



The usual precautions followed. Khizr Khan was sent away to Amroha but his return soon afterwards on hearing that his father was convalescent, was interpreted by his enemies as an act of disobedience to the royal command. Kafur unfortunately asked the emperor to take drastic steps to put down the conspiracy formed against him and at last his wish was granted. Khizr Khan and Shadi Khan were sent to the fort of Gwalior and their mother was confined in Old Delhi and Alap Khan was put to death. Now Kafur induced the emperor to execute a will nominating his son, Shihab-ud-din, heir to the throne. The authority of the emperor ceased to command respect, and insurrectionary movements were set on foot in the outlying provinces of the empire. Gujarat rebelled and Kamal-uddin Garg who was sent there to restore order was put to death; the Rajputs of Chittor shook off the yoke of Delhi and expelled the Muslim garrison stationed there; Rama Chandra's son-in-law Harpal Deva raised the banner of rebellion at Devagir and declared himself independent. The news of these rebellions aggravated the malady of the Sultan. In the words of the Muslim chronicler. "Fortune proved as usual, fickle; and destiny drew her poniard to destroy him," and the mighty monarch 'bit his own flesh with fury,' as he saw the work of his life-time undone before his eyes. His trusted nobles and officers had been removed one after the other through Kafur's machinations. The end of the Sultan, who was already in the grip of a mortal disease, was accelerated by the news of revolts against his authority, and on January 2, 1316 A.D., he breathed his last and was solemnly interred in a tomb in front of the Jam-i-Masjid.

The reign of Alauddin represents the high watermark of Muslim despotism. He was by nature cruel and implacable and swept aside the dictates of religion and canon law if they interfered with his policy. He had no regard for the ties of brotherhood or filial relationship and inflicted punishments without distinction.

Estimate of
Alauddin.



A determined will, a capacity to work other men at high pressure, and an inflexible resolve to make the state efficient, enabled him to grapple successfully with the problems of his time. He steadily followed his goal with the instruments that were ready to his hand, and his Machiavellian statecraft excluded all conscientious scruple and ecclesiastical verdict. His ambition grew with every conquest, and so powerful did he become that in a short time he put down the recalcitrant barons with a strong hand. He possessed the qualities of a born military commander and a civil administrator—a rare combination in mediæval history. He saw clearly the dangers to which society was exposed in his day, and marshalling the forces that lay around him, attempted to promote the welfare of his people though this was merely to subserve the chief end of his policy—military aggrandizement. He enjoyed in an unstinted measure the confidence of his soldiers, and his zeal for the faith inspired his followers with an undying resolve to fight under his banner against the 'infidels.' In organising his civil administration, he displayed great originality and mental vigour; and his phenomenal energy enabled him to exercise personal supervision over the conduct of his officials. But all his institutions lacked the elements of permanence. He did not go beyond providing the primary needs of mankind, but it was not his fault. He was hampered by the limitations which his age imposed upon him. But he did much to relieve human want and misery by his control of the market, and, like Napoleon, found in cheap bread the supreme talisman of statesmanship. He was the first Muslim ruler who had the courage to take exception to the orthodox policy of the canonists; and Havell rightly observes that though he represented in his own person the uncompromising barbarity of the Turkish despot, his policy and conduct asserted to some extent the process of evolution by which the typical Indian Muslim came to regard India as his spiritual home, and to make Islam in India the bright expression of a great world religion.



CHAPTER IX

**A PERIOD OF REACTION AND THE
FOUNDATION OF THE TUGHLUQ DYNASTY**

ALAUDDIN'S death was a signal for civil war and the scrambles of rival parties for power. Malik Kafur removed from his path the princes of the blood royal, one by one, and produced a spurious will of the late Sultan, in which Umar Khan was nominated heir to the throne. As the heir-designate was only a tender stripling of six years, Kafur himself undertook the regency and began to administer the affairs of the state. The first thing needed was to exterminate the survivors of Alauddin. The villainous Malik Sambul was commissioned to put out the eyes of Prince Khizr Khan, the amorous hero of Amir Khusrau's famous poem, *Dewal Rani* and *Khizr Khan*, at Gwalior, and as a reward for this atrocious crime, was elevated to high rank. Prince Shadi Khan suffered a like fate; his eyes were "cut out from the sockets, with a razor, like slices of melon," and Malika Jahan, the queen-mother, bereft of all her jewels and property, was cast into prison. Mubarak Khan, who afterwards became king, escaped this tragic fate; his life was spared, but he was placed under custody. All the supporters of the late Sultan, the tried veterans who had served Alauddin with rare fidelity, were removed, one by one, and in their places were pitchforked low-born men who depended upon Kafur for favour and promotion to high office. This policy caused profound dissatisfaction among the representatives of the old order, who became alarmed for their own safety. A conspiracy was formed, and the slaves

¹The fall of the Khilji dynasty and the rise of the Tughluqs has been dealt with exhaustively in my work on the Qarauna Turks in India.



of Alauddin, with the help of Malik Mushir, the commander of the foot-guards, killed Kafur together with his confederates. After Kafur's death, Qutb-ud-din Mubarak Shah was placed upon the throne in 1316 A.D.

During the first few years of his reign, he acted with commendable energy and ability. The political Mubarak Shah. prisoners were released, the confiscated Qutb-ud-din lands were restored to their owners, and the numerous tolls and taxes which had hampered trade were abolished. Barani records that men were no longer in fear of hearing the words. 'Do this, but don't do that; say this, but don't say that; hide this, but don't hide that; eat this, but don't eat that; sell such as this, but don't sell things like that; act like this, but don't act like that.' The conditions of life were pleasant; but the relaxation of the old rules and regulations diminished the awe in which the royal authority was held. Secure on his throne, the Sultan abandoned himself to pleasure, and his Bacchanalian revels left him no time to attend to the business of the administration. But there was no rebellion or disturbance of a serious nature. The only important rebellion was that of Raja Harapal Deva of Devagir in 1218; but it was quickly suppressed and the rebel was flayed alive.² ✓Khusrau,³ a man of low caste from Gujarat, who had won the king's affection and confidence, undertook an expedition to Telingana, which met with great success. The army of Khusrau encamped at a

² Amir Khusrau says that all the Rais of the country submitted to the Sultan except Raghu, the minister of the late Rama Deva.

He fled into the hills and collected an army of 10,000 Hindus. But he was badly wounded in battle and the Hindus fled from the fields in utter confusion.

Amir Khusrau, *Nuh Sipihr*. Elliot, III, pp. 558-59.

³ Khusrau was an outcast from Gujarat.

Barani writes *Burwar bucchuh*. In some MSS. it is Parwari which is a low caste in Gujarat. The Khudabaksha MS. of Barani's *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi* has Baraon which is a word used for the sweeper class. Amir Khusrau's *Tughluqnumah* has Faradu. It is clear that he was a convert to Islam.



short distance from Warangal; the Khan ascended on a lofty mound from where he could survey the position of the fort and its defences. Amir Khusrau, who is a contemporary writer, says that the Hindu horsemen were more than 10,000 and the foot soldiers were beyond calculation, while the horsemen on the side of the Muslims were altogether only 300, or even less. But in spite of the disproportionate strength of the enemy, the Muslims succeeded in inflicting a crushing defeat upon the Hindus and capturing vast booty in jewels and gold. They pursued the enemy to the gates of the citadel and burnt their gardens and orchards. Next morning Khusrau's army attacked the outer wall of the fortress, which was dismantled and many Hindus were slain, among whom was Antil Mahta, the principal commandant of the Rai of Telingana. The outer wall having been successfully attacked, the Muslims proceeded to besiege the inner fortress. Khwaja Haji, the energetic Ariz, pointed out to the soldiers the posts they were to occupy, and constructed a mine below the fort, which was 150 yards in length. These mighty preparations alarmed the Rai, who saw no chance of escape except in submission. Khusrau told him in plain words that he must choose between submission and death, which was certain in case he refused to comply with the conditions laid down by him.⁴ Driven to despair by adverse fate, the Rai surrendered, and ceded to Khusrau five districts and promised to pay an annual tribute of "more than a hundred strong elephants as large as demons, 12,000 horses, and gold, jewels and gems beyond compute."

Having secured possession of Gujarat and the Deccan, and freed himself from the danger of conspiracy, Mubarak abandoned himself to debauch. Success made him perverse, proud, vindictive and tyrannical, and he inflicted terrible punishments for the most trivial offences. None ventured to advise him on matters of state, and things began to be managed in

⁴Amir Khusrau, Nuh Sipihir, Elliot, III, p. 560.



accordance with his caprice. The court became the scene of the most disgraceful orgies, and the king lost all regard for decency and morality, and practised every vice that can debase human nature. Often he dressed himself in female attire, and with his body decked with trinkets, he went out into the city in the company of harlots and danced at the houses of the nobles. In private life he vented his contempt for the ordinary restraints of morality and boasted of his most indefensible conduct with a peculiar naivete. He was in fact the embodiment of that evil spirit against which the leading nobles and officers of the age protested but in vain. There was a great demand for dancing girls, and 'the price of a boy, or handsome eunuch, or beautiful girl varied from 500 to 1,000 and even 2,000 *tankas*.' The common form of amusement in which the king used to indulge was to show himself in a state of inebriety in the company of public women to the assembled nobles of the court. But the fool cast all decency to the winds when he allowed these women to insult in foul and obscene language the distinguished nobles of the court. The result of this depravity was the slackening of the royal authority in all parts of the empire. Khusrau, who had become the king's confidant, acquired a great influence at the court. He daily conferred with his crew to compass the king's death. By false excuses he obtained the king's permission to keep around him men of his own caste in order to guard himself against the jealousy of the officials. The king was apprised of Khusrau's nefarious intentions, but he paid no heed to the remonstrances of Qazi Zia-ud-din, his old tutor.⁵ On the appointed night, the conspirators entered the palace and found the Sultan in his private apartments. Realising that his life was in danger, the Sultan hastily fled towards the ladies' quarters, but he was caught. Again, he made a frantic effort to effect

⁵ Qazi Zia-ud-din held the office of *Vakil-i-dar*, the keeper of the keys of the palace gate. This was a highly important post and was conferred only on trustworthy persons.



his escape but in vain. One of the conspirators thrust his dagger into the king's breast and severed his head from the body. A court was hastily improvised at midnight hour, and some of the nobles were summoned to the palace by means of guile "to be made accomplices" in these heinous crimes. The house of Firuz Khilji was extinguished; and with the forced consent of the nobles and officers, Khusrau mounted the throne in 1320 A.D. under the title of Nasir-ud-din.

