ferdusi, an old man and in broken health, hastened back to Tus, his birthplace, and continued to occupy himself in polishing his immortal verse. To make full amends for his harsh treatment, the Sultan sent him a gift of 100,000 *dirhams*. Unfortunately, it was too

late. Passing through the streets of Tus one day, the aged poet heard a child singing one of his early compositions, which recalled to his memory all his sufferings with such pathetic force that he swooned away, and being carried to his house, almost immediately expired. He was then in the 83rd year of his age (1020). The Sultan's messengers, with the bags of gold, entered one gate of the city, just as the poet's bier, with a long procession of mourners, went out of the other, to convey his remains to their last resting-place.*

Mahmud was, I think, a man of nobly generous temper. Having heard that a citizen of Ghazni was very wealthy, he sent for him, reproached him with being an idolater and an apostate from the faith of Islam. "Nay, O King," replied the man, "I am no apostate, but I have great riches: take them if thou wilt, but do not rob me of my good name as well as my money." Far from showing any anger at this bold reply, the Sultan gave the citizen a certificate, under his own signet, of his perfect orthodoxy.

* This incident has been taken as the subject of a graceful poem, "Firdausi in Exile," by E. W. Gosse.

Good Muhammadan as he usually was, he sometimes broke through the Prophet's ordinance against wine, and on one of these occasions cut off the sleek tresses of his favourite Sultana. When sober, he grieved greatly at his folly, so that none dared venture into his presence. Eventually the poet Hakim Ali soothed him with a pretty conceit: "On this happy day, why grieve that your beloved has been deprived of her locks? Drink and be merry, for is not the taper form of the cypress best seen when its branches have been pruned?" Let us hope that the shorn beauty was as easily consoled as the Sultan, who ordered the poet's mouth to be thrice filled with jewels.

On the whole, however, the impartial historian, if he reject the unbounded eulogy of the epitaph, written in Persian, which was placed on the conqueror's throne,—“When we consider all the virtues of this great prince, we can scarcely believe he was born as other men,”—will pronounce him not unworthy of his enduring fame. His eminent actions were many, and some of them conduced to the welfare of mankind. He was an enlightened patron of the

arts and sciences. He founded a University in Ghazni, with a vast collection of MSS. in various languages, and a museum of natural curiosities. For its maintenance he set apart a large sum of money, besides establishing a permanent fund for allowances to professors and students. He appropriated a sum of nearly £10,000 a year in pensions to learned men. His taste for architecture, whether natural or inspired by the glorious structures he beheld at Kanauj and Muttra, led him to enrich his capital with many handsome buildings. The Mosque which he called "The Celestial Bride" was, for generations, the wonder of the East. It was built of marble and granite, was of such beauty as to strike any beholder with admiration, and was furnished with sumptuous carpets, with rich candelabra, and other ornaments of gold and silver. When the nobles of Ghazni, says Ferishta, saw their monarch's architectural triumphs, they vied with one another in the magnificence of their private palaces, as well as in the public edifices which they raised for the embellishment of the city; so that, in a short time, it was ornamented with mosques, porches, fountains,

reservoirs, aqueducts, beyond every city in the East.

He was certainly a great captain. He conducted in person seventeen campaigns, and fought thirty sieges and battles ; yet did he never besiege a city which he did not take, nor fight a battle which he did not win. Whilst in the north he kept at bay the rising power of the Tartars, he extended his empire east, west, and south, he seated his sons on the thrones of Balka and Ispahan ; he carried the grim standard of the Prophet over the dreary table-lands of Irak and Tartary, across the Five Rivers of the Punjab, through the scorching deserts of Sind, and amid the eternal snows of Tibet.

Three miles south of Ghazni may still be seen the cupola which surmounts his grave ; and to this day the Muhammadan priests read the Koran over the tomb of the great king of the East, *Mahmud the Sultan*.

CHAPTER II.

A PAGEANT OF KINGS.

TWO sons were born to Mahmud,—Masaud and Mahomed,—the former being the older by only a few hours. Mahomed was crafty, resolute, and ambitious; and at an early age intrigued to displace his brother. In this he was encouraged by his father's partiality; but the old Sultan saw that he was no favourite with his nobles and warriors, and refrained from altering the succession.

At the time of Mahmud's death, Masaud was residing at Ispahan as governor. Mahomed was at Guiyan, whence he immediately marched to Ghazni, proclaiming himself king; and seizing on the imperial treasure, he endeavoured to gain supporters by a profuse distribution of bubio. But Masaud's popularity was not to be set aside. The young prince had a ready tongue, a winning address,

a generous temper, and enormous physical strength. Ferishta says that his iron mace was so heavy, like William the Conqueror's sword, that none but himself could wield it with one hand; and that an arrow, launched from his bow, would pierce the hide of an elephant after passing through the stoutest mail. Though aware of his brother's plots, he had never cared to circumvent them. On one occasion, he was told that the Court Mullah, in his anxiety to please an over-partial father, had ventured to read his brother's name before his in the *Khatba*, a prayer for the Royal Family. "What matters it?" he replied with a smile: "the world goes to the longest sword."

Even his brother's usurpation did not at first provoke him to any violence of action. At the head of the household guards, who had remained faithful to him, he marched upon Ghazni; but he sent a message to his brother, that he did not wish to treat him unjustly, but was prepared to divide the empire with him, stipulating, however, that in the *Khatba* his name (at least in his own territories) should have precedence. Rejecting this generous

offer, Mahomed marched out to defend by force what he had gained by fraud. But a conspiracy overthrew him; he was seized and cast into prison; and to prevent him from doing further mischief, he was deprived of sight—a “fire-pencil,” or red-hot needle, according to the Eastern custom, being drawn across the pupils

It was not long before Masaud found himself involved in a war with the Turkis or Turcomans, a wild and martial race, who had carried the desolation of their arms as far as Ispahan and the Tigris. His omrahs, or counsellors, had warned him from the first that they would prove a formidable enemy. “At the outset,” they said, “these people were a swarm of ants; they have grown into little snakes; and if you do not crush them at once, they will develop the venom and acquire the dimensions of serpents.” It was in 1039 that, several of his generals having been defeated, the Sultan resolved to take the field in person. He fell in with his adversaries at Zendekan, near Merv. “Masaud,” says the Persian historian, “advanced alone to oppose the torrent of gleaming steel, performing such acts

of gigantic strength and valour as never king had performed before. A handful of his warriors, stimulated by his words and deeds, and by that innate honour which inspires the brave, supported their prince so nobly, that, wheresoever they swept with fatal swords, their enemies were cut down or retreated before them. But just as victory seemed about to crown his standard, misfortune did its evil work in his rear; and when Masaud looked round, he perceived that, with the exception of the division he himself commanded, his whole army was *devouring the paths of flight.*"

After a vain attempt to rally his broken ranks, he returned to Ghazni, where he was speedily entangled in a network of treachery and revolt. The army mutinied; he was deposed; and his brother Mahomed taken out of prison to replace him. Mahomed—to his credit be it recorded—did not indulge in any bloody revenge, but was content to imprison the brother who had deprived him of sight, confining him in the castle of Kini without any of the pomp and circumstance appropriate to his rank. On one occasion, being actually in want

of necessaries, he sent for some money to his brother, who returned an insulting message and the paltry sum of five hundred dirhams. "O wonderful—O wonderful stroke of Providence!" said Masaud, on receiving it; "O cruel reverse of Fate! Yesterday was I not a mighty prince, three thousand camels bending under my treasure? And to-day I am forced to beg the merest mockery of my wants!" Borrowing a thousand dirhams from his attendants, he made them a present to the messenger, bidding him carry back to his brother the paltry gift with which he had mocked at his privation.

But a blind sovereign was unable to steer the ship of the State through the troubled waters of that stormy time, and Mahomed gave up his throne in favour of his eldest son, Ahmed, a fierce and truculent prince, one of whose first acts was to put his imprisoned uncle to death.

A succession of sovereigns followed—a pageant of kings—all whose reigns were involved in the lurid clouds of war. We may select as one of the most notable figures the Sultan Ibrahim (1058), a grave and austere prince, who delighted in his religious

duties and in the art of caligraphy, in which he became an adept. He made many very beautiful copies of the Koran, some of which are still in existence in the mosques of Mecca and Medina. The following anecdote justifies, I think, a favourable estimate of his character :—One day, seeing a prisoner tottering under the burden of a very heavy stone, his pity was awakened, and commanding him to set it down, he gave him his liberty. The stone lay in the middle of the public thoroughfare ; yet so strict was the law that none ventured to remove it. But a courtier's horse having stumbled over it, petition was made that some other resting-place might be allotted to it. "I commanded that it should be thrown there," said the Sultan, "and there it must remain as a memorial of the misfortunes of humanity and of my own pity : it is better for a king to be obstinate, even in his inadvertences, than to break his royal word."

The princes of whom I have been speaking all belonged to the House of Ghazni, which came to an end in 1186, when the last of its representatives was conquered by Mohammed Ghori, or, as he is also called, Shahab-ud-din, of the Afghan house of Ghor.

Shahab-ud-din, like his predecessors, meditated the conquest of India, and descended into its fertile plains in 1191. In the Rajputs he found more formidable opponents than he had anticipated. Under their gallant leader, the Prithwi Raja, they threw themselves across his line of march, and gave him battle at Tiruri, between Thaneswar and Karnal, "on the great plain where most of the contests for the possession of India have been decided." The Moslem mode of fighting was to make repeated charges with bodies of cavalry, who either withdrew after discharging their arms, or, if the foe retired, pressed their advance. On the other hand, it was the tactic of the Hindus to flank their enemy, and close in upon him with both wings while he was attacking their centre. On this occasion the manœuvre proved completely successful. When he saw, with shame and indignation, the retreat of his warriors, he endeavoured to restore the battle by his personal example. Charging into the thickest of the fight, he felled his antagonists beneath his sweeping scimitar. The Rajput prince, to stay his onset, drove his elephant against him ; but Shahab-ud-din divined his

intention, wheeled his horse dexterously aside, and, at the same time lifting his lance, struck the Raja a blow on the mouth, which knocked out some of his teeth. Almost simultaneously, an arrow pierced the Moslem sovereign's eye, and he was on the point of falling from his steed, when one of his faithful attendants leaped up behind him, supported him with his body, and guided him off the lost field. Having recovered from his wound at Lahore, Shahab-ud-din returned to Ghor, and dismissed and punished the officers to whose misconduct he attributed his defeat,—compelling them to parade about the city with horses' mouth-bags, full of fodder, suspended from their necks, the alternative before them being to eat the fodder or lose their heads.

Two years later, with a force of 120,000 cavalry, many of whom bore jewelled helmets and armour inlaid with gold and silver, he once more set out on the march to India. As his design had been kept secret, a venerable sage addressed him at Peshawar, and said: "O king, we put our trust in thy conduct and wisdom, but as yet thy intentions have been the subject of much conjecture among us." "Know, old

man," replied Mohammed, "that since the day of my defeat in India, I have never slumbered in ease, nor waked but in sorrow and anxiety. And I am now determined to recover my lost honour or perish in the attempt."

On arriving at Lahore, he sent an envoy to the Raja of Ajmere, offering him his choice between conversion to the faith of Islam, and war. The Raja returned a contemptuous answer, and then sent for assistance to the neighbouring princes. The approach of a common enemy imposed a cordial union upon all, and they soon took the field with an army equal in numbers to that which had conquered in 1191. Encamping upon the same spot, they swore "by the water of the Ganges,"—the most sacred form of oath known to the Hindus—that they would conquer their enemies or die martyrs to their faith. So confident were they of a triumphant issue, that they sent a message to Shahab-ud-din, warning him of the ruin that awaited him if he challenged their arms, but at the same time offering that he should retreat unmolested. The answer of the Moslem chief was so meek and apologetic in tone, that the Hindu princes

thought it must have been dictated by fear, and abandoned themselves to revelry as if the battle had been fought and won. This was the result which the Sultan had anticipated; and while the Indian camp echoed with the sounds of premature rejoicing, he carried his army across the river by an unguarded ford, and with flashing scimitar and bended bow broke into the midst of the astonished Hindus. Though thus suddenly attacked, they got into tolerable array, and fought with gallant determination "from morn till dewy eve," when, as the last glories of sunset faded from the contested field, the Sultan headed a final charge of 12,000 steel-clad horsemen, and carried off the victory. The Hindus, worn and weary, could make no further resistance, and fell before the cavalry of Islam like shocks of corn before a whirlwind. "This prodigious army, once shaken, like a huge building, tottered to its fall, and was lost in its own ruins."

A ROMANTIC STORY.

We come now upon a strange, romantic story which reads like a page out of chivalrous Froissart. Bitter

was the rivalry that had long subsisted between the two great Hindu monarchies of Delhi and Kanauj ; and fiercer did it become when the King of Delhi took to himself the title of the Prithwi Raja—that is, over-lord, or suzerain. To assert his own claim to that dignity, the King of Kanauj—then a rich and splendid city basking in the sunshine of prosperity, but now a colossal heap of ruins, dispersed over an area of eight square miles—resolved to hold the *Somair*, or Feast of Rajas. Now, at this grand ceremony, it was essential that even the menial offices should be filled by vassal princes, just as at royal banquets in feudal Christendom the cup-bearers and all other attendants were required to be of gentle blood ; and the King of Kanauj availed himself of the opportunity of appointing his rival of Delhi to the post of gate-keeper, the most humiliating a high-caste Hindu could occupy. It was arranged that while the guests were drinking, the Raja's daughter should perform the ancient and traditional rite of making her *swayamvara*, that is, selecting for herself a husband.

The Prithwi Raja, or King of Delhi, a bold and handsome young prince, was, as the reader will

have surmised, in love with the beautiful princess of Kanauj; but felt unwilling by his presence at the Somair to acknowledge her father's pretensions. As he failed to appear, the King of Kanauj set up his effigy in ridicule at the entrance to his palace. When the banquet was over, the princess glided into the hall, swept with indifferent glance the circle of kingly guests, and, stepping quickly to the doorway, threw her bridal garland over the neck of the insulting image. At that moment, the Prithwi Raja strode across the threshold—like a Hindu Lochinvar—caught her up in his arms, and mounting his horse, which thought little of the double burden, rode away to his fair city on the Jumna. So fierce was the pursuit, however, that nearly all the brave warriors who had formed his escort perished in defending the flight of their prince and his bride. “He preserved his prize,” says the Oriental poet, “and won immortal renown, but he lost the sinews of Delhi.”

And so it appeared when, soon afterwards, the King of Kanauj called in the aid of the Sultan's ablest general, Kutab-ud-din, and the Prithwi's lessened force was attacked by the combined armies on

the banks of the Caggar. The gallant young prince perished in the unequal fight ; and his heroic and devoted bride mounted with alacrity her hero-husband's funeral pile, after the Hindu custom (1193).

In the following year, Shahab-ud-din again invaded India, and joining his magnificent array with the veterans of Kutab-ud-din, advanced to the Jumna, where he was opposed by the mighty host of the Hindu king, numbering 300,000 Rajput warriors, and including 150 rajas, who had sworn by the Sacred River to destroy their enemy or drink of the cup of martyrdom. But "notwithstanding their high-sounding menaces," says Ferishta, "their rank-bearing elephants, war-treading horses, and bloodthirsty soldiers, the Sultan surprised their camp in the night, when this mighty army recoiled like a troubled torrent from the bloody plain." The king perished in the Jumna ; Kanauj was taken and sacked, and never regained its pristine splendour and importance.

The capture of the holy city of Benares was the Sultan's next great achievement. It met with the same fate as Kanauj. Its gilded shrines were rifled ;

their priests slaughtered in cold blood. This is the sacred spot where the Supreme Deity of the Hindu Pantheon is supposed by orthodox Hindus to spend three hours of every day ; reclining, during the remainder, on a large rock of black marble, in the shade of a venerable peepul tree, within the walls of Chunar. Its sanctity dates back to the earliest age of fable. Long before men began to write history, Siva the Destroyer, chief god of the Hindu Trinity, built this famous city of the purest gold, enriched it with temples of precious stones, and named it *Kasi*, or The Magnificent. As the years went on, and the wickedness of the people increased, he converted it into stone ; and, the moral declension continuing even now, is engaged in changing the edifices of stone into humble buildings of mud and thatch. We may assume that his wrath at the wrong-doing of his worshippers was extreme, when he allowed his holy city and all its sanctuaries to be despoiled and polluted by the Warriors of the Crescent.

A thousand temples, it is said, were plundered and destroyed on this occasion ; the booty they yielded would seem to have been enormous. Flushed with

triumph and the fervour of fanatical enthusiasm, the Moslem army returned to Ghazni ; and when the Sultan, at the head of his victorious legions and followed by a long train of camels, loaded with the spoils of many cities, traversed the plains at the foot of his mountain-capital, the grey-beards among the crowds of exultant spectators gathered on its walls, glowing with pride at a spectacle that revealed the ancient glories of their race and reminded them of the stories they had heard in their youth of the wealth and glory of the great Sultan Mahmud.

In 1206, Shahab-ud-din went on a journey into his western provinces, his busy brain teeming with new plans of conquest, and never suspecting that the shadow of death was pressing fast upon his footsteps. A band of twenty Ghakkars, who had lost some of their kinsmen in his wars, had bound themselves by a solemn oath to avenge their death upon the Sultan, and, following him closely, were ever on the watch for an opportunity to slay him. He had encamped on the bank of the Indus ; and the heat being excessive, had ordered the screens which enclosed the royal tent as in a quadrangle to be struck, that

the air might have free passage. The murderers were thus enabled to ascertain the exact position of the Sultan's private apartments. At midnight, on the 14th of March, they stole through the darkness and the silence to the door of the pavilion, warily eluding the notice of the guards. The Sultan lay asleep, with a couple of slaves fanning him. Before an alarm could be raised, the murderers fell upon him, and hacked him to death with two-and-twenty wounds.

“THE POLE-STAR OF RELIGION.”

At the time of Shahab-ud-din's death, a Turkish slave, whom he had carefully trained and educated, was governing the conquered provinces in India. Kutab-ud-din immediately proclaimed himself King of India at Delhi, and asserted his supremacy over all the Muhammadan princes from Sind to Lower Bengal. His devotion to the creed of Islam was so intense, and he was so zealous in observing all its rites, that he was called “the Pole-star of religion.” In history he is known as the founder of the dynasty of the Slave kings, and as the first Muhammadan

sovereign who established his capital in India. Born a slave, he married the daughter of a slave, gave his sister in marriage to a slave, and married his own daughter to a slave,—to Altamsh, who succeeded him on the throne. He was a great soldier and a capable administrator; altogether a remarkable man, with broad and liberal ideas, an ardent love of justice and virtue, and a cultivated taste. Two splendid memorials of his piety and his lofty conception of architecture are still extant in the Kutab mosque, and Kutab Minar of Delhi.

Begun in 1200, the Kutab Minar was not completed until 1220, in the reign of Kutab's successor. It is built of dark red sandstone, is profusely carved, encrusted with texts from the Koran in gigantic characters, and rises to a height of two hundred and thirty-eight feet. There is something singularly impressive in the appearance of this stupendous monument; not alone from its great elevation, but also from the solitariness of its position and the exquisite grace of its outlines. Its form is that of an elongated cone, in four tiers or stages, which diminish in altitude as they recede from the ground. At the base it

measures forty-six feet in diameter ; at the summit, nine feet. Richly ornamented, it repays the closest examination. Each storey or tier is surrounded by a broad belt of flowers and arabesques, and supports a massive balcony. In all probability, the monument was intended for a Muezzin's tower or minaret, whence the call to morning and evening prayer might be heard over the whole city.

The mosque, as we learn from an inscription on its entrance-archway, was begun some seven years before the erection of the Minar, and completed in three years. During the reign of Altamsh it was enlarged. It consists of an inner and outer courtyard, the latter enclosed by a beautiful colonnade of marble, the polished shafts of which had been plundered from Hindu temples. The idolatrous carving with which they were adorned was originally concealed from the eyes of the faithful by a thick coat of stucco ; but this crumbled away long ago, revealing the exquisite handiwork of the Hindu artists in all its "pristine wealth." The western façade is relieved by eleven splendid arches, Muhamadan in design, but evidently of Hindu execution.

Among his many virtues Kutab possessed that of generosity. Before his accession to the throne he was known as "the giver of lakhs" (i.e. lakhs of rupees); and for long after his death the people would say of any prince distinguished by his liberality, "He is as generous as Kutab."

ALTAMSH, AND THE MOGUL INVASION.

It is in the reign of Altamsh, the third of the slave-kings, and son-in-law of Kutab, who bought him in his youth for no less a sum (it is said) than 50,000 pieces of silver, that we first hear of the Moguls or Mughals in connection with Indian history. Legend and tradition have done much to expand the fame of Changiz or Genghis Khan; but it is certain, from the evidence of authentic history, that he was a remarkable man, one of those who change the fates of nations and shape the destiny of the world. A petty Mughal chief, he gathered round him a force of desperate warriors, with whom he subdued the three nations of Tartary. Afterwards, uniting their levies of fighting men in one mighty host, he broke like a flood of waters upon the Muhammadan king-

doms, and threatened to sweep away their religion, their wealth, and their civilisation. "This irruption," remarks the historian, "was the greatest calamity that had fallen on mankind since the deluge. They (the Tartars) had no religion to teach, and no seeds of improvement to sow, nor did they offer any alternative of conversion or tribute; their only object was to slaughter and destroy, and the only trace they left was in the devastation of every country which they visited."

In 1227, the year in which St. Louis led the soldiers of the Cross on an expedition against the Paynim, this Mughal chief swept with fire and sword the fairest regions of Central Asia, from China in one direction to Persia in another. To us who contemplate him across a gulf of nearly seven centuries, he seems to have been neither warrior nor statesman, but simply a monster of cruelty. From the day when, after the Tartar fashion, he was seated on a black sheepskin, and saluted as chief khan of the Turki peoples, to that when he closed his haggard, wolfish eyes on the frontier of China, his career was one of unending warfare, of continuous bloodshed,

Having asked one of his chiefs what he considered the greatest pleasure of man, he received the reply of a true son of the Steppes: "To go hunting on a bright day in spring, mounted on a high-bred horse, and, holding a falcon on your wrist, to see him pull down his prey." This was too tame a felicity to satisfy the restless spirit of Changiz Khan. "No!" he exclaimed; "man's greatest enjoyment is to conquer his enemies, to sweep them before him, to spoil them of all they possess, to fill with tears the eyes of the persons they love, to seize upon their horses, and carry away captive their wives and daughters."

One need not be surprised that a man who cherished so fiendish a sentiment, and made it the governing purpose of his life, was regarded with terror and hatred by the nations whom he plundered and oppressed. They ascribed to him a birth supernatural, as if it were impossible for such a monster to have been born like other men. Whispering low, the peasants told one another that he had come into the world with congealed blood on his hands; that, like Romulus and Remus in the old Latin myth,

he was suckled by wild beasts. His marches were accomplished with such swiftness that the ignorant declared his horses had wings. Among other exaggerations, the chroniclers pretend that in his wars he had put to death fourteen millions of human beings. They add that, on one occasion, he burned the Bible with every manifestation of contempt, and trod the Koran under his horse's feet in the centre of the holiest mosque of Bokhara.

Ferocious as he was, Changiz must have possessed some of the highest qualities of ruler and commander, or he would never have tamed the fiery temper of the Tartar race and compelled them to do his bidding. No rebellion shook his stable government, and his will was uncontested over an empire which extended eighteen hundred leagues from east to west, and upwards of one thousand from north to south. Though he crossed the Indus and penetrated into the Doab, he turned away from the rich plains of Hindustan to gratify his great hatred of the Chinese ; but he had shown the warriors of Central Asia the way into that golden land, and inspired them with a dream and desire of its conquest.

A WOMAN RULER.

Raziya, a daughter of Altamsh, was the only woman who ever sat on the throne of Delhi.

Her brother, a profligate and indolent youth, had been deposed after a reign of only seven months. Of the two factions who had combined to overthrow him, one was opposed to the elevation of his sister and appeared in great numbers before the capital, defeating an army which had been sent to its relief. With consummate address, however, the Sultana contrived to sow dissension among its leaders, until the whole confederacy was honeycombed with intrigue, and fell into hopeless disorder. Some of its prominent men she then put to death, others she enlisted in her own service; and by the exercise of new powers of government she soon restored peace and made her throne secure. Her father had predicted her success as a ruler: "Know," he frequently said to his morahs, "that the burden of empire, too heavy for my sons, will not be so for the delicate Raziya! There is more courage in that young girl than in all her brothers." Ferishta remarks, with a compliment

to the queen that conveys a slight to her sex,—“Raziya Begum was endued with every princely virtue, and those who scrutinise her actions most severely *will find in her no other fault than that she was a woman.*” No doubt her influence was greatly increased by her rare personal charms ; by that sunny smile of hers, which, according to her wazir, was sufficient “to ripen the corn in the blade” ; by that expressive glance, with which, it was said, she could revive a dying friend, or subjugate her most powerful enemy.

Her personal attention was given to every detail of administration. Throwing aside her robes and veil, she would assume the tunic and cap of a man, and take her seat daily on her throne to listen to the prayer or complaint of every comer ; reforming the abuses which her keen eye detected, redressing the grievances which were brought before her, deciding important suits, and, in a word, displaying all the characteristics of a Justinian or a Charlemagne. But, like great Queen Bess, she could not guard against one weakness—a liking to have handsome men about her. She conceived a strong partiality for her Master

of the Horse ; and this partiality was all the more unfortunate in that he was an Abyssinian slave, and she deeply offended her proud nobles by raising him to the dignity of *Amir al Omara*, or Captain-General, which gave him precedency before all. It does not appear that any imputation rested on her honour, nor was she accused of any greater indecorum than that of allowing the Abyssinian to lift her on her horse.

But a rebellion broke out under the leadership of a Turki chief named Altunia. With her usual energy and promptitude, she marched against his fort of Batinda. The poison of disaffection, however, had crept into her army, which mutinied, killed its commander, and placed the Sultana in Altunia's hands for safety. Her beauty and her address temporarily extricated her from the perils of her position. She so fascinated Altunia that he married her, raised a large force to assert her claims, and advanced to Delhi to attack his former confederates. Two bloody battles went against Raziya and her husband ; they were taken prisoners, and put to death (1239). Her brilliant reign lasted little more than two years ; but

a woman of so much courage and capacity would seem to have deserved a better fate.

“KING AND NO KING.”

Some anecdotes which seem to me not without interest are recorded of Sultan Nasir-ud-din, the grandson of Altamsh. He cultivated very assiduously that unkingly virtue, economy,—a virtue which is hardly ever popular in a ruler; and, indeed, on so parsimonious a scale of simplicity was his household regulated that it gave great offence to a people accustomed to all the pomp and circumstance of Oriental royalty. But in his early years he had endured the privations of a prison, and been compelled to earn his daily bread by his skill as a penman. Throughout his reign he continued the practice of writing every day as much “copy” as would have paid the day’s expenses. As his fare was of the plainest description, and always cooked by the Queen, we may assume that the demand upon his pen was not very heavy. “Contrary to the custom of other [Eastern] princes,” says Ferishta, “he had but one wife, whom he com-

pelled to perform even the homeliest parts of housewifery. When she complained one day that she had burned her fingers in baking his bread, and desired the assistance of a maid, he refused her request, saying he was only a steward for the State, and was resolved not to burden it with any needless expenditure. He exhorted her, therefore, to be patient and persevering in doing her duty."

He seems to have been an enlightened and a well-mannered gentleman. It is told of him that having shown to a nobleman of his court one of the copies he had made of some famous book, the nobleman indicated several mistakes, which the Sultan forthwith corrected. When the nobleman left, the Sultan was observed to erase his corrections and restore the original text. Being asked the reason, he replied that he knew his transcript to be right all the time, but preferred to make the supposed emendations rather than wound the feelings of a well-intentioned adviser. The Sultan was thoroughly versed in Persian literature, and took a pleasure in the patronage of literary men. The "Tabakati Nasiri," a general history of Persia and India, which is still regarded as a Persian

work, was written at his Court, and in its title preserves his name.

In short, Nasir was one of those princes of whom one naturally thinks as *misplaced men*. In a private situation he would have enjoyed life and graced it by his refinement and culture. He wanted the firmness of character and the vigour of intellect indispensable in a successful ruler, and therefore devolved his sovereign duties on his wazir, or chief minister, Ghiya-ud-din Balban, a Turki slave, who had married one of the Sultan Altamsh's daughters. Balban was a man of ability, and governed with a firm hand; repulsed the inroads of the Mughals; and subdued some rebellious Hindu rajas. It was but natural—alas, poor human nature!—that the Sultan should at last grow jealous of the fame his minister had acquired, and summon up resolution to dismiss him. But the misgovernment which followed gave rise to a powerful combination for restoring to power the capable wazir. The Sultan submitted; and thenceforth Balban became the real head of the government, though it was administered in the name of Nasir-ud-din.

A CRUEL SOVEREIGN.

On the death of Nasir, Balban, or Ghiya-ud-din, assumed the royal title (1266). He was a Turki slave; the son of an influential Turki chief. Having been kidnapped in his boyhood by the Mughals, he was eventually sold to a merchant of Bussorah, who on discovering that he belonged to the same tribe as the Sultan Altamsh carried him to Delhi, and exhibited him in the public mart, together with a hundred other youths of different nations. All found favour in the Sultan's eyes except Balban, who was short of stature and plain of countenance. On hearing that his physical disadvantages were the cause of his rejection, he said to the Sultan: "Lord of the world, why have you bought all these slaves?" With a smile Altamsh answered, "For my own sake." "No doubt," replied the youth: "buy me, then, for God's sake." "I will," said the Sultan, greatly struck by the lad's boldness, and he bought him and placed him with the rest. Owing to his want of comeliness, he was first put among the cupbearers; but his address soon brought him for-

ward, and as he displayed much skill in the pastime of hawking, he was appointed Court Falconer. Thenceforward his rise was rapid, until he became, as we have seen, Nasir's wazir and lieutenant.

There can be no doubt that he was a man of astonishing intellectual vigour. As a sovereign he was distinguished by his sagacity and strict love of justice; but he inherited the cruelty of his race. During the life of Altamsh he had entered into a kind of offensive and defensive alliance with forty of the king's other slaves, most of whom attained to high stations. But when he himself rose into power, he became apprehensive of their possible jealousy and ambition; and on various pretexts put them all to death. He made it a rule to confer office only on men of family; carrying this policy to such an extreme, that he refused to hold any intercourse with people of low origin. He was careful also to exclude Hindus from all offices of trust; which, however, may have been a politic and necessary precaution.

A liberal patron of literature, as was also his eldest

son, Prince Muhammad, he attracted to his court all the famous authors of that age. Among many names well known in Persian literature, the chief was the poet, Amir Khusru, on the enjoyment of whose society he was congratulated by Sadi, the greatest of the Persian bards, who sent him at the same time a copy of his works, and expressed his regret that the infirmities of old age prevented him from visiting Delhi. As the Muhammadan nobles followed their prince's example, literature, during his reign, had quite a spell of prosperity. At the house of a grandee, named Khan Shahid, a society of learned men assembled regularly ; while the Sultan's second son presided over a more miscellaneous and attractive gathering of musicians, actors, dancers, and *kissagoes* or story-tellers. Similar societies flourished all over the capital.

Balban, like our English Plantagenets, had a fine taste for sumptuous show and glittering pageant. Here again his example influenced his nobles, so that the streets of Delhi were alive with gorgeous dresses and costly equipages—with all the outward and visible signs of wealth and luxury. The regal

pomp with which Balban loved to dazzle his subjects is thus described by Ferishta : " So imposing were the ceremonies of introduction to his presence, that none could approach the throne without a mixture of awe and admiration. Nor was he less magnificent in his processions. His state elephants were covered with trappings of purple and gold. His horse guards, numbering one thousand Tartars, were clothed in glittering armour, and mounted on the finest steeds of Persia and Araby, with silver bridles and richly embroidered housings. Five hundred foot soldiers, carefully picked, preceded him with their swords drawn, to proclaim his approach and clear the way. His omrahs, or nobles, followed in the order of their rank, with their various equipages and attendants." Thus, through kneeling crowds, the splendid Sultan made his royal progress.

In his old age Balban met with a heavy misfortune, the death of his son and heir, Prince Mahmud, whom he had made Governor of Multan. After suppressing an insurrection in Bengal, the Sultan, on his return to Delhi, was visited by the Prince ; and father and son spent three months together in great happiness,

for they were united by the bonds of a strong and sincere affection. But the Mughals having invaded Multan, the prince hastened to drive back their marauding hordes. The Sultan, who was nearly eighty years old, felt the separation keenly, having a presentiment that they would meet no more, and in their parting interview he gave the prince much good counsel as to the policy he should adopt when he took up the burden of power.

By swift marches the Prince overtook the invaders, and defeated them with terrible slaughter. In the heat of the pursuit, he halted on the bank of a cool, clear stream to quench his thirst. The bulk of his army had not come up, and he was attended by only some five hundred horsemen. In an adjoining wood lay concealed a Mughal chief, with two thousand of his followers. Breaking from their covert, they surrounded the prince and his little company, who, after a gallant resistance, were slain to a man. The death of his son proved a mortal blow to the aged Sultan, and he died shortly afterwards, devolving the succession on his grandson (1286).

TRAITORS AND TREACHERY.

