

the poor wretches in behalf of their altars. On the capture of Deig, all the remaining part of the Jaut country submitted; and as heavy fines were imposed by the general upon the different Zemindars, he continued to fill his treasury, which enabled him to discharge the arrears of his troops; at the same time he ordered a general rejoicing throughout the camp.

The embassy afore mentioned arriving at the same time, Nujuff Khan availed himself on the occasion to shew his respect to the vizir, by entertaining the commissioners in the most splendid manner. He feasted them for several days, and then dismissed them with additional presents.

The conquest of the Jauts being now complete, Nujuff Khan directed his attention to the collection of the revenues, and in reforming the abuses which had prevailed during the war. But in the midst of his arrangements, he was suddenly called off by letters received from Delhi, which required his immediate presence at that city. Zabita Khan, whose success, as already related, had inflamed his resentment and excited his ambition, was resolved to persist in his rebellion, and actually threatened Delhi with a siege. Previous, however, to proceeding to open hostilities, he augmented his army, and took into his pay large bodies of *Seiks*.

He formed, moreover, connections with some of the principal chiefs of that nation; and in order to render this alliance the more effectual, he embraced the tenets of this extraordinary sect, and became a convert to their faith. The part which the *Seiks* have borne

in the transactions of later times in the upper parts of Hindostaun, justify an attempt to describe their origin and progressive advancement to authority in the empire.

During the reigns of Akbar, Jehanguire, Shah Jehan and Aurangzeeb, the annals of Hindostaun exhibit a series of events and brilliant actions which raised the empire to the first station in the history of Asia. Emulating the conduct of their founder the great Timoor, those princes whilst they trod in his steps rendered their dominions flourishing and their people happy, and the power of that august family appeared established on so solid a basis as to bid defiance to the fluctuating and capricious changes of fortune; but the seeds of dissolution and decay were internally generated even in the height of their prosperity; and the indolence, folly and effeminacy, of the princes of later times, overthrew the fabrick of power, and buried the authority of the house of Timoor under its ruins. Out of the shipwreck of its former grandeur, several new and independent states arose. To the *Seiks*, among others, may be assigned an interesting station; obscure in their origin, in a remote part of the province of Lahoor, this tribe had nothing but novelty to recommend itself or attract notice.

In the reign of the Emperor Baber, *Nanick Shah*, founder of the tribe, was born at a small village named Tulbindee, in the province of Lahoor; at an early period of life, this extraordinary person, who possessed a good capacity and amiable manners, forsook the world, and devoted himself to a life of religious austerity. In this reclusive state, aided by the effusions of a fervid imagination, Nanick framed

a system of religion, composed from the speculative and contemplative theories of Mussulman divinity, which he delivered to his numerous followers as of divine origin. This book he termed Gur-runt, which, in the Punjabee dialect, implies scriptural. Nanick, after reaching his nintieth year, expired peaceably, and was buried at Amrit Seer, where his tomb to the present day attracts the attention, and animates the piety of his numerous disciples. He left two children, Lucsmi Dofs and Sree Chund.

At his death, Nanick Shah, with a view to render permanent his new system, ordained that the succession should be elective and not hereditary, an ordination which, as it precluded the supreme authority from remaining in one family, placed the benevolent and disinterested views of the founder in a light truly amiable. Sree Chund, who found means to secure his election, presided over the tribe for several years, and, at his death, Angajee succeeded. But this custom, though it obtained for some time, was at length set aside, and Gooroo Ram was the first who established an hereditary succession.

The tribe continuing to increase by the vast number of converts which it had acquired, had not hitherto attracted the notice of the neighbouring powers; occupied in paying a scrupulous adherence to the laws and ordinations of their founder, the Seiks were looked upon as harmless, inoffensive devotees; but the period was at hand when they were to act a different part, and to contend with vigour against imperial authority. Teigh Behadur, whose actions and misfortunes render his name memorable, was the first who took

up arms against the officers of Aurengzeeb, till after many bloody encounters with the king's troops, he was at length overcome, taken prisoner, and put to death. His successors, animated by revenge, continued a predatory war with the descendants of Aurengzeeb, and, during the struggle, the Seiks acquired a considerable addition of territory. Among the most memorable of these chiefs, was Bundah, who, after a long and severe contest, was taken prisoner, carried to Delhi, and there suffered with heroic fortitude an ignominious death*.

In the reign of Ahumud Shah the tribe became very formidable. Profiting by the disturbances which then prevailed in every part of the empire, the Seiks again made head against the government, and with far better success. They conquered the whole of the Punjab, (or country included within the five rivers which fall into the Indus) and even pushed their arms beyond it.

In the last reign (Aulum Geer the Second) their dominions were bounded on the west by the country of Cabul, and extended eastward to the vicinity of Delhi, north by a range of high mountains, and to the southwest they embraced the province of Moulton and the city of Tatta, situated on the banks of the Indus. Lahoor, the capital of Punjab, was selected as their chief city of residence, and as such has since continued. They possess many large towns, and among the principal are those of Puttiali, Hurril, Loeh Ghur.

* See a particular account of this enterprising chief in Captain Scott's second volume of the History of Deccan. Article *Furrok Seer*.

Serhind, Shahabad, and Tanasser. The Seik territories are said to contain prodigious quantities of cattle, horses, oxen, cows, and sheep; and grain of various kinds is produced in abundance. The precious metals are very scarce; and their trade is for that reason chiefly carried on by barter, especially in the manufacturing towns.

At Pattiali they make excellent cloth, and fire arms superior to most parts of Hindostaun. The collected force of the Seiks is immense, they being able to bring into the field an army of 250,000 * men, a force apparently terrific, but, from want of union among themselves, not much to be dreaded by their neighbours. Divided into distinct districts, each chief rules over the portion appropriated to him with uncontrolled sway; and tenacious of his authority, and

* The following table, which was delivered to the author by a Seik chief when at Pannapat in 1793-4, will exhibit the situation of the different chiefs at that period.

	Men					
Beejee Sing	-	-	-	-	-	12,000
Tanah Sing	-	-	-	-	-	22,000
Jeffah Sing	-	-	-	-	-	14,000
Kurrun Sing (of Shahabad)	-	-	-	-	-	12,000
Jeffah Sing (of Ramghur)	-	-	-	-	-	12,000
Jundut Sing (of Amrit Scer)	-	-	-	-	-	24,000
Khofal Sing (of Fuzoolah Pore)	-	-	-	-	-	22,000
Herri Sing (on the confines of Moultan)	-	-	-	-	-	40,000
Runjat Sing (of Loeh Ghur)	-	-	-	-	-	70,000
Shahur Sing (of Pattiali), Loll Sing, Juswaunt Sing (of Nawbeh), Gujpur Sing (of Chunda), and other chiefs	-	-	-	-	-	20,000
Total						<u>248,000</u>

jealous of his brethren, it seldom happens that this nation makes an united effort *.

The Seiks are armed with a spear, scymetar, and excellent match-lock. Their horses are strong, very patient under hardship, and undergo incredible fatigue. The men are accustomed to charge on full gallop, on a sudden they stop, discharge their pieces with a deliberate aim, when suddenly wheeling about, after performing three or four turns, they renew the attack. The shock is impressive when offered only to infantry, but against artillery they cannot stand. It is a fact well known and established, that a few field pieces is sufficient to keep in check their most numerous bodies. Inured from their infancy to the hardships of a military life, the Seiks are addicted to predatory warfare, in a manner peculiar to themselves alone. When determined to invade a neighbouring province, they assemble at first in small numbers on the frontier, when having first demanded the *raki* or tribute, if it be complied with, they retire peaceably; but when this is denied, hostilities commence, and the Seiks, in their progress, are accustomed to lay waste the country on all sides, carrying along with them as many of the inhabitants as

* The alarm once excited in the British government of the formidable power of this nation, might be obviated by observing, that the discordant and clashing interests of the respective Seik chiefs prevent almost the possibility of a general union, and even if disposed to attack the territory of our ally, the vizir, they would be necessitated to keep a watchful eye over their own territories, which would be left open to invasion from the north. It is well known that Zemaun Shah, the king of Cabul, is desirous of sharing in the fertile province of Punjab, and especially of getting possession of Lahoor, emphatically termed the key of Hindostan. His late attack at the end of 1796, is a proof of this assertion.

they can take prisoners, and all the cattle. The prisoners are detained as slaves, unless redeemed by a pecuniary compensation.—But though fond of plunder, the Seiks, in the interior parts of their country, preserve good order, and a regular government: and the cultivation of their lands is attended with much assiduity. Their revenues are collected at two stated periods of six months each; and by an equitable adjustment between the proprietor and cultivator, the latter is allowed a fifth part as the reward of his labour.

Of their religion much information has not as yet been acquired; but it has been remarked by an ingenious and spirited historian, that in the act of receiving proselytes, they compel them to the performance of an act equally abhorrent to the principles of the Hindoo or Mahomedan faith*. Yet, notwithstanding the nature of their ceremonies, it is certain they continue to gain numerous converts.

The Seiks, in their persons, are tall, and of a manly erect deportment; their aspect is ferocious, their eyes piercing and animated; and in tracing their features a striking resemblance is observable to the *Arabs* who inhabit the banks of the Euphrates. The dress of the males consists of a coarse cloth of blue cotton, thrown loosely over the shoulders, and coming down between the legs, is confined round the waist by a belt of cotton. An ample turban of blue cloth covers the head, and over this is frequently wore a sash of silk and cotton mixed, resembling both in colour and pattern a *Scotch*

* By obliging the Mussulmaun to drink water, in which some Seiks have washed their feet, mixed with hog's blood, and the Hindoo with that of a cow. See Captain Scott, Vol. II. article *Furrook Seer*.

Tartan. They speak the Aufghaun or Pooſhto language, with prolific additions of Perſian, Arabic, and Hindoovee*.

From this digreſſion let us proceed to relate the tranſactions at court. Shah-Aulum, who was enraged at Zabita Khan for his repeated acts of insolence and diſreſpect, reſolved to take the field in perſon, and had for this purpoſe, as above remarked, ordered the captain general from Deig. On the miniſter's arrival, the king marched out and encamped.

At a ſecret conference held on the occaſion, it was reſolved, previous to commencing hoſtilities, to make one effort to perſuade the rebel to return to his duty; though had a retroſpect of his former conduct been taken, they would have foreſeen the inſufficiency of any but reſolute meaſures. Agreeably to this reſolve, Rajah Dai-eram, Himmut Behadur, and Lutafut, were ſent to Sehaurunpore to treat and offer terms; but for fear of an unſucceſſful iſſue, the king and the general followed with the army. The deputation at firſt

* In the year 1793-4, the author was at Panneput in company with Major Charles Reynolds, of the Bombay eſtabliſhment, employed by the Britiſh government on a ſurvey through the Doo Ab; the reſult of which, when communicated to the public, will no doubt prove a valuable addition to the geography already acquired. At that time he ſaw a body of Seiks then in the ſervice of the great Sindiah; they were about one thouſand in number, under the command of Doolchee Sing, from whoſe brother moſt of the information above mentioned was received. The author has to apologize for giving a ſketch ſo imperfect, though he is happy to learn there is another and far better account already before the public from the late Colonel James Browne, of the Bengal eſtabliſhment, but which account the author has not ſeen. The account here given ſtands merely on his own reſearches.

gave hopes of a peaceful termination. A conference took place between the captain general, Mujud Al Dowla, and Zabita Khan; but unhappily a misunderstanding arose, which proceeded to violent altercation on both sides. Whether Zabita Khan, who was of a turbulent and haughty spirit, could not brook the manner of the king's ministers, who talked in a high strain, or whether he was determined at all events on resistance, has not been clearly ascertained. From whatever cause it arose, he was observed as he came out of the tent to be uncommonly agitated; and without waiting for the ministers to accompany and introduce him, repaired directly to the royal tent. Having paid his respects to the king, he withdrew to his own camp; and suddenly, without assigning any reason for such a conduct, struck his tents and went into fort. Notwithstanding so glaring and insolent a conduct, the king did not proceed to the immediate punishment of the rebel. On the contrary, he was persuaded, through the mediation of Lutafut, who, it is asserted, was bribed largely on the occasion, to pardon him. Zabita Khan was, therefore, invited to court, and, on promising submission, was again confirmed in his government of Sehaunpore. The army returned to Delhi.

CHAP. VI.

Revolt of the Rajah of JYPORE—Succinct Account of the Principalities of OUDIPORE—Joudpore and JYPORE—The King marches to JYPORE—Taking of NARNOUL and DHANSNEY—Disgrace of MUJUD AL DOWLA—Death of Prince FURKHINDA BUKHT—Death and Character of NUJUFF KHAN.

ON the return of the royal army to Delhi, Nujuff Khan, who had lately been appointed to the government of Agrah, repaired to that province: about this time news arrived at court of the death of Madhoo Sing, ruler of Jypore, and of the accession of Pertaub Sing, a youth of twelve years of age, to his father's government. The considerable share which this prince bore in the transactions of the court of Delhi, justify our taking a retrospective view of the provinces of Oudipore, Joudpore, and Jypore, or the countries denominated by geographers *Rajpootana* *.

When the Moguls first entered Hindostaun, they found the inhabitants in general effeminate and luxurious, and in consequence incapable of opposing with effect those hardy bands who at first under Zingis Khan, and afterwards his descendant, the Great Timoor, ac-

* Consult the excellent memoir of a map of Hindostaun by Major Rennel, to whom the author begs leave to return his thanks for his liberal and polite attention in permitting him to copy the map prefixed to this volume.



Mujid al Dowlah

From an Original in the possession of Jonathan Scott Esq.

quired a succession of conquests, and finally laid the foundation of the Mogul empire in Hindostaun in the person of Baber, sixth in descent from Timoor.

But however competent to overturn the Patan government, they found it more difficult to subdue the great Rajpoot principalities.—The princes of those countries, who were the aboriginal sovereigns of Hindostaun, inherited from their ancestors a high and warlike spirit, which, added to the natural advantages of their situation, in countries surrounded by high mountains and intersected by narrow vallies and numerous defiles, rendered hazardous a foreign invasion. The Rajpoot princes therefore continued long to resist with effect the valour and discipline of the Mogul troops; and the different sovereigns of the house of Timoor, after repeated, but ineffectual, struggles to reduce them by force, were in the end necessitated to adopt a method more conciliatory. The first princes of the race of Timoor not only invited them to the capital, and heaped upon them honours and dignities of all kinds, but were accustomed to intermarry with their families, a circumstance, which, if the tenacious adherence of the Hindoos to preserve their blood pure and uncontaminated be considered, would appear disgraceful; but an alliance with the sovereign was, among the Hindoos, deemed honourable by the ancient usages of their country.

