



CHAP. VIII

A. D. 1658

Ruin of Morad.

Policy of Aurengzebe.

Unsuccessful attempt to assassinate him.

restore to him his liberty, promising in reward even the empire of India, which his influence with the army and people would be sufficient to secure. Mohammed appeared to hesitate for a moment, but then, hastening out of the apartment, turned a deaf ear to every subsequent solicitation.

Aurengzebe had now only Morad to dispose of, and from that quarter he had not much to apprehend, though this prince, having recovered of his wounds, had repaired to Agra, and resumed the command of the army. His brother received him with the warmest congratulations, saluted him emperor, and declared all his wishes to be now fulfilled, since he had succeeded in raising so deserving a ruler to the throne of his ancestors. For himself he wished only to perform the pilgrimage to Mecca, on which he was intent as the commencement of a life to be entirely devoted to religion. The other, after some affected opposition, gave his consent, thinking himself too happy that his relative should thus voluntarily retire. This farce having been successfully acted, the ruin of Morad was secretly prepared; and the design soon became so obvious, that even his credulous spirit could no longer be beguiled. His friends assured him that the preparations for the visit to Mecca were sufficient to acquire the dominion of India; that by ample largesses Aurengzebe was gaining the affections of the soldiery; and, in short, that no time was to be lost in securing his own safety. Being at last undeceived, he determined to employ against his brother his own weapons of treachery. He invited him to a splendid banquet, where every thing was prepared for his death; but the penetrating eye of the guest discerning something suspicious, he pretended a sudden illness, and hastily withdrew, without exciting any suspicion of the motive. On the contrary, Morad soon after accepted his invitation to an entertainment, in which the finest musicians, and the most beautiful damsels that India could afford, were studiously assembled. The host, laying aside his austerity, invited to gayety and indulgence this voluptuous prince, who



yielded to the seduction, and, after revelling in luxury, fell asleep in the tent. He then sent in some of his most unscrupulous partisans, who proceeded to bind their victim. The prince awoke, made violent efforts to extricate himself, calling for his sword, which had been taken away; when his brother, lifting a curtain, exclaimed,—“He has no choice but death or submission; despatch him if he resists.” Morad, after venting loud reproaches, yielded to his fate, and was immediately conveyed a prisoner to Agra.

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Fate of Morad.

Aurengzebe, having thus overcome every obstacle, considered it now time “to exalt the imperial umbrella over his head.” He felt, however, considerable difficulty in taking a step so inconsistent with all his professions, and especially with that of his being entirely devoted to religious retirement and abstraction. It was contrived that his friends should come forward to urge upon him the important duty of sacrificing his ease and pious resolutions for the public good, and of submitting to this painful necessity. In due time he allowed himself to be persuaded, though he adhered so far to his former character as to suppress all the pomp with which the ceremony of coronation was usually attended. But the shouts of the people reached the ears of the captive monarch, who felt assured that something fatal to himself had been determined. He asked Jehanara to go and inquire; yet immediately recalled her, lest she should see the head of Dara exposed to public view. She, however, soon learned and communicated to him the real fact. The unfortunate sovereign rose, walked through the room in silence, then fixing his eyes on the figure of a crown suspended over his head, said,—“Take away that bauble;—yet stay, this would be owning the right of Aurengzebe.” After standing long involved in thought, he said,—“The new emperor, Jehanara, has prematurely mounted the throne. He should have added the murder of a father to the other crimes which have raised him so high.” It was now announced that Mohammed wished to be admitted, that he might state the reasons which

Aurengzebe assumes the throne.

The captive emperor.



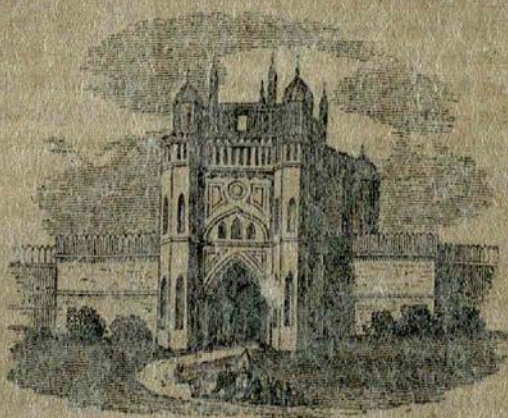
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A. D. 1658.

Indignant
remon-
strance.

had induced the victor to mount the throne; but the degraded ruler indignantly replied,—“Fathers have been deposed by their sons; but it was reserved for Aurengzebe to insult the misfortunes of a parent. What motives but his ambition has the rebel for assuming the empire? To listen to his excuses would be to acknowledge the justice of his conduct.”

Aurengzebe, smarting under remorse for the step to which his bold ambition had irresistibly impelled him, and having indeed very little to say in his own defence, did not press the unwelcome explanation. He had now reached the summit of his wishes, having deceived and vanquished one of the ablest monarchs of the East. He did not therefore push his triumph any farther, and maintained his father during the rest of his life, in strict confinement indeed, but honoured and respected.





CHAPTER IX.

Aurengzebe—Decline of the Mogul Dynasty.

Aurengzebe opposed by his Brothers, Dara and Sujah—Defeat of Sujah—Capture and Death of Dara—Defection of the Prince Mohammed, who is obliged to surrender—Death of Sujah—Aurengzebe's Treatment of Shah Jehan—His Administration—Defects of Mogul Government—Anecdotes furnished by Bernier—Danger of Persian War—Fakir Insurrection—Disturbance in Cabul—Conquest of the Deccan—Rise of the Mahratta Power—Exploits of Sevajee—His Death and Character—Sambajee's Reign and Death—Character of the Mahratta Armies—Bigotry of Aurengzebe—His Death and Character—Shah Allum—The Seiks—Their Progress checked—Character and Death of Shah Allum—Contests for the Empire—The Syeds—Nizam-ul-Mulk and Saadat Khan—Invasion by Nadir Shah—Sack of Delhi—Distracted State of the Empire—Invasion by the Afghans—Contest between them and the Mahrattas—Battle of Panniput—The Mogul Dynasty reduced to entire insignificance.

AURENGZEBE was seated on the throne of India; but his position could not be considered secure while his brothers Dara and Sujah lived, and were at the head of powerful armies. The former, from his brilliant qualities, and his designation to the empire by Shah Jehan, inspired the greatest apprehension; and against him the first efforts of the new sovereign were directed. Having withdrawn into Lahore, Dara had collected a host more numerous than that of his adversary, composed, however, chiefly of new levies, whom he was afraid to bring into the field against his brother's veteran forces. He therefore retired beyond the Indus; but retreat in these circumstances, and with such troops, was not less disas-

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Aurengzebe's position.

Dara retreats.



CHAP. IX.

A.D. 1658.

Advance of
Sujah.Critical posi-
tion of Au-
rengzebe.Flight of
Sujah.Dara's rein-
forcement.

trous than actual defeat. His ranks gradually melted away, and he arrived at Tatta with only a small body of faithful adherents.

It would now have been the policy of Aurengzebe to pursue Dara without intermission till he had completed his destruction; but he was necessarily checked by the intelligence that his brother Sujah, with a large force, was advancing from Bengal. He found this rival very strongly posted near Allahabad; but, trusting to the valour and hardihood of his own troops, he resolved to attack him. Early in the day, however, the Rajpoot bands, who had accompanied him only through compulsion, fled from the field, and even began to assail his rear; so that the Mogul warriors, left alone, were soon very hard pressed. The elephant on which Aurengzebe rode received a severe shock, and fell on its knees; whereupon the emperor drew one foot out of the stirrup, preparing to alight,—but, as in an Indian battle the presence of the monarch on his war-elephant is the rallying point round which the army fights, Jumla, the vizier, called out, “You are descending from your throne.” The prince felt the truth and importance of the remark, resumed his seat, and even ordered the feet of the animal to be chained to the spot. Thus, cased indeed in strong armour, he remained exposed to the darts and arrows of the enemy. His men, encouraged by the gallant example of their chief, rallied, and making the most desperate efforts, caused their opponents to give way. Sujah, finding his elephant disabled, committed the error which his rival had avoided, and mounted a horse. The view of the royal quadruped, moving into the rear without a rider, spread general dismay, which ended in a total rout; and the prince found present safety only by throwing himself into the strong fortress of Monghir.

Aurengzebe was again obliged to allow some respite to a vanquished adversary; for Dara, after reaching Tatta, recrossed the Indus, and proceeded through the great desert into the province of Guzerat. There he prevailed upon the governor, whose daughter had been



married to Morad, to espouse his cause; and having raised a considerable army, he advanced into Rajpootana, and in the neighbourhood of Ajmere, its capital, intrenched himself in a position of extraordinary strength. The conqueror, on hastening thither, saw with dismay the commanding ground on which his brother had encamped. He endeavoured, by presenting his men in order of battle, and even by studied insults, to provoke the proud Dara to come forth and fight; but the prince had the prudence to decline these challenges. The emperor, however, always fertile in stratagem, devised a new scheme. Having in his camp the two chiefs who had been mainly instrumental in gaining over the army of the young Solimán, he caused them to write a letter to the father, assuring him that they had been induced only by imperious circumstances to forsake his cause, which they were anxious again to embrace; and that if he would leave open a certain gate at a particular hour, they, with all their followers, would enter and place themselves under his command. In vain did the oldest and most prudent counsellors warn Dara of the danger to which this step would expose him, and of the wiles of Aurengzebe. Rash, credulous, and inaccessible to advice, he allowed himself to be dazzled by the prospect of an accession to his force, which would have given him a complete superiority. The gate was opened at the appointed time; the chiefs rushed in, and were soon followed by the whole imperial army. Undeceived too late, he still attempted a gallant, though vain resistance, but being totally routed, was obliged to flee with a very small remnant of his troops. He bent his way to the capital of Guzerat, hoping there to find an asylum; but the governor refused him admittance. A band of Mahrattas, his sole remaining troops, seeing his fortunes lost, took the opportunity to plunder the camp, leaving nothing except what was concealed in the tents of the women. Dara was then compelled to undertake, without any preparation, a march across the desert, in a plight still more miserable than that in which the same

CHAP. IX.

A. D. 1688.

Strength of
his position.Duplicity of
Aurengzebe.Total rout of
Dara.



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A. D. 1658.

disastrous journey had been performed by his ancestor Humaioun. Amid the horrors of fatigue and thirst, beneath a burning sun, a number of his faithful followers successively lay down and expired. At the head of a few survivors he reached Tatta, and might thence have pushed on into Persia, where he would probably have been well received; but at this crisis Nadira Bana, his favourite wife, was at the point of death, and he could not endure the thought of leaving this beloved object to die among strangers. He sought the hospitality of

Seeks shelter
from Jihon
Khan.

Jihon Khan, a neighbouring ruler; another rash or unfortunate act. This was a violent and bloody chief, who, after being twice condemned to death by Shah Jehan, had been pardoned at the prince's intercession. Dara had indeed the melancholy satisfaction of paying the last duties to his sultana; but, on attempting to depart, found himself surrounded by a body of troops, who delivered him to Khan Jehan, the imperial general, then in close pursuit of him. When at length he saw his

Made captive.

fate inevitable, he assumed a demeanour of majestic fortitude, and maintained during the whole journey a calm dignity, soothing his grief by verses composed by himself on his own eventful history. He was led through Delhi miserably mounted and almost in rags. But Aurengzebe had miscalculated the effect of this exhibition; for the multitude, when they beheld their once noble and gallant ruler led to death under circumstances so fearfully changed, and beside him his son, a spirited and graceful boy, over whom so dark a destiny impended, were seized with the deepest sympathy, and melted into tears, mingled with curses against the tyrant. Jihon, the betrayer, was killed on his way home, while the capital seemed on the eve of insurrection. The emperor felt that he must hasten to close the tragedy. Assassins were accordingly introduced in the night, beneath whose blows his unfortunate brother fell after a desperate resistance; and, through the address of the monarch, the commotion in the city quickly subsided.

