



commander in the service of Sindia, who brought a well-equipped Campoo, or brigade, of eight battalions and about forty guns. Fortunately for Bhopal, a serious dissension now occurred amongst its enemies' leaders. The refusal of Jeswunt Row Bhow to make an advance of money to pay the troops of Baptiste was the first ground of discontent: this was daily aggravated, till a chance quarrel between a party of their foragers caused each to draw out their troops, and a serious affray ensued. But the followers of the Bhow, particularly the infantry, which had suffered extremely during the siege, were not able to stand against the fresh and better-disciplined brigades of Baptiste; they fled in every direction, leaving their camp to be plundered. This action took place at Sehore, where Baptiste is said to have taken one hundred and three guns of different sizes. The Bhow and some of the leaders took refuge under the walls of Bhopal, where they were permitted to shelter themselves for one night, but requested to depart early the next day, as it was apprehended that their remaining there might be a motive for another attack, which, if aided by the renewal of a hostile combination, would probably have effected the destruction of this principality in spite of the heroic efforts made in its defence. That Baptiste did not prosecute the siege has been variously accounted for; but the real cause was, that the overture made by Vizier Mahomed at this period to the British agent\* in Bundelcund had been so far favourably entertained, that the Resident† at the

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\* The late Mr. Wauchope.

† Mr. Strachey.—Vide that gentleman's Correspondence.



court of Gualior had called upon Sindia to abstain from prosecuting hostilities against Bhopal, as that country gained importance when viewed as an instrument for repressing the Pindarries, whose excesses now menaced the general peace of India. The resident\* at Nagpoor also, to whom Vizier Mahomed had sent an agent, evinced equal penetration in the delineation he early gave of the actual condition and character of this principality, and the eventual benefit that might be derived from its friendly disposition, local advantages, and resources, in the approaching contest against the predatory system which now threatened to desolate India.

Though Vizier Mahomed, when relieved from the pressure of misfortune, did not pursue his object of obtaining the protection of the English with the same ardour he at first exhibited, and the negotiations that ensued were never matured into any engagement during his life;† yet the knowledge of his being in constant communication with the public officers of the British Government was no slight shield, as it deterred his most powerful enemies from attacking him. He was, nevertheless, continually engaged in that predatory warfare, amid which he had lived, and of which the territories of the State that he governed had long been the focus. One of the last actions of his life was an effort to recon-

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\* Vide Despatch from Mr. Jenkins to Mr. Secretary Adam, dated 29th October, 1814.

† Vizier Mahomed died in 1816. In 1814 Mr. Jenkins' letter to Lord Moira states, that the British Government had afforded its protection to the State of Bhopal; but this appears to have been afterwards withdrawn; though by Mr. Strachey's communication from Gualior, it seems to have been our interference alone that prevented Baptiste's attack on Bhopal.



cile, by intermarriages, his family with that of Ghous Mahomed.\* Vizier Mahomed died in February, A. D. 1816, aged fifty-one, after having governed Bhopal little more than nine years; but of this short period he had not passed one day in repose. This principality, from the hour he assumed the government until that of his death, was threatened with destruction. Such a man could alone have saved it. Though as remarkable for prowess and valour as the most desperate of the Afghan race, he was, in his manners, mild and pleasing; but his look and stature were alike commanding, and there was in his disposition a sternness that inspired awe. He latterly gave way to habits of dissipation, which were believed to have shortened† his existence. All, acquainted with the vicissitudes of his life, deeply regretted his death at the moment it occurred. He should have lived to behold his patriotic efforts rewarded; to see the people of the land he loved rescued from destruction, and raised to happiness and prosperity by the Government which he had through life courted, and on which his hopes till the last hour of his life rested. This destiny was reserved for a son whom he selected and educated as his successor, and who proved himself every way worthy of his father.

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\* The daughter of Ghous Mahomed was married to Nuzzer Mahomed, the second and favourite son of Vizier Mahomed; while the latter chief gave the eldest son of the Nabob, his niece, the daughter of Kurreem Mahomed, the present minister of Bhopal.

† Vizier Mahomed, according to the account given by those who knew him best to Major Henley, became during the last years of his life much addicted to intoxicating liquors; and he died of an inflammatory fever, supposed to have been brought on by that cause, after a short illness of four days.



Nuzzer Mahomed has been already mentioned as fighting and bleeding, while yet a youth, by his father's side, at the memorable siege of Bhopal. Hopeless of his eldest son, who was a slave to habits of indolence and excess, which enervated both his mind and body, Vizier Mahomed had early determined upon his successor, whose education was an object of his earnest solicitude; and, in addition to his other acquirements, Nuzzer Mahomed had learnt so well the duties of a soldier, that on his father's death he stood the first in fame among the chiefs of the country. The respect for the memory of his father, combined with his own high qualities, made all the nobles press the Government of Bhopal upon his acceptance.

Ghous Mahomed, who, though sunk into obscurity, was still called Nabob, made no objection to his elevation; and his eldest brother, Ameer Mahomed Khan, stupefied with his excesses, was among the first to avow publicly his own disqualifications, and to urge his younger brother to take upon himself the administration of the affairs of the State. To this Nuzzer Mahomed consented; and his first efforts were directed to the favourite object of his father's life, a treaty of peace with the English Government. The policy of this measure had been long under discussion, and a fear of the embarrassments it might produce had led the India Government in England to desire that no such treaty should be concluded; but the outrages committed by the Pindaries forced the Governor-General to a course of measures, which made obedience to such restrictive orders impossible.

The first step of the campaign of 1817 was an engage-



ment with the State of Bhopal, concluded at Hussingabad,\* which guaranteed that territory to its actual ruler, and stipulated for his aiding the British army with a contingent, and co-operating to the utmost of his means in the ensuing war. No obligations were ever more faithfully fulfilled. Nuzzer Mahomed received, as the reward of his zeal and efforts, the fine province named Punj Mahal, or the five districts, which were taken from a Jahgeerdar† of the Paishwah, and which not only joined the territories of Bhopal, but had formerly been an integral portion of that principality. The restoration of the fort of Islamnuggur, subsequently obtained from Sindia, though of little value, was esteemed beyond all other favours by the ruling family of Bhopal. It contained the tomb of Yar Mahomed; and its position, almost at the gates of the capital, had made its separation from the State a source of the greatest annoyance. The condition of this principality at Vizier Mahomed's death was so low, that its actual revenue could not have amounted to one lac of rupees. It was now, however, raised to a high rank among the secondary class of Native States. Its rescued territories included almost all the provinces its princes formerly possessed; and its revenues yielded from nine to ten lacs of rupees, with the expectation of soon exceeding thirty.

Never were prospects more flattering than those of Nuzzer Mahomed, when an unhappy accident terminated his life, and left his family and country to mourn the untimely and irreparable loss of a prince who seemed

\* This engagement was negotiated by me in concert with Lieutenant-Colonel Adams, C. B., commanding the force at Hussingabad.

† The Vinchoor chief.



born for the times in which he lived, and who promised to be as active and successful in restoring his country to prosperity, as his father had been in saving it from destruction. His death was occasioned by the discharge of a pistol he carried about his person, which he laid down when playing in his inner apartments with his infant daughter; and it is supposed to have been fired by his brother-in-law, Foujdar Khan, a child of eight years of age, who was the only one present on this melancholy occasion. The sensation caused by his death was great, and men gave way for the moment to the worst suspicions. These, however, were dispelled by the minute investigation which took place, and by the conduct of all to whom such a design could have been attributed, or who could in any way have expected benefit from the event.\* But the general feelings and

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\* After minutely detailing the results of the investigation which had been made, Major Henley, political agent at Bhopal, speaking of Foujdar Khan, observes: "The child had been often seen to handle the pistol when sitting by the Nabob, who had on such occasions taken it from him. He was, moreover, just of that height, that a pistol discharged from his hand, when standing by the side of the Nabob sitting on the cot in the posture described, would have taken the direction which had been mentioned; and the circumstance of its having been fired rather from before than behind, renders it evident that the attention of the Nabob could not have been excited, as must have been the case had any person entered and taken up the pistol.

"An assassin," the Major adds, "would have chosen other weapons, and not have risked the chance of his securing the pistol from the Nabob, whose personal prowess and courage were well known; nor was it possible such a one could have seized the pistol unperceived, and fired it in a stooping posture so close to the Nabob, without resistance being attempted. Foujdar, moreover, being now alarmed, prevaricates, and denies his former statements, which renders it probable he disguised the truth in the first instance. There is no





conduct of all persons, from Ghous Mahomed to the lowest Patan, banished every suspicion of Nuzzer Mahomed Khan's death being premeditated. There was but one sentiment, that of the deepest regret, and no person sought to take advantage of the accident to promote his own interests. At a consultation of the principal chiefs, it was resolved to continue to attend to the widow and ministers of the deceased prince, till the pleasure of the British Government was known as to his successor; and it is remarkable, that not the slightest effort was made by any party to influence the judgment of the British agent—a sufficient proof, of itself, of the absence of all design or guilt on this unhappy occasion.