The slave dynasty came to an end in 1288, and was succeeded by the line of the Khiljis, who came of Afghan lineage. The first Sultan of this house was Jalul-ud-din, a man of great ability, but in his old age a too generous and lenient leader. Having pardoned and set free some chiefs who had rebelled against him, he sought to explain his lenity by a text from the Koran: "Evil for evil is easily returned; but he only is great who returns good for evil." His omrahs did not dispute the excellence of the sentiment, but objected that in the circumstances it was inapplicable. "At all events," they argued, "the rebels should be deprived of sight, to render them powerless for further mischief, and to serve as a warning to others. If this were not done, treason would soon raise its head in every corner of the empire. "What you say," rejoined the Sultan, "is quite in accord with the usual rules of policy; but, my friends, I am now old, and I would fain go down to the grave without shedding more blood." There are times, however, in which—just as there are people

over whom—a firm, strong hand is indispensable for the repression of crime and the preservation of law and order ; and Jalul-ud-din's "rose-water" government was not altogether justified by the result. The turbulent race he ruled over mistook his lenity for weakness ; and crime was encouraged by the tenderness he showed to criminals. "The streets and highways," says the historian, "were infested by thieves and banditti. Housebreaking, robbery, murder, and every kind of offence were committed, many adopting them as a means of subsistence. Insurrections prevailed in every province : the numerous gangs of robbers interrupted commerce, and even common intercourse ; while the King's governors neglected to render any account either of their revenues or administration."

Of the plots formed against the Sultan's life the most formidable was the work of a famous dervish, Siddi Mullah. A Persian by birth, he had risen into immense popularity at Delhi by his apparent sanctity of life, and his unbounded liberality to the poor. This popularity nourished in his mind a great ambition, which was encouraged by an intriguing Hindu,

who had gained his confidence, and pretended that the people looked to him as to a deliverer sent by Providence, to rescue them from the yoke of the Khiljis, and bestow upon Hindustan the boon of a wise and equitable government. To reach the goal of his new hopes, the dervish planned the removal of the Sultan. Two of Jalul-ud-din's attendants were bribed to assassinate him on his way to the public mosque; but one of them was seized with remorse, and revealed the design. The dervish was at once arrested; but, as he protested his innocence, and the evidence against him was only that of a suspected witness, the Sultan gave orders that he should be allowed to compurge himself by the ordeal of fire. Everything was prepared for the ceremony; the flames blazed high and strong; and the dervish, having performed his devotions, was on the point of plunging into the fiery furnace, when Jalul-ud-din stopped him, and turning to the priests or mullahs, inquired, "Is it lawful to try the faithful by the ordeal of fire?" With one consent they replied that the custom was heathenish, and contrary to Muhammadan law as well as to reason, inasmuch as it was the

property of fire to destroy, and it made no distinction between the righteous and the wicked. The dervish was then ordered back to prison, but as he went some religious mendicants fell upon and killed him.

The conspiracy formed against the Sultan by his nephew, Ala-ud-din, proved more successful (1295). By profuse expressions of respect and affection, he inveigled his uncle into paying him a visit. When the imperial canopy was seen coming up the river, Ala-ud-din drew out his troops under pretence of doing honour to his sovereign, and sent his brother Alagh Khan to arrange the details of his reception. Alagh, a man of insinuating address, poured out a flood of compliments in the true Oriental fashion, while craftily persuading the Sultan that if he advanced with a large retinue, Ala-ud-din, who feared that he had already incurred the royal displeasure, would be seriously alarmed. Jalul-ud-din was induced to dismiss all but a few attendants, whom he ordered to unbuckle their armour and lay aside their swords. The royal barge then ascended the river to the gât, or landing-place; and the white-haired Sultan stepped ashore alone to greet his nephew, who threw

himself prostrate at his feet. Raising him up, embracing him, and tapping him familiarly on the cheek, "How couldst thou be suspicious of me," said the Sultan, "who have brought you up from the weakness of childhood, and nurtured you in the warmth of a paternal affection, holding you dearer, if possible, than my own offspring?" Ala-ud-din, unmoved by these tender words, made a signal to his troops, one of whom aimed at the aged monarch with his scimitar, wounding him in the shoulder. He turned to gain his barge, exclaiming, "O thou villain, Ala-ud-din!" but before he could reach it, was overtaken by another soldier, who threw him to the ground and struck off his head. It is said that the man who did this bloody deed never afterwards enjoyed a moment's rest. By day and night, the old man's grey locks, bedabbled with gore, were present to his disordered vision; so that at last he went mad, and expired in the greatest agony, crying aloud, until death stopped the delirious repetition, that Jalul-ud-din was cutting off his head.

Ala-ud-din was a great warrior, and spent the twenty years of his reign in continuous battle.

The story of his double siege of Chittur will interest the reader, I imagine, for it reads like a chapter from an Oriental romance.

Lakhumsi, a minor, was then Raja of Chittur, and Bheemsi, his uncle, governed in his name as regent. He had chosen for his bride the dark-tressed Padmani (or "very beautiful"), daughter of the King of Ceylon, whose rare personal charms are to this day celebrated by the Oriental poets. The fame of her loveliness having reached the ears of Ala-ud-din, he conceived a strong desire to win her for himself. Invading Rajputana, he laid siege to Chittur, but offered to withdraw his army if Padmani were given up. But no true Rajput would consent to a Rajput woman's degradation, and his condition was scornfully rejected. The siege was prolonged for several months, until at length the Sultan declared that he would be satisfied with the mere sight of the beautiful princess—a pleasure which he was enabled to enjoy through an arrangement of refracting mirrors. Relying on the chivalry of the Rajputs, he entered Chittur with only a few attendants, and after contemplating the reflected charms of Padmani, set out on his return to his

camp, accompanied by Bheemsi, who, placing equal faith in the honour of the Khilji, advanced to some distance from the walls of Chittur. Unwise are they who put their trust in princes! He was involved in an ambush treacherously prepared by Ala-ud-din, made prisoner, and informed that his life and liberty depended on the surrender of his loving wife. When the news reached Chittur, Padmani expressed her readiness to make the sacrifice; but stipulated that she should be attended by a suitable train of handmaidens, and that no curious gaze should be permitted to violate her privacy.

On the appointed day she set out for the royal camp, followed by a hundred litters, each of which contained a Rajput noble, and was carried by six armed men, disguised as bearers. The litters were deposited within the royal tents, and half an hour was allowed for the leave-taking between Padmani and her husband, who, at the expiry of the interview, was placed in a litter, ostensibly to be carried back to Chittur, while most of the supposed handmaids remained to accompany their royal mistress to Delhi. Ala-ud din's treachery hastened the *dénouement* of

this romantic drama ; for when it became apparent that he sought to prevent Bheemsi's return, the Rajput nobles sprang from their concealment, and with drawn swords attacked the Sultan's guards. A desperate struggle and a bloody one ensued ; in the course of it Bheemsi escaped on a swift horse, and Padmani was saved to him by the chivalrous devotion of the nobles and warriors of Chittur.

THE VISION.

Later in his reign, Ala-ud-din a second time laid siege to the fortress-city, and this time with a force which proved irresistible. Connected with its downfall is told the following legend :—

“The young Lakhumsi was dead, and Bheemsi reigned in his place. One night, after long fighting against the besiegers, he was resting on his pallet, and pondering the perils of his beloved country, when he was startled by a voice which said, ‘I am hungry!’ Looking up, his blood almost froze as he recognised between himself and the lamp a shadowy Presence, which he knew to be the guardian-goddess of Chittur. ‘Not satisfied yet?’ exclaimed the prince, ‘though

eight thousand of my kinsmen have been offered in battle as a sacrifice to you!’ ‘I must have kingly victims,’ she cried, ‘and unless twelve who have sat on the purple musnud bleed for Chittur, the sovereignty will pass from your line.’ With these words she vanished. On the following morning he related his vision to his nobles, who treated it as a freak of the imagination ; whereupon he commanded their attendance at midnight. And lo ! the goddess came again, and again she named the condition on which alone she would consent to watch over Chittur. Frowning upon them, she said : ‘Though barbarians strew the earth in thousands, what are they to me ? On each day see that you choose a prince, and place in his hand the sceptre, and on his head the diadem, and for three days let his commands be obeyed. On the fourth let him go to meet the enemy and his fate ! Thus alone will I be satisfied.’ ”

Now, it happened that the Raja had twelve sons, and after a generous contention among themselves, the eldest was proclaimed king. For three days he ruled, and on the fourth he fell in battle. Each son in turn devoted himself in the same manner, until

all but the youngest had been slain. One more victim would complete the tale. Calling his nobles around him, the Raja said, "Now will I myself perish, that Chittur may be saved." And he would listen to neither expostulation nor entreaty. A chosen band of warriors was entrusted with the person of his youngest son, and ordered to cut their way through the enemy's ranks at whatever cost. He then commanded that the *johur*, or self-immolation of the women, should take place—the last resource of the Rajputs in the hour of defeat; and a huge funeral pile having been erected, Padmani, and all the wives and daughters of Chittur, hastened to plunge into the mounting flames; after which the Raja put on the sacrificial robe of saffron, and sallied forth with his followers to fall beneath the swords of the Moslems.

THE JOHUR.

A singular sacrifice occurred when Ala-ud-din besieged the city of Jossulmeer. For eight months he invested it so closely that famine stalked through its streets, and its population, wan and haggard, with

staring eyes and pallid countenances, perished by hundreds daily. When human nature could endure no more, Mulraj, the Raja, summoned his nobles in durbar, and addressed them in the true spirit of a Rajput prince: "We are the sons of the free; in our veins flows the blood of the Rahtou: shall we see our houses defiled and our women dishonoured by a barbarian foe? For eight months we have defended our dwellings; but now the last handful of rice is eaten, and it is impossible to obtain any fresh supplies: what is to be done?" "There is but one thing to be done," replied his chiefs, gravely, "and that is the johur. We must sacrifice our women, destroy by fire and water all that is capable of destruction, and bury all that is not; then throw open our gates, rush upon the foe, and, sword in hand, ensure our admission into Paradise."

Mulraj and his nobles returned to their palaces, and acquainted the women with their dread resolve. It was rapturously applauded. The Rani clapped her hands, and, smiling, said, "To-night we will make our preparations, and before to-morrow's dawn we shall be inhabitants of the realms of eternal bliss."

As soon as the first streak of day was visible in the eastern skies, women and children, all in their gayest attire, assembled at the gate of the palace, to the number of four thousand. Every countenance wore a smile of rapt devotion. There was no sign of the terror and dread which a premature and, more particularly, a violent death inspires. You would have thought they were taking part in some high festivity. Within the palace court a huge pile had been erected, which sent up columns and spires of flame in the grey morning light. When they had bidden farewell to one another, and had parted from husband and father and brother, they went gaily to their doom, most of them cheerfully ascending the blazing pyre, but some preferring to bare their bosoms to the sword, and die by a beloved hand. Not one—not one shrank from the sacrifice! Then, having destroyed everything of value in the city, three thousand eight hundred warriors, their faces red with wrath and their hearts torn by raging passions, broke upon the foe in hopeless battle, and perished with their prince and his nobles (1295). Of such heroic deeds of patriotism were the Rajputs capable,

—decids which, if told of Greek or Roman, would have gained the applause of all the Western World, and been made the theme of epic and romance.

Here I must interpolate a bit of history. By this time—that is, by the close of the thirteenth century—the Afghan king of Delhi had blossomed out into the Muhammadan Sultan of India. As Sir William Hunter points out, three great “waves of invasion” had deposited in India a large Muhammadan population. First came the Turkis, represented by the House of Ghazni; next, the Afghans (commonly so called), represented by the House of Ghor; and, third, the Mughals or Moguls, who, having failed in repeated attempts to conquer the Punjab, hired themselves out as soldiers to the sovereigns of Delhi. Those mercenaries, like the Janissaries of Constantinople and the Mamelukes of Cairo, in a later age, became so formidable to their employers that Balban, in the last year of his reign, was compelled to put them to the sword. About 1292, a suburb of Delhi, still called Mughalpur, was allotted for their quarters to three thousand Mughals, who had abandoned their old Tartar religion, and embraced the faith of Islam.

But the immigration still continued, until Ala-ud-din, like his predecessor, grew alarmed at the numbers of these fierce but intractable fighting-men; and, in 1311, having laid his plans with consummate ability, accomplished the massacre of fifteen thousand males, and sold their women and children into slavery.

Ala-ud-din died in 1316,—it is said of poison, secretly administered by his general, Kafur. His youngest son, Amir Khan, reigned for a short time and was succeeded by his eldest son, Mubarik. Mubarik was murdered in March, 1321, by one of his eunuchs, who ascended the purple musnud as Nasir-ud-din. But the proud nobles of Islam could not brook the usurpation of a low-born renegade, and a conspiracy was formed against him, of which the leading spirit was Ghiyas-ud-din Tughlak, Governor of the Punjab. Nasir was defeated and slain in battle. The day after his victory, Tughlak mounted his horse, rode away to Delhi, and entered the city with the pomp of a conqueror. But on coming in sight of the imperial palace, he burst into tears, and exclaimed:—"O ye people of this great empire, I am nothing more than one of yourselves, who unsheathed

his sword to deliver you from oppression and rid the world of a monster. By the blessing of Allah, my efforts have been crowned with success. If, therefore, any member of the royal family be living, let him be brought forth, that justice may be done, and that we his servants may do homage before his throne. But if no one of the royal race have escaped the bloody hand of tyranny and usurpation, let the worthiest of the illustrious order be elected by you, and I swear that I will accept your choice." Struck by his magnanimity, the people replied that none of the princes had survived; and that as he had rescued them from a tyrant's yoke, no one was worthier of the crown than he. They gathered round him with shouts and cries of exultation; seated him on the musnud; and saluted him with the title of Shah Jehan, "King of the Universe." But with prudent humility he declined so ostentatious a designation, and declared that he would be known only as Ghiyas-ud-din, "The Aid of Religion." Ghiyas was the first King or Sultan of the House of Tughlak. He was killed by the fall of the roof of a pavilion which had been erected hastily for his entertainment (1324).

CHAPTER III.

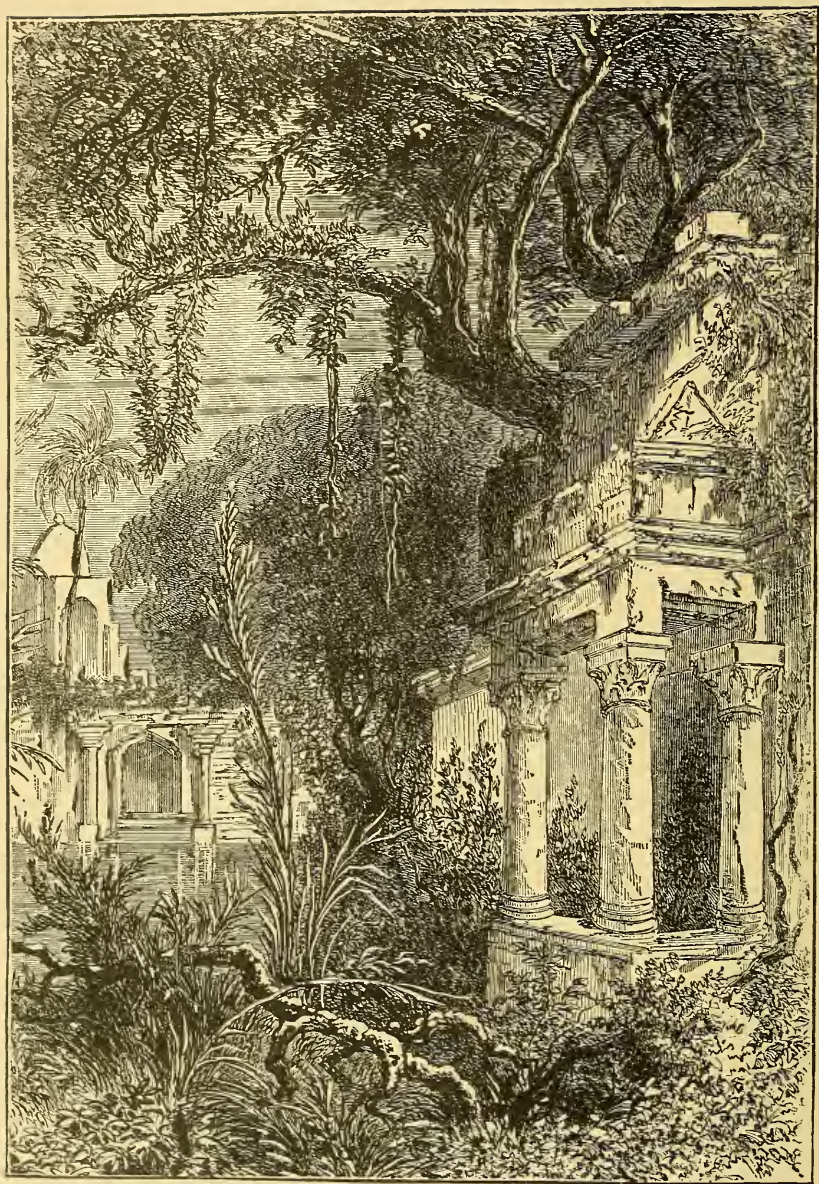
A TYRANT AND A SCHOLAR.

THERE is a well-known Ovidian saying that the love of knowledge softens the manners, and prevents them from lapsing into brutality—"imollit mores, nec sinit esse feros." Muhammad Tughlak, son and successor of Ghiyas, was a notable example of its fallacy. In cruelty he surpassed even the cruellest of Oriental potentates; he raged with the lust of blood; to take the lives of his fellow-men was his supreme pastime. "So little did he scruple," says Ferishta, "to spill the blood of God's creatures, that when aught occurred which excited him to that dreadful extremity, one might have supposed his object was to exterminate the human race altogether." Yet he was a fine scholar; in all probability more learned, eloquent, and polished than any contemporary sovereign. Medicine, logic, astronomy, and mathematics

were his favourite studies ; and he had drunk deeply of the fountains of history. Nature had endowed him with a memory of extraordinary tenacity, so that he retained every name, date, and event which he had heard or read but once. Poetry he cultivated with success ; and he swept with intelligent glance the wide region of Greek philosophy. In the art of war he was as skilful as he was experienced. As he was also a man of great piety, scrupulously adhering to the doctrines and regulations of Islam, he possessed apparently all the qualifications of a wise and prosperous ruler, except that which the poet rightly calls twice-blessed, since it blesses both him who gives and him who receives—the quality of mercy. So terrible, indeed, and so relentless was his fury at the slightest provocation, that we may reasonably suppose his intellect to have trembled at times on the borders of insanity. And such would certainly seem to be the only explanation of some of his extravagances, as when he buried one of his teeth, which had been extracted in order to relieve him from toothache, with all the pomp of royal obsequies, and erected over it a magnificent mausoleum.

One of his nephews having rebelled against him (in 1338), and twice defeated the Sultan's troops, was eventually subdued and taken prisoner. Being carried to Delhi, the Sultan ordered him to be flayed alive; and his dead body was afterwards paraded round the city, while the executioner cried,—“Thus shall all traitors to their monarch perish!”

Muhammad had taken the field in person to suppress this revolt, and fixed his headquarters at Dergiri, or Dergarh, which had been captured by Ala-ud-din in 1294. He was so pleased with its situation that he resolved to make it the capital of his empire; and re-christening it Daulatabad, or “The Fortunate City,” issued orders that Delhi should be evacuated, and its population transferred thither, a distance of eight hundred miles. It is easy to imagine the terrible hardships this compulsory migration must have involved. Delhi, at that time known as “The Envy of the World,” was completely deserted; and the story goes that at last only a blind man and a paralytic were found lingering in its silent streets. The poor palsied wretch, as a punishment for his dilatoriness, was blown from the



VIEW IN THE GARDENS OF THE OLD PALACE, DELHI.

mouth of a catapult ; but the blind man was dragged from the old to the new capital, a march of forty days. With grim humour the historian adds that on the way he fell into pieces, and only one of his legs reached Daulatabad.

In the course of one of his later expeditions, his army advanced into the immediate neighbourhood of the ancient capital ; whereupon those soldiers who had been born there, or otherwise connected with it, deserted in thousands, concealing themselves in the surrounding woods until the king should have passed on. This wholesale desertion so thinned his ranks that the Sultan was compelled to resume his residence at Delhi in the hope of tempting the fugitives to return. Not the less obstinately did he adhere to his original purpose ; and at the end of two years he once more removed the inhabitants to Daulatabad ; so that "the noble metropolis of Delhi" became "a resort for ants and a dwelling-place for the beasts of the forest." Before his own departure, his insane lust of blood impelled him to the perpetration of fresh atrocities. Having organised an immense hunting-party, he proclaimed that the

quarry would consist of human beings ; and a considerable area of country having been surrounded by the hunters, he commanded them to converge simultaneously towards the centre, and kill all they met with, as if they were wild beasts ! These dreadful *man-hunts* were repeated in several provinces ; and on one occasion he ordered a wholesale massacre of the inhabitants of the famous city of Kanauj.

It is no wonder that a reign disgraced by such atrocities should be disturbed by constant rebellions. The marvel is, that his subjects did not everywhere rise and overthrow this enemy of the human race (as he may fitly be called). An insurrection in his new capital of Daulatabad so disgusted him that he gave permission to the people of Delhi to return to their old homes. Thousands attempted the long journey ; but as the country was then suffering from a terrible famine, these pilgrims perished in large numbers, their dead bodies strewing the whole line of march between the two capitals, while most of those who succeeded in dragging their attenuated frames as far as the city of their affections died of exhaustion in its streets.

The Muhammadan governor of the Deccan threw off the Sultan's authority ; and the troops in Guzarat broke out into open mutiny. With his usual energy the Sultan suppressed this rising, and then hurried off to crush the hydra head of rebellion elsewhere. He was on the march towards the Indus when he was seized with a fever, attributed by his physicians to a surfeit of fish. At first no dangerous symptoms were observed ; but his impetuous temper goaded him into continuing his advance before he had completely recovered. A fatal relapse took place ; and his subjects rejoiced at their deliverance from a cruel oppressor. This was in 1351 ; so that, strange to say, though in the East the use of the dagger, the bowstring, and the poisoned cup was so common, he had been allowed to reign seven-and-twenty years.

A TRAVELLER'S TALES.

It was during this reign that the Arab traveller, Ibn Batuta, visited India. The obviously truthful and graphically simple description which he has left on record of all he saw and heard is full of interest. He fully confirms the native account both of the

king's abilities and his crimes, which were equally remarkable ; and of the mingled grandeur and desolation of the Empire, which reflected the twofold character of its ruler. While the disturbed condition of the country made travelling dangerous, he found an admirable postal service existing between the frontiers and the capital. He dwells enthusiastically on the splendours of Delhi, but though the Sultan was then recopling it, it was almost a desert. "The greatest city in the world," he says, "has the fewest inhabitants."

In the absence of the Sultan he was invited, along with other noble and learned strangers, to the court of the queen-mother, who received them courteously, entertained them hospitably, and on their departure presented them with robes of honour. A spacious residence was allotted to our traveller ; a liberal table was supplied every day ; and he was presented with a couple of thousand dinars "to pay for his washing." While staying at Delhi, he had the misfortune to lose his daughter. Her death was privately notified to the Sultan "by post" ; and at her funeral, to his great surprise, the wazir attended, and the ceremony

was similar in every detail to that which took place at the burial of a noble. The queen-mother sent for his wife, to condole with her, and gave her some rich dresses and ornaments.

Ibn Batuta speaks with much warmth of the Sultan's exceeding graciousness and fine courtesy. On his return to Delhi, the traveller went out to meet him, and was accorded a very flattering reception. Muhammad afterwards appointed him a judge, explaining to him in Arabic the duties of his office; and when Ibn Batuta hesitated on account of his ignorance of the Hindu language, the Sultan, though evidently astonished at his presuming to raise difficulties, answered him with calmness, combated his argument, and finally settled the matter by assigning him a liberal salary. Afterwards he paid his debts to the amount of fifty-five thousand dinars, in response to an application for help which Ibn Batuta had ventured in the form of an Arabic poem. But the claws of the tiger soon made themselves felt. A dervish who dwelt near Delhi had incurred the Sultan's suspicion. He was immediately put to death, and everybody who had been accustomed to

visit the man's cell was arrested and thrown into prison. Ibn Batuta was one of these unfortunates ; but he succeeded in appeasing his royal patron and convincing him of his innocence. The risk he had run, however, disgusted him with Delhi ; and he seized the earliest opportunity of resigning his post, expressing a desire to resume his travels. The Sultan, fortunately, took the matter good-temperedly, and instead of punishing his somewhat ungrateful guest, attached him to an embassy which he was despatching to the Chinese court at Peking.

CHAPTER IV.

TIMUR THE TARTAR.

IT was in 1398 that the Tartars first invaded India, under Pir Mahmud Jahanger, grandson of the great Mogul or Mughal sultan, Timur or Tamerlane. This irruption was formidable in itself, in the then enfeebled condition of the Delhi Empire; but it was more formidable as the shadow of "coming events," as the precursor of the invasion of the terrible Timur himself, and the conquest of India by the Moguls.

The story of Timur or Tamerlane the Great had a strong attraction for our forefathers, and was put on the stage in Elizabeth's reign by the powerful genius of Christopher Marlowe, who took it from Fortescue's "Foresti," a translation of Pedro Mexica's Spanish life of the great Tartar hero,—and from the "Vita Magni Tamerlanis" of Petrus Paudinus. His play was at once successful, and made Tamerlane

a household word with Englishmen for many generations. I remember that, in my young days, "Timur the Tartar" was a favourite character on the transpontine stage, and also in the sheets of figures which boys bought for painting and tinselling, and adapting for performances in their miniature "theatres." Marlowe infused such a fervent, kindling, passionate life into his creation that its immortality is not to be wondered at. The fierce, restless warrior of the East he transformed into a passionate, poetic spirit, impelled to constant action by his unquenchable thirst for new things, new pleasures, new scenes, new triumphs :—

"I will, with engines never exercised,
Conquer, sack, and utterly consume
Your cities and your golden palaces ; . . .
And, till by vision or by speech I hear
Immortal love say, 'Cease, my Tamburlaine,'
I will persist, a terror to the world,
Making the meteors (that, like armèd men,
Are seen to march upon the towers of Heaven),
Run tilting round about the firmament,
And break their burning lances in the air,
For honour of my wondrous victories."

Apart, however, from the exaggeration permissible

to the dramatic poet, the story of Timur the Tartar breathes a living and romantic interest to which the reader cannot fail to respond.

HIS BIRTH AND EARLY YEARS.

According to his own account—which is confirmed by independent testimony—Timur (that is, “iron”) was the son of the chief of a Tartar tribe, and lineally descended on his mother’s side from the famous Genghis Khan. He was born about 1330 at Kesh (“The Green City”), forty miles from famous Samarcand. His birth, as Gibbon remarks, was cast on one of those periods of anarchy which precede the fall of Asiatic dynasties and open up a new field to the adventurous. His boyhood was spent, therefore, in an atmosphere of feud and strife, which prepared him for the storm and stress of his later career. He received the training usually given to the son and heir of a chief,—learned to ride the most spirited steeds, to bend the bow, to hurl the javelin, and how to order an army on the battle-field, according to the simple principles of Oriental strategy. When he reached the age of twenty, his

father assigned to him a certain quota of flocks and slaves, which he managed for his own advantage. And in the following year he began his life of adventure by leading a body of mounted warriors against a predatory force which had broken into Transoxiana.

The historian is of opinion that "the conquest and monarchy of the world" was the first object of Timur's ambition. "To live in the memory and esteem of future ages, was the second wish of his magnanimous spirit." But I think that in his earlier exploits we may fairly credit him with having obeyed a patriotic rather than an ambitious impulse. He had reached the age of twenty-five, when he undertook to deliver his country from the tyranny of the Kalmuks.

In one of his battles with the enemy he received a wound in the thigh, which crippled him for life; and thenceforward he was known as *Timur lank*, or "lame Timur," corrupted by Europeans into Tamerlane. But the chiefs who had pledged themselves to support him in his noble enterprise with their lives and fortunes now in the hour of danger

stood aloof and inactive ; and after tarrying some days on the hills of Samarcand, waiting for reinforcements, he rode away towards the desert with only sixty followers. It is said that, overtaken by a thousand Kalmuks, he defeated them with terrible slaughter ; so that even his enemies were compelled to exclaim, "Timur is a wonderful man ! Fortune is his, and the Divine favour." By this desperate and sanguinary conflict, however, his little force was reduced to ten, and three of these having deserted, he wandered for weeks in the wilderness, with his wife, seven comrades, and four horses. Surprised by the enemy and taken prisoner, he was thrown into a loathsome dungeon, where he lay for fifty-three days and nights ; until, his wonderful energy of mind and body asserting itself anew, and sustained by his belief in a great and glorious future, he attempted and accomplished his escape.

After swimming the broad swift stream of the Jihon, or Oxus, Timur led for some months a nomad life, passing through a series of remarkable adventures, which brought out all his latent powers—his sagacity, his clearness of perception, his promptitude

of decision, his fertility of resource. Gradually he was joined by parties of his countrymen, who, attracted by the greatness of his character, were prepared to obey and serve him to the death. He describes in simple but forcible language what happened on one of these occasions, when he presented himself as a guide to three chiefs, who were in command of some seventy horsemen. "When their eyes fell upon me," he says, "they were overwhelmed with joy, and alighted from their steeds, and throwing themselves on their knees, kissed my stirrup. I too, hastened to dismount, and took each of them severally in my arms. And I put my turban on the head of the first chief; and my girdle, rich in jewels and embroidered with gold, I bound about the loins of the second; and the third I clothed in my own coat. And when they wept, I wept also, until the hour of prayer arrived, and we all knelt down and prayed. Then we mounted our horses, and rode to my dwelling, and I collected my people and made a feast." His force was soon augmented by the bravest men of the tribes, who proved irresistible when he led them against an enemy superior in numbers, but inferior

in valour and endurance; and, after a severe and protracted struggle, in which the tide of war ebbed and flowed more than once, he drove the Kalmuks out of the territory they had invaded.

HIS CONQUESTS.

In 1369 Timur was made—or made himself—Khan of Zagatai, and fixed upon Samarcand as his capital. His success was encouraged and predicted by the native astrologers, who pretended that at his birth the planets had quitted their orbits, and bestowed on him the stupendous title of Sahib Keranor, or “Lord of Auspicious Conjunctions.” Timur was not unwilling that his authority over his subjects should be strengthened by their superstition; but his own intellect was too strong and clear to be misled by the jargon of the magicians. “I confide,” he said, “in the assistance of the All-Powerful, who has never abandoned me. What avails the triplicity or conjunctions of the planets to me, who never delay the execution of my projects a single moment after I have taken the necessary measures for ensuring their success?” Gradually extending his conquests,

he conceived the idea of subjugating all the countries which had been included within the empire of Genghis Khan, and turned his arms in the first place against the Persian kingdom of Khorassan. From the Oxus to the Tigris, Persia had long been without a lawful sovereign ; and groaning under the injustice of numerous petty rulers, its people gladly welcomed an invader under whose stable government they might hope to enjoy tranquillity and order. These tyrants were jealous of one another, and instead of combining against the Tartar conqueror, encountered him separately, and separately fell—some submitting promptly, some after a brief and hopeless struggle. Thus, Ibrahim, prince of Shirwan, hastened to pay his homage, bringing with him offerings of silks, horses, and jewels,—each gift composed, according to the Tartar custom, of nine items,—except that, as a bystander remarked, there were only eight slaves. “Not so,” replied the Prince ; “I am the ninth,” and the adroit compliment drew a smile from the conqueror. On the other hand, Shah Mansur, Prince of Fars (or Persia proper), fought desperately to maintain his independence. In a great battle under

the walls of Shiraz he with three or four thousand soldiers broke the *coul*, or main body, of 30,000 horse, where the emperor fought in person. Only some fourteen or fifteen guards remained near Timur's standard. Timur himself stood firm as a rock, and received two weighty blows with a scimitar upon his helmet. The Moguls rallied, and then Mansur's head was thrown at Timur's feet. To show his esteem for Mansur's bravery he extirpated all male members of his family, the race being too intrepid for his plans. From Shiraz he led his army to the Persian Gulf, and Ormuz, extremely rich though weak, paid a yearly tribute of 600,000 dinars of gold. Bagdad was no longer the seat of peace, the seat of the caliphs; but the noblest conquest of Houlacou could not be overlooked by his ambitious successor. The whole course of the Euphrates and Tigris, from the sources to the mouths of these rivers, lay at his feet. He entered Edessa, and the Turkmans of the black sheep were chastised for the sacrilegious pillage of a caravan of Mecca. In the mountains of Georgia the native Christians still braved the law and sword of Mahomet; by three

expeditions he obtained the merit of the *gazie* or holy war, and the prince of Teflis became his proselyte and friend.