His betrayer
slain.

Aurengzebe had now only to dispose of Sujah, who,



under favour of this diversion, had rallied his broken forces. But as little apprehension was felt in that quarter, it was thought enough to detach against him Prince Mohammed and Jumla the vizier. This expedition, however, received a striking interest from a very unexpected and moving incident. The young warrior had been early betrothed to a daughter of Sujah, for whom he had conceived a strong attachment; and though in the late tumult of events he had forgotten the first impression, a letter which the princess, in concert with her father, now wrote to him, led to a revival of all his tenderness. He determined to quit the army, and espouse the cause of his uncle; nor does it seem improbable that he cherished some secret intention of imitating the example of Aurengzebe himself, by fighting his way to the empire. Being highly elated with the part he performed in the late revolution, and the offer made to him by his grandfather, he had often been heard to boast that it was he who placed the crown on his parent's head. He fondly flattered himself that the army would follow his example, and, when combined with that of Sujah, would compose a force so overwhelming as to defy all resistance. He embarked on the Ganges, as if upon a party of pleasure, and returned not. The soldiers, on discovering his intention, were at first greatly agitated; but the prudence and vigour of Jumla preserved their attachment to their master, and prevented any desertion. Sujah received his illustrious relative with the highest distinction; and, the nuptials having been celebrated with great pomp, he led out his men and offered battle. Mohammed placed himself in the foremost line, and when he saw the flower of the opposing cavalry bear down upon him, vainly imagined that they came to join his standard. But their fierce onset soon undeceived him. Both he and his kinsman behaved with the greatest valour; but the effeminate troops of Bengal could not withstand the veterans led by Jumla, who gained a complete victory. The situation of the prince was now deeply distressing, and the arts of his father rendered it



- CHAP. IX. desperate. Aurengzebe wrote a letter, addressed to him as if in answer to one from himself, treating of a plan for deserting the cause of his father-in-law. It was so arranged that this epistle should fall into the hands of Sujah, who thereupon conceived suspicions which the most solemn protestations could not remove. No violence was indeed offered to him; but he was informed that he and his wife must depart from Bengal. All India being now under the sway of the relentless emperor, the youth had no resource but to throw himself upon the mercy of one who never trusted those that had once deceived him. Mohammed was immediately arrested and sent to the strong fortress of Gwalior, where he pined away the remainder of his life, which terminated in seven years. Sujah having fled into Arracan, was betrayed by the rajah, and he with all his family perished. Soliman, the son of Dara, was taken prisoner among the Himmaleh mountains, whither he had fled for refuge; and thus Aurengzebe was left without a rival.
- Captivity of Mohammed.
- Close of Shah Jehan's life.
- His indomitable pride.
- Shah Jehan survived for eight years the loss of empire; and it may be mentioned, to the credit of his ambitious son, and as some palliation of his crimes, that he treated his captive with all the respect and delicacy which were compatible with the condition of being dethroned and immured. He even tolerated the violent sallies of pride and indignation to which his unfortunate parent gave vent. Aurengzebe sent to solicit the daughter of Dara in marriage for his son Akbar, hoping by this connexion to strengthen his family interest with the nobles. But both Shah Jehan himself and his household received this proposal with the deepest resentment. The former returned for answer, that the insolence of the usurper was equal to his guilt; and the young princess herself kept a concealed dagger, declaring that she would rather die a hundred times than give her hand to the son of her father's murderer. All this was reported to the ruling sovereign, who quietly desisted from his solicitation. At another time he made a request for some of the imperial jewels, which were deemed



necessary to adorn his throne. The Shah replied, that the hammers were ready to pound them into dust, if he should ever attempt to enforce such a demand. The other then exclaimed, "Let him keep his jewels, nay, let him command all those of Aurengzebe." The old monarch was so much affected by this moderation, that he sent a number of them, accompanied with a letter, in which he said,—“Take these, which I am destined to use no more.—Wear them with dignity, and by your own renown make some amends to your family for their misfortunes.” The emperor burst into tears, which, on this occasion, appeared to be sincere. In short, by habitual respect and forbearance, and by occasionally asking advice, he succeeded, not indeed in reconciling the fallen sovereign to his fate, but in reviving a certain measure of friendly intercourse. On receiving intelligence that his father's end was approaching, he did not, it is true, venture into his presence, but sent his own son Shah Allam, who, however, arrived too late. The master of Hindostan then exhibited every mark of undissembled grief, and hastened to effect a reconciliation with his sister Jehanara, who had hitherto remained devotedly attached to her unfortunate parent.

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A. D. 1666.

Aurengzebe's moderation.

Death of the Shah.

Aurengzebe continued for many years to occupy the throne of the Mogul dominion, which, under him, attained to its greatest extent and its highest glory. After he had added to it the kingdoms of the Deccan, it included nearly the whole peninsula of India, with the neighbouring regions of Cabul and Assam,—territories, the population and wealth of which probably exceeded those of the Roman empire during its most flourishing period. The revenues amounted to 32 millions sterling, which, though inferior to the immense income of one or two modern European states, was then probably unexampled. His internal administration seems to have been decidedly superior to that of his immediate predecessors. Amid the somewhat ostentatious display and matchless splendour of his court, his personal conduct remained pure and even austere; he neither allowed to himself, nor per-

Aurengzebe's reign.

Immense revenues.



CHAP. IX. mitted in his palace, any species of disorder or licentious-
ness. Early in the morning he was seated in the hall
A. D. 1670. of justice, accessible to the meanest of his subjects, ad-
Purity of his ministrating the law with the strictest impartiality, re-
conduct. dressing their wrongs, and even relieving their suffer-
ings by his bounty. India, therefore, under his long
reign, apparently enjoyed all the happiness of which a
country is susceptible in a state of subjection to the des-
potic power of a foreign prince. Indeed, were we to
place implicit reliance in the Mohammedan historians,
and in the English writers who copy their narratives,
we should imagine the period from the accession of Ak-
bar to the death of Aurengzebe to have been in the East
an age of gold, an era of felicity almost unparalleled in the
history of mankind. It cannot indeed be denied, that
during all this time the central regions enjoyed a con-
siderable measure of peace and prosperity; for the civil
wars, though frequent and sometimes tragical, were
usually decided in a single battle, and were not accom-
panied with extensive desolation. On looking narrowly
into the subject, however, we shall find reason to suspect
that the picture is too flattering, and that the empire
throughout this period groaned under many of the evils
incident to arbitrary rule. The very fact that at the
time when Britain succeeded to this vast inheritance, the
class of cultivators were all sunk into such abject poverty,
that it was scarcely possible to discover by what tenure
the land had been originally held, seems to invalidate
the testimony of these historical eulogists.

Evils inci-
dent to arbi-
trary rule.

Bernier's
narrative.

It was during the reign of Aurengzebe that Bernier,
an intelligent and reflecting traveller, spent some years
in India, and applied himself with diligence to investigate
the state of the Mogul government and empire. The
description he gives is that of a country going to ruin,
rather than of one flourishing under a just and impartial
government. He observes, that supposing the sovereign
inclined to enforce justice, he might perhaps succeed
within his own immediate circle, in Delhi, Agra, and
the close vicinity of these capitals; but in the provinces



and remote districts the people had no adequate protection from the rapacity of the governors, who ruled with arbitrary power, and whom he characterizes as "men fit for ruining a world." This was confirmed by the mean garb, and the anxiety to assume the semblance of poverty, which prevailed even among those whom other circumstances proved to be possessed of exorbitant wealth. The people could appeal to no court of justice, no administrators of the law, no independent tribunals. The monarch himself could call to his service no men endowed with honourable principles, inspired with feelings of genuine loyalty, or identifying their glory with that of their prince. These functionaries were generally "men of nothing, slaves, ignorant and brutal, raised from the dust, and retaining always the quality and temper of beggars." The only object of those intrusted with any power was to amass wealth during the short and precarious tenure of their possession, regardless if afterwards the whole state should fall into ruin.

Even as to the feelings of justice and regard to the rights of their subjects, which are said to have characterized this dynasty, Bernier mentions several particulars, which, agreeing in a remarkable manner with those reported by Hawkins and Roe, tend to cast great doubt upon the panegyrics of native writers. Anecdotes, even of a somewhat familiar description, may illustrate the tone of manners at this oriental court. A young man laid before Shah Jehan a complaint, that his mother, a banian, was possessed of immense wealth, amounting to two hundred thousand rupees, who yet, on account of alleged ill-conduct, withheld from him all participation. The emperor, tempted by hearing of so large a fortune, sent for the lady, and commanded her, in open assembly to give to her son fifty thousand rupees, and to pay to himself a hundred thousand; at the same time desiring her to withdraw. The woman, however, by loud clamour, again procured admittance, and coolly said:—"May it please your majesty, my son has certainly some claim to the goods of his father; but I would gladly know

CHAP. IX.

A. D. 1675.

Unprotected
state of the
provinces.Evidence of
disregard for
justice.Familiar
anecdotes.



CHAP. IX.

A. D. 1650

what relation your majesty bears to the merchant, my deceased husband, that you make yourself his heir." This idea appeared to Shah Jehan so droll, that he desired her to depart, and no exaction should be made. Such an incident may prove an accessible temper, and a degree of good humour on the part of the sovereign, but gives a very low idea of the general character of that justice which oriental writers are pleased to ascribe to him.

Personal
freedom en-
joyed.

The other anecdote is of a still more odd description. There were in Delhi a class of females called Kencheny, who, though of somewhat doubtful reputation, were not altogether abandoned, and were allowed to contribute to the amusement of this very gay court. A French physician, named Bernard, then resident at Delhi, endeavoured to obtain a young damsel of this class as his mistress; but her mother, probably from motives of prudence, opposed the connexion. The medical man, however, having gone in the evening to wait upon the Emperor Jehangire, and being about to receive a present in return for a cure which he had effected in the seraglio, pointed to the Kencheny, who happened to be among the multitude paying her court to the prince, and besought, in place of any other gift, that she might be bestowed upon him. His majesty burst into a fit of laughter, and called out, "Lay her on his shoulders, and let him carry her away."—"So said, so done." The young lady was immediately given up to him, and Bernard departed laden with this unlawful booty.

Bernier's ac-
count of the
Mogul
armies.

Bernier was among the first to dispel the impression which prevailed in Europe of the mighty and unconquerable armies engaged in Mogul warfare. Even the numbers had been greatly exaggerated. The only efficient department was the cavalry, of which the portion immediately attached to the monarch's residence did not exceed 35,000 or 40,000, nor was it supposed that the whole under his command could much exceed 200,000. The infantry, including the artillery stationed at the capital, might amount to 15,000. The innumerable hosts of



foot-soldiers; said to compose the mass of the army, consisted chiefly of servants, victuallers, foragers, and others, who followed in its train, conveying tents, and supplying provisions, cattle, and every thing wanted for the men and officers. This attendance was so numerous that, when the imperial troops marched, all Delhi and Agra might be described as proceeding along with them; and, indeed, these cities could be considered as little more than standing encampments; while the actual camps, on the other hand, with their streets of tents and regular markets, might be viewed as moving cities. Still lower was Bernier's estimate of the quality of these warriors. Often, it is true, they fought with great bravery; but, being destitute of all discipline, they were frequently struck with panic, and then became altogether incapable of command. He was persuaded that a force of 20,000 or 25,000 men, led by a Condé or a Turenne, would easily trample all these barbarians under foot,—an anticipation amply verified by subsequent events in the annals of British India.