Nuzzer Mahomed Khan, when he died, was only twenty-eight years of age; he had governed Bhopal three years and five months, but he has left a name that has been attained by few during the longest life. Schooled in adversity, he early attained a remarkable maturity of judgment. His appearance was noble, and his manners

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reason, however, for supposing he was actuated by any bad intention, as he had always appeared much attached to the Nabob—"The same cause (his being the son of Ghous Mahomed) which led to these suspicions, attached to his sister, the Nabob's only wife; but her ever having had such an intent is treated by Major Henley as quite impossible. She is described as very young, being only seventeen; she is, besides, stated to be of a mild disposition, and to have been strongly attached to the Nabob, who treated her with unusual consideration. He not only resisted all the entreaties that were used to induce him to contract a second marriage, but strictly prohibited the introduction of any young females, either as slaves, servants, or otherwise, within the Mahal. In farther disproof of this it is stated, that her grief since the accident has been so great, as to produce her miscarriage,—an event that, had she cherished any ambitious views, she must have earnestly deprecated.



those of a prince who knew the value of possessing the hearts of his subjects. His mind was so superior, and his courage so elevated him above suspicion, that the whole family of the rulers of Bhopal whom he had supplanted, as well as his elder brother who had resigned his birthright to him, lived not only without restriction, but on the most intimate footing of familiarity with him, coming and going through every apartment of his palace at their pleasure. Nuzzer Mahomed held in just detestation the general vices and indulgences of his tribe. His haram contained but one princess, and no slaves. He was a good Mahomedan, but so far removed from bigotry, that his favourite companion and minister was a Christian.\* His whole soul was absorbed, during the

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\* Shahzad Musseah, or Balthazar Bourbonn, with whom I am well acquainted. This person, who is an able man and a brave soldier, is the descendant of a Frenchman called Bourbonn, who came to India in the time of the Emperor Akber. The following is an account given by Shahzad Musseah of his family:—

“John Bourbonn came from Pari, or Bevi, (probably Paris or Berni in France,) in Europe, to Hindustan, during the reign of Akber, and, going to Delhi, was employed in the service of that prince. After the death of John Bourbonn, the king particularly distinguished his son, Alexander Bourbonn, who was entrusted with the charge of the gate of the palace of the Begums. This charge was continued in the family to the time of Furadee Bourbonn, about the time that the king (Nadir Shah) destroyed Shahjehanabad, and the ruin of the empire had taken place. Furadee Bourbonn also left this wicked world, leaving a son, Salvador Bourbonn, who, viewing these events with disgust and sorrow, left Delhi, and came to reside at Narwar. As all the Rajas and princes of Hindustan were aware of his having been distinguished by the royal service and favour, he was treated with much consideration and respect, and lived at Narwar in great ease. No other man of consequence (foreigner, I suppose) remains, in whose family can be traced the possession of an Imperial Jahgeer.



two last years, in plans for improving his country. He investigated every account himself, heard every complaint; and, while all speak of his kindness, benevolence, and justice, his memory is unstained by the reproach of a single act of tyranny.\*

A greater loss could not have occurred to a community in the condition of Bhopal than the death of Nuzzer Mahomed; and that event was also a serious misfortune to the British Government, to which this virtuous prince was firmly attached. He was exactly fitted to be the

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Sheerghur, &c., near Gualior, was the Jahgeer of Bhoba, my ancestor, commonly known as the Nawaub Musseah Rago Khan. My father, Enayet Musseah (Shoohur Bourboun) was born at Gualior. Although Europeans without number have flocked to Hindustan since the arrival of John Bourboun, yet our family has not intermarried with any of them except two, and they were noble in their own tribes, and also Monsubdars (which constitutes nobility in India) of the Moghul empire; the one a Frenchman, and the other an Armenian of the Roman Catholic, otherwise our, religion.

"In the year that Colonels Kamak and Popun (Camac and Popham) took Gualior, the Raja of Narwar had treacherously seized and murdered Bhoba and our other relations, and possessed himself of their property. At the time the fort was taken, my father, on account of the above calamity, was residing there, and visited Colonel Camac, to whom he related the history of our family since its arrival in Hindustan, and especially of its recent calamity. The Colonel sympathized with and comforted my father, gave him a handsome sum of money, a good house for his family, and a village in free gift. Some time after this my father came to Bhopal, where he was also treated with great kindness and respect. Since the time that the Mahrattas have occupied Gualior, the village has been resumed by them, and lost to my family."

\* I had, during two years, much communication with Nuzzer Mahomed, and personally knew him; but I rely for the facts here stated on Major Henley, the political agent at Bhopal, who enjoyed the fullest opportunities of observing and appreciating the character of this remarkable young prince.



popular instrument which was required to restore order and prosperity. His mind went far beyond the usual range of those of his class. He cultivated knowledge of every description with extraordinary ardour, and had made no slight progress in the arts\* foreign to the occupations of his life and the habits of his station. The fame of Nuzzer Mahomed will be long commemorated as an object of emulation to his successors; but we must despair of seeing his equal. He was, as most other such characters have been, formed by the early scenes of his life: no instructions could have conveyed the lessons he had learnt. When encouraged by the example and rewarded by the love of a noble father, he struggled with him to preserve a country, rendered dearer from the extreme misery to which it was reduced; and his mind was too well formed, before the hour of success came, ever to lose that tone which it had received amid scenes of difficulty and danger.

Nuzzer Mahomed left no issue by his princess, the daughter of Ghous Mahomed, except one female child. He had not assumed the title of Nabob, though he was always addressed as such by the British, for Ghous Mahomed, who had sunk into complete obscurity, was never in any way brought forward in the connexion which was formed between that Government and the actual ruler of Bhopal. In the engagement which was entered into at Hussingabad, and the treaty made after the war, by which the cession to this State and the numbers of the contingent to be maintained were finally

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\* Nuzzer Mahomed was particularly fond of mechanics, and could himself take to pieces and put together a watch, with the principles of the construction of which he was well acquainted.





settled, Nuzzer Mahomed Khan and his descendants were alone mentioned, and to them the government of the country was guaranteed. Mooneer Mahomed Khan,\* the son of Ameer Mahomed Khan, the elder brother of Nuzzer Mahomed, has succeeded his uncle, to whose daughter he is to be married, that the interests of the family may as much as possible be united in his person.† In discussing the question of succession, no reference was made to Ghous Mahomed, or his sons, who are living on the estate assigned for their support at Bhopal; nor do these appear ever to have brought forward their pretensions. It is, however, worthy of remark, that though the representative of the family of Vizier Mahomed may now be deemed entitled to the name as well as the power of Nabob of Bhopal, that title is still given by the inhabitants to Ghous Mahomed.

The Murajee Kheil Patans of Bhopal have, as has been before remarked, some singular institutions which arose

\* The right of Ghous Mahomed was never agitated. He was titular Nabob, but not ruler. Ameer Mahomed, the brother of the deceased, had publicly resigned his birthright and declared his incompetency; but this abdication of right was very properly not considered to affect the claims of his children.

† It may be asked, if, in theory, the abdication of Ameer Mahomed Khan was very properly considered not to affect the claims of his children, would not the same rule apply equally to the children of Ghous Mahomed, who has been, like Ameer Mahomed, excluded from his acknowledged incompetence? But it is to be replied, that the obligations and engagements of the British Government have been exclusively contracted with the family of Vizier Mahomed, who alone have been recognized as rulers of Bhopal. Nor can either faith or policy call upon us to revive or support the obsolete claims of a family, to which, though long excluded from power, a titular rank and a provision are still granted by the prejudices of their relations and countrymen.



out of their original agreement to maintain the habits and laws of their society, such as they existed in Afghanistan. It is from this patriarchal form of government that they claim\* a limited privilege in the selection of their chief, to whom, however, they deny the right of interfering in the jurisdiction of their respective families. The habits and character of this body of men demand our attention. With every good disposition to the British Government, and gratitude for the benefits they have derived from it, they are not only jealous of encroachment on their usages, but impatient of neglect, and turbulent in a degree that requires much care in conducting our relations with them. They are, however, deserving both of that solicitude and favour which they have hitherto received; for Bhopal is at this moment, and will continue while well managed, an essential point of strength in Central India.

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\* The rights of Afghans and other tribes in this particular are invariably limited by usage. They must choose a member of the ruling family; and the Murajee Kheil chiefs of Bhopal appear to have always adhered as closely to hereditary succession as attention to the general safety during a state of anarchy and continual warfare would admit.

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## CHAPTER X.

*Rise, Progress, and Annihilation of the Pindarries.*

THE Pindarries, though they never took deep root in Central India, made that country their home, or rather head-quarters, for the short period they continued formidable as enemies to the peace of India; and cannot, therefore, be excluded from its history. Some general observations on the origin, character, and constitution of these plunderers, and a short sketch of the lives of their most remarkable chiefs, will sufficiently illustrate this part of the subject.

The name of Pindarry occurs in Indian history so early as A. D. 1689,\* but it is only of late years that this race, or rather class of men, have attracted attention, or acquired importance. From obscure freebooters, they rose into sufficient consequence to be deemed useful auxiliaries by the different Mahratta powers, whose desultory mode of warfare was suited to their predatory habits. Their aid was purchased by occasional grants

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\* Poonapah, Pindarry, is mentioned as being, in the latter part of the reign of Aurungzeeb, an auxiliary of Mahratta plunderers.—Scott's *Ferishta*, vol. ii., p. 121.



of land, or, more correctly speaking, by a tacit admission of their right to possess tracts which they had usurped, and a privilege of plundering, even beyond the usual licence given to a Mahratta army. They took substantive form under this system; chiefs acquired reputation, and their claims to the service of their adherents became hereditary, and were transmitted to their descendants. Tribes were cemented in federal union, and common motives of action led to somewhat of a common interest being established throughout the whole of this lawless community.

The Pindarries have been compared to the first Mahrattas; but, though alike in character and habits, there were essential points of difference. The adherents of Sevajee and his successors were united and animated by the ties of brotherhood, as well as by the prejudices of religion. They were of one tribe, and almost of one province. They were not impelled by the mere love of plunder, and the ambition of a martial chief; they had the more legitimate, and, therefore, the more permanent, motives of attachment to their native soil and to the religion of their fathers, with the consequent resentment against the intolerant and oppressive rulers by whom they were assailed. These causes, though they might have checked the increase of their numbers, gave them an union of interest and action, which was unknown to the Pindarries. It was, however, one of the greatest evils attending the growing numbers of the latter, that, though divided, and only susceptible of union through the existence of some common principle of action, they became, from the very looseness of their composition, a nucleus to attract what was floating and unattached in





the community; and thus presented, at all moments, a mass of materials, which an able and popular leader might use, either for the destruction of others, or for his own aggrandisement.

The Pindarries, when they came to a rich country, had neither the means nor inclination, like the Tartars, to whom also they have been compared, to settle and repose. Like swarms of locusts, acting from instinct, they destroyed and left waste whatever province they visited. Their chiefs had, from grants or by usurpation, obtained small territorial possessions; but the revenues of their land were never equal to the maintenance of one-tenth part of their numbers, and they could, therefore, only be supported by plunder: their force, within the last twenty years that they were settled in Central India, has been computed at from twenty to thirty thousand horse of all descriptions. But it was evidently impossible to form a correct estimate of a body whose numbers were so continually varying, who were diminished by misfortune and swelled by success, who coalesced, from similarity of habits and condition, with every chief who was tempted, by the weakness or the oppression of the power he served, to throw off his allegiance, and to become a freebooter. It is also to be observed, that the Pindarries were fed and nourished by the very miseries they created; for, as their predatory invasions extended, property became insecure, and those who were ruined by their depredations, were afterwards compelled to have recourse to a life of violence, as the only means of subsistence left them. They joined the stream which they could not withstand, and endeavoured to redeem their own losses by the plunder of others.