The great acquisition of interest thus obtained by the Rajpoot princes, the security of their possessions, and, above all, the prospect of their descendants mounting the throne, were motives that insured a cheerful acquiescence in the proposed alliances, and abated their

ardent love of independence, and contributed to render them contented in their tributary state. Accordingly, during the reigns of Jehanguire, Shah Jehan, and Aurengzeeb, the Rajpoot princes, were gradually allied to royal blood *.

Rajpootanah †, or country of the Rathore Rajpoots, in the imperial register is included in the province of Agimere. From Jypore, one of the principal cities, it extends 168 cofes ‡ to its north-western boundary of Bekanceer, a city which skirts the confines of the desert; to the eastward it extends 150 cofes, and is bounded on that quarter by Agrah; west by the city of Debalpore, on the banks of the Sutt-luz; and south by the province of Guzerat.

The principal river, the Puddar, rises in the mountainous part of the country; and, after traversing a vast extent, is discharged into the sea, near the gulph of Kutch.

Within the afore-mentioned tract are the cities of Oudipore, Joudpore, and Jypore, including the strong fortresses of Cheitore and Rintimpore; the former memorable for resisting the arms of the emperor Akbar; and the latter for having afforded an asylum to the families of Shah Jehan and Aurengzeeb, when in rebellion against their parents. These countries abound in cotton, opium, indigo,

* See Dow's Hindostaun — *passim*.

† In this description the author has availed himself of a Persian MS. intitled *Hudeeka Al Akauleem*, or a geographical account of several of the principal cities and provinces of Hindostaun. It is written by a learned native, and contains much curious and useful information.

‡ Cofs is equal to two British miles.

tobacco, and grain of various kinds, most of which articles are exported to Ahumudabad, the capital of Guzerat, which returns the manufactures of Europe and Persia. They have also a breed of excellent horses, which are in general use among the Marhatta armies. While the empire flourished, the revenues of the Agimere province were estimated at twenty-six millions; and the different Rajahs, when united, could bring into the field an army of 200,000 men, a force truly formidable, and which proved frequently fatal to the Mogul princes, even in the zenith of their power and authority. To conclude our remarks on this singular people, in the words of a spirited historian *, “ their situation enabled them to retaliate injuries in the “ center of the empire; but attached to their soil, as ground on “ which their deities as well as their ancestors had lived, few of “ their princes had been ambitious of increasing their territory.”

Towards the close of the last century, Jyasing, a prince no less celebrated for his warlike talents than for his reputation as a philosopher and a cultivator of the arts, founded the modern city of Jypore, which he called Jynagghar. It is situated in the central parts of Rajpootanah, and about 140 miles west of Agrah. The town is handsome and well built; the houses are of stone, and the streets, which are large and spacious, intersect each other at right angles. A citadel, which commands the town, is built upon a steep rock, around which extends a chain of fortifications four miles in circumference. In the town is to be seen an observatory, erected by the prince aforementioned, to which, during his life time, many eminent and

* Orme's Historical Fragments.

learned men were invited, where the science of astronomy was assiduously cultivated.

This city has of late years increased in commerce and opulence ; for since the communication through the province of Lahoor has been stopped by the Seiks, the merchants from the north have been accustomed to enter Hindostaun by the route of Jypore. Rock salt, iron, and copper, are found in the province ; and its revenues are estimated at five millions sterling.

The inhabitants are wholly Hindoos ; and their manners are represented by travellers to be hospitable and unaffected. Since the death of Jyasing, who may be considered as the founder of the present family, there has been a succession of four princes *. Purtaub Sing, who, as already remarked, was a minor in the hands of his guardians, from inexperience was incapable of governing and entirely under the guidance of others. During the late disturbances, his ministers taking advantage of the absence of the royal army, had neglected to send to court the customary tribute, which Shah-Aulum was determined to punish. He accordingly assembled the army, the command of which was given to the Nawaub Mujud Al Dowla. This nobleman, eager to gratify his own ambition, had long beheld with impatience the authority of Nujuff Khan : he thought the present opportunity favourable to his views ; and the absence of the captain general, who was employed in the Agrah province, gave him hopes of establishing his ascendancy over the mind of his sovereign,

* Jyasing Sewail, Alferi Sing, Prithi Sing, Madhco Sing.

and by the reduction of the Jypore country fix himself in power without controul.

The army being assembled, Mujud Al Dowla, accompanied by the king marched against Rewari, a large town in the dominions of Pertaub Sing, the place after a short resistance submitted, as did also the forts of Narnoul and Dhanfney. The success of these operations induced Mujud Al Dowla to carry the king to a greater distance, and to propose to his majesty to extend his circuit through the provinces of Agimere¹, under pretext of paying his devotions at the shrine of a Mahomedan saint. This plan which was to separate the king from Nujuff Khan, would in all probability have succeeded, had not a circumstance occurred which baffled his schemes, and led in the end to important consequences. Nujuff Khan hearing of the late successes, and perceiving the increased influence of Mujud Al Dowla, ventured on a personal visit to the royal camp; and leaving the care of Agrah to his friend Mahomed Beg Khan, he began his march towards Jypore. The ministers of Pertaub Sing, after the losses afore mentioned, finding farther resistance vain, now made overtures of submission in the name of their master, and a negociation accordingly commenced. A large pash-cush was offered on the part of the young Rajah, and professions of loyalty and attachment in his future conduct.—Pending this treaty, Nujuff Khan, who was informed of the circumstance, resolved it should not be terminated until his own arrival. He therefore, dispatched an express to the king, requesting that the treaty should not be concluded without him; and on his own authority forbade the Jypore Vakeel to proceed any farther in the affair. Com-

mands dictated in terms so forcible had the desired effect, and Shah-Aulum was compelled to acquaint Mujud Al Dowla of his acquiescence in the demands of his rival.

In a few days the army of Nujuff Khan arrived in the neighbourhood of the royal camp, and, to do the general honour, his majesty sent his third son, the Prince Yezdan Bukht, to meet and conduct him to the presence. A private conference was held on the occasion, and Mujud Al Dowla was convinced that the authority of his rival was too powerful to be overthrown. Pertaub Sing was now ordered to repair to the royal camp, and on presenting an offering of five lacks of rupees, received his majesty's pardon, and was restored to the government of the Jypore province. The army then returned to Delhi, where Nujuff Khan, soon after his arrival, celebrated the nuptials of his youngest daughter with the Nawaub Nujuff Cooly Khan. The marriage was honoured by the king's presence, and in a few days after Nujuff Khan returned to Agrah.

During the remainder of the current year, little occurs at Delhi worthy of notice; but the ensuing season exhibited a new scene of action, and occasioned a considerable alteration on the face of affairs at court. The Seiks, who for several years had confined themselves to their own territories, now suddenly appeared in great numbers on the frontiers. A great force under different leaders having assembled, entered the king's territories, and commenced their usual course of plunder and devastation. They soon penetrated as far as Carnal, a large city 100 miles north of the capital. Of this they took possession, and dispersed their parties in various

directions to overrun the province of Delhi. To repel this daring invasion, Mujud Al Dowla, accompanied by Furkhinda Bukht, a prince of the royal family, were ordered to take the field. Twenty thousand men, with a respectable train of artillery, were soon ready to march. Advancing by easy marches along the western bank of the river Jumna, the royal army reached Carnal without interruption. At this place Runjeet Sing and Deo Sing, two of the principal leaders of the Seiks, dispatched a vakeel to camp with offers of submission. They promised a pishcush of three lacks of rupees, and to recal their associates from their predatory incursions. Mujud Al Dowla acquiescing in the proposal, those chiefs were directed to attend the royal army in its future progress. Accordingly having evacuated the town of Carnal, they joined the minister. From Carnal, Mujud Al Dowla advanced to Puttiali, a town 60 coses north of the latter, and situated on the Seik frontier. That place was defended by Amur Sing, who with a numerous garrison, and abundance of provisions, resolved to sustain a siege. Amur Sing had, however, other motives for resistance; he was aware that a large reinforcement of Seiks had left Lahore, and might shortly be expected at Puttiali; nor was he without hope that even in the event of their non-arrival, and the town being hard pressed, but that he should be able to gain over the minister to his views, by the aid of all-powerful gold. However this might have been, Mujud Al Dowla besieged the place in form; but many days had not elapsed, when it was announced to the army, that a negotiation for peace was in train. Amur Sing consenting to become tributary, commissioners were appointed on both sides to draw up an amicable treaty. The conferences accordingly commenced; but an act of treachery

on the part of the Seiks, and in which it was suspected the minister had a considerable share, suddenly dissolved the meeting. To relate with precision the circumstances which led to this breach of faith, we must recollect that the Seik chieftains, who had submitted at Carnal, were still in the royal camp. They having received advice of the expected reinforcement of their countrymen being near at hand, sent notification of it to Amar Sing; at the same time advising that chief by some means or other to break off the treaty then pending.

Agreeably to this information, Amar Sing exhibited to the commissioners many shuffling evasions and pretexts; and to this was added an haughty and contemptuous behaviour, which could not be mistaken. Rajah Daieram, the chief commissioner, perceiving his drift, quitted the town of Pattiali, and with his associates returned to camp.

Meanwhile the traitors there endeavoured by studied respect to preclude all suspicion of their fidelity in the mind of the minister. Mujud Al Dowla said nothing; and his shameful supineness on this occasion in suffering the insults sustained by the royal commissioners at Pattiali to pass unnoticed, afforded additional proofs of his collusion in the disgraceful scene. Early on the following morning, Runjeet Sing and his associate suddenly left the camp: a party was directed to go in pursuit of them; this party had scarcely cleared the advanced posts of the army, when they discovered the vanguard of an immense host of Seiks, who by forced marches had advanced thus far unnoticed. At the same instant Amar Sing, of

Pattiali, issuing out of the fort, covered the retreat of the traitors, and with them shortly after joined the troops from Lahoor. The Seiks now made a violent attack on all sides: accustomed to a desultory mode of warfare, they charged the line in several parts at once, and by the fierceness of their onset, threw the king's troops into confusion. The whole army would now have been sacrificed had not the officer who commanded in the rear, by a well-directed fire of his artillery, given a timely check to the enemy. The king's troops were, however, compelled to retire; and for four days made a disgraceful and disorderly retreat. On the fifth day, the army reached Panniput, under the walls of which they encamped. Here the Seiks quitted them; and unfatigued with success, and fiercely thirsting for plunder, they divided into separate columns, and crossing the Jumna, spread themselves over the upper parts of the Doo Ab, committing every where acts of cruelty, devastation, and death.

The late disgraceful scenes had excited in the army universal indignation against Mujud Al Dowla. On him the eyes of all men were bent; and numbers scrupled not openly to accuse him of having been bribed by the Seiks to betray the king's interests, and devote his army to utter ruin. If, indeed, it be considered that a finer and better appointed army never marched from Delhi, that they were flushed with recent successes, and animated by the presence of a prince of the blood; that this army should be incompetent to sustain the shock of a tumultuous rabble, appeared incredible in the eyes of all men, and proved the reproaches thrown on the minister to be strictly merited. Even after the enemy had re-

tired, instead of remaining on the frontier to recover his soldiers from their late depression, he, as if panic struck, marched precipitately to the capital, thereby leaving the whole country exposed in his rear, and the wretched inhabitants a prey to the ravages of those barbarous invaders. But he was soon to receive a punishment adequate to his deserts.

Intelligence of this disastrous event arriving at Delhi, consternation and dismay seized on all. The king was highly incensed at the base conduct of Mujud Al Dowla; and to prevent farther ill consequences, required the immediate attendance of the captain general. It was indeed high time for some effectual interference. On one hand the Seiks were filling the Doo Ab with outrage and devastation, while on the other several of the Zemindars, availing themselves of the confusion of the times, rose in arms in many parts of the country.

The minister, who by this time had reached Delhi, on his arrival laboured incessantly to remove from the king's mind all suspicion of his fidelity. He entered into a long defence of his conduct, wherein he attempted to prove that the late disaster was imputable not to his want of attachment, but to the common accidents of war; that for himself he had ever been one of the foremost in zeal and exertion for his majesty's service.

Shah-Aulum, who was not in a condition as yet to refute the arguments of his minister, (that nobleman's guards having possession of the palace) apparently accepted his apologies; but the sequel

inclined all thinking persons to conclude, that the king was in his own mind resolved on his disgrace. It must here be remembered that Mujud Al Dowla, from his extensive influence at court, had a strong party in his favour in the army; that he, moreover, was in possession of the king's person and the citadel, and therefore resolved to oppose his enemies by force of arms. It was justly feared that the contention between the rival chiefs would, to the citizens of Delhi, be attended with considerable mischief, if not of bloodshed.

These alarms, however, were happily subdued by the conduct and dexterity of the captain general, who was now on his way to the capital. By means of his emissaries, dispersed throughout the city, he, by large bribes and promises of preferment, drew over to his own views the leading chiefs of the minister's party. Secure on this head, he hesitated not to carry his designs into instant execution.

On his arrival in the neighbourhood, the prince Furkhinda Bukht and Mujud Al Dowla were ordered to meet and conduct the captain general to court. Prior to Mujud Al Dowla's quitting the citadel, he received information of the intended combination against him. He was told of the designs of his enemies to seize him, and of the king's acquiescence and secret indignation toward him: finally, they recommended him to be upon his guard; and, in the strongest manner, urged him to remain within the citadel, where, with the force he possessed, he might bid defiance to the united efforts of his enemies. Staggered at the unexpected intelligence, the minister for a moment paused. But impelled by an unaccountable infatuation, he

relied on the king's personal favour, and, maugre the intreaties of his friends, resolved to go on.

Scarcely had the prince's retinue quitted the city, when Afrasiab Khan, a young foldier of fortune, who had been bred in the camp and in the family of Zulficar Al Dowla, at the head of 500 horse, seized on the gate; thence proceeding to the citadel, he compelled the garrison, who had been stationed there by Mujud Al Dowla, to lay down their arms and evacuate the fort. They obeyed: the spirited youth then took possession for Shah-Aulum in the name of his benefactor. The king having taken no notice of this transaction, it was supposed his majesty was apprised of the whole plan prior to its execution.

By this time the prince and Mujud Al Dowla had reached the camp of the captain general. After a few complimentary ceremonies, the minister was informed that he was no more to visit the king. Perceiving his disgrace inevitable, he begged leave to return to his palace in the city. This was allowed, but a guard was sent along with him; and shortly after the whole of his property, amounting to more than twenty lacks of rupees, was seized, and confiscated to the use of the captain general.