Khusrau began what the Muslim chronicler call a hideous reign of terror. The royal haram was explored,

The regime of
Khusrau.

and his followers and kinsmen divided among themselves the women of the nobles and the Amirs. The treasures

of the state were rifled, and lavish gifts were conferred upon the people at large to obtain their support. Khusrau's object was to re-establish Hindu supremacy, and for the fulfilment of this object, he employed a large number of his own kinsmen, who were bound to him by ties which could not be easily broken. Islam was treated with contempt; the Quran was used as a seat for idols, which were set up in mosques to the utter grief of the faithful. This is Barani's exaggerated account of the situation. The court nobles were divided among themselves and were powerless to put an end to this unhappy state of things. The prestige of the Delhi Sultanate had reached its nadir, and if a powerful Hindu Raja had organised a confederacy of his fellow-princes, he might have easily obtained possession of Delhi, and the power of the Muslims might have been well-nigh extinguished. But the Rajput states were busily occupied with their own affairs, and took no interest in the political revolution that was going on at Delhi.

It was impossible for Khusrau to found permanently a Hindu state upon the support of satellites whom everyone hated and despised. Besides, the Alai nobles were filled with disgust at his usurpation of the royal authority. Among these discontented nobles was

Khusrau's
downfall.

Fakhrud-din Juna, whom the usurper had tried to conciliate by appointing him master of the horse. But Juna secretly brooded over the wrongs done to the house of Alauddin by the 'infidels' and devised means to effect the overthrow of Khusrau. He communicated all that had happened to his father Ghazi Malik, the warden of the marches at Dipalpur. The veteran warrior gnashed his teeth in anger when he heard of Khusrau's atrocities and crimes. He swore to wreak vengeance upon the enemies of Islam and started for Delhi at the head of a considerable force. He was joined by all the nobles of the empire except the governor of Multan, who kept aloof, because he did not like to play the second fiddle to Ghazi Malik.

The news of Ghazi Malik's approach alarmed Khusrau, and he began to organise his forces. The army of Delhi, demoralised by indolence and debauchery was no match for the sturdy Muslims who followed the banner of Ghazi Malik. Lack of experienced generalship added to want of discipline made the cause of Khusrau, from the outset, hopeless. When the two armies came face to face, each side began to plan dexterous manoeuvres to overpower the other. The rickety forces of Khusrau were routed and fled in confusion. The cause of the Parwaris was doomed and they were so frightened that 'hardly any life was left in their bodies.'

Having seized considerable spoils, the victorious general⁶ commenced his march towards Delhi to deal a decisive blow. Driven to despair, Khusrau looked for help in all quarters. Like one 'despised by fortune or worsted in gambling,' he brought out all the treasures and distributed them among the soldiers to prevent defection in the royal army. But this prodigality proved of no avail; the soldiers, who knew that Ghazi Malik's cause was just and righteous, accepted Khusrau's gold, but abandoned all intention of fighting under his

⁶ He afterwards ascended the throne under the title of Ghiyas-ud-din Tughluq.



colours. Once more the usurper made a desperate effort to save himself, and the forlorn hope of the Delhi army fought a hotly-contested engagement, in which they carried everything before them. Khusrau fled from the field of battle, but he was captured and beheaded.⁷ His supporters were diligently traced out; they were charged with treason and made to suffer the fate which they so richly merited. Ghazi Malik received the congratulations of the assembled nobles, who offered him the keys of the palace. The old leader shrank from the burden of the kingly office, and enquired if there was any survivor of the stock of Alauddin. The nobles answered in the negative and dwelt upon the confusion and disorder that prevailed in the empire owing to the abeyance of authority. With one voice they appealed to him to assume the insignia of sovereignty and placed him upon the throne. Zia Barani, who is an orthodox chronicler, writes with exultation: "Islam was rejuvenated and a new life came into it. The clamour of infidelity sank to the ground. Men's minds were satisfied and their hearts contented. All praise for Allah."⁸ The election of a plebeian to the kingly office demonstrated in an unmistakable manner the democratic spirit of Islam, and reaffirmed the principle of the survival of the fittest, which dominated and controlled the Muslim state in India in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

Ghazi Malik, the warden of the marches, ascended the throne under the title of Ghiyas-ud-din Tughluq. He was a man of humble origin; his father was a

⁷ Ibn Batuta has given a different account of his death, which seems to have been based upon hearsay. He says Khusrau remained concealed in a garden belonging to Malik Shadi, but when he was compelled by hunger to come out, he was captured and brought before Ghazi Malik, who ordered him to be beheaded. Ibn Batuta, Paris ed., III. p. 207.

⁸ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, Biblioth. Ind., p. 423.

Qarauna Turk,⁹ and his mother was a Jat woman of the Punjab. He had risen to high position by dint of personal merit, and, during the reign of Alauddin, had played an important part in wars against the Mongols, whom he had chased out of India, again and again. When he

⁹ Ibn Batuta says, he heard it from Shaikh Rukn-ud-din Multani that Sultan Tughluq was of the stock of Qarauna Turks, who lived in the mountainous region between Sindh and Turkistan. In his early life he was very poor and was obliged to take up service under some merchant in Sindh. Later, he joined the army and by sheer dint of merit rose to high position.

Ibn Batuta, Paris ed., III, p. 201.

Lee, Translation of Ibn Batuta, p. 125.

Marco Polo speaking of Qaraunas says: "This name is given them because they are the sons of Indian mothers by Tartar fathers. The king of those scoundrels is called Nagodar."

Cordier, Travels of Marco Polo. I. p. 98.

The account of Marco Polo is incorrect. He certainly confounded them with some other predatory tribe of Central Asia. The Qaraunas are often mentioned in the histories of the Mongols of Persia, as forming a *tuman*, i.e., a corps of ten thousand men. Mirza Haider, the author of the *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, says that the Mongols of Central Asia were divided into two classes—the Mongol and the Chaghtai. Both were jealous of each other, and employed special names by way of disparagement. The Chaghtai called the Mongols *Jatab*, while the Mongols called the Chaghtai *Qaravanas*. Elias and Ross, p. 148.

Nay Elias, the well-known translator of Mirza Haider's *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, made enquiries regarding the origin of the Qaraunas. His enquiries yielded the result that the Qaraunas were among the Mongols of Central Asia, and took a prominent part in Mongol campaigns in Persia in early times.

Elias and Ross. A History of the Moghuls of Central Asia (the translation of Mirza Haider's *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*.) Appendix B. pp. 76-77.

Ibn Batuta is correct. The Qaraunas were Turks.

The Muhammadan historians of India do not write anything about the Qaraunas. Shams-i-Siraj Afif in his *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi* writes that he has given a full account of Tughluq and his brothers in his *Manaqib-i-Sultan Tughluq*. But the copies of this work, so far as I know, are non-existent.



assumed the reins of office, the empire of Delhi was in a state of confusion, and it was with great tact, prudence, and firmness that Ghiyas restored order and recovered the moral prestige of the monarchy. The magnanimity of his nature showed itself in the generous treatment which he meted out to the relatives of Alaud-din. He made a suitable provision for them and appointed them to high offices in the state. No just claim was ignored and no past service was forgotten. The claims of rank and birth were respected, and many families that had been ruined were restored to their former dignity.

Soon after the organisation of his government, Ghiyas ordered an expedition against Warangal, the capital of the Kakatiya Rajas of Telingana. During the feeble reign of Mubarak, Pratap Rudra Deva II had greatly increased his power and ceased to pay the stipulated tribute. The Crown Prince was sent at the head of a large force to chastise him. The fort of Warangal was besieged; and the Hindus mustered strong to fight against the forces of Islam. A fierce battle was fought between the besiegers and the besieged, and large numbers of men were slain on both

Expedition against
Warangal.

These are the words of Afif in the Calcutta text, p. 36:—

Edward Thomas (*The Chronicles*, p. 186), it seems to me, has wrongly spelt the word in writing it as *Qarauniah*. I do not find it in the Arabic text of Ibn Batuta published in Paris in 1914. The word is written there as copy (*Qarauna*).

Firishta writes that when he went to Lahore and made enquiries regarding the parentage of Sultan Tughluq, he was told by reliable informants that his father was a Turki slave of Sultan Balban and his mother was a Jat woman of the Punjab. Firishta is supported by the author of the *Khulasat-ut-tawarikh*.

Firishta's statement is acceptable, for such marriages with the Hindus were not altogether unknown. Tughluq's brother Rajab, father of Sultan Firuz, had married a daughter of the Bhatti Rajputs. Lucknow text, p. 130.

sides. Driven to despair, Pratap Rudra Deva sued for peace, but the Prince haughtily rejected the terms offered by him. Meanwhile, a rumour was spread that the old king was dead at Delhi, and mischievous men began to induce the soldiers of the army to desert the prince.¹⁰

Malik Tamar, Malik Taghin, Malik Mal Afghan, and Malik Kafur, keeper of the seals, deserted the army when they were informed that the prince intended to put them to death. These defections considerably thinned the ranks of the royalists, and they were compelled to raise the siege. But this failure rankled in the mind of the Sultan, and again in 1323 he despatched the Crown Prince with fresh reinforcements to reduce Warangal. The Hindus fought with desperate courage, but, when the Kakatiya prince saw that the day was going against him, he surrendered with his family, dependants, and the principal officers of the state. The Raja was sent to Delhi with Malik Bedar and Khwaja Haji, and Warangal was re-christened Sultanpur and the whole country was thoroughly subjugated. The glory and greatness of the Kakatiyas ended and henceforward they ceased to exist as a predominant power in southern India.

The administration of Ghiyas was based upon the principles of justice and moderation, though the Hindus were still held in contempt and treated as inferior beings. The royal order was that in the matter of revenue 'there should be left only so much to the Hindus that

Administration of
Ghiyas.

¹⁰ The chief man who spread this rumour was 'Ubaid, the poet, whom Badaoni writes as Ubaid Zakani, which is the name of a contemporary Persian poet. The prince arrested some of these mischief-mongers. Malik Mal Afghan and 'Ubaid were sent to Delhi, where, according to Barani, they were impaled, and according to Firishta, were buried alive.

Elliot, III, p. 233.

Tabqat-i-Akbari, Biblioth. Ind., pp. 195-96.