Such facts as these rendered fallacious all calculation regarding the numerical strength of the Pindarries, who were, indeed, so amalgamated with the whole of the loose part of the military population of India, that it had become a system, not a particular force, that was to be subdued.

Lines of defence against the ravages of the Pindarries, and partial expeditions against their leaders were equally ineffectual to remedy this evil; for while efforts were made to crush one head of the hydra, others arose; and the resources of those Governments which tried to suppress them, were vainly wasted against an enemy who had every thing to hope from success, and whose condition defeat did not render more desperate. To understand this fact, it is necessary to advert to the mode of warfare pursued by these freebooters. When they set out on an expedition, they placed themselves under the guidance of one or more chosen leaders, called Lubbiriah,\* who were selected on account of their knowledge of the country that it was meant to plunder. The Pindarries were neither encumbered by tents nor baggage; each horseman carried a few cakes of bread for his own subsistence, and some feeds of grain for his horse. The party, which usually consisted of two or three thousand good horse, with a proportion of mounted followers, advanced at the rapid rate of forty or fifty miles a-day,

\* The Lubbiriah, according to Major Henley's manuscript notes, were not selected for each expedition; but their situation in the Durrah, or Pindarry camp, had an affinity to that which is termed Herawul, or leader of the van, among Rajpoots. When an expedition was determined on, the Lubbiriah's moving out with his standard was the signal for march. These persons were always remarkable for intelligence and activity.





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## PROGRESS AND ANNIHILATION

neither turning to the right nor left till they arrived at their place of destination. They then divided, and made a sweep of all the cattle and property they could find : committing at the same time the most horrid atrocities, and destroying what they could not carry away. They trusted to the secrecy and suddenness of the irruption for avoiding those who guarded the frontiers of the countries they invaded ; and before a force could be brought against them, they were on their return. Their chief strength lay in their being intangible. If pursued, they made marches of extraordinary length, (sometimes upwards of sixty miles,) by roads almost impracticable for regular troops. If overtaken, they dispersed, and re-assembled at an appointed rendezvous ; if followed to the country from which they issued, they broke into small parties. Their wealth, their booty, and their families, were scattered over a wide region, in which they found protection amid the mountains, and in the fastnesses belonging to themselves and to those with whom they were either openly or secretly connected ; but no where did they present any point of attack ; and the defeat of a party, the destruction of one of their cantonments, or the temporary occupation of some of their strongholds, produced no effect, beyond the ruin of an individual freebooter, whose place was instantly supplied by another, generally of more desperate fortune, and therefore more eager for enterprise.

The Pindarries, who had arisen, like masses of putrefaction in animal matter, out of the corruption of weak and expiring States, had, fortunately, none of those bonds of union which unite men in adversity. They had neither the tie of religious nor of national feeling. They were men



of all lands and all religions. They had been brought together less by despair than by deeming the life of a plunderer, in the actual state of India, as one of small hazard, but of great indulgence. A body so constituted, and of such a character, could only be formidable when considered as part of a distempered community, with every branch of which they were more or less connected. In this view they had importance, whether we refer to the dangerous contagion of their example, or the probability that they would early triumph over what little remained of government in Central India, and swell their bands with all its military population.

The Pindarries who first settled in Central India may be said to have been introduced by the Mahrattas. Ghazee u Deen,\* a person who served under the first Bajerow, died when employed with a detachment at Oojein. He left two sons, Gurdee Khan and Shah Baz Khan. The eldest, though only sixteen years of age, succeeded to the command of a party which was sent on all plundering excursions; and their successes pleased Mulhar Row Holkar so much, that he presented their chief with a golden flag,† which enabled him to increase his numbers. His men, it is particularly mentioned, were encamped separate from the other troops, and were pro-

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\* According to the account given by Captain Tod, this person, who was a horseman in the service of the first Bajerow, was the son of a person named Chekun, who had been a Jemadar of Bildars with Sevajee. The same station had been filled by Nusroo, the father of Chekun, who was a Mahomedan of the tribe of Tooracee.

† This flag is termed Zerree, or golden. It was this distinction which first gave the Pindarries consequence as a body among the Mahrattas, and it has led to an erroneous belief that this class of troops was first introduced by Mulhar Row Holkar.





fessed plunderers; and, though he was known by the name of his tribe, Toorae, (which term is still used among this class to signify a man of distinction,) his followers were collectively called Pindarries,\* a name that for a century has been given, in this part of India, to lawless freebooters.

Gurdee Khan accompanied Mulhar Row on his expedition to Hindustan, and was attached to that leader during his life. The actions of the freebooters he commanded are blended with those of the Mahrattas with whom they were associated; though their excesses were, perhaps, a shade worse, as they avowedly lived on pillage. Defenceless provinces, which it was the object of predatory conquerors to lay waste with a merciless sword, were the points to which the efforts of the Pindarries were directed; but it was to plunder, not to fight, that they were sent in front of other troops; and they never established any reputation as a body for valour, nor is the history of their excesses relieved by the recurrence of those instances of humanity and generosity, which usually chequer the narrative of the most desperate races of depredators. Condemned from their origin to be the very scavengers of Mahrattas, their habits and character took, from the first, a shape suited to the work they had to perform. Courage and enterprise were often the qua-

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\* Many different conjectures have been offered as to the etymology of the term Pindarry. The most popular one among the Natives is, that they derived it from their dissolute habits leading them constantly to resort to the shops of the sellers of an intoxicated drink termed Pinda. Kurree Khan told me, he had never heard any other reason given for this name; and Major Henley had this etymology confirmed by the most intelligent of the Pindarries of whom he enquired.



lities of their leaders, and, no doubt, of many of their followers; but, amid reverses and successes, none appear to have displayed any higher virtues. It is, indeed, an extraordinary fact, that not one of these marauders ever established a claim to high reputation: all appear to have shared in the ignorance, the meanness, the rapacity, and unfeeling cruelty, by which they were, as a body,\* distinguished. The narrative of such a race has very little variety. Gurdee Khan left his camp, or Durrah, as it was now called, to his son Lal Mahomed, who was succeeded by his son Emam Buksh. The power of this chief, however, did not remain, as he wished, in his family. A number of officers established independent commands. Of Lal Mahomed little is said; and Emam Buksh, who is now a pensioner in Bhopal, though he received a village from Ahalya Bae, was never a leader of any eminence. A person of the name of Kauder Buksh, an ignorant but brave man, who was born in the Pindarry camp, was of late years the chief leader of this tribe in Holkar's service. The vicissitudes of his life have nothing beyond the common events of a Pindarry. He surrendered towards the conclusion of the late war,† and is now settled in the province of Goruckpoor in Hindustan, a dependant upon the bounty of the British Government.

\* On asking an intelligent old Pindarry, who came to me on the part of Kurreem Khan, the reason of this absence of high character, he gave me a short and shrewd answer: "Our occupation (said he) was incompatible with the fine virtues and qualities you state; and I suppose, if any of our people ever had them, the first effect of such good feeling would be, to make them leave our community."

† When this man surrendered himself to me, I could hardly believe, from his manners and conversation, that he was the person he was stated to be. His sole merit appeared to be his courage.





Of the others who remained with the house of Holkar throughout the late scenes of distraction, Tukoo and Bahadur Khan were the two next in rank to Kauder Buksh. They both delivered themselves up, and have had small portions of land given them, which they cultivate.

The followers of the above leaders never amounted to more than four or five thousand; but they continued faithful throughout to the family they served, and obtained, from this, the distinct appellation of Holkar Shahy, or adherents to Holkar.

During the time of Mulhar Row and Tukajee Holkar, the Pindarries, who always encamped separately, had, when within the Mahratta territories and not permitted to plunder, an allowance, which averaged four annas,\* or a quarter of a rupee, a day; and they farther supported themselves by employing their small horses and bullocks in carrying grain, forage, and wood, for which articles the Pindarry bazar was the great mart. When let loose to pillage, which was always the case some days before the army entered an enemy's country, all allowances stopped; no restraint whatever was put upon these freebooters till the campaign was over, when the Mahratta commander, if he had the power, generally seized the Pindarry chiefs, or surrounded their camps, and forced them to yield up the greater part of their booty. A knowledge of this practice led the Pindarries to redouble their excesses, that they might be able to satisfy, without ruin, the expected rapacity of their employers.

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\* Sevenpence-halfpenny English money.



Till the period of the insanity of Jeswunt Row Holkar, the Pindarry chiefs, who served his family, were kept in their proper situation. Although they commanded large bodies of men, they were never allowed to sit down in the presence of the prince; and when Jeswunt Row, previous to his expedition to the Punjab, met Dowlet Row Sindia, he reproached that prince for the encouragement he had given the Pindarry chiefs, by his personal intercourse with them, and by the high titles and grants of land which he had bestowed on men unworthy of such distinction. Jeswunt Row was quite aware of the danger of their progress; and one of his favourite plans was their complete extirpation; but when he became insane, Toolsah Bae, and those who contended for his power, sought to increase their strength by every means. The Pindarry chiefs of the Holkar Shahy class, consequently, rose into consideration; and they were not only treated with respect, but had lands assigned them for the subsistence of their followers.

It has been mentioned that the Pindarry chief Ghazee u Deen, when he died at Oojein, left two sons, and that the eldest, Gurdee Khan, followed the fortunes of Mulhar Row Holkar. The second son, Shah Baz Khan,\* who was a child at the death of his father, when he grew up entered the service of Ranojee Sindia, whose favour raised him to a command. His party, from the first, appear to have been Pindarries. Shah Baz attended Ranojee into Hindustan, and was killed in an action at Tonk in the Jeypoor country. He left two sons, Hera and Burrun, both of whom became distinguished Pin-

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\* He was living then at his native village of Muzagong, near Poona.





darry leaders in the army of Madhajee Sindia, with which they were employed in Hindustan. When that chief died, they came to Malwa. Having encamped with about five thousand followers near Bersiah,\* they offered their services to the State of Bhopal, that they might, under the sanction of its prince, invade and lay waste the territories of Nagpoor, with which Government that petty State was then at war. This occurred immediately after the death of Chutta Khan, when Raja Himmuto Rao was in nominal charge of the office of Dewan. Caution prevented the offers of these freebooters (who were deemed adherents of the family of Sindia) being accepted, and they went to Nagpoor, where Ragojee Bhonslah readily entertained them; and the first order they received from that prince was to lay waste the country of Bhopal, which was then in a most flourishing condition. This service they performed so effectually, that the principality has not to this day recovered the miseries and horrors they inflicted. It was a small consolation to those who suffered from the cruel ravages of the Pindarries, that the avarice of the Raja of Nagpoor was so excited by the exaggerated report of the booty they had obtained, that he not only surrounded and plundered their camp when they returned to his capital, but seized Burrin, who died in confinement, while his brother Hera fled to Dowlet Row Sindia at Poona, and died soon afterwards at Boorhanpoor.