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A. D. 1683

Cumbersome
attendance
on the army.

The foreign history of this reign was chiefly distinguished by the danger which threatened the new sovereign of being involved in war with Abbas, king of Persia, the most powerful and warlike prince in Asia. Dow, following the native historians, represents this rupture between these two mighty potentates to have arisen from the error of a secretary, who addressed a letter, "From the emperor of the world to the master of Persia." On receiving the epistle thus directed, Abbas, it is said, rejected all explanation and apology, and instantly prepared for war. Such a mistake seems not very probable, much less that a monarch so distinguished for talent and policy, and now of mature age, should have engaged in so formidable a contest on a ground so trivial. Possibly he might use it as a pretext; and, seeing the throne of India filled by a prince not yet firmly seated, and rendered odious by the steps which had led to his elevation, might conceive the hope of making this important addition to his dominions. Many circumstances conspired to favour his

Threatened
rupture with
Persia.



CHAP. IX.

A. D. 1685.

Secret plots
of the Persian
king.His sudden
death.Ridiculous
cause of
danger.Bistamia's
victories.

expectations. Of the great omrahs at the court of Delhi a number were of Iranian extraction; many also, of Patan or Afghan origin, looked back with regret to the period when princes of their nation sat on the imperial throne. Aurengzebe had room to suspect that Abbas was seeking to open a communication with the Persian chiefs in his service, and was even attempting to seduce the vizier, who was of that descent. He felt himself in a very delicate situation; for this body was so numerous and powerful, that to drive them into open hostility might have rendered his position still more critical. The minister and the other nobles, however, strenuously denied the charge; and the whole affair was amicably adjusted. The emperor, notwithstanding, continued to suffer the utmost anxiety till he was relieved by the intelligence that Abbas, in consequence of a neglected illness, had expired in his camp on the frontier. Sefi, his grandson and successor, looking forward with uneasiness to the scenes of disorder which usually follow a vacancy in an eastern throne, had no inclination to embarrass himself farther by a foreign war, and readily concluded a treaty.

We must not omit to mention a ridiculous incident, by which Aurengzebe was exposed to great danger. An old female devotee, called Bistamia, in the Rajpoot territory of Marwar, having, by her bounty, collected around her a number of fakirs and other Hindoo sectaries, formed them at length into a sort of army, with which she defeated the rajah and some inferior officers. Having at length assembled a force amounting to twenty thousand, she marched upon the imperial city. Superstitious terror paved the way for her victories; for it was believed that she prepared a mess, composed of the most horrid ingredients, which rendered her followers on the day of battle invisible, and consequently irresistible. Having made their way victoriously almost to the gates of Agra, they looked on themselves as masters of the empire, and proclaimed their leader Queen of India. The emperor, seriously alarmed on finding even his own troops struck with awe, was convinced that it would be vain to contend



against such a host with mere human weapons. Having, by his Moslem zeal, acquired a holy character in the eyes of his soldiers, he wrote sacred sentences on pieces of paper, and causing them to be stuck on the points of spears, which he placed in front of the battalions, he assured his men that they would protect them against the necromantic influences of their fanatical adversaries. Their fears being thus dispelled, the superiority of their arms soon enabled them completely to rout the fakir host, which was almost entirely cut to pieces.

CHAP. IX.

A. D. 1686.

Aurangzebe's policy.

The reign of this great monarch was again disturbed by an insurrection in Cabul, where he soon reduced the open country, though he wisely desisted from the attempt to deprive the inhabitants of their independence. But the grand object of his ambition was to effect the final subjugation of the Deccan kingdoms of Golconda and Bejapore, which, although their force had indeed been broken by repeated victories gained by his predecessors, and even by himself previous to his accession, still retained a considerable share of power.

Insurrection in Cabul.

Various occurrences and dissensions prevented this expedition from being carried into effect till the year 1686, the twenty-eighth of Aurengzebe, when the whole imperial force marched by three directions into the Deccan. Operations were begun by Shah Allum, the heir-apparent, who laid siege to Golconda. The king solicited peace on very humble terms, which the invader granted, that he might turn his whole force against Bejapore. This kingdom made a more obstinate resistance; but afterwards the troops being induced by treachery to desert, the city was closely invested, and at length compelled by famine to capitulate. Secunder Adil Shah, the last of a long line of powerful princes, became a captive in the hands of the emperor. The victor forthwith employed his arms to complete the conquest of Golconda; when his son Shah Allum, by remonstrating against this breach of faith, incurred his resentment, and was thrown into prison. That city, after a siege of seven months,

Invasion of the Deccan.

Capitulation of Bejapore.

Conquest of Golconda.



CHAP. IX.

A. D. 1686.

Rise of the
Mahratta
power.Character of
the country.Lineage of
Sevajee.

was taken by treachery ; and the death of its king, Abou Houssein, after being treated with the utmost indignity, terminated another powerful race of monarchs.

But an event which influenced the whole reign of Aurengzebe is still to be mentioned. This was the rise of the Mahratta power, which, from small beginnings, was one day to subvert the proud fabric of the Mogul empire, and even dispute with Britain the supremacy of Hindostan. The north-western part of peninsular India composes the territory of Maharashtra, which, according to Mr Grant Duff, includes a surface of 102,000 square miles, and a population of about six millions. It is traversed by branches of the Ghauts and Vynndhia mountains, and comprises a large portion of the provinces of Malwa, Candeish, Aurungabad, and Bejapore. The whole bears a very different aspect from the extensive plains of the Deccan and of Hindostan Proper. It is elevated, rugged, diversified with bleak table-lands, and broken by numerous streams and torrents. Being throughout unfit for the movements of heavy cavalry, in which the strength of the Mogul armies consisted, it could be reduced only to very imperfect subjection. All the hills and fastnesses were occupied by petty chieftains, who paid a mere outward homage to the imperial throne or the kingdom of Bejapore. Amid the constant wars, however, of the Mohammedan nations with one another, and the disputed successions of the great empire, opportunities were afforded to a leader of daring and comprehensive mind to erect them into an independent community. Such a person was Sevajee, the founder of the Mahratta dynasty.

This hero, though he began with slender resources, was by no means of ignoble descent. His great-grandfather, Babjee Bhonslay, was a son of the Rana of Oodipoor, whose blood is considered the highest and purest in all Hindostan ; but his mother was a woman of inferior caste, and the stain thus incurred induced him to quit his native country, and seek employment and distinction in other courts. Having risen to eminence in



the service of a rajah in the territory of Candeish, he procured a zemindary near Poonah, then only a village, but which the prosperity of his family raised afterwards into a great capital. His son Malejee acquired celebrity under a Mahratta chief, whose daughter he obtained in marriage for his son Shahjee. This last having quarrelled with his father-in-law, entered the army of the King of Bejapore, and was employed in Tanjore and the Carnatic. While serving in this quarter, he left his son Sevajee at Poonah with his mother, under the tuition of Dadajee Konedee, who seems to have bestowed very great pains in training the future warrior. He initiated him, not indeed in letters, which are despised by those mountaineers, but in military exercises, in national legends and poetry, and in a deep veneration for the Hindoo faith and observances. At the age of seventeen, the pupil was impelled by his daring spirit to a warlike enterprise; he collected a band of Mawulees, natives of the neighbouring glens, and commenced that ambiguous profession of a warrior and a robber, which is generally pursued by the half-civilized tribes of Asia. Heavy complaints were lodged with Dadajee on account of these exploits, against which he felt himself bound to make the most solemn remonstrances; but he is alleged, at the same time, to have secretly encouraged the youth to persevere in his pursuits, for which he conceived him eminently qualified; foreseeing, probably, in some degree, the greatness to which such an adventurous life would conduct him.

Sevajee accordingly followed his aspiring course; and obtaining possession of the almost inaccessible castle of Torna, gave the first alarm to the King of Bejapore, whom, however, he conciliated by the promise of an increased tribute. As he continued to seize or erect fort after fort, the king not only redoubled his remonstrances, but also appealed to Shahjee, the father of the marauder, whom he first threatened and then imprisoned, disregarding all his protestations that he neither knew nor approved of his son's proceedings. The youth was distress-

CHAP. IX.

A. D. 1625.

His son
Malejee.Collects a
band of fol-
lowers.Sevajee ac-
quires the
Castle of
Torna.



CHAP. IX.

A.D. 1649.

Sevajee's
pliant policy.Collision
with the
court of Beja-
pore.Sevajee's un-
principled
stratagem.Approach of
Afzool Khan

ed at the disaster in which he had involved his parent ; yet, very unwilling to effect his release by a change of system, he bethought himself of an application to Shah Jehan, whose vassal he professed himself, and by whose powerful intercession the deliverance of Shahjee was in fact obtained. When Aurengzebe came to make war against Bejapore, Sevajee continued to represent himself as an ally of the Mogul, and hence, as even his neutrality was of importance at so eventful a period, he was allowed to retain unmolested all his possessions. But, as soon as he saw these two great monarchies fully occupied in their sanguinary contest, he hesitated not to seize plunder and territory from either as opportunity offered. At length Aurengzebe suspended the contest, that he might prosecute those ambitious schemes which effected his elevation to the throne of Hindostan ; during the progress of which he had of course no leisure to resent the conduct of the young freebooter. This rising chief, however, had to encounter the undivided hostility of the court of Bejapore, which had long considered him as a rebel, and now exerted its entire force to accomplish his destruction ; and he boldly determined to face the storm with the combined power of arms and stratagem.

The army of Bejapore, under the command of Afzool or Abdul Khan, a leader of distinction, advanced against this restless insurgent, in full confidence of speedily subduing him. Sevajee, finding it necessary to ply all his arts, gave intimation that he had resolved to submit, but dreaded to place himself in the power of an enemy so justly offended. He therefore prevailed upon his adversary to arrange a meeting, to which each party should come with one attendant only. In contemplation of this interview, he secretly filled the woods in front of his castle with armed men, put on a complete suit of chain-armour under his cotton robe, a steel cap on his head, and concealed in his clothes a dagger with other deadly weapons. He had soon the satisfaction to discover Afzool Khan approaching with an escort of 1500 men, whom he left at some distance, and repaired to the appointed spot



with a single follower. Sevajee meantime had performed the most solemn religious ceremonies, and besought his mother's blessing, like one going forth on some deed of glorious peril. He then proceeded to the place apparently unarmed, and looking frequently back as if afraid to advance. At length he stepped forward, embraced Afzool after the Indian fashion, and at the same moment struck him through the body. The Bejapore chief instantly drew his sword, and aimed a blow at the head of his treacherous assailant; but it was intercepted by the helmet beneath his turban; and the next stab laid the Khan lifeless on the ground. The Mahratta troops, warned by the sounding of a horn, started from their ambuscade, and soon put to flight the surprised and terrified escort. Asiatic armies can only be rallied round the person of their commander, and on his fall lose all their courage. The enemy's soldiers having dispersed, Sevajee was left at full liberty to carry on his operations, and overrunning a great extent of country, he pushed his inroads to the very gates of the hostile capital. He took occasion in particular to possess himself of the Concan, called by the ancients the Pirate Coast, and became master of its key, the strong fortress of Panalla, which, by enabling him to equip a fleet, greatly augmented his means both of conquest and plunder. The King of Bejapore recruiting his forces, sent repeated expeditions against this rebel chief, which reduced him indeed to great extremities; but he always extricated himself, and at last concluded a peace that left in his possession an extensive range of mountain-territory, with an army of 50,000 foot and 7000 horse.