A just retaliation might be urged for the invasion of Turkestan or Eastern Tartary. The dignity of Timur could not bear the impunity of the Getes: he passed the Jihon, subdued Kashgar, and marched seven times into the heart of their country. His most distant camp was two months' journey, or 480 leagues, to the north of Samarcand, and his emirs, who traversed the river Irtish, engraved in the forests of Siberia a rude memorial of their exploits. The conquest of Kipzak, or Western Tartary, had the double motive of helping the distressed and punishing the ungrateful. He received and kept at his court Toctamish, a fugitive prince, and protected him. The ambassadors of Auruss Khan departed with a haughty denial, and the armies of Zagatai followed them immediately. Owing to their success Toctamish was established in the Mughal empire of the north. But the new khan forgot the merits and strength of his benefactor, and considered him the base usurper of the sacred rights of the house of Zingis. Through

the gates of Derbend he led into Persia 90,000 horse ; with the innumerable forces of Kipzak, Bulgaria, Circassia, and Russia, he passed the Jihon, burnt Timur's palaces, and compelled him amidst the winter snow to contend for Samarcand and his life. After a mild expostulation and a glorious victory the emperor resolved on revenge, and by the east and west of the Caspian and the Volga he twice invaded Kipzak with such mighty powers that the distance from his right to his left wing measured thirteen miles. During a march of five months they rarely beheld the footsteps of man, and often the chase alone supplied their daily subsistence. At last the armies met. The treachery of the standard-bearer, who in the heat of action reversed the Imperial standard of Kipzak, determined the victory of the Zagatai, and Toctamish (to use the words of Timur's "Institutions") gave the tribe of Toushi to the wind of desolation. He fled to the Christian duke of Lithuania, returned, however, again to the Volga, and after fifteen battles with a domestic rival perished in the wilds of Siberia. The pursuit of a flying enemy carried Timur into the tributary provinces of Russia.

A duke of the reigning family fell a prisoner into his hands, and his capital was turned into ruins. Moscow trembled at the approach of the Tartar, and resistance would have been feeble, since the Russians placed their hope in an image of the Virgin, which they believed had turned the enemy aside. Ambition and prudence, however, recalled Timur to the south: the desolate country was exhausted, and the Mughal soldiers were greatly enriched with immense spoil of precious furs, linen from Antioch, and ingots of gold and silver. On the banks of the Don (or Tanais) he received a humble deputation from the consuls and merchants of Egypt, Venice, Genoa, Catalonia, and Biscay, who held the commerce and city of Tana (or Azoph) at the mouth of the river. They offered presents, admired his magnificence, and trusted to his royal word. Soon, however, an emir, on a peaceful journey, explored the country, the state of the magazines, and the harbour, and this visit was soon followed by the disastrous presence of the Tartars. The city was burnt to the ground, the Moslems were plundered, and sent away; but all the Christians who had not taken refuge on board their ships were

condemned either to death or slavery. Revenge incited him to burn the cities of Serai and Astrakhan, the monuments of a progressive civilisation; and his vanity proclaimed that "he had penetrated to the region of perpetual daylight—a strange phenomenon, which authorised his Muhammadan doctors to dispense with the obligation of evening prayer." The Oriental historian remarks that the rays of the setting and those of the rising sun were scarcely separated by any interval—a statement which refers us to the latitude of Moscow "with the aid of the aurora borealis, and a long summer twilight."

TIMUR'S INVASION OF INDIA.

Not satisfied with having extended the supremacy of his arms from the Wall of China on the east to Moscow on the west, Timur, at the age of sixty-three, proposed to himself the invasion of India, ambitious of advancing beyond even the uttermost limits of the victories and conquests of Alexander the Great. When he first made known his design to his emirs and nobles, he was met with excited apprehensions:

“The rivers, and the mountains, and the deserts! The soldiers clad in armour, and the elephants—destroyers of men!” But Timur’s iron will prevailed over a timidity which sprang in the main from ignorance. His keen eye had detected the inherent weakness of India, and he was well acquainted with the rebellion and discord which paralysed the energies of its princes. The facility with which his grandson, Pir Mahmud, had crossed the Indus, and pushed forward as far as Multan, convinced him that no opposition would be offered which his redoubtable horsemen could not easily overcome.

At the head of an immense army, in three divisions, Timur set out from Kabul in August, 1398, and marched to Dinkot, on the Indus; hailing it as a good omen that his ninety-two squadrons, each of a thousand horsemen, happily corresponded in number with the ninety-two names of the Prophet.

Between the Jihon and the Indus he crossed one of those immense mountain-ranges which the Arabian geographers style “the stony girdles of the earth.” The march was long, toilsome, and hazardous; and though the mountaineers were easily subdued or

extirpated, the natural obstacles were not so lightly overcome. Great numbers of men and horses perished in the snow, or fell down the icy declivities. At one point it was found necessary to lower Timur down a tremendous precipice on a portable platform. The ropes used for this purpose were one hundred and fifty cubits in length ; and before he could reach the bottom the dangerous process had to be five times repeated.

Timur crossed the Indus on a bridge made of rafts and bundles of reeds. He then advanced to the Hydaspes, along the banks of which he marched to Tulamba, where he levied on the inhabitants a large contribution. But without his orders, his troops broke into and sacked the unfortunate city, massacring men, women, and children. Fire and sword marked his victorious advance—town after town was captured and razed to the ground, or occupied by a Tartar garrison—until, at length, he arrived in front of Delhi. Crossing the Jumna, with 700 cavalry, to reconnoitre its position, he was attacked by the Sultan Mahmud Tughlak, with 5,000 horse and 29 elephants, but drove him back in great disorder

and with heavy loss. At the beginning of the contest, when the difference of numbers seemed to point to Timur's speedy defeat, his prisoners, of whom there was a vast number in his camp, unwisely gave vent to shouts of premature exultation. When this was reported to the Destroyer (as the Hindus called him), he gave orders that every prisoner above the age of fifteen should be put to the sword. The Moslem historians assert that one hundred thousand perished; but this number is an obvious and a gross exaggeration, for it would have been impossible for Timur to have fed them on the march, in addition to his mighty host of fighting men.

Having crossed the Jumna, Timur encamped on the plain of Firuzabad, where the King of Delhi drew out his army to meet him—a splendid host of 10,000 horsemen in full armour, 40,000 infantry, and 120 elephants, whose tusks were equipped with sharp, poisoned daggers. Perceiving that his troops were somewhat dismayed by the formidable array of these huge animals, he caused his front to be protected by a ditch and a line of blazing fires, with rows of iron spikes, like a *chevaux de frise*, and a rampart of

bucklers, but in the event these stratagems proved unnecessary. For, at the first charge of the Tartars, the elephants, deprived of most of their drivers, and irritated by the volleys of sharp arrows which rattled upon them like iron hail, wheeled round upon their own ranks and threw them into fatal disorder. Timur immediately ordered an advance of his whole force; and the Hindus turned and fled, contending with one another who should be foremost in the flight, while the Tartar horsemen, with blood-red scimitars, rode in among the hindmost and covered the ground with corpses to the very gates of Delhi. The king escaped to Guzarat, and the inhabitants of Delhi made haste to surrender on condition that their lives were spared.

Not ignorant of the savage temper of his warriors, Timur encamped them outside the city, and for some days restrained them from pillage or massacre. But it so happened that the Sultanas of his court were anxious to see the wonders of the famous city, and for this purpose were sent thither under a strong guard. The gates being left open, some fifteen thousand Tartars poured in almost at the same time.

Plunder and violence were met by resistance ; then the passions of an infuriated soldiery broke loose, and an indiscriminate massacre took place of men and women, of old and young ; the streets were soon rendered impassable by heaps of dead bodies ; every house reeked with blood, and for five days Delhi, in the hands of the merciless invaders, was one vast saturnalia of lust, rapine and murder. Timur in real or affected indifference looked on at an outbreak he was probably powerless to repress ; and celebrated a sumptuous feast in honour of his victory, at which the princes he had conquered prostrated themselves before him. He was presented with two white parrots, which for seventy years had been transmitted from one sovereign to another as symbols or heir-looms of empire ; and tamed elephant and rhinoceros knelt in his presence as they had knelt in the presence of the native kings, uttering loud cries of salutation. And while his steeds were stabled in the imperial halls, and luxuriously fed upon bread and butter and sugar, with bowls of milk and rice ; while his blood-stained warriors pitched their tents in gardens hitherto sacred to the sleek beauties of the harem,

his architects took plans and drawings of the great Mosque, which he desired to reproduce in his own city of Samarcand.

On the last day of the year, having in this great marble mosque, which the shining waters of the Jumna reflected like a mirror, offered up to the Divine Majesty "the sincere and humble tribute of grateful praise," Timur the Destroyer began his homeward march. In seventy days he recrossed the Indus. Then entering Afghanistan, he made himself master of Kabul, and striking into the route by which he had entered India, returned in triumph to Samarcand, after a laborious campaign, which had tested successfully his capacity as a commander, his physical vigour, and his strength of will.

THE WAR WITH THE TURKS.

The final episode in the career of this extraordinary man was his great war with Turkey, which originated in the personal rivalry and arrogance of himself and Bajazet, the Turkish Sultan. Neither advancing years nor the fatigues of numerous campaigns had weakened his energies of mind or body, nor had they quenched

the fire and fervour of his kindling ambition ; so that it was almost with the elasticity of youth he entered, after a few months' rest in his palace at Samarcand, upon a new expedition. The warriors who had served under him beyond the Indus were allowed the option of again following his standard or remaining at home ; but all the rest of the fighting men in his dominions were commanded to assemble at Ispahan. Thence he advanced into Georgia, which, after a fierce campaign, he completely subjugated. While he was engaged in consolidating this new conquest, messengers arrived from Bajazet with complaints that the Tartar sovereign was encroaching upon Turkish territory ; and thus opened an angry correspondence which, for two years, fomented a fierce antipathy between two monarchs equally imperious and resentful. As Gibbon epigrammatically puts it, Timur was impatient of an equal, and Bajazet ignorant of a superior. The tone and style of the missives which passed between them will be understood from the following example :—

“Dost thou not know,” writes Timur, “that the greater part of Asia is subject to our arms and our

laws? That our invincible hosts extend from one sea to the other? That the potentates of the earth form a line before our gates? And that we have compelled Fortune herself to watch over the prosperity of our empire? On what dost thou base thy insolence and folly? That thou hast fought some battles in the wilds of Anatolia? Contemptible victories! Thou didst obtain some successes over the Christians of Europe, because thy sword was blessed by the Apostle of God; and thy obedience to the precept of the Koran in waging war against the infidels is the sole consideration that prevents me from overthrowing thy kingdom—the frontier and bulwark of the world of Islam. Be wise in time; reflect; repent; and avert the thunder of our vengeance which hangs suspended over thy head. Thou art but a pismire: why wilt thou seek to provoke the elephant! Alas, he will trample thee under his feet!”

Bajazet, in his reply, showed how deeply he was stung by his rival's unmeasured contempt. He denounced him as the robber and rebel of the desert; and enumerating his triumphs in Iran, Turan and

India, asserted that all the victories of Timur had been won through perfidious intrigues and the weakness of his foes. "Thou sayest thy armies are innumerable: be it so! But what shall the arrows of the flying Tartar avail against the scimitars and battle-axes of my fierce and unconquerable janissaries? I will watch over the princes who have implored my protection: seek them in my tents. The cities of Arsinga and Erzeroum are mine; and unless the tribute be duly paid, I will demand the arrears under the walls of Tauris and Sultania."

In his first campaign (in 1400), Timur displayed his military power by the capture of Sebaste, a strong city on the borders of Anatolia. He razed it to the ground, and put to the sword its garrison of four thousand Armenians. Advancing into Syria, he was opposed at Aleppo by the Syrian emirs, at the head of their famous Mamelukes, who were posted in magnificent array in front of the walls. Timur covered his onset with a line of elephants, whose trunks were filled with archers and soldiers who threw the Greek fire. The disorders which their charge effected were augmented by the swift attacks of the

Tartar horsemen and their storm of arrows, until the Syrians fell back defeated, and endeavoured to find shelter within the city. Many thousands, however, were stifled or slaughtered in crowding into the entrance to the main street. The Tartars forced their way in with the fugitives ; and, after a brief defence, the citadel of Aleppo, which was reported to be impregnable, surrendered to treachery or cowardice.

Timur next laid siege to Damascus ; the resistance was honourable, but ineffectual ; and the beautiful city was reduced to ashes among its gardens and orchards. A similar fate befel Bagdad, the ancient seat of the Khalifate. It is pretended that he raised in the midst of its ruins a pyramid of 90,000 human heads. A second time he broke into Georgia ; and, encamping on the banks of the Araxes, made known to his nobles his design of challenging in arms the Ottoman Emperor. Well aware that he would be contending with no ordinary foe, he drew together the largest army he had yet put into the field. Its exact numerical strength, however, it is impossible to ascertain, owing to the hopeless exaggeration of

Oriental writers when dealing with figures. Thus they tell us that its front extended thirteen miles, and that it consisted of 800,000 infantry and cavalry. Similarly large figures are used in reference to the army of Bajazet. The general opinion of the historians seems to be that the Turks were more numerous than the Tartars; perhaps we may estimate them at 120,000, and the latter at 100,000. What is certain is that their leader was greatly inferior to Timur in military capacity, and they themselves to the Tartar warriors in military qualities.

BATTLE OF ANGORA.

The great conqueror of Asia anticipated the strategy of the great conqueror of Europe, four centuries later. Like Napoleon in his Prussian and Austrian campaigns, he resolved to strike at the heart of his enemy's kingdom, and there fight a decisive battle. From the Araxes he advanced, therefore, through the provinces of Armenia and Anatolia, guarding his adventurous march by every possible precaution. He threw out a cloud of scouts in front and on either flank; while strong detachments were advanced

to seize and occupy every important ford, pass, and defile. Leaving the Ottoman camp on the right, he threw a garrison into Cæsarea, crossed the salt marshes and the river Halys; and while Bajazet, immovable in his camp and ignorant, was ridiculing what he supposed to be the tardy progress of his great adversary, the sentinels on the walls of Angora were startled by the clang of his kettledrum, and looking forth beheld the green standard of Islam borne at the head of his formidable warriors.

Then, indeed, Bajazet awoke from his arrogant supineness, and setting in motion his armed host—his janissaries and his spahis, his black cuirassiers and his Anatolians—he advanced slowly to the relief of Angora. In front of the city was fought the tremendous battle which crushed for a time the Ottoman power. Beginning on July 28th, it was protracted over three days. On the third, Bajazet fled from the lost field, but was pursued and taken prisoner by the Khan of Zagatin, and conducted into the presence of his conqueror, who received him courteously, seated him by his side, and addressed him in dignified language: “Alas!” he exclaimed,

“the decree of Fate is now accomplished through your own fault; you are caught in the web which you yourself have woven, your hands are pricked with thorns from the tree which you yourself have planted. I wished to spare, and even to assist, the champion of Islam: you defied our threats, you contemned our friendship, you forced us to invade your kingdom with our invincible armies. Behold the issue! Had you conquered, I am not ignorant of the fate to which you destined me and my troops. But I disdain to retaliate: your life and honour are secure; and I shall express my gratitude to God by my clemency to man.”

The royal prisoner showed some signs of regret, accepted the humiliation of a robe of honour, and embraced with tears his son Mousa, who, at his request, had been sought and found among the captives. A splendid pavilion was assigned to the Ottoman princes for their accommodation, and their guards were not less respectful than vigilant. During the magnificent “feast of victory,” to which Bajazet was invited, Timur placed in the latter’s hand a sceptre and on his head a crown, and promised to

restore him with an increase of glory to the throne of his ancestors. He was prevented from fulfilling his promise by the Sultan's death, which took place at Akshehr, the Antioch of Pisidia, about nine months after his defeat. The story that Timur confined him in an iron cage, and carried him as a living trophy on all his marches, is now discredited by most historians; and explained by others as referring to a Byzantine litter, inclosed with bars, such as was generally used for the conveyance of state prisoners on long journeys.

We must add an anecdote of their first interview. Timur, it is said, after regarding his prisoner attentively, and perceiving that he was blind of an eye, burst out laughing. "You laugh at my disgrace," said the Sultan, proudly; "but remember, it might have befallen you just as soon as myself. God is the Disposer of events, and it is He who distributes them." "I do not doubt it," replied Timur, "and it is not your misfortune at which I laugh, but at the idea which crossed my mind on examining you. States must, I thought, be of little importance in the eyes of God, when He is willing that a

lame man should enjoy what He had given to a blind.”

AT SAMARCAND.

Flushed with victory, Timur, after pushing his conquests to the shore of the Bosphorus, returned to Samarcand, from which he had been four years and nine months absent. He made a full display of his power and magnificence; listened to the petitions of his subjects; distributed rewards or punishments with impartiality, and received in audience the ambassadors of Egypt, Arabia, India, Tartary, Russia, and Castile—the last of whom presented a suit of tapestry surpassing the handiwork of Oriental artists. The marriage of six of his grandsons was made the occasion of a gorgeous festival, which extended over two months; and during this joyous season the Green Palace, where state prisoners were killed or blinded, closed its dread portals, while the Porcelain Pavilion and the Purple Gates and the Imperial Gardens were open to all comers. Timur insisted that every one of his subjects should share in his ostentatious rejoicing. “This is the time,”

he announced, "for feasting, pleasure, and revelry. Let no one murmur or complain of another—let not the rich encroach upon the poor, nor the powerful upon the weak; let none ask another, 'Why have you done thus?'" Whole forests were felled to dress the viands for the banquet, pyramids of meat were piled up, and rivers of koumis, wine, and other liquors poured out, for the entertainment of thousands of guests. "The orders of the state, and the nations of the earth," says the Oriental historian, "were marshalled at the feast; neither were the ambassadors of Europe excluded, for even the *casses*, the smallest of fish, have their place in the ocean."

Illuminations and masquerades bore witness to the popular enthusiasm. The trades of Samarcand paraded before the Sultan, each trade distinguished by some quaint and appropriate device or pageant. After the judicial authorities had duly ratified the marriage-contracts, bridegrooms and brides retired to their nuptial chambers; nine times, according to the Arab fashion, were dressed and undressed; at each change of apparel, pearls and rubies were showered on their heads, but with magnificent extravagance

were left for the attendants to appropriate. A general indulgence was proclaimed ; law was relaxed, pleasure made universal ; the sovereign ceased to rule, and his subjects to tremble ; and Timur's panegyrist may remark that, after devoting fifty years to the attainment of empire, he enjoyed only the two months of his life in which he forbore to exercise his power (A.D. 1404).

THE CASTILIAN AMBASSADORS AT TIMUR'S COURT.

Among the guests on this memorable occasion were some Spaniards who had come on an embassy from Don Henry, king of Castile and Leon.

Early in 1402 Don Henry, a sovereign of great capacity, with a boundless thirst for knowledge, had despatched a couple of his cavaliers, Payo de Sotomayor and Sanchez de Palazuelos, to inquire into the relative military strength and resources of Bajazet, the Turkish Sultan, and Timur, his great adversary. They arrived in time to witness the crushing defeat of Bajazet on the field of Angora. Afterwards they were received at the victor's court,

and having been splendidly entertained and loaded with presents, returned well-pleased to Spain, accompanied by Muhammad Alcaji, who carried a letter and some costly gifts from Timur to the king of Castile. It is hardly necessary to say that the Tartar ambassador had no reason to complain of his reception; and when the time arrived for his homeward journey, Don Henry sent with him three special envoys to convey his congratulations to the great Mughal conqueror: these were Fray Alonzo de Santa Maria, Ruy Gonzalez de Clavijo, and Gomez de Salasar.

They sailed from Cadiz on May 22nd, 1403; wintered at Pera; and in the spring of 1404 arrived at Trebizond, whence, escorted by Tartar cavalry, they proceeded on their way to Samarcand. All along the road supplies were abundant, and furnished them free of cost; for at each town where they halted, small carpets were brought for them to sit upon, and then in front of them a piece of leather was laid down, and upon this piece of leather the townsfolk hastened to deposit their gratuitous but compulsory contributions of bread, meat, fruit, cream,

milk, and eggs. If at any time the quantity were found insufficient, Timur's officers summoned the chief men of the place, and after a liberal allowance of whips and sticks, compelled them to make up the deficiency without delay.

On May 4th they arrived at Arsinga, where they obtained from the governor a good deal of useful information.

They were warned, for instance, not to speak of the great Mughal conqueror as Tamerlane, or Timur the cripple—which was, indeed, a disrespectful nickname—but as Timur Beg, or the Iron Lord. They were also enlightened—at least from the governor's point of view—on the origin of the recent war between Turk and Tartar. This was his explanation:—Zuratan, prince or chief of Arsinga, possessed some land adjacent to the Turkish frontier on which Bajazet had cast a covetous glance; and one day he suddenly demanded that Zuratan should pay him tribute, and give up to him his castle of Kamoj. Zuratan appealed for assistance to Timur—who was then engaged in war with Persia—at the same time acknowledging him as his lord. There-

upon Timur intimated to Bajazet that the chief of Arsinga was under his protection. "The haughty soldier" (as our forefathers called him) was indignant that a Mughal chief should make so light of his authority, and declared that no man durst stand between him and Zuratan or any other of his slaves, and that, when a convenient time came, he would march against Timur and put him into chains. Timur replied by a rapid advance into Turkey, capturing, plundering, and destroying the city of Sabastia; after which he returned to the theatre of war in Persia. This bold defiance was straightway taken up by Bajazet, who marched into the territory of Arsinga, and was sweeping it like a simoom, when he was attacked by Timur, as we have seen, at Angora, and completely crushed.

Resuming their journey, the Castilian ambassadors passed through the fortified town of Erzeroum; Dulularquente, peopled by Moorish hermits; and the great city of Calmair, one league from Mount Ararat, "the first city built in the world after the Flood." In the third week in June they arrived at Sultania, a populous town, with a strong castle.

“This land,” says Don Clavijo, “is so hot that when a foreign merchant is struck by the sun, he is killed ; and they say that when the sun strikes any person, it immediately penetrates to his heart and slays him ; and those who escape nearly always remain quite yellow, and never regain their proper complexion. From Cathay vessels come,” he adds, “within sixty days’ journey of the town, having navigated the western sea. The ships and boats which sail in these waters have no iron, their timbers being joined with cords and wooden pegs, for if they were fastened together with iron, *they would be torn to pieces by the loadstones, of which there are many in that sea.*”

Hearing that Timur was waxing impatient for their arrival, the envoys pushed on more rapidly, but Gomez de Salasar, falling ill, had to be left behind, and the treatment of the native doctors killed him. Having crossed the Oxus, the envoys rested a day or two at Timur’s native town of Kesh, a large mud-walled town, containing two great mosques, one the burial-place of Timur’s father and his own firstborn son, and the other intended, in due time, to be the mausoleum of the conqueror

himself. Here they were joined by the ambassadors of the Sultan of Babylon ; and in a few days they entered Samarcand, at three o'clock in the afternoon. Passing under a high gateway, radiant with blue and golden tiles, and guarded by foot-soldiers armed with maces, and others mounted on towered elephants, they halted in front of a shining fountain, which sent up its silver columns "with red apples in them"—probably ivory balls—to a great height. Behind it, sitting cross-legged on a soft pile of embroidered carpets and pillows, was a man of fine and imposing aspect, though grey-haired, lame, and half-blind, Timur Beg. He was clothed in silken robes, and wore a high white hat, or caftan, on the top of which blazed a great spiral ruby, set round with pearls and other precious stones.

After making their obeisances, by bending one knee to the ground and inclining the head, the Spanish envoys were taken up under the arms of the Mirzas, or councillors, and conducted severally into the conqueror's presence. This was done to the end that he might see them better, his eyelids having drooped through old age. "How is my son the

King? Is he well?" was his greeting; and having received a satisfactory reply, he addressed himself to the circle of councillors and courtiers, saying,—
"Behold! here are the ambassadors of my son, the King of Spain, who is the most powerful King of the Franks, and lives at the end of the world. These Franks are truly a great people, and I will give my benediction to the King of Spain, my son! It would have sufficed if he had sent the letter without the presents, so well satisfied am I to hear of his health and prosperous state."

Due reply having been made to these compliments by Clavijo and his companion, they were ushered into the banqueting chamber, where many other strangers from far lands were seated, and by Timur's express instructions were accorded precedency over the ambassador from the Celestial Empire. When the lord had taken his place, in came a number of attendants carrying boiled and roasted sheep and roasted horses, which they laid upon broad dishes of stamped leather. And on these the carvers knelt and with sharp blades cut up the steaming carcasses, and with the pieces filled huge bowls of gold and

silver, glass and earthenware ; reserving the daintiest viand—a compound of sheep's heads, horses' tripe, and haunches of horse—for half a score of the finest gold and silver bowls, two of which were set before Fray de Santa Maria and Gonzalez de Clavijo. Then rose a sound of revelry by night, and Timur and his guests feasted heartily, each man pouring a small quantity of salted soup into his bowl, and breaking up into it a thin wheaten cake. The bill of fare was diversified by meats dressed in various ways, by nectarines, grapes, and melons ; while gold and silver jugs, brimful of *bosat*, a beverage made from sugar and cream, were passed round with frequent repetition. When the guests could eat and drink no more, they rose up and went their way, each taking with him whatever remained of his share of the feast—a share so liberal that the Castilians found themselves supplied for six months. Similar banquets were of almost daily occurrence ; and the Castilians attended them all with the dignified gravity of their nation. Timur, however, was desirous of seeing them under a more cheerful aspect, and for this purpose resolved to give a feast at which

wine should be served ; and that they might duly prepare for "tipsy mirth and jollity," he sent them a jar of good wine to raise their spirits beforehand.

A stringent edict prohibited Timur's subjects from drinking wine in public or private without his royal permission. When this was obtained, the thirsty Tartars made ample amends for their compulsory abstemiousness. "The attendants," says Don Clavijo, "serve the wine upon their knees, and when one cup is empty fill another, and that is their sole duty. As soon as an attendant grows fatigued with the cup-filling, his place is taken by another, no attendant serving more than one or two of the guests ; who, if they refuse to drink, are informed that by doing so they insult 'the lord,' at whose request the wine is sent round. They empty the cup at two or three draughts, unless they are called upon to drink by 'their love to their lord,' when they must toss it off at a single draught, without leaving a drop." A guest receiving a cup from Timur's own hands, first knelt on the right knee, then, moving forward a little, sank on both knees : taking the cup, he rose and walked backwards a few paces, knelt again, and

disposed of the wine at once. Don Clavijo escaped the performance of this tedious ceremony, as well as the hard drinking at the dinner table, because he never drank wine under any circumstances.

The palace which Timur had built for himself outside the walls of Samarcand commanded a fair view of a broad, open plain, brightened by a full flowing river and by several streams. Desirous of impressing his foreign visitors with the extent of his military resources, he caused his shining pavilion, with its silken banners, to be pitched in the middle of the plain, and ordered his captains to marshal there his armies. From east and west, from north and south, they came: and with such alacrity of movement that in three days thirty thousand horsemen, fully equipped, were encamped upon the plain, each man falling into his proper place with the greatest readiness. And the manner of their array was this: over every hundred men was set a captain, over every thousand men a captain, over every ten thousand men a captain, and a chief captain over all.

Just at the beginning of the military display, some

excitement was occasioned by the arrival of an embassy from a land bordering on Cathay, and once, indeed, belonging to it. The chief ambassador wore a coat of skins, by no means of the newest, with a hat so small that it would hardly go over his head; fastened to his breast by a cord. His companions also wore dresses of skin, and had a general resemblance to "a party of blacksmiths." The scene around them must have moved their surprise and admiration. All along the river-side were pitched the soldiers' tents in regular rows or alleys, and parallel with these were rows of tents belonging to the traders of Samarcand, who, by their lord's orders, had brought their wares to the camp for sale. The plain seemed a mass of tents of various colours and with different insignia, and high above all towered Timur's spacious pavilion, three lances in height and a hundred paces in breadth, with a silken turret surmounting its decorated vaulted roof, from which depended silken cloths fastened arcade-wise to twelve gilded and painted columns of the girth of a man's chest. The sides of the pavilion were of black, white, and yellow silk; and at a distance of

three hundred paces it was surrounded by a silken wall, and in the intermediate space were the tents of Timur's wives and of other members of his household.

There was something else to be seen by the envoys from the east and the west who had met at Timur's court: for that part of the plain which had been assigned to the traders was thickly studded with gibbets. Wherever the great King went, he was accompanied by his judges, who in their own tents inquired into the cases brought before them, hearing the evidence, examining the accused, and reporting the judgments they arrived at to Timur, who alone pronounced sentence. In this way justice was promptly administered, but it was justice of the sternest sort, and not often tempered with mercy. Even crimes of a light character were visited with severe punishments. A trader who charged for his goods more than they were worth expiated the offence on the gallows. An official accused of neglect of duty was beheaded; so also was the chief who had ventured to intercede on his behalf; so also was a man who had been entrusted with the charge

of three thousand horses, and could not produce every one at a very brief notice. For delaying the appearance of the Spaniards at a State banquet, their interpreter was condemned to have a rope passed through his nostrils, and to be dragged by it round the camp; and it was with no small difficulty the envoys procured the poor man's pardon.

While the soldiers were in camp, races, acrobatic performances, and other entertainments were given for the general amusement. On one occasion, the queen, or Sultana, was present. Kano (*i.e.* "the lady") was a tall and stately dame, clothed in loose-flowing robes of red silk, embroidered with gold lace, —wearing a head-dress of such colossal proportions that three of her ladies were constantly employed in keeping it in its place, and a train of such dimensions that it took fifteen ladies to adjust and support it so that its wearer might walk. Timur had seven other wives, respectively named "Ouérchicano" (the little lady), "Oilcoltange," "Mundagaso," "Vengaraza," "Chilpamalaga," "Ropaarbaraga," and "Gangurajo," or Queen of the Heart, who seems to have been the aged Sultan's favourite.

Clavijo and his companion, when their curiosity was more than satisfied, became anxious to return home; but durst not set out until they had obtained the great Amir's permission. While they were waiting for it, he was struck down with paralysis. Much troubled, they repeatedly pressed his counselors to give them some answer or message for their sovereign; but this was beyond their power, and to the frequent entreaties of the envoys they would give no other answer than that it would be well for them to depart while there was yet time. At last the two Spaniards deemed it wise to act upon this friendly advice; and hurrying away from Samarcand, they made haste to cross the frontier of Turkey, before the news of the Amir's death should be noised abroad. Their journey proved to be a prosperous one, and they reached Spain in safety, furnished with an ample supply of "travellers' tales" (A.D. 1408).

Clavijo's statement* that the Amir was stricken

* Clavijo's narrative is entitled—" *Historia del Grand Tamerlan e dinarario y manaceon del viago y relacion de la Embasador quy Ruy Gonzalez de Clavijo le hijo par mandedo del*

with palsy does not correspond with the narratives of the old historians. Gibbon, who carefully compared them, states that, when the festivities were at an end, Timur unfurled his standard for the invasion of China. Two hundred thousand of his choicest warriors began their march, their baggage and provisions conveyed by five hundred great waggons and an immense train of horses and camels. Neither the pressure of years nor the severity of winter could tame his impatient spirit. He mounted on horseback, passed the Jihon on the ice, and had advanced three hundred miles from his capital, and pitched his camp in the neighbourhood of Otrar, when he was seized with a mortal fever, of which he expired in the seventieth year of his age. He met his fate with calmness. "At night, between evening prayer and bedtime, he several times made profession of his belief, 'There is no other god than God.' Then he surrendered his soul to the angel Azrael, who called him in these words: 'Oh soul, that hopest in God,

muy podereso Señor Ruy don Enrique a fuana di Castilla-Sevilla," 1582. See also Mariana, *Historia Hispaniæ*, l. 19, c. 11, tome ii., pp. 329,330.

return to thy Lord with resignation. We belong to God ; to Him we must return !”

The chief authorities for the life of this remarkable man are the histories by Sherefeddin and Arabshah (the latter coloured by a venomous prejudice), that by Ferishta, the Persian, and Timur's own autobiography in the “Institutions,” “Malfuzat Timure,” translated by Major Stewart. Of the last, Elphinstone remarks that “it is written in the plain and picturesque style of Turki autobiography ; and if there were a doubt that it was from his dictation, it would be removed by the unconscious simplicity with which he relates his own intrigues and perfidy, taking credit all the time for an excess of goodness and sincerity which the boldest flatterer would not have ventured to ascribe to him. The mixture also of cant and hypocrisy with real superstition and devotion could not have been exhibited by any hand but his own ; and these traits, with his courage, prudence, and address, his perfect knowledge of mankind, and his boldness in practising on their weakness, make one of the most extraordinary pictures ever presented to the world.”

Timur was a remarkable, and in some respects a great man. It is true that, though a successful warrior, he made few permanent conquests ; that his empire died with him ; that he founded nothing ; that he destroyed and did not reconstruct ; but elaborate systems of government and polity are not to be expected from a Tartar chief, bred up among the wild tribes of Transoxiana. And it would be folly to deny to one who achieved all that Timur achieved, who extended his rule over so vast a region, who asserted the supremacy of his arms over so many nations, who controlled his turbulent subjects with so firm a hand throughout so long a reign, the possession of many of the qualities of greatness—such as foresight, patience, tenacity of purpose, wealth of resource, and immense vigour both of mind and body.

Though a cripple, Timur was not unworthy in form and stature of the leadership of men : he was large-limbed, with massive shoulders and broad chest, a capacious head and wide high forehead, with eyes full of fire, a fair complexion, and an ample beard. Notwithstanding his enormous fatigues, his temper-

ance, activity and robust constitution preserved his health even to his last years. In his discourse with his friends and courtiers he was grave and modest ; and though ignorant of Arabic, he spoke Persian and Turkish with fluency and elegance. He delighted to converse with the learned on topics of history and science ; and the amusement of his leisure hours was the game of chess, to which he added new refinements (or, as some say, corruptions). In religion he was a zealous but not an orthodox Muhammadan, and it was probably from policy rather than credulity that he sometimes affected to believe in the prophecies of saints and astrologers. For good or evil—or mixed good and evil—he made a mark in history which will not readily be effaced ; and for generations to come the world will dwell with wondering interest on the extraordinary career and character of TIMUR THE TARTAR.