The camp of Hera descended to his sons, Dost Mahomed and Wasil Mahomed, who continued, throughout a

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\* Kheslee Ram (who is now in my service) was at this period manager of Bersiah.



career which was attended by the common vicissitudes of Pindarry chiefs, professed adherents of Dowlet Row Sindia, to whom they were generally obedient, though they shewed on some occasions little respect for his orders. Their cantonment was usually fixed in the Eastern quarter of Malwa. Dost Mahomed died some years ago, and the sole command of the Durrah devolved on his brother, Wasil Mahomed, who distinguished himself by leading some bodies of freebooters, which plundered the British territories, and in consequence incurred the just resentment of that Government. When the Pindarries were broken and dispersed in the campaign of 1817 and 1818, Wasil Mahomed, who had been for some time a solitary fugitive, came to Gualior, where he, no doubt, thought Dowlet Row Sindia would still protect him. Though he dwelt in secret, he was discovered by the vigilance of the British representative, who demanded\* his seizure with a firmness that was not to be evaded; and, though the struggle between the fulfilment of his engagements and feelings of honour made Sindia hesitate, he was at last true to the former, and delivered up the Pindarry chief. Wasil Mahomed was sent to Ghazipoor, where he was treated by the magistrate with every kindness; and the British Government, in a spirit of liberal policy, contemplated forgiving his crimes, and making a provision for him, as it had done for others, within its own provinces. His restless spirit, however, could not brook his degradation and confinement. He attempted to escape, but, finding his design

\* Letter from the Acting Resident, Captain J. Stewart, to the Chief Secretary, dated 25th May, 1818.





discovered,\* he swallowed poison, which he had prepared, and perished on the spot.

The camp of Burrun,† after he was made prisoner, was transferred to a leader named Dooblah Jemadar; at whose death his son Rajun became the nominal head; but the real authority devolved upon a bolder chief, who raised himself by his energy and enterprise to the principal command. This person, whose name was Cheettoo, was a native of Mewat near Delhi. He had first been seized as a slave, and next adopted as Kower, or son, by Dooblah Khan; and, after many vicissitudes, attained such rank as to be praised for the consideration with which he treated the son of his benefactor, whom he continued to consider the ostensible head of the camp. Cheettoo, however, in this and most other acts of his life, evinced considerable art and prudence. He not only conciliated the Pindarries by attention to Rajun, for whom they had an hereditary respect, but also derived great benefit from being associated with a man of known humanity, and who enjoyed a reputation for good faith which was often useful to the tribes.

It has been before stated, that all the Pindarries joined Dowlet Row Sindia, when he came to Central India in A. D. 1804, and that their chiefs were, through the recommendation of Sirjee Row Ghatkia, honoured with titles. Those of Cheettoo‡ were engraved upon his seal, and he

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\* Vide Mr. Bird's letter to the Chief Secretary, 13th October, 1819.

† When Burrun died, his son Dadoo Buksh, who was with Kurreem, did not succeed to any authority. This man now cultivates a few begahs in a village near Bhopal.

‡ The name he assumed was Nabob Mahomed Kunud Khan Moosta-keem Jung (or, the firm in war); but he continued to be known by his



at this period began to be ranked among the ablest, as well as the most powerful, of his class. He had, in the early part of his career, been much indebted to Kurreem Khan, in whose party he had served; and when the latter escaped from Dowlet Row Sindia, Cheettoo seemed to share the feelings of other Pindarries, and united his whole force apparently to assist him in revenging his wrongs; but, at the moment when the union of these powerful freebooters alarmed all India, the wily Cheettoo not only forsook his former commander, but, joining his enemies, aided to effect his ruin, and by this act of treachery gained the station to which he aspired, the first rank, undisputed, among the Pindarry leaders.

Cheettoo had fixed his abode amid the rugged hills and wild forests that lie between the Northern bank of the Nerbudda and the Vindhya mountains. The range of this tract, which he possessed, was bounded to the East by the Bhopal territories, and to the West by the lands of the Raja of Baglee. His cantonments were near the village of Nimar opposite Hindia, and he himself resided there, or at Sutwass. He had besides small possessions on the table-land, and he latterly established his authority over the district of Tallein in Omutwarra. This chief, during the last years of his power, seldom went far from head-quarters; but parties from his camp, which was computed at twelve thousand horse, ravaged in every direction. He always professed allegiance to Dowlet Row Sindia, but the territories of that prince, though generally spared, were not exempted from occa-

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original appellation of Cheettoo, which is more of a Hindu than a Mahomedan name: it was common among the Pindarries to give familiar, and short appellations.





sional attacks, and several armies were, in consequence, sent from Gualior against him and other leaders of Pindaries; but whether from the insincerity of the prince, the weakness of those employed, the mutinies of their troops, or the collision of interests, which continually existed between Sindia's half-independent delegates, or all these causes combined, none were successful. Much had been expected from an expedition against this class of freebooters, commanded by Jean Baptiste, who was himself a brave, energetic man, and had under him one of the most efficient Campoos, or divisions in the army; but his efforts (though he defeated them and their ally, Jeswunt Row Bhow) terminated in his concluding a treaty, by which, on the Pindarry chiefs agreeing to refrain from plunder, and to furnish a body of troops to serve Dowlet Row Sindia, he consented to cede to them specific lands for their subsistence. Many causes made Sindia hesitate\* before he ventured to ratify this engagement; among others was the very natural one, that a great proportion of the lands, of which his European commander had thus liberally disposed, did not belong to him, but to the Paishwah, the Puar, and Holkar; and though he had often made free with the substance of their power and property, he had on most occasions pretended to observe forms† with these princes. A very short period, however, satisfied him, that he must either confirm the compact into which his general had entered, or submit to have his country

\* Vide letter from the Resident at Sindia's court, 20th May, 1815.

† For the first remarkable deviation from an observance of the forms of Mahratta relations on the part of Dowlet Row Sindia, vide p. 112.



again plundered. Sunnuds, or orders, were, in consequence, given to different chiefs, among whom Cheettoo was one of the principal. He received grants of five districts\* for the support of his troops. This was the first occasion on which he was recognized as a chief in the exercise of legitimate rule; and it might have led, at no distant date, to important changes, had not this leader and others of his description, been so intoxicated with success, as to become the dupes of the designing intrigues of imbecile courts, who, while they dreaded the excesses of these freebooters, sought to use them as instruments for annoying their enemies; but to command, it was necessary to divide them, and to this object the efforts of their policy were always directed.

Cheettoo retired from Omutwarra, after taking possession of the lands ceded to him, to his cantonments on the Nerbudda; and during the course of next year his marauding parties were encountered by detachments of British troops, which had, in consequence of the subsidiary alliance concluded with the Raja of Nagpoor, advanced to the Southern banks of that river.

In the following year the British armies entered Central India. Cheettoo, who, with other Pindarry chiefs, had been denounced as a criminal, and an enemy of the public peace, left his fastnesses† without an effort to defend them. He was closely pursued to Aggur, whence he went to the skirts of Mewar; but on the

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\* These districts were Nimar, Tallein, Sutwass, Kilchipoor, and the tribute of Rajgurh.

† His force, when he commenced this flight, amounted to between four and five thousand horse of all descriptions. He had also, when at Nimar, five small guns and two hundred infantry.





approach of a British detachment towards that quarter, he again fled, and returned, after a wide circuit, to the strong country whence he had been at first expelled. Here, however, he had no rest. His main body was attacked and routed; and his followers, when divided, were every where pursued by detachments of the British army, till they were so broken-spirited, that they became the prey of the petty Rajpoot chiefs and village officers, who plundered them with a zeal and activity, which were equally prompted by the desire of gain, and a recollection of the miseries they had long endured from these base and cruel freebooters.

Cheettoo having lost his power without making one single struggle, now wandered a mere fugitive with his associate Rajun, and thirty or forty followers, in the deep and almost inaccessible woods of Eirwass, the Gond\* chief of which, who had been before united with him in guilt, was still in secret his friend. But even here he soon found himself so pressed, that he could not remain. He had heard that the British Government had pledged itself to treat the Pindarry chiefs who surrendered, with mercy and generosity; but his ignorance could not understand the motives of such conduct, and his mind continued to waver betwixt the hopes of pardon and the fear of punishment. In this temper he repaired to Bhopal, apparently to seek the intercession of the Nabob; but when he seemed to have given himself up, his agitated mind again took the alarm, and he fled from the protection he had the moment before courted, to regain his former haunts, which a division

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\* Kooshal Singh.



of the British army had now approached, and begun to penetrate with a number of detachments. Though the offers to Cheettoo were repeated, his alarm, chiefly excited by a fear of transportation,\* prevented his accepting them; and when the better sense of Rajun induced him to submit, and secure a respectable provision, Cheettoo crossed the Nerbudda, and proceeded to the fortress of Asseer, whence he was summoned to join Appah Saheb, the ex-Raja of Nagpoor, who had escaped from confinement, and was collecting adherents among the Mahadeo hills. The Pindarry chief now became the guide of this prince to the vicinity of Asseer; but he had hardly reached that place of fancied security, when an English detachment forced his small body of followers to disperse. Cheettoo fled, with his son and five remaining adherents, towards his former place of refuge, the jungles of Eirwass; but he was closely pursued by numerous small parties, while others occupied every place from which he could derive a day's food. His last friend, Kooshal Singh of Eirwass, came into one of the British camps to avoid the suspicion of concealing him, and this was the signal for the aid even of robbers being withheld from this once celebrated leader, who was now tracked, like a hunted animal, through the jungles, by the prints of his horse's hoofs.† Driven by

\* The Natives of the interior of India term transportation *Kala Panee*, or black water (alluding to the sea), and have an indescribable horror of it. An agent of mine, who was for some days with Cheettoo, told me he raved continually about *Kala Panee*, and that one of his followers assured him, when the Pindarry chief slept, he used in his dreams to repeat these dreaded words aloud.