In a court so fruitful of revolutions as Delhi, the removal or death of a minister is in general viewed by the people with perfect apathy and indifference: yet on this occasion, Mujud Al Dowla's conduct in the late expedition had excited a disgust among all ranks; which, added to his former acts of rapacity and oppression to supply the

extravagance of the court, altogether rendered his disgrace justly merited.

Zulficar Al Dowlah, on his presentation at court, was received by Shah-Aulum with marks of the most affectionate respect. In return he made an offering of four lacks of rupees, together with some beautiful Persian horses for the use of the king's stable. The palace of the late vizir Cummir Aldeen Khan was assigned for the residence of the new minister, who from henceforth determined to fix his residence at Delhi.

The dismissal of Mujud Al Dowla from all his employments occasioned some alterations in the arrangement of offices. At the recommendation of the captain general, the prince Mirza Juwaun Bukht was made superintendant of the bathing apartments; prince Furkhinda Bukht, Meer Atush, or Grand Master of Artillery; and his majesty honoured the captain general himself with the high office of Vakeel Mutluck, or Absolute Director General of the affairs of the empire.

The commencement of 1781 was taken up in preparations for punishing the Seiks. That lawless banditti were still ravaging the upper parts of the Doo Ab. To chastise them, Mirza Shuffee Khan, a young nobleman who possessed great military experience, was detached from the capital with a body of twelve thousand men, and a suitable train of artillery. After crossing the Jumna, he went in quest of the enemy; and after several ineffectual skirmishes and

a desultory warfare, he at last brought them to a general and decisive action.

On the 15th of August, under the walls of Meerut, he attacked them with great gallantry and spirit: the king's troops, stimulated by the remembrance of their disgrace the preceding year, and burning for revenge, exerted on this occasion their utmost efforts to make an honourable amend. Success crowned their wishes in a total overthrow of the enemy with a terrible slaughter. Sahib Sing, their leader, with several other commanders of note, were slain on the spot, and upwards of 5000 men. Dispirited at this loss, the Seiks returned in the utmost confusion, crossed the Jumna with precipitation, and finally took refuge in their own territories, which afforded relief to the miserable inhabitants over whom for the space of several months they had exercised the most uncontrolled and unbounded severity.

After the victory, Mirza Shuffee Khan humanely directed his attention to the distresses of the inhabitants; and to afford them solid proofs of his benevolent intentions, he, in the name of his majesty, granted them a remission of taxes for a year.

Order being once more restored, he returned in triumph to the capital. Had the advantages we have above detailed been pursued with a vigour proportionate to the occasion, there is no doubt but the most substantial benefits would have accrued to the royal cause. The enemy were totally dispirited with their losses; and by natural consequence, were at variance with each other, and incapable of

resistance. Here then was a most favourable opportunity afforded for extending the king's influence from the environs of his capital even to the Attock; and of establishing his authority on so secure and permanent a base as in future to have effectually precluded all attempts of his ambitious neighbours, or, what was to him of more consequence, to keep within bounds his own rebellious subjects.—Unfortunately for the state, these advantages were not followed up; nor could the prime minister be prevailed on to re-assemble the army for an invasion of the Punjab. He was now advancing in years, and had become indolent, to which it might be added the minister could not without jealousy behold the abilities and rising fortunes of Mirza Shuffee Khan. High spirited and active, that nobleman had gained the attachment of the soldiery in a very uncommon degree; and by acts of liberality and munificence, he was careful to confirm them in their sentiments.

Meanwhile, as the person most fit for the appointment, Mirza Shuffai was nominated to the command of the frontier station; and accordingly having received his dismissal from the presence, attended by a considerable force, he repaired to the city of Panniput.

About this time ambassadors from Lahoore arrived at court.—They brought letters of submission from the principal chiefs, which were accompanied by a large pailhcuish in money, and a promise of the payment in future of a regular tribute. The city of Carnal was likewise restored to the king; and the ambassadors moreover made a pecuniary compensation for the losses sustained in the late invasion.

Shah-Aulum now celebrated the nuptials of his second son, Prince Akbar Shah, with a princess of the royal family. The ceremony was performed with much splendour at the house of the minister, who took this opportunity of gratifying his master by bestowing liberal presents on the new-married pair.

Toward the latter end of the current year, died the Prince Furk-hinda Bukht. His remains were interred in the mausoleum of Humaioon, the general repository of the ashes of the house of Timoor*.

The death of the prince was followed shortly after by that of the minister. He had been much afflicted for several preceding years with a severe rheumatic complaint. This was increased by a complication of other disorders occasioned by an irregular mode of life, which at length inflamed his humours to such a degree of acrimony as rendered life a burthen to him. In this deplorable state, he languished for several months, till in the month of April 1782, he expired in the palace of Sefdar Jung, sincerely regretted by his sovereign, who visited him during his illness, and lamented by the inhabitants of Delhi, who loved and revered him. He was buried in the sepulchre of Ali Mirdaun Khan.

Mirza Nujuff Khan Zulficar Al Dowla was a native of Persia: by the mother's side, he claimed his descent from the royal house of Sefi, who, at the commencement of the present century, sat on

the throne of Persia. When Nadir Shah usurped that government, he put under confinement all the relative branches of the royal family who remained. Among those were the mother of Nujuff Khan: she had two children, himself and a sister, named Khadeeja Sultaun.

In 1746, Mirza Mohuffun, brother of Sefdar Jung, Soobadar of Oude, was sent on an embassy to the Persian court. By his intercession, the family obtained their liberty; when the mother, preferring to remain in her native country, Mirza Mohuffun carried back into Hindostaun Mirza Nujuff Khan and his sister, at that time about thirteen years old. This princess was shortly after married to her deliverer, and had by him one son, who, in process of time, became governor of Allahabad. In that station Mahmud Cooli Khan, the person above mentioned, was, by order of Shuja Al Dowla, most basely assassinated*.

Mirza Nujuff Khan, at the time of his nephew's decease, was likewise in the vizir's service.—But Shuja having taken an aversion to him, which most probably arose from an unworthy jealousy of his superior accomplishments, treated him in several instances with marked disrespect. The high spirit of Nujuff Khan could not brook these indignities, and accordingly quitted for ever the dominions of Oude.

In the year 1762, he repaired to Patna, where Cossim Ali Khan,

* At the fort of Jelaulabad, about five miles distant from the city of Lucknow.

Nabob of Bengal, at that time held his court. That prince taking Nujuff Khan into his service, he was promoted to the command of a body of Mogul horse. He was employed during the war that soon after broke out between the Sooba and the British government, and was present at the attack of Oudah Nulla, and other places; and on all occasions conducted himself with vigour, spirit, and gallantry.

On the defeat of Shuja Dowla at the memorable battle of Buxar, and the total ruin of the affairs of the unfortunate Coffim, Mirza Nujuff Khan being unwilling to trust to the vizir's clemency, sought an asylum in Boghilocund. Here he remained until the treaty of Allahabad in 1765, when he was sent for by Shah-Aulum; and at his recommendation, Lord Clive gave him a pension of two lacks of rupees, chargeable on the revenues of the Corah province*.

On his majesty's retreat from Allahabad, Nujuff Khan accompanied the court; and from that period he rose, as we have seen in the preceding pages, to the first offices and highest honours in the state.

Mirza Nujuff Khan, by his powerful influence, high military character, and unrelaxed attention to business, was well fitted to conduct the affairs of the empire with a vigorous and steady hand. He restored order and tranquillity to the almost-ruined provinces;

* See the reports of the select committee.

and by his wife administration, recruited in a considerable degree the exhausted finances.

Though continually surrounded by numerous and warlike enemies, the abilities of the captain general were equal to the contest. By a steady and undeviating pursuit in his designs, he at length triumphed over all his enemies, and reaped the fruits of his well-earned labours by erecting for himself a noble principality. This, consisting of the province of Agra, of which he was governor, the adjoining countries of Merut and Macheri, the whole of the Jaut territories, and greater part of the Doo Ab, altogether yielding a revenue of two millions sterling. His establishment was magnificent and extensive; and he lived in a manner worthy a prince.

To great skill in military affairs, Nujuff Khan added the happy talent of being able to conciliate the attachment of his troops in an uncommon degree. The soldiers admired his patience under adversity, his affability, generosity, and manliness of spirit; and though, from a variety of circumstances, and the fluctuating changes incident to an Asiatic army, they were not unfrequently thrown into discontent, and some times even to mutiny, Nujuff Khan, on these critical occasions, never failed, by his address and dexterity, to pacify the most unruly without a diminution of his own authority.--A rare and fortunate example.

That no other person was equally capable to combine and keep together such a variety of discordant interests as the policy of an

Eastern government ever exhibits, was effectually evinced in the examples of his successors.

Upon the whole, we may, with justice, ascribe to Nujuff Khan the character of an able statesman, a skilful commander, and a humane and benevolent man. Polite and affable in his manners to all persons, which is indeed proverbial to his countrymen, he was generous to his dependants, and strictly just. His death was deservedly regretted by Shah-Aulum, who certainly owed to Mirza Nujuff Khan a situation more respectable than he had before, or was hereafter, destined to experience *.

* The foregoing account of the family of Nujuff Khan is extracted from a Persian MS. in the author's possession; it is entitled *Khazanah Omrah*, or Biography of the Mogul Nobility, a work frequently mentioned by Oriental historians.

CHAP. VII.

Transactions at Court subsequent to the Death of ZULFICAR AL DOWLA—AFRASIAB KHAN appointed Minister—Dissentions among the MOGUL Lords—Elevation of MIRZA SHUFFEE KHAN—Intrigues—He is assassinated before DEIG—Re-appointment of AFRASIAB KHAN—Reflections.

UNTIL Nujuff Khan's death, affairs at court, though at times interrupted by temporary dissentions and disagreements betwixt the Mogul nobles, had by the active vigilance of the captain-general been amicably settled. But their turbulent spirit, however, restrained during his life time, now broke forth with a fury which was totally ungovernable. Hence in the sequel of this history we shall be reduced to the painful necessity of recording scenes of violence, anarchy, and bloodshed. Shah-Aulum advancing in years, and destitute of that energy and vigour of mind so necessary to stem the torrent, was compelled as occasions demanded to yield to its force, and the unhappy king, in the evening of life, had the mortification to perceive his authority totally annihilated, and himself become a wretched pageant in the hands of his rebellious subjects.

Among the principal competitors for power was Afrasiab Khan. This young foldier, bred in the camp, and under the eye of the late captain-general, had by his military talents acquired the affections of the army. He was nominated to the post of Ameer Al

notice of Afrafiab Khan, and on receiving information of it from his emissaries, he determined by a vigorous measure, at once to bring the matter to issue. Repairing to the palace, he, in peremptory terms demanded the dismissal of Mirza Shuffee, and told the king that perceiving his enemies had formed a plan to subvert his authority, it was incumbent on him by every means in his power, to prevent such an act of injustice. That with respect to the appearance of Mirza Shuffee at the capital, he must be called on to assign his motives for quitting his station on the frontiers without leave obtained, and in manifest violation of his oath of allegiance. Afrafiab Khan concluded with remarking the improper conduct of the Princess Khadejee Sultaun, whom he knew acted in concert with his enemies, and urged the necessity of laying some restraint upon her ambitious and intriguing spirit. He charged, her with a design to degrade his majesty's authority; and finally concluded his remonstrance, with a requisition for that princess immediately to deliver up the fortrefs of Agrah, with the cannon and warlike stores contained therein. Shah-Aulum under the restraint of his minister acquiesced in his demands, and accordingly Mirza Shuffee was called upon by letter to state his reasons for having quitted his station. This vigorous measure, though it alarmed Mirza Shuffee, did not incline him to relinquish his pursuits. Instead of answering to the charge, he advanced his camp opposite the Ajimere gate of the city, which he closely blockaded.

The aspect of affairs was gloomy. The rival chiefs were each determined to rest the issue of their respective claims to the sword, and a scene of tumult and horror was apprehended by the peaceful

inhabitants. At this crisis of affairs an unexpected circumstance arose, which defeated the designs of the prime minister, and gave the palm of success to his opponent. During the disputes above related, Mahomed Beg Khan Hamdani, who was governor of Agrah on the part of Nujuff Khan, availing himself of the confusion of the times, resolved to participate in the spoils. He left the fort of Agrah, and began to plunder and lay waste the country, but his vengeance was principally directed against the Jagheer of Afrasiab Khan, of whose authority he was jealous. Afrasiab Khan deeming the preservation of his estate preferable to maintaining his authority at court, determined to retire. But previous to taking that step he delivered over the citadel to his associate Mujud Al Dowla, and at his departure told the king he would soon return, and take vengeance of his enemies. He then with a select body of horse took the road to Agrah.

Scarcely had Afrasiab Khan left the city, when Mirza Shuffee Khan marched in with his whole force. His success was rapid, having secured the gates and principal avenues to the palace, he detached a party to surround the houses of Mujud Al Dowla, Lutafut Khan, Nujuff Cooli Khan, and other chiefs, attached to his rival. After a short, but desperate resistance, in which several were slain, those noblemen were compelled to submit; and Mirza Shuffee, elevated with his success, repaired in triumph to the palace. He was immediately invested with the dignity of Ameer Al Omrah, and the supreme administration of affairs. Tranquillity being restored in the city, Mirza Shuffee paid a visit to the Princess Khadeja Sultaun. After mutual congratulations the princess presented him with a large sum of money, of which he was much in

want, and to confirm his authority by every means in her power, she bestowed on him in marriage the only remaining daughter of her deceased brother. The nuptials were celebrated with much splendour at her own charge.

Arrived at the height of his ambition, it might naturally be conjectured that Mirza Shuffee would omit no precautions to confirm his authority upon a solid basis. But in his subsequent conduct he was highly reprehensible. That conduct which had acquired him the affection of the troops and the support of the officers, now appeared to have forsaken him. His demeanour on a sudden became haughty and imperious, which excited murmuring and discontent in the breasts of his associates, and their effect were for him but too soon apparent. In the mean time we must direct our attention to the deposed minister. Afrasiab Khan hearing of the late revolution, wisely resolved to make Mahomed Beg Khan Hamdani his friend. He being equally well disposed to a compromise, a treaty was accordingly drawn up, in which it was agreed to join their forces and march forthwith to Delhi, to reinstate Afrasiab Khan in his authority, and afterwards sharing in a mutual administration.