BOOK II.

THE GREAT MOGULS.

CHAPTER I.

THE EMPEROR BABAR, OR "THE LION."

THE Emperor Babar, who founded the Mogul or Mughal empire in India, the last representative of which died in 1862, a British state-prisoner at Rangoon, was the fifth in descent from the great conqueror Timur.

As he was the first of the Mughal sovereigns, so was he the best—the loftiest-minded, the purest, the humanest, the most sincere. He was as chivalrous as any of the Paladins of old romance; and, in truth, a romantic element coloured his character and pervaded his life.

The extensive territories of his grandfather, Abusaid, were divided at his death among his numerous sons. To the fourth, Omar, father of Babar, fell the small but fair and fertile country of

Ferghana, in the upper valley of the Jaxartes. Babar's mother was of Mughal descent; she was a descendant of Genghis Khan; but the relationship did not foster very affectionate feelings on her son's part towards the Mughal nation, of which he invariably spoke with strong and contemptuous antipathy. It is strange, therefore, and one of the ironies of fate, that the empire which he founded in India should have been called both by Hindus and by Europeans the empire of the Moguls or Mughals, thus taking its name from a race its founder detested. The reason is that it was so named by Babar's native subjects, who designated as Mughals all the unshorn Muhammadans, with the exception of the Afghans.

BABAR IN HIS YOUTH.

Babar was only twelve when he succeeded to his father's principality, and to a war in which his father had been involved with two of his brothers (1494) With the proverbial ill-feeling of uncles, they refused to listen to Babar's peaceful overtures, and advanced against his capital. They were defeated, however, and

one of them, Ahmed Mirza, dying soon afterwards, Babar, though only fifteen, resolved to attempt the conquest of Samarcand. The first time he failed; the second he was successful. But his boyish ambition had overleaped his resources. He was unable to maintain his position for want of funds to pay the arrears due to his soldiers, who deserted him, therefore, in large numbers; and a rebellion breaking out in Ferghana, he was compelled to abandon Samarcand after a reign of one hundred days. An inopportune illness so delayed the boy-warrior's movements that Ferghana was lost to him. He then appealed to his Mughal uncle, and, with such assistance as he could wring from his reluctant hands and his own inexhaustible energies, made repeated and not wholly unsuccessful expeditions against Samarcand and Ferghana. In 1499 he recovered Ferghana; but the revolt was still smouldering when he was tempted by strong invitations from Samarcand to direct his forces thither. Before he reached that capital, he learned that both it and Bokhara had been occupied by the Uzbeks, and that in his absence the rebels of Ferghana had again got the upper hand.

Then, without a rood of land to call his own, the young prince escaped into the wild mountainous districts south of his patrimonial inheritance. "I lived," he says, "in the house of one of the head men of the place. He was an aged man, seventy or eighty years old. His mother was still alive, and had attained an extreme old age, being about a hundred and eleven. One of his kinsmen had accompanied the army of Timur Beg when he invaded Hindustan. The incident remained fresh in her memory, and she often told us stories about it." It was these stories—stories of stately temples and jewelled shrines, of populous cities and crowded marts, of mighty rivers and vast fertile plains—which first kindled in the youth's active imagination the idea of rivalling his ancestor Timur and accomplishing the conquest of India.

He records a dream which he had one night while he lay concealed among the mountains, a dream which his friends and he himself invested with prophetic significance. He dreamed that Abdallah, a dervish renowned for his sanctity, called at his house, and that he (Babar) invited him to sit down,

while a table-cloth was spread before him. The dervish, apparently offended, rose to go away. Babar sought to detain him, whereupon the dervish seized his arm and lifted him up towards the sky.

Ascertaining that the Uzbek chief had left Samarcand on an expedition, he determined to essay its recapture; with two hundred and forty ill-armed followers, he scaled the walls in the night, overpowered the guards, and by the swift audacity of his enterprise produced so great an impression that the admiring citizens declared on his side, and massacred the Uzbeks wherever they were to be found. But he was again driven from the capital, and for nearly two years experienced the most startling vicissitudes of fortune—at one time a prince on his throne, at another a suppliant at his uncle's court, and yet again a wanderer in the wooded defiles of the mountains.

He had nearly reconquered Ferghana, when the Uzbek chief advanced against him with his hordes, besieged Akshi, the capital, and effected its capture. Behold Babar a fugitive beyond the snow-capped masses of the Hindu Kush!

A ROMANTIC CAREER.

His sufferings and his experiences, his successes and his failures, had already been sufficient to have filled up the history of an eventful life, and yet he was only in his twenty-third year.

The elasticity of his disposition, however, was not to be crushed by adverse fortune. It is true that in his autobiography he speaks of having shed frequent tears and composed many melancholy ditties ; but generally he was sanguine and hopeful, and rose up after each downfall with a firmer conviction than ever that he would eventually succeed. He seems never to have looked back ; his eye was always on the future. He had a fine facility for making the best of everything, and where any pleasure was available did his best to have a proper share of it. He tells us that he never enjoyed himself more thoroughly than after his last escape from Samarcand, when again for a brief interval he tasted the luxury of ample meals and sound sleep and freedom from anxiety and labour. Babar was the most genial of conquerors ; no Oriental warrior ever had tastes more innocent. He

would halt on a victorious march to examine a new species of melon. In his few hours of leisure he revelled in gardening and his plants. In his most difficult campaigns he never lost his interest in the beauty of the landscape, the colouring of a group of flowers, the delicate structure of some new leaf. At the bottom of his heart lay a little spring of pure and unadulterated poetry. Babar enjoyed life, and all that life brings with it of beauty, sweetness, and grace.

Believing himself born to a great destiny, he looked around at this time to discover in what direction lay the best chance of realising it; and his keen eye was soon attracted by the anarchy that reigned in the green valleys of Kabul. His uncle, Ulugh Beg, the king of that country, had died about two years before; his son and successor, Babar's cousin, had been deposed by his minister, who in his turn had been expelled by the Mughal or Turki family of Arghun, then in possession of Kandahar. Sweeping across the mountain passes with a large force which had been attracted to his standard by his fame as a daring leader, Babar occupied Kabul almost without

opposition ; and though Ulugh Beg's son was still alive, ignored his claims and ruled by right of conquest. He found his throne by no means "a bed of roses." Externally his old enemy, the chief of the Uzbeks, threatened invasion ; internally he was confronted by independent tribes, by false friends and personal foes. His title to his crown lay only in his sword ; he had no minister on whom he could rely ; and his army was composed of mercenaries, who would sell their services to the highest bidder. But no difficulties or dangers could break down Babar's indomitable spirit. He entered upon the conquest of Kandahar, subdued the hostile tribes of the mountains, and accomplished a daring march to Herat, to concert measures with that branch of the house of Timur for their common defence against the Uzbeks.

While he was absent on the banks of the Indus in 1508, the Mughal garrison of Kabul revolted, and placed on the musnud Abd-ur-Razzak, the son of Ulugh Beg. Once more the fortunes of Babar were at zero ! But his soul never yielded for a moment. Here was a fresh opportunity of proving his superi-

ority to hostile circumstances. It was Babar against fortune, and Babar did not intend to be beaten. Forced marches carried him back to Kabul, where he was opposed by Abd-ur-Razzak with 12,000 men. Furious at the treachery of warriors who had partaken of his salt, he rode right up to their ranks, denounced their crimes, and defied their lord to mortal combat. Abd-ur-Razzak showed no desire to cross swords with a rival who could swim the Ganges in three-and-thirty strokes, and with a man under each arm could leap from platform to platform of the terraced ramparts of the East; but five of his omrahs advanced in succession to accept the challenge, and five in succession fell beneath Babar's conquering arm. Moved to intense admiration by this deed of "derring-do," and ashamed of their leader's cowardice, the Mughals returned to their old standard, and Babar once more reigned in Kabul.

HIS CONQUEST OF INDIA.

Babar now revived his schemes of Indian conquest, and in 1524 a great opportunity was offered of carrying them out, which he did not suffer to escape him.

Ibrahim Lodi, then King of Delhi, had provoked, by his cruelty and misgovernment, a general feeling of hatred and discontent, which broke forth in various insurrections. One of them was fomented by Doulat Khan, the governor of the Punjab, who, to protect himself from the vengeance of Ibrahim, solicited the assistance of Babar. It was promptly accorded, and Babar, with his cavalry, quickly crossed the Indus ; but some other Afghan chiefs, either from loyalty to Ibrahim or distrust of the stranger, drove out Doulat Khan, and encountered Babar in the field. They were beaten very thoroughly near Lahore, which Babar afterwards burned to ashes. At Dibalpur he was joined by Doulat Khan ; but having reason to suspect his good faith, he threw him and his sons into prison. His generous temper, however, speedily relented ; and releasing Doulat Khan and his sons, he treated them with distinction, and made them liberal gifts of lands. But they were sullenly wrathful at the humiliation put upon them, and while he was on the march for Delhi revolted and fled to the hills.

Unwilling to leave in his rear such dangerous enemies, Babar resolved on returning to Kabul, but

kept his hold on the country he had reduced, and in the principal towns placed his most trusted lieutenants. At Dibalpur he left in command an uncle of the Delhi king, one Ala-ud-din, who had pledged him his allegiance. No sooner had Babar returned into Afghanistan, than Doulat Khan invaded the Punjab with a large army. One wonders what could have been the condition of the peasantry, the villagers, of this unhappy country, while it was thus incessantly traversed by fire and sword! Eventually Doulat Khan was defeated and killed, while Ala-ud-din advanced rapidly against Delhi, but under its walls was attacked by Ibrahim with great spirit and put to the rout.

Thereupon Babar prepared for another Indian campaign. He crossed the Indus with 10,000 cavalry on December 15th, 1525, and fought several battles on his way to the Sutlaj, where he struck into the direct road to Delhi. With waving banners and the clang of cymbals, he moved forward rapidly, as he loved to do, until at Panipat, about fifty miles from Delhi, he found his road blocked by the glittering hosts of Ibrahim. Stretching across the plain for

miles, the Indian array consisted of 100,000 cavalry and infantry, drawn up behind a phalanx of 1,000 elephants. Babar's force did not exceed 13,000 men, including the usual camp followers; but they were veteran warriors, clothed in complete armour and expert in the use of lance and sword and bow, while the men opposed to them were Muhammadans, enervated by the Indian climate and the luxurious habits of Oriental indulgence, and Hindus, whose ancient military virtues had been crushed out of them by centuries of oppression. The battle was less unequal, therefore, than from the startling difference of numbers might be inferred. It was a Crecy or an Agincourt upon Indian soil. We must remember also that the native army necessarily included a considerable proportion of non-effectives, as is always the case with Oriental armies.

Panipat is described by a traveller as a far-reaching, almost illimitable level tract, broken only by insignificant undulations. At certain points, where the shallow soil is moistened by some tiny watercourse, sparse grasses and stunted thorn-bushes grow. But for the most part it is one uniform yellowish-grey

waste of sterile earth. Everywhere silence reigns ; and it would almost seem as if this desert had been designed for the battle-field of nations.

It was on this dreary plain that Babar prepared to make his last throw for empire. His dispositions were marked by consummate skill. His flanks were strongly protected by fieldworks of earth and fascines ; his front was covered with cannon, linked together by ropes of twisted leather. Then came a line of breastworks ; and behind these were massed his troops in compact bodies, capable of swift and ready movement.

So strong was Babar's position that Ibrahim, on reconnoitring it, shrank from an attack, and proceeded with great industry to fortify his own camp. For some days the two armies sat watching each other ; but at length Ibrahim's unwieldy host could no longer be restrained, and on April 21st he was compelled to lead it out to storm the invader's lines. As soon as he saw the enemy engaged with his centre, Babar moved forward his right and left wings, under a cloud of arrows, to attack and beat back the Indians on their flanks, and then close in upon their

rear. This manœuvre being crowned with success, Babar placed himself at the head of his main body of horsemen, waved aloft his banner, and dashed like a mountain torrent on the Indian centre, driving everything before him. Such was the fury of his onset that elephants, men, and horses were rolled up before it and thrown into irretrievable disorder, until the only thought of the panic-stricken Hindus was how they might escape those terrible scimitars of the Mughal troopers! Surrounded as they were, however, escape was scarcely less difficult than resistance. Babar records that, to the best of his judgment, some 15,000 or 16,000 were slain upon the field, of whom between 5,000 and 6,000 were piled up immediately around their sultan, the last of the Afghan kings of Delhi. The loss in the battle and the pursuit is estimated by some authorities at 40,000.

The third day after this crowning victory Babar entered Delhi, which he proceeded to garrison and fortify, after which he advanced upon Agra. The treasures which he secured in these two great and opulent cities seemed to his simple mind almost inexhaustible; and he distributed them with charac-

teristic open-handedness, thereby earning the sobriquet of "The Kalandar," in allusion to a religious order whose members were pledged to keep nothing for the morrow. He presented his son Humayun with a magnificent diamond, weighing six hundred and seventy-two carats, which, under the name of the Koh-i-noor, or Mountain of Light, now glows in the imperial crown of Great Britain. He gave him also a palace and seventy lakhs of rupees, and to each of his amirs seven to ten lakhs, according to their rank and services ; and he sent a shahrukh (about 11*d.*) to every man, woman, and child, slave or free, in the kingdom of Kabul.

BUILDING UP HIS EMPIRE.

Babar, with justifiable complacency, speaks of his conquest of India as a great achievement, and compares it with the exploits of Sultan Mahmud and Shahab-ud-din. And though it is true that the area of his victories was much less extensive than that which his predecessors had made their own, still, when we remember the inadequate means at his disposal, we shall admit, I think, the justice of the comparison.

But it taxed all his ability and all his wonderful energy to complete the work he had undertaken, and establish himself firmly on the throne of Delhi. Delhi was his, and Agra, and the country round about, and little more. All the country east of the Ganges had become independent in Ibrahim's time ; and many places west of the Jumna had also thrown off their allegiance. A greater difficulty was the ill-feeling existing between his troops and the natives, so that the latter deserted the villages near his camp, and refused to supply provisions or forage. The greatest difficulty of all was the reluctance of his chiefs to remain in the burning plains of India, and their home-thirst for the green valleys and shining streams of Kabul. This obstacle he overcame in characteristic fashion. Assembling his officers, he made them a speech full of fervent eloquence. The conquest of India, he said, had long been the goal of their labours ; and it would be incredibly weak and shameful to abandon it now that it was attained. What would all the Muhammadan kings in the world say of a sovereign whom the fear of death compelled to abandon such a kingdom ? For himself, therefore, he was

resolved to remain in India ; but all who desired to return home were at full liberty to do so. The firmness of their leader's language infused a new confidence into the breasts of his followers, most of whom resolved to cast in their lot with his. It had its effect even on the enemy ; and many who had expected Babar to retire, as Timur had done, hastened to make their submission. Detachments, under experienced officers, were sent out to reduce others ; and Babar's military operations were so skilfully devised and vigorously carried out that before the end of the year not only had the territory held by Sultan Ibrahim been subdued, but all the revolted provinces which at one time had acknowledged the supremacy of the King of Delhi.

Having thus consolidated his authority over the Muhammadan princes, he was free to attempt the subjugation of those Hindu sovereigns who asserted their independence, the most considerable of whom was Sanga, Raja of Mewat, the acknowledged leader of the brave Rajput chiefs, and a man inured to war, who delighted in the thunder of the battle, to whose ear no music was so sweet as the clash of foemen's

swords. His vigorous and robust frame bore many marks of rough experiences : he had lost an eye and an arm, had had a leg broken by a cannon-ball, and in various parts of his body the scars told of eighty wounds. His military capacity as well as his prowess made him a formidable opponent ; and he enjoyed the prestige of invincibility, having defeated every enemy who had met him in the open field. Moreover, he had at his disposal a very powerful force ; 80,000 horsemen following his standard, with seven rajahs of higher and nine of lower rank, one hundred and four chieftains. His array included also five hundred war-elephants. When Babar first invaded India, the Raja made overtures for an alliance, but had afterwards dropped them ; and growing alarmed at or jealous of the Mughal emperor's increasing power and dominion, he resolved to drive him back across the Indus. Early in 1527 he put his immense host in motion, and advanced, 100,000 strong, to Biana, within fifty miles of Agra. The garrison there he compelled to retire into their citadel, and cut off all communication between them and the capital. Thereupon Babar marched to its relief, and

had pushed forward as far as Sikri, about twenty miles from Agra, when his vanguard was suddenly attacked by Sanga's army and repulsed with heavy loss.

This disaster greatly depressed the Mughals, who perceived that their opponents were made of very different stuff from those they had conquered at Panipat, and were alarmed by their great numerical preponderance. Nor were their spirits improved by the arrival of a noted astrologer from Kabul, who loudly predicted, from the aspect of Mars, the defeat of the Mughals, who chanced to lie encamped "in the opposite quarter to that planet." Babar was of too robust an intellect to be affected by this jargon; and to counteract its untoward influence upon his soldiery, he addressed them in strenuous earnest language, exhorting them, as warriors of the Crescent, to prefer death to defeat, and, as true believers, to welcome a crown of martyrdom rather than a life of shame. His spirited words rekindled the enthusiasm of the soldiers of Islam; and when he produced a copy of the Koran, and invited every man, whatever his degree, to swear on that sacred volume to die

rather than abandon the field, they rushed forward with exultant cries to take the oath. Babar himself prepared for the struggle on which his empire depended with unusual solemnity. He tells us that he repented of his sins; he forswore wine, to indulgence in which he was unfortunately prone; he distributed his gold and silver drinking vessels among the poor; he made a vow to let his beard grow; and he promised to remit the stamp tax on all Muhamadans if it pleased God to send him the victory.

Availing himself of the renewed ardour of his soldiers, he drew them up in front of his entrenchments on the morning of March 16th, and after planting his cannon in the best positions for harassing the enemy in their advance, he galloped along the front, and by pithy and stirring speeches animated his fighting-men and instructed their officers. The two armies joined battle. Owing to their preponderant numbers, the Hindus were able to outflank Babar's little force, and by sheer pressure to drive back both wings until they almost formed a circle. But the fine array of the Mughals remained unbroken, until Babar, perceiving that the enemy were

fatigued with their prolonged efforts, suddenly assumed the offensive, and raising the shout of "Allah-il-Allah!" fell, in a storm of spears and scimitars, on the Hindu legions. "Then that wonder of our age Mustafa Rumi," says Babar, "charged with terrible fury, making the heads of the Hindus fall from their bodies like stars from the sky, and Victory, whose countenance, bedecked with loose flowing tresses, had been concealed beneath a veil, as the bride of futurity, came to greet the present. The infidels were scattered like teased wool, and broken like bubbles of wine."

This great victory made Babar master of Mewat, and by a rapid succession of well-directed movements he extended his rule over all Behar and Rajputana. He showed as much administrative capacity in settling and organising his conquests as he had shown military genius in making them; and peace and tranquillity were established in all parts of an empire which stretched from the river Amu in Central Asia to the Gangetic delta in Lower Bengal.

Let us note that the conqueror duly sent for the knavish astrologer who had predicted the defeat of

his arms, rated him soundly, then gave him a lakh of rupees, and bade him lie no more.

ANECDOTES OF BABAR'S DOMESTIC LIFE AND
CHARACTER.

Babar was now at liberty to indulge in his favourite pursuits : in planting and gardening ; in music and poetry, in both of which arts he excelled ; and in the composition of his autobiography, which supplies us not only with a veracious record of his life at home and abroad, but with a wonderfully transparent and unconscious portrayal of a character of a very admirable and attractive order. He grew old, however, long before his time. He led a life of such incessant labour and adventure that his physical energies were completely undermined ; and it is said that, unhappily, he yielded to his love of wine—his only vice—to an extent which hastened his premature decay. For some months he had been ailing, when his weakened constitution sustained a severe shock from the dangerous illness of his son Humayun, to whom he was tenderly attached. After drawing upon all the resources of their art, the

physicians at length gave up the case as hopeless; and the wise men when consulted were of opinion that the Sultan's sole chance of preserving the young life he valued so dearly lay in his making a propitiatory offering of something very precious to him.

With characteristic generosity, Babar resolved on sacrificing his own life. In vain his friends entreated him to remember that it belonged to his subjects. He was old, he said, and broken; his son, in the prime of manhood and the flush of his intellectual vigour, would make a better and more efficient sovereign. Others urged upon him that Heaven would be satisfied with his surrender of the most cherished of his worldly goods; and suggested that he should give up to the gods his famous diamond, the Koh-i-noor. But Babar contended that the exchange must be life for life; and walking thrice round the bed of the sick prince, he spent some moments in silent prayer, then, with a burst of sudden confidence, joyously exclaimed, "I have carried it away—the disease—I have carried it away!" The unusual ceremony, the noble act of

paternal devotion, the excitement and agitation, so wrought on the young prince's susceptibilities that he immediately rallied, and thenceforth began to recover rapidly ; while the health of Babar, as might be expected under such pathetic circumstances, just as rapidly declined. He survived but a few weeks, and passed away with the creed of Islam on his lips, "There is no God but God!" on December 26th, 1530, in the fiftieth year of his age and the thirty-eighth of his reign. During his last hours his thoughts went back to the blooming gardens and fresh bright streams of his beloved Kabul. He gave directions that his remains should be conveyed thither and interred on the summit of the picturesque hill outside the city, which to this day is known as the Babar Baghshah. A little brook waters the fragrant parterres of the cemetery ; and in front of the grave rises a small but graceful mosque of white marble, commanding a magnificent prospect of mountain, plain, and valley.

The empire which Babar founded has long since decayed, until it is now only a shadow and a name ;

but he has left a permanent memorial of himself in his remarkable autobiography, the most charming in its frank simplicity and the most interesting in its minute details of any Oriental writings of the kind. Indeed, it is open to doubt whether even the autobiographical literature of the West can easily surpass it, for Babar was a man of original and powerful mind, with a keen faculty of observation, a quick insight into character, and a remarkable power of graphic description. With swift but exact touches he sketches the places he visits, the persons he meets with ; he has an eye for beauty of landscape, while he does not fail to notice in every country he traverses the principal points of interest : the climate, the natural products, the works of art, the industrial resources. His portraits are equally full and accurate ; he tells you the figure, the dress, the habits, the tastes of every individual he introduces. His narrative is often diversified by pleasant little epigrammatic touches and by the frankest possible personal allusions. He gossips about the first time he shaved, how he lost his first dinner through his awkwardness in carving a

roast goose, his sufferings from lumbago, his love of the game of leap-frog, his naughty fits of intemperance. Nor is he less copious in talking of his friends, whose accidents and illnesses, adventures and peculiarities, he records at length and with undisguised relish. He speaks with much affection of his mother and kinswomen, and cherishes a tender recollection of his childish companions. "It is a relief," says Erskine, "in the midst of the pompous coldness of Asiatic history, to find a king who can weep for days, and tell us that he wept for the playmate of his boyhood."

Writing to his son Humayun, he freely criticises the young man's composition.

"In compliance with my wishes," he says, "you have indeed written two letters, but certainly you cannot have read them over. Had you attempted to do so, you would have found the task impossible, and would undoubtedly have laid them aside. I contrived, however, to decipher your last letter and make out the meaning, but with much difficulty. The style is excessively crabbed and confused. Who ever saw a *Moamma* or charade in prose? Your

spelling is not bad, but yet not quite correct. Your letter may indeed be read, but, in consequence of the far-fetched words you have employed, its meaning is far from being intelligible. You certainly do not excel in letter-writing, chiefly because you have too great a desire to show off your acquirements. For the future write unaffectedly, with clearness, using plain language, which will give much less trouble both to writer and reader."

After discussing, in a letter to his most confidential counsellor, Khaja Khan, certain affairs of state, he prattles away about their common acquaintances in the most diverting fashion, and then, pretending suddenly to recollect himself, exclaims, "For Heaven's sake, excuse all these fooleries, and do not think the worse of me for indulging in them." In another letter, proud of his resolution to abstain from wine, he urges a similar abstemiousness upon his minister, and laughingly gives as a reason that, though drinking might be pleasant enough with his old friends and gossips, now that he has only two bores like Shir Ahmed and Heider Kuli to take his wine with, it can be no great sacrifice to give it up! In the same

letter his love of his native country finds naïve expression :—“ They recently brought me a musk melon. While cutting it up, I felt myself impressed with a sense of loneliness and of exile from my birth-land, nor could I refrain from shedding tears while I was eating it.”

It has been aptly pointed out, in illustration of the restless and unsettled nature of his life, that from the time he was eleven years old he never kept the fast of the Ramazan twice in one place. The time not spent in war and travelling was given to hunting and other sports, or in long excursions on horseback about the country. On his last journey, after his health had begun to fail, he rode in two days from Calpi to Agra, a distance of a hundred and sixty miles, though he had no particular motive for despatch ; and on the same journey he swam twice across the Ganges, as he said he had done every river he had met with. His mind was not less active than his body : besides State business, he was constantly occupied with aqueducts, reservoirs, and other improvements, as well as in introducing new fruits and other productions from foreign countries. Yet he found time

to compose many elegant Persian poems and a collection of verses in Turki, which claim for him, it is said, a high rank among the poets of his own country.

On the whole, I think one may say that Oriental history, though it presents figures more splendid and picturesque, presents none more attractive, none more interesting—because so sympathetic, genial, and humane—than the Emperor Babar.

CHAPTER II.

HUMAYUN, THE SECOND OF THE GREAT MOGULS.

THE reign of Humayun was darkened by heavy misfortunes, the chief of which originated in the partition of the empire that was forced upon him immediately after his accession, his brother Kamran, who was governor of Kabul and Kandahar, insisting on retaining those provinces and the Punjab as an independent kingdom. To propitiate his other brothers, he gave to Askari the government of Mewat, and to Hindal that of Sambal. Thus he was left to rule over newly conquered territories without the resources by which they had been acquired and might have been retained; while his generosity did not secure the loyalty of those who profited by it, and bitter domestic feuds were added to his external difficulties. Unhappy indeed is the king who has

to contend not only with foreign enemies, but with foes in his own household!

It was not to be supposed that the Afghans, who for generations had battered on the wealth of India and occupied its throne, would submit without further struggle to be dispossessed by the enemies they hated most, the Mughals. During the brief reign of Babar they had trembled before his power, but he did not live long enough to establish his dynasty on an unassailable foundation; and when Humayun succeeded to a divided and enfeebled empire, he was immediately involved in hostilities which extended almost continuously over a period of ten years.

THE HIDDEN TREASURE.

One of his campaigns was made against the King of Guzarat, whom he drove out of his entrenched camp at Mandesor and hunted from place to place until the weary fugitive sought refuge in the island of Diu, off the coast of the Kathiwar peninsula. Humayun, in the course of this rapid pursuit, was exposed to much personal peril from the nocturnal attack of a tribe of mountaineers. They stole into

his camp under cover of the darkness, eluding the vigilance of his guards, surprised the imperial tent, and actually carried off from it the Sultan's baggage and books, among which was a remarkable copy of the "History of Timur," the loss and subsequent recovery of which were considered circumstances worthy of special mention by contemporary historians. Humayun soon made himself master of Guzarat, but it was late in the summer before he captured its principal stronghold, the hill-fortress of Champanir, which crowned the summit of an isolated rock of great height. The story runs that the Emperor himself, with three hundred picked men, scaled it "at dead of night," by means of iron spikes driven into the face of the cliff, forced an entrance through its gateway, and then admitted the main body of his troops. After they had made their conquest secure, the Mughals discovered that the hiding-place of the royal treasures was known only to one of the Guzarat officers, and the Emperor was solicited to order him to be put to the torture until he disclosed the secret ; but Humayun, who had inherited much of his father's urbanity, suggested that recourse should instead be

had to wine, and gave orders that the officer should be hospitably entertained by one of the imperial nobles. So it befell that when the Hindu's heart glowed with the warmth of wine his tongue was loosed, and he revealed to his host that if the water were drawn off from a certain tank, the sediment would be one of gold and silver. And thus, without suffering or bloodshed, the Sultan became possessed of the hidden treasure.

AN AFGHAN CHIEF.

The most formidable of Humayun's enemies was Shir Shah, the governor of Bengal.

He was an Afghan chief and a remarkable man, gifted with all the strong and stalwart qualities which in times of convulsion carry men into the foremost rank. He was wary, yet bold ; full of resource, prompt in decision, and of great physical strength. It is told of him that while still a youth he slew a tiger with one blow of his scimitar. His ambition was boundless ; and from early years he had conceived the idea of seizing on the throne of India. As Alexander the Great remarked of himself and Darius

that two suns could not shine in one hemisphere, so Shir Shah was wont to say that "two swords could never rest in one scabbard." With almost incredible patience and tenacity, he climbed step by step the ladder of power. On the death of Babar, he established himself in Behar, married a wealthy widow, and got hold of the strong fortress of Chunar, on the Ganges. Soon afterwards he conquered Bengal. In 1532 the Emperor demanded of him the surrender of Chunar, and when he curtly refused, marched against him. But as at the same time the King of Guzarat renewed hostilities and threatened the Rajput capital of Chittur, Humayun made a hasty peace with his Afghan adversary, and advanced against his old foe. The king then retired, but in the following year renewed his attack, and Humayun again moved to defeat it.

Now for ages the Rajputs had maintained an institution known as "The Festival of the Bracelet." It was held in the spring of the year; and the Rajput ladies then selected their favourite cavaliers, forwarding to them a bracelet, with the title of "adopted brother." If the chosen warrior accepted the pledge,

and in return sent the plain silken vest worn by Rajput women of rank, he was thenceforward bound to devote himself to her service whenever she commanded him. When the King of Guzarat advanced a second time against Chittur, Kumarath, the Rani, sent a bracelet to Humayun, and invited his assistance. With something of the spirit of the old chivalry of the West, Humayun accepted the obligation. Before he could reach Chittur, however, it had been captured by the Guzarat soldiers, but not until 10,000 Rajputs had perished, and Kumarath and all the women had voluntarily sacrificed themselves amidst the leaping flames of "the johur."

A STRATAGEM.

Meanwhile Shir Shah had been growing more formidable every day. His fame as a warrior had been increased by his capture of the hill-fortress of Rohtas, which is situated at an elevation of 1,400 feet above the sea-level. Its natural advantages rendered it almost impregnable; and Shir Shah resorted to stratagem to effect its reduction. To its

Rajput governor, who was as credulous as he was courageous, he sent a message saying that he was about to undertake a campaign in Bengal, and desired to leave in the charge of a warrior whom he esteemed so highly his women and treasures until he returned. After some little hesitation, the governor undertook the trust. Shir Shah then prepared a number of the litters usually employed in the conveyance of Muhammadan women of high rank, and in each—except the first three, which carried females—placed armed men, disguised in female attire. He also caused five hundred money-bags to be filled with leaden bullets; these he entrusted to his bravest warriors, who were clad in the dress of Hindu peasants, and instructed to follow the litters on foot. The procession reached the fortress gate; the first three litters were examined, and as these contained women, the others were suffered to pass unchallenged. Once within the walls, it was easy to play out the cunningly contrived drama; Shir Shah's warriors sprang from their litters, and being joined by the pretended peasants, overpowered the garrison and admitted their leader into the fort.

SIEGE OF CHUNAR.

Humayun, on his return from Guzarat, made immediate preparations for a campaign against this formidable foe. Shir Shah was not at first prepared to meet him in the open field, and, to delay his advance, threw a strong garrison into Chunar, near Benares, which lay on the Emperor's line of march, and provided it with the means and appliances of a protracted defence.

The fort of Chunar crosses the summit of a rock of sandstone which juts into the Ganges. It lies nearly north and south, is 800 yards in length, 133 to 300 yards in breadth, and 80 to 175 feet above the surrounding plain. The walls extend over a circuit of nearly a mile and a half. The fortifications now existing were mainly constructed by the Moslem, apparently from the materials of earlier Hindu buildings. Sculptured stones, with figures of Hindu deities and heroes carved in high relief, are let into the walls and pavements, with their faces contemptuously turned downwards into the earth.

Early in January, 1539, Humayun invested the

fort. He endeavoured to mine such parts of the landward walls as were accessible, and constructed floating batteries with which to bombard those that looked upon the river. But though he plied his artillery with a good deal of vigour, the garrison defied his attacks for six laborious months, surrendering only when their provisions were exhausted. The siege operations had been conducted by Rumi Khan, a Constantinopolitan Turk, who was highly esteemed as a military engineer ; and so much importance was in those days attached to the knowledge of the service of artillery that Humayun ordered the right hands of all the gunners in the garrison, three hundred in number, to be cut off, either to disable them for the future, or in revenge for the loss they had occasioned.

HUMAYUN'S DEFEAT.