† He rode a horse with remarkable large hoofs; a measure of this animal's foot was obtained, and the flight of Cheettoo literally tracked by it.





the increasing vigour of the pursuit from every well-known haunt, forced by hunger to separate from his son and his last companions, Cheettoo, while seeking shelter in a deep recess of the forest, was sprung upon and killed by a tiger. When accounts of this event were brought to a local officer of Holkar's Government, he hastened to the spot. The horse, saddle, sword,\* ornaments, some money, and some recent grants he had obtained from the ex-Raja of Nagpoor, and part of the body of the Pindarry chief, were found, where he had been first seized; but, aware of the necessity of establishing his death beyond all doubt, they traced the tiger to his den; and though the animal, alarmed at their approach, had left it, they discovered the head of Cheettoo in a perfect state, which they afterwards brought† to the English camp, then besieging Asseergurh, in confirmation of the facts they asserted. These, however, could not now be doubted, and the head of the Pindarry was given for interment to the unfortunate Mahomed Punnah, his son, who was made prisoner the day after his father's death. This youth had been deaf from his infancy, and possessed but a weak intellect: he was, in consequence, deemed more an object of charity than punishment. Besides, criminal as he was, the fate of his father had been such as to excite commiseration, and to satisfy justice. Mahomed Punnah, therefore, was released, and transferred to the Government of Holkar, from whom he has received a few fields for subsistence.

\* Holkar's local officer sent these articles to Captain Watson, who was in command of the detachments on the North bank of the Nerbudda.

† The head was brought to me by Nanah, a Brahmin Zemindar of Kantapoor, the district in which Cheettoo was killed.



The Pindarry leader Kurreem Khan, who at one period attained greater power and independence than any of his rivals, states himself\* to be the son of Mahomed Dawud, who commanded a body of plunderers in the service of the Paishwah Ragobah. According to his own account, he was born near Bersiah; and the earliest event of which he had any recollection was, his father's being killed, when he was eight years of age, at Shah-poor; on which his uncle, Yar Mahomed, succeeded to the command of the camp. This latter chief served Ragobah till the latter joined the English, when he entered the service of Madhajee Sindia, with whom he proceeded to Hindustan, where he remained until his nephew was twenty years of age.

Kurreem states, that he had received a promise from Madhajee Sindia of a settlement in Malwa, into which he came with De Boigne's army, and was present at the defeat of Holkar's troops near the Lakheree Ghaut. The correctness of these facts may be doubted; for, several years afterwards, when Hera and Burrun offered their services to the Bhopal Government, and on being refused became the scourges of that State, Kurreem, who shared in the spoils, was only at the head of five or six hundred men. He fled from Nagpoor on the confinement of Burrun, and joined Dowlet Row Sindia, who had just ascended the Musnud, and was preparing, with other Mah-ratta chiefs, to attack the Nizam. In the bloodless but eventful campaign that ensued, Kurreem asserts that he

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\* This chief, who delivered himself up to me, remained a long time in my camp. I requested him to dictate (he cannot write) an account of his life, which, though full of exaggeration, is no doubt correct in the general facts, and I have found it useful by comparing it with other accounts.





gained more plunder than ever he did at any other period of his life. His fears for this booty induced him to leave, or rather to escape from, Sindia's army in the Deckan, and come to Central India, where, on his arrival, he offered his services to Jeswunt Row Holkar, by whom he was entertained, and directed to attend Kurreem u Deen to reinforce his brother Ameer Khan, who had recently been obliged to retreat from Saugor. Kurreem Khan was now the commander of between two and three thousand horse; but apprehensions for the safety of his property made this wary leader soon withdraw himself from the service of Jeswunt Row; and while he entreated to be again admitted among the adherents of Sindia, he opened a correspondence with Ameer Khan, from whom he solicited an asylum for his family. The Patan chief, anxious to swell the number of his adherents, complied with his request; but he had soon cause to repent of this connexion, for, when engaged in hostilities with Dowlet Row Sindia, Kurreem formed a junction with other Pindarry leaders, and made himself master of the town and districts of Shujahalpoor; in the possession of which, as well as of Bersiah, which he had recently conquered from the Puar family, he was confirmed by Sindia, when that prince returned from the Deckan, after his unsuccessful campaign against the English.

Kurreem Khan, who had been created a Nabob by Sindia, married a lady of that branch of the family of Bhopal which is settled at Rathgurh; a connexion which he expected would increase his respectability, and promote the ambitious views which he at this period entertained. Taking advantage of the absence of Sindia and Holkar, who were both engaged on the frontiers of



Hindustan, he added, by conquests, several rich districts\* to those he before possessed. He was now at the very zenith of his power, and a Pindarry chief appeared for the first time on the point of becoming the prince of a regular State. Kurreem certainly cherished this ambition, and was active in preparing means to effect his object. He enlisted a thousand infantry, and cast two guns, which, with two he before possessed, constituted his park of artillery. He also formed a Pagah, or body of household troops, amounting to twelve hundred, which, added to ten thousand Pindarries now under his command, made him truly formidable. An invitation from Ghous Mahomed, as has been already noticed, carried Kurreem to Bhopal; but the poverty of that State, and the gallantry and enterprise of Vizier Mahomed, soon obliged him to renounce the hopes he had indulged of increasing his territories in that quarter. This effort had just failed, when he was summoned to attend Dowlet Row Sindia, who had, under various pretences, advanced from his capital with the intention of destroying him. This was, however, difficult to accomplish by open force; art was therefore resorted to, and never was more consummate cunning displayed than by the Mahratta prince on this occasion. Success had inflated the vanity, and augmented the self-confidence of the Pindarry leader, who advanced to meet a superior, to whom he professed allegiance, with a State hardly inferior to his own. Dowlet Row, who had encamped near the fortress of Suttunbaree, in the vicinity of Bersiah, at first flattered Kurreem with the hopes of giving him that stronghold,

\* Ashta, Sehore, Itchawur, Sarungpoor, and Shahjehanpoor were on this occasion subjected to Kurreem Khan's authority.





when it was reduced. To give full weight to these flattering delusions, Sindia proposed to pay a visit to Kurreem Khan, who, though in general sufficiently wary and cautious, seems to have been completely the dupe of his own exaggerated anticipations of splendid fortune. A Musnud,\* or throne of rupees, made one part of the present he bestowed upon his visitor. Sindia pretended at this visit, and for several days afterwards, to be quite delighted with the abilities he discovered in Kurreem, who, he declared, possessed the combined qualities of a soldier and a statesman, which he had so long sought for in vain. All the requests of the Pindarry chief were readily complied with, and he asked, in addition to what he had been before promised, several valuable districts, and proffered security for an advance of four lacs and a half of rupees, on these places being given up to him. The Sunnuds were directed to be prepared, and a rich dress of investiture was ostentatiously made ready. Some of the older Pindarries, who had seen their chiefs on former occasions seized and plundered, were not remiss in their warnings to Kurreem, whom they reminded of Mahratta treachery; but he had satisfied himself of his perfect security, and Sindia had managed either to bribe or deceive every individual in whom he reposed confidence.

On the day appointed for his departure to take possession of his new districts, Kurreem was invited to pay his last visit, at which it was proposed to complete what

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\* The Musnud was made of specie to the amount of one lac and twenty-five thousand rupees, which was covered with a rich cloth, on which Sindia was seated. This mode of making a present to a superior who condescends to visit an inferior, is very usual in India.



remained of the settlement of his affairs. He came with few attendants, and was received with singular honour. The Sunnuds were called for, dresses were made ready, and every thing, in short, that could lull suspicion, took place. The farce, however, approached its conclusion. Sindia having retired on some pretext, armed men rushed from behind the tent walls, and the vain-glorious Pindarry, with some of his principal adherents,\* were made prisoners. A cannon being fired to announce that the first part of the scheme had succeeded, the troops which had been drawn up to shew respect to Kurreem, as well as those that were to accompany him to the countries assigned to him, moved, the moment they heard the signal, against the Pindarry camp. The followers of Kurreem took early alarm, but, though few were killed, they lost almost all their property, and the army of Sindia, glutted with plunder, extolled the abilities of their chief, who had shewn on this occasion such proficiency in the art which constitutes the highest quality of a Mahratta prince; and his fame was doubly enhanced, from his force being so small in comparison with the freebooter's whom he had so successfully entrapped.

The news of Kurreem's disasters was carried with incredible celerity to his family at Shujahalpoor, where his treasure and property, said to be very great, were deposited. His mother, though extremely old, acted with much energy. She instantly loaded all that was portable, and fled towards the jungles of Baglee, where she was joined by a large body of Pindarries. But, as the

\* Kurreem's brother, Hera, did ~~not~~ accompany him to the Durbar. He was, however, taken by Sindia's troops, who attacked the Pindarry camp.



dread of Sindia's power made all in that quarter refuse her shelter, she moved to the Westward, and found a place of refuge in the territories of Zalim Singh, the regent of Kotah.

Kurreem was for four years kept prisoner at Gualior ; but, though strictly watched, his confinement was not severe. He had directed his Pindarries to plunder every where, and particularly in the territories of Sindia. They acted in small parties ; one of the largest that kept together, was that under his nephew, Namdar Khan. Dowlet Row Sindia, after long refusing to release the Pindarry chief, was at last tempted by an offer of six lacs of rupees ; for the payment of which, and one lac more to the officers of the court by whom this settlement was negotiated, Kurreem obtained the security of Zalim Singh. After his release, an effort was made to obliterate past occurrences, by bestowing upon him the most honourable presents, and treating him with every mark of distinction. But the wound he had received was too deep to be easily healed ; and he no sooner regained his liberty and re-assembled his Pindarries, who came to join him from every quarter, than he commenced his depredations, and, settling himself at Shujahalpoor, was soon in possession of more extensive territories than before his captivity.