In the mean time their views were advanced, though unintentionally towards them, by the disclosure of a plan which had been concerted under the auspices of the Prince Juwaun Bukht, which produced a new revolution in affairs. That prince, who had long been indignant at the degraded situation of the royal authority, thought the absence of Afrasiab Khan a favourable opportunity for prosecuting a plan for the king's relief, and of taking a share of the government to himself. He had for this purpose privately gained

over to his views Lutafut Ali Khan, Mahomed Yacoob, and some other lords. To the weight of their influence, was added that of Mr. Pauly, a French officer, who commanded the disciplined battalions of the late Somroo.

The plan of operations having been thoroughly digested, Mirza Juwaun Bukht, accompanied by his associates, disclosed it to Shah-Aulum. They strenuously urged his majesty to dismiss Mirza Shuffee Khan from his employments, and to re-assume his authority, and punish the rebels. They concluded by recommending the immediate arrest of the minister, whom Mr. Pauly undertook to secure. Shah-Aulum signifying his acquiescence, the conspirators prepared to carry their plan into execution. It was however rendered needless by the voluntary departure of Mirza Shuffee Khan. He was that very morning exercising his troops on the sands of the Jumna, when he received an account of the plan for his destruction. He saw his danger, and finding his troops insufficient to face the combination, prudently resolved to retire. The Nawaub Mujud Al Dowla and about 1000 horse, accompanied him in his flight. They took the road to Agrah. On Mirza Shuffee's departure, the king mounting an elephant proceeded directly to the *Jumma Musjed**, where he received the compliments of the nobility, and distributed a large sum of money to the troops. His majesty then invested the Prince Juwaun Bukht with the office of Ameer Al Omrah, and returned to the palace. But this triumph of the court was of very short duration, and the principal actors in the late transaction were

* The principal mosque in the city of Delhi. See Appendix 1.

soon destined to experience a sad reverse of fortune. Indeed every attempt of this ill-fated monarch to emancipate himself from the restraints imposed by his rebellious servants, seems only in the conclusion to have rendered his situation more wretched.

Mirza Shuffee and his associate on quitting Delhi, determined to seek an asylum in the camp of his inveterate foes. But it must be recollected that circumstances were now materially altered. He, like them, was a fugitive, and a sense of their common danger had moreover naturally reconciled the exiled chiefs to a combination of their mutual interest. Mahomed Beg, Mirza Shuffee, and Afrasiab Khan, having met in the neighbourhood of Muttra, after a mutual interchange of compliments, drew up a solemn treaty to the following effect: 1. An equal division was to be made of the lands, possessed by the late Nawaub Zulficar Al Dowla. 2. Mirza Shuffee Khan to be re-instated in the post of prime minister, and to remain at Delhi. 3. In consideration of Afrasiab Khan yielding up his claim to the chief direction of affairs, he was to be left in joint authority with Mahomed Beg Khan, to rule in the Doo Ab and south west of the Jumna. The treaty was concluded by an unanimous assurance of inflicting on their enemies the most exemplary punishments. The united forces of these powerful chiefs then commenced their march towards the capital. On the road they were joined by Pertaub Row of Maeheri. On reaching Fereedabad, a town about twelve miles south of Delhi, the confederates encamped, and from hence resolved to dictate to the emperor their own terms. Agreeably to this resolution, Mujud Al Dowla was dispatched to court. He was commissioned in the name of the confederates to declare

to Shah-Aulum, their resolution to maintain their allegiance to his majesty, but at the same time to state the necessity of restoring to Mirza Shuffee Khan, that authority of which by the machinations of his enemies he had been so unjustly deprived.

The arrival of this ambassador created the most alarming apprehensions in the king's mind. A council was assembled on the occasion, when Prince Juwaun Bukt spiritedly proposed to oppose the rebels by force. He observed to his majesty with much judgment, that should the rebels obtain their insolent demands, there was no reasonable ground in future to hope that any respect would be paid to his majesty, but that the traitors, as the natural effect of an easy compliance, would not rest satisfied without the complete degradation of the royal authority. The prince was supported in his opinion by the whole council, and Mr. Pauly affirmed that his own force was of itself sufficient to overthrow and disperse the rebels. But the king with a pusillanimity totally unworthy of him, which arose from a fear of sustaining insults should the rebels be successful, rejected the salutary advice of his son, and commanded him in concert with Mr. Pauly to enter into an amicable agreement with the confederates. Many persons at Delhi scrupled not to affirm, that the king on this occasion, was swayed by the intrigues carrying on in the haram. That the Princess Khadejee Sultaun, the aunt of Mirza Shuffee, had persuaded his majesty to pacific measures. It is most probable that to the latter cause may be attributed his irresolution. Pauly and Lutafut therefore, were charged with the negotiation, and to give appearance of greater cordiality on the part of his majesty, the Prince Juwaun Bukht was directed to accompany the

commissioners to the rebel camp. Mean while a plan of which Afrafiab Khan is said to have been the contriver, was agitated in the councils of the confederates. They agreed to the propositions for peace, but, instigated by a revengeful spirit, descended to the perpetration of an atrocious act.

A general reconciliation of parties being agreed to, and properly ratified by the respective signatures, Prince Mirza Juwaun Bukht, accompanied by Pauly and Lutafut, left the city and proceeded to the confederate armies. But scarcely had the devoted victims entered the camp, when a party of horse, who had been placed in ambuscade, suddenly issuing from their concealment, attacked and dispersed the followers of the commissioners, seized and overpowered those unfortunate men, and by a bloody process struck off the head of Mr. Pauly, and deprived Lutafut of fight. The army of the rebels then attacked the battalions of the commissioners, whom as they were totally unprepared for the treachery, were easily overpowered. To the prince they promised implicit obedience, and shortly after in his company entered the city in triumph.

Shah-Aulum, thus reduced, was constrained to receive the rebels with apparent satisfaction and marks of respect. Mirza Shuffee was reinstated in his authority, and the other chiefs were honoured with titles and dignities.

From the ascendancy thus acquired by Mirza Shuffee, had he pursued an upright conduct, there was every prospect of his authority being permanent. But it soon appeared that the late reconciliation of

the contending chiefs was temporary and insincere. The prime minister, in order to restore tranquillity to the province of Agra, which had suffered much by the tumults before mentioned, resolved to repair thither in person: he took with him the prince Solimaun Shekoo. We may recollect the stipulations made in the treaty of Agra the preceding year. Mahomed Beg Khan Hamduni, who deemed himself the principal instrument in the restoration of the minister's authority, now called on him for the performance of his agreement. He demanded his share of the lands of the late Zulficar Al Dowla. Mirza Shuffee, whether he thought his authority too firmly established to be again shaken, or jealous of divided sway, refused compliance with the terms of the treaty.

Mahomed Beg Khan, justly incensed at this breach of faith, gave vent to the natural ferocity of his disposition, and resolved to take a severe revenge. It is probable, however, that the minister might have warded off the blow, had he not by an act of equal folly and injustice, hurried the whole body of the Mogul nobility into acts of open hostility. It will be necessary here to develop the causes of sudden revolution which led to the extinction, not only of his authority, but his life. To an unbounded ambition, Mirza Shuffee unfortunately added an inextinguishable avarice: actuated by that unworthy passion, he in a fatal moment determined to resume those lands which had been granted by the late Nujuff Khan as *Jaidad* for the maintenance of the troops of the different Mogul lords. In lieu of these, he determined it should henceforth be disbursed by monthly payments from the royal treasury. His commands, when notified to the different chiefs, excited universal murmurings and dis-

content. But Mirza Shuffee enforced obedience to his orders.—Fatal were the consequences which followed this rash and impolitic measure. The commanders, irritated at the unworthy treatment, with justice deemed their services merited a return far different; and under the impulse of passion, hurried themselves into the commission of a crime of the blackest dye. Afrafiab Khan, Mahomed Beg Khan, and other lords, entered into a conspiracy to assassinate the minister; and bound themselves, after the perpetration of the deed, to place Afrafiab Khan in the authority of the deceased, and to restore the Jaiedads. The more effectually to conceal their intentions, it was agreed to invite Mirza Shuffee, who was by this time advanced towards Agrah, to an amicable conference, to reconcile and settle their mutual disputes.

On the 23d of September of the current year, the two armies met, and encamped in the neighbourhood of Deig. Though the conspiracy we have before related, had been planned with the utmost secrecy and caution, it, by some means or other, reached the ears of Mirza Shuffee's friends: and previous to the intended interview, the prime minister was warned of the treacherous designs of his enemies. But Mirza Shuffee rejected the information as a concerted falsehood; and totally regardless of personal safety, accompanied by a few followers, he proceeded on his visit. The army of Mahomed Beg Khan was drawn out as if ready to receive and compliment the minister. Each of the chiefs was mounted on his elephant; as the animal on which Mirza Shuffee rode approached the other, Mahomed Beg Khan, conformable to established usage, rose up, saluted, and embraced his rival; but in the performance of

that act, having seized hold of the minister's right hand, which was the signal agreed on, Mirza Ismaeel Beg, his nephew, who sat in the Khawafs *, plunged a dagger into the body of the devoted victim. He groaned, fell back, and expired. A desperate action ensued between the armies; but at length Afrasiab Khan, exerting his influence, persuaded the troops of the late minister to join the confederates. The body of Mirza Shuffee was taken up by his followers, and interred in the fort of Deig.

Of this event Afrasiab Khan having sent notification to Delhi, an answer was received, expressive of the king's approbation of the deed. At the same time a firmaun arrived, which constituted Afrasiab Khan, Ameer Al Omrah, and moreover gave permission to appropriate to his own use the effects of the late minister. Finally, Afrasiab Khan and prince Solymaun Shekoo were ordered to repair to the capital with all possible expedition.

The indifference with which this important trust was conferred upon Afrasiab, creates a suspicion that the fate which had befallen Mirza Shuffee was not disagreeable to his majesty. A generous mind, on this surmise, deplores the humiliating situation of a descendant of Timoor, sanctioning acts disgraceful to humanity, and subversive of the principles of moral and social order.

When Mirza Shuffee was assassinated, his brother, Zein Al Abu-

* The Khawafs is the back seat on an elephant, in which a person is usually placed with a *Chawri*, or fan. At court, and amongst the nobility, it is deemed the highest honour to be placed there.

deen Khan, was governor of Meerut. The king, tenacious of the power which he derived from that situation, determined upon his removal. A mandate was accordingly issued for that nobleman's appearance at court. He was received with respect. Shah-Aulum, after condoling with him on the death of his brother, intimated to him the necessity there was to resign his government. Zein Al Abudeen, who was a man of impatient temper, in secret burnt with indignation at this unworthy treatment; at the time, however, he said nothing; but on retiring from the hall of audience, he repaired to his own palace, whence he privately departed. Sensible that this conduct would enrage the king, he hastened to Meerut; and determined to resist the royal authority, he there collected around him his friends and dependants.

Intelligence of this defection reaching Afrasiab Khan, he assembled the army, led it to Meerut, and invested the town. He had determined to have punished the rebel in the most exemplary manner; but this determination was overruled by the advice of his confidential officers. They represented that his power in the state was as yet infirm, and it therefore became him first to make overtures for negotiation, to which, in all probability, Zein Al Abudeen would assent. Nor were they deceived in their conjectures. Intimation being given, a treaty was set on foot; and Zein Al Abudeen consenting to submit to his majesty's clemency, was pardoned. He was received at court with honour, and a stipend out of the royal treasury was allotted for his support.

The prime minister returning to Delhi, was received with great

distinction. He answered Shah-Aulum with protestations of perpetual attachment; and as proof, presented his majesty with an offering of three lacks of rupees, and some valuable Persian horses.

Cuttub Al Dowla was now sent to command in Meerut; and Nujuff Cooli Khan, son-in-law to the late minister, who had till now resided at Meerut, was directed to remain at court.

In the beginning of 1784, Major Brown, who had been commissioned on a deputation to the king by the supreme council of Calcutta, arrived at the capital. The Major was received with high respect; and in behalf of the British government, presented Shah-Aulum a handsome *paishcush*.

The arrival of this deputation excited various emotions in the minds of the Delhians; some were of opinion that the period was at hand when Shah-Aulum would return to the protection of his oldest and, in truth, his best friends, the English: others again conjectured that the intent of the embassy was, to arrange with the minister the concerns of the royal family. These, during the late commotions, had arisen to a height which was truly distressful. But the real cause of Major Brown's arrival * was in consequence of orders he had received from his government, not to decline any overture that might be made for affording a military aid to the royal cause. The Sikhs had for several years back, by their predatory incursions into Doo Ab and Rohilcund, excited alarm in the go-

* See the proceedings of parliament on the trial of Mr. Hastings.

vernment of Afuf Al Dowla: and Mr. Hastings, the British governor, with his usual discernment, deemed the exertions of the court of Delhi might, at the present juncture of affairs, prove a beneficial counterpoise to the rising power of the Seiks.

Many days had not elapsed since the arrival of Major Brown, when an event occurred which created much confusion in the palace, and led, in its future consequences, to concerns of momentous import. The heir apparent, prince Mirza Juwaun Bukht, disgusted at the daily insults he received from the minister, resolved to throw himself on the protection of the vizir and the English: he hoped thereby to procure ease to himself, and an alleviation to the distresses of his family. Escaping from the palace at midnight, he crossed the Jumna, and repaired to Lucknow. But as the fortunes of Mirza Juwaun Bukht will hereafter be detailed in their proper order, it is here only necessary to point out the immediate effects of his flight from the capital.

Afrasiab Khan, conscious of the ill treatment the unhappy prince had, through his means, endured, was fearful of the vizir's* resentment. He thought, therefore, that the most effectual means of obviating this would be, to persuade the heir apparent to return to Delhi. Accordingly, he, in the king's name, sent letters to the vizir and Mr. Hastings, who was then at Lucknow, demanding, in terms most peremptory, the immediate return of the fugitive prince. Although Shah-Aulum, by affixing his seal to the dispatches, ap-

* Afuf Al Dowla.

parently functioned the demands of his minister, it is certain, that in his own mind he was not averse to the escape of his son. If, indeed, his unhappy situation be thoroughly considered, it is not to be wondered at he should endeavour by any means in his power to obtain relief.

Some days after the departure of the letters before mentioned, Major Brown, the British Ambassador, was requested to proceed to Lucknow. He accordingly repaired thither. Afrasiab Khan deeming his authority fully established, now threw off the mask, and exhibited himself in his natural colours. He first proposed to the king to march to Agrah, the object of which he affirmed was the restoration of that province to order. Had he rested here, it would have redounded to the honour of Afrasiab; but impelled by a jealousy against Mahomed Beg Khan totally unwarrantable, he, at the close of the conference, in vehement language urged the king to revenge the assassination of the late minister in the punishment of Mahomed Beg. His majesty perceiving the invidious drift, turned from the minister with coldness, and retired into his haram.