Hostilities were continued for some time longer, but some severe reverses befell the imperial armies, and Shir Shah's energy carried everything before it. When the Emperor was falling back upon Agra, he suddenly threw himself across his line of retreat, and

surprised him by a sudden and vehement attack which completely routed his forces. Humayun had barely time to leap on horseback and, guided by one of his officers, gallop away to the bank of the Ganges. As there was no bridge at the point he struck, he plunged immediately into the deep water, but before he could reach the opposite bank his horse, exhausted, sank like a stone, and his imperial rider would have met with the same fate had not a water-carrier, who was crossing with the help of an inflated bladder, observed his danger and hastened to his rescue. The bladder proving sufficient for the support of both, Humayun landed in safety, and, with a few attendants who gathered round him, pursued his flight to Kalpi, and thence to Agra (1539). I may note that the man who had so opportunely assisted him made his appearance afterwards at the capital, and was rewarded by being seated for half a day, or, according to some authorities, for a couple of hours, on the imperial cushion, and allowed the full exercise of sovereign power, of which he made good use in providing freely for himself and his friends.

Humayun arrived at Agra in time to prevent the

outbreak of a conspiracy of which his brothers were the leading spirits. With his usual good-nature, he pardoned them both ; and the danger threatened by Shir Shah's rapid success temporarily united the three brothers by the bond of a common interest. For some months they held him at bay ; but in the spring of 1540 Humayun thought himself strong enough to take the field again, and marched out to encounter his formidable enemy, who was posted on the Ganges opposite Kanauj. For some time the two armies watched each other from opposite banks, but the desertion of an important chief and his followers compelled Humayun to take instant action. Throwing his army across the river, he offered battle. His challenge was accepted, and a desperate engagement took place, which resulted in his total defeat. A second time he narrowly escaped with his life. His horse was wounded, and he himself on the point of being killed or taken prisoner, when he came across an elephant, mounted it, and hastened down to the Ganges. The driver hesitated to make his animal swim the river ; and the Emperor, throwing him from his seat, ordered an eunuch to take his place.

The other side, however, proved to be too steep for the elephant to climb, and Humayun would certainly have perished had not a soldier—who afterwards was raised to the ranks of the nobility—loosened his turban, and throwing the end down to him as he struggled in the water, dragged him, not without some difficulty, ashore (May 16th, 1540).

Further resistance was impossible. The defeated Emperor fled towards Sind, accompanied by his young wife, who at Amarkot on October 14th, 1542, gave birth to a male child—the celebrated Akbar. Eventually he found shelter at Herat, and made a friendly alliance with the Shah of Persia. Afterwards we find him on “the war-path” in various directions—in Kandahar and Badakhshan and Transoxiana—quarrelling with his rebellious brothers and undergoing the most extraordinary vicissitudes of fortune.

HIS LAST YEARS.

Meanwhile Shir Shah, after a reign of about five years, was succeeded on the throne of Delhi by his son Selim, who reigned nine years. Then came Selim’s brother-in-law, Muhammad Khan, who waded

to the musnud through the blood of his nephew, a boy of twelve years old. This man was ignorant even to imbecility, and throughout his brief period of government was the sport of rebellion. The friends of Humayun urged upon him, in these circumstances, to attempt the recovery of his throne. Accordingly in January, 1555, he set out from Kabul at the head of 15,000 cavalry; invaded and overran the Punjab; and afterwards captured both Agra and Delhi. But the pomp and circumstance of Indian royalty he was fated not long to enjoy. Descending from the terrace of his library by an external flight of steps, which had no other protection than an ornamented parapet about a foot high, he paused on hearing the muezzin of the royal mosque make the call to prayers to repeat the creed, and sat down on a step until the crier ceased. In rising to his feet he leaned for support upon his staff, but it slipped on the polished marble, and he fell over the parapet on to the pavement below. He was taken up insensible; and though he was soon restored to consciousness, the injuries he had sustained proved mortal, and on the fourth day after the accident he passed away (January 25th,

1556), in the forty-ninth year of his age and the twenty-sixth of his troubled and unprosperous reign. Even to the last he seemed pursued by a malignant fortune, and in his death, as in his life, justified his sobriquet of Humayun "the Unlucky."

He was interred on the bank of the Jumna, and over his last resting-place his son Akbar afterwards erected that stately mausoleum which is to this day the wonder and admiration of strangers. It is a noble building of granite, inlaid with marble, situated in a spacious garden of terraces and fountains, the whole being surrounded by an embattled wall, with towers and four gateways. In the centre stands a platform, about 200 feet square by 60 feet high, supported by cloisters, to which access is gained by four flights of granite steps. Above rises the mausoleum, also square, with a great central dome of white marble. It is a remarkable fact that here, in Humayun's tomb, the last representative of the Mughal emperors—the last King of Delhi—sought refuge, with his sons and family, after the recapture of Delhi by the British troops in 1857; and it was here that he and they surrendered to Major Hodson, of Hodson's Horse.

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CHAPTER III.

AKBAR THE GREAT.

THE year 1556 was an *annus mirabilis* both in the Eastern and the Western worlds. It witnessed in the West the abdication of the Emperor Charles V., who surrendered to his son, Philip II., the thrones of Spain, Germany, and the Netherlands; in the East it witnessed the accession to the imperial throne of Delhi of the famous Akbar, then a boy of fourteen. As he ascended the musnud in 1556 and died in 1605, his reign almost exactly covered the same period as that of our Queen Elizabeth, who reigned from 1558 to 1603. And as Elizabeth's reign forms one of the most brilliant chapters in English history, so does Akbar's form one of the most splendid in the history of Islam.

BATTLE OF PANIPAT (1556).

At the time of his father's death he was gaining experience of war in the Punjab; but though nominally the commander of the imperial army, he was really under the tutelage of a veteran warrior and statesman, Bairam Khan, who had been a faithful servant both to Akbar's father and grandfather. In compliance with the will of Humayun, Bairam Khan assumed the title of Khan Baba, "the King's father," or regent, during Akbar's minority, and exercised sovereign power. Accompanied by the boy-Sultan, he marched against his sovereign's most formidable adversary, Hemu, the Hindu minister and general of Muhammad Adali, who, at the head of 100,000 horse and foot, with 3,000 elephants, was advancing upon Delhi. The two contending hosts met on the historic field of Panipat. The night before the battle Hemu sent an arrogant message to Akbar, warning him that one so young and feeble must not suppose himself capable of successfully encountering a monarch of vastly superior power. "Come not," he said, "within the reach of my

numerous and irresistible fighting-men and elephants, lest in the collision harm should befall thee. I resign to thee all the territories eastward of the Jumna to the uttermost limits of Bengal; be mine the remainder of Hindustan." Akbar, or his regent, replied that all Hemu's previous victories had been at the expense of inconsiderable antagonists. "Where is the glory," he continued, "of fastening a chain upon a slave? Without experience of battle, without having known aught of the terrors of an encounter with the warriors of *my* race, what canst thou imagine of the honour of an equal contest? The shadows of night disappear at the approach of day, when the lord of light unsheathes his sword of splendour. When to-morrow dawns, come to the field in thy strongest array, and we shall then see whom God is disposed to favour."

Never was action more desperately fought. Hemu opened it with a charge of elephants; but the Mughal ranks stood solid as a rock, and the ponderous animals, as was ever their way when the first assault failed, irritated by the storm of missiles which burst upon them, wheeled round and crashed into the native

ranks, spreading everywhere the greatest confusion and dismay. Then the Mughals made haste to grapple with their foemen; and in a hand-to-hand combat the feeble Hindus had but a sorry chance. They broke, they fled, and in their flight were remorselessly slaughtered. Hemu, mounted on a colossal elephant, endeavoured to prolong the battle; but an arrow pierced his eye, and he fell back senseless into his howdah. On regaining consciousness, he plucked out the arrow, dragging with it the bleeding eyeball. The physical agony he endured could not daunt the brave spirit that dwelt in this man's insignificant and frail body; and he made another furious effort to shake and shatter the hostile ranks. He failed, was taken prisoner, and conveyed to Akbar's pavilion, where Bairam would have had his young sovereign gain the noble title of *Ghazi*, or champion of the faith, by killing with his own hand this valiant "infidel." But Akbar refused to strike a wounded enemy, and gently touching him with his sword, broke into tears of compassion. Angrily exclaiming that it was by their inopportune clemency his family had incurred their many mis-

fortunes, Bairam, with one sweep of his scimitar, severed the head of the unfortunate Hemu from his body.

AKBAR REIGNS.

Order and tranquillity were speedily established throughout the empire. No doubt this result was largely owing to the capacity and energy of Bairam Khan; but unfortunately his success intoxicated him with pride and arrogance. He began to presume on the value of his services, and exercised an arbitrary dictatorship which Akbar, as he grew towards manhood, felt to be extremely irksome. His anger was roused by the injustice and even cruelty of some of his minister's proceedings. Without troubling himself to ask his sovereign's assent, he banished or put to death all whom he regarded as his private enemies. Akbar's old preceptor was among those whom he sent into exile, the former governor of Delhi among those whom he executed. At length, having reached the age of eighteen, Akbar resolved to throw off a yoke which had become intolerable. When out on a hunting-party, he pleaded the sudden illness

of his mother as an excuse for galloping away to Delhi; and having reached the capital, he immediately issued a proclamation announcing that he had personally assumed the government, and forbidding obedience to any orders but his own. This *coup d'état* startled Bairam out of his dream of perpetual authority, and he despatched two of his friends to make his humble submission; but Akbar refused to see them, and committed them to prison (March, 1560).

For some weeks the disgraced minister lingered at Nagor, in the hope, perhaps, that Akbar would find the burden of imperial power too heavy and recall to his assistance his old and experienced minister. But a message dismissing him from his office, and ordering him to proceed on a mission to Mecca, excited his worst passions. He made haste to assemble a body of troops, raised the standard of revolt, and invaded the Punjab. He soon discovered that a disgraced minister has few friends; and being hotly pursued by the imperial troops, he was compelled to escape to the Siwalk hills and implore the Emperor's mercy. Akbar behaved with a magna-

nimity worthy of the grandson of Babar. When Bairam came, with his turban round his neck and bathed in tears, to throw himself at his master's feet, Akbar, forgetting all but his eminent services, raised him from the ground, seated him on his right hand, and invested him with a dress of honour. He then offered him three alternatives: an important provincial government, a distinguished post at court, or a royal retinue and suitable income to make his pilgrimage to Mecca. Prudence and piety counselled him to accept the last; accordingly he was allowed an annual pension of £5,000, and he then set out for Guzarat. On the way he turned aside to offer his devotions at Sahassak, or "The Thousand Temples," where he fell beneath the dagger of an Afghan, whose father he had killed in battle in the reign of Humayun.

Relieved from a control which had grown oppressive, and from a system of administration of which his sagacity disapproved, Akbar felt at liberty to shape out a great design, and to its accomplishment directed all his energies during his long and memorable reign. His political insight taught him

that the Mughal dynasty rested upon no solid or stable foundation, but only on the spears of the fine soldiery who were attracted to its banners by the promise of high pay, the hope of plunder, and the love of adventure. The houses of Ghazni and Ghor had possessed resources in their native kingdoms, which lay contiguous to their Indian conquest, and the slave kings were supported by the continual immigration of their countrymen; but though Babar had been to some extent naturalised in Kabul, yet, as Elphinstone remarks, the separation of that country from the empire under Kamran had broken its connection with India, and the rivalry of an Afghan dynasty converted the most warlike of its inhabitants, as well as the Indian Muhammadans, into enemies. In these circumstances Akbar conceived the idea of "placing himself at the head of the whole Indian nation," and of amalgamating its various races and sects into one vast community, governed by the same laws, though preserving their distinctions of customs, religion, caste, and even to some extent their separate political institutions.

AKBAR HIMSELF.

The man who formed this fine ideal of empire was well fitted by nature to accomplish its realisation. His physical advantages were considerable. He was tall of stature, with a regal presence ; of a strongly knit frame, capable of enduring the extremes of hardship and fatigue ; with a handsome and open countenance, such as men love to look upon in their rulers. His son Selim describes him as of a ruddy nut-brown complexion. Some Portuguese Jesuits, who visited his court when he was about fifty, say he was "white like an European," with dark eyes and eyebrows, the latter running into each other. He had "the strength of a lion," which was apparent in the extraordinary breadth of his chest and length of his arms. On the whole, say these foreigners, his appearance was impressive and dignified. A black mole on his nose was declared "by those skilled in the science of physiognomy to prognosticate an extraordinary career of good fortune ; and, indeed, he could not be regarded as other than fortunate who sounded the great drum of sovereign power for

a period of fifty years over the whole of Hindustan, and that without a rival or an opponent.”

His sobriety and abstemiousness maintained him in admirable health and activity. On certain days, amounting altogether to nearly a fourth part of the year, he refrained entirely from animal food. Very little sleep sufficed him. His adventurous temper he gratified by frequent indulgence in hunting ; and he especially delighted in the destruction of tigers and the capture of herds of wild elephants. In his pastimes, as in his more serious pursuits, there was nothing mean or trivial ; he was in all things a man of large thoughts and high aspirations. He was absolutely fearless of danger ; and his passion for action was remarkable in one who could reflect with so much calmness and profundity. He would ride from Agra to Ajmere, a distance of two hundred and twenty miles, in a couple of days, for pure enjoyment of the swift continuous exercise. He would spring from the back of a tame elephant on to that of the most furious and unmanageable, which had killed, perhaps, several keepers ; or he would drop upon its neck from the branch of a tree or the top of a wall. On

more than one occasion he slew with his own hand the royal tiger, the fierce lord of the jungle; and once, coming upon a tigress with five cubs, he spurred his horse against her, and laid her dead with one blow across the loins.

In battle his brilliant courage was the inspiration of his soldiers. Clothed in glittering armour, mounted on his favourite steed, Koparah, and brandishing his well-known scimitar, "The Conquest of Empires," he was always foremost in the charge; and his turbaned crest, rising high above the heads of his nobles, was as conspicuous a rallying-point to the chivalry of Islam as "the snow-white plume" of Henry of Navarre to the Huguenot soldiery on the fields of Ivry and Moncontour. The generosity which was as marked a feature of his character as it had been of that of his grandfather Babar permeated, as it were, and inspired his courage. Once, when weary of the delay caused by the slow siege of the fortress of a rebellious raja, he challenged him to single combat, saying, "Though in my army I have a thousand men as good as yourself, yet, rather than fatigue my soldiers with a long

blockade, I will stake the whole on the issue of a single combat between you and me; and let him own the fort who shall best deserve it." Again, in the storming of a strong castle he was himself leading the assault, when a young Rajput chief, indignant at some supposed rebuff from the Emperor, stripped off his armour, and declared he would go into the fight without any. Akbar immediately doffed his own coat of mail, saying he would not allow any of his chiefs to be more exposed in battle than he himself was.

But you must not conceive of him only as a valiant soldier: he was more—as a military commander he displayed consummate skill, and in the management of an army in the field he exhibited a tactical dexterity which none of his predecessors had approached. He was not wholly devoid of ambition; and probably it would have been impossible for any one in his position to have refrained from schemes of conquest, nor could he have fulfilled his great idea of the unification of India without engaging in them. But he had no passion for military glory. His ruling desire was to be known as a legislator and reformer His

intellect was strong, vigorous, and clear ; his imagination was vivid, but always under the control of his judgment ; and though tenacious of purpose and firm of will, he did not shut his ears to the voice of reason. According to his lights and opportunities, he was a deeply religious man, with a profound sense of the Divine government of the world ; and he delighted in discussing the great and solemn questions connected with the soul's destiny. His scholarship was considerable, and he was fond of the society of learned men, who found in him a liberal and sympathetic patron. In character and disposition he was nearly all that a sovereign ought to be : tolerant, humane, strictly just, generous to a fault, assiduous in the discharge of his duties, easy of access, and ever ready to encourage and reward the deserving. When I have added that he was fascinating in his manners and genially affable towards all comers, while there was a dignity about him which effectually prevented undue familiarity, I have said enough to prove that Akbar the Mughal is fairly entitled to a place among the world's greatest men, along with an Alfred the Great and a Charlemagne.

I shall not weary the reader with detailed narratives of all Akbar's campaigns and achievements. They belong to a dead past, and have no longer any actual interest or profit for mankind. Let me note in one brief sentence that he subdued and annexed the Rajput kingdoms in 1566-68, Guzarat in 1572 and 1573, Bengal in 1576, Kashmir in 1586, Sind in 1592, Kandahar in 1594, and Khandesh in 1601, and then pass on to glance at some incidents which illustrate the man and his time.

INCIDENTS.

During one of his campaigns—in the Punjab, I think—as Akbar was going in procession to a famous mosque, an archer in the service, as it was afterwards ascertained of a rebel chief, mixed with the spectators, and pretending to discharge his arrow at a bird which hovered in the blue above, suddenly lowered it so as to lodge it some inches deep in the Emperor's shoulder. He was immediately arrested and Akbar was solicited to defer his execution until he had been compelled by torture to reveal the name of his employer ; but the Emperor finely replied that

a confession so obtained was more likely to criminate the innocent than disclose the guilty.

On another occasion one of his maternal kinsmen, Khaja Moazzim, a man of very violent temper, having treated his wife with great cruelty, her relatives implored the Emperor to use his influence and prevail upon him to leave the unfortunate lady with her mother when he retired to his country estate. Akbar, when out on a hunting expedition, seized the opportunity to pay a visit to Khaja's house near Delhi ; but Khaja, conjecturing his object, hurried to the woman's apartment, stabbed his wife to the heart, and threw the bloody body from the window among the imperial attendants. Akbar, on entering the house, found the wretch armed for resistance, and narrowly escaped death at the hand of one of his slaves, who was cut down while aiming a blow at the Emperor. He thereupon gave orders that Moazzim should be thrown headlong into the Jumna ; but, as he did not sink immediately, Akbar relented, and causing him to be dragged out of the river, sentenced him to be imprisoned for life at Gwalior, where, however, he soon afterwards died, a maniac.

AN HEROIC EPISODE.

One of the most heroic episodes of the siege of Chittur, undertaken by Akbar in 1569, has for its central figure a young chief: Pulta, Raja of Kailwa. His father had been killed by a Mughal arrow; and when no hope remained of successfully defending the fortress, his mother bade him put on the saffron-coloured robe of mourning and join his father in Paradise. And that he might not leave behind him any one he loved, she armed his young bride, and seizing a sword for her own use, descended the rock, at the base of which the two brave women fell in the sight of both armies, fighting desperately to the last.

THE HAPPY VALLEY.

In extending his dominions, Akbar was led to undertake the conquest of Kashmir, that beautiful country which the poets have designated "The Happy Valley," which in some parts seems to realise the dream of an earthly Paradise. Situated in the heart of the Himalayas, and more than half-

way up their height, it is sheltered by ramparts of lofty peaks and pinnacles from the biting blasts of the higher regions, and yet escapes the tropical heat-waves of Hindustan. Thus it enjoys a climate of delightful temperance and equability, and displays a luxurious scene of "continual verdure and almost of perpetual spring," though the vast summits around are white and worn with everlasting snows. Trees belonging to different zones here flourish side by side, while various kinds of delicious fruits and flowers of brilliant hue and exquisite fragrance are poured profusely forth over hill and plain. The level lands are brightened by shining streams, which slide out of the deep glens or tumble in cascades down the mountain slopes, to collect in brimming pools, more particularly in the two beautiful lakes of the Dal and the Manusbul, which, with their picturesque shores and floating gardens, greatly enhance the natural charms of the Happy Valley.

It seems fitting that to an Eden like this the access should be only through difficult mountain passes, ranging from 9,000 to 12,000 feet in elevation. "The road, though a steep ascent on the whole,

often rises and descends over rocky ridges, sometimes winds through long and close defiles, and sometimes runs along the face of precipices overhanging deep and rapid rivers. The higher part of the mountain, whence the descent into Kashmir commences, is at one season further obstructed, and in some places rendered impassable, by snow."

In 1586 the imperial army penetrated into the valley, through a pass which had been left unguarded ; but its commanders, alarmed by the failure of their supplies and by a heavy snowfall, which indicated the approach of winter, hastily concluded a treaty, the effect of which was to preserve the actual independence of Kashmir, though the Mughal supremacy was nominally recognised. With this compromise Akbar was greatly dissatisfied, and in the following year he despatched a second army, which fought its way to the capital, and compelled complete submission. The King, surrendering himself prisoner, was enrolled among the great nobles of Delhi, and sent to live on an estate assigned to him in Behar. Thus Kashmir sank quietly into a subject province, after having held the rank of an independent kingdom

for nearly a thousand years. Soon afterwards Akbar made a pilgrimage, or royal progress, to the Happy Valley, to survey the natural beauties of which he had heard so much. Twice only during the rest of his reign was he able to repeat the visit ; but the Happy Valley became the favourite retreat of his successors, and numerous proofs and memorials of their partiality are to this day in existence.

A REMARKABLE WOMAN.

In 1595 Akbar desired to extend his authority to the Deccan, or Central India, which was then convulsed with the dissensions between its princes. At Ahmednagar the succession to the musnud was disputed ; and the would-be king in possession of the capital solicited the assistance of Akbar against his rival. This exactly suited the Emperor, who at once sent into the Deccan a powerful army, under his son, Prince Morad. But in the meantime the government of Ahmednagar had fallen into the hands of Chand Sultana, or Chand Bibi, one of those remarkable women who make such brilliant figures on the canvas of Indian history ; and she had made

strenuous efforts to induce the princes of the Deccan to sink their private quarrels and unite in common resistance to a common enemy. To a considerable extent her efforts were successful, and the gathering of the native forces compelled Prince Morad to push forward in all haste the siege of Ahmednagar. Two mines which he had sunk and carried under the fortifications were discovered by the besieged and rendered useless by counter-mines, Chand Bibi superintending the workmèn in person, heedless of the missiles that flew around her. A third mine was exploded, however, before the counter-mining was completed, blowing up a number of the besieged and tearing a great gap in the wall. A sudden panic shook the hearts of the defenders, and they were on the point of deserting the ramparts, when Chand Bibi, clothed in full armour and sword in hand, but with her face veiled, according to the custom of the native women, hastened to the spot, rallied her soldiers, and infused into them so much of her own spirit that they soon repulsed the attack of the Mughals, overwhelming them with ceaseless volleys of arrows, matchlock balls, and rockets. Morad next

day ordered a renewal of the assault ; but it was found that in the night the defenders, encouraged by the heroic Sultana, had built up the breach to such a height that it could not be mounted without new ladders. Both parties then thought it advisable to cease the desperate contention, and the Mughals agreed to withdraw on the cession of Berar to the Emperor being confirmed.

In the following year fresh troubles broke out in Ahmednagar, and Akbar's assistance was again solicited by one of the contending parties. A great battle was fought early in January, 1597, on the river Godaveri ; but though maintained with unfailing fury for two days, it was indecisive. It is true that the Mughals claimed the victory, but they were in no condition to profit by it, and Akbar, dissatisfied with Morad's management of the campaign, sent Abul Fazl, his prime minister (and also his historian), to supersede the prince and take command of the army. Before long it became evident that only the presence of the great Emperor himself could bring back fortune to the arms of the Mughals ; and in the late spring of 1599 he made his appearance on the banks of

the Nerbadda, and despatched his vanguard, under his son Prince Daniyal, to reinvest Ahmednagar. Chand Bibi was at the time involved in so many complications that she felt unable to undertake its defence, and had entered into negotiations for peace with the Mughals, when the Hindu soldiery, at the instigation of some of her personal enemies, broke into the female apartments of the palace, and foully murdered this heroic woman. Such was the sad end of Chand Bibi.

AKBAR'S LAST YEARS AND DEATH.

The misconduct of his sons darkened the closing years of the great Emperor. Selim, afterwards the Emperor Jahanger, possessed excellent abilities; but in all other respects contrasted unfavourably with his father and grandfather. Naturally of an austere temper, it had been inflamed, and at the same time his intellect enfeebled, by the immoderate use of wine. He himself tells us in his autobiography—all the Mughal emperors, by the way, inherited Babar's autobiographic tastes—that in his youth he took at least twenty cups of wine daily, each cup containing

half a soi, that is, six ounces,—or nearly half a pint (the amount seems incredible)—and that if he went a single hour without his beverage, his hands began to shake, and he was unable to sit at rest. Opium-drinking was another of his vices. The severe and didactic minister-historian, Abul Fazl, he had always regarded as his natural enemy ; and it was partly as a concession to this feeling of his son's that Akbar sent his minister to the Deccan. In 1602 the prince contrived his murder, employing as his agent Narsing Deo, Raja of Orcha, who inveigled him into an ambuscade, overpowered him and his court, and sent his head to the prince. The loss of his principal adviser—his son's share in which he seems never to have known or suspected—was a great blow to Akbar. He wept bitterly, and passed two days and nights without food or sleep ; and he despatched an army against Narsing Deo, with orders to seize his family, lay waste his territory, and inflict other severities from which, in his ordinary frame of mind, Akbar would certainly have shrunk.

His third son, Prince Daniyal, brought much sorrow and shame on Akbar's grey hairs. He too

was addicted to intemperance ; and his terrible excesses finally killed him in 1604, when he was only in his thirtieth year. His health for some time previous had been lamentably feeble ; and the Emperor, besides exacting from him his word of honour that he would drink no more wine, surrounded him with trusty officers to prevent him from gratifying his unhappy craving. But, with the cunning of the dipsomaniac, the prince contrived to outwit them. He had his liquor conveyed to him secretly in the barrel of a fowling-piece, and speedily drank himself to death.

The Emperor, an old man, whose strength had been taxed for nearly half a century by the burden of empire, was unable to bear the additional pressure of domestic troubles. He had been for some time ailing, when, in September, 1605, his complaint suddenly assumed a most unfavourable aspect. Feeling that his end was approaching, he hastened to set in order the vast affairs of his extended empire, so that his successor might have no difficulty in taking up the various threads. His laborious task completed, he sent for his son Selim, and bade him summon to

his presence all his omrahs, "for I cannot endure," he said, "that any misunderstanding should exist between you and those who for so many years have shared in my toil and been the associates of my glory."

As soon as they were assembled, he cast upon them a wistful glance, and desired them to bury in oblivion and to forgive any offences of which they could justly accuse him. Then, drawing Selim towards him, and embracing him affectionately, he said: "My dear son, take this my last farewell, for on earth we never meet again. Beware that thou withdrawest not thy protection from the ladies of my harem; continue to them the allowance that I have always made; and although my departure must cast a heavy gloom upon thy mind, let not the words that are past be at once forgotten. Many a vow and many a covenant have been exchanged between us; break not the pledge which thou hast given me; forget it not. Beware! Many are the claims which weigh upon my soul. Be they great or be they small, do not thou neglect them. Call to thy remembrance my deeds of martial glory; forget not the

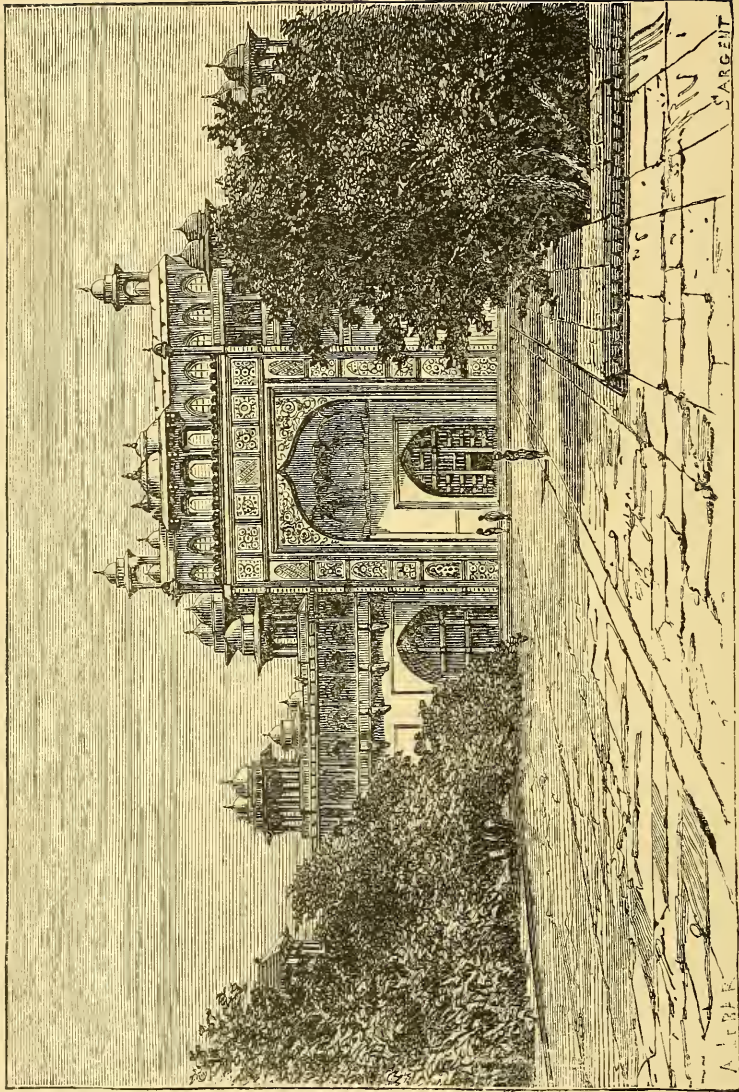
exercise of that bounty which distributed so many jewels ; remember, when I am gone, my servants and dependants, and the afflicted in the hour of need ; ponder word by word all that I have said. Do thou bear it all in mind ; and, again, forget me not !”

Selim threw himself at his father's feet, and wept many tears. Then Akbar pointed to his favourite scimitar, and made signs to him to bind it on in his presence. Afterwards (according to a somewhat doubtful authority) he permitted one of the chief mullahs, a friend of Prince Selim, to be introduced, and repeated to him the Muhammadan confession of faith, and otherwise assented to the rites and forms of Islam. And on the night of Wednesday, October 10th, 1605, Akbar Shah, “The Ornament of the World,” “The Asylum of the Nations,” “The King of Kings,” “The Lord of Lords,” “The Great,” “The Fortunate,” and “The Victorious”—for all these titles did he bear—passed away from the scene of his greatness and his glory, in the sixty-fourth year of his age and the fiftieth of his reign.

The funeral of Akbar was worthy of the grandeur of the man and the magnificence of his empire.

Selim and his three sons bore the coffin out of the palace gates. There it was taken up by the young princes and the great officers of the imperial household, relieving each other at fixed intervals, and conveyed to Sikandra, on the banks of the Jumna, five miles north-west of Agra, where to this day it reposes, under a stately tomb, erected at a cost of eighteen hundred thousand pounds. This is the splendid mausoleum of which Fergusson supplies so happy a description.

It is pyramidal, he says, in external form. The outer or lower terrace is 320 feet square by 30 feet high, and of a bold and massive architecture. From this terrace rises another, far more ornate in style, measuring 186 feet on each side, and 14 feet 9 inches in height. A third terrace is 15 feet 2 inches, and a fourth 14 feet 6 inches in elevation, each being of red sandstone, and upon this fourfold substructure rests an enclosure of white marble, 157 feet each way, or externally just half the dimensions of the lowest terrace. The outer wall of this is entirely composed of marble trellis-work of the most beautiful patterns. Inside it is surrounded by a colonnade of the same



TOMB OF AKBAR AT SIKANDRA.

material. In the centre of this cloister, on a raised platform, stands the founder's tomb, a splendid composition of the most beautiful arabesque tracery. This, however, is not the real sepulchre, for the mortal remains of the great Emperor repose within a far plainer resting-place, in a vaulted chamber in the basement, 35 feet square, exactly beneath the factitious tomb that crowns the summit of the mausoleum.

This is the most characteristic of all Akbar's buildings, while it differs completely from every other tomb in India either of earlier or later date. Probably the idea was derived from some Buddhist model. It was begun by Akbar, and completed by his son Jahanger in 1613.

AKBAR'S TOLERANCE.

Akbar was nobly distinguished by his enlightened tolerance in all matters of religious belief and practice—a tolerance which procured him the enviable title of “Guardian of Mankind.” He was the first Indian sovereign who treated both Muhammadan and Hindu on a footing of equality, and made no

distinction between them in the distribution of rewards and honours. In the seventh year of his reign, he abolished the *jizya*, a head tax levied upon "infidels," as all non-Muhammadans were called. About the same time he swept away the taxes upon pilgrims, remarking that "though they were imposed upon a vain superstition, yet, as every form and mode of worship inclined the hearts of men towards the Supreme Being, it was wrong to throw any obstacle in the way of the devout and cut them off from their channel of intercourse with their Maker." But while he allowed the Hindu entire freedom of belief and worship, he sternly repressed those native practices which were contrary to the moral law. Thus he prohibited trials by ordeal, marriages before a proper age, and the *sati*, or burning of widows against their will; and hearing, on one occasion, that the Raja of Jodpur intended to compel his son's widow to immolate herself on the burning pile, he mounted his horse, and rode post to the spot to prevent the perpetration of so foul an atrocity.