At this period Kurreem was joined by the whole force of Cheettoo, whose junction, connected with the relations of friendship that were known to subsist between these chiefs and Ameer Khan, then in the very zenith of his power, caused a most serious sensation throughout all India ; nor was it a causeless fear. The host of plunderers that one leading spirit might have directed to any



given point, could not have then been less than sixty thousand horse. The combination was, fortunately, of short duration. Kurreem Khan, whose disposition was violent, was led by his resentment against Dowlet Row to commit great excesses in his dominions. That prince, ashamed and alarmed at the consequences of his own weak-sighted and avaricious policy, which had let loose such a scourge on his country, directed one of his principal commanders, Juggoo Bappoo, to march immediately against the Pindarry chief, and to make every effort to effect his destruction. Cheettoo, who had previously some difference with Kurreem, was easily persuaded to join against him; and Kurreem's camp was attacked and routed in the province of Omutwarra. He fled from the field to the country of Kotah. The wary ruler of that State, however, not desiring to offend Sindia, entreated his former friend to keep at a distance; but while he advised him personally to seek the protection of Ameer Khan, he furnished an asylum to his family and property.

Ameer Khan, to whom Kurreem went, on pretext of recommending him to the favour of Toolsah Bae, made him over to Ghuffoor Khan, with whom he remained under restraint, amid the revolutions of Holkar's government, for a period of three years; during which his camp, acting generally under Namdar Khan, was engaged in various operations, principally at the siege of Bhopal; a service on which the nephew of Kurreem obtained much personal credit; but his uncle, who always maintained a correspondence with him, asserts in his narrative that he only acted in strict conformity with his orders.





A few months before the British troops entered Malwa, Kurreem Khan made his escape from Holkar's camp, and joined his adherents at Bersiah. He states as the motive of his conduct upon this occasion, that he received a letter from Dowlet Row Sindia, offering not only to forget the past and restore his former possessions, but to add Ashta and other districts, provided he would act in concert with the Mahratta confederacy against the English in an approaching war with that nation.

When the British detachments were on the point of crossing the Nerbudda, Kurreem Khan (according to his own statement) joined, in conformity with Dowlet Row Sindia's orders, the camp of Wasil Mahomed; and they were within seven coss of Narwar, and only forty coss from Gualior, to which place they had been ordered, when a special and confidential Brahmin came from Sindia, directing them to keep at a distance, as he was so situated by the advance of the British armies that he could give them no protection.

This intelligence threw the freebooters into dismay and indignation; a resolution was immediately taken to march to the Westward, and join Holkar's army, which, they heard, had proceeded from the borders of the Kotah country towards Mahidpoor.

Though resentment at what they deemed Sindia's defection from a contest to which he had invited them, made them plunder as much as they could of his country, their principal object now was to provide for their own safety. Every day brought reports of British corps advancing in all directions; by the operations of which Kurreem was so harassed and alarmed, that, after entering Harrowtee, he could only escape by abandoning



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his family and great part of his baggage;\* which he did, and pushed on without a halt to join Holkar's army, then encamped near Mundissor. The Pindarries with Kurreem were so reduced by their flight, that they did not, when they reached Holkar, exceed five thousand men. An offer of their services was made, which was rejected by the ministers of that prince, who had, subsequent to the battle of Mahidpoor, no thoughts but how to save themselves from ruin; and after a few days of hesitation, Kurreem Khan was desired by Ghuffoor Khan to take his departure, as the British army was advancing, and the proximity of the Pindarries would prevent Holkar from making peace. They marched towards Jawud, where their own quarrels, and the advance of British detachments, soon compelled them to separate. Kurreem, wearied out with fatigue, concealed himself in the town; while his camp, under Namdar Khan, went back from Mewar to Malwa, and, when near Gungraur, fell in with a British corps, by which it was so completely routed, that its leaders, despairing of all success, hastened to Bhopal, where they implored the Nabob to become their intercessor; and this early submission obtained not only a liberal provision for Namdar Khan, but secured to a great proportion of his followers the kind and humane consideration of the British Government.

Kurreem's career now drew to its termination. He was concealed in one of the meanest houses in Jawud, when that place was taken by the English troops. He afterwards escaped, and wandered for some days on

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\* Kurreem Khan's wife and part of his property were taken by Major-General Donkin's division.



foot and alone in a mendicant's dress, in equal danger, according to his own representation, of perishing from fatigue and from hunger. Having at length communicated his situation to Ghuffoor Khan, he followed the advice given him by this Patan, and threw himself unconditionally\* on the mercy of the British Government, by which he was treated with consideration and liberality. He is now, with his numerous family settled in the province of Goruckpoor, where lands have been allotted for his support, and where, could he forget the dreams of high fortune in which he once indulged, and learn wisdom from the strange vicissitudes he has endured, he might still be happy.

In this short sketch of the lives of their principal chiefs, we have all that can be desired of the history of the Pindarries, who, from their composition and habits, never could take substantial shape as a State or nation. They might, and did cause revolutions; but it was impossible for them to rise, upon such events, into permanent power. They could not take root in the soil without losing their character; because every civil establishment, however rude, was opposed to their fundamental institutions, which were framed for a state of constant war against all Government.

The Pindarries were principally dangerous from their existing among Governments, none of which was powerful enough to subdue them, and their being themselves constitutionally incapable of settling into a community, possessing any interest in the general tranquillity; but this condition, while it made them formidable to weak

\* He came into my camp at Neembaherra.



and distracted States, rendered them incapable of resisting the resolute attack of a strong and vigorous Government. Superficial observers thought it would be difficult, if not impossible, to destroy these freebooters. But it was evident that they could not exist without a home or without support. To drive them from the territories they possessed, to identify with them all who gave them aid or protection, was the only mode by which the great and increasing evil could be remedied. No measures were ever more wisely planned, more vigorously pursued, or more successfully accomplished, than those adopted for their suppression. There remains not a spot in India that a Pindarry can call his home. They have been hunted like wild beasts; numbers have been killed; all have been ruined. Those who adopted their cause have fallen. They were early in the contest shunned like a contagion; and even the villagers, whom they so recently oppressed, were among the foremost to attack them. Their principal leaders have either died, submitted, or been made captives; while their followers, with the exception of a few, whom the liberality and consideration of the British Government have aided to become industrious, are lost in that population, from the dregs of which they originally issued. A minute investigation only can discover these once formidable disturbers, concealed as they now are among the lowest classes, where they are making some amends for past atrocities, by the benefit which is derived from their labour in restoring trade and cultivation. These freebooters had none of the prejudices of caste, for they belonged to all tribes. They never had either the pride of soldiers, of family, or of country; so that they were bound by none of those ties which, among many of the





communities in India, assume an almost indestructible character. Other plunderers may arise from distempered times ; but, as a body, the Pindarries are so effectually destroyed, that their name is already almost forgotten, though not five years are past since it spread terror and dismay over all India.

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## CHAPTER XI.

*The Rajpoot Princes and Chiefs of Central India.*

The rise of the principal Rajpoot families in Central India has been already noticed : some of these have, since the Mahrattas invaded that region, acted no inconsiderable part ; and, though they all agreed to pay tribute, many have preserved the independent government of their own lands ; while others, though subdued, have gained celebrity by the courage and perseverance with which they defended their possessions against the usurpations of the invaders. An account of a family that has been completely ruined, and of one that has, beyond all others, prospered during the convulsions which have afflicted this part of India, with a few general remarks on the past and present condition of lesser chiefs, will be sufficient to illustrate the recent history of this class of petty rulers.

The origin of the Ragoogurh chiefs has been already mentioned ; the sequel of their history is remarkable, and exhibits, in strong colours, both the character of the Rajpoots and of their enemies the Mahrattas. The Chowan Rajpoots of Ragoogurh have been always distinguished



by the name of Kychee. They trace their descent from the first princes of the Rajpoot race ; and, according to their Bhats, or traditionary bards, they possessed a principality in Central India before the Moghuls conquered that country ; but of this there is no distinct record, though we find them at a remote date the possessors of Gagroon on the Kalee Sind. Ghureeb Doss, a distinguished chief of this family, was an Omrah of some rank at the court of Akber ; where his services gained him such favour with the Emperor, that, in addition to his former possession of Gagroon and other lands, he received a grant of the town and district of Seronje. This chief left three sons, of whom the first, Lal Singh,\* succeeded : he founded Ragoogurh, where, it is stated, he was honoured by a visit from Shah Jehan, by whom he was treated with singular favour and distinction.

Lal Singh died at the age of seventy, and was succeeded by his eldest son, Dhuruj Singh, who appears to have been very successful in all the petty wars which he waged with his neighbours. The reputation of this prince was high. The reigning Rajas of Jeypoor and Odeypoor both visited him, and each of them married one of his daughters. Dhuruj Singh was slain in an affray with the Aheer tribe, whom he had been long engaged in reducing to order. His eldest son, Guj Singh, was expelled by his half-brother, Bickermajet,† who was supported by the Raja of Jeypoor, to whom his sister was married. The Rana of Odeypoor, who stood in the

\* The descendants of this chief are called Lalawut ; those of his brother Beeja Singh, Bejawut ; the third son of Ghureeb Doss died childless.

† He is called in one of the genealogical accounts, Bicker Singh.



same relation to Guj Singh, armed to vindicate his right ; but the death of the latter terminated the contest. His only son, Indur Singh, being unable to struggle against his uncle, remained inactive till the latter died, leaving the principality to his son, Bulbudder Singh ; against whom a powerful combination was formed\* by the neighbouring Hindu princes in favour of Indur Singh, who was, however, slain in one of the first actions that took place. About this period the Mahrattas invaded Central India. When the Paishwah Bajerow was at Saugor on his way to Hindustan, some difference arose between him and Bulbudder Singh ; but the latter, who is noticed among the most powerful of the Rajpoot chiefs, appears ultimately to have succeeded in ingratiating himself with the invaders ; and we find him, throughout his campaigns, one of the favourite friends and companions of Mulhar Row Holkar, after whose death he accompanied Junkojee Sindia to Marwar, and was with that leader when he was assassinated at Nagore. After this event, Bulbudder Singh returned to Ragoogurh, where he died, in the sixtieth year of his age, leaving the principality to his son Bulwunt Singh, whose administration commenced and closed with a series of misfortunes. This prince had no sooner succeeded his father, than Madhajeo Sindia demanded from him the cession of particular districts, in compensation of tribute ; and some years afterwards, on pretext of his having entered into negotiations with the British Government, with which the Mahratta leader was then at war, he attacked the fort of Ragoo-

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\* There were no less than fourteen Rajas in the combination armed against Bulbudder Singh.





gurb, and, having captured it, and made the Raja and his young son, Jey Singh, prisoners, confiscated the property and territories of the family.