Firishta, Lucknow text, p. 131.

neither, on the one hand, they should become arrogant on account of their wealth, nor, on the other, should they desert their lands and business in despair."¹¹ He reorganised the revenue administration and discarded measurement in favour of sharing. He found the latter method satisfactory, for measurement in the 14th century implied vexation and corruption. The chiefs and headmen were allowed a fair share of the collected dues as their wages and were not allowed to take any additional or extra amount from the peasants. The provincial governors were required to set a higher standard of conduct and to act honestly in their dealings. The evils of the farming system were stopped and the dishonest activities of farmers' and 'enhancement-mongers' were sternly suppressed. The Sultan ordered the *Diwan-i-Wizarat* not to enhance the revenue beyond one-tenth and one-eleventh, but to see that the enhancement extended over a number of years. The Amirs and Maliks were not to be molested if they took half a rupee in ten or eleven or a rupee in ten or fifteen as *haq iqtaadari*, while their subordinates were allowed to keep for themselves a half or one per cent in addition to their salaries.¹²

The accounts were audited and the officials in the provinces had to submit statements of their receipts to the Revenue Ministry at the capital. The governors paid a fixed sum which was not to be increased arbitrarily on the reports of spies and 'touts and pests of various kinds.' The jagirs which had been recklessly granted by Khusrau to his adherents were resumed,

¹¹ Zia Barani, Cal. text, p. 430.
Elliot, III, pp. 230-31.

¹² The opinion expressed by me previously that the state demand was fixed at one-tenth or one-eleventh of the gross produce is not borne out by the text. The passage relates, as Mr. Moreland rightly points out (*Agrarian Systems*, p. 44), to the enhancement—and not the assessment of revenue. The reader will do well to read Mr. Moreland's learned and critical exposition of Ghiyas's measures in his well-known book, '*The Agrarian System of Moslems in India*,' pp. 40-45, and Barani's Cal. text, pp. 429-30.

and the finances of the state were set in order. The departments of justice and police were organised, and so great was the dread of the Sultan's justice that security prevailed even in the remote parts of the empire. Himself a battle-scarred veteran, Ghiyas took great pains to make the military system orderly and efficient. The soldiers were liberally paid and treated with kindness. Strict discipline was enforced, and arms and weapons were amply provided. The method of Alā-uddin regarding descriptive rolls of troopers and the branding of horses was adopted; and the prices and results of the inspection of the latter, together with an account of the retainers, were entered in a register with a view to secure efficiency.

Towards the close of his reign in 1324 the princes of Lakhnauti, Shihab-ud-din and Nasir-ud-din who had been expelled from their kingdom by their brother Bahadur whom Ibn Battuta calls Bahadur Bura, came to Delhi and sought the intervention of Tughluq Shah. The Sultan entrusted the capital to Ulugh Khan and himself marched towards Lakhnauti. Bahadur was overpowered and brought with a halter round his neck to Delhi. Nasir-ud-din with the leading chiefs and *zamindars* made his submission and was reinstated in his territory. It was during this campaign that the Raja of Tirhut (Mithila), Hari Singh Deva of the Karnata dynasty, encountered the forces of Islam. He was defeated and his capital was taken by the Muslims. The neighbouring country was thoroughly subdued and Hari Singh Deva fled into the Nepal territory.¹³ When the Sultan returned to Delhi, he was killed by the fall of a pavilion which his

¹³ Firishta, Lucknow text, p. 142.

Wright, History of Nepal, pp. 174-75.

J. A. S. B. LXXII. pt. 1, 1903, pp. 1—32.

Ind. Ant., 1880, p. 189.

Journal Asiatique, 1816. I, p. 552.

Briggs, I, p. 407. Firishta, Lucknow text, p. 132.



son, Prince Juna, had erected near Afghanpur at a distance of six miles from the capital in 1325 A.D.¹⁴ The prince was suspected of having planned the emperor's death, for the hasty construction of such a palace was entirely superfluous. Whatever the real truth may be, there are strong reasons for thinking that the Sultan's death was the result of a conspiracy in which Crown Prince took part, and not of accident.

¹⁴ Barani does not clearly state what happened. He simply says, "A thunderbolt of a calamity from heaven fell upon the Sultan and he was with five or six others crushed under the *debris*."

Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi, Biblioth. Ind., p. 452.

Elliot has incorrectly translated the passage. From his translation it appears that lightning fell upon the roof and the whole structure came down with a crash. But this is not in agreement with the text of Barani. Elliot; III, p. 235.

Ibn Batuta, who came to India in 1333 A.D., unequivocally states that Prince Muhammad was the cause of the death of the Sultan. He says that he heard it from Shaikh Rukn-ud-din Multani, who was present with the emperor on the occasion, that the building was intended to fall down at a particular moment. The Sultan with his favourite son Mahmud Khan was crushed under the *debris* and when the workmen were called to dig up the body of the Sultan with their shovels, the Prince deliberately delayed their arrival. The king's body was found bending over that of his son as if to protect him. According to him, it was the work of Ahmad Ayaz, the principal architect of the realm, whom Muhammad afterwards, probably to signify his gratitude, made his chief minister, Ibn Batuta's account is supported by circumstantial evidence. Besides, he is an independent authority.

Ibn. Batuta, Paris ed., III, pp. 212-13.

Nizam-ud-din Ahmad says, the hasty construction of the structure creates a suspicion that Ulugh Khan encompassed his father's death. He charged Barani with intentionally suppressing truth out of regard for his patron Firuz Tughluq. He thinks that the death of the Sultan was due to a conspiracy formed by Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Aulia and the Crown Prince. He is supported by Isami, a contemporary writer.

Tabqat, Biblioth. Ind., pp. 214-15.

Ghiyas was a mild and benevolent ruler. He loved simplicity, and towards his quondam colleagues, he behaved with the same frank jovialty which had characterised him in his earlier days. A pious and peace-loving Muslim, he practised rigidly the observances of his faith, but he never persecuted the non-Muslims. If the Hindus were treated harshly, it was due to political reasons and not to religious bigotry. His private life was free from blemish. His watchword was moderation. As long as he lived, he tried to promote the welfare of his subjects, and his beneficent activity extended to every branch of the administration. It was no mean achievement to have successfully reorganised the administration which had been thrown out of gear during the reigns of the imbecile Mubarak and the 'unclean' Khusrau. The following verse of Amir Khusrau is illustrative of the Sultan's excellent methods of government:

"He never did anything that was not repleta with wisdom and sense. He might be said to wear a hundred doctors' hoods under his crown."

Firishta tries to exonerate the Crown Prince from all blame and says that such accusations are far from being probable. But again he says:—

Haji Muhammad Qandhari says that it was struck by lightning, and *this does not seem at all improbable*. Clearly Firishta has not made up his mind one way or the other, and in characteristic fashion he brings his uncritical account to a close by saying "But God only knows the real truth." Briggs, I, p. 408. Lucknow text, p. 132.

I have discussed the subject at length in my work on the Qarauna Turks. There is little doubt that the death of the Sultan was the result of a conspiracy planned by the Crown Prince.

CHAPTER X

MUHAMMAD TUGHLUQ, THE ILL-STARRED IDEALIST

GHIYAS-UD-DIN TUGHLUQ was succeeded by his son, Prince Juna, under the title of Muhammad Tughluq,¹ in 1325 A.D. No revolution, no palace intrigue, and no gubernatorial or popular insurrection marred

The ill-starred idealist.

the smoothness of his accession to the throne. The city was adorned and the streets were strewn with flowers. Money was thrown broadcast among the people, and to commemorate the auspicious occasion, large and generous gifts were made to loyal officers of the crown. The fame of his liberality travelled far and wide, and brought to Delhi learned and pious men, who were fitly honoured by their royal benefactor. Men's memories are proverbially short, and before the outflow of this generosity, the catastrophe which had befallen the late Sultan was completely forgotten, and in the minds of many the prince was perhaps, acquitted of all guilt.

Muhammad Tughluq was unquestionably the ablest man among the crowned heads of the middle ages. Of all kings, who had sat upon the throne of Delhi since the Muslim conquest, he was undoubtedly the most learned and accomplished. Nature had endowed him with a marvellous memory, a keen and penetrating intellect, and an enormous capacity for assimilating knowledge of all kinds. The versatility of his genius took by surprise all his contemporaries. A lover of the fine arts, a cultured scholar and an accomplished poet, he was equally at home in logic, astronomy,

¹ The reign of Muhammad Tughluq has been dealt with exhaustively in my work on the Qarauna Turks in India, which contains a complete bibliography and references.



mathematics, philosophy, and the physical sciences. No one could excel him in composition and calligraphy; he had at his command a good deal of Persian poetry, of which he made a very extensive use in his writings and speeches. He was an adept in the use of similes and metaphors, and his literary productions were saturated with the influence of the Persian classics. Even the most practised rhetoricians found it difficult to rival the brilliance of his imagination, the elegance of his taste, and his command over the subtleties and niceties of expression. He was a master of dialectics, well-versed in Aristotelian logic and philosophy, and theologians and rhetoricians feared to argue with him. Barani, who is neither an apologist nor a court minion, describes him as an eloquent and profoundly learned scholar, a veritable wonder of creation, whose abilities would have taken by surprise such men as Aristotle and Asaf.² He was not unacquainted with the science of medicine, which was widely studied in the middle ages, and used to cure diseases. The generosity of the Sultan was prodigal; and all contemporary writers are unanimous in extolling his lavish gifts to the numerous suppliants who crowded his gate at all times.³ He was a strict Muslim who rigidly practised and enforced the observances laid down in the Holy Book. But he was not an unrelenting bigot like some of his predecessors. His liberalism is reflected in his desire to be tolerant towards the Hindus and in his humane attempt to introduce ameliorative reforms, like the suppression of Sati, which was in vogue in the fourteenth century.

The Moorish traveller, Ibn Batuta, who came to India in 1333 A.D., thus describes the Sultan:—"Muhammad is a man who, above all others is fond of making presents and shedding blood. There may always be seen at his gate some poor person becoming

² Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuz Sahi*, Biblioth. Ind., p. 461.

³ Barani and Ibn Batuta bestow lavish praise upon the Sultan for his gifts and favours to the foreigners.

rich, or some living one condemned to death. His generous and brave actions, and his cruel and violent deeds, have obtained notoriety among the people. In spite of this, he is the most humble of men, and the one who exhibits the greatest equity. The ceremonies of his religion are dear to his heart, and he is very severe in respect of prayer and the punishment which follows its neglect. He is one of those kings whose good fortune is great and whose happy success exceeds the ordinary limit; but his distinguishing character is generosity. I shall mention among the instances of his liberality, some marvels, of which the like has never been reported of any of the princes who have preceded him."⁴

Superficially viewed, the Sultan seems to be an amazing compound of contradictions. But he is not really so. The charges of blood-thirstiness and madness, brought against him by later writers, are mostly unfounded. No contemporary writer gives the barest indication of the Sultan's madness. The charge of blood-thirstiness was bolstered up by the members of the clerical party whom the Sultan treated with open disregard.⁵ It is true, he was, like all mediæval despots, subject to great paroxysms of rage, and inflicted the

⁴ Ibn Batuta Paris ed., III, pp. 216-17. Also Elliot, III, pp. 611-12; Masalik-al-absar, Quatremères Notices et Extraits, Tome XIII, pp. 191-92. Elliot, III, p. 580.