Aurengzebe meantime, by civil war and treason, had attained the undisturbed possession of the Mogul throne; and he now resolved to make himself complete master of India. For this purpose it was necessary to put down the rising power of Sevajee, which was assuming so formidable an attitude. He despatched on this service a well-appointed army under Shaista Khan, an omrah high in his confidence. The new general carried on

CHAP. IX.

A. D. 1650.

Treacherous
assassination
of the Beja-
pore chief.Acquires the
fortress of
Panalla.Aurengzebe's
plans of con-
quest.



CHAP. IX.

A. D. 1660.

Bold exploit
of Sevajee.Recall of
Shaista.Plunder of
Surat.

Mock sieges.

Sudden on-
surance of
Surat.

the campaign for some time with great success, reduced many forts, including Poonah, the original seat of the military adventurer, who in this extremity had recourse to one of his bold exploits. Having selected a small band of resolute soldiers, he obtained admittance, favoured, as was suspected, by the jealousy of a Mogul chief, into the residence of Shaista. The assailants with pick-axes forced their way into the cook-room, whence they rushed into the interior of the house with such fury that the omrah had scarcely time to leap out at a window; in effecting which he was wounded, and had one of his fingers cut off. His son was killed; and he himself was at once so intimidated by this disaster, and filled with such a degree of jealousy of his own officers, that he solicited his recall; after which the military operations against the Mahrattas for some time languished.

This interval was improved by their active chief for the accomplishment of one of his most adventurous undertakings,—the plundering of Surat, at that time the chief emporium of India, and perhaps the richest city in the world. Confident in its greatness and wealth, the citizens seem to have rested secure, having only surrounded it with a slight earthen wall, incapable of even retarding the intrepid bands of Sevajee. That leader, according to some authors, went in disguise three days through the town, marking the fittest objects for attack and plunder. He then formed two camps at once, before Bassein and Chaul, and seemed solely occupied in pressing the sieges of these important places, when suddenly he ordered the main body of his troops to withdraw from the former, leaving only small parties, who were instructed to keep up lights, noise, and every appearance of a large army. The Mahratta force thus presented itself quite unexpectedly, and entered Surat without resistance, the governor retiring into the fort, while the English and Dutch remained within their factories; so that the victorious army for three days ranged through this vast city, busying themselves in the appropriation of every valuable article on which they could lay their hands.



The booty in treasure, jewels, and other precious commodities, was valued at a million sterling.

CHAP. IX.

A.D. 1664.

Resolute effort of Aurangzebe.

Aurangzebe, more and more exasperated at being thus baffled by a petty chieftain, determined to make the most vigorous efforts to crush him; and with this view he sent a formidable army under the maraja, or Mirza Rajah, a gallant officer, who had been accustomed to make war in a mountainous country. The Mahratta was quite unable to face this new commander in the open field; and, castle after castle being reduced, he was soon driven to a more perilous extremity than ever. At length Poorundur, his main place of strength, in which he had lodged his family and treasure, was closely invested, without any hope of his being able to relieve it. He then gave up his cause as desperate; and on receiving the pledged faith of the maraja, that he should find at Delhi safety and an honourable reception, surrendered himself to the Mogul. He seems to have gone to court with the expectation of being treated as an omrah of the first class, and was therefore deeply mortified when he found himself received by the emperor with studied contempt, and consigned to quite a secondary rank. If we may believe some respectable historians, the daughter of Aurangzebe, seeing the young stranger from behind a curtain, became enamoured of him,—of which Sevajee being apprized, he made overtures for her hand, which were rejected by the monarch with the deepest indignation. More diligent inquirers regard this tender interlude as altogether apocryphal; but at all events, the discomfited chief saw himself a closely-watched and unhonoured captive, in the hands of one whose wiles were as deep as his own. All his invention, therefore, was on the rack to effect his escape. Having lulled the suspicions of his keepers by counterfeiting madness, he contrived to have himself and his son deposited in two large baskets that had been employed for carrying sweetmeats, and was conveyed to a spot outside the city. Here, mounting in disguise a miserable horse, he travelled onward without suspicion to Muttra, and thence to

Submission of Sevajee.

Contemptuous treatment of him.



CHAP. IX. Benares and Juggernaut, taking this occasion to visit
A. D. 1670. these holy seats of pilgrimage. From the latter he went
round by Hyderabad, and at length found himself amid
Effects his his native hills, with his devoted and gallant followers
escape. rallying around him.

Resumes his Sevajee at once resumed his predatory and victorious
predatory career, which placed him in a state of avowed warfare
with the Mogul; but Aurengzebe, disgusted, perhaps,
with the manner in which he had been overreached, and
occupied with the arms of Persia and the insurrection of
the Patans, did not for a long time direct his attention
to this marauder, who pillaged merely a wild district of
his dominions. The Mahratta prince accordingly ex-
tended his ravages almost undisturbed along the western
coast; he again plundered Surat, and on a third occa-
sion, though he did not enter, he levied a large contri-
bution. In the sack of Rajapore, he robbed the English
factory of 10,000 pagodas, which, however, were after-
wards repaid. Singurh, a hill-fort, deemed next to im-
pregnable, had been wrested from him by famine during
his late disasters; but a thousand of his daring Mawulees,
mounting at the highest point by a ladder of ropes, carried
the place sword in hand. Immediately on his return
he had assumed the titles of royalty, and caused coins to
be struck bearing his name. He now determined to satisfy
his pride and dazzle his followers by a formal coronation,
modelled upon that of the Mogul, in which the weigh-
ing against gold, and other childish ceremonies, were not
omitted. Gifts to an immense value, bestowed on Brah-
mins, gave lustre to this as well as to several other
political festivals.

Second plun-
der of Surat.

Assumes the
titles of roy-
alty.

Assault of
Golconda

In the year after his coronation, Sevajee was seized
with an illness which confined him eight months; but,
upon recovering, he renewed his warlike operations on a
more extended scale than ever. Golconda, almost at the
opposite side of the peninsula, and considered far beyond
his reach, saw itself suddenly surrounded by upwards of
12,000 Mahratta horse, who rushed to the assault so
suddenly as to leave no time to put the city in any pos-



ture of defence. An immense ransom was paid to save it from plunder; and the assailant, having entered at the head of a large body of followers, held an audience on quite an equal footing with its great and potent sovereign. He even appears, without abating any part of his claim for ransom, to have formed an alliance for common defence against the Mogul. He penetrated next year across the territories of Bejapore into the Carnatic, which afforded an entirely new scene of conquest. He made himself master of Gingee, Vellore, and other strong places, in the name of the King of Golconda, but carefully garrisoned them with his own troops; then pushed his victories to the neighbourhood of Madras on the one side, and of Seringapatam on the other. After his return he alarmed and had nearly obtained possession of Bombay; but having to encounter Dilleer Khan, the imperial general, to whom Sambajee, his son, with the usual treachery of Indian princes, had deserted, he sustained a defeat, and was obliged to retreat to Rayree, his capital. Afterwards, being reconciled to the runaway, he set out, and making an immense circuit, seized near Burhanpoor a large convoy bringing treasure to the enemy's army. He returned rapidly and safely to his metropolis; but the extreme fatigue of this journey, joined to what he had endured in so many other expeditions, caused an inflammation in the lungs, which terminated his life on the 5th April 1680, at the age of fifty-three. On receiving the tidings, Aurengzebe is said to have shown extraordinary marks of exultation; having at the same time the magnanimity to bear witness to the great talents by which, while he himself had been employed in subverting all the ancient kingdoms of India, Sevajee had been able, in defiance of numerous and well-appointed armies, to erect a new one on a broad and firm basis.

The character of Sevajee has been variously drawn; though the delineations appear to us, on the whole, somewhat too favourable. He certainly presented a complete example of a character not uncommon in the East or in barbarous countries, but seldom brought

CHAP. IX.

A. D. 1680.

Immense
ransom.Invasion of
the Carnatic.Desertion of
his son.

His death.

Character of
Sevajee.



CHAP. IX.

A. D. 1680.

His mercenary views.

Unscrupulous policy.

Simplicity of manners.

Sambajee's accession.

into view in our happier forms of society ; in which the monarch, general, partisan, bandit, and even the expert thief, are blended in nearly equal proportions, and each part is performed with equal success, according to the scene on which it is acted. In all these capacities Sevajee showed himself what we should call an excessively clever fellow ; and the history of his tricks and surprises, repeated and exaggerated for the sake of amusement, has rendered his name highly popular among the Hindoos. Yet there seems nothing, either in his objects or in his mode of pursuing them, which can entitle him to be ranked as a great man, actuated by high or enlarged views of policy. In regard to his moral qualities, again, it seems difficult to ascribe any merit to the man who scrupled at nothing whatever by which he could compass his ambitious designs ; for if he had the principles of faith or honour, it is obvious that they were never allowed to interfere with any important interest. Not to have been addicted to wanton cruelty is, indeed, in an eastern warrior, a subject of praise ; yet blood was never spared by him if the shedding of it could serve a purpose. Perhaps, had he ever attained the peaceable possession of an extensive kingdom, he might have atoned for the evils which his predatory warfare inflicted, by a beneficent and protecting system ; but for this he had scarcely an opportunity. At the same time his habits were simple and temperate ; he mingled frankly and familiarly with his followers ; and, without guard or precaution, felt himself among them always in perfect safety. He was strictly observant of the rites of the Hindoo religion, professing in its cause the most fervent zeal ; nor would we hastily pronounce this attachment to have been purely political, though it proved one of the chief instruments of his aggrandizement. He proclaimed himself its champion against the bigoted enmity, degenerating at last into persecuting zeal, manifested by Aurengzebe.

The Mahratta cause was placed in imminent peril by the premature decease of its founder. Sambajee, accord-



ing to the usual fate of an Indian prince, opened his career by contending with a brother for the sovereignty. He was next invaded by a large Mogul force; but, showing himself not an unworthy descendant of his father, compelled it to retire with great loss. Aurangzebe, however, soon afterwards pushed all his armies into the Deccan, with the view of making a final conquest of the south of India. He commenced, as we have already related, with the entire reduction of the kingdoms of Bejapore and Golconda, which had so long braved his power. He then turned his whole array towards the Mahrattas, and began to practise against them their own arts. Having learned from one of his spies that Sambajee, in the pursuit of the irregular pleasures to which he was addicted, had set out almost unattended, he sent a detachment of soldiers who surprised and made him prisoner. The emperor, according to his usual ungenerous conduct, ordered the captive to be immediately put to death, and is alleged even to have feasted his eyes on the sufferings which that unfortunate prince bore with unshaken fortitude. The final downfall of the Mahratta cause was now fully anticipated; but Rama, a brother of the deceased, hastened to the Carnatic, and concentrated his troops round the almost impregnable fortress of Gingee, the reduction of which, interrupted by desultory warfare, occupied the imperial army several years. Meantime the people, throughout their native mountains, were mustering their irregular bands, with which they poured down, not only upon the newly-conquered countries of Golconda and Bejapore, but even upon the old territories of Candeish, Malwa, and Benar.

CHAP. IX.

A. D. 1685.

Military capacity.

Aurangzebe's invasion of the Deccan

Sambajee's capture and death.

His brother Rama.

The Mahratta army, which was destined for more than a century to exercise great influence over the fortunes of India, was, like that of the Mogul, composed chiefly of cavalry, but very differently organized. The latter, cased in strong defensive armour, rode heavy and powerful steeds, while the chiefs, mounted on elephants, were enclosed in a species of fortification. Such squa-

Mahratta army.