The Mahratta chief was not long left in quiet enjoyment of his triumph. Sheer Singh, a Thakoor, or lord of the Kychee tribe, assembled the scattered adherents of Bulwunt Singh, and commenced a desperate and systematic course of predatory warfare, with the professed object of compelling Madhajee Sindia to release his prince. The first care of this bold and enterprising leader was to prevent the country of Ragoogurb from yielding one rupee of revenue to the Mahrattas. He warned the villager to leave his dwelling, and the husbandman to desist from tilling his fields, on pain of being pillaged. He ordered them to repair to neighbouring countries, and particularly to Bhopal; with the Dewan of which place, Chutta Khan, he had established an understanding, which provided for their protection, and ensured an eventual refuge for himself and family. The friendship, or rather alliance, between these chiefs, was well known to Madhajee Sindia, but it did not suit either his convenience or policy to resent it. This forbearance was not extraordinary. In Governments like those of the Mahrattas, which have no permanent principles, but adopt, year after year, the expedients which seem best suited to the emergency of the moment, it is often deemed prudent to have channels through which they can conciliate, if it becomes necessary, the greatest offenders against the State. The purpose for which such connexions are maintained, was evinced on this occasion in a remarkable instance. Sheer Singh kept himself distinct from the class of common plunderers. Ragoogurb



and its dependencies were, as before stated, laid waste, but Madhajeel Sindia's other possessions were not invaded. The natives of Central India were comparatively treated with humanity, but no mercy was shewn to the Mahrattas who fell into his hands. The Pundits or Brahmins of the Deckan were the chief objects of his vengeance. Their noses and ears were cut off, and their infants murdered, by this merciless chief, who answered to all remonstrances, that he would teach Madhajeel Sindia what it was to destroy a Rajpoot principality. While the alarm of Sheer Singh's cruelties was at its height, Mahajeel's wife, with a number of the families of his principal officers, came from Poona to join him in Hindustan. They were guarded on the journey by four or five thousand men. Though the adherents of the Rajpoot leader did not amount to as many hundreds, the terror he had spread was so great, that the convoy hesitated to advance. They knew that Sheer Singh would hazard every thing to glut his vengeance on the families of Sindia and his principal minister; they therefore solicited the protection of the Dewan of Bhopal, who rejoiced in the opportunity of shewing his regard for the Mahratta prince, and not only appointed a party to accompany the Baeel (or princess), but requested Sheer Singh not to offer any insult or injury to her retinue. His wish was complied with; and the lady, when she reached Muttra, was warm in her praises of Chutta Khan, to whom Madhajeel Sindia wrote a letter\* of grateful acknowledgment.

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\* The complimentary part of this letter termed the Dewan his son, and gave him high titles. The vanity of Chutta Khan was much flattered by this mark of attention from Madhajeel Sindia.





While Bulwunt Singh was kept prisoner in Hindustan, his son Jey Singh, a youth of twenty years of age, was closely confined at Bhilsa. The most anxious efforts of Sheer Singh had long been directed to effect his release; and he at last succeeded, through the means of corruption and the adventurous enterprise of some trained thieves,\* by whose aid the prince was enabled to escape over the walls of the fort. He was immediately mounted on a swift horse, and carried to a place of safety, from whence Sheer Singh sent him to Jeypoor, that he might interest the Raja of that principality, and of Joudpoor, in favour of his father. Jey Singh was successful in persuading both these princes to adopt his cause; and their representations to Madhajee Sindia not only obtained the release of the Raja, but the restoration of Ragoo-gurh, to which, however, a stipulation for the payment of a large sum was annexed. Ambajee Ingolia, then one of Sindia's principal leaders, became responsible for Bulwunt Singh's performing his engagement. But the apparent friendship of this wily Mahratta had no object but his own benefit; for he sent his brother† with the unfortunate Raja, who, restored to a country without revenue, was soon compelled, by his inability to fulfil his obligations, to leave it to be again usurped, and to retire to the Jeypoor territories, where he died three years afterwards. Bulwunt Singh was devoid of energy, and quite unsuited to the troubled times in which he lived. His memory is, in consequence, held in no estimation by the gallant tribe, of which he was so long the nominal head.

\* The thieves were of a tribe called Baugrees: one of these leaped the wall with the Raja on his shoulders, and escaped unhurt.

† Balaram Ingolia.



Balwunt Singh, when forced to leave Ragoogurh, had written to his relation Doorjun Lal, whom he had left as his agent at the court of Sindia, to quit it, as he found the whole proceedings of the Mahrattas full of deceit and treachery, and had himself resolved to place no further confidence in them. Doorjun Lal, on receiving this intimation, hastened to Kycheewarra,\* where he collected a number of followers, and commenced depredations upon the Mahratta territories. After he had pursued this course about two years, he was compelled to fly; but the numerous and strong detachments† which were sent against him by Madhajee Sindia prove, that even at this early part of his career, Doorjun Lal was considered as no contemptible insurgent. This chief, when forced to abandon Kycheewarra, only retired to Saugor, from the manager of which he found shelter till the death of Madhajee Sindia seemed to present the opportunity he had so long desired of avenging the wrongs of his family. He was joined by the young prince Jey Singh, who had assumed the title of Raja; and the two chiefs, being invited to adopt the cause of Madhajee Sindia's widow, united their force with that of Luckwa Dada, the commander of her army. Their friendship and support were purchased by the restoration of Ragoogurh to Jey Singh, and the grant of a large Jahgeer‡ to Doorjun Lal. But all hopes of success from this connexion were completely destroyed by an action with the disciplined battalions of Dowlet Row Sindia, under the command of his French

\* Kycheewarra is the name by which the country inhabited by the Kychee Rajpoots is now, and has for several centuries, been known.

† The corps of Balaram Ingolia, Jewa Dada, and Gopal Bhow, were employed against him.

‡ Seronje, Jadhooree, and Ranoude.





general, Perron. The latter was completely victorious. The troops of Luckwa Dada fled and dispersed in every direction; and Doorjun Lal and Jey Singh were again reduced to depend upon their own efforts. These were at first directed against the Hindu tribe of Aheerwarra, whose chief\* being slain, his capital, then called Oondee, fell into the possession of Doorjun Lal, who, selecting it for his own, changed the name to Bahadurgurh, and endeavoured by every expedient to increase its strength and population. This was but a first step of the able and ambitious Rajpoot, who appears to have entertained views of establishing a principality distinct from that of the family to which he professed allegiance. It is also probable that he was disgusted with the moody violence of Jey Singh, which had broken out on several occasions. Whatever was the cause, their interests were separated; and, while the Raja retired to Ragoogurh, Doorjun Lal took advantage of the weakness of the petty Hindu chiefs in the Eastern parts of Central India, and of the contests in which the Mahratta States were involved in the Deckan, and subsequently with the British, to increase his army, and extend his territory, which at one period comprised the sovereignty of no less than twenty-two districts:† which he enjoyed for several years, till a formidable detachment, under the orders of Dowlet Row Sindia's principal European commander Baptiste,‡ succeeded in wresting from him, one by one, all his possessions. His new capital, Bahadurgurh,

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\* Deleep Singh.

† Bahadurgurh, Ranoude, Pucher, and Gondah, were the principal.

‡ This commander is always termed European, though born in India, and his mother a native of India.



which shared the fate of the rest, was doomed once more to change its name; and received from its Christian conqueror, that by which it is now distinguished, Yesugurh, or the fort of Jesus. Though he lost his territories, the spirit of Doorjun Lal was still unconquered. He kept around him a considerable body of the kindred bands of the Kycheewarra Rajpoots, and some other faithful adherents; with whom he made constant attacks on the country of Dowlet Row Sindia, and once at Narwar carried off a number of cattle from that prince's camp. The object of his last efforts was to compel Sindia to come to some arrangement with him, that would enable him to support his family and followers; and in this he probably would have succeeded, had he not died.\* Few of his tribe have left a higher reputation for wisdom, courage, or enterprise. He was for many years the terror of the Mahrattas, against whom he cherished the most rooted hatred and hostility.

Doorjun Lal having left no children, his relation Bhyroo Lal was elected his successor; and the depredations he continued so far prospered, as to obtain him the grant of a district† for his subsistence, yielding one lac of rupees, which he still enjoys.

The fortunes of Doorjun Lal for a period predominated over those of the princes to whom he was related, and to whom he professed allegiance; for though he endeavoured to establish his own independence, he never ceased to acknowledge them as his hereditary superiors.

\* He died at Bheernawud, in the forty-eighth year of his age.

† Bhyroo Lal is a younger son of Goolab Singh, a relation of Doorjun Lal. He assumes the title of Raja Bahadur, on the ground of its having been conferred on Doorjun Lal by the Rana of Odeypoor.





## THE RAJPOOT PRINCES

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The zeal and attachment which he had evinced to Bulwunt Singh were, upon the death of that chief, transferred to his son, Jey Singh, who, when his father died, was in the Jeypoor territories,\* with the prince of which, as well as those of Odeypoor and Jeypoor, he was intimately connected. After he had received presents and congratulations from these Rajpoot princes on his succession, he attended, as has been related, to the summons of Doorjun Lal, to aid in the war against the enemies of his family.

Jey Singh, then twenty-eight years of age,† was, according to the Hindu MSS. from which this account is extracted, a prince of great promise. His mother, the favourite wife of Bulwunt Singh, is said to have been so beautiful, that she fell a victim to the jealousy of the other Ranies, who practised every art of Asiatic sorcery for her destruction. Their malignity is described as having given Bulwunt Singh an uncommon interest in his son, whom he took, according to the historian of his family, every pains to instruct both as a scholar and a soldier. We have no evidence of the progress made by the young prince in learning, but he early shewed that in personal heroism he was excelled by none; and even before the death of Doorjun Lal, with whom his first efforts were associated, Jey Singh had established a name for courage and enterprise that rendered him formidable to the Mahrattas. But the admiration which his followers granted to his valour must have been mixed with fear and horror at his violence, of which he gave some

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\* He was at Madoogurh.