The source of this extraordinary demand may, without difficulty, be traced in the rivalry of the two chiefs. Mahomed Beg Khan, though certainly guilty of an atrocious act, deserved not punishment from the hands of Afrasiab. It has before been seen, that the minister himself, in conjunction with the Mogul Sirdars, had urged and stimulated him to the deed; and for this he was now to become a sacrifice at the shrine of his imperious coadjutor.

Astonished at the king's abrupt departure, Afrasiab Khan, in fullen silence, retired to his own palace. Giving loose to his resentment, he there determined on a measure equally violent and unjust. At the conference above mentioned, the Nuwaub Mujud Al Dowla had been present. That nobleman having endeavoured to dissuade the king from his intended expedition to Agrah, the officious remark passed not unnoticed by the haughty spirit of Afrasiab. He now directed Nujuff Cooli Khan, his dependant, to lead a party of guards to the palace of Mujud Al Dowla, and seize his person. His orders were obeyed with alacrity, and the unfortunate man again found himself in the course of a few short hours reduced from affluence and command to penury and a prison. His property was seized, and converted to the minister's use. Mujud Al Dowla was afterwards confined in the fort of Agrah, where he died in 1788; not much regretted, except by Shah-Aulum, whose confidence he had so frequently abused by the commission of oppressive acts upon his subjects. He was an intriguing artful courtier, avaricious, and insolent. Shah-Aulum, when informed of this outrage, was filled with the deepest indignation. He resolved therefore, at all events, to throw himself into the hands of the Marhattas; and by a foreign aid, to relieve himself from the insupportable insults daily offered him by his own subjects.



Madhajee Sindiah.

From an Original in the Possession of Tho^d Daniell Esq^r

CHAP. VIII.

Rise and Progress of MADHAJEE SINDIAH, Ruler of MALWAH, from the Establishment of his Family in that Province until his Interference in the Politics of the Court of DELHI—Intrigues of AFRASIAB KHAN—His Death and Character—SINDIAH is made Prime Minister.

FROM the preceding scenes of party violence, the reader will with pleasure follow history through the more edifying detail of geographical information. We shall proceed, therefore, to take a retrospective view of the Malwah province, in its fluctuating state under a succession of rulers. But the considerable influence acquired by Madhajee Sindiah in the politics of Hindostan, previously demands attention to the rise and progressive fortune of this extraordinary man.

Madhajee Sindiah Putteel Bahadur was descended from a Rajpoot family. His father, Ranojee Sindiah, was an officer in the service of Bajerow, who, in the latter end of the reign of Rajah Sahoo, was Paishwah of the Marhatta state. The supineness and effeminacy of the court of Delhi, and the distracted state of the empire toward the close of the reign of Mahmud Shah, rendered easy the subjugation of the Malwah province. On that expedition Ranojee Sindiah accompanied the Paishwah. The services and ability dis-

played by Ranojee during the campaign, were rewarded with the management of the province, which was confirmed in jagheer to his descendants by Rajah Sahoo. Ranojee had four sons: Appagee, Tagee, Tookagee, and Sindiah. Appagee was slain in a civil broil in the Jynaghur province; Tookagee and Tagee perished in the memorable battle of Panniput in 1762.

Sindiah, in that action, though only seventeen years of age, displayed a genius and spirit which well foretold his future greatness: being desperately wounded, and unable to follow the route of the few survivors of the Marhatta army, he was secretly taken care of in the camp of the Abdallee. Recovered from his wounds, he was privately removed from this asylum, and by his protectors conveyed into Deccan. He then assumed the government of his patrimonial estate of Ougein. From his intense application to business, aided by the endowments of a vigorous mind, he soon acquired considerable influence in the Marhatta state; and was early considered as one of the principal Jagheer Dars. In 1770, he accompanied Holkar and Beesajee into Hindostaun, where his actions have been recorded in the preceding pages.

Malwah*, the greater part of which is the inheritance of the Sindiah family, is in length two hundred and forty-five coss, in breadth two hundred and thirty. On the north it is bounded by the Agimere Soobah; on the south by Baglanah; on the east by part of Agrah

* For the following detail of the Malwah province, the author is happy to confess his obligations to Major Charles Reynolds, surveyor general on the Bombay establishment, who furnished him with the materials collected by himself on the spot.

and Allahabad ; and on the west by Guzerat. The principal rivers that flow through this fertile and extensive tract, are the Chumbul, the Sind, and the Nerbuddah : but it is watered by many other smaller streams. Though higher than the rest of Hindostaun, the land of Malwah is in general fertile ; in it are reared numerous herds of cattle ; and it abounds in opium, indigo, and tobacco.— In former times the revenues were computed at four millions sterling ; this, of late years, however, has been much reduced ; and even Sindiah, in his collections, can realize only a million.

The Patan princes of the race of Khuljee having conquered that province from the Hindoos, fixed their seat of government at Mando*. It was during the long and glorious reign of the renowned Akbar, that Malwah was gradually alienated from the Patans.— Having annexed it to his empire, it remained in his family until the close of the reign of Mahmud Shah.

The Zemindars and soldiers of fortune here, as in other parts of the empire, during this turbulent period, divided amongst them the different provinces. Out of these arose several independant states ; those states encroaching upon the imperial authority, by degrees threw off all but a nominal allegiance to the house of Timoor.— Hence, the authority of the Soobah became frequently circumscribed to the environs of that city, which he chose for his residence. The Rajah of Chundeely, descended from the ancient princes of the country, seized on the north-east parts ; the southern were occupied

* A large city, fifty miles distant from Ougein.

by the Keeches. To the westward the petty Zemindars of Annuntwarah and Sooudunah assumed the stile of independant princes; and in the centre of the province was erected the nabobship of Bopaul.

Whilst these rebels were bidding defiance to the royal authority, a new and more formidable enemy, the Marhattas, soon destroyed the hopes of those petty sovereigns, and made themselves masters of the whole province. At this period, Kullich Khan, the famous Nizam Al Mooluk, was governor of Deccan. He also, disgusted at the levity which stigmatized the councils of the court of Delhi, resolved to render himself independant. To avert, however, the vengeance of the royal arms, he secretly invited the Marhattas to an invasion of the Malwah province. Delighting in predatory warfare, the proposal was received with avidity. The immense Marhatta host was commanded by Bajerow; Rajah Gheerdir directed the imperial forces. Desperate was the battle which soon ensued; but victory declaring for the invaders, with incredible rapidity they overran both Malwah and the rich province of Guzerat; and their victorious arms were afterwards carried to the confines of Beianah and Agimere.

The petty sovereigns who had assumed independancy, in consequence, obliged to yield up the best part of their possessions, were reduced to the payment of an annual tribute: but the Nabob of Bopaul and a few other Rajahs were still permitted to retain a part of their territories, and to exercise over them an authority subordinate to the controul of the Marhatta government.

Malwah was then divided into three shares : the first was allotted to Bajerow ; the second to the Marhatta prince, Rajah Sahoo ; the third to the family of Mulhar Holkar. Sindiah, as we have seen, inherited that part of the province bestowed on his father by Bajerow. But by a train of successful operations, he was enabled to appropriate to himself a considerable portion of the Circar lands. Tookajee Holkar, who inherits the third division of the Malwah province, since his accession has resided at Indore, a city thirty miles distant from Ougein.

Ougein, the modern capital of Malwah, is situated on the eastern bank of the Sipree river, in lat. 23. 12. N. and long. 75. 48. W. The city is, from its antiquity, of considerable note in the empire. The monuments which it exhibits of the piety and superstition of its Hindoo sovereigns, are still regarded with veneration ; nor have the Patan emperors contributed less to its embellishment. Among a variety of grand and venerable ruins, travellers mention with applause an edifice erected by Nassir Al Deen Khuljee in the ninth century of the Mahomedan æra. About one mile and a half east of the city is a large gloomy building of an octangular form, and the whole of the materials of stone. Its foundation is an artificial island, which is formed by a deviation of the western channel of the stream in the bed of the Sipree, and is connected with the opposite bank by a stone bridge of sixteen arches. The building consists of a variety of spacious chambers, constructed upon a level with the water : throughout these, by means of reservoirs, the water is conveyed in different channels, and hence, by artificial cascades, discharges itself into the Sipree in pleasing murmurs. The apart-

ments in this delightful retreat are cool and falubrious. To each recess are fastened rings of iron for the purpose of attaching purdahs, or skreens made of the aromatic root called Khufs. These, when sprinkled with water from without, not only give an agreeable coolness to the entering air, but entirely exclude the inclemency of the sultry season. We have before remarked that, among persons of distinction, this luxury is common throughout Hindostaun. Into these watery abodes, when desirous of repose, and fatigued with the toils of state, the princes of the house of Khuljee were accustomed to retire. During the periodical rains, the lower parts of this building are entirely overflowed, and an amazing force of water acts against it: but so great were the pains bestowed on its erection, and the materials of such wonderful solidity, that after a lapse of three centuries it remains entire, and still continues to attract the admiration of the spectator.—We resume, after this digression, the thread of our narration.

Sindiah, on his return from Hindostaun in 1774, employed his utmost exertions to extend his influence, and enlarge his patrimonial territory. Bold and aspiring in his views, he pursued the plans of his future aggrandisement with ardor and unremitting perseverance. He had greatly increased his revenues, and rendered his country highly flourishing, when six years afterwards was formed the grand Marhatta confederacy. Joining with that league, he became a principal actor in the scene, in which it was vainly hoped to have overthrown the British empire in the East. It was, however, happily dissolved, and the scheme rendered abortive, by the promptitude and

vigor of the British councils, aided by the brilliant ascendancy acquired by British arms under the auspices of Coote and Goddard.

Sindiah, who during that memorable contest had exhibited the conduct of an active and able leader, on its conclusion, turned his arms against Gohud*. In 1782, at the head of a numerous and well-appointed army, he entered that province for a second time, and with a fairer prospect of success than in his former expedition.

The reigning prince, Rajah Chutter Sing, fearful of the issue, endeavoured, by soliciting an alliance with the British government, to avert the impending storm. Accordingly, by his ambassador at Calcutta, in recompence for an interference of the English in his behalf, he promised an annual Nuzeranah of four lacks of rupees. It does not however appear that such an alliance was, at the present juncture, deemed acceptable to the Supreme Government of Bengal. Although Sindiah's extensive views of conquest, and the notoriety of his ambition, were to the council objects of sufficient magnitude to excite alarm, still the fidelity which that prince had invariably observed in his transactions with the British nation, his uprightness, and, above all, his faithful and steady adherence to treaties, had impressed the minds of government with sentiments highly favourable toward him.

The alliance with the Ranah was, therefore, rejected: but it was deemed eligible by the council to endeavour effecting an amicable

* A province situated about sixty miles west of Agra, and originally ruled by Rajpoot princes.

compromise betwixt the contending parties. Consonant to this resolve, Mr. David Anderson*, the British ambassador at Sindiah's Durbar, was directed to ascertain his sentiments in regard to the proposed mediation. But Sindiah, either in consequence of repeated breaches of faith on the part of Chutter Sing, was animated with a spirit of personal resentment against him; or, impelled by a desire long entertained of extending his dominions, declined the proffered interference. After a desultory warfare of two years, the reduction of Gohud was finally effected; and, on the 24th of Nov. 1784, Rajah Chutter Sing surrendered himself to his opponent.

Sindiah having thus acquired the province of Gohud, now directed his whole attention to the affairs of Delhi. During the transactions before mentioned, he had maintained a correspondence with Mirza Shuffee Khan. That nobleman entering into his views, had promised him his entire assistance and support in its execution. But on his arrival on the north of the Chumbul with an army of thirty thousand men, Sindiah heard of the death of his associate. Deeming the opportunity for which he had so long and so anxiously fought, now arrived, he, from his present station, dispatched letters to the court of Delhi. In these, after declaring his intentions of restoring the royal family to its former splendour, he made a request to Shah-Aulum to remove with his court to Agrah; at which place,

* To the zealous and faithful exertions of this gentleman, as well as those of his brother, Mr. James Anderson, who succeeded him, may be chiefly ascribed the conciliatory conduct of the Marhatta government, at a momentous and interesting period, in entering into an alliance which has hitherto been preserved with fidelity on their part. See the reports of the select committee on the second Marhatta war.

the Marhatta chief informed his majesty, he would, to the satisfaction of all parties, arrange and settle the affairs of the empire.

Afrafiab Khan, on receipt of these letters, laid them before the king, and urged his majesty to an immediate compliance with the contents. Shah-Aulum, who for a long time possessed neither influence nor authority, assented to the proposal, and the royal tents were ordered to be got ready. The prime minister, after nominating Nujuff Cooli Khan to the government of the fort and city of Delhi, pitched his camp without the walls. On the ensuing day, the army took the route to Agrah.

The high pitch of authority to which the minister had arisen, gave him entire controul in the state; and whilst his order of march in this expedition was marked with the most luxurious extravagance, inconvenience and distress attended the family of his sovereign.—On the march, the prime minister received letters from the vizir and the British governor general*. Actuated by the impulse of a liberal mind, those powers, on the present occasion, urged in the most pressing terms the release of the Nuwaub Mujud Al Dowla; and recommended to the minister a different treatment to his unhappy sovereign. But the unrelenting spirit of Afrasiab was not to be softened; intreaties or threats were to him alike indifferent. Mujud Al Dowla was ordered into a closer confinement; and Afrasiab Khan, leading the emperor in triumph, encamped under the walls of Agrah.

* Mr. Hastings.

Mahomed Beg Khan Hamdani had taken a strong position about forty miles from that place, and the Marhatta prince was now advanced to Futty Pore.

Such was the situation of the contending parties, when Sindiah opened a negotiation with Mahomed Beg. Anxious to acquire a thorough knowledge of the sentiments of the Mogul nobility, and to learn the extent of their different views and expectations, Sindiah proceeded in a manner cautious and circumspect: as a preliminary step, he called on Mahomed Beg to exculpate himself from the charge of murder. In extenuation of his crime, that nobleman threw the odium of the transaction upon the prime minister. He had alledged, and truly, that Afrasiab Khan had not only instigated him to the deed, but bound himself by the most solemn ties to support him in it when executed. Regarding himself, Mahomed Beg professed a ready obedience to the commands of the Marhatta, and that if he would so far interfere as to procure the king's pardon, he would henceforth attach himself to his fortunes. Meanwhile he declared his intention of remaining quiet in his present position.—To these insinuations, Sindiah in reply declared that, satisfied with such a declaration, Mahomed Beg might rely on his interference in procuring the pardon required. Whilst the above negotiation was pending, Afrasiab Khan beheld the motions of Sindiah with a watchful and jealous eye: suspecting an accession of influence from the submission of Mahomed Beg, he prepared to circumvent it by a counter treaty. But these designs were frustrated by an accident which at once put a period to his ambition and his life.