His liberality towards Hinduism did not fail to

excite the indignation of the more bigoted Muham-madans, and particularly of the mullahs, who had a vested interest in the suppression of every creed but their own. Their mouthpiece, the author of the "Muntakhab ut Tawarikh," accuses the Emperor of intentionally and regularly degrading the religion of Islam, and even of persecuting its more zealous adherents. But if he had not favoured those who obeyed him, and shown some degree of dislike for active opponents, he would have been more than human; but in every case adduced by the writer it is clear that Akbar was irritated by particular acts of disrespect or disobedience, which he could hardly have been expected to overlook. Thus, if he ordered one of his principal Muhammadan courtiers out of his presence, it was because the man had rudely criticised his proceedings, and insolently asked what he thought would be the opinion of orthodox Muhammadan princes in other countries. If he told another that the only fit reply to his language would be a blow, it was because the offender had applied the word "hellish" to Akbar's heterodox advisers. The most conspicuous of his fanatical censors was

the Khan-i-Azim, his foster-brother and one of his most trusted lieutenants. As he had long been absent in the government of Guzarat, his mother prevailed on the Emperor to invite him to Court. Azim excused himself; and it came out that his real objection was to shaving his head and performing the prostration. The Emperor wrote to him in terms of good-humoured remonstrance, and when this proved of no avail, sent him an imperative summons. Azim then resigned his government, and addressed an insolent letter to the Emperor, in which he inquired if he had received a new revelation from Heaven or could work miracles like Muhammad, seeing that he imposed upon men a new religion; warned him that he was on his way to eternal perdition; and concluded with a prayer that God would bring him back into the path of salvation. After this intemperate outburst, he thought it advisable to embark at once for Mecca. But he soon grew weary of his self-imposed banishment, and returned to India, where he made his submission, and was received by the generous Akbar into his former favour and confidence.

The large and liberal tolerance cultivated by Akbar was not based upon an indifference to Islam or a preference for Hinduism, inasmuch as he extended it to Christians, Jews, and members of all other religions. He permitted the Jesuits to build Christian churches in Agra and Lahore, and to establish colleges, which he assisted in endowing. Early in his reign he displayed this wise and generous spirit, and listened without prejudice to different religious teachers ; but he had occupied the musnud for nearly a quarter of a century before he made open profession of his latitudinarianism. No doubt it was the free discussion at his Court of religious topics that led him to reject the pretensions of Islam ; while many of those around him were gifted with an exceptional breadth of sympathy, which cannot have been without influence on his mind. One day he asked a celebrated Persian teacher, respected not less for the purity of his life than his intellectual gifts, "which was the best of all the various sects of Islam." He replied :—"Suppose a great monarch be enthroned in a palace to which access is given by numerous gates, and suppose that through either you

can see the Sultan and obtain admission to his presence, would you ask which gate was the best? Your business is with the prince, and not with those at either gate," a sufficiently plain assertion that all religions are alike which lead the human soul to God. Akbar pressed the mullah with a second question :—"which in his opinion was the best of all religions?" The mullah replied indirectly. "The best men of every religion," he said, "followed the best religion."

AKBAR AS RULER.

The system by which Akbar regulated the affairs of his vast empire was notable for its simplicity. There were fifteen subahs, or provinces, over each of which was placed a Viceroy or Governor, with full civil and military powers. Each sent regular and detailed reports to the Emperor, who scrutinised them rigidly, and insisted that his officers should discharge their duties with the utmost efficiency. That his soldiers might not break out into mutiny, nor their leaders attempt to throw off the imperial

control, he reformed the organisation of his army. He substituted, as far as possible, money payments for the old custom of jagirs, or grants of lands ; and when circumstances prevented this charge from being carried out, he established a close supervision by the central authority of the holders of the old military fiefs. And as an additional check on his provincial generals, he instituted a kind of feudalism, by which the native tributary princes and the Mughal nobles were brought into exactly the same relation towards the sovereign.

The head of the judicial system was the *Mir-i-advl*, or "lord justice," who resided in the capital ; and under him were the *Kazis*, or magistrates, in the principal towns. The police in the cities obeyed the orders of the *Kotwal*, or superintendent, who was also a magistrate. " In country districts where police existed at all, they were left to the management of the landholders or revenue officers. But throughout rural India no regular police force can be said to have existed for the protection of person and property until after the establishment of British rule. The Hindu village had its hereditary watch-

man, who in many parts of the country was taken from the predatory castes, and as often leagued with the robbers as opposed to them. The land holders and revenue officers had each their own set of myrmidons who plundered the peasantry in their names."

Akbar's revenue system was founded on the old native customs, and so well adapted to the circumstances of the country that, in its main features, it survives to the present day. In the first place he caused an exact measurement to be made of the land. His officers then took steps to ascertain the amount of produce per acre and fix the government share (*i.e.*, one third). And lastly they settled the rates at which this third share might be commuted into a money payment. These processes, known as "the land settlement," were at first repeated every year; but as an annual inquiry inflicted continual annoyance and extortion on the peasant, the Emperor modified it into a decennial one. The sums due being very strictly collected, a large revenue flowed regularly into Akbar's coffers, and enabled him not only to maintain his vast armies and his imperial

pomp, but also to afford a liberal—almost a lavish—expenditure upon public works.

The imperial establishment was ordered on a scale of the utmost magnificence: Akbar had never fewer than 5000 elephants and 12,000 horses at his disposal, besides hawking and hunting services, and these were all kept in admirable condition, without waste or extravagance. His camp equipage consisted of pavilions and portable houses, enclosed within a high wall of canvas screens, and containing great halls for public receptions, banqueting chambers, galleries for exercise, and retiring rooms,—all constructed of the costliest materials and decorated in the most sumptuous style. The area thus occupied measured 1530 yards square. The tents and outer wall were, externally, of the royal colour, vermilion: but were ornamented within in various colours and patterns. Gilded balls and pinnacles gave to the whole the semblance of a Moorish castle erected inside the camp; which, in itself, was a noble and a stirring spectacle—a city of many-coloured tents, disposed in beautiful order, and covering a space of about five miles in length.

The annual feasts of the imperial birthday and the vernal equinox were the occasions of the greatest display and pageantry, when the imperial splendour was revealed on the most extensive scale. The rejoicings were protracted over several days, and comprised a general fair, procession upon procession, and all kinds of military shows. The Emperor took his seat in a sumptuous pavilion, which was hung all around with coverings to temper the glare and heat of the sunshine. About two acres of ground shone with silk and gold hangings, and rich carpets, as radiant and costly as velvet, embroidered in gold and pearl and precious stones, could make them. The nobles had smaller pavilions, in which they received visits from each other, and sometimes from the Emperor. Rich dresses of honour, jewels, horses and elephants, were lavishly distributed as gifts. Akbar, according to an Oriental custom, was weighed in golden scales against gold, silver, rare perfumes, and other articles and substances, in succession, and the different quotas were divided among the fortunate spectators. Almonds and other fruit, wrought in gold and silver, were scattered about by the Emperor's

own hand, and eagerly scrambled for by the obsequious courtiers. On the high day of each festival Akbar occupied the purple cushion in his marble palace, surrounded by nobles wearing tall heron plumes, and sparkling with diamonds, like a starry firmament. Many hundred elephants passed before him in procession, all most gorgeously adorned, and the leading elephant of each company wore gold plates on its head and breast, studded with rubies and emeralds. Trains of gaily caparisoned horses followed; and after them came numbers of lions and tigers, rhinoceroses and panthers, hunting leopards, hounds, and hawks, the picturesque if somewhat barbaric display closing with squadrons of horsemen, arrayed in cloth of gold and caracoling to the sound of drum and cymbal. In a word, nothing was wanting which could impress the spectator with a vivid idea of the wealth, resources, and dignity of the empire, and of the greatness and power of its lord.

Yet, amidst all this gorgeous pomp and splendid circumstance, that lord appeared in a severe simplicity which showed that he valued them only

for their significance and political uses. European travellers who visited his court agree in asserting that he employed less show or state than any other Asiatic prince, and that, when administering justice, he always stood or sat "below the throne." They add, in reference to this remarkable man,—the greatest of Indian rulers, equally renowned as statesman, warrior, legislator, and reformer,—that he could be both kindly and majestic, merciful and austere; that he was well skilled in the mechanical arts, in making guns and casting ordnance; that he was strangely abstemious in diet, and so incessantly active that he slept but three hours a day; and, finally, that he was "affable to the vulgar, seeming to grace them and their presents with more respectful ceremonies than the grandees; loved and feared of his own, and terrible to his enemies."

CHAPTER IV.

JAHANGER : THE CONQUEROR OF THE WORLD.

AN ENGLISH EMBASSY.

SELIM, the eldest son of Akbar, on his accession to power, assumed the sonorous title of Jahanger, "The Conqueror of the World." He had reigned for ten years when an English ambassador arrived at his court.

As far back as 1599 some London merchants had applied to Queen Elizabeth for permission to trade to the East Indies, and in the following year had obtained the charter they desired. The Company thus founded, which, as the East India Company, was to have so long and glorious a history, limited its operations at first to the great islands in the Indian seas—to Java and Sumatra. In 1608, however, the Company's agents reported that in these islands the cloths and calicoes of Hindustan were

in great request, and advised the establishment of factories at Cambray and Surat, in the hope of monopolising the trade between the islands and that part of the Indian mainland. In 1612, some English ships, which were endeavouring to open up trade at Surat, were attacked by a largely superior Portuguese force, but, after a desperate struggle, succeeded in beating it off. As the natives here, and indeed, wherever the Portuguese settled, hated them for their cruelty and extortion, they rejoiced in their defeat, and consented to an English settlement.

In the following year, one of the Surat factors visited Ahmedabad. What he saw and heard induced him to advise the authorities in London that it would be advantageous to trade directly with the markets in the interior; and he suggested that an envoy should be sent from England to obtain the necessary facilities from "the Great Mogul." The person selected for this difficult and even dangerous errand was a man of parts and courage, Sir Thomas Roe, who had already distinguished himself by good service at home and abroad. He left England in the spring of 1615, and on his arrival in India

repaired without delay to Jahanger's splendid court at Agra, where he resided for upwards of three years. The advice he sent home to his employers was always sound and shrewd. They were not to attempt, he said, to become a political power ; nor to waste their money, like the Portuguese, in building forts and batteries. No better counsel could have been given at the time. So long as the whole of Northern India was in the hands of a powerful sovereign, it was wise for a body of traders to trust to his protection. It was impossible for them to dispense with it, and hopeless for a handful of foreigners to attempt to maintain themselves in a corner of the empire by force of arms. The time was yet to come when in the anarchy and feebleness of the Mughal empire the European Powers were to find their opportunity.

JAHANGER'S COURT.

Sir Thomas Roe was a careful observer, and collected and recorded a good deal of interesting information relative to the court of Jahanger and the condition of the Empire. Though as a writer

by no means addicted to the use of superlatives or of exaggerated language, he speaks in the most glowing terms of the magnificence of the Imperial Court. He does justice to the liberal courtesy of the nobles, and describes the richness and elegance of the entertainments they gave in his honour. His reception was always most cordial; though his presents and his retinue were on a scale of moderation which seemed almost meanness amidst so much wealth and splendour. The emperor seems to have conceived a great respect for him, and specially exempted him from all humiliating ceremonial. On public occasions he was constantly exalted to the highest seat, and the emperor at all times admitted him to the most familiar intercourse.

With one of James I.'s gifts, Jahanger was much delighted: namely, a richly gilded coach, in which he was pleased to display his corpulent figure before the eyes of his subjects, as it rolled and rumbled, luxurious but unwieldy, through the streets of Agra.

The Great Mogul (as the English then called him) spent his day in the following manner:—

Every day he showed himself to his people from

a window of the palace which overlooked the plain ; at noon he was there again to see his elephants mustered, his officers of rank being stationed in an enclosure underneath ; afterwards he retired to enjoy a siesta in his harem. At three he attended the Durbar, whence he proceeded to the Gazaleum, a fair court, in the midst of which was a throne. Here he received his most intimate friends, and discoursed on State matters ; after which he feasted, generally closing the day by getting intoxicated. His intemperance was one of his worst vices, though he was careful to keep from the wine-cup till after the hour of evening prayer. But, having once begun, he seldom left off until he fell asleep ; when the lights were put out and the guests withdrew. On such occasions he was excessively amiable, and the more wine he drank the more affable he became.

Once, with some pictures Sir Thomas had taken to the palace, Jahanger was greatly delighted, and he fell to drinking the Alicant wine Sir Thomas had given to him 'giving tastes of it to several about him, and then sending for a full bottle" for his guest, saying, "It began to sour so fast that it would spoil

before he could drink it, and that Sir Thomas had none." This done, "he turned himself to sleep, the candles were popped out, and I groped my way out in the dark." On another occasion, "the good king fell to disputing on the laws of Moses, Christ, and Mahomet, and in his drink was so kind that he turned to me and said, 'I am a king; you shall be welcome, Christians, Moors, and Jews,' and continued that 'he meddled not with their faith, they came all in love, and he would protect them from wrong; they lived under his protection, and none should oppress them.' This he often repeated, but being very drunk he fell to weeping, and in divers passions, and so he kept on till midnight."

JAHANGER'S CHARACTER.

It was dangerous to appeal from Jahanger drunk to Jahanger sober. He frequently desired his boon companions to ask no favours of him, lest Selim at the banquet might promise what Jahanger on the throne could not perform. A courtier having indiscreetly referred in public to the previous night's debauch, the Emperor affected profound surprise,

inquired what other persons had taken part in so audacious a violation of the law, and ordered those named to be so severely bastinadoed that one of them died. In public he observed a precisian propriety, and admitted none into his presence whose breath, gait or appearance indicated that he had been drinking. Any offender, on being detected, was soundly whipped.

Jahanger inherited much of his father's fondness for theological inquiry. He was equally partial to discussion with learned men of all creeds, though the result can hardly be described as satisfactory, since he was wont to declare that all prophets were impostors, and that he himself, but for his indolence, could form a better religious system than any yet given to the world. Like his father also, he inclined more towards Christianity than any other creed. He allowed two of his nephews to become Christians, and had figures of Christ and the Virgin at the head of his rosary. As a matter of policy, however, he conformed much more strictly than his father had done to the external observance of Islam.

The Emperor was a man of good abilities, and

spoke Persian, Turkí, Turkish and Hindustani with equal facility. He gave audience every day from the throne, when any person who had performed the proper ceremonies could obtain admission to his presence. To ensure easy access for petitioners, he caused a chain to be hung from a part of the wall of the citadel which was within the reach of all comers; it communicated with a cluster of golden bells in the Emperor's own apartment, and their soft chime immediately informing him of the appearance of a suitor, he was thus enabled to baffle his officers if they wished to keep from him inconvenient information.

He permitted a freedom of speech which no European sovereign would have tolerated. The son of a Bamian widow having complained to him that, though his father had died worth 200,000 rupees, his mother doled out to him an allowance insufficient for his support, the Emperor sent for her, and ordered her to pay to her son 50,000 rupees, and to himself double that amount. "God save your Majesty," cried the woman: "I find my son hath some reason to demand the property of his father, as being of his

and my flesh and blood, and therefore our heir. But I would gladly know your Majesty's relationship to him, since you also seek a share of his inheritance?" Jahanger laughed at the woman's frankness and dismissed her.

His rigorous sense of justice sometimes led him into excessive severity. An adopted son of Nur-Mahal, his favourite Sultana, having harshly denied satisfaction to the parents of a child whom his elephant had trodden under foot, and on their breaking into loud complaints banished them from their native place, they proceeded to Lahore and laid their wrongs before Jahanger, who immediately gave orders that they should receive due compensation. But instead of obeying the Emperor's command the prince threw them into prison. On their liberation, they returned to Lahore, and in spite of Nur-Mahal's interposition, obtained a second audience of Jahanger, who, on hearing their story, summoned the prince to his presence, caused him to be bound, mounted the complainants on an elephant, and ordered its driver to trample him to death. He buried the unfortunate prince, however, with great magnificence, and mourned

him for two months. "I loved him," he said; "but kings must be governed by justice, not affection."

Sir Thomas Roe hints that the Emperor was not so generous as he wished the world to think he was. According to an Oriental custom, already described, he was weighed on his birthdays against gold, silver, spices, and other commodities, in rotation, the whole being distributed, it was supposed, among the multitude. The gold and precious stones being packed in cases, Sir Thomas Roe could not see their quality, nor be sure even of their existence; but he had good reason to believe that all the valuables brought out on these occasions were returned to the imperial treasury, and that the free distribution was confined to money, corn, and butter.

THE LIGHT OF THE HAREM.

The most brilliant and attractive figure in the drama of Jahanger's reign is that of his beautiful queen, Nur-Mahal, whose career contains all the elements of a highly-wrought romance, and has furnished a theme for Western as well as Oriental poets. In one of the episodes of "Lalla Rookh,"

Moore introduces this charming woman, whose personal gifts and graces it would seem, from contemporary records, he does not exaggerate. For hers was that exquisite loveliness, so various in expression :—

“Which plays

Like the light upon Autumn's soft shadowy days,
 Now here and now there, giving warmth as it flies;
 From the lips to the cheek, from the cheek to the eyes:
 Now melting in mist, and now breaking in gleams,
 Like the glimpses a saint hath of Heav'n in his dreams.
 When passive, it seemed as if that very grace,
 That charm of all others, was born with her face!
 And when angry—for ev'n in the tranquillest climes
 Light breezes will ruffle the blossoms sometimes—
 The short passing anger but seemed to awaken
 New beauty, like flowers that are sweetest when shaken.”

The grandfather of this celebrated beauty was a native of Teheran, in Persia, where he held a high civil office. His son, Mirza Ghiyas, fell into destitute circumstances, and resolved to seek a livelihood for himself and his family in India. Misfortune, however, still dogged his footsteps, and before the caravan with which he travelled reached Kandahar they suffered the most terrible privations. To increase their distress, his wife, immediately on their arrival,

gave birth to a daughter, the future Nur-Māhal ; but in the then straits of the family, cold was the welcome accorded to the unfortunate babe, and her parents, unable to provide for themselves, resolved to trust her to the care of Providence. Accordingly they exposed her on the road by which the caravan was bound to proceed, and covering the infant with leaves, the weeping mother retired to a distance, to watch if haply some benevolent stranger should stretch forth the hand of rescue. Such proved to be the case. A principal merchant of the party was struck by her infantile sweetness, took charge of her, and resolved to educate her as his own child. A nurse being needed, he turned, all unwittingly, to the infant's mother, and his attention being thus drawn to the family and their poverty, he relieved their immediate wants. He soon discovered that the father was a man of capacity and experience ; and, on reaching Lahore, introduced him to the Emperor Akbar, who hastened to employ him, and was so satisfied with his services that he advanced him with exceptional rapidity from grade to grade, until he became the imperial Treasurer.

Meanwhile, his daughter, Mher-al-Nissa, "The Sun of Women," as she was then called, grew in loveliness and grace with each succeeding year; and her natural gifts of mind and intellect were so carefully cultivated that she was scarcely less famous for her wit than her beauty. It is certain that her ambition was inferior to neither; and as she was well aware of her charms, she aspired to share the imperial throne with the heir of Akbar. Her mother having free access to the Emperor's harem, she frequently accompanied her thither, and made use of these opportunities to gain the attention, and eventually to fascinate the regard, of Prince Selim. With her tall, lithe form arrayed in the soft folds of the graceful zara—her luxuriant dark tresses and deep eloquent eyes but partially concealed by the airy tissues of the gauzy veil which drooped from the crown of her head round about her slender throat and beautiful bosom,—she completely dazzled the eyes of Prince Selim. Her influence over him was complete when she danced in his presence like the daughter of Herodias, or sang her native wood-notes wild with a voice which seemed to breathe the very soul of music.

Her parents, however, did not share their daughter's ambition ; and when they discovered the Prince's passion for her made it known to the Emperor. Akbar immediately remonstrated with his son, and at the same time advised that the beautiful girl should be married, and removed from the Prince's neighbourhood. Her father thereupon betrothed her to Shir Afgan Khan,—“the conqueror of the lion,” a young Persian, who had recently entered the imperial service, and upon whom Akbar had bestowed a large fief in Bengal. The fair maiden evinced no objection to the match ; but to Jahanger it was positively hateful. He petitioned his father ; he threatened the bridegroom ; and when he had been about a year on the throne, charged his foster-brother, Kutb-uddin, whom he appointed viceroy of Bengal, to secure for him the possession of the beautiful woman he loved so passionately. He supposed, no doubt, that the husband's consent could be obtained by adequate bribes ; but he, too, was in love with his charming wife, and when he learned the nature of the sacrifice expected of him, threw up his command, and left off wearing arms, as a sign that he was no longer in the

Emperor's employment. Several attempts seem to have been made upon his life, but he baffled them by his vigilance and courage. At length, the viceroy, having made an excuse to visit the part of the province where the young Persian resided, sent to require his attendance. He obeyed the summons, but with a dagger concealed in his girdle. An angry altercation ended fatally. Shir Afgan slew the viceroy with his dagger, and was immediately put to death by the viceroy's attendants.

The murder of the viceroy was dexterously attributed to a treasonable conspiracy, and proceedings were immediately taken against the murderer's family. Nur-Mahal was seized and sent a prisoner to Delhi. There the Emperor saw her, and offered her his hand. But whether she had learned to love her husband, and was indignant at the persecution which had resulted in his untimely death,—or whether she acted on some deliberate scheme of policy,—she rejected the honour, and displayed a dislike and even repugnance which seemed to quench the Emperor's long-nourished passion. He placed her among his mother's attendants, and apparently forgot her very existence.

After awhile Nur-Mahal's ambition revived, and her regret for her dead husband became a thing of the past. The problem which then presented itself was how to recognise her imperial lover, who for six years had never once visited her. Her craft, if it were really craft, had proved too subtle; and in her stratagem, if such it were, she had gone too far, outwitting herself. She contrived, however, that stories should be circulated, so as to reach his ear, of her various accomplishments, her brilliant conversation, and her natural charms; as also of the elegance with which her industrious and skilful fingers, guided by her exquisite taste, had adorned the plain and incommodious apartments assigned to her by the Emperor in the first resentment of his slighted passion.

Now, according to a custom of the Mughal Court, a kind of carnival was annually celebrated, in the imperial seraglio, on the *Noroze*,—a festival held on the ninth day of the New Year. At this "fancy fair" the stalls were superintended by the ladies of the Zenana, who piled them up with stuffs in purple and gold, cloth of gold, delicate muslins, and costly

embroideries. The great attraction, however, on this occasion, was the presence of the sovereign, who made purchases at the different stalls, bargaining with the stall-keepers in high good humour, pretending to depreciate the quality of the wares, and disputing the prices put upon them. Jahanger had increased the number of these entertainments, which added largely to the gaiety of the Court; and at one of them he discovered that the articles most in demand were those which testified to the skill, refinement, and diligence of his forgotten Nur-Mahal. He heard, too, of her universal attractiveness; and his old affection reviving as his curiosity kindled, he made his way to her apartments, where he was struck by their magnificence, but more by the beauty of their occupant, who, half reclining on a luxurious couch, was arrayed in some diaphanous gauzy material which indicated the graceful outlines of her figure, and only partially concealed her charms. On perceiving her visitor, she rose in real or pretended confusion, and did homage as usual by touching first the ground, and then her forehead, with her right hand. Then, with downcast eyes and a lovely blush

on her countenance, she stood silent, the heaving of her rounded bosom alone betraying her agitation. Jahanger bade her be seated, and placed himself beside her. His passion overpowering him, he clasped her in his arms, and once more invited her to share his throne. She murmured a willing assent; whereupon he threw round her neck a circlet of forty pearls, each valued at £4000, and ordered her to be proclaimed "Empress of the World."

Their marriage, which took place immediately, was celebrated with unusual splendour; and the honours lavished upon the beautiful bride were such as had never before been enjoyed by the consort of an Indian prince. Her name was stamped on the currency along with the Emperor's, and with the flattering legend—"Gold has acquired a hundred degrees of excellence in receiving the name of Nur-Jahan." For her name was changed from Nur-Mahal, "The Light of the Harem," to Nur-Jahan, "The Light of the World"; and she was allowed to assume the title of Shahi, or Empress.

If her supreme beauty won the Emperor's heart, it was her exceptional ability which prevailed over

his intellect, and perpetuated her ascendancy. For nearly twenty years her authority was unquestioned, her will was law. She made her father Prime Minister, and raised her brother to high office. With great address she strengthened her position by intermarrying her family with Jahanger's. The heir to the throne, Shah Jehan, found a wife in her niece; and her daughter was wedded to Prince Shehryar. No appointment was made without her knowledge; no treaty concluded without her approval. The Emperor invariably sought her advice before he took any step of importance. On the whole, she exercised her vast influence to good purpose; and to her must in fairness be attributed the salutary change which marked the conduct of Jahanger after the first few years of his reign.

“He was still capricious and tyrannical,” says the historian, “but he was no longer guilty of such barbarous cruelties as before; and although he still carried his excess in wine to the lowest stage of inebriety, yet it was at night, and in his private apartments. In the occupations which kept him all day before the eyes of his subjects, he seems to have

supported his character with sufficient dignity, and without any breaches of decorum."

Nur-Jahan's capacity was exerted not only in state affairs, but in those matters which are usually regarded as the special province of her sex. The magnificence of the imperial court owed much to her refined taste, while the expenditure was diminished by her good management. She contrived numerous improvements in domestic furniture. She introduced women's dresses of a more elegant and becoming design than any seen before, and it is still a moot point in India whether it was she or her mother who invented attar of roses. One of the accomplishments by which she captivated Jahanger is said to have been the facility with which she improvised verses. She possessed quite an imperial taste for building.

"In the whole empire," says Jahanger, "there is scarcely a city in which the Shahi has not left some lofty structure or some ample garden as a splendid monument of her magnificence."

Such was Nur-Mahal, "The Light of the Harem," or Nur-Jahan, "The Light of the World."

THE STORY OF MOHABAT KHAN.

There was a certain Mohabat Khan, whom Sir Thomas Roe describes as "a noble and generous man, well beloved by all, and the King's sole favourite," whose increasing influence in the State aroused the jealous suspicions of the Shahi. He was the foremost subject in the empire, and seems to have been the most popular. Nur-Jahan was one of those who not only desire to occupy the first place, but are loth that any should occupy the second. At length she resolved on crushing Mohabat's influence, and caused accusations of oppression and embezzlement to be preferred against him.

He was summoned from the Deccan to make his defence; but he came accompanied by five thousand Rajputs, who were loyally attached to his person. On reaching the imperial camp, then stationed on the bank of the Jelum, he was denied admission to the imperial presence; and suspecting that his ruin had been determined upon, he resolved, before he could be separated from his troops, to strike a

blow so sudden and so daring that it should paralyse the action of his enemies (March, 1626).

Jahanger, at this critical moment, was on the march to Kabul ; and was preparing to cross the river by a bridge of boats which he had constructed for the purpose. Having watched the safe passage of his soldiers, he was about to follow, with his body-guards and attendants, when, at daybreak, Mohabat, after occupying the bridge with two thousand men, suddenly surrounded the imperial pavilion, and disarmed and made prisoners of the Emperor's retinue, before the nature and object of the attack was understood. Jahanger was sleeping off the effects of his last night's debauch, when he was wakened by the tramp of armed men. Starting up, he seized his sword ; but a bewildered glance around showed the folly of resistance, and, comprehending the situation, he exclaimed, " Ah, Mohabat Khan ! traitor ! what is this ? "

Mohabat, prostrating himself, expressed his deep regret that he had been compelled by the artifices of his enemies to employ violence to obtain an audience of his lord and master ; adding that, as it

was now the Emperor's usual hour for parade, it would be well for him to show himself in public, to prevent alarm or misrepresentation. Jahanger assented; but, on pretence of dressing, endeavoured to retire to the women's apartments, that he might consult with Nur-Jahan. But Mohabat guessed his purpose, and begged him to dress where he was, that there might be no more delay. Jahanger then mounted one of his own horses, in the midst of the Rajputs, who received him with every mark of respect and deference; but again Mohabat interfered, and placed him on the back of an elephant, where he would be more conspicuous, with a couple of armed Rajputs by his side. At this moment the Emperor's chief elephant-driver attempted to force his way through the Rajputs, that the Emperor might mount his own elephant; but was cut down, on a sign from Mohabat. One of Jahanger's personal attendants contrived to reach him, though not without a wound, and was allowed to take his position by his master; and the like permission was given to his cup-bearer. He was then conveyed to the camp of Mohabat, who repeatedly assured him of his personal safety, but

added, significantly,—“And I too, am determined to be safe.”

Of this strange scene Nur-Jahan was no indifferent or listless spectator. Prompt to form and execute her resolutions, she hastily disguised herself, got into an ordinary litter, and was carried through the guards, unsuspected. With equal good fortune she passed the bridge, and reached the imperial camp. Making known to her brother and the principal omrahs the capture of their sovereign, she insisted, in glowing language, that they should hasten at once to his rescue, reproaching them bitterly for every minute's delay. During the night, a noble named Fedai Khan made a spirited effort to carry off Jahanger, by swimming the river with a small body of horsemen; but their approach was detected, and it was with extreme peril that, under a storm of arrows and javelins, they repassed the river, not without some empty saddles.

Early next day, Nur-Jahan, in person, led the imperial army to the attack. Seated in the howdah of a gigantic elephant, and armed with bows and arrows, she nursed in her lap the infant daughter of

Prince Shehriyar, in order to stimulate the loyalty of her troops. The bridge of boats having been set on fire by the Rajputs, the army passed by a ford which had been discovered lower down the river—a difficult ford, narrow and irregular, with deep water on either side, and intersected by dangerous pools. The imperial soldiers struggled through it as best they could, but not without falling into great disorder ; and on reaching the shore, with their clothes and armour wetted, their bows unbent, and their powder spoiled, they were struck at by the fierce Rajputs before they could make good their footing, and compelled to fight under overwhelming disadvantages.

From the higher ground incessant volleys of balls, rockets, and arrows were poured upon the Mughals, who, after exhibiting the greatest bravery and perseverance, were compelled to retreat. The victorious Rajputs pursued them relentlessly, and a terrible rout ensued. The ford was choked with horses and elephants, and the fugitive soldiers, unable to extricate themselves, perished in great numbers—some trampled upon by the affrighted animals, others lost

in the deep pools, others borne away by the current. Furious was the Rajput assault upon Nur-Jahan, who fought with all the courage of a Semiramis. Her elephant had been driven into the thickest of the fight, where a crowd of Rajput warriors hemmed it in ; balls and arrows whistled round and about ; three drivers in succession were killed as they sat in front of her howdah ; and a missile wounded the infant who was cradled on her knees. Still undaunted, she bore the storm and stress of battle until she had emptied two quivers of arrows ; nor would she then consent to fly, so that the chief officer of her household was forced to mount her elephant, and, despite her angry remonstrances, convey her back to the camp.

The discomfiture of the imperial army was complete ; and, utterly broken and spent, its remnants retired to Lahore, where Nur-Jahan received a message from the Emperor, entreating her to join him in his captivity. She eagerly consented, hoping that before long a revolution of Fortune's wheel would effect the release of her husband and herself. And, in truth, Mohabat's position was more precarious

than it seemed. The ascendancy of the Rajputs was offensive to the rest of his troops ; he himself made enemies daily by his violent temper and haughty demeanour, and the provinces still remained faithful to the Emperor, two of whose sons were at liberty. He felt that the ground trembled beneath his feet, and that he must compass his ends by artifice rather than force. But in duplicity he was no match for the Emperor when inspired by a woman's wit, and at the time he thought his influence over Jahanger most firmly established the latter was secretly preparing his overthrow.

As the army advanced towards Kabul, the friendly disposition of the Afghans inspired Nur-Jahan with fresh hopes, and she began, through trustworthy agents, to enlist suitable men at different points, some of whom were instructed to straggle into camp as if in quest of service, while others were to wait for orders. She then made Jahanger suggest that the troops of all the jagirdars, or military fiefs, should be called out, and when she was summoned to put into the field her own boy, she professed great indignation at being treated like an ordinary subject,

and boasted that her contingent should not prove inferior to that of the wealthiest noble. She then arrayed her old troops in such a manner as to emphasise their inferiority, enlisted recruits as if to complete her quota, and at the same time sent orders to those already engaged to repair by twos and threes to the camp. When Mohabat Khan awoke to a perception of the stratagem played upon him it was too late to offer any opposition, for the imperial soldiers had assembled in large numbers, and he allowed Jahanger to persuade him not to accompany him to the muster of the Empress's troops, lest his life should be in danger. Jahanger was attended to the review by his Rajput guards, but his own soldiers immediately closed in around him and effected his deliverance.

Jahanger then repaired to Lahore, where he addressed himself to the task of re-organising the government, which, during his detention, had fallen into anarchy and disorder. Afterwards he set out on his annual visit to the beautiful Kashmir valley. Soon after his arrival there, Prince Shehriyar was attacked with an illness of such severity that he was

compelled to return to the warmer climate of Lahore. The Emperor made an attempt to follow him, but was prevented by an asthmatic affection, which rapidly grew worse, and at length terminated the life and reign of Jahanger on the 28th of October, 1627. He was then in the sixtieth year of his age and the twenty-third of his reign.

CHAPTER V.

SHAH JAHAN :—“THE TRUE STAR OF THE FAITH.”

DURING the latter years of his father's reign, Shah Jahan, the eldest of Jahanger's sons, had been in open revolt against him.

On the death of his father he immediately marched from the Deccan to take possession of the vacant throne, and arriving at Agra in January 1628, caused himself to be proclaimed by the sonorous titles of “The True Star of the Faith,” “Second Lord of Happy Conjunctions,” and “Muhammad, the king of the World.” His brother, Prince Shehriyar, endeavoured to contest the succession with him, and was known to be favoured by the Empress Nur-Jahan. But his troops were defeated near Lahore; his partisans then surrendered him in the hope of propitiating Shah Jahan, and he was afterwards put to death. Nur-Jahan, however, was treated with

indulgence, and though her liberty was to some extent contracted, she was allowed an income of £25,000 a year, with a palace and a suitable retinue. Her attachment to the memory of her husband seems to have been sincere. She wore no colour but white, which in the East is the colour of mourning, abstained from all the amusements of society, and lived in complete seclusion. She died in 1646, and by her express desire was buried in a tomb which she had erected close to that of her husband at Lahore.