⁵ Barani makes the complaint and denounces the rationalism of the Sultan. In very strong language he condemns his philosophical speculations and pours his cold scorn upon Ubaid and Saad, who were the king's closest associates and whom he wrongly charged with having drawn the Sultan away from the path of orthodoxy. Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, Biblioth. Ind., p. 466.

This charge is again untrue. Ibn Batuta mentions terrible punishments inflicted upon Shaikhs and Maulvis—men of the sacerdotal order, who had been so far deemed as sacrosanct. Muhammad, who was too strong a man to be dominated by the priestly class, laid his hands freely upon them when they flouted his authority, aided treason, or embezzled public funds. A careful perusal of Ibn Batuta's narrative makes it clear that those who suffered heavily were men of the clerical party.

MEDIAEVAL INDIA

most brutal punishments upon those who offended against his will, irrespective of the rank or order to which they belonged; but this is quite a different thing from stigmatising him as a born tyrant, taking delight in the shedding of human blood. A close examination of the alleged murders and atrocities of the Sultan will reveal the unsoundness of the common view that he found pleasure in the destruction of human species and organised 'man-hunts'.⁶ The truth is that the Sultan combined a headstrong temper with advanced ideals of administrative reform, and when his people failed to respond to his wishes, his wrath became terrible. His impatience was the result of popular apathy, just as popular apathy was the outcome of his startling innovations.

The earliest administrative measure, which the Sultan introduced, was the enhancement of taxation in the Doab. Barani who put the measure as the first in point of time, says that 'it operated to the ruin of the country and the decay of the people,' while another historian, who is more cautious in his remarks says that 'the duties levied on the necessities

Administrative
experiments—
Taxation in the
Doab.

a class that clamoured for privilege and grounded its claim to preferential treatment on prescriptive right.

Ibn Batuta, Paris ed., III, pp. 292-99.

⁶ It is amusing to read Barani's story of the Sultan's organisation of man-hunts. What they really were will be made clear by a critical-study of his narrative. A dreadful famine stalked the land; and to mitigate the suffering caused by it, the Sultan advanced loans and introduced measures to promote agriculture. Those who did not carry out his orders were severely punished by the officers of the state, who must have frequently transgressed their proper limits. Those who have any experience of *tagavi* loans in British India in these days must be aware of the harshness that always attends the work of realisation. Barani was a native of Baran (Bulandshahr). The people of his district were also punished, and he specially mentions Baran. This led him to frame such a monstrous charge against the Sultan. Probably his local patriotism and orthodoxy led him to do so.

of life, realised with the utmost vigour, were too great for the power of industry to cope with. The principal reason, which induced the Sultan to enhance the imposts in the Doab⁷ was the richness and fertility of its lands and the refractory and rebellious conduct of its inhabitants. Alauddin had also harshly dealt with the *khuts*, *muqaddams*, and *balahars* of the Doab, who gave not a little trouble to the administration.⁷ The taxes in the Doab were raised, according to Barani, out of all proportion to the income of the people, and some oppressive *abwabs* (cesses) were also invented, which broke the back of the ryot, and reduced him to utter impoverishment and misery.⁸ All historians dwell upon the distress which was caused by this fiscal measure, and Barani whose native district, Baran, also suffered from the effects of this enhancement, bitterly inveighs against the Sultan. He greatly exaggerates the suffering and misery caused to the population, when he says that the ryots of distant lands, on hearing of the distress and ruin of the people in the Doab, broke out into open rebellion, and threw off their allegiance. Unfortunately, this measure was carried out at a time when a severe famine was prevailing in the Doab, and the distress of the people was greatly aggravated by its disastrous effects. But this does not exonerate the Sultan altogether from blame; for his officials continued to levy taxes

⁷ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, Biblioth. Ind., p. 291.

The Muslim chroniclers give to the chiefs and landholders of the Doab these names.

Barani writes:

This means ten or twenty times, that is, ten instead of one and twenty instead of one—Elliot mistranslates the passage and says, the Sultan enhanced the cesses 10 or 5 per cent more. But the first interpretation is not to be literally accepted, because twenty times will be absurd. On the other hand if the latter interpretation is accepted, the increase would be so small as not likely to be felt at all by the agricultural population. What Barani intends to convey to his readers is that the taxes were increased out of all proportion.

⁸ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, Biblioth. Ind., p. 473.

at the enhanced rate with the utmost rigour, and made no allowance for famine. It was long afterwards that he ordered wells to be dug and loans to be advanced to agriculturists to promote cultivation in the affected areas. The remedy came too late; the famished population, whose patience was sorely tried by the long duration of the famine, failed to profit by it, and gave up the ghost in sheer despair. Never were benevolent schemes of reform more cruelly frustrated by an evil fate than in the case of Muhammad Tughluq.

Another measure, which entailed much suffering on the population, was the transfer of the capital to Devagir, which was re-christened Daulatabad. During the early years of his reign, when the Sultan went to the Deccan to suppress the rebellion of Baha-ud-din Ghashtasp, he was struck with the strategical importance of the situation of Devagir and expressed a wish to make it the capital of his growing empire. The empire had grown to large dimensions; towards the north it embraced the Doab, the plains of the Punjab and Lahore with the territories stretching from the Indus to the coast of Gujarat; towards the east it comprised Bengal, and in the centre it included such principalities as Malwa, Ujjain, Mahoba and Dhar. The Deccan had been subdued, and its principal powers had acknowledged the suzerainty of Delhi.⁹ Having fully weighed in

⁹ Barani mentions the following provinces of the empire at the beginning of Muhammad's reign:—(1) Delhi, (2) Gujarat, (3) Malwa, (4) Devagir, (5) Telang, (6) Kampila, (7) Dhorsamundar, (8) Mabbar, (9) Tirhut, (10) Lakhnauti, (11) Satgaon, (12) Sonargaon.

Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, Biblioth. Ind., p. 468.

These, says Barani, were thoroughly settled at the outset of the reign. As the empire grew in extent, many more provinces were created. The author of the *Masalik-ul-absar* mentions 23 provinces which represent the highest extent of the empire under Muhammad, *Masalik-al-absar*, Elliot, III, pp. 574-75.

Thomas, *The Chronicles*, p. 203.

70

satisfied only with the removal of the official machinery of the state. But he made an egregious blunder in ordering the people of Delhi, men women, and children, to go *en masse* to Daulatabad with all their effects. All sorts of facilities were provided; a road was built from Delhi to Daulatabad, and food and accommodation were freely supplied to the emigrants. Those, who had no money to feed themselves during the journey, were fed at the expense of the state, and the Sultan was "bounteous in his liberality and favours to the emigrants, both on their journey and on their arrival."¹² But all these concessions and favours proved of no avail. The people, who had lived in Delhi for generations, and to whom the city was endeared by numerous associations, left it with broken hearts. The sufferings, attendant upon a long journey of 700 miles, were incalculable, and a great many of them, wearied with fatigue and rendered helpless by home-sickness, perished in the way, and those who reached their journey's end found exile in a strange, unfamiliar land unbearable, and "gave up the ghost in despair." Barani writes that the Muslims, struck with despondency, laid down their heads in that heathen land, and of the multitude of emigrants only a few survived to return to their homes.¹³ 'Isami also dwells at length upon the horrors of the migration and heaps abuses and execrations upon the Sultan.

The unwarranted assumption of Ibn Batuta that a search was instituted in Delhi under a royal mandate to find out if any of the inhabitants still lurked in their

¹² Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, Biblioth, Ind., p. 474.

¹³ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, Biblioth, Ind., p. 474.

Zia Barani writes: "So complete was the ruin, that not a cat or a dog was left among the buildings of the city, in its palaces or in its suburbs." A statement of this kind made by an oriental writer of the middle ages is not to be taken too literally. European scholars, unaccustomed to Indian forms of speech, have made this mistake: Vincent Smith uncritically accepts Ibn Batuta's story related above. *Oxford History of India*, p. 239.



houses, and that it resulted in the discovery of two men, one lame and the other blind, who were dragged to Daulatabad, is based upon mere bazar gossip, invented afterwards to discredit the Sultan. It is true, the Sultan's orders were carried out in a relentless manner, but it is a calumny to assert that his object was to cause needless suffering to the population. It must be said to his credit that, when he saw the failure of his scheme, he ordered the inhabitants to go back to Delhi and on the return journey treated them with great generosity and made full amends for their losses. But Delhi was a depopulated city. From far and near the Sultan brought learned men, merchants, and landlords to take up their abode in the deserted capital, but no inducement proved of any avail to reconcile them to the changed surroundings. The old prosperity did not return, and Delhi did not recover her former grandeur, for the Moorish traveller found it in 1334 A.D. uninhabited in some places and still bearing the marks of desolation.

Daulatabad remained, as Lane-Poole writes, a monument of misdirected energy. The scheme of transfer failed disastrously. That it would have, in the event of success, enabled the Sultan to keep a firm hold upon the different parts of the empire, may well be doubted. He failed to see that Daulatabad was situated at a long distance from the northern frontiers of the empire, which needed to be watched with constant vigilance. He disregarded the warning, which experience amply furnished, that Hindu revolts and Mongol inroads might at any time jeopardise his possessions in the north. If such a contingency were to arise, it would have been an extremely difficult task for the Sultan, pressed by the half-subdued races of the Deccan and the nomad hordes of Central Asia, who repeatedly ravaged the northern frontier, to cope with the forces of disorder.

Muhammad Tughluq has rightly been called the prince of moneyers. One of the earliest acts of his reign was to reform the entire system of coinage, to

determine the relative value of the precious metals, and to found coins which might facilitate exchange and form convenient circulating media. But far more daring and original was his attempt to introduce a token currency. Historians have tried to discover the motive which led the Sultan to attempt this novel experiment. The heavy drain upon the treasury has been described as the principal reason which motivated the issue of the token coins. It cannot be denied that great deficiency had been caused in the treasury by the prodigal generosity of the Sultan, the huge expenditure that had to be incurred upon the transfer of the capital, and the expeditions fitted out to quell armed rebellions. But there were other reasons which must be mentioned in giving an explanation of this revolutionary measure. The taxation policy in the Doab had failed; and the famine that still stalked the most fertile part of the kingdom, with the consequent decline in agriculture, must have brought about a perceptible fall in the revenue of the state. It is not to be supposed that the Sultan was faced with bankruptcy; his treasure was not denuded of specie for he subsequently paid genuine coins for the new ones, and managed a most difficult situation with astonishing success.¹⁴ He wished to augment his resources in order to carry into effect his

¹⁴ Ranking in a foot-note to his translation of Badaoni's *Muntakhab-ut-tawarikh*, raises a doubt whether these coins were exchanged at their relative metal value or their face value. Badaoni certainly means what he says. He says, the copper tokens were exchanged for silver coins when the Sultan saw the failure of his scheme. Barani is explicit on the point. The new coins were exchanged at their face value, otherwise how would it have been possible to tide over an embarrassing situation with success? Barani says gold coins were given in exchange.