CHAP. IX. drons, when acting on the vast plains of Hindostan Proper, or even on the wide and level table-lands of the Deccan, bore down all opposition. But Maharashtra is
A.D. 1690. a region of hills neither so lofty nor so rugged as to
Character of obstruct altogether the movement of horse, yet not
the country. affording ground on which the enormous masses of heavy cavalry could make their impetuous charge. The inhabitants, therefore, raised a force suited to their country and to their own habits, composed of small, swift, active horses, with riders lightly dressed and equipped, fitted for march rather than for battle; to sweep over a wide extent of territory, and return without allowing an enemy to overtake them. They were intermixed with infantry, armed partly with matchlocks, partly with arrows; but the favourite national weapon is the spear, with a short sword and shield. An annual
Annual campaign. campaign was regularly opened at the termination of the north-west monsoon, and announced by the hoisting of the *ghoonda* or royal standard. In forming a camp, the flag of the prince or general is first displayed, whence the bazaar or range of shops extends in a parallel line from front to rear. Along these, on each side, the chiefs raise their ensigns, around which their followers, with their horses and cattle, crowd in masses. The army sets
Mode of provision. forth without any provision except what can be contained in two cotton bags or pouches thrown over the front of each rider's saddle. They march onward, trusting to supply all their wants on their route, either by forcible seizure, or by means of the numerous brinjaries, or merchants, who resort to a Hindoo encampment as a market for their commodities. Although
Systematic plunder. plunder is indispensable, it is not pursued by lawless violence, nor does each individual trooper appropriate to himself what falls into his hands. It is extorted from the rich according to a regular system, and the produce is thrown into the public stock. A liberal pay is allowed to the soldier, not indeed always very regularly distributed, but he is indulged in great freedom while suing for its liquidation. In these excursions the troops not only



load themselves with booty, but add much to their numbers; for men of an adventurous spirit, who have no tie to home, if they can only provide a horse are easily induced to join the ranks of this roving army. Thus the Mahratta force, without any decisive victory, swelled as it proceeded; and even amid successive defeats, while losing battle after battle and castle after castle, they continued to overspread the extensive provinces of Candesh, Malwa, and Berar, and to occupy a large portion of Central India.

The latter years of Aurengzebe, though they were not marked by any serious reverse, and though his power continued on the whole unbroken, were yet rendered gloomy by the disappointment of several important enterprises, and by the many omens of decline which thickened around his empire. His bigotry, always increasing, impelled him at length to the most violent measures for extirpating the Hindoo religion. The superb temples of Muttra and Benares were razed to the ground, and mosques erected on their site. The pagoda of Ahmedabad, one of the most splendid of the national structures, was desecrated by killing a cow within its walls. These outrages, viewed by the superstitious people with the deepest horror, did not indeed excite them to direct rebellion; but still they spread throughout the empire a universal detestation of the Mogul yoke, and an eager disposition to rally round any standard whether erected by a chief or a government. To them may be ascribed in a great measure the rapid progress of the Mahratta state, and the successful resistance of the petty Rajpoot principalities. The days of Aurengzebe were also more and more embittered by the disposition which his children showed to follow his example. Mohammed, his eldest son, had already died in prison,—the punishment of rebellion. During a dangerous illness, under which he suffered at an early period of his reign, Shah Allum, the second, had too clearly shown how intently his mind was fixed on the succession; and though he had done nothing absolutely

CHAP. IX.

A.D. 1700.

Accession of
adventuresLatter years
of Aureng-
zebe.

Bigoted zeal.

Influence on
his popular-
ity.



CHAP. IX.

A. D. 1707.

Rival jealousies of his sons.

His death.

Estimate of his character.

Purity of his private life.

undutiful, or which would have justified his disgrace, the intercourse between him and his father was ever after marked by suspicion and distrust. Akbar, another son, distinguished by the high rank of his mother, was guilty of open insurrection, and joined successively the hostile standards of the Mahrattas and the Rajpoots. Two others, Azim and Kaum Buksh, were near him in his last illness; and he foresaw too clearly that his death would be the signal for dreadful conflicts, to be terminated only by the blood of all his male descendants except one. Amid these troubles and gloomy presentiments the fatal term at length arrived; he expired in his camp on the 21st February 1707, in the ninety-fourth year of his age, and in the forty-ninth of his reign.

Historians have found much difficulty in forming a correct estimate of the character of this extraordinary monarch. His crimes, written in deep and legible characters, cannot be concealed, while the general tenor of his life was marked by many virtues. In the administration of justice he was assiduous and impartial; he was liable neither to fits of passion nor caprice; his charities were almost unbounded, and he usually showed much concern for the welfare of his people. Surrounded by the most ample means of licentious indulgence, of which the example had been set by the greatest of his predecessors, the habits of his private life were pure and even austere. Our opinion of his character must be materially affected by the degree of credit which we attach to that religious profession which he maintained through life with so much apparent zeal. It is exposed to much suspicion, from the manifest exaggeration with which it was sometimes exhibited, and still more from its having been made an instrument of ambition, and even of crimes. Yet there seems reason to believe that, as in the case of Cromwell, whom in many respects he resembled, there may have been, beneath a good deal of interested and hypocritical pretension, a fund of sincerity. This conclusion seems



strengthened by his persecution of the Hindoo religion, the imprudence of which, in a worldly point of view, was too manifest to have escaped a prince of his penetration, and, however blamable in itself, must, in the professor of a creed essentially intolerant, admit of some palliation. There seems reason to believe, that amid the greatest aberrations his moral feelings remained strong; that though the tempest of ambition, when it arose, swept all before it, the deeds to which it prompted him were afterwards a subject of painful remorse. The blood of his kindred which he had shed seems never to have been effaced from his mind; so that, seated on the greatest throne of the world, and possessed of every quality which could support and adorn it, Aurengzebe was miserable. Several letters have been preserved, written to his sons in the prospect of death, which are apparently genuine, and give a striking picture of the emotions felt at the approach of that awful hour when the earthly greatness which he had purchased at so dreadful a price was about to disappear. He says,—“Old age is arrived; weakness subdues me, and strength has forsaken all my limbs. I came a stranger into this world, and a stranger I depart. I know nothing of myself, what I am, and for what I am destined. The instant which passed in power hath left only sorrow behind it. I have not been the guardian and protector of the empire. My valuable time has been passed vainly. I had a patron in my own dwelling (conscience), but his glorious light was unseen by my dim sight.—I brought nothing into this world, and, except the infirmities of man, carry nothing out. I have a dread for my salvation, and with what torments I may be punished. Though I have strong reliance on the mercies and bounty of God, yet regarding my actions fear will not quit me; but when I am gone, reflection will not remain.—My back is bent with weakness, and my feet have lost the powers of motion. The breath which rose is gone, and left not even hope behind it. I have committed numerous crimes, and know not with what punishments I may be seized.—

CHAP. IX.

A. D. 1707.

Evidence of
his sincerity.

His remorse.

Letters to his
sons.



CHAP. IX. The guardianship of a people is the trust by God committed to my sons.—I resign you, your mother, and son, to God as I myself am going. The agonies of death come upon me fast.—Odiporee, your mother, was a partner in my illness, and wishes to accompany me in death; but every thing has its appointed time.—I am going. Whatever good or evil I have done, it was for you.—No one has seen the departure of his own soul; but I see that mine is departing.”

Shah Allum's
temperate
overtures.

On the death of Aurengzebe, the struggle for empire immediately commenced; yet it was neither so obstinate nor so bloody as had been anticipated. Shah Allum, the eldest son, and whose cause was embraced by the more powerful party, was of a temper peculiarly mild and amiable; he made the most liberal offers to his brothers, proposing to grant them the government of some of the finest provinces; but ambition and evil advisers urged them on to try the fortune of battle. They were vanquished; one of them was killed in the field, the other put an end to his own life; and Shah Allum, by painful steps, but without guilt, ascended the throne.

His peaceful
policy.

The chief aim of this monarch seems to have been to restore peace to the empire, even at the cost of resigning some of the pretensions advanced by its rulers during the long period of progressive prosperity. He effected an accommodation with the Rajpoots, on terms which required from those haughty chiefs little more than the shadow of submission. The Mahrattas, during the latter part of the reign of Aurengzebe, had offered to cease their depredations on condition of receiving the *chout*, or fourth part of the revenue of the districts which were exposed to their inroads; but that proud sovereign, though unable to repel them, indignantly rejected the idea of listening to proposals made by the leaders of a predatory horde. Shah Allum, however, finding that the empire did not afford the means of subduing these plunderers, determined, wisely perhaps, to accede to their terms, and thereby to deliver several of

Amicable arrangements
with the
Mahrattas.



his finest provinces from so dreadful a scourge. On other occasions, when circumstances were more favourable, he showed himself not destitute either of enterprise or military skill. These qualities he had occasion to display against a new enemy, who about this time rose into political importance.

CHAP. IX.

A. D. 1700.

The Sikhs or Seiks made their first appearance during the reign of Baber simply as a religious sect. Nanuk, the founder, is said to have been an amiable and intelligent man, of a mild and philosophic temper, who, seeing with pain the violent dissensions between the votaries of the Hindoo and Mohammedan creeds, formed a scheme by means of which he hoped to effect a reconciliation. Borrowing some of the leading ceremonies of each, he endeavoured to inculcate the grand principles of a superintending providence and a future retribution acknowledged by both. The numbers of the Seiks rapidly multiplied, being swelled by accessions from other sects; but they still conducted themselves as peaceable citizens, and, under the philosophic reigns of Akbar and his immediate successors, suffered not the slightest molestation. It was the persecuting bigotry of Aurengzebe which converted them into mortal enemies. He caused their chief or patriarch, Teeg Bahadur, to be seized, brought to the fort of Gwalior, and there put to death. This furious proceeding changed entirely the character of the people; and Gooroo Govind, son to the murdered pralate, devoted his whole life to the task of vengeance. He succeeded in inspiring all his followers with the same sentiments; and, having armed and mounted them, he changed peaceful fakirs into daring troopers and fierce marauders. Being obliged, however, with these newly-levied bands, to encounter Aurengzebe in the plenitude of his zeal and power, he was unable to make an effectual resistance. His troops were scattered; his two sons were taken and put to death; he himself became a hopeless exile; and, overpowered by so many calamities, died bereft of reason. But the spirit of the association did not sink; on the contrary,

First appearance of the Seiks

Accessions to their numbers.

Influence of persecution.

Death of Gooroo Govind.



CHAP. IX.

A. D. 1710.

Banda,
their new
leader.Assault of
Daber.Escape of the
Seik.

under the pressure of wrong and suffering, it became more savage and resolute than ever. After lurking for many years amid the hills and fastnesses on the rude border of the Himmaleh, they were encouraged by the death of Aurengzebe again to approach the northern provinces. They were now led by Banda, a follower of the late chief, who assumed also the name of Gooroo Govind; and their devastations are represented to have been truly dreadful, inspired by an unbattered feeling of revenge, and an entire disregard of humanity. Banda had occupied Sirhind, when he learned that the emperor with his whole force was advancing against him; he then fell back upon Daber, a hill-fort situated among the steep slopes of Himmaleh, on an elevated summit which could be approached only by craggy rocks and ravines. According to the account of Eradut Khan, who appears to have been present, his majesty regarded the position as so strong that he wished to decline the attack, and proposed rather to remain inactive, and, by appearing afraid of the enemy, to allure them into the open field. The Khan Khanan or general, however, was animated with a more daring spirit; and having obtained permission to advance with a party to reconnoitre, he immediately began to attack and drive the enemy from the heights surrounding the fortress. This success roused the military ardour of the whole army, who instantly rushed forward in great numbers to join in the assault; and their imperial leader, with mingled anger and satisfaction, saw his troops, in defiance of his injunction, carrying all before them. They had driven the enemy into the central fort, which, relying chiefly on the strength of its approaches, was not calculated for any serious resistance; but darkness now fell, and the commander contented himself with closing all the avenues, and keeping strict watch through the night. In the morning, however, he was disappointed to find that, by a narrow path which had eluded his notice, the Seik chieftain had effected his escape, and was retreating into the wildest recesses of the Himmaleh. His progress, notwithstanding, was



checked for the present, though the sect retained their power unbroken, and were destined at a later period to act a conspicuous part on the theatre of India.