Shah Jahan's reign extended from 1628 to 1658 ; so that it was contemporaneous with the stirring period of English history which includes the reign of Charles I., the Civil War, the Commonwealth, and the Protectorate down to the death of Oliver Cromwell.

Like the reigns of the Great Mughals generally, it was marked by conspiracies and rebellions, by wars and by domestic treason. Under Shah Jahan, however, the Muhammadan empire touched its apogee of wealth and power. Ahmednagar was conquered and annexed ; Golconda and Bijapur became tributary

states ; Kandahar was reconquered from the Persians ; Balkh was subdued. One of the most interesting episodes was

THE REBELLION OF KHAN JEHAN LODI.

I am not quite certain who Khan Jehan *was*—except that he was an Afghan, and possessed the pride, courage, and fiery spirit of his race. Some authorities say he was low-born, others that he was descended from the imperial family of Lodi. But, at all events, he rose to high military employment during the reign of Jahanger, and was in command in the Deccan at the time of his death. When Shah Jahan set out for Agra, he refused to join him, marched into Malwa, and seemed to aim at carving out with his sword an independent sovereignty. Mohabat, who, having taken the side of Shah Jahan, had been made captain-general and *Khani-Khanan*, or “First of the Nobles,” was despatched against him with a powerful army ; but Khan Jehan craftily solicited his mediation with the new Emperor, protesting that he had been unable to decide between the different claimants to the throne ; but now that



“Shah Jahan alone remained of the dynasty of Timur, he could not hesitate to obey his commands.” His submission was graciously accepted ; but he was removed to the government of Malwa, while that of the Deccan was given to Mohabat.

The story runs that Shah Jahan cherished a secret animosity against this proud young Afghan warrior, for while in revolt against his father he had demanded Khan Jehan’s permission to march across the Deccan, and had been refused. Moreover, the Khan had offered him a grave insult by sending him a present of a thousand rupees, a horse, and a dress of honour, as if he were a person of inferior rank. The Khan’s envoy had too much regard for his life to deliver in person this degrading gift ; and when he got a safe distance, he placed it in the charge of a shepherd, to return it to the Khan, with the message that “if it were not unworthy for him to give, it was too insignificant for his servant to carry to a great prince.” Thus Shah Jahan escaped the humiliation, but his knowledge that it had been designed hardened his heart against the Khan.

After the Khan had made his submission he was

invited to court; but, on making his appearance, was ordered by the court chamberlain to perform certain prostrations, which he considered unworthy of his elevated rank. As he was not in a position to resent the discourtesy, he silently obeyed; but his son, Azmut Khan, a brave, hot-tempered young warrior of sixteen, thinking he was kept longer than necessary in the prostrate attitude, rose before the signal was given; and when the irate chamberlain struck him on the head with his wand and required him to repeat the ceremony, drew his sword, and aimed a swashing blow, which threatened to cut short his tormentor's official career. The stir and the excitement caused by this terrible breach of etiquette may be more easily conceived (as the novelists say) than described. The Emperor leaped from his throne, his nobles closed around him in a ring of defence, and the air sparkled with the flash of steel. Rushing from the presence, the Khan and his sons shut themselves up in their residence, with their faithful followers. One night, soon after dark, the Khan mustered them in fighting order, mounted his women on elephants, and placed them in the

centre, and, with kettle-drums beating, marched out of Agra, remarking to the sentinels at the gate, "The tyrant will awake at the glad sounds of my departure, but he shall tremble at my return."

DEATH OF KHAN JEHAN.

Being swiftly pursued by the imperial forces, he was overtaken on the bank of the river Chambal, and attacked while engaged in passing his household over to the opposite side. To cover this movement, the Afghans fought with desperate resolution against overwhelming numbers, until scarce one man in ten remained unhurt, while their chief himself was bleeding from many wounds. His sons, Hussein and Azmut, then implored him to attempt to ford the river, while they maintained to the last the unequal combat. He reluctantly consented, but only on condition that one of them accompanied him, so that he might not be left childless. How warmly did the two brothers dispute for the privilege of dying to save a father's life! The enemy, after a short interval, renewed the onset; and in front of their grim array rode the high dignitary who had struck

Azmut at court. "Hussein," cried the young man, "'tis the will of Allah! Seest thou that yonder villain lives, and yet wouldst thou ask me to quit the field?" Without another word, he dashed into the thick of the fight, while his father and brother made haste to cross the stream.

The chamberlain was a Kalmuk, a man of immense strength, and when he saw the young man spurring towards him, rejoiced in the certainty of an easy triumph. He pushed forward to the encounter, but Azmut swerved aside, and drawing his bow, sent an arrow crash into the forehead of the giant, who dropped from his saddle, and fell dead under his horse's feet. Then, with a clatter of hoofs, the infuriated Mughals swept down upon Azmut and his little band, cutting them to pieces, for not one would yield himself a prisoner.

Having crossed the Chambal in safety, the Khan rallied the few survivors of the lost battle, and rapidly traversing Bundelkhand, found shelter in Doulatabad. The Emperor then resolved to take the field in person, and, at the head of 10,000 cavalry, marched into the Deccan. Halting at Burhanpur, he sent

three divisions by different routes against the insurgents ; but the rapidity of the Khan's movements enabled him for some time to baffle pursuit. Gradually, however, his partisans wearied of a campaign which brought with it no prospect of pay or plunder ; his allies were defeated, and submitted to the Emperor ; and in a last attempt to rally the people of Bundelkhand against the sovereign of Delhi he was surprised by an imperial army under the wazir, Azam Khan. Though his following was reduced to four or five hundred Afghans, he made a noble resistance, fighting from sunrise to sundown, until his gallant little company was almost annihilated. Again he escaped from the lost field, and after an unsuccessful dash at the hill-fortress of Calinjer, in which he lost his son Hussein, he retreated towards the hills, closely pursued by 5,000 imperial troops. Thirst and fatigue compelled him to rest, with the score of warriors who still clung to his fortunes, on the margin of a small lake. Here the enemy overtook them ; and after a desperate but brief contest, they perished to a man. The Khan's head was struck off and sent to Shah Jahan.

AT KANDAHAR.

Some years of tranquillity followed, but in 1644 the unsettled state of affairs in the countries of Balkh and Badakhshan tempted Shah Jahan to undertake their conquest. He placed a large army under the command of Ali Merdan Khan, who had formerly been the Persian governor of Kandahar, but had given up that city to Shah Jahan, and entered the imperial service. Ali Merdan broke through the difficult passes of the snow-capped Hindu Kush, and with fire and sword swept across Badakhshan ; but the advance of winter compelled him to retire before he had secured a permanent footing in the country. Another campaign in the following year being equally unsuccessful, the Mughals turned their arms towards Balkh, which was subdued by the Emperor's son, Prince Morad, and annexed by proclamation to the imperial dominions (1646). This conquest, however, was not allowed to remain long undisturbed. The expelled King of Balkh collected a force of fighting men beyond the Oxus, and carried fire and sword into the newly annexed territory. Sick of a service

which brought with it neither distinction nor profit, Prince Morad left his government without permission, and was punished with exile from the court. Prince Aurangzib was sent to take his brother's place, and Shah Jahan repaired to Kabul in order to support him. These movements were of no avail ; and the enemy increasing in numbers and activity, the Emperor deemed it prudent to abandon his conquests.

Nor was this all. A Persian force recaptured Kandahar ; and two strenuous attempts made by Prince Aurangzib to recover this "key to India" proved unsuccessful. In the spring of 1653, the indefatigable Emperor sent a third and more formidable expedition under his eldest son, Prince Dara Shukoh, who had complained that no opportunities of military distinction had been given to him such as his brothers had enjoyed. On the day and at the hour fixed upon by the imperial astrologers as most auspicious, he opened his trenches before Kandahar, beginning the siege with an exceptionally formidable armament. A high and solid mound of earth was raised in order to command the town, and upon it was planted a battery of ten guns ; and

the prince pushed his operations with a passionate persistency which was inspired, no doubt, by a desire to succeed where his brother, Prince Aurangzib, had failed. He made an urgent appeal to his nobles to support his honour, declaring that he would hold to his position until the town was taken. He seemed ubiquitous, now urging on the mines, now directing the approaches, now encouraging his artillerists, and always displaying an impetuous courage which amounted almost to recklessness. The defence, however, was as steadfast as the attack was vehement. Every assault was beaten back with terrible loss; and the disappointed prince made abject entreaties to his officers not to humiliate him to a level with the twice-beaten Aurangzib. He also spent large sums in gifts to magicians and other impostors, who promised to put him in possession of the place by supernatural means. These were the expedients of desperation, and utterly useless. At length the prince was compelled, with shame and anger, to own himself beaten and to fall back upon the Indus, leaving behind him the best troops of his army, whom he had sacrificed in his frantic but futile

endeavours. Thus pitiably terminated the last attempt of the Mughals to recover Kandahar, of which they had held precarious possession since it was first reduced by Babar.

A DIVIDED HOUSEHOLD.

Four sons had Shah Jahan, who at this time were all of mature age, and all inspired by an ardent love of power and independent authority. The eldest, Dara Shukoh, was forty-two, Shuja forty, Aurang-zib thirty-eight, and Morad about thirty. Morad, the youngest, was both brave and generous; but his intellect was narrow and feeble, and he wasted himself on degrading pleasures. A slave to wine, he delighted nevertheless in manly exercises, and boasted that, with his strong arm and ready sword, he would make good his claim to the throne. Dara, the eldest, was, on the contrary, a prince of rare mental gifts and many accomplishments; he was witty, affable, and liberal, frank and high-spirited, but of an overbearing and passionate temper, forming his opinions hastily and enforcing them dictatorially.

The most cultivated man in the empire, he had

studied the literature of Persia and Arabia ; was thoroughly conversant with the Hindu philosophy ; and, under the guidance of the head of the Jesuit monastery at Agra, had obtained no inconsiderable knowledge of the history and religion of Europe. His religious sympathies were as broad, indeed, as those of his great ancestor Akbar ; and he had written a book which aimed at reconciling the Hindu and Muhammadan systems. His father said of him that he had great talents for command and all the dignity of character befitting the imperial office ; but that he was intolerant to all who had any pretensions to eminence, whence he was “good to the bad and bad to the good.”

Shuja, the second son, resembled in some respects his elder brother ; he was candid and generous, with brilliant talents, but these were neutralised by his indulgence in the lusts of the flesh.

The ablest of the four was Aurangzib, a man with a will as strong as his intellect was subtle ; a mild temper, but a cold heart ; dominated by a restless and unscrupulous ambition, which possessed him like an evil spirit ; not naturally cruel, and yet capable

of deeds of pitiless savagery when they were necessary to gain his ends ; sagacious and wary ; reserved in speech ; fertile in expedients ; prompt of action ; and a master of dissimulation. If you come to think what such a combination of qualities implies, you will determine that Aurangzib was a man to be feared as a rival and an enemy and mistrusted as a friend. He was born to rule ; and to the intellectual gifts indispensable to a great ruler he joined the advantages of a handsome person and a suave and fascinating address. His life was such a web of craft and hypocrisy that men have naturally supposed he was a hypocrite in his religious professions ; but though he used religion as the stalking-horse of his policy, he was beyond doubt a sincere and even a bigoted Muhammadan.

Says the historian : " He had been brought up by men of known sanctity, and had himself shown an early turn for devotion ; he at one time professed an intention of renouncing the world and taking the habit of a fakir ; and throughout his whole life he evinced a real attachment to his faith, in many things indifferent to his interest, and in some most seriously

opposed to it. His zeal was shown in prayers and in reading the Koran, in pious discourses, in abstemiousness (which he affected to carry so far as to subsist on the earnings of his manual labour), in humility of deportment, patience under provocation, and resignation in misfortunes, but, above all, in constant and earnest endeavours to promote his own faith and to discourage idolatry and infidelity. But neither religion nor morality stood for a moment in his way when it interfered with his ambition; and though full of scruples at other times, he would stick at no crime that was requisite for the gratification of that passion."

THE BATTLE OF THE BROTHERS.

In 1657 Shah Jahan was seized with a dangerous illness. Immediately the rival ambitions of his sons began to weave a web of intrigue. Dara, the heir-apparent, attempted to prevent the news from reaching his brothers, stopping all correspondence and detaining travellers who might have carried the intelligence into the provinces; but they were kept well informed by their secret agents, and Shuja and

Morad hastened to assemble their armies and advance upon the capital, each assuming the royal title, and making it known that he laid claim to the succession. Aurangzib, according to his custom, acted with greater prudence. He refrained from adopting the royal title, and, while making elaborate military preparations, left Dara and Şhujā to weaken each other. Meantime he spared no pains to win Morad over to his side, perceiving that he might be made an useful instrument. He wrote to him in a strain of fervent affection, urging him to assert his right to the crown, since Dara, he said, had forfeited it by his infidelity, and intimating that his own desire was to withdraw from the world's vanities and meditate on the things essential to eternal happiness in retirement at Mecca. The artifice was sufficiently transparent, but it imposed on the frank and unsuspecting Morad, who proceeded without delay to unite his forces with those of Aurangzib. The combined armies then marched upon the capital. To meet the formidable attacks with which he was threatened by his brothers, Dara acted with considerable energy. He despatched his son Soleiman Shukoh to oppose

Shuja, and Raja Jeswant Sing, a veteran Rajput chief, to intercept Morad and Aurangzib. But by this time the Emperor had sufficiently recovered to resume the direction of affairs, and he sent peremptory orders to Shuja to return to his government.

Shuja, however, pretended to believe that these orders were really given by Dara, and continued his advance until he was encountered by Solciman Shukoh in the neighbourhood of Benares, where, after a hard-fought battle, he was heavily defeated and compelled to escape into Bengal.

So far Dara had been successful ; but when his Rajput general attacked Aurangzib and Morad, the result was very different. The technical skill of the elder and the brilliant courage of the younger brother overcame the dash and daring of the Rajputs ; their commander fled from the field, and retired into his own country, while the survivors of his army dispersed to their own homes. Aurangzib, continuing his duplicity, loudly ascribed all the honour of the victory to his brother, and renewed his promises of allegiance and attachment with every appearance of earnestness.

After a brief pause, the victorious brothers resumed their march towards Agra. The old Emperor made an effort to bring about a reconciliation, to which Dara, however, was not less averse than his brothers were, fraternal affection being as dust in the balance when weighed against the hope of a crown. Finding his efforts useless, Shah Jahan despatched his heir to fight for his father's throne and his own succession to it, saying, "Go, Dara, and may Allah bless thee! But remember my words: if thou lose this battle, thou hadst better be careful never again to come into my presence."

The battle of the brothers was fought in the immediate neighbourhood of Ajmere in the first week of June, 1658. Dara's army mustered 100,000 horse, 30,000 foot, and eighty pieces of artillery; while that of Morad and Aurangzib did not exceed 40,000 horse and foot. The fight began with a charge of Dara's cavalry, which was rolled back by the heavy fire of the artillery with which Aurangzib had defended his front. Dara in person headed a second and more powerful attack, but with the like result. All Dara's force was then hurled repeatedly against the centre of

his enemies, where Aurangzib commanded. For some time, however, they were foiled by his vigilance and energy. Meanwhile a body of 3,000 Uzbeks fell upon Morad's division, raining in continual volleys of arrows. Morad's elephant shrank from the iron hail, and would have fled from the field if Morad had not ordered its feet to be chained—a device, however, which rendered retreat impossible for himself.

While his soldiers were still wavering under the pressure of this vehement assault, they were taken in flank by a large body of Rajputs, whose leader, Ram Sing, conspicuous by his chaplet of pearls and robe of saffron, charged Morad's elephant, hurling his pike at the prince, and shouting to the driver to make the elephant kneel down. Morad, however, adroitly turned the javelin aside with his shield, and almost at the same moment shot his adversary dead with an arrow. In a furious burst of grief and rage, the Rajputs rushed to revenge the death of their chief, and the air was literally darkened with the flight of arrows, pikes, and other missiles. The battle eddied to and fro with so much vehemence in this quarter

that Aurangzib was preparing to advance to his brother's assistance, when his thoughts were diverted to his own desperate position by the terrible onset of Dara and his cavalry, who, having broken at last through the line of guns, fell crushingly in upon the centre of his brother's army.

Aurangzib, however, preserved his coolness, and kept a watchful eye over every phase of the attack. Wherever it was most vehement, he presented his elephant, and by his voice and example rallied his discomfited followers, crying, "Allah is with you! Allah is on your side! and in Him alone is your refuge, your protection!" While the battle eddied and swirled in conflicting currents, a Rajput chief leaped from his horse, and running up to Aurangzib's elephant, hacked away at the girths with his sword. The prince could not refuse his admiration to an action of so much daring, and in the moment of his own peril called to his soldiers to spare the life of this brave man, but he had already fallen beneath a dozen blows. In this crisis of the fight, when victory still hung dubious in the scales, Morad, having at last beaten off his assailants, was able to relieve the

pressure on his brother by a rapid movement against Dara's right. Probably Dara's preponderance of numbers would have prevailed in the long run, but as he was pressing forward, and waving his hand to encourage his soldiers, a rocket struck his elephant, and made it so furious that he was compelled to leap from its back and mount a horse which was brought up to him.

Bernier, the French traveller, who at the time was abiding in Agra, asserts that this was a manœuvre on the part of Kallil-allah Khan, an officer of high position in Prince Dara's service, but secretly his bitter enemy—that Kallil, riding up to the prince, addressed him, saying, "God save your Majesty! The victory is yours; why do you tarry longer on your elephant? Nothing more remains to be done but to mount your horse and pursue yonder fugitives. Let us hasten to do so, that none may escape our swords!" Dara, we are told, eagerly assented, and joined in the pursuit. Whether the story be true or not, this much is certain: that his sudden disappearance from the richly equipped howdah in which he had been visible to all his army gave rise to a report

that he had been killed ; and the death of their leader is always sufficient to strike with panic an Oriental host. If their chief were dead, reasoned the soldiers, what gain could there be in further combat? They dispersed in all directions ; and though Dara attempted to rally them, it was useless, the general advance of Morad and Aurangzib compelling him to abandon the lost field. With some 2,000 battle-soiled and weary horsemen, he rode back to Agra, where, ashamed to appear before his imperial father, he secured some valuables, and then, accompanied by his wife and two of his children, continued his flight to Delhi.

AURANGZIB'S AMBITIOUS SCHEMES.

Three days after this great victory, on which he had not failed to congratulate his brother Morad in the most affectionate terms, Aurangzib advanced to Agra, pitched his camp under its walls, and made himself master of it. After a politic delay, employed in sending messages to his father of the most filial character—which failed, however, to beguile the old Emperor from his support of Dara's claim to the succession—he seized the citadel, and isolated Shah

Jahan from all communication with his friends and adherents. At the same time he placed his sister Jehanara and Dara's children in close custody. On the other hand, Shah Jahan made an attempt to get his treacherous but astute son into his power; and on one occasion almost succeeded in drawing him into a visit to the palace, where he had concealed several stalwart Tartar women, who were to overpower and strangle him at a given signal. The prince, however, was not to be deceived by a sudden outburst of paternal affection; and if his sister Jehanara hated him, he had a loyal adviser and confidant in his younger sister, Roushanara Begum. Truly, the household of Shah Jahan was a divided one!

It is a curious historical fact that a sovereign so able and so powerful should so easily have been dethroned, and that none of his old servants and ministers, though they could have little to hope from his successor, should have made any effort to support him. I suppose we must accept the explanation offered by Elphinstone, though it seems to me far from adequate: that the Emperor's habits of indul-

gence had impaired his energy, and that, as he had long ceased to head his armies, the troops turned their eyes to the princes who led them in the field, and had the immediate distribution of their honours and rewards. It is, perhaps, worthy of remembrance that Aurangzib was an adept in the art of political intrigue ; and that his complete self-control gave him a signal advantage over his impetuous adversaries.

Having secured the Emperor's person, his next object was to dispose of his brother Morad. The two princes were marching in pursuit of Dara, when one day Aurangzib invited Morad to a splendid supper, at which, waiving his well-known prejudice against the use of fermented liquors, he had provided an abundant supply of the choicest and strongest vintages. Some of the loveliest and most accomplished Indian dancing-girls were likewise engaged to charm his guest by their graceful figures and harmonious movements. Aurangzib, as became a rigid Muhammadan, left the table when the reign of licence began, bidding his brother to drink and be merry. After a wild debauch, Morad, in a state of helpless intoxication, fell asleep upon a couch, and

was stripped of his arms without resistance. Returning to the scene of the revel, Aurangzib, in real or pretended anger, roused his bemused brother with a contemptuous kick, exclaiming, "What means this shame, this degradation? How accursed a thing it is that so great a prince as you should have so little command over yourself as to plunge into such excess! Take away this infamous man, this drunkard," he said to his attendants; "tie him hand and foot, and fling him into yonder room to sleep off his wine." He was afterwards sent, a prisoner in chains, to Delhi, mounted conspicuously on the back of an elephant; while three other elephants, each carrying a person "got up" to represent the prince, and all provided with the same escort, were despatched in different directions, that people might be misled as to his actual place of confinement—the great prison fortress of Gwalior.

On his arrival in Delhi, Aurangzib caused himself to be proclaimed emperor (August 20th, 1658), though he did not as yet cause his name to be stamped on the currency, nor was he crowned until the first anniversary of his accession.

THE MUGHAL EMPIRE.

During the reign of Shah Jahan, thus abruptly terminated by the unfilial treachery of his sons, the Mughal empire in India reached its climax of prosperity and power. Though sometimes engaged in foreign wars, Shah Jahan had preserved tranquillity and maintained order in his own dominions, governing with firmness, but, on the whole, with gentleness, and encouraging the arts of peace. Tavernier, the traveller, says of him that "he reigned not so much as a king over his subjects as a father over his children"; and his rule exhibited some of the best features of a paternal despotism. Thousands of artisans found employment in constructing and embellishing the splendid edifices with which he adorned his two capitals. As for Delhi, he rebuilt it on a regular plan, far surpassing the old one in magnificence. Three broad thoroughfares, one of which was brightened by a canal and rows of trees and lined with houses rising over an arcade of glittering shops, led to a spacious esplanade, in the centre of which, stretching along the Jumna, stood

the fortified palace, the spacious courts, the marble halls, and golden domes of which have been described so often and in such enthusiastic terms.

The magnificence of this monarch's court was the wonder of European travellers ; and Tavernier dwells, with evident astonishment, on the glories of his peacock throne, the tail of the bird representing the prismatic tints of its natural plumage in rich incrustations of rubies, sapphires, and emeralds. He reports that it cost 160,500,000 livres, or £6,500,000 ; but this is an evident exaggeration. He speaks, also in glowing terms, of the rich array of courtiers, guards, and attendants, the pomp and pageantry of the imperial processions, and the sumptuous character of the imperial entertainments. But we turn from these comparatively uninteresting details to tell the romantic story of the Emperor's love for his beautiful wife, Mumtaza Zemani, "the Most Exalted of the Age."

A STORY OF IMPERIAL WRONG-DOING.

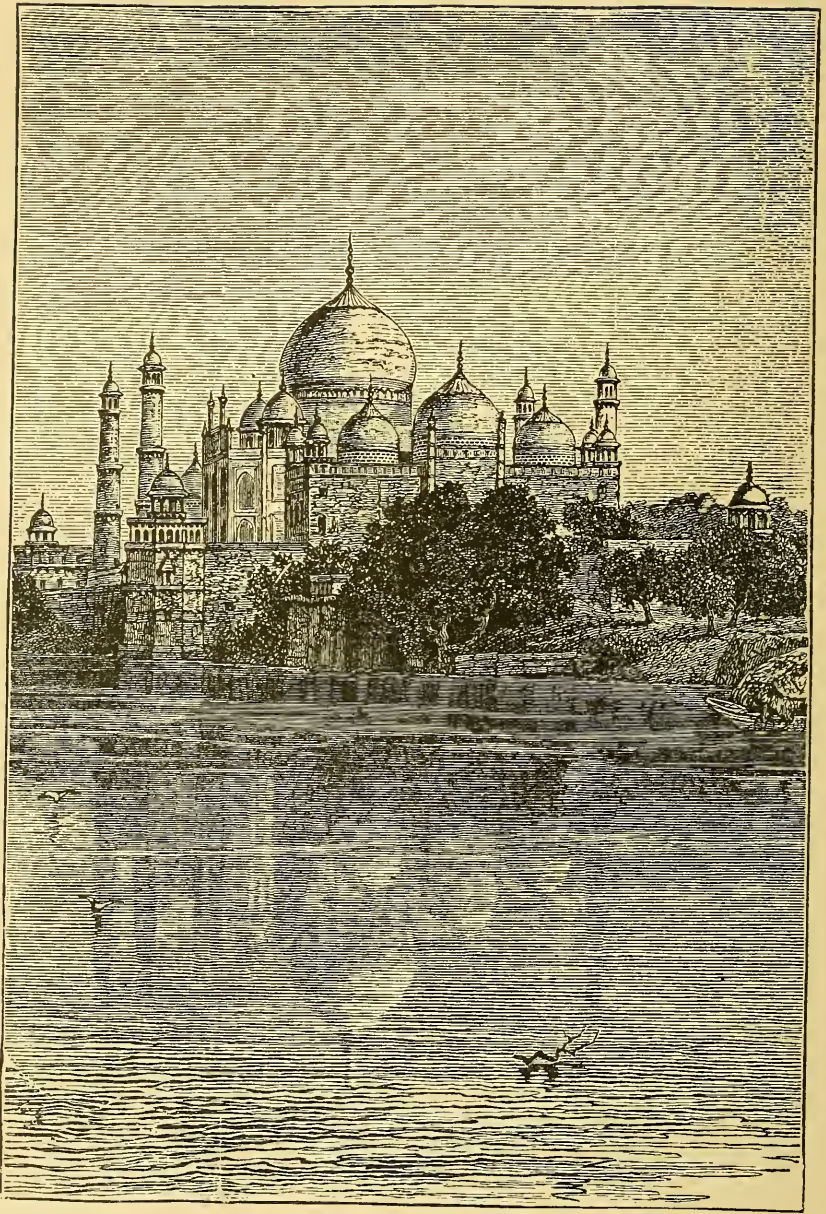
In the days of his early manhood, while residing with the Imperial family at Agra, Prince Jahan,

together with his brothers and the great nobles, never failed to attend those fête-days of the Noroze, of which I have already furnished a description. On one occasion the Emperor, Jahanger, had desired the ladies of the Court, who presided at the various stalls, to provide a stock of precious stones, which the nobles and the courtiers were expected to purchase. The Emperor himself was among the visitors, and proved a liberal customer. Prince Jahan, while making the round of the gay scene, came upon the stall of Aijemund Banu, daughter of the wazir, and wife of Semal Khan, a woman of surpassing loveliness. Struck by her charms, he lingered there for some time, and asking her what she had to sell, received the laughing reply that she had nothing left but one large diamond, the value of which was enormous,—and she showed him a lump of fine transparent sugar-candy, resembling a diamond in shape. Keeping up the jest, he asked the price ; she rejoined, with a fascinating smile, that she could not part with it for less than a lakh of rupees, or about £12,500. The Prince took her at her word, paid the money, and, enchanted by her beauty and address, invited

her to his palace, where she remained for two or three days. On her return the faithless wife was received by her husband with bitter reproaches. Of these she complained to Prince Jahan, who immediately gave orders that he should be put to death by an elephant. The unfortunate husband, however, obtained permission to speak to the prince before he was led away to the place of execution, and humbly explained that if he had offended his wife by his coldness, it was because he felt unworthy to receive beneath his roof the fortunate fair one who had been honoured with the notice of the future Emperor.

Jahan was much pleased with Semal Khan's excessive deference; gave him a royal robe and the command of 5000 horse, and received into his seraglio the beautiful and fascinating Aijemund Banu, who soon made such good use of her gifts and graces of mind and person that she became his favourite wife, and acquired a very great influence over him.

On the accession of Shah Jahan to the Imperial throne, she was graced with the title of Mumtaza



THE TAJ MAHAL.

Zemāni, the "Most Exalted of the Age." For twenty years they lived together in the utmost affection, confidence, and fidelity, no other wife dividing with her the Emperor's allegiance; and when she died, his grief was irrepressible. On her deathbed she exacted from him a double promise,—that he would never marry again, and that he would raise over her remains a tomb which should perpetuate her name and his love for ever. He kept both promises with a faithfulness and a loyalty unusual among princes. He took no other wife; and he erected at Agra, on the bank of the river Jumna, that magnificent and unequalled mausoleum, the Taj Ma'hal, which absorbed the labour of 20,000 men for two-and-twenty years, and entailed an expenditure of nearly one million sterling.

Combined in this beautiful fabric are the white marble of Kandahar and Jaipur, the red marble of Futtehpur, the jasper and lapis lazuli of Kabul, the diamonds of Golconda, and the precious stones of Ceylon. The finest specimen of Saracenic architecture in the world, it is of the most exquisite finish and the supremest loveliness, and, once seen, can never be

forgotten. A recent writer describes it as a cluster of purely snow-white domes which nestle round a grand central dome, like a gigantic pearl; and then all crown a building of purest, highly polished marble, so perfect in its proportions, so lovely in its design, so restful to the eye, and so simple yet complex in its simplicity, that it resembles rather the marble embodiment of a fairy dream than any work of human hands. Its four sides are exactly alike; so that its perfection of form never varies, from whatever point of view the spectator may examine it. Standing all alone in its transcendent loveliness, with a rich Eastern garden blooming beside it, and the warm red sandstone walls of the inclosure washed by the blue waters of the sacred Jumna, it rises upon the eye of the traveller who approaches it for the first time like a poetical vision. Sir Grant Duff speaks of it as the one building in the world which equals, or it may be excels, the Parthenon of Athens. Often as it has been lauded in glowing panegyrics, no one, he asserts, as yet has done it justice; and we may wait for centuries for a worthy description, since Mr. Ruskin has failed to visit it and write of it, as he has

written of St. Mark's at Venice, and the Campanile at Florence.

Shah Jahan was a great builder. At Delhi he raised the Jama Masjul or Great Mosque; and the Palace, which occupied a site 3200 feet by 1600 feet, with several magnificent structures in marble and fine stones. A deeply recessed gateway leads into a lofty vaulted hall of stately proportions; and the Dirvan-i-khas, or Court of Private Audience, is a masterpiece of poetic design and superb execution.

He built at Agra another beautiful and stately edifice, the Moti Masjid, or Pearl Mosque. It is situated within the precincts of Akbar's battlemented fort; a circumstance which led Bishop Heber to characterise the vast pile as a fortress built by giants and finished by jewellers. Its dimensions are spacious, and its mass or bulk is considerable; for the airy fabric springs from an artificial terrace, which raises it conspicuously above the surrounding buildings. Its principal charm is in its court, or quadrangle, which, from the pavement to the top of the loftiest dome, is wholly composed of white marble. So is the

Mosque proper, both internally and externally ; and, with the exception of a text from the Koran, lettered in black marble and inlaid as a frieze, it has no other ornament than the lines of its own graceful architecture. Seven open passages or corridors, each consisting of a rich marble arcade with arched roof, penetrate into the interior, which is adapted to hold six hundred worshippers, as may be seen from the number of spaces or stations marked out on the marble floor.

The erection of the Moti Masjid was Shah Jahan's principal occupation during the last nine years of his life, which he spent in a kind of gilded captivity, attended affectionately by his daughter Jehanara. He died, a prisoner, in the palace at Agra, in 1666, aged seventy-five.

“The perishable pilgrim,” as his daughter Jehanara describes herself, survived him for many years, and before her death was reconciled to her imperial brother, Aurangzib. She lies buried at Delhi in a sarcophagus of white marble, which is richly carved with flowers and incrustated with gems ; while in the centre blooms a patch of fresh green turf, in com-

pliance with the direction contained in her last dying utterance :—

“ Let no one desecrate my tomb with any other things than flowers and grass, since these are fitted for the resting-place of a holy spirit.”

CHAPTER VI.

AURANGZIB OR ALAMGIR, "THE CONQUEROR OF
THE UNIVERSE."

WITH the strange Oriental fancy for sonorous titles, Aurangzib caused himself to be proclaimed Emperor in 1658, under the assumed name of Alamgir, the Conqueror of the Universe. His long, and in some respects brilliant, reign extended over nine-and-forty years ; but in spite of its early successes, and its external pomp and pageantry, it marked the commencement and the rapid progress of the decline of the great Mughal empire, while its close was darkened with ominous shadows and gloomy portents of a disastrous future.

That poetical justice which we all of us delight to see exercised in human affairs fell heavily upon the last of "the Great Moguls" ; and his history affords a striking illustration of the Nemesis which even in

this world frequently overtakes the evil-doer. A rebellious and disloyal son, a treacherous and cruel brother, he died amid the intrigues, the mutinies, and jealousies of his own children; in constant dread lest he should experience at *their* hands the fate his father had met at *his*, and racked in his last hours by agonies of terror and remorse.

A TALE OF FRATRICIDE.

His first care on his usurpation of the throne was to disembarass himself of all possible competitors; and as soon as he had made himself secure at Delhi, he set out in pursuit of his brother Dara.