The following passage in Briggs (I, p. 415) is not to be found in Firishta's Lucknow text:—

"Such abuses had occurred in the mint, however, that after the treasury was emptied, there still remained a heavy demand. This debt the king struck off, and thousands were ruined."



grandiose plans of conquest and administrative reform, which appealed so powerfully to his ambitious nature. There was another reason: the Sultan was a man of genius who delighted in originality and loved experimentation. With the examples of the Chinese and Persian rulers before him, he decided to try the experiment without the slightest intention of defrauding or cheating his own subjects, as is borne out by the inscriptions on his coins. Copper coins were introduced and made legal tender; but the state failed to make the issue of the new coins a monopoly of its own. The result was, as the contemporary chronicler points out in right orthodox fashion, that the house of every Hindu—of course as an orthodox Muslim he condones the offences of his co-religionists—was turned into a mint and the Hindus of the various provinces manufactured lakhs and crores of coins. Forgery was freely practised by the Hindus and the Muslims; and the people paid their taxes in the new coin and purchased arms, apparels, and other articles of luxury. The village headmen, merchants, and landowners suppressed their gold and silver, and forged copper coins in abundance, and cleared their liabilities with them. The result of this was that the state lost heavily, while private individuals made enormous profits. The state was constantly defrauded, for it was impossible to distinguish private forgeries from coins issued by the royal mint. Gold and silver became scarce; trade came to a standstill, and all business was paralysed.

This passage contains a clear charge of dishonesty against the Sultan, which is thoroughly inconsistent with his policy. The Sultan was anxious to avoid injustice, and that is why he permitted exchange of coins. It is not clear where Briggs found this passage. Sultan Firuz Shah makes no mention of the repayment of these debts in his *Fatuhāt-i-Firuz Shahi*. Barani clearly states that the Sultan met all demands and Ibn Batuta's account of gifts and rewards points to the fact that there was no dearth of money in the royal treasury. Ranking, *Al-Badaoni*, I, pp. 306-07.

Great confusion prevailed; merchants refused to accept the new coins which became as "valueless as pebbles or potsherds." When the Sultan saw the failure of the scheme, he repealed his former edict and allowed the people to exchange gold and silver coins for those of copper.¹⁵ Thousands of men brought these coins to the treasury and demanded gold and silver coins in return. The Sultan who meant no deception was defrauded by his own people, and the treasury was considerably drained by these demands. All token coins were completely withdrawn, and the silence of the Moorish travellers, who visited Delhi only three years later, proves that no disastrous results ensued and the people soon forgot the token currency.

The failure of the scheme was inevitable in the India of the fourteenth century. To the people at large copper was copper, however benevolent the intentions of the Sultan might have been. The Sultan who pitched his expectations too high made no allowance for the conservative character of the people, whose acceptance of a token currency even in modern times is more in the nature of a submission to an inevitable evil than a willingness to profit by the use of a convenient circulating medium. The mint was not state monopoly; and the Sultan failed to provide adequate safeguards to prevent forgery. Elphinstone's statement that the failure of the token currency was due to the king's insolvency and the instability of his government, is not justified by facts, for the Sultan withdrew all coins at once and his credit remained unshaken. Mr. Gardner Brown has ascribed this currency muddle to the shortage in the world's supply of silver in the fourteenth century. There was a great scarcity of coins in England in the reign of Edward III about the year 1335 and he had to take steps to prevent the export of bullion without a license. Similar difficulties were felt in other countries. Soon after his accession, Muhammad

¹⁵ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, Biblioth. Ind., p. 486.



Tughluq introduced a gold *dinar* of 200 grains and an *adali* or a silver coin of 140 grains in place of the gold and silver tankas which had hitherto been in use and which had weighed 175 grains each. The introduction of the gold *dinar* and the revival of the *adali* show that there was an abundance of gold and a relative scarcity of silver in the country. The prize money brought by Kafur from the Deccan consisted largely of jewelry and gold and it was this which had brought about a fall in the value of gold. The scarcity of silver continued even after the death of Sultan Muhammad. Only three silver coins of Firuz have come to light and Thomas mentions only two pieces of Muhammad bin Firuz, one of Mubarak Shah, one of Muhammad bin Farid and none of Alam Shah and his successors of the Lodi dynasty and it is not until the middle of the 16th century that we come across a large number of silver coins issued from the mints of Sher Shah Suri and his successors.¹⁶ Regarding the failure of this scheme, Edward Thomas, a numismatist of repute, has rightly observed, "There was no special machinery to mark the difference of the fabric of the royal mint and the handwork of the moderately skilled artisan. Unlike the precautions taken to prevent the imitation of the Chinese paper notes, there was positively no check upon the authenticity of the copper token, and no limit to the power of production by the masses at large.

Muhammad Tughluq adopted a policy which ran counter to the cherished prejudices of the orthodox school. He levied many taxes in addition to the four legal ones¹⁷ prescribed the Quran, and showed a greater regard for the religious susceptibilities of the Hindus

The liberal character of the administration.

¹⁶ I have considerably modified the views expressed on this subject in the first edition of this work. A fuller discussion is provided in my work on the Qarauna Turks in India.

¹⁷ The four legal taxes are *Khiraaj*, *Zukat*, *Jeziya* and *Khamsa*.

than his predecessors had ever done. Unlike his weak-minded cousin, Firuz, he was no unreasonable bigot. His culture had widened his outlook, and his converse with philosophers and rationalists had developed in him a spirit of tolerance for which Akbar is so highly praised. He employed some of them in high positions in the state,¹⁸ and, like the great Akbar after him, tried to stop the practice of *Sati*. The independent Rajput states were left unmolested; for the Sultan knew that it was impossible to retain permanent possession of such strongholds as Chittor and Ranthambhor—a policy which was not liked by the clerical party. He continued Alauddin's practice of appropriating four-fifths of the share of plunder to himself, leaving the rest to the soldiers. But the feelings of the canonists were deeply embittered, when he deprived them of the monopoly of the administration of justice. His love of justice was so great that he personally looked into the details of the judicial administration, and submissively accepted the decrees of the courts passed against himself.¹⁹

He made himself the Supreme Court of Appeal, and when his judgment differed from that of the *Muftis*, he overruled them and adhered to his own view. To curtail the influence of the orthodox party, he invested some of the distinguished officers of the state with judicial powers in spite of the fact that they were not *Qazis*, *Muftis*, or professed canonists. The Sultan's brother Mubarak Khan sat with the Qazi in the *Diwan-i-khana* to assist him in deciding cases. He occupied the office of *Mirdad* whose duty was to produce in the court any big Amir or nobleman against whom a

¹⁸ Ibn Batuta speaks of a Hindu Ratan who was in the Sultan's service. The traveller praises his skill in finances, Ibn Batuta, Paris ed., III, pp. 105-106.

¹⁹ Ibn Batuta, Paris ed., III, pp. 285-86.

Ranking, *Al-Badaoni*, I, pp. 317-18.

Badaoni gives a detailed account of the manner in which the Sultan administered justice.



complaint was instituted or a suit was filed, and who was too powerful to be controlled by the Qazi. Some members of the sacerdotal order were severely punished by him when they were found guilty of rebellion, open sedition, or embezzlement of religious funds. It was this stern justice which led to his condemnation by the priestly class, which could not tolerate a ruler who was impious enough to lay his hands freely upon *Shaikhs* and *Saiyyads*, hitherto considered sacrosanct by Muslim rulers. Neither birth nor rank, nor piety availed aught to afford protection to an offender from the punishment which his guilt merited, and that is why Ibn Batuta, who had visited many lands and seen a great deal of men and affairs, recorded the verdict, when he was in his own country, no longer afraid of the Sultan's wrath, that "of all men this king is the most humble, and of all men he most loves justices."

He was greatly interested in agriculture. He tried to deal heroically with famine but his officers did not co-operate with him. He appointed a special officer called *Amirkohi* to look after the agricultural department and in times of famine advanced seventy lakhs of tankas as *taqavi* to his subjects.

The Sultan's acts of munificence surpass all belief. Whoever went to pay his respects to him carried with him presents, and since the Sultan gave rich rewards in return, the practice became very common. A separate department of presents was maintained. Those who were fortunate enough in securing royal favour were granted the *Khat-i-Khurd* which contained an order that the bearer should be paid the specified amount of money from the royal treasury after proper identification. This *Khat* or letter was signed and countersigned by several officers before the payment was made. The state also maintained an industrial department and the author of the *Masalik* writes that the Sultan had a manufactory in which 4,000 silk weavers were employed who manufactured cloth for all kinds of dresses for the Amirs and officers of the court. Besides, there were 4,000 manufacturers of

golden tissues who prepared gold brocades for the use of the royal ladies and the wives of the nobles.

The Sultan's energy manifested itself not only in the organisation of the civil administration, but also in

The Sultan's the formation of grandiose plans of schemes of foreign conquest. Early in the reign of conquest. he was induced by some Khorasani

nobles who had sought refuge at his court to attempt an invasion of their country. There was nothing fantastic or absurd in the plan. The condition of Khorasan under the degenerate Abu Said favoured the consummation of such a project. Abu Said was a minor when he ascended the throne, and the affairs of the state were managed by Amir Chaupan, a nobleman of considerable influence, who had virtually attained to the position of the *major domo* of the palace. But Amir Chaupan's tutelage galled the young ruler, and when Chaupan opposed his wish to marry his daughter, of whom the young Sultan was passionately enamoured, he was captured and strangled to death by his orders. The death of Chaupan plunged Persia into confusion and encouraged the Chaghtai chieftain, Tarmashirin Khan, and the ruler of Egypt to threaten the eastern and western frontiers of the Persian empire. Muhammad Tughluq, who had established friendly relations with the ruler of Egypt, collected a large army containing 370,000 men, who were paid for one whole year from the public treasury. But several causes combined to wreck this ambitious scheme. First, the Egyptian Sultan, who had become friendly to Abu Said, refused to render assistance. Secondly, the Chinese ruler did not want to see any increase in the power of the Chaghtai chieftain who was a dangerous neighbour. Thirdly, the deposition of Tarmashirin by his rebellious nobles removed a great danger from the eastern frontier of Persia and lessened the difficulties of Abu Sa'id. Besides, it was extremely difficult to mobilise a huge host through the passes of the Hindukush to a distant country, where it was not easy to obtain supplies for the army. The expedition had little chance of success.