CHAP. IX.

A. D. 1712.

Shah Allum, according to the account of Eradut Khan, who enjoyed his intimate confidence, appears to have been one of the most accomplished and amiable princes that ever swayed the sceptre of India. His liberality though censured by some as extreme, was always exerted towards the most deserving objects. He was strongly attached to the Moslem faith, and deeply versant in its theology, which he studied, however, in a liberal manner, making himself acquainted with the opinions of all sects, and even of freethinkers, to a degree that somewhat scandalized the more rigid doctors. Instead of the dark jealousy which had usually reigned between the members of the Mogul family, he had seventeen sons, grandsons, and nephews, constantly seated at his table, who showed no disposition to abuse this kind confidence. Though he did not possess the full energy suited to the trying circumstances of his government, his moderation and the general respect in which he was held might probably have averted the calamities which impended over this great empire; but unhappily, after a reign of five years, he was seized with a violent illness, and died in his camp at Lahore in the year 1712.

Character of
Shah Allum.Amiable
disposition.

His death.

He left four sons, who, notwithstanding their peaceful conduct during his life, immediately began to contend with one another for the empire. The cause of Moiz-ud-Dien, the eldest, was espoused by Zulfeccar Khan, one of the most powerful of the omrahs, who succeeded in defeating and putting to death the three others, and placing the crown on the head of this prince, who assumed the name of Jehander Shah. The new monarch, however, was found wholly incapable of supporting, even with an appearance of decency, the exalted rank to which he had been elevated. Neglecting altogether the business of the state, he abandoned himself to dissoluteness, and was even seen strolling in the vicinity of Delhi in the company of mean and abandoned females. In a

Struggle for
the empire.Accession of
Jehander
Shah.



CHAP. IX.

A. D. 1719.

His incapacity and death.

government of so little vigour, there were not wanting bold spirits to avail themselves of the opportunity which the weak character and bad administration of the emperor had created. Two brothers, Abdoolla and Hussein, who boasted the high rank of Syeds, or descendants of the Prophet, undertook to recommend a successor, in whose name they might rule Hindostan. They nominated Feroksere, the offspring of Azim Ooshaun, who was the favourite son of Shah Allum. An army was soon raised, and though Zulfecar bravely defended the unworthy object whom he had placed on the throne, he was, after a short struggle, entirely overthrown, and both he and his master put to death.

Feroksere Shah.

The Syeds having thus elevated their candidate to power, considered him as their vassal, and proceeded to administer the empire at their pleasure. They discovered no want of vigour in the conduct of affairs. Banda, the Seik prince, having descended to the plains bordering on the Indus, was defeated, taken, and put to death with the most cruel tortures. The great omrahs, however, soon began to murmur at the supremacy of these chiefs. Even the emperor himself felt their yoke burdensome; and favourites were also found who exhorted him to submit no longer to this thralldom, but to assume real power in his own person. Thus his reign of seven years was spent in a continued series of intrigues, the issue of which was that the Syeds completely prevailed, put Feroksere to death, and looked around for another high-born pageant on whom to confer the semblance of sovereignty. They chose first a great-grandson of Aurangzebe by his rebellious son Akbar; but in five months he died of consumption. Next his brother Ruffeh-ul-Dowlah was named to succeed, but he survived his elevation only three months. The Syeds then placed on the throne Rooshun Akter, a grandson of Shah Allum, under the name of Mohammed Shah.

His troubles and death.

His successors.

Mohammed Shah.

This prince, like Feroksere, paid at first implicit deference to the two individuals who had raised him to the empire; but he also soon listened to other counsellors,



who exhorted him to emancipate himself from their tyrannical sway. He was at length induced to join in a regular conspiracy formed for that purpose. A misunderstanding had arisen between the two brothers and Nizam-ul-Mulk, a powerful chieftain who held the government of Malwa, and refused to resign it at their mandate. It was arranged that the emperor and Hussein should set out together, and subdue this refractory commander. A plot for the assassination of the Syed was however matured; the three conspirators cast lots which of them should do the deed, and it fell upon one whose name was Hyder. Approaching the palanquin in which Hussein was seated, as if to present a petition, the murderer stabbed him so dexterously that he died in a few moments. He had only time to show his suspicion of the motive by calling out, "Kill the emperor!" and his nephew, at the head of a few resolute soldiers, made a desperate effort to fulfil this dying injunction; but precautions had been taken against the attempt. Mohammed then marched upon Delhi, where the remaining Syed, determining to make a stand, set up a new monarch and collected an army; but he was defeated and taken prisoner. The victor made his triumphal entry into the capital, as if he had just begun to reign.

CHAP. IX.

A. D. 1720

Plot against
Hussein.Triumph of
the Shah.

But he was no sooner in full possession of sovereign power than he displayed that incapacity which seemed to be now inherent in the Mogul race. He had two able and not unfaithful ministers, Nizam-ul-Mulk and Saadut Khan; but, disgusted with their grave and severe manners, he resigned himself to youthful advisers, who were easily found within the precincts of a court. Those two chiefs, irritated at finding themselves thus overlooked, withdrew, and endeavoured to establish a separate authority in other quarters; Nizam in the Deccan, where he has transmitted his name and title to a race of princes still nominally independent; and Saadut in Oude, where a branch of his family likewise continues to reign. In this crisis the Mahrattas, who had been continually extending the range of their incursions, began

His incapacity.

Rival kingdoms of
Deccan and
Saadut.



CHAP. IX.

A. D. 1730.

Ambitious
schemes of
the Mahratta-
tas.Incapacity of
the emperorThe Afghans
invade
Persia.

Siege of Ispahan

The chief
Nadir.

openly to contend for the empire. After overrunning the greater part of Malwa and Guzerat, they pushed forward to the very gates of Agra, and struck terror into the imperial capital. Saadut Khan, who alone seemed to retain any regard for the honour and safety of the state, marched down from Oude, and gave them so great an overthrow as would have completely broken their power, had he been permitted to follow it up; but the weak emperor desired operations to be suspended till his favourite minister should have collected troops, and marched forth to take the chief command. Saadut then retired in disgust; after which the enemy rallied, made a fresh incursion as far as Delhi, plundered the environs of that capital, and returned laden with booty to Malwa. But, as if this combination of imbecility with intestine war were not enough, an assault from abroad, of the most formidable character, burst upon the sinking fabric of the Mogul empire.

Persia, had been recently exposed to the most violent revolutions. The Afghans, a warlike race inhabiting the mountainous region which separates that country from India, took advantage of the weakness into which the once-powerful dynasty of the Sophis had sunk. They marched into its territory, defeated its troops, and laid close siege to Ispahan. Having reduced that capital, they put to death Hussein, the reigning sovereign, with all his family except one son, named Thomas. This young prince sought refuge among the pastoral tribes who occupy those elevated plains which extend over a great part of the Persian empire. These hardy and warlike shepherds, animated with loyal and patriotic feelings, warmly espoused the cause of this last branch of their royal house, and assembled round him in numbers, which became every day more formidable. Among these volunteers a young chief, named Nadir, but who on this occasion assumed the title of Thomas Kouli Khan, or the noble slave of Thomas, soon distinguished himself by such zeal and ability as raised him to be their leader. After having gained successive victories, he at



length retook Ispahan, and drove the invaders completely out of the empire. In the course of so many successes, the troops contracted a stronger attachment to Nadir than to him for whom they had taken up arms; and this bold chief, finding himself within reach of the supreme power, placed the prince under restraint, allowing him the mere epithet and shadow of royalty. He afterwards put out his eyes, and seized the kingdom in his own person, under his original name of *Nadir Shah*.

CHAP. IX.

A. D. 1737.

Recovery of
Ispahan.

The new monarch was not content to be master of Persia; but, confident in the bravery and affection of his followers, he resolved to carry his conquests into the neighbouring countries. He invaded the territory of the Afghans themselves, and having reduced Cabul and Candahar, at length approached the frontier of India. He professed to have no intention or wish to penetrate into that region,—for which historians in general give him credit; but we should hesitate in ascribing to the daring usurper so much moderation. At all events, sufficient grounds or pretences were not long wanting. A number of his countrymen who had fled from him found an asylum in Hindostan. An ambassador and his escort, whom he sent to demand that these fugitives should be delivered up, were murdered by the inhabitants of Jellalabad; and Mohammed, under the advice of his arrogant and imprudent courtiers, refused to grant satisfaction for this outrage. The Persian prince advanced, burning for revenge, and, probably not without some secret anticipation of ulterior objects, marched with such rapidity, by way of Peshawer and Lahore, that he was within four days' march of Delhi before the supine emperor was aware of his approach. The latter then hastily mustered his troops, and obtained the able assistance of Saadut Khan; but that officer, not duly aware of the high talent and valour opposed to him, committed the fatal error of quitting his intrenchments, and hazarding an engagement in the field with the veteran forces of Nadir. The effeminate pomp of an Indian host was quite unfit to contend with the valour of these pastoral

*Nadir Shah.*Reprisals on
the Afghans.Folly of
Mohammed.*Saadut Khan.*



CHAP. IX. bands; hence the imperial army was totally routed, and
A.D. 1738. their commander taken. A series of transactions now fol-
Total rout of Mohammed's army. lowed, which are not very distinctly related by histo-
rarians. Saadut, it is said, negotiated a treaty, by which the
other agreed to evacuate the empire on the payment of
a subsidy of two crores of rupees (two millions sterling).
The Persian seemed so entirely satisfied with this arrange-
ment, that the emperor and Nizam-ul-Mulk hesitated
not to visit him, and thus put themselves within the
grasp of the invader. Then, however, as is reported, the
captive general, disappointed at finding that the office of
vizier which he claimed as the reward of this service,
was to be conferred on the nizam, disclosed to the enemy
the secret of the unbounded wealth contained in the
palace and capital of India, and for which two crores of
rupees were a most inadequate ransom. We should
require fuller evidence before we could believe such
treachery in one whose conduct had hitherto been so
honourable; nor was it likely that the riches of Delhi
were so little known as to be confined to the honour and
fidelity of a single chief. May we not suppose, with
greater probability, that the terms of the treaty were
discussed by Nadir, and his friendly professions made,
solely to induce the emperor and the nizam to commit
the almost incredible imprudence of placing themselves
in his power. Certain it is, that having thus obtained
possession of their persons, he marched forward and
made himself master of the metropolis.

Alleged
treachery of
Saadut.

Probable
policy of
Nadir.

Intended
moderation.

Rash attack
by the Hin-
doo.