To relate with precision the particulars of this event, we must recur to the situation of Zein Al Abudeen. That nobleman, the reader will recollect to have been forgiven: but Afrafiab well knowing his disposition, would not be easy while he remained at liberty; on this account he had hitherto been detained in, what by the natives of Hindostaun was deemed, an honourable confinement. Upon the first letters, however, that passed between Afrafiab Khan and Sindiah, at the particular request of the latter, Zein Al Abudeen was released. He appeared in the camp, but resolved to be avenged of his brother's death. An occasion soon offered. In the month of November, an interview took place in the vicinity of Fuddy Pore between Sindiah and Afrafiab Khan. After the usual interchange of civilities, Sindiah returned to his own camp. Rajah Himmud Behadur and several other officers of the army having likewise taken leave, there remained in the tent Zein Al Abudeen and Afrafiab Khan.

Zein Al Abudeen, whose plan was already formed, now entered into conversation with the minister. In terms apparently cordial, and in the most respectful manner, he proposed to him for the future to live upon a more amicable footing; expressed his wish that all former differences should be forgotten, and urged the necessity of henceforth consolidating their mutual interests.

Suspended at the unexpectedness of this address, Afrafiab Khan remained for a time absorbed in silence. But about to have replied, Zein Al Abudeen*, with fury in his countenance, rose from his seat, a signal, upon which Maddoo Beg came up, and plunged his dagger

* MS. Narrative of Syud Rezzi Khan.

into the breast of the devoted minister. He expired on the spot.— A violent tumult ensuing, several persons were slain: but Zein Al Abudeen having effected his escape, fought and found protection in the camp of Sindiah.

Thus perished Afrasiab Khan, a man of turbulent disposition and impetuous manners; but with great personal bravery, he possessed abilities for war. Zulficar Al Dowla having adopted him into his family, trained him to arms. Considerable were the services which he rendered the state, whilst under the guidance of his patron; deprived of his salutary counsels, the passions of Afrasiab, always uncontrollable, hurried him into measures the most bold and sanguinary. The cause of his ruin may be traced to his unguardedness in permitting Zein Al Abudeen to recover his liberty. In that instance circumspect, he might perhaps have terminated his career happily.

The conduct of the Marhatta chief in countenancing Zein Al Abudeen after the perpetration of so foul a crime, calls loudly for the severest reprehension; it is a strong presumptive proof that he was accessory to the deed. In recording the transactions of a wicked and dissipated court, the impartiality of history demands the strictest scrutiny; whilst the multiplied assassinations which, in later times, have disgraced the politics of Delhi, in a reflecting and susceptible mind, must excite horror.

When the tumult occasioned by Afrasiab Khan's death had subsided in the camp, Himmud Behadur and the Mogul officers, as if

by preconcerted agreement, repaired to the tents of the Marhatta chief. After complimenting him on the death of his rival, they assured him of their unanimous support in his administration of affairs: they doubted not but his majesty would confer on him the office of Ameer Al Omrah, for which he was so eminently qualified. These assurances Sindiah received with real satisfaction; and the two armies having joined, he led the united forces to Agrah. We must now for a while turn aside to the situation of the king, who, during the late negotiations, had remained in the fort of Agrah.

The Nuwaub Mujud Al Dowla, who, as before remarked, was confined by order of the late minister, hearing of his rival's death, persuaded the Killadar of Meerut to connive at his escape. This being effected, he, in company with Cuttub Al Dowla, visited the king. Shah-Aulum received him with kindness, and directed him to remain near the presence. This would in all probability have led to an immediate return of his honours and employments, had not his enemy, Shuja Dil Khan, governor of Agrah, in conjunction with Rajah Daieram, endeavoured to impress the king's mind with suspicions of his fidelity. But their malice failed of effect; for the king, convinced that there was no reason to suspect Mujud Al Dowla of any disloyal intentions, heard their remonstrances with disgust, and commanded them to desist.

But the insolent manner in which they had urged their demands, convinced Shah-Aulum that he was entirely in their power; and having little to hope for any respect from them in future, he resolved to quit Agrah altogether. The arrival of Sindiah would, he hoped

and expected, speedily afford him the means of punishing their presumption. But in order to leave no room for those noblemen to suspect his intentions, he ordered the greater part of his family to remain behind; then taking Mujud Al Dowla along with him, his household troops escorted him to Delhi.

Mahomed Beg Khan, to whose situation we must now recur, remained, during the late transactions, in his entrenched camp. Sindiah, on Afrasiab's death, wrote to Mahomed Beg to repair to Agrah. A conference ensued, and a pension of 16,000 rupees per month was allotted for his support out of the revenues of Shekooabad. A few days after, Sindiah, with his usual policy, resolved to employ the abilities of his newly-acquired dependant on a distant expedition. By removing Mahomed Beg from the scene of action in Hindostaun, he effectually prevented any cabals for counteracting his own designs; and the probability of his being taken off while employed on active service was an additional motive in the mind of this politic chief. He therefore requested of Mahomed Beg to proceed to the conquest of Rhago Ghur, a strong fortress in Deccan, and bordering upon Sindiah's patrimonial estate. The country of Keetchwara, in which the before-mentioned fortress is situated, was then in a state of actual rebellion; and to Mahomed Beg was committed the double charge of reducing it under obedience to Sindiah, and the subsequent management of the districts. Having made the necessary preparations for his departure, Mahomed Beg Khan, accompanied by 5000 men, proceeded on his expedition to Rhago Ghur.

The greater part of the Mogul nobility having by this time declared for Sindiah, he now repaired with confidence to the capital. His expectations were fully answered; for, whether Shah-Aulum, disgusted at the thralldom in which he had been held since the death of Nujuff Khan, expected by a change in the government to experience some repose, or whether he, on this occasion, made a virtue of necessity, has not been clearly ascertained. To Sindiah, however, the event proved highly favourable. In the month of January, the Marhatta chief entered Delhi. He was received by the king with every demonstration of satisfaction, and treated with distinguished honour. In full Durbar, his majesty invested him with the office of Ameer Al Omrah; and as an additional mark of favour, ordered a patent to be made out for the Paishwah of the Poonah Durbar, (under whose authority Sindiah professed to act) constituting him Vakeel Mutluck*, or Absolute Director General of the affairs of the Empire, with the Neabut of that office to Sindiah himself. On receiving his honorary dress, the new minister presented an offering of five lacks of rupees, and retired from the presence.

* The office of Vakeel Mutluck in Hindostaun is paramount almost to sovereign authority, inasmuch as it empowers the person holding that office to raise troops at pleasure. It may appear remarkable that the Paishwah, who is the head of the Marhatta empire, should deem it any acquisition to his authority to receive an office from what he considered as coming from a nominal emperor of Hindostaun: yet it should be remembered, that however weak and impotent the present descendant of Timoor is esteemed, it still continues, and ever will continue, a desirable object among the native powers to make use of his name towards completing their own aggrandisement.

CHAP. IX.

Occurrences at Court—War against JYPORE—Intrigues of the MOGUL Nobility—SINDIAH is defeated—Retires across the CHUMBUL—Intrigues of GHOLAUM CADIR KHAN—Account of BEGUM SOMROO—GHOLAUM CADIR KHAN besieges the Palace—He is repulsed and pardoned—Prince MIRZA JUWAUN BUKHT—Review of his Life—Death and Character.

DURING the late violent commotions, the provinces had fallen into disorder and decay. Their restoration was the first object to which the attention of the new minister was directed. The office of Dewaun, or superintendant of the revenues, had long been under the management of Daieram. His conduct of late had, in many instances, been highly reprehensible; but his behaviour towards the king at Agrah, determined Sindiah to remove him from office. The Dewanship was accordingly bestowed on Naraien Dafs, a person of capacity, and a skilful financier. Remaining a short time at Delhi, during which he disposed of several offices and employments, Sindiah assembled the army for the reduction of Agrah.

The commencement of the current year was marked by the departure of the British governor general from India. In quitting this important trust, Mr. Hastings had the satisfaction to perceive himself followed by the unanimous good wishes of the princes of Hindostaun, and the prayers of the natives. On the present occasion,

the king, the vizier of the empire, the nazim of Deccan and the court of Poonah, all sent letters to Calcutta; in those were expressed their regret for the governor's departure, and contained moreover most ample testimonies of the high opinion they entertained of his abilities, integrity, and good faith *.

On the arrival of the army before Agrah, Sindiah summoned the governor to surrender the fort. He declared also, that by a resistance to the royal authority, the governor could have no hope for pardon. Treating the summons with contempt, Shujah Dil Khan prepared for a vigorous resistance. Sindiah commencing his approaches, two batteries were soon opened, and began to play upon the fort with considerable effect. Part of the curtain was thrown down, and several guns within dismounted. The governor in the mean time was not idle. He repaired the breaches with incessant activity, and by his own spirited behaviour animated the garrison. A month had elapsed when Shujah Dil Khan, foreseeing the ultimate reduction of the place, endeavoured, by an act of assumed respect, to mollify Shah-Aulum. That part of the royal family who, as before seen, remained in the fort of Agrah, were now liberated, and sent with an escort to Delhi, which they reached without molestation.

* Time, which removes the veil from the intrigues of policy, has evinced, that the ideas entertained by the natives of India, of that illustrious character, were just. His countrymen have beheld with a satisfaction, almost universal, the honourable award of a British Senate; an award no less honourable to the character of Mr. Hastings, than grateful to his mind, harassed by the degrading circumstances attendant on a prosecution, which is without parallel in the annals of mankind.

Sindiah perceived that the siege advanced but slowly ; he hoped therefore, that by opening a negotiation with some leading men among the besieged, to gain them over to his interests. The event answered his wishes. The Cutwal and several other officers having been bribed by a large sum of money and a promise of personal security, agreed to deliver up one of the gates of the fort. On a preconcerted signal, a select body of troops presenting themselves, were admitted by the treacherous Cutwal, and, before the governor or his associate Daieram could receive information, were overpowered and taken prisoners. They were immediately put into close confinement, and sent off to the camp. Sindiah, when possessed of the fort, by not permitting it to be plundered, acted with becoming policy ; he, however, exacted considerable sums from the most wealthy inhabitants, which he distributed as a largess to the army. Of the whole of the possessions of the late Afrasiab Khan there now remained only Ali Ghur. That fort is situated in the upper part of the Doo Ab. It had been fortified with great care, and in it were deposited the family and treasures of the deceased Nuwaub. Jahaungire Khan, his brother, commanded in Ali Ghur. He had a strong garrison, and the siege was expected to be long and bloody. Early in the month of July of the current year Sindiah appeared before the place. Contrary, however, to all expectation, it held out but a short time. It has been imagined that the fears of the women, for the preservation of their honour and effects, had inclined the Killadar to pacific measures. Certain it is that Jahaungire Khan, signifying his readiness to negotiate, a treaty was accordingly drawn up, and agreed to by the respective parties. To Khadim Hossien Khan, eldest son of the deceased Nuwaub, a jaghire was allotted,

amounting to a yearly revenue of a lack and a half of rupees. To the Begums were promised an honourable asylum, and to Jehangire Khan personal safety. It appears, however, that this treaty was very ill adhered to by the Marhatta Chief; for on the place being surrendered, the Begums and Jehangire Khan were sent under a strong guard to the fort of Gualior, and there detained in confinement. The young Nuwaub, indeed, was received by Sindiah with great attention, and directed to remain in the royal camp. Sindiah then took possession of the fort, and with it the whole of the treasures of Afrasiab Khan, amounting, as it has been affirmed, in specie, jewels, and valuable articles, to a crore of rupees.

The fall of Ali Ghur established the minister's authority on a firm and solid basis. Having before reduced under obedience the greater part of the Doo Ab and the countries south-west of the Jumna, he now found himself master of the whole of the possessions of the late Zulficar Al Dowlah, with an acquisition of revenue of two crore of rupees.

Intelligence of these important successes reaching Delhi, Shah-Aulum demonstrated his satisfaction by signal marks of favour. These were conveyed to the prime minister in three hundred superb Khilluts, to be distributed by him to the officers of the army. Nor was Sindiah less liberal in his return. Twelve lacks of rupees were allotted for the support of the king's household; and he moreover sent rich presents to court.

About this time the prince Juwaun Bukht, the heir apparent, then

residing at Benares, forwarded to court a paishcush of one lack of rupees. This testimony of attention afforded great consolation to the king's mind. He now, for the first time since the death of Zulficar Al Dowlah, experienced some repose from the tumultuous cabals which had so long disgraced his court, and filled him with inquietude and anguish.

The departure of Mr. Hastings having occasioned some changes in the British administration, perspicuity requires that we bring under one head such transactions under that government as bear relation to the court of Delhi, during the current year. Sir John Macpherson succeeded Mr. Hastings in the chair. That gentleman, equally well inclined with his predecessor to pay every attention in his power to the king's interests, took an early opportunity of signifying the same. He confirmed to the Shah Zadah the generous aid he had received the preceding year, and through him assured his majesty, that the British government would, on all reasonable occasions, extend their aid in support of his authority.

On the part of Sindiah Mr. James Anderson had succeeded his brother as ambassador to that Durbar. Major Brown, who had resided at court for some time past, was now recalled.

On the side of Oude, Major Palmer, who had resided at the court of Afuf Al Dowla the two preceding years, was now, at his own request, removed. To him succeeded Colonel Harper, who took an early opportunity of paying attention to the king, which he

signified by letters, accompanied on the part of the governor general by a paishcuth suitable to the occasion.

From these digressions we return to affairs at court. After the capture of Ali Ghur, Sindiah repaired to Delhi, where, on his arrival, his whole care and attention were directed to restoring good order to the government, in all affairs, both foreign and domestic.

Shah-Nizam Al Deen, a confidential servant of the minister, was appointed to the superintendence of the royal household, to which his majesty added the government of the fort and city of Delhi.

Toward the close of the current year died Zabita Khan, ruler of Sehaurunpore, a man, whose long and active life had been marked with a variety of alternate success and misfortune.

Taken comparatively with his father Najeeb Al Dowlah, Zabita Khan appears to have been of inferior capacity; his frequent rebellions, and the native turbulency of his temper, had totally estranged from him the king's mind, and the account of his death was received at court with indifference.