The Muslims had hitherto encountered the disunited Hindus, but to try conclusions with their co-religionists in their own native land was a task beyond the strength of the armies of Delhi at this period. It was an act of wisdom on the part of Muhammad Tughluq to abandon the scheme and to concentrate his attention upon India.

Another project which has brought much odium upon the Sultan was the so-called Chinese expedition. All modern writers on Indian history, following the lead of Firishta, have made the mistake of supposing that the expedition was aimed against China.²⁰ But the contemporary chronicler, Barani, says that the design of the Sultan was to conquer the mountain of Qarachal or Qarajal, which lies between the territories of Hind and China.²¹ Ibn Batuta states clearly that the expedition was directed against the Qarajal mountain, which is situated at a distance of ten stages from Delhi.²² This shows that the mountain meant was Himachal (the Himalayas), which constitutes an impassable barrier between China and India. The expedition was obviously directed against a refractory hill chieftain who had refused to own the suzerainty of Delhi. The first attack of the imperialists was a success, but when the rainy season set in, the troops became demoralised, and it became impossible to obtain supplies

²⁰ Briggs, *Firishta*, I, p. 416.

Elphinstone, *History of India*, p. 396.

Firishta writes: "Having heard of the great wealth of China, Muhammad Tughluq conceived the idea of subduing that empire; but in order to accomplish his design it was found necessary first to conquer the country of Himachal." He further says that the nobles and councillors of the king tried to convince him of the futility of the scheme, but failed to do so. Barani's testimony is, of course, more reliable. Ibn Batuta supports Barani.

²¹ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, Biblioth. Ind., p. 477. Ibn Batuta, Paris ed., III, p. 325.

²² This refers to the Himalaya mountains. Ibn Batuta says, it is three months' journey in length.



from the headquarters. The troops suffered heavily, and the entire baggage of the army was plundered by the wily mountaineers. Only ten horsemen returned to tell the story of this terrible disaster. But the object of the expedition was realised; the mountain prince made peace with the Sultan and agreed to pay tribute, for it was impossible for him to cultivate the low lands at the foot of the hills without acknowledging the authority of the ruler of Delhi, of whose kingdom they formed a part.

The first decade of the reign of Muhammad Tughluq was comparatively a period of tranquillity, but from

The Disorders of
the reign—Ahsan
Shah's revolt.

the year 1335 A.D., there was a perceptible decline in his fortunes. It was due partly to his harsh policy in the later years of his life, and partly to the visitation of famine, which continued for several years and produced enormous suffering in all parts of Hindustan. When public revenue, the principal mainstay of the administration, decreased, rebellions broke out in all parts of the empire. In despair, the Sultan sought the aid of the Khalifa at Cairo to recover his waning prestige and secured a patent of investiture from the Amir-ul-mummin. The earliest rebellion of importance was that of Jalal-ud-din Ahsan Shah in Mabhar, which occurred in 1335 A.D.²³ Although Delhi was in a deplorable condition owing to the famine and the lawlessness prevailing in its vicinity, the Sultan marched in person to chastise the rebels; but when he reached Telingana, cholera broke out and carried off a large number of men belonging to the king's retinue. The expedition against Ahsan Shah was abandoned under the pressure of unforeseen troubles, and he was allowed to become independent.

²³ The date 1338-39 given by Smith on page 242 in his Oxford History of India is incorrect.

Ahsan Shah rebelled in 1335 A.D. He began to issue his coins as an independent ruler in this year. Dr. Hultzsch who has examined these coins with care assigns this rebellion to 1335 A.D.

J.R.A.S., 1909, pp. 667-83.



Bengal had never been a loyal appanage of the empire of Delhi since the days of Muhammad, son of Bakhtiyar. Fakhr-ud-din, the armour-bearer of Bahram Khan, the governor of Eastern Bengal, slew his master and usurped his territories in 737-38 A.H. (1336-37) A.D. Qadr Khan, governor of Lakhnauti marched against him but he was killed. Taking advantage of the state of confusion into which the affairs of the kingdom of Delhi had fallen, Fakhr-ud-din proclaimed himself independent ruler of Bengal and struck coins in his own name. The emperor, who was busily occupied with greater troubles in other parts of his wide dominions, could not pay attention to this upstart rebel. As there was no interference from him, Fakhr-ud-din successfully overcame the local opposition to his assumption of royal power. He soon brought the whole country under his control and governed it with ability and vigour. He is described by Ibn Batuta as a capable despot who took delight in the company of pious men and spent large sums of money in charity. Bengal was prosperous under his rule, and the economic conditions were so favourable that the people passed their days in ease and comfort. Prices of foodstuffs and other articles of common use were so cheap that the people from Persia used to call Bengal a 'hell crammed with good things.'²⁴

The rebellion in Bengal was followed by others of less importance, but they were speedily put down.

Revolt of Ain-ul-mulk, 1340-41 A.D.

The most important rebellion, however, was that of Ain-ul-mulk, the governor of Oudh and Zafrabad, which broke out in the year 1340-41. Ain-ul-mulk was a distinguished nobleman who was held in high favour at the court. When the Sultan removed his court to Saragdwari in

²⁴ Ibn Batuta, Paris ed., IV, pp. 211-12.

Yule, Travels of Marco Polo, II, pp. 79-80.

the Farrukhabad district on account of famine, Ain-ul-mulk and his brothers rendered great assistance in mitigating its severity. A singular lack of foresight on the part of the Sultan drove the loyal governor into rebellion. Having heard of the misconduct of certain Deccan officers, the Sultan, decided to appoint Ain-ul-mulk governor of that country and ordered him to go there with his family and dependants. This peremptory order of transfer took the Malik by surprise. His ears were poisoned by those persons who had sought shelter in Oudh and Zafrabad to escape from the wrath of the Sultan. All of a sudden, Ain-ul-mulk, who suspected danger, revolted, and with his brothers seized the entire royal baggage which was in his charge. The Sultan was at first dumb founded at the news of this revolt, but he at once devised measures to strengthen his forces. He paid special attention to the *morale* of the army, and himself superintended the operations. After a prolonged and stubborn fight, Ain-ul-mulk was defeated and brought as a prisoner to the royal camp. His associates were cruelly put to death, but he was pardoned in recognition of his past services and appointed superintendent of the royal gardens.

Destiny allowed no respite to this unlucky monarch, and no sooner did he quell disturbances in one quarter than troubles of greater magnitude broke out in another. The evil-minded persons who always thrive in a state of social disorder began to raise their heads and organised themselves in bands for purposes of plunder and brigandage. This evil was the greatest in Sindh. The Sultan marched thither with his forces and scattered the ruffians. Their leaders were captured and forced to embrace Islam. By the end of the year 1342 A.D., order was established in Hindustan, but disorders of greater magnitude soon afterwards broke out in the Deccan. They assumed formidable dimensions, and the Sultan found himself powerless to stamp out sedition and overcome resistance to his own authority.

Suppression of
brigandage in
Sindh.

The Deccan was a hot-bed of intrigue and seditious conspiracy. In the early part of the reign, the Sultan had effectively brought under his sway such distant provinces as Mabbar, Warangal and Dvarsamudra, and his empire embraced practically the whole of the Deccan. But Mabbar became an independent principality in 1335, and in 1336 Hari Hara and his brother Bukka founded the kingdom of Vijayanagar as a protest against the Muslim power, of which a full account will be given later. In 1344 Kanya Naik or Krishna Nayak, son of Pratap Rudra Deva Kakatiya, organised a confederacy of the Hindus of the south. Barani describing the rebellion of Shahu Afghan writes:—'While this was going on, a revolt broke out among the Hindus of Warangal. Kanya Naik (Kapaya Nayak) had gathered strength in this country. Malik Maqbul, the Naib Wazir, fled to Delhi, the Hindus took possession of Arangal which was thus entirely lost. About the same time one of the relations of Kanya Naik (Kapaya Nayak) whom the Sultan had sent to Kambala apostatised from Islam and stirred up a revolt. The land of Kambala also was thus lost, and fell into the hands of the Hindus, Devagir and Gujarat alone remained secure.²⁵ The great Deccan revolt began, and through the efforts of Ballala IV, Hari Hara and Krishna Nayak, followed by many lesser leaders, it finally culminated in the disappearance of Muslim power in Warangal, Dvarsamudra, and the country along the Coromandel coast. The fall of the Hoysalas in 1346 A.D. enabled Hari Hara to place his power upon a firm footing, and henceforward Vijayanagar became a leading state in the south and a bulwark against the Muslim invasions from the north.

Gujarat and Devagir alone were left in the hands of Muhammad Tughluq. His many failures had soured his temper, and he had lost that quality of human sympathy without which no conciliation of hostile

²⁵ Elliot, III, 245.

people is possible. He removed Qutlugh Khan, the veteran governor of Devagir, from his office, and appointed his brother in his place—an arrangement which caused much discontent in the country. The revenue declined and the officers of the state began to extort money for themselves from the hapless ryots. The recall of Qutlugh Khan was followed by a fresh blunder in the massacre of the foreign Amirs²⁶ by the foolish vintner's son, Aziz Khummar, who had been entrusted with the fiefs of Malwa and Dhar. The crime of Aziz produced a feeling of consternation among the Amirs, and they took up arms in self-defence. Disorder rapidly spread in the Deccan, and the troops became mutinous everywhere. The Sultan proceeded in person to suppress the rebellion in Gujrat, and from Broach he sent a message to Nizam-ud-din Alim-ul-mulk, brother of Qutlugh Khan, governor of Daulatabad, asking him to send the foreign Amirs immediately to the royal camp. The Amirs of Raichur, Mudgal, Gulbarga, Bidar, Bijapur, Berar and other places obeyed the royal command and started for Gujarat, but on the way a sudden panic seized them, and they entertained the suspicion that the Sultan intended to take their lives. They attacked the royal escort, killed some of the men in a skirmish that followed, and returned to

²⁶ The Muslim historians use the phrase "*Amiran-i-Sadab*." Barani always writes '*Amiran-i-Sadab*.'

Briggs has turned it into Amir Jadeeda although the expression is not to be found in Firishta's original text.

These amirs were foreigners of various nationalities who had settled in India. E. Bayley thinks that it is a term for a Mughal centurion or captain of a hundred. But in this connection it is hardly the case. Here it is used generally for all those adventurers who had settled in India. That they were a turbulent and restless element is clear from the manner in which they behaved during Muhammad's reign. See Bayley, *Local Muhammadan Dynasties of Gujarat*, p. 43.

Also Denison Ross's *Introduction to the Arabic History of Gujarat*, II, pp. xxxi-xxxii.