Nadir seems to have entered it with the intention
of acting moderately, and of protecting the inhabitants
from outrage. For two days the strictest discipline was
observed; but unfortunately, in the course of the second
night, a rumour was spread of his death, when the Hin-
doo, emboldened to a vain resistance, killed a number of
his troops. Their commander, whose fierce spirit had
been with difficulty restrained, roused to the utmost fury
by this outrage, issued orders for a general massacre in
every house or lane where the body of a murdered
Persian could be found. Till mid-day the streets of



Delhi streamed with blood; after which the conqueror suffered himself to be appeased,—and so complete a control did he exercise over his rude followers, that at his mandate the sword was immediately sheathed. The imperial repositories were now ransacked, and found to contain specie, rich robes, and, above all, jewels to an almost incredible value. The Mogul emperors, since the first accession of their dynasty, had been indefatigable in the collection of these objects from every quarter, by presents, purchase, or forfeiture; and the store had been continually augmented without suffering any alienation, or being exposed to foreign plunder. The invaders continued during thirty-five days to extract, by threats, torture, and every severity, the hidden treasures of that splendid capital. Historians hesitate not to estimate the spoil carried off by the Iranian monarch and his officers at thirty-two millions sterling, of which at least one-half was in diamonds and other jewels.

CHAP. IX.

A. D. 1739.

Immense
spoils of
Delhi

Nadir made no attempt to retain India, though it lay prostrate at his feet. He had probably the sagacity to perceive that so vast a country and Persia were incapable of being united into one kingdom. He contented himself with exacting the cession of Cabul, Candahar, and all the provinces west of the Indus; then, seating Mohammed anew on the Mogul throne, he gave him some salutary advices, and departed without leaving a soldier or retaining a fortified post in Hindostan. Yet the empire, already greatly sunk, lost by this discomfiture the little remnant of respect which it had hitherto commanded. In Rohilcund, a hilly district closely contiguous to the capital, some refugee chiefs of the Afghan race, with the brave inhabitants of the country itself, formed an independent state, which defied the imperial power. They were, it is true, obliged to give way before the united force of the vizier and the Nabob of Oude; but they held themselves in readiness to take advantage of those convulsions to which the successors of Akbar were constantly becoming more and more exposed.

Abandon-
ment of
India.Restoration
of Moham-
med.Independ-
ence assumed
in Rohilcund.

The western nations had learned the route to Delhi



CHAP. IX.

A. D. 1747.

Assassination
of Nadir.Ahmed
Abdalla.

and were not likely to forget it. Nadir, eight years after leaving India, was assassinated in his tent at Meshed, in Khorasan; whereupon the dominion which had been formed by him, and kept together by his prudence and vigour, fell quickly to pieces. Ahmed Abdalla, one of his officers, an Afghan by birth, being joined by a part of the army, hastened home, and forthwith proclaimed himself king of his native land, and, amid the distractions that followed the death of his master, succeeded without difficulty in making good his claim. Finding himself thus seated in the undisturbed possession of a strong country, with a brave population, which had often given conquerors to Hindostan, he could not resist the temptation of following the footsteps of Nadir. In 1747 he passed the Indus, plundered the city of Sirhind, and defeated the vizier, who fell in the engagement; but being disconcerted by some unexpected obstacles, and particularly by the explosion of a magazine, he did not then push his conquests any further.

Accession of
Ahmed Shah.

Soon after this expedition the emperor died, and was succeeded by his son, Ahmed Shah, during whose short reign, as if foreign enemies had not been sufficient, the court was perpetually distracted by intestine dissension. The sovereign and his vizier were now almost in regular opposition. Ahmed being oppressed by one of these officers, Suffder Jung, employed against him Ghazee-ud-Dien, grandson to Nizam-ul-Mulk, who had died at the age of 104. This young man, holding the rank of Ameer-ul-Omrah, made considerable efforts to retrieve the affairs of the empire. He compelled the vizier, who had even set up another monarch, to relinquish his station. He undertook an expedition against the Jits or Jauts, a wild tribe inhabiting the hilly tracts in the most western provinces, and who, amid the general anarchy, had shaken off the yoke. But, while thus employed, he excited the jealousy of his master the emperor, who, adopting the views of a new favourite, concerted with the enemy a plan for his destruction. Aided, however, by the Mahratta chief Holkar Mulhar, he

Distracted
state of the
kingdom.



CHAP. IX.

A. D. 1750.

completely baffled these designs, obtained possession of his master's person, put out his eyes, and raised to the throne a son of Jehander Shah, under the empty but imposing title of Aulumgire the Second.

Aulumgire
Shah.

The empire was now in a most distracted condition; there was scarcely a power so insignificant as not to think itself sufficiently strong to trample on it. The Afghans had completely conquered the provinces of Moultan and Lahore; the Seiks, in the same quarter, daily augmented their numbers and strength; the Jauts and Rohillas continued their predatory inroads; while the Mahrattas extended their incursions, in the course of which they had even passed the Jumna, and obtained an important settlement in Rohilcund. Ghazee-ud-Dien precipitated the disaster by a rash attempt at conquest, to which his power was wholly inadequate. An Afghan lady having been intrusted by Ahmed Abdalla with the government of Lahore, the vizier, under pretence of negotiating a marriage with her daughter, seized her person, and brought her a prisoner to Delhi. At this outrage the indignation of the barbarian king knew no bounds. He hastened at the head of a vast army, and made an unresisted entrance into the capital, which was given up to a sack almost as dreadful as it had suffered from Nadir. A most extraordinary scene then ensued. The emperor besought the invader not to leave him without protection against his own vizier, who had raised him indeed to nominal power, but treated him as a mere agent, while he himself exercised all the real authority. Ahmed accordingly made some arrangements for this purpose, placing Aulumgire under the guardianship of a Rohilla chief; but these measures, after his departure, proved wholly insufficient. Ghazee-ud-Dien (for so, to prevent confusion, we shall continue to call him, though he now chose to entitle himself Umad-ul-Mulk), having formed an alliance with the Mahrattas, easily obtained possession both of the capital and the sovereign. That unfortunate prince at first pretended a reconciliation, but, being soon after detected in a correspondence

Second sack
of Delhi.Ghazee-ud-
Dien.



CHAP. IX.
A. D. 1737.

with the adverse party, was assassinated, and his body thrown into the Jumna. Yet Ghazee-ud-Dien himself, unable to withstand the numerous enemies who surrounded him, was at no distant period obliged to seek refuge in a castle belonging to the Jauts.

State of the
Mogul
empire.

Combined
claimants of
Hindustan.

Ahmed
Abdalla
enters Delhi.

Defeats the
Mahrattas.

New forces
assembled.

Without attempting to thread further this labyrinth of treason, we may observe generally, that the Mogul throne had now almost ceased to retain any degree of weight or importance. The contest for the empire of India lay entirely between the Afghans and the Mahrattas; and the latter, taking advantage of the absence of their rivals, determined upon a grand attempt to secure complete possession of Hindostan. Bringing up from the Deccan an immense body of cavalry, and being aided by the Seiks, they overran not only the metropolitan provinces of Agra and Delhi, but also these of Moultan and Lahore, and drove the Afghans beyond the Indus. Ahmed Abdalla, however, was not of a character tamely to allow these fine countries to be wrested from his kingdom. He soon crossed the river with a formidable army, and was joined by many chiefs who were exasperated at the incursion of the Mahrattas. These plunderers at first retreated, and allowed him to occupy Delhi; but immediately intrenched themselves in a strong camp, which he did not venture to attack. Pressed, however, by want of provisions, they imprudently came out and gave battle, when they experienced a total defeat; their army of 80,000 men being almost entirely destroyed, and Duttah Sindia, their general, killed. Another body under Holkar was surprised near Secundra, and so completely worsted, that he himself fled naked with a handful of followers.

The Mahrattas, though humbled by this disaster, were not discouraged; and they resolved to make the most extraordinary exertions for retrieving their fortunes. Before the close of the year, they had assembled a force of 140,000 men, commanded by Sewdashee Rao, called the Bhow, nephew to their peishwa or supreme prince; and that chief, being joined by the vizier and the Jaut



leaders, advanced upon Delhi. The deep stream of the Jumna, swelled by the rains, separated the armies; but, though it could not be forded, the daring spirit of Abdalla impelled him to plunge into its waters, and swim across with his whole army. This achievement, which was almost without example, struck dismay into the host of the Mahrattas. Though triple the number of their antagonists, they did not venture to face them in the open field, but shut themselves up in an intrenched camp at Panniput, on a spot where the fate of the empire has been repeatedly decided. Ahmed for some time merely hovered round them and cut off their supplies; at length he ventured on an attempt to carry their position, but was obliged to retire without any important success. Encouraged by this result, and distressed as formerly by the want of provisions, his active foe determined again to risk a battle in the open plain. Placing their artillery in front, they advanced with that impetuosity by which they were accustomed to carry all before them. The Afghan commander caused his troops to hold themselves in reserve till the enemy had nearly come up;—then gave the signal for a general charge. The light horse of the mountains were never able to resist, even for a short interval, the heavy cavalry of the more northern nations. On the first onset a complete rout took place; their host was so scattered in every direction that only a remnant reached the Deccan: while 22,000 prisoners, 50,000 horses, with an immense booty, fell into the hands of the conquerors.

It was now easy for the victorious Abdalla to seat himself on the vacant throne of the Mogul; but he seems not to have felt any ambition for this high dignity. Perhaps he was sensible that, amid such a general agitation throughout Hindostan, and with so many nations in arms, such an acquisition was too distant from the centre of his dominions to be retained with advantage. Contenting himself with the provinces west of the Indus, he quitted in a few months the seat of government, leaving



CHAP. IX.

A.D. 1760.

Alee Gohur.

there Alee Gohur, eldest son of Aulumgire II., in possession of the empty but still venerated title of Great Mogul, to be the tool or the captive of the first daring warrior who should seize the capital. Having traced the decline of this mighty empire to so low an ebb, we shall now pause till we have marked the progress of that new power from a distant continent, which has seated herself on its ruins, and obtained a complete supremacy over all the states of India.



CHAPTER X.

British Conquest of the Carnatic.

First Territorial Acquisitions—War between France and England—Early Settlements of the French—Their Establishment at Pondicherry—Enterprises of Labourdonnais—He takes Madras—Superseded by Dupleix—Pondicherry besieged—Conclusion of Peace—English Expedition to Tanjore—Contests for the Sovereignities of Southern India—The French interpose—Gain a complete Victory—They are expelled by Nazir Jung—The English join him—His Death—Succession and Death of Mirzapha Jung—Salabat Jung—Exploits of Clive—Advantages over the French—Their Influence in the Deccan—Form a Confederacy against the English—Siege of Trichinopoly—Acquisitions of the French—Recall of Dupleix—Treaty concluded—The Collieries—War of 1756—Lally takes the Command—Reduces Fort St David—Siege of Madras—Raised—French defeated at Wandewash—Siege of Pondicherry—Its Surrender—Cruel Treatment of Lally in France.

THE voyages of the English, related in a former part of this work,* were personal adventures, undertaken with a mingled view to discovery, commerce, and piracy, rather than to any fixed scheme of conquest or dominion. Their forts accordingly were erected as depositories for goods, or to supply commercial facilities, but not with any aim at territorial possession. It was not till 1689 that their views seem to have extended to the latter object. In the instructions issued to their agents during that year, they intimate that the increase of their revenue was henceforth to occupy as much attention as their merchandise; that they wished to be "a nation in India;"

CHAP. X.

A. D. 1689.

Early English voyages.

* Chapter V.



CHAP. X.