Zabita Khan was succeeded in his territories by his eldest son Gholam Caudir Khan. He was a youth, proud, cruel, and ferocious. His first act on assuming the government was the expulsion of his uncle Afzul Khan. This nobleman was at the time advanced in years, and admired for his exemplary manners. On his degradation Gholam Caudir ordered his effects to be seized and confiscated.

This bold assumption of the government, without consulting the court, or petitioning for a continuation of the Sunnud, agreeable to the established usage of Hindostaun, gave great offence to the king. But Gholaum Caudir, well aware of the consequences, prepared to support his rebellion by open violence. The fort of Ghose Ghur was accordingly put into a state of defence, and the means of assembling a considerable force was afforded him by the confiscation of his uncle's property.

In those acts Gholaum Caudir exhibited the first symptoms of that diabolical spirit which designated the actions of his future life. To him it was reserved to disgrace the house of Timoor, and to add the last outrage to the miseries of a long and most unfortunate reign. But previous to entering into a detail of the intrigues of Gholaum Caudir, we must for a while carry forward the affairs of Sindiah, and his operations with the neighbouring states.

Intelligence of the defection of Gholaum Caudir had scarcely arrived at court, when the prime minister was alarmed by an account of the rebellious designs of the Jynaghur prince. Pertaub Sing, informed of the late transactions at Ghose Ghur, had at the same time withheld his accustomed tribute. He thought the present opportunity favourable to a design long entertained of rendering himself independant. Sindiah prepared to subdue him by force: but the advice of the Rajah's confidential servants prevented for the present matters proceeding to extremity. They, foreseeing ruin to his cause while Sindiah continued so powerful in the state, persuaded Pertaub Sing to desist. Their advice was attended with

effect. The tribute was sent, and an additional paishcush which accompanied it appeased the resentment of Shah-Aulum.

Respected on all sides by the country powers, this fortunate Marhatta chief now saw with exultation his authority arrived at its highest extent. The factious spirit which had been exhibited by the Mogul nobility was quelled; and Sindiah's subsequent conduct toward that powerful body contributed both to reconcile them to his cause, and attach them to his person. Thus eligibly situated, had Sindiah properly appreciated his good fortune, he might have secured a power complete and unimpaired to the end. Unfortunately, however, a spirit of avarice gaining ground in his breast, inclined or impelled him to deviate from that line of liberal policy by which, at the first advance of his authority, he had been wisely guided. This deviation led in its consequences to events of a most serious nature, and had well nigh proved the utter destruction of the minister. But in order to explain the causes of an act which, in its execution, was followed by a revolution in the state, it will be here necessary to detail in a more particular manner the nature and tenure of the Jaiedads, or, as known in Hindostaun, those lands which are appropriated for the support of the troops.

In most of the courts of India, certain portions of land are set apart for the payment of the army; these are termed Jaiedads, a tenure which secures to the possessor a sure and easy collection: they are made over to the commanding officers, who, exclusive of the advantages they derive from these assignments in realizing their pay, are moreover enabled to retain a numerous body of dependants.

These increased their consequence in the state, and not unfrequently afforded them the means of personal safety, when their turbulent ambition led them to rebel against their sovereign. It was these Jaiedads that the Minister determined to resume; and for the causes before mentioned, their resumption at this juncture was equally dangerous, impolitic, and unjust: yet did Sindiah persist; and though having the examples of Mirza Shuffee and others of his predecessors before his eyes, he, with a pertinacity approaching to insatiation, carried his resolves into effect. Considerable murmurs there were, but the great force of Marhattas kept up by the minister, prevented for the present any open act of hostility on the part of the Mogul officers. In secret, however, fired with resentment, they resolved on vengeance. The blow was gradually preparing. About this time Naraiceen Daufs, who, since the death of Afrasiab Khan, had conducted the affairs of the Khalifa, was suddenly, without accusation, dismissed from his employment, and his property, to a large amount, openly confiscated for the minister's use. The vacant office was confirmed on Shah-Nuzam Al Deen.

Such repeated acts of injustice excited extreme disgust. Rajah Himmutee Behadur, who had so eminently assisted the designs of Sindiah, was not the last to experience an ungrateful return. An account of his Jaiedad, together with certain balances, said to be due to the royal treasury, were demanded of him in the most peremptory terms. But Himmutee Behadur, indignant at the controul attempted to be exerted over him, resolved to withhold all future support from his ungrateful associate. Quitting the court, therefore, he withdrew to his estate near Bindrabund, and prepared for resistance.

The downfall of the minister's authority was accelerated by a rupture with the Rajah of Jynaghur, against whom a war now seemed inevitable.

Pertaub Sing, though himself of weak capacity, and enervated by effeminate pleasures, had nevertheless, during a long interval of peace, increased the revenues, and extended the commerce of his country. He now resolved openly to declare his independance of the court ; and having, as a prelude to his rebellion, withheld the customary tribute, he began to collect forces, and prepare himself for the consequences. But previous to entering into a detail of the war against Jynaghur, we must recur for a while to the situation of Mahomed Beg Hamdani, who bore a considerable share in that war. Mahomed Beg, the reader will recollect, had been sent into the country of Kitchwara, where having reduced the fortress of Ragho Ghur, and settled the affairs of the province, he remained in that station for three years. Sindiah now ordered him to the capital, where he arrived at the commencement of the current year. As he brought with him a considerable body of his Mogul troops, the minister received him in a manner apparently cordial ; but dreading his power and influence whilst at the head of an army, endeavoured to persuade him to disband his troops. To this Mahomed Beg gave a positive refusal ; and the intelligence of the revolt of Pertaub Sing arriving at court, deterred the Marhatta prince from enforcing compliance. Mahomed Beg, who retained in his breast a deep resentment, was resolved, as opportunity should occur, of gratifying it to the full extent. He had since his return entered into a correspondence with the prince of Jynaghur, which was terminated by an

alliance with that chief. Mean while Sindiah having made the necessary preparations for the campaign, committed the care of the capital to his deputy Shah Nuzam Al Deen, and marched towards Jynaghur. Pertaub Sing, attended by a numerous army, which he had recruited by alliances with several of the neighbouring Rajpoot princes, was encamped on the frontiers of his dominions.—The effect of that disgust, long entertained by the Mogul officers, now began to manifest itself to the detriment of the prime minister. Scarcely was he arrived in the presence of the enemy when he received information of a defection among his own troops. The Mogul nobility, headed by Mahomed Beg Khan, had secretly entered into engagements with Pertaub Sing, whose splendid offers of money and employment in his service at once gratified their avarice, and afforded them the means of being revenged for the indignities they had sustained from the Marhatta prince. Through the agency of Rajah Daieram a treaty was formally drawn up, by which it was settled, that on the approach of the minister's army, Mahomed Beg and the other Mogul lords should join Pertaub Sing. Accordingly, attended by their whole force, they, in the face of Sindiah's army, went over to the enemy. Astonished, but not dismayed at this treacherous act, Sindiah with his remaining force hesitated not to give instant battle. The action which ensued was long and bloody; but Mahomed Beg Khan Hamdani having been slain by a cannon ball, the Moguls received a check, and were thrown into some confusion. Pertaub Sing, informed of this accident, hastened to the spot, and conferred the command of the Moguls upon Ismaeel Beg, nephew of the deceased chief. Ismaeel Beg renewing the combat with ardour, soon recovered from the disorder,

and restored the success of the day. But the event would have still remained doubtful, had not some disciplined battalions, formerly in the service of Afrasiab Khan, at this critical moment, suddenly gone over to the enemy, by which the Marhattas were dispirited beyond repair. The affair was immediately decided; Sindiah retreated from the field with expedition, and was obliged to take refuge in the fort of Alwar, the capital of his ally, the prince of Macheri. That chief received the fugitive with cordiality and respect: but the severe check which Sindiah's authority had sustained in the loss of the late battle, and the dispersed state of the Marhatta army, convinced him that he could not long hold his situation at court. Collecting, therefore, the remains of his discomfited forces, he quitted Alwar, and retiring southward across the Chumbul, repaired to Gualior, there to wait for reinforcements from Deccan.

Had the Jynaghur prince on this occasion made a proper use of his victory, it is probable the Marhatta influence in Hindostan would have been totally annihilated; but content with having cleared his dominions of the invader, Pertaub Sing, after first detaching the Mogul force under Ismacel Beg to besiege Agrah, which place was still in the hands of the Marhattas, he himself returned to Jynaghur.

The fort of Agrah was defended by Lackwajee, the Marhatta general; he had with him a strong garrison, with abundance of provisions and every thing requisite to sustain the attack. But the inhabitants of the city, totally unprepared with any means of resistance, and intimidated by threats of military execution, quietly sub-

mitted on the first approach of Ismaeel Beg. That chief having laid the inhabitants under a severe contribution, now formally demanded a surrender of the fort, to which Lackwajee replying in the negative, Ismaeel Beg commenced the siege.

Our attention must now be directed to the disagreeable situation into which the king had been thrown by the defeat and subsequent departure of the Marhatta army from Alwar. Prior to that event, Sindiah had received certain intelligence that the late desertion of the Mogul officers was owing to the intrigues of Rajah Daieram. Restless and turbulent in disposition, that nobleman was continually employed in fomenting the intrigues and reviving the discontent of the Mogul nobility; and through his negotiation, the treaty before mentioned with Pertaub Sing had been effected. Sindiah, in acquainting his deputy, Shah Nuzzam Al Deen, with this circumstance, urged him to inflict exemplary punishment upon the traitor. His orders were obeyed; for having caused Rajah Daieram to be arrested and brought to court, the ferocious deputy, even in the royal presence, gave orders for the unhappy wretch to be trodden to death under the feet of an elephant*.

Although, by this sanguinary deed, the deputy evinced a determined spirit to support the Marhatta authority, the accounts of his master's defeat and subsequent movement towards Deccan, prepared him to expect the most unpleasant issue. He accordingly put the fort and city of Delhi into the best possible state of defence. Of these precautions he soon found there was sufficient need. Gholaum

* MS. Narrative of Syud Rezzi Khan.

Cadir Cawn, who, as before remarked, had assembled an army, now determined to employ it in the advancement of his ambitious schemes. In a few days he arrived on the eastern bank of the Jumna, and encamped opposite the citadel. The Rohilla chief, however, rested not his hopes of success wholly on arms. He had attached to his interests a person of great influence, as well in the councils, as over the mind of the king. This man was Munfoor Ali Khan, the Nazir *, who, bred up with Shah-Aulum, had, from his earliest youth, been a confidential servant, and loaded with a profusion of honours and distinguished kindness; but forgetful of the duty he owed his sovereign, or gratitude due to his benefactor, the treacherous Nazir joined in the intrigues of the rebel. By the advocates for the Nazir it has been asserted, that hatred against the Marhatta government was the real cause of so extraordinary a conduct. From whatever motive it arose, certain it is, the Nazir was determined to introduce Gholaum Cadir into the administration; and had accordingly sent letters to the rebel, urging his speedy appearance to demand of his majesty the vacant office of Ameer Al Omrah.

Great was the consternation occasioned at Delhi by the arrival of the Rohilla army; but Shah Nizam Al Deen, assisted by Desmouk, son-in-law of Sindiah, prepared to repel the invader. Unhappily for themselves, they despised the force of Gholaum Cadir; and lulled into a fatal security, were contented with detaching a small force across the river, giving positive orders to the commanding officer to make an immediate attack on the enemy's camp. Of this inattention they, in the sequel, had cause to repent: the battalions,

* Superintendant of the household.

on the very first onset, were driven back and dispersed by the Rohillas with great loss; they pursued them to the banks of the river, where, boats not being at hand, many threw themselves into the Jumna and perished miserably: the few who survived, ashamed to appear before the deputy, dispersed themselves over the city, and, as usual in Hindostan, began to plunder.

The deputy seeing the disastrous posture of affairs, and having by this time received intelligence of the traitorous designs of the Nazir, prepared by a speedy flight to save himself from the vengeance of the conqueror. Accompanied by Desmouk, he withdrew privately from Delhi. They repaired to the fort of Bullum Ghur, a place twenty miles south of the capital. Hera Sing, Killadar of that place, received them with humanity: but Shah Nizam Al Deen not deeming himself sufficiently safe at Bullum Ghur, retired from thence to Deig, which still acknowledged Sindiah's authority. Desmouk repaired to his father-in-law, whom he joined in the neighbourhood of Gualior.

On the flight of the deputy from Delhi being made public, Gholaum Cadir prepared to reap the fruits of his late success. He crossed the river with a select body of troops, and went direct to the king's palace. On his arrival, (agreeably to a concerted plan) he was introduced by the treacherous Nazir to the emperor. When honoured with the customary khillut, Gholaum Cadir preferred his petition for the investiture of the office of Ameer Al Omrah, and concluded with protestations of fidelity and attachment to his majesty's person. Shah-Aulum, perceiving himself without resource, was

constrained, much against his inclination, to grant the request of this turbulent chief. Having acquiesced in the demand, the patent of creation was ordered to be got ready, and the Rohilla with a respectful obeisance retired from the presence.

Though by compulsory means Gholaum Caudir had thus attained the desired object, his power was by no means securely established. Several persons well attached to the Marhatta government, as likewise to the king's person, still remained in Delhi. These, indignant at the unworthy treatment of their sovereign, and pitying his degraded state, resolved to make one effort for the restoration of his authority. Amongst others was the Begum Somroo, who at that time had considerable influence in the councils of Delhi. This lady, wife of Somroo, (a name too well known to Englishmen by his infamous conduct at Patna,) now commanded the disciplined battalions which he had raised, and was moreover possessed of a considerable jaghire.

As this lady will bear a considerable share in the remaining transactions, we shall proceed to a concise retrospect of her situation and progress to authority.