Daulatabad where they seized Nizam-ud-din and made him prisoner. The fort of Daulatabad fell into their hands; they seized the royal treasure, divided the Maratha country amongst themselves, and elected one of their leaders, Malik Ismail Makh Afghan, as their king. When the Sultan received intelligence of these developments, he marched towards Daulatabad and defeated the rebels in an open engagement. Malik Makh Afghan entrenched himself in the fort of Dhara-gir, and Hasan Kangu, another Afghan leader, with his followers went away in the direction of Gulbarga. The Sultan laid siege to Daulatabad and sent his general Imad-ul-mulk Sartezi in pursuit of the rebels. Daulatabad was recovered; but soon afterwards the Sultan had to leave the place on account of the rebellion of Taghi in Gujarat. As soon as the Sultan's back was turned, the foreign Amirs, once again, made a vigorous effort to recover their lost power. They besieged the fort of Devagiri and baffled the attempts of the imperialists to recapture it. The imperial general Imad-ul-mulk was defeated in an action by Hasan, and the rebels occupied Daulatabad. Ismail Makh whom they had chosen as their king "voluntarily and gladly" resigned in favour of Hasan, a young and high spirited warrior, who had taken a prominent part in these campaigns. Hasan assumed sovereignty under the title of Alauddin wad-din Abul-Muzaffar Bahman Shah on August 13, 1347 A.D.²⁷ Thus was founded the famous Bahmani kingdom, of which a full account will be given in another chapter.

Hearing of the rebellion of Taghi, the Sultan left Devagiri for Gujarat. It was a mistake on his part to resolve to put down the traitor Taghi before dealing effectively with the foreign Amirs. In these depressing cir-

The death of
the Sultan.

²⁷ This is Firishta's date. The date given by the *Burhan-i-Maasir* is December 3, 1347.

Burhan-i-Maasir, Ind. Ant. 1899, xxviii, p. 143.

Journal of the U. P. Historical Society, I, pt. II, p. 32.

cumstances the Sultan had an interview with Barani whose advice he asked on matters of state. Barani suggested abdication, but the Sultan expressed his determination to punish his rebellious subjects. He told the historian clearly that he would teach the people obedience and submission by punishment. He pursued the rebel Taghi from place to place, but the latter succeeded in eluding his grasp. He subdued the Rai of Karnal and brought the entire coast under his sway. From there he proceeded to Gondal where he fell ill and was obliged to halt for some time. Having collected a large force he marched towards Thatta but when he was about three or four days' march from that place he got fever and died on March 20, 1351 A.D. The empire, which once contained 23 provinces, and extended from Delhi and Lahore to Dvarsamudra and Mabar in the south, and from Lakhnauti and Gaur in the east to Thatta and the Indus in the west, broke up into pieces, and upon its ruins arose powerful and wealthy kingdoms. Gujarat continued nominally a province of the empire, but elsewhere the imperial authority had ceased to exist.

Such was the end of this unlucky monarch. All his life, he battled against difficulties and never abandoned his task in despair. It is true, he failed, but his failure was largely due to circumstances over which he had little or no control. A severe famine which lasted for more than a decade marred the glory of his reign and set his subject against him. The verdict that declares him a cruel and blood-thirsty tyrant like Nero or Caligula does little justice to his great genius, and ignores his conspicuous plans to cope with famine and his efforts to introduce ameliorative reforms. There is ample evidence in the pages of Barani and Ibn Batuta to show that he was not fond of shedding blood for its own sake, and that he could be kind, generous and just even towards his enemies. He possessed an intellect and a passion for practical improvement, which we rarely find in mediæval rulers. But his task was an extremely onerous one. He had to deal with the

Estimate of
Muhammad,



problems of an ever-growing empire with a staff of officers who never loyally co-operated with him. He had also to reckon with the orthodox '*Ulama*' who clamoured for privilege and who resented his attempt to enforce justice and equality among his subjects. In view of these extenuating circumstances, the common opinion about the Sultan's character and policy needs to be revised. Mr. Gardner Brown's remarks, although he overestimates the wisdom of the Sultan's policy, come near the truth and deserve to be quoted.²⁸

"That he was mad is a view of which contemporaries give no hint; that he was a visionary, his many-sided, practical, and vigorous character forbids us to believe. To call him a despot may be true, but no other form of government was conceivable in the Middle Ages: to use the term as though it were the name of a vice or a disease is to ignore the fact, that a despotic prince who is accessible to new ideas or who embarks on measures of reform can do much to advance the prosperity of his people in an age when education is but little advanced and conservatism deeply rooted. Such a ruler, however, has in his own time serious difficulties to face; the inevitable disturbance of vested

²⁸ Compare this view with the views of Elphinstone, Havell, Edward Thomas, and V. Smith on the subject. All of them repeat the charge of madness, but neither in the pages of Ibn Batuta nor in the history of Barani there is any mention of it. Edward Thomas (*The Chronicles*, pp. 202-03) pours his wrath upon Muhammad like a Hebrew prophet and paints him in the most lurid colours. Havell does the same. But the attitude of these writers is not surprising. They have taken their cue from Barani, who was bitterly prejudiced against the Sultan, and have uncritically accepted most of his statements.

The charge of blood-thirstiness is equally untenable. The Sultan was no monster of iniquity, who loved crime for its own sake. He inflicted severe punishments on the wrong-doers, and punishments were always severe in his day both in Europe and Asia. Even the Mughals at times showed a ferocity of temper, which was terrible. On the contrary, the Sultan loved justice, and Ibn Batuta has given a full account of the manner in which justice was administered by him.

Ibn Batuta, Paris ed., III, pp. 285-86.

MEDIEVAL INDIA

interests, the innate preference for established custom, raise up for him numerous enemies: officials carrying out unpopular reforms shelter themselves beneath the plea of the master's orders: should unmerited disaster befall his schemes, should corrupt or incompetent officials pervert their ends, it is he—because he is a despot—who must bear the blame: if he has been a warrior and Death finds him when engaged on some small campaign—Like Muhammad bin Tughluq beneath the walls of Thatta—the judgment of Heaven is cited to confirm the popular verdict, and literature records:—

“He left a name at which the world grew pale
To point a moral or adorn the tale.”

A most interesting source of information regarding the reign of Muhammad Tughluq is the account of

Ibn Batuta,

his travels given by the Moorish traveller, Ibn Batuta. Abu-Abdulla Muham-

mad, commonly known as Ibn Batuta, was born at Tangier on the 24th February, 1304 A.D. He had an inborn liking for travel, and as soon as he grew to manhood, he made up his mind to fulfil his heart's desire. At the early age of 21, he started on his journey and after wandering through the countries of Africa and Asia, he came to India through the passes of the Hindukush. He reached the Indus on the 12th September, 1333 A.D.; thence he proceeded to Delhi where he was hospitably received. He was appointed Qazi of Delhi by Muhammad Tughluq and admitted to his court, where he had close opportunities of acquainting himself with the habits, character, and acts of this most extraordinary and unfortunate monarch. The traveller dwells upon the Sultan's generosity, his hospitality towards aliens, his vast wealth, his love of justice, his humility, his strict observance of the practices of Islam, his love of learning, and his numerous other accomplishments in terms of glowing admiration. But he also gives a catalogue of the atrocities of the Sultan, whom he describes as the “wonder of the age.” The eight cases of murder of Shaikhs and Maulvis mentioned by Ibn Batuta are those of men who had either embezzled

public funds or participated in seditious conspiracy. Ibn Batuta lived in India for eight years and left the service of the Sultan in 1342 A.D. He throws much light on the customs and manners of both Hindus and Muslims in those days and supplements Zia Barani in many respects. He was sent on an embassy to China on a diplomatic mission by Muhammad Tughluq but he was prevented by unforeseen circumstances from fulfilling it. The ship in which he sailed was sunk and the men of his suite were either drowned or killed by pirates with the exception of one. If Ibn Batuta is to be trusted—though Sir Henry Yule doubts what he says in regard to this matter—he reached China after considerable hardship, but soon turned back on finding the conditions unfavourable. After coming back from China, he started from Malabar to the coast of Arabia and reached Fez, the capital of his native land, on the 8th November, 1349. Here he recounted the adventures of his long voyage to his admiring friends and persons, occupying exalted stations in life. Some believed him; others looked upon him as a mere inventor of gossip. He put his experiences and observations in black and white and finished his labours on the 13th December, 1355 A.D. Ibn Batuta died at the age of seventy-three in 1377-78 A.D.

There can be no doubt about the general veracity of Ibn Batuta, for his statements are very often corroborated by other historians. He describes the gifts and punishments, the kindnesses and severities of his patron with considerable impartiality. His view of the Sultan's character is corroborated by Zia Barani who is more fulsome in his adulations and less balanced in his denunciations. The character of Ibn Batuta, as it is reflected in the pages of his narrative, is profoundly interesting. Full of freshness, life, daring, a kind of superstitious piety, and easy confidence, Ibn Batuta is a man of extravagant habits, prone to fall into pecuniary difficulties, out of which he is more than once extricated by his indulgent patron, to whom he clung like a veritable horse leech as long as he lived in India.



CHAPTER XI

FIRUZ TUGHLUQ, 1351—88 A.D.

FIRUZ was born in the year 1309 A.D. His father's name was Sipah Salar Rajab, who was brother of Sultan Ghiyas-ud-din Tughluq. The fief of Dipalpur was entrusted to Tughluq by Alauddin, which he managed with remarkable tact and firmness. On hearing of the beauty and charms of the daughter of Rana Mall, the Bhatti Rajput chieftain of Abuhar, he proposed to the Rana that he should marry his daughter to his brother Rajab. The Rajput with characteristic pride spurned the proposal. Thereupon Tughluq, who was mightily offended, demanded prompt payment of revenue, and subjected the people of Abuhar to considerable hardship and misery. The old mother of the Rana had a conversation with her son on the subject which was overheard by his daughter. The young Rajput lady heroically offered to sacrifice herself, if her surrender could save the people from misery and ruin. Thus was her marriage with Rajab brought about. The offspring of this union was Firuz Tughluq. It is extraordinarily strange that Firuz who was born of a Rajput mother should have become so fanatically orthodox. Sultan Muhammad Tughluq, when he occupied the throne of Delhi, had treated Firuz well and appointed him to high offices. He had reposed great confidence in him, and in the *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi* of Barani there is internal evidence of the fact that Sultan Muhammad intended him to be his successor after his death.

The death of Muhammad Tughluq near Thatta plunged the entire royal camp into confusion, and a feeling of despair seized the leaders of the army as well as the rank and file. The Mongol mercenaries who had come to assist in the expedition against Taghi began to

Early life of
Firuz.