A. D. 1715.

Limited
possessions of
the English
Company.Possessions
acquired by
purchase.European
medical skill.Cure of the
emperor.

and they quote with unmerited applause the conduct of the Dutch, who, they assert, in the advices sent to their governors, wrote ten paragraphs concerning tribute for one relative to trade. The means of gratifying this disposition were as yet very limited; as certain small portions of territory around Bombay and Madras comprised the whole extent of their Indian sovereignty. They held themselves ready, however, to purchase every city or district which the native princes could, by any motive, be prevailed upon to alienate; and in this way they acquired Tegnapatam on the Coromandel coast, which they garrisoned, and gave it the name of Fort St David. Nine years after they made a more important acquisition. Azim Ooshaun, whom his father, Aurengzebe, had nominated Viceroy of Bengal, but who, contemplating a struggle for the succession to the empire and standing in need of treasure to forward his schemes, was induced, in 1698, to sell to the Company the zemindarships of the towns and districts of Chutanutty, Govindpore, and *Calcutta*,—the last destined soon to become the capital of British India. Here they began, though not without due circumspection, to erect Fort William, which, in 1707, was made the seat of a presidency.

The superior skill of Europeans in medicine, which had first enabled them to obtain a footing in Bengal, now afforded an opportunity of greatly extending their influence. In 1715, under the reign of the Emperor Feroksere, the residents sent two factors, with an Armenian merchant, on a commercial mission to Delhi. The principal object was defeated, in a manner similar to that of Roe and others, by the intrigues of the omrahs, and of Jaffier Khan, governor of Bengal. But his majesty happening to labour under a severe illness, which the ignorance of the native physicians rendered them unable to treat with success, was completely cured by a medical gentleman, named Hamilton, who accompanied the embassy. For this signal service he not only received large presents, but obtained the valuable grant of three villages in the vicinity of Madras, with liberty



to purchase in Bengal thirty-seven additional townships; an arrangement which would have secured a territory extending ten miles upwards from Calcutta. The emperor conferred also the still more important privilege of introducing their goods and conveying them through the province without duty or search. But the acquisition of these districts was frustrated by the hostility of the nabob, who by private threats deterred the owners from consenting to the purchase. Still, the permission of free trade, though limited to foreign exports and imports, proved of the greatest importance, and soon rendered Calcutta a very flourishing settlement.

CHAP. X

A. D. 1744

Important
privileges
conceded.

A considerable time now elapsed without any farther change in the territorial relations of the Company. They complain of the extravagance of their servants, which involved them in debt to the native shroffs and merchants; but this evil seems to have been in a good measure remedied. Having establishments supported at a moderate expense, which enabled them to carry on trade with security and advantage, they gradually extended their operations till the annual sales amounted to the considerable sum of about two millions sterling; whence they were enabled to pay a dividend of seven or eight per cent. on their capital. Perhaps it would have been fortunate had this state of things remained unaltered; but the war which broke out in 1744 between the French and British produced an entire change in the position of the Company, both in regard to its internal management, and relatively to the powers of Europe and of India. To understand this, we must look back for a moment to the first establishments formed by the French in the eastern world.

Gradual
progress of
the Company.Influence
of war with
France

That people, though they had suffered themselves to be far outstripped in the progress of maritime greatness by the English and Dutch, had yet at an early period displayed a spirit of enterprise. Even in 1503 an expedition had been fitted out by some merchants of Rouen; which, however, experienced a complete failure, in consequence probably of the imperfect nautical skill then

Early French
enterprise.



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CHAP. XI.

A. D. 1664.

Establishment of a French settlement at Madagascar.

possessed by their mariners. Attempts, though on a small scale and generally unsuccessful, were made early in the next century; but it was not till 1642 that a considerable company was at length established. Unluckily that body directed their main attention to the formation of a settlement on Madagascar, a large and fruitful island, which it was easy to describe as affording ample scope for cultivation and commerce. But it yielded no commodity suited to the markets of Europe; its inhabitants, too, were numerous and ferocious, and soon became formidable to a power which attempted to take possession of their territory. The settlers were involved in a harassing warfare, and with difficulty maintained, at certain points on the coast, a few wooden tenements dignified with the title of forts, which involved them in expense without yielding any profit.

French East India Company.

Colbert's system.

The first real establishment of a French East India Company took place in 1664, under the auspices of Colbert, who, prompted by the aspiring genius of his master Louis XIV., devoted himself indefatigably to the promotion of agriculture, manufactures, and commerce. He proceeded upon the principles of that age, which was by no means enlightened in respect to the sound doctrines of political economy; and hence, exclusive grants, exorbitant privileges, and the removal of competition, were the expedients by which it was then attempted to make any branch of industry flourish. Such was Colbert's system, when he submitted to the king the plan of an East India Company, to carry on trade with a capital of 15,000,000 livres (£625,000), and supported by the most extravagant encouragements. They received an exclusive charter for fifty years; they were exempted from all taxes; and the government came under the singular obligation of reimbursing them for all the losses which they might sustain in the course of the first ten years,—a stipulation which actually subjected the state to the payment of a large sum. The funds supplied by individuals not being equal to the amount of the proposed capital, limited as it was, three millions



were advanced out of the treasury; while the nobles, and all the opulent classes connected with the court, were induced to follow the example.

CHAP. X.

A. D. 1668.

The management of the Company was neither judicious nor fortunate. They began by endeavouring to turn Madagascar to some account, and sent thither a large colony, most of whom perished under the influence of climate, fatigue, and the hostility of the natives. The survivors were afterwards employed in occupying the islands of Cerne and Mascarenhas, which at a later period, under the names of Mauritius and Bourbon, rose to some degree of prosperity. After the failure of the attempt at Madagascar they sent vessels to India, and formed settlements on different points of its coast. In 1668 they established their principal factory at Surat, under the direction of Caron, one of their countrymen, who had spent most of his life in the service of Holland. The prospects at first appeared rather promising; but, being involved in dispute with the native powers, and finding the trade ultimately unprosperous, they thought fit to take their departure very suddenly, leaving their debts unpaid,—an omission which of course precluded their return. Attempts were afterwards made to secure a position at Trincomalee in Ceylon, and at St Thomas on the Coromandel coast; but both were defeated by the jealousy of the Dutch. Their affairs, therefore, would have become desperate, had not M. Martin, an officer possessed of talent and patriotism, collected the scattered adventurers and fixed them at Pondicherry; where, by judicious and conciliatory conduct, he gained the attachment of the inhabitants, opened an advantageous trade, and soon raised the settlement to a very prosperous condition.

Mismanagement of the Company.

Settlements in India.

Rivalry with the Dutch.

When the French and English first came into mutual collision, the former had no station of much consequence on the continent of India except that just named; but it was of very considerable importance, being well fortified, and having some extent of territory attached to it. They had smaller factories at Mahé and

State at the period of collision with the English.



CHAP. X.

A.D. 1746

Project for
attacking the
English
settlements.Obtains the
sanction of
government.Governor
Labourdon-
nais' zeal.Expedition
against
Madras.

Carical, as well as at Chandernagore in Bengal. In 1744 hostilities broke out between the two nations, which were carried on in Europe with great animosity. The French Company appear to have been rather desirous that the war should not extend to the Indian Seas; but their naval officers, on the contrary, were fired by hopes of glory from an attack on the English settlements in that quarter, before they could be placed in a posture of defence. Labourdonnais, a person of great talent and most indefatigable activity, who had raised himself through all the ranks of the navy, was now governor of Mauritius and Bourbon; and these islands, by his exertions, almost without assistance from home, had become very flourishing. Happening to be in France when the war was in preparation, he made proposals, both to the Company and the ministry, for an attack upon the enemy's establishments. The former were altogether averse to his scheme; but the government unknown to them sanctioned it, and even engaged to furnish two ships, which however were afterwards withheld. The adventurer returned to his command with the most resolute determination to prosecute his design, though possessed of very slender resources. With this view he detained the vessels which happened to touch there, and employed them in the expedition; he brought the sailors, many of whom had never fired a gun, into regular training; and he supplied by various inventions the defective means of equipment. In June 1746, he arrived at Pondicherry, after a slight action with an English naval force on the coast. Here, too, he had to overcome certain obstacles raised by Dupleix, before he was permitted to sail with his squadron to attack Madras.

This city was not only the capital of the English possessions, but one of the chief settlements at that time formed by the Europeans in India. It comprised within its district a population of not less than 250,000, of whom, however, only 300 were from this quarter of the globe, including 200 soldiers. These lived in Fort St George, surrounded merely by a slender wall, with four



ill-constructed bastions and batteries; and hence, it is obvious, they had very small means of defence, and did not, in the use of them, display any heroism. After sustaining a bombardment of five days, in which two or three houses were demolished, and four or five men killed, they capitulated on the 10th September 1746. They obtained, indeed, the singular condition, that Labourdonnais, after having regularly occupied the place and taken possession of the Company's magazines and warehouses, should, within a stipulated period, and on payment of a fixed ransom, restore Madras to the English. That officer, having made this important acquisition without the loss of a single man, returned to Pondicherry.

CHAP. X.

A. D. 1746.

Capitulation
of Madras

But there he did not meet with such a reception as he merited. Dupleix, an aspiring and ambitious man, who could not brook any rival in power, thwarted all his schemes, and exposed him to repeated mortifications, till at length he gave up the contest, and sailed for France. There, too, on the representations of his superior officer, he was treated in a manner altogether unworthy of his long and faithful services, being thrown into the Bastille, whence he was not liberated till the end of three years, soon after which he died.

Rival jealous-
ies of the
French

Dupleix, who was thus left in the supreme command of affairs in India, was a very extraordinary character. From his father, who had been a farmer-general and a director of the East India Company, he inherited an immense fortune, which he was taught to employ in the pursuits of commerce. Being sent out originally as first member of the council at Pondicherry, and afterwards as superintendent at Chandernagore, he at once, by his public measures, rendered this last settlement extremely prosperous, and by an extensive trade largely augmented his private wealth. His talents and success recommended him to the important station of Governor of Pondicherry. Although, from feelings of jealousy, he had quarrelled with Labourdonnais, and succeeded in removing him, yet his mind was enthusiastically and intensely devoted to the same system of policy. Neither

Dupleix
the French
governor.Talents and
success.



CHAP. X.

A. D. 1746.

Vast schemes
of conquest.Breach of
faith with the
English.Expedition
against Fort
St. David.Success of
French arms.

Cæsar nor Alexander ever formed more magnificent schemes of conquest than this mercantile ruler of French India. His first object was to follow up the advantage gained over the English, and thoroughly to root out that rival nation from the coast of Coromandel. Labourdonnais had, as already mentioned, stipulated on certain conditions to restore Madras, after a temporary occupation of it; and as a man of honour he was resolved to make good his engagement,—a design wholly foreign to the grasping ambition of Dupleix. Unable otherwise to accomplish his object, he made such arrangements as to delay the period of surrender till the departure of that officer, and then contrived to draw forth from the citizens of Pondicherry a remonstrance against giving up a place the possession of which was so important to their security. In pretended compliance with this request, Madras was not only retained, but exposed to a species of plunder, while the governor and principal inhabitants were carried prisoners to the French settlement.

This step was forthwith followed by an expedition on his part for the reduction of Fort St David, while his confidence was greatly heightened by an event which forms a memorable era in the annals of Indian warfare. The Nabob of Arcot, having espoused the English cause, had sent his son with 10,000 men, to endeavour to retake Madras on their behalf. The French had only 1200 soldiers to defend the city, with which force they hesitated not to attack the numerous army of the nabob; when, by their superior discipline and the expert management of their artillery, they gained a complete and decisive victory. The superiority of even a handful of Europeans over the tumultuary bands which compose an Asiatic host had long ago been proved by the Portuguese; but the example of their success was nearly forgotten; and both French and British had been accustomed to view the Mogul as a powerful and mighty monarch, whom it was vain with their slender means to think of resisting. The spell was again broken; and the settlers of either nation learned a lesson which they