But when he had got as far as the river Satlaj—since famous in Anglo-Indian history—he learned that Dara had escaped into Sind, while his other brother, Shuja, with 25,000 horse and a large train of artillery, was rapidly moving up from Bengal. Thereupon he returned to Delhi, and struck eastward to meet this new antagonist.

The armies of the two brothers came into collision at a place called Cajwa, on the road to Allahabad. For three days they carried on an artillery duel, each

being unwilling to come to close quarters,—but on the fourth day (Jan. 6th, 1659), they joined issue. There was nothing in the circumstances of the battle to distinguish it from other battles. It ended in a victory for Aurangzib, who captured one hundred and fourteen pieces of cannon and many elephants. Shuja retired to Bengal; and Aurangzib was free for the time to attend to the movements of Dara, who had entered Guzarat, and with the assistance of its governor had occupied the whole province. He was posted on the hills near Ajmere, with an army of thirty thousand men and thirty or forty guns, when he was suddenly attacked by his brother's forces and again defeated,—defeated so utterly that it was with difficulty he escaped from the lost field, attended by a few faithful followers.

After eight days and nights of almost incessant wandering,—exhausted by the excessive heat, and harassed by the attacks of marauders, who stripped or murdered every man of his little company who fell into the rear,—Dara reached the neighbourhood of Ahmedabad. Here he was met by the celebrated traveller, Bernier, who has left on record a pathetic

account of the unfortunate prince's sufferings. His wife, to whom he was devotedly attached, had received a severe wound, and as he had no physician in his retinue he persuaded Bernier to remain with them for three days. The fourth brought them within a day's march of Ahmedabad, where he hoped to find a secure asylum. They slept that night in a caravanserai, where the accommodation was so limited that nothing but a screen of canvas separated Bernier from the princesses of Dara's family.

At dawn, when they were preparing for what they believed would be their last day's journey, the sad intelligence came that the gates of Ahmedabad had been shut against them, and that their sole chance of safety lay in immediate flight. Bernier tells us that he first knew of this stroke of misfortune through the cries and lamentations of the women; and that soon afterwards Dara came forth, pale with anxiety and alarm. His attendants received him in silence and with downcast looks,—Orientals are quick to abandon a master whom they think unlucky,—and the traveller could not refrain from tears as he saw the noble and ill-fated prince go to each in turn, appealing

for support, but conscious all the while that the appeal was made in vain.

Bernier took leave of him with regret, and with melancholy anticipations, which were only too soon fulfilled. The fugitive made his way into the small territory of Jun, on the eastern frontier of Sind, the chief of which, an Afghan, had received many favours at his hands, but now thought only of betraying him. Here his devoted wife died in his arms. This last misfortune seems to have broken the prince's spirit. With a great cry of anguish he exclaimed that all his past troubles were nothing, but that now, indeed, he was alone upon the earth! Tearing off his costly robe and flinging on the ground his imperial turban, he put on a mean habit, and threw himself down by the side of the dead body. In the evening Gul Muhammad, a faithful follower, joined him with fifty horse. Dara welcomed him warmly. Ordering his wife's body to be embalmed, Dara entreated Gul Muhammad, as a last favour, to convey it to Lahore, that it might rest in the tomb of her ancestors. "Aurangzib himself," said the unhappy prince, "will not refuse a sepulchre to the family of Dara."

As soon as the period of mourning permitted, he set out again on the march ; but before he had traversed many miles he and his son were overtaken, made prisoners, and carried to Aurangzib at Delhi (July 26th, 1659). The latter's vindictiveness prevailed over his prudence, and he caused his brother, loaded with chains, to be mounted on a wretched elephant, without the usual trappings, and conducted through the principal streets of the capital. But to see the lawful heir to the throne—a prince so noble and generous-minded—reduced to such a miserable plight, greatly moved the feelings of the people ; and the wave of compassion and indignation which swept through the city seemed to threaten an insurrection, so that Bernier armed himself, and went out into the street prepared for any emergency. The multitude, however, refrained from violence, and Dara was led away to a prison in Old Delhi. He was afterwards brought to trial before a packed tribunal on a charge of apostasy from Islam ; was found guilty, and sentenced to death. The emperor, with professed, perhaps with real reluctance—for he cannot have been wholly insensible to the claims of

kindred, though his ambition prevailed over his feelings—confirmed the sentence, the execution of which was entrusted to one of Dara's personal enemies.

When the executioners made their appearance. Dara and his son were preparing some lentils, the only food which they allowed themselves, from fear of poison, to touch. The prince snatched up a small knife, and defended himself with his usual courage until overpowered by numbers. His body was afterwards thrown upon an elephant, and exhibited to the populace; his head cut off and carried to Aurangzib, who commanded it to be placed on a dish, and having sent for water, washed it clean, and wiped it with a handkerchief. Having satisfied himself that it was indeed his brother's head, he began to weep, and exclaiming, "O unfortunate man!" ordered that it should be interred in the tomb of Humayun.

Shuja was the next victim among the brothers. Aurangzib sent against him his principal general, who drove the ill-fated chief from place to place, until at last he fled into Aracan. His later history is shrouded in obscurity; but it is said that, having

headed an insurrection against the ruler of Aracan, he perished in the attempt. This at least is certain, that he and his family were never again heard of. Thus Fortune had so far made herself an accomplice of Aurangzib in his ambitious designs, that she had removed from his path all possible rivals, except Morad and his son, and two sons of Dara—namely, Soleiman Shukoh and Sepehr Shukoh. But these were in safe custody at Gwalior, and their removal was an easy matter. Morad was put to death for the alleged murder of a man, committed during his government of Guzarat. The others all died within a few weeks,—of natural causes, said Aurangzib; of poison, said the voice of popular report. Such wholesale fratricide is uncommon even in the history of Oriental princes.

NOT UNWORTHY TO REIGN.

Apart from these crimes, Aurangzib showed himself worthy to reign by his strength of will and iron resolution. Soon after the fifth anniversary of his accession, he was seized with a violent illness, and at one time a fatal termination seemed more

than probable. Even after its worst severity had subsided, he remained in a dangerously weak condition, and was almost deprived of the faculty of speech. With startling rapidity intrigues developed on every side. The partisans of Shah Jehan renewed their activity; while among the emperor's own adherents two factions were speedily formed, one bent on securing the succession for his second son, Moazzim, and the other for his third son, Azam. In these threatening circumstances the sick Sultan displayed a composure and an intrepidity which those who most condemn his ambition, his cruelty, and his craft must nevertheless admire. On the fifth day of his illness, though shaken and tremulous, he caused himself to be raised up, and received the homage of his principal courtiers; and, on a subsequent occasion, when a fainting-fit had given rise to a report of his death, he summoned two or three of his principal nobles to his bedside; and as the paralysis which had affected his tongue still troubled him, wrote, in their presence, an order to his sister to send him his great seal, which he thenceforward kept beside his pillow that it might not be used without

his knowledge. This strenuous self-assertion had as much effect in suppressing disturbances as the prospect of his early restoration to health (1662). As soon as he was able to travel he hastened to Kashmir, where, in the delightful air and amidst the beautiful scenery of the Happy Valley, he rapidly regained his strength. And he needed all his bodily vigour and intellectual energy to cope with a new and most formidable enemy, whose appearance in the Deccan rang the knell of the great Mughal empire.

THE STORY OF SIVAJI.

A strip of country lying between the mountain range of the Western Ghats and the sea was inhabited by a race of people known to our forefathers as the Mahrattas, but more properly called the Marathis.

They had been for centuries an agricultural population, who held the ways of traders in contempt; hereditary marauders, who, in the interval between seed-time and harvest, broke through the mountain-passes, descended into the fertile lowlands, and returned laden with plunder—like the Border-clans

of mediæval Scotland. Clothed in short drawers half down the thigh, a turban, and sometimes a cotton frock, with a cloth waistband, which also answered the purpose of a shawl; capable of marching thirty or forty miles a day for twenty or thirty days consecutively—armed with matchlock, sword, and shield, skilful marksmen, and intrepid in hand-to-hand combats, thoroughly acquainted with every precipice, pass, ravine, and jungle among their native mountains, the Marathis were unequalled “for all purposes of predatory and guerilla warfare.” The troopers in endurance and courage were hardly inferior to the footmen; and, indeed, “any one who has seen the long easy seat of the Marathi horsemen, the perfect skill and grace with which they handle sword, shield, or spear, the comfort and convenience of their saddles and accoutrements, and the sharp biting of their active horses, will acknowledge them to be, to all appearance, the most wiry, workmanlike-looking cavalry in the world.”

About 1634 one of these stalwart Marathi warriors made for himself a reputation in Southern India. He lent his sword to the two independent Muham-

madan states of Ahmednagar and Bijapur; and transmitted to his son a military fief and the leadership of a band of loyal and daring partisans.

This son, Sivaji, was one of the most extraordinary men whom India has produced. His career was one long breathless series of remarkable adventures. Even in his early years he showed an audacious and enterprising spirit, which was kindled to fever heat by the old ballads of his country. Before he was sixteen he had been suspected of sharing in several wild freebooting forays. He could neither read nor write; but he was a splendid shot with gun and bow, and rode like one to the manner born. Three items among his equipment deserve particular notice. The first, says Sir Richard Temple, is what is called "the tiger's claw," an iron instrument, resembling in shape the claw of a tiger, with three very sharp points, which could be fastened inside the palm of the wearer, and so concealed from observation. The second item was his sword Bharvani—so called from a Hindu goddess, but a fine bit of tempered steel, wrought in Genoa. And the third was a coat of mail, which he generally

wore under a dress of cotton, or, in summer, of muslin; so that, to all appearance, he was a mild-mannered, peaceable Hindu; while, in reality, under the cotton folds was hidden the famous sword—which was to the Marathis what King Arthur's sword Excalibar was to the warriors of romance—and in the strong sinewy hand lay the tiger's claw.

He was about eighteen when the idea of his mission in life dawned upon him—the deliverance of the Hindu peoples of Southern India from the yoke of the “Great Moguls.” Having gathered about him, by his repute for courage and sagacity, a large body of fighting-men, he surprised, captured, and plundered several little forts in Bijapur. The king of that country rose in his wrath, and demanded of his nobles what should be done against the insolent marauder. Then a Muhammadan commander, named Afzal Khan, undertook, if he were allowed an army of two thousand horse and five thousand foot, with some guns, to hunt down this “mountain-cat,” and within two months bring him into the king's presence in an iron cage. His offer was

accepted, and he set out on his self-enterprise, in total ignorance of the difficulty and danger it involved.

On arriving in the neighbourhood of Sivaji's fortress, he was met by some of his envoys, in the meanest possible attire, who represented that their master was one of the humblest of men, with the gratefulest thoughts possible towards the King of Bijapur, and that he would rejoice to receive Afzal Khan in his fort on any morning. The Muhammadan general sent word in reply that he should not object to pay a visit to Sivaji, but that, owing to the steepness of the hills and the density of the forest, he did not see how it was to be managed. Sivaji at once offered to clear a road for his visitor's convenience; and his followers speedily carried it over the hills and through the forest to Partabghar, where a wide open area was provided for the Muhammadan camp. To all appearance nothing could be more friendly; but the Muhammadans did not observe that this convenient site was enclosed by rocky hills and labyrinthine woods, where Sivaji's best marksmen lay in ambush.

The next proceeding on the part of the "mountain-cat" was to persuade Afzal Khan, who seems to have been singularly wanting in prudence, to meet him outside the gate of Partabghar, with a single attendant. At the last moment Sivaji had some qualms of conscience, and apparently shrank from the ill deed for which he had made such elaborate preparations. So he made his way to a little shrine on the summit of a neighbouring hill, where he had arranged to meet his mother. To her he confided his hesitation. "Shall I kill this man," he inquired of her, "as I have planned? And when I have killed him, shall I order my men in the woods to fire upon the Muhammadan camp?" To both questions she answered in the affirmative. "In this very temple," she said, "I have consulted the goddess Siva—after whom, as you know, you were named—and she has commanded me to take care that no single Muhammadan should escape alive. Therefore, my son, act resolutely as I have advised you, and my blessing shall go with you."

In the morning Afzal Khan left his camp, and repaired to the appointed rendezvous, whither, at the

same time, Sivaji advanced from his fort. As he crept along, with slow and infirm gait, and downcast look, the Muhammadans observed to one another, "What a meek and humble person is this Marathi chief of whom we have heard so much!" According to agreement, he had but a single attendant, Tannaji, his kinsman, a man on whose bravery and fidelity he could always rely. As he drew near, the Muhammadan general spoke the usual words of greeting, and held out his arms to embrace him. Sivaji bowed his head, drew close up to his victim, and with "the tiger's claw" dug into his entrails. Then out came his dagger, followed by a desperate stab; and then out came his sword, and Afzal Khan lay dead upon the ground, together with his attendant, whom Tannaji had in the meantime despatched. At this moment a signal gun blazed from the fort, and immediately the surrounding forest kindled into sheets of flame, as the Marathi marksmen poured in a storm of bullets upon the surprised Muhammadans, very few of whom escaped to tell the story of the disaster that had befallen their army. Then Sivaji descended from his mountain-eyrie, overran the whole

country near the Ghats, and entered upon a guerilla warfare against the king of Bijapur ; until, in 1662, he extorted from him the cession of a territory along the sea-coast, which enabled him to raise and maintain a predatory force of 7000 horsemen and 50,000 foot.

FURTHER EXPLOITS OF SIVAJI.

The cause of the first rupture between Sivaji and the Mughals is not known ; but after he had made peace with Bijapur, we find him ravaging the imperial dominions as far as Aurangabad. Aurangzib sent an army against him under Shayista Khan, who drove him out of the field, and advanced to Puna, within twelve miles of Singhar, a strong hill-fort to which Sivaji had retired. The Khan took every precaution to guard against surprise. No Marathi was allowed to enter the town, even singly ; and with his soldiers posted all around him, he flattered himself that he was as secure as if he were in Agra or Delhi. The house in which he had taken up his residence happened, however, to have been occupied by Sivaji in his earlier years ; and this circumstance suggested to him an exploit of the most daring character.

Leaving Singhar one evening after dark, and posting small bodies of troops along the road to Puna, he and twenty-five Marathis, whom he had selected to accompany him, contrived to slip into the town as part of a wedding procession, with the connivance of its conductor. Proceeding direct to the house, he entered by the rear before any person took the alarm, and so completely surprised the Khan that he had barely time to escape from his bedchamber, and lost two fingers by a blow from a sword as he was lowering himself from a window into the court below. His son and most of his attendants were cut to pieces. Sivaji retreated without encountering any opposition ; and gathering up his posts on the way, ascended to Singhar amidst a blaze of torches which made known his success to every part of the Mughal camp.

Aurangzib next sent his son, Prince Moazzim, with one of his best guards, against this redoubtable freebooter ; but by numerous rapid movements he deceived them as to his whereabouts, and, while they were searching for him among the hills, he suddenly swooped down on the rich commercial town and port

of Surat. Resistance was impossible. The governor retired to the fort, the English and Dutch merchants to their factories ; while the Marathis plundered the place at leisure for six days, and finally carried off a booty valued at one million sterling. The Emperor now was thoroughly roused ; and an overwhelming force, under Raja Jei Sing, was put into the field. Sivaji was beaten back from point to point, in spite of his desperate courage ; and when his chief stronghold, Singhar, was surrounded, he repaired to the Mughal camp and made his submission. He was received with great distinction ; and having taken a formal oath of allegiance and fidelity, was allowed to retain twenty out of his thirty-two forts and the territory attaching to them as a jagir or fief from the Emperor. At the same time his son, Sambaji, a boy of five years old, received the rank of a commander of five thousand horse. Further, Sivaji was to be entitled to a sort of percentage on the revenue of each district under the King of Bijapur ; and this grant, I may add, was the foundation of the ill-defined claims of the Marathis, which in later times afforded them such constant pretexts for encroachments upon

foreign territories. Sivaji then joined the imperial army with two thousand cavalry and eight thousand infantry ; and the whole body invaded Bijapur (1665).

In this campaign the "mountain-cat's" services were so brilliant that Aurangzib addressed to him two complimentary letters, promising him advancement, and inviting him to court, with an assurance that he should be at liberty to return to the Deccan. Accordingly he repaired to Delhi. Had Aurangzib exercised his usual craft, and conciliated the chief by liberal treatment, he would have converted a formidable enemy into a loyal and zealous servant. But his religious and personal prejudices were too strong for his prudence. He hated and despised the unlettered freebooter who had insulted his religion and his imperial dignity ; and heaped slights and insults upon him, which were deeply resented. Finding that guards were stationed round his residence, and that he was virtually a prisoner, he resolved to effect his escape.

Feigning illness, he took to his bed, gained over some of the Hindu physicians who were allowed to attend him, and through their instrumentality con-

veyed his instructions to his friends without. He was in the habit of receiving large baskets of fruits and flowers every day, and when the guards had grown accustomed to their passage, and ceased to inspect them, he concealed himself in one and his son in another, and both were carried out unsuspected through the line of sentinels. His bed was occupied by a servant, and it was some time before he was discovered to be missing. Outside the walls of the city he found the faithful Tannaji and some trusty followers; and, assuming the dress of a Hindu religious mendicant, he proceeded, by the least frequented route, into the Deccan; and after long wanderings and many adventures reached his fortress of Raigar, nine months after his escape from Delhi (December 1666).

DEATH OF SIVAJI.

It was at this time that the power and prosperity of Aurangzib attained their zenith. Peace for a while prevailed throughout his extended dominions; to which his governor of Kashmir had just added Little Tibet, and his viceroy of Bengal the fertile country

of Chittagong. The neighbouring potentates took every opportunity of paying him marks of their high respect. Embassies arrived at his court from the Shiref of Mecca and several other princes of Arabia, from the King of Abyssinia, from the King of Persia, from the Khan of the Uzbeks. But, as is usual in this world, there was a fly in the ointment—a cloud on the horizon—that *amari aliquid* which poisons every human cup. Sivaji had resumed his activity, and gained so many successes in the Deccan that the mighty sovereign of Delhi was glad to make peace on terms which almost compromised his imperial dignity. A considerable portion of territory was restored to him, and a new jagir granted in Berar. His title of Raja, which he had assumed unbidden, was also formally confirmed.

Aurangzib, however, never forgot or forgave; and he manœuvred secretly to get Sivaji again into his power. He directed his son, Prince Moazzim, and his general, Jeswant Sing, who were commanding in the Deccan, to pretend disaffection, and feign a strong desire to conclude a separate alliance with the great Marathi chief. But Sivaji was not to be deceived,

and held aloof from every snare. He had lost nothing of his audacity. On one occasion, disguised as a peasant, he waited on Prince Moazzim as he passed through a village near Burhampur and presented him with a dish of cream. So appetising was its appearance that the Prince ordered it to be served up at his own table ; and lo, within it, was a note inclosed in wax, in which Sivaji explained that curiosity had induced him to view the mighty prince who had condescended to become his antagonist in the lists of fame. By liberal bribes and presents he won the good will of the Mughal generals ; and they actually became his willing accomplices in deceiving the Emperor. The latter, however, in his turn, detected the imposture ; and then issued stringent commands for the capture of his Marathi adversary, which necessarily led to a renewal of hostilities.

By a night attack of almost incredible daring the mountain-cat recovered his fortress-rock of Singhar. Then, for the second time, he plundered Surat. With fire and sword he broke into Khandesh ; and equipping a fleet of eighty vessels, sailed along the Malabar coast, and made a descent upon Jinjera.

His constant good fortune influenced his ambition ; and having defeated the Mughal army in a great pitched battle, in 1672, he caused himself to be crowned king after the manner of a Mughal coronation, copying every detail, even to being weighed against gold and silver, and distributing rich presents to his officers and attendants. About two years later he made an incursion into Golconda, with a large army, and exacted a heavy ransom from its people. Next he appeared in the Karnatic, capturing some of its strongest places and garrisoning them with his own troops. But his extraordinary career was cut short by a sudden illness, which terminated fatally on April 5th, 1680, when he was in the fifty-third year of his age. He died at his great fortress of Raigarh, where he had accumulated the riches of half India—“treasures in Spanish dollars, sequins, and the coins from all Southern Europe and all Asia.”

Aurangzib, though he heard with satisfaction of the death of his adversary, paid a generous tribute to his abilities. “He was a good captain,” he said, “and the only one who has had the magnanimity to raise a new kingdom while I have been endeavouring to

destroy the ancient sovereignties of India. My armies have been employed against him for nineteen years, and nevertheless his power has always been increasing. He was eminently fitted by nature for the work he had to do, the revival of Hinduism and the foundation of a native kingdom ; for to courage and capacity in the field he added a singular sagacity and foresight in the council." A born ruler, he possessed that personal magnetism which bade masses of men to dare everything for their chosen leader. His vigour and powers of endurance and action were such as to call forth the admiration even of his hardy subjects, who loved to speak of him as when, mounted on a white horse and going at full gallop, he tossed grains of rice into the animal's mouth that it might feed without delaying its course. His contempt of danger led him to undertake the most hazardous enterprises. Thus he stole into Bombay in disguise, in order to climb through a natural tunnel of rock on Malabar hill, which is supposed to purge from sin all who effect its passage. He was passionately fond of music ; and would incur the greatest risks in entering the strong places of his

enemies to listen to the stirring stories of the achievements of the Hindu gods as sung in the Kuthas at the numerous Hindu festivals.

Though these pages are intended to chronicle the deeds of the great Muhammadan sultans and khalifs, I have been unable to resist the temptation of telling at some length the tale of a famous Hindu chief ; and I believe the reader will agree that its romantic interest justifies its introduction, or at all events excuses it.

LAST YEARS OF AURANGZIB.

Meanwhile, at the head of the Grand Army of the Empire, the indefatigable Aurangzib endeavoured to accomplish the reduction of the Deccan. It is impossible not to admire the exhaustless energy and unflinching patience with which the aged sovereign made head against every difficulty—against the ceaseless efforts of his external enemies, as well as against the domestic treachery which, as he felt, was but a well-deserved retribution for his own conduct towards Shah Jahan. He was in his sixty-fifth year when he first crossed the Nerbudda to enter upon this labo-

rious and protracted enterprise ; he was in his eighty-first when he retired from the field, having won numerous victories and captured many forts, but having so exhausted the strength and vitality of the empire that it was shaken to its foundations. His last campaign closed with an inglorious retreat to Ahmednagar, and this was not accomplished without severe loss, so dispirited were his troops and so audacious their assailants. "All hurried on in disorder and dejection, deafened with the incessant firing kept up by the marksmen, alarmed by the shouts and charges of the lancers, and every moment expecting a general attack to complete their disorder and destruction. Such, indeed, was the fate of a portion of the army ; and it is a subject of pious exultation to the Mussulman historian, that the emperor himself escaped falling into the hands of the enemies whom he had once so much despised."

His health had, of late, given way. Not only did he feel the weight of years, but he was conscious of the dangers which beset the empire, and continually haunted by the apprehension that his sons would inflict upon him the same fate which he had inflicted

upon his father. Prince Moazzim having proposed some administrative changes to relieve him of some of his more onerous duties, he immediately suspected him of a design to seize upon the government. Receiving a letter from Prince Azam, in which he requested permission to return to Ahmednagar, as the air of Guzarat disagreed with his health, he exclaimed, "That is the very excuse I made to Shah Jahan,"—adding: "No air is so unwholesome as the fumes of ambition." His youngest and favourite son, Prince Cambakhsh, he sent away to Bijapur, lest he should become the rallying-point of any rebellious faction.

In a mood of great despondency he awaited the approach of that inevitable hour which he felt to be near at hand. The mingled emotions which possessed him are apparent in the letter which he wrote, or dictated, to his son Azam:—"I came a stranger into the world, and as a stranger I leave it. I know nothing of myself—what I am, or for what I am destined: the brief moments of my enjoyment of power have left only sorrow behind them. I brought nothing into the world, and, except the infirmities

of humanity, I carry nothing out. Though I have a strong faith in the mercy and goodness of God, yet when I think of my past deeds I am not without fear. But come what may, I have launched my vessel on the waves. . . . Farewell! Farewell!" Surely words of greater pathos were never wrung from the lips of dying emperor! Surely never was the vanity of the world's ambitions more strikingly exposed!

To Prince Cambakhsh he wrote in a similar strain, but intercalated among his confessions some maxims of serious wisdom. "Your courtiers," he says, "however deceitful, must not be ill-treated; you must gain your objects by gentleness and art. . . . Wherever I look I see nothing but the Divinity. . . . I have committed numerous crimes, and I know not what may be my punishment. . . . The agonies of death are coming upon me fast. . . . I am going: whatever of good or evil I have done, was done for you."

He died on the 21st of February, 1707, in the eighty-ninth year of his age and the fiftieth of his reign. By a will found under his pillow it appeared that he wished Moazzim to be recognised as Emperor,

but that he and Azam should divide between them the imperial territories ; the former taking the northern and eastern provinces, with Delhi as his capital ; and the latter, all the country to the south and south-west, including most of the Deccan, with Agra as his capital. The kingdoms of Golconda and Bijapur he assigned to Cambakhsh. In another will he left minute directions for his funeral, which he ordered to be conducted on the simplest scale, limiting the expense to four rupees and a half—a sum which he had saved from the price of some caps made and sold by him. Eight hundred and five rupees, which he had earned by transcripts of the Koran, he left for distribution among the poor. His last commands were scrupulously obeyed, and his remains interred in a plain wooden tomb at Ranzah, the “Place of Graves,” near Ellora.

CHARACTER OF AURANGZIB.

“Of all the dynasty of Timur,” says the historian, Khafi Khan, “indeed, of all the kings of Delhi, none since the time of Secander Lodi ever appeared so distinguished in point of devotion, austerity, and

justice ; and in courage, patience, and sound judgment he was unequalled. But as from reverence to the injunctions of the Divine Law he did not inflict punishment, and as without punishment no community can be kept in order—in consequence, also, of the dissensions arising from rivalry among his nobles—every plan and design which he formed came to little good, and every enterprise drew into delay and never attained its object. Though he had lived ninety years, none of his five senses were at all impaired ; except his hearing in a small degree, but not so that others could perceive it.”

It has justly been said that he endeavoured to lead the life of a model Muhammadan emperor, and in many respects he succeeded. He was easy of access, a strict dispenser of justice, a firm administrator. By the pomp and splendour of his public appearances he maintained the imperial dignity ; though in private his habits were remarkable for their simplicity. In the discharge of the observances of his religion he was exact and unquestionably sincere ; he was diligent in business, with a vigilant eye supervising every detail of the government of his vast empire.

Further, he was an accomplished scholar, with a fine taste for poetry, and an elegant and prolific letter-writer. But the deposition of his father and the murder of his brothers left ineffaceable stains upon his private life ; while his public policy was vitiated by the religious intolerance, which roused against the empire the sleepless hatred of a host of enemies. Not that Aurangzib was prone to acts of cruelty or oppression ; he neither took the lives nor confiscated the property of his Hindu subjects ; but he irritated them by his "systematic discouragements." He excluded them from office ; he branded them by a special tax ; he prohibited their fairs and festivals ; he insulted their temples ; and abolished every practice or custom that seemed in any way to foster or countenance their superstition.

Some hundreds of the great Emperor's letters have been preserved ; and prove that he was gifted with no small literary ability, while on the peculiarities of his character they throw a vivid light. Generally some poetical character is introduced, or a verse from the Koran. Occasionally the tone is familiar, and even humorous, when addressed to his sons. One,

written after he was eighty, ends with a number of burlesque verses, of two or three words to the line, embodying comical descriptions of the pursuits of the principal people about his court.

He delighted, as I have said, in the parade of royalty upon public occasions ; and the magnificence of the Fanakbagh, or Palace of Pleasures, which he erected at Ahmednagar, as a memorial of his conquest of the Deccan,—the extensive accommodation of the royal tents, their canvas walls enclosing an area of nearly three-quarters of a mile in circumference,—the various establishments for preparing betel and sweetmeats, cooling water with saltpetre, and preparing fruit in good condition for the imperial table—the host of attendants and officials which he maintained—the splendid decorations of his palaces,—all indicate the keen sense which he entertained of the necessity of keeping up the royal dignity. I have referred to his diligence in the conduct of state business. “All men,” he was accustomed to say, “have a natural inclination to a long, easy, and careless life, and do not need to be advised to lay aside work and anxiety : besides, our wives who lie

in our bosoms too often encourage us in the same direction. But there are times and conjunctures of such critical importance that a king ought to hazard his life for his subjects.”

The Italian traveller, Gemelli Carreri, who visited the imperial court when Aurangzib was nearly eighty, describes him as of low stature, slender, and bowed at the shoulders, with a long nose and a round beard, the silvery whiteness of which contrasted with his olive skin. He was dressed in plain white muslin, with a single but very large emerald in his turban. Standing in the middle of his omrahs, and leaning on a staff, he received petitions from all who chose to present them, read them without the help of glasses, endorsed them with his own hand; and seemed, by his cheerfulness of aspect, to be pleased with the employment.

Such was Aurangzib, the Last of “the Great Moguls.”

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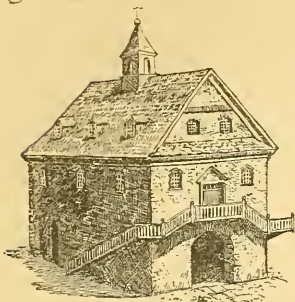
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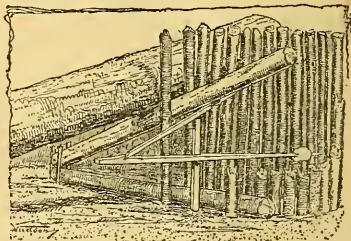
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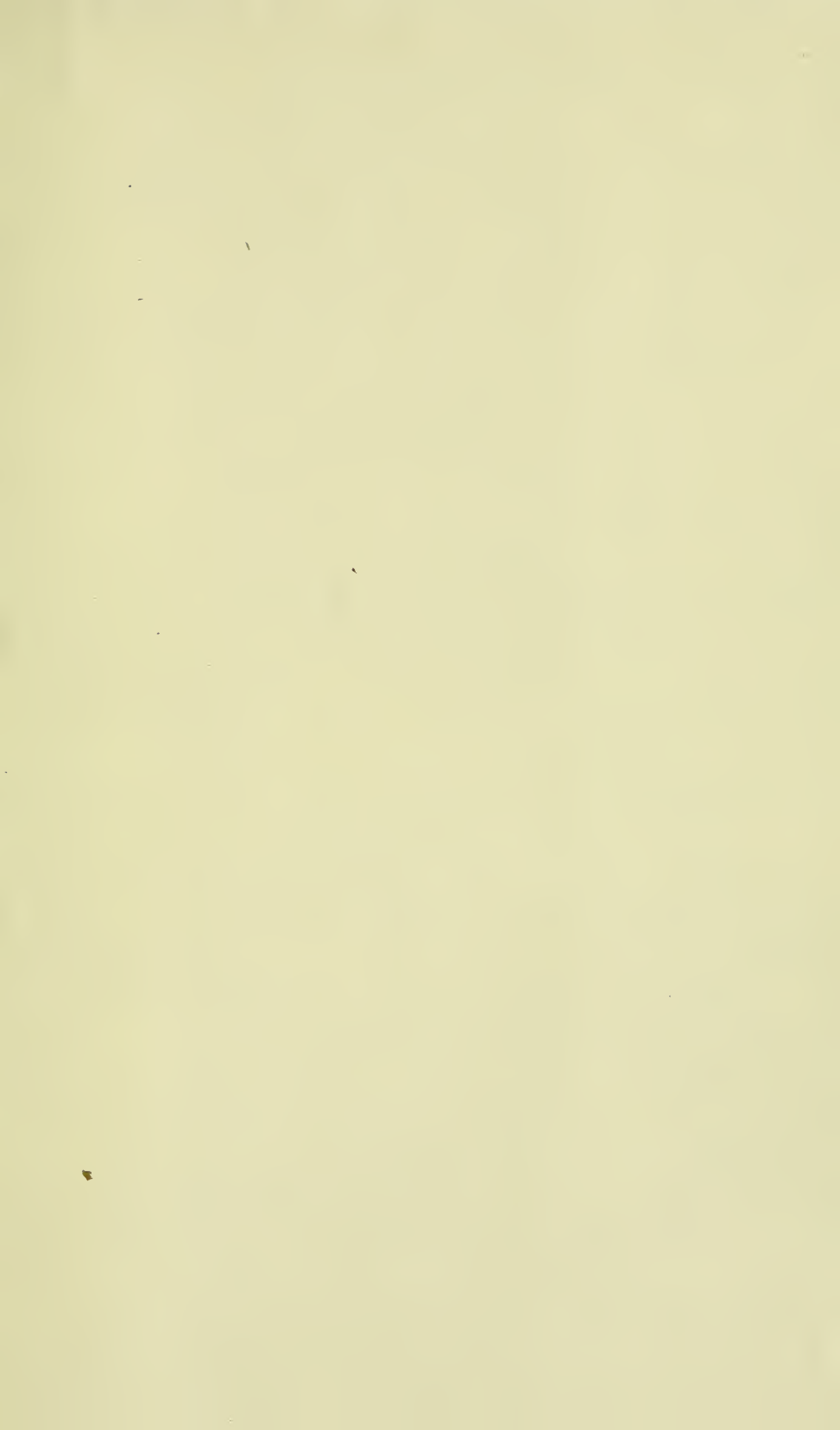
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