The accession of
Firuz Tughluq.

plunder the royal camp, and the army found it difficult to retreat in safety towards the capital. The situation was further aggravated by the fact that Muhammad had left no male heir, and it apprehended by the nobles that disastrous consequences might follow if they did not at once proceed to choose a successor. Barani who was an eye-witness of these events writes that the late Sultan had nominated Firuz as his heir-apparent, a statement which is corroborated by another contemporary writer, Shams-i-Siraj Afif.¹ According to this testament of the late Sultan they offered the crown to Firuz and appealed to him to save the families of the generals and soldiers from the Mongols by accepting it. Firuz who was utterly devoid of ambition and who wishes to lead the life of a religious recluse at first demurred to the proposal, and said that he contemplated a pilgrimage to Mecca. But the pressure of the nobles became irresistible, and at last he had to concede to their wishes in the interests of the state. Firuz's acceptance of the crown had a calming effect on the army, and order was quickly restored. But in Delhi the Khwaja Jahan's attempt to set up a suppositious² son of Muhammad had created a serious situation. The Khwaja cannot be charged with treason, for he had done so in public interest on receiving the news of the disappearance of Firuz and Tatar Khan, the principal leaders of the imperial army, from the field of

¹ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, Biblioth. Ind., p. 535.
Tabqat-i-Akbari, Biblioth. Ind., p. 224.

Firishta says that Firuz was the testamentary legatee of the late Sultan. But again he says that when Firuz enquired of Maulana Kamal-ud-din, Shaikh Muhammad Nasir-ud-din Oudhi, and Maulana Shams-ud-din whether the late Sultan had a son, they replied that, even if there be any son, under the circumstances it was advisable to accept the *fait accompli*. From this Firishta concludes that the child was not a suppositious one. Lucknow text, p. 145. See also Briggs, I, pp. 444 and 447. But Firishta is not to be preferred to contemporary writers.

² Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, Biblioth. Ind., p. 539.
 Firishta, Lucknow text, p. 145.

MEDIÆVAL INDIA

battle.³ Firuz enquired of the nobles and officers of the state if the late Sultan had left a son, and received a reply in the negative. The Khwaja repented of his

³ Shams-i-Siraj Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, Biblioth. Ind., p. 68.

Firuz made his state entry into Delhi after having been duly crowned king on the second day of the month of Rajab, 752 A.H. (September 14th, 1351 A.D.) Sir Wolseley Haig in a learned article in the *J.R.A.S.*, 1922, pp. 365-72, expresses the opinion that Firuz was a usurper who set aside the claims of Muhammad's son. It is very difficult to agree with Sir Wolseley on this point. Barani positively asserts that the late Sultan had nominated him as his heir by a testamentary decree and he is supported by Shams-i-Siraj Afif. But if these be dismissed as court panegyrists who were anxious to condone or overlook the faults of their patron, there are other facts which militate against the theory of usurpation. No contemporary writer—not even Ibn Batuta—throws out a hint that Sultan Muhammad had a son. 'Isami clearly says that he had no son. Sultan Muhammad himself towards the close of his reign when he was in Gujarat, much troubled by the foreign Amirs, once said that he would go on a pilgrimage to Mecca and entrust his kingdom to Malik Kabir, Ahmad Ayaz and Firuz. No mention was made of abdication in favour of a son although this was suggested by Barani. Khudawand Zada, the daughter of Sultan Ghiyas hatched a conspiracy not to secure the crown for her brother, the pretender, of whom she did not make even a casual mention, but for her own son. She must have been aware of the existence of a son of Muhammad, if one had really existed. Firuz was unwilling to accept the crown, and his gratitude to and reverence for Muhammad, by whom he was always treated with affection and kindness, could never have permitted him to set aside the claims of his lawful heir.

Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, Biblioth. Ind., pp. 45, 46, 54. Afif writes.

Firishta writes that Muhammad proposed to make him his successor, and accordingly recommended him on his death-bed to the nobles. Briggs, I, p. 444. Elliot, III, p. 267.

Firuz always had a great respect for his patron, Muhammad Tughluq, as is shown by the opening words of the *Fatuhāt-i-Firuz Shahi*.

conduct, and with every mark of abject submission appeared before Firuz to implore forgiveness. The latter was inclined to take a lenient view of his offence on the score of his past services, but the nobles refused to condone what they described as "unpardonable treason." The Khwaja was asked to go to the fief of Samana, but on his way he was beheaded by Sher Khan's orders. Thus did the weak and irresolute Firuz acquiesce in the victimisation of a trusted friend and colleague, of whose guiltlessness he was probably fully convinced.

Firuz Tughluq mounted the throne on 24th march 1351 A.D., with little ambition and less fitness for that

The personality
of Firuz.

high position. He had held responsible offices in the state and had received his training under the guidance of the late Sultan. He had acquired considerable experience of public affairs, but he was utterly wanting in that courage and warlike zeal which was almost a *sine qua non* of fourteenth century kingship in India. The contemporary Muslim chroniclers have bestowed lavish praise upon him, for his reign marked the beginning of that religious reaction, which became a prominent feature of his administrative policy. Barani writes that since the days of Muiz-ud-din Muhammad bin Sam, there was no ruler of Delhi, so humble, merciful, truth-loving, faithful and pious.⁴ Shams-i-Siraj Afif pronounces upon him a fulsome eulogy, and extols his virtues in terms of hyperbolical praise. The author of the *Tarikh-i-Mubarakh Shahi* endorses this eulogis-

⁴ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi* Biblioth. Ind., p. 548.

He pronounces a fulsome eulogy upon the Sultan, for his tastes and policy agreed so well with his orthodox principles. He had witnessed the rationalism of the last reign, which was anathema to him. To bring the virtues of his patron into clear relief, he paints in lurid colours the condition of Hindustan in the previous reign, and describes how Firuz established order and made the people happy and contented.

Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, Biblioth. Ind., p. 572.

tic testimony and writes that since the days of Nausherwan, no king of Delhi was so just, merciful, kind, religious and fond of magnificent buildings. Later historians have repeated the verdict, and Firuz has figured in history as an ideal Muslim ruler. But a closer examination of his character and policy leads to a different conclusion. He was an uncompromising bigot who followed the straightest path of orthodoxy, and in the management of the government employed the theocratic principles of the Quran. He observed the Holy Law with great strictness, and on the occasion of religious festivals behaved like a pious Muslim. He encouraged his 'infidel' subjects to embrace Islam and exempted the converts from the payment of the *Jeziya*.⁵ Fully in the grip of the orthodox school, he sanctioned the persecution of those whom he considered heretics or infidels. A Brahmana who was charged with seducing the Muslims from allegiance to the true faith was burnt alive in front of his palace, when he refused to abjure the faith of his forefathers.⁶ During the expedition against Jajnagar the Sultan caused the idol of Jagannath to be rooted up and treated with every mark of indignity at Delhi.⁷ For the first time in the history of Islamic domination, the poll-tax was levied upon the Brahmanas, and their protests were contemptuously disregarded. The nobles were not allowed to put on gaudy dress, and gold brocades and embroidery were sparingly used. He interdicted ornaments of brass and copper and used earthen vessels instead of plates of gold and silver for eating purposes.⁸ Pictures on banners and ensigns were forbidden and royal intolerance extended also to certain heretical Muslim sects

⁵ *Fatuhāt-i-Firuz Shahi*, Elliot, II, p. 386.

⁶ *Shams-i-Siraj Afif*, *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, Biblioth. Ind., p. 379.

Elliot, III, p. 315.

⁷ *Sirat-i-Firuz Shahi*, Allahabad University MS., p. 170.

⁸ *Afif*, p. 374.

whose leaders were put down with a strong hand. Firuz was fanatically orthodox like Aurangzeb, although he possessed none of the talents of that great ruler.

He was by nature a man of irresolute will and vacillating temper, and though opportunities were not denied to him, he had not cultivated those qualities of character, which mark the successful man of genius from a mediocrity. Constant association with *Muftis* and *Maulvis* had made him so weak-minded that he never transacted any business without referring to the Quran for an augury. Weak and timorous, he lacked the qualities of generalship, and in moments of crisis, when victory was almost within reach, his craven scruples led him either to beat a dishonourable retreat or to patch up a temporary truce with the enemy. Unlike his great cousin, he had no pretensions to finished scholarship, and was unfitted to deal with the problems of an empire which had been shaken to its foundations by the convulsion of the previous reign.

The Sultan's vaunted devotion to the Quran did not prevent him from seeking the gratification of his lower appetites. On one occasion, in the midst of a campaign, when Tatar Khan paid him a visit, he saw him lying half-naked with wine cups concealed in his bed. The Khan reproached him for this depravity, and struck with shame and remorse, the Sultan promised to observe abstinence as long as Tatar Khan was with the army. But the contemptible weakness of will soon asserted itself, and the Khan was transferred to the neighbourhood of Hisar Firuza to restore order, probably as a punishment for his "disrespectful behaviour."

But Firuz was not altogether devoid of human virtues. Towards his co-religionists he behaved with marked generosity, and his charitable and humanitarian instincts led him to make grants for performing the nuptials of the daughters of indigent Muslims and for administering poor relief. He abolished torture, simplified the legal system and discouraged espionage. He endowed colleges where the professors and students of Islam devoted themselves to theological studies.

MEDIÆVAL INDIA

He devised several measures to promote the welfare of his subjects of all classes,⁹ the chief of which were the facilities of irrigation which he provided to the cultivators and a hospital at Delhi, where medicines were distributed gratis to the sick and the suffering. He was fond of the pleasures of the chase, and a large forest was maintained near Delhi where game was carefully preserved at state expense. Desirous of introducing useful reforms, he tackled the problem of civil administration with great energy and vigour, though he made mistakes which worked to the detriment of the state. But, even if Firuz's achievements in the field of civil administration are duly recognised, he cannot be pronounced to have been a successful or a brilliant ruler, and when the balance is struck between success and failure, we must unhesitatingly record that his weak policy was largely responsible for the break-up of the early Turkish empire. The only extenuating circumstance is that he had inherited great difficulties from his predecessor. Napoleon was right when he wrote to King Joseph, "when men call a king a kind man, his reign has been a failure."

During the confusion that followed the death of Muhammad Tughluq, Bengal completely separated itself from Delhi, and Haji Ilyas proclaimed himself an independent ruler of Western Bengal under the title of Shams-ud-din. The Sultan marched towards Bengal at the head of a large army, and on reaching there issued the following proclamation to his Bengali subjects, in which he explained the wrongs of Haji Ilyas and his own desire to do justice to the people and to govern the country well.¹⁰ The promises of rewards and liberal concessions made by the Sultan

Foreign policy—
The first expedition to Bengal
1353—54 A.D.

⁹ The contemporary chronicler says that the crops were abundant, and that the Hindus also were happy and contented. Aff, *Tarikh-i-Firuz Sahi*, Biblioth. Ind., p. 180.

¹⁰ This proclamation was issued towards the end of the year 1353 A.D. It explains the cause of the invasion and