Somroo, a German adventurer, whom a spirited author* has emphatically styled "the bloody agent of the cruelties of Meer Cossim," after the ruin of his master's affairs, retired into the Jaut province. He was there taken into the service of the late Zulficar Al Dowla, then in the plenitude of his power. In addition to his disciplined

* Captain Jonathan Scott, Hist. of Deccan, Vol. II.

battalions, Nujuff Khan gave him the command of a body of Mogul horse; and for the support of the whole, assigned him the Pergunnah of Serdhauna, situated in the upper part of Doo Ab, as a Jaiedad. Somroo, previous to his death, which happened in 1778, married the daughter of a Mogul nobleman, whose family, from the unsettled state of the times, had fallen into distress. This lady, the present Begum, at the persuasion of her husband, embraced the Christian faith. She received from the king the title of Zeeb Al Nisfaa, or, Ornament of the Sex; and on Somroo's demise, was continued in command over the troops, and confirmed by Nujuff Khan in the management of her Jaghire. In the centre of the ruined province of Schaurunpore, in twenty-ninth degree N. latitude, and about sixty miles distant from the capital, rises the small but fertile principality of Serdhauna; it is bounded on the north by the town of Berhauna, on the east by Nowlah, west by the Hingun river near the town of Bernaba, and south by the district of Meerut. Its extent from north to south is thirty-six miles, and twenty-four from east to west. An unremitting attention to the cultivation of the lands, a mild and upright administration, and care for the welfare of the inhabitants, has enabled this small tract to vie with the most cultivated parts of Hindostaun, and to yield a revenue of ten lacks of rupees per annum. The rivers Hingun and Crishna, which traverse this valuable jaghire, afford an ample supply of water; and the soil, naturally fertile, produces in abundance grain of all kinds, cotton, sugar-cane, and tobacco.

The town of Sedhauna, where the Begum generally resides, is of considerable extent, pleasantly situated, and commanding a fine

view of the mountains of Himmeleh to the north-east. A fort near the town contains a good arsenal and foundry for cannon. Five battalions of disciplined Seapoys, commanded by Europeans of different countries, and about forty pieces of cannon of various calibres, constitute the force kept up by Begum Somroo. With these and about two hundred Europeans, principally employed in the service of artillery, she is enabled to maintain a respectable situation among the neighbouring powers.

While the surrounding lands exhibit the effects of desolation and distress, the flourishing appearance of this Jaghire impresses the mind of the traveller with sensations most gratifying; and it is upon this principle, that, deviating from the rigid line of historical precision, we embrace the opportunity of paying a tribute deservedly due to the spirit, activity, and talents of this noble lady. Endowed by nature with masculine intrepidity, assisted by a judgement and foresight clear and comprehensive, Begum Somroo, during the various revolutions above detailed, was enabled to preserve her country unmolested, and her authority unimpaired. In the successive administration of Zulficar Al Dowla, Mirza Shuffee, and Afrasiab Khan, she was confirmed in her possessions; and when Sindiah arrived at supreme power, he added to the extent of them by a grant of some other lands south-west of the Jumna. In the war against Pertaub Sing, Begum Somroo with her force was stationed at Panniput on the frontier, and in committing so important a trust to her charge was sufficient proof of the idea the Marhatta chief had conceived of her capacity. Her conduct now evinced that that confidence had not been misplaced, and her spirited exertions in defence of the

king's authority acquired deserved applause in the breasts of all. To this lady, then, Gholaum Cadir, on retiring from the presence, made offers of alliance. Aware of her influence at court, the artful Rohilla endeavoured, by the most studied respect to acquire her support in the extension of his usurped authority, assured her of a grateful return on his part, and finally proffered her an equal share in the administration of affairs. The prospect was tempting; but the Begum, well acquainted with the characteristic perfidy of the Rohilla, and resolved to defend her sovereign, rejected all his solicitations; and to give proof of her resolution to maintain the king's authority, she with her whole force repaired to the palace, and declared her intention of sacrificing her life in his majesty's cause. Her appearance gave great consolation to the king; and some other officers at the same time assembling troops, the court began to talk in a higher strain toward the rebel. Matters drew near to a crisis. Gholaum Cadir, baffled in his attempts to acquire the Begum's support, when informed of what had passed, was inflamed with savage fury. Going to his camp on the opposite bank of the Jumna, he thence dispatched a messenger to court, demanding, in terms most peremptory, the immediate removal of Somroo's wife, adding, that in the event of non-compliance he should proceed to hostilities. His message having been treated with the contempt it deserved, Gholaum Cadir commenced a heavy cannonade upon the royal palace*. This was answered from some artillery in the fort, from the guns attached to the Mogul battalions in his majesty's service, and from a battery which had been erected with great expedition by Begum Somroo. Considerable damage

* Syud Rezzi Khan's MS. narrative.

was done to the palace by this outrageous insult; but the king's troops behaving with great firmness and spirit, it is most probable the Rohilla would have been compelled to retire. For the present, however, he was saved by the treacherous machination of his associate within the fort. The Nazir suddenly declared, that the royal treasury was exhausted, and refused to make any farther disbursements for the troops. This untoward circumstance on so critical an occasion, greatly embarrassed his majesty's affairs; but as the urgency of the case required some immediate steps, the royal jewels and several articles of the household were deposited to raise a sum of money, which was immediately given to the soldiery. During this disgraceful scene, intelligence arrived that the Prince Mirza Juwaun Bukht, accompanied by a large army, was on his march to the capital. Of this event the Nazir conveyed private information to Gholam Caudir, and foreseeing that the prince's arrival would disconcert his perfidious schemes, he strongly recommended the Rohilla to make immediate overtures for a pacification, to which he doubted not the King would agree. No time was to be lost; Gholam Caudir, therefore, having signified to his majesty his sincere contrition for the late insult, presented a handsome paishcush in ready money, and moreover promised to restore all the royal lands in Doo Ab which he had lately usurped. To these offers Shah-Aulum, who knew the insincerity of the Rohilla, would not have consented, but, urged by the repeated solicitations of the Nazir, whom by a blind infatuation he deemed a faithful servant, at length acquiesced in the proposals. The terms being settled, an honorary dress was dispatched over the river to Gholam Caudir Khan, who immediately after receiving it, struck his camp, and returned to Schaurunpore.

Scarcely had he departed when letters from the prince Mirza Juwaun Bukht arrived at court. In these, after acquainting his father of his rapid approach, he congratulated him on the prospect now afforded of punishing the rebel, and earnestly requesting the king not to enter into terms. The intimation arrived too late. To account for the prince's re-appearance at the capital, we must now proceed to a brief review of the occurrences of his life.

The death of Nujeeb Al Dowla in 1769, and the intrigues of the Marhattas having, as already related, recalled Shah-Aulum to his capital, the prince Mirza Juwaun Bukht from that period continued to reside with his father. During the various revolutions which occurred, the prince, by living in a retired state, and forbearing to interfere with public affairs, escaped from the perilous situation of the contending parties. But the conduct of Afrasiab Khan having, as before remarked, excited in his breast a just indignation, Mirza Juwaun Bukht resolved to seek an asylum at the court of Oude. In the year 1784 he effected his escape from the palace; and accompanied only by a few persons, he crossed the Jumna, and afterwards the Ganges, from whence he repaired to Rampore, the capital of Fizoolah Khan*. He was received by that chief with every attention due to his high rank, and treated with profuse hospitality. At his departure, the benevolent Rohilla directed a detachment of horse to accompany him to the vizir's frontier.

* See a particular detail of the prince's escape, translated from the Persian language, by Captain Jonathan Scott, at the end of a very interesting memoir written by Mr. Hastings, late governor-general of India.

On his arrival at Lucknow, the prince was received by the vizir and the British governor-general, who had lately repaired to Oude, in order to make some arrangements in the affairs of that province. At Mr. Hastings' suggestion, the vizir was induced, not only to extend his protection to the fugitive prince, but to allow him a provision of four lacks of rupees for the support of his establishment, and, moreover, furnish him with a house and every suitable convenience becoming his dignity. On the governor's departure for Benares, the prince, from motives of gratitude, resolved to accompany him to that place, where an event occurred which awakened his ambition, and determined him to return to his father's court. Hearing of the death of Afrasiab Khan, the prince applied to Mr. Hastings to assist him with an armed force, to accompany him to Delhi, for the recovery of his authority; but the governor, not deeming himself authorized to interfere in the politics of Delhi, declined his assent. Mirza Juwaun Bukht, on the governor's departure for Calcutta, returned to Lucknow, where he had not long been, when a visible alteration was perceived in the behaviour of Asuf al Dowla. The cause of the breach that ensued between them has not been correctly ascertained; by some it was alledged, that the want of punctuality in the payment of the prince's stipend, occasioned a sharp animadversion on his part; on the other hand it was affirmed, and probably with some reason, that the vizir was not altogether so well pleased at the diminution his own revenues sustained in granting the allowance before mentioned; but such sentiments were surely unworthy of the vizir of the empire, whose family had risen to power by the favour of his majesty's ancestors, and on which account the prince ought to have been treated with all imaginable kindness.

Certain, however, it is, that the prince, in consequence of the slights which he received, determined him to remove from the court of Oude. In 1785, he repaired to Benares, and made another, though ineffectual, attempt to interest the British government in affording him assistance for the re-establishment of his authority at Delhi. His application failed of success; but Mirza Juwaun Bukht was assured that an asylum for himself and his family would always be readily granted within the company's territories, and as his highness declined returning to Lucknow, an order was issued upon the company's treasury at Benares, for the payment of the stipend which had been allowed him by the vizir. In a situation so eligible, Mirza Juwaun Bukht, had he properly appreciated it, might have passed the remainder of his days in happiness and comfort; but a restless spirit of ambition impelled him to enter into the politics of the times, and in the end caused him inconceivable anxiety and the most bitter, though unavailing, regret. Not however, to anticipate our narrative, it is here sufficient to remark, that about this period Earl Cornwallis, who had been nominated to the supreme government in India, arrived at the city of Benares in his way to the vizir's court. To him, the Shah Zada in the most pressing manner, renewed his solicitations for assistance from the English; but Earl Cornwallis, adopting the same line of conduct as his predecessors, was compelled to give a decided negative to his requests. The governor-general*, however, from motives highly to be commended, seriously advised the prince to remain where he was; he assured him that the

* MS. narrative of Syud Rezzi Khan.

respect entertained by the British government towards his illustrious house, would ever be evinced, by rendering his highness such assistance as did not militate against the general line of policy which they had adopted in their concerns with the princes of Hindostan, and, finally, his lordship concluded with observing to his highness, that the company's territories would always afford him a safe and honourable asylum.

Soon after this conference, the governor-general pursued his journey to Oude, whither the prince followed him. By the good offices of Earl Cornwallis, an interview between the prince and the vizir was effected, and an apparent reconciliation ensued: we affirm apparently only, for the subsequent conduct of the vizir, after Earl Cornwallis's departure, satisfied the prince that this reconciliation was pretended. Abandoned by the court of Oude and finding he had nothing to expect from the English government, Mirza Juwaun Bukht now directed his whole attention toward raising an army *. Himmut Behadur, the Ghosien, and some other chiefs, having offered their services on this occasion, invited the prince to a conference on the plains of Bindrabund, in the neighbourhood of Agra. By their assistance, he, in a short time, assembled a considerable force, and being at the same time joined by the Mogul chief, Ismaeel Beg, the prince took the road to Delhi.

At the close of the current year he arrived in the neighbourhood of the city, where he was met by his family and his brother, the

* It was at this time he wrote the letter, which appears in the appendix, No. 3.

prince Akbar Shah. The next morning he made his entry into the capital in great state, when Shah-Aulum, by the warmth of his embraces, testified the joy which he experienced on the return of the heir apparent after so long and distressing an absence. The prince was immediately invested with the sole management of affairs; and there once more seemed a prospect of relief from that vexation which the royal family had for a series of years undergone. The Marhatta usurpation was overthrown, and the rebellious chief of Schaurunpore had lately made ample submission: appearances so flattering were, however, by the machinations of an ungrateful and wicked man too soon overclouded. The Nazir, envious of the prince's authority, and constant in his attachment to the turbulent Gholam Cadir, set at work every engine to sow dissention in the royal family, and alienate the king's mind from his son.

Some days after the prince's arrival, the Nazir, in concert with other lords whom he had gained over to his party, demanded in full Durbar the payment of certain arrears, which he alleged to be due to the troops from the royal treasury. The funds being at that time insufficient, he well knew this demand would embarrass the prince; but, contrary to expectation, the prince, with much spirit, appealed to his father, and declared that as the assignments for those arrears were given during the Nazir's administration, he alone ought to be held responsible for their liquidation. To this opinion the king not only assented, but in severe terms commanded the Nazir to desist. Though baffled in a first attempt, the Nazir was firmly resolved to try a second; in which, much to the discredit of Shah-Aulum, he was but too successful. Secure in the confidence of his sovereign,

which he so shamefully abused, he had the audacity to insinuate to the king suspicions of the prince's loyalty. On this occasion, he observed to his majesty, that the high pitch of authority to which he had elevated his son, would no doubt inspire him with the design of rising still higher; and that as the king was now rapidly advancing in years, and consequently incapable of vigorous exertion, the prospect of ascending the throne of Hindostan was too seducing to be passed over by a person even less ambitious than his son: that his late efforts crowned with success, and being at the head of an army, gave him entire and uncontrouled authority; and these advantages were, when opportunity offered, powerful inducements, as well as fit instruments, for the completion of his most aspiring views.

These insinuations, however unworthy, made a deep impression upon a mind debilitated by age, and obscured in its intellectual vigor and energy by a long series of despondency and misfortune. The audacious presumption of the interested servant was forgotten, and an eye of suspicion cast upon the services of a faithful and hitherto-beloved son.

The effects of the Nazir's treachery soon became apparent.—Mirza Juwaun Bukht, who, since his return, had bestowed unremitting attention to the re-establishment of good order and tranquillity at the capital, now solicited the king's permission to take the command of the army, and at the same time for his majesty to accompany it in person during its progress. He pointed out the propriety and good effect that might be expected from his majesty's making a circuit through the Deo Ab, which, he judiciously ob-

served, would contribute much to calm the minds of the people, agitated as they had been during the late troubles; and give additional consequence to his majesty's authority, now re-established under such happy auspices.

This proposal, however salutary and wise, was, to the astonishment of the prince, rejected by his father with the most frigid indifference. He now too plainly perceived that some secret machinations had been set on foot to instill into the king's mind the most base and unjust suspicions; and therefore, disdaining to remain at court, where he was treated so unworthily, he determined to remove to a distance, in hopes that time and absence would contribute to efface such impressions from his father's mind. Having obtained the king's permission to repair to Agra, of which place he had lately been appointed governor, the prince, accompanied by his whole family and a small escort, quitted the court, to which he never more returned.

Ismael Beg, who was at that time besieging Agra, at first received the prince with the utmost respect and submission: but his subsequent conduct evinced, that in his heart this ungrateful chief was actuated by sentiments far different from the loyalty and fidelity due to his sovereign; and perceiving the untoward state of his affairs, he looked only to the preservation of his own consequence. The prince, compelled by urgent necessity and the very low state of his finances, requested of Ismael Beg to adjust the affairs of the province, and to make over to him a suitable assignment for the support of the small force which had accompanied him from Delhi, and