† He succeeded to the title of Raja of Ragoogurh, in the Hindu month of Koomar, in the year of the Sumbut 1855, or A.D. 1798.



terrible proofs. The most remarkable may be selected as an example: a short period before the death of Doorjun Lal, Jey Singh, having through his own rashness been defeated by one of Sindia's officers, fled wounded to Boojrungurh, where he confined himself so closely that a rumour of his death was spread, and believed by his nearest relations and most confidential officers; some of whom, as was to be expected, began to intrigue and cabal for the succession to his power. The Raja is said to have encouraged the report of his death, that he might discover the real dispositions of those around him; but, when recovered from his illness, he appeared quite unconcerned at what had passed, and assumed a serenity and gaiety that lulled all into security. After the lapse of some months, however, he took advantage of a season of festivity, not only to seize and put to death his kinsmen Lutchmun Singh and Amun Singh, the persons he chiefly suspected, but with the most wanton barbarity he ordered their families, without distinction of age or sex, to be sacrificed to his resentment. The mode in which these murders were perpetrated is quite shocking to every feeling of humanity. The only exculpation\* that can be framed for these and similar atrocities is the belief that he was at this period insane; and the evidence of those who were in the habit of seeing him,† even before he exercised power, sufficiently proves the fact. The misfortunes of his family, and an ardent desire of revenge,

\* Jey Singh put several of his own wives to death.

† Khealee Ram was sometimes in Doorjun Lal's camp. He often saw Jey Singh, and says that he appeared to him, from his acts and conversation, to be a person not merely of an ungovernable temper, but of unsettled reason.



are stated, in one account of his life, to have had such an effect upon his mind, that he early devoted himself to the adoration of Hunoomaun, and sought, through penances and incantations, an interview with the warrior Demigod,\* which he was deceived by an old priest into a belief that he had obtained. It was, according to some statements, on this occasion that his reason first became unsettled; and it is highly probable that the constant practice of these superstitious rites, combined with the use of opium and other intoxicating drugs, acting upon an ardent and impatient temper, rendered him at times deranged. His appearance and language indicated frequent intoxication; but his natural courage, which was great, was increased by this state of continual excitement; and as his mind was chiefly inflamed with one object, that of determined hostility to the Mahrattas, his Rajpoot followers were disposed to deem his madness inspiration, and they readily pardoned the crimes of a chief, who, they persuaded themselves, was born to be the scourge of their cruel and oppressive enemies. We can on no other ground account for their suffering an intemperate tyrant to commit the numerous murders he did, after he had lost all his possessions, and had no authority left, but what he derived from their continued attachment.

The policy of Dowlet Row Sindia, when he made peace with the British Government, was directed to the complete subjection, or rather annihilation, of some of his Rajpoot tributaries in Central India, whose lands he

\* Hunoomaun is represented as a monkey. His wonderful exploits are celebrated in the Hindu mythological fable of Rama's attack of Rawun, the monarch of Ceylon, who had carried off his wife Seeta.



desired to incorporate with those of the State. Baptiste, with his corps of infantry and artillery, was employed on this service; and having reduced the neighbouring principality of Seopoor, the report of Jey Singh's excesses led him to hope the possessions of that chief would be an easy conquest. The festival of the Hooly, when the Raja and his adherents were known to give way to the greatest indulgence in liquor, was the moment chosen for attack. Boojrungurh was taken, and Ragoo-gurh invested, but the latter did not fall till some time afterwards, and during its siege every effort was made by Jey Singh himself to distress an enemy whom he had no force to meet in the open field. Among his other exploits, he completely succeeded in a well-planned enterprise against Seopoor,\* which he retook, and not only obtained considerable treasure, but made Baptiste's family prisoners. He afterwards released the wife of that leader; and this act of consideration was returned by his

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\* Seopoor was taken on the 3rd of June, 1816. The mode in which it was taken, is thus described by Captain Close:

"Jey Singh approached the fort early in the morning, having, as was believed, an understanding with some of the people within. He applied scaling-ladders to the walls, and mounted in person, with sixty of his men, at a place which led immediately to the citadel, where Baptiste's family resided. There was here a guard of only twenty men, with five half-caste Europeans. The Raja, half, naked, was armed with a spear, and the rest of his party with swords and shields. They overpowered the guard, among whom two of the Europeans were killed, but the Raja also lost ten or twelve men of his own in the struggle. Written orders from Baptiste's son and wife were then sent down to the garrison, consisting of about two hundred irregulars, desiring them to remain quiet, as it would cost them their lives if any resistance was made; accordingly no opposition was offered."—Vide Captain Close's letter to Government.





princesses being allowed to join him when Ragoogurh fell. A settlement was more than once proposed by Sindia's commander to the Rajpoot chief; but the objects of the parties were irreconcilable. The consequence was, the contest was continued with redoubled animosity, and the Mahratta troops being numerous, the districts of Ragoogurh were completely occupied by them. Jey Singh, when expelled from his own country, found subsistence for himself and adherents by invading Sindia's unprotected possessions; but even in this extremity of his fortune he preserved the character of a prince. He levied contributions only from the officers of Government, and refrained from plundering individuals. His range was at one period very extended, having gone as far West as the districts of Nolye and Katchrode, and as far South as Kundwah and Boorhanpoor. His force was entirely composed of horse, and amounted to about five thousand men, many of whom were Rajpoots of his own tribe. His enterprises were not alone directed against the wealth of the country; the predatory war maintained for several years against Sindia's commander, Baptiste, was prosecuted with an activity and spirit that often reduced that leader, in spite of his superior means, to great distress: at one period a corps,\* consisting of two battalions and a number of guns, was completely defeated, and Jey Singh, who had led his own followers to the charge on this memorable occasion, seemed on the point of recovering his possessions, when his enemies collected in such force that he was again compelled to retire. But, though

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\* This corps was commanded by an Armenian officer named Arafoon, from whose account, as transmitted to Gualior, the action was not so decisive.



exposed to continual reverses, his spirit was unbroken, and he had infused the same courage into his kindred tribe. The undaunted valour and personal prowess of their prince were the theme of all their Charuns and Bhats (genealogists and minstrels); and an expelled chief, whose country did not produce an annual revenue of three lacs of rupees, occupied for five years a large part of Sindia's force. Nor is it probable, had the British armies not advanced into Central India, that the Mahratta troops, numerous\* as they were, would have proved equal to his reduction, as his followers increased rather than diminished. These, however, were of different classes; he was personally surrounded by between four and five hundred of his immediate relations and family adherents, who were all well mounted, and so devoted to their leader and his cause, that hardly any superiority of numbers would induce the Mahratta horse to stand the assault of his band. The remainder of his force was made up of hired soldiers; and he was able, from the funds obtained at the commencement of the contest, and the contributions he levied during its continuance, to pay them with tolerable regularity. The condition of Central India was favourable to Jey Singh, but his hostility was solely directed against the territories of Dowlet Row Sindia; no other country was attacked, no travellers or merchants plundered, nor was he, except in action, either cruel or vindictive. The scenes of constant activity and enterprise in which he became engaged, are stated to have effected a favourable

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\* There were with Jean Baptiste, acting against Jey Singh, five battalions, with between thirty and forty guns, and from eight to ten thousand horse, including a number of Pindarries.





change in his character. He was, when the English columns reached the Nerbudda, the theme of every tongue, and held forth as an example of a gallant prince struggling to the last against his oppressors. He appears to have long looked forward with anxious hope to the occurrence of war between Sindia and the British Government; and his ardent mind anticipated the restoration, under the auspices of the latter, of his own fortunes, with those of the other Rajpoot chiefs who had been subdued by the Mahrattas. The letter which he addressed to an officer\* in command of a corps on the frontier, is a proof of the exaggerated expectations in which he indulged from the events that he saw approaching. After some remarks on the different Rajpoot tribes, and an assertion that the Kychee Chowans, of which he is the head, have the true right to the title of Hinduput, and the sovereignty† which that implies, Jey Singh observes, "As the Maharaja Sindia has desolated my country, and deprived me of my honour, besides having carried off property to the amount of some crores of rupees, it is my earnest wish to destroy his power. I therefore hope that the English Government will enable me to demand retribution from my enemy. If the country of Sindia is made over to me, I will agree to pay six or eight annas in the rupee on all the collections."

"The English troops and my horsemen, wherever they go, will, from the good fortune of the English, be victorious, and Sindia shall be destroyed." After some

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\* Colonel MacMorine.

† That is, to be kings of India. He gives the Sesodians of Odeypoor only the second rank as Rajpoot princes.



farther remarks on the former power of the Rajpoots, he concludes by saying, "I am well informed that you English intend to destroy the Pindarries: let me have orders on this subject, and if any chief harbours these plunderers in his country, or joins with them, I shall not fail to give information of it. The Pindarries have thirty thousand good horsemen; this is not hid from you: if the English Government will advance me funds to maintain fifteen thousand horse, or five lacs of rupees, I will destroy these Pindarries.

"Wherever I may suggest that battalions should be sent, let them be sent; and where regiments (meaning cavalry) are required, let regiments be sent; at all events, until an answer can be given to this letter, let me have an advance of twenty-five thousand rupees, and wherever I am ordered, there shall I encamp; but if cash cannot be immediately given, let a Vakeel or agent of mine be allowed to remain with you for the adjustment of this point, and let me know to what place I am to repair to await your decision. But, above all things, let the negotiation be made binding; it will redound to the fame and glory of the Company."

Had Dowlet Row Sindia not preserved neutrality, Jey Singh would have been an apt and popular instrument for his reduction; as it was, no support could be given to the cause of this prince, who was preparing the means of renewing the contest, when he fell a sacrifice to the prevailing epidemic,\* and left his title and claims to be disputed by two candidates, Dhokul Singh and Adjeet

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\* Cholera Morbus.



Singh, who, by dividing his adherents, broke the union and strength of the Kychees, and gave to Sindia's Government a comparatively easy triumph over that gallant tribe.

The first in rank among the princesses of a Hindu ruler or chief who has no issue, becomes on his death a personage of great consequence in the State, from her acknowledged right of adoption, and the claims upon the power and property of her husband which this choice confers. It is generally conceived a duty to choose from the least objectionable among the near relations of the deceased; but the obligation is not imperative, and the consequences of the exercise of this right too often produce family feuds and disputed successions. In the present instance, one of the chief Ranies, or princesses, of Jey Singh, after consultation with some of the principal officers, chose the son of Goolab Singh,\* who was declared by her and her party, raised to the Gaddee, or seat of power, under the name of Adjeet Singh. The aunt of Jey Singh, a widow lady of much influence, opposed this act, and proclaimed herself in favour of Dhokul Singh,† a leader of reputation for his gallantry, but against whom there was, with many of the Rajpoots of Kycheewarra, the insuperable objection of his being of the Bejawut, or younger branch of the family, whose descendants have

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\* The name of this youth was Buchtawur Singh; but on his adoption by the Rani he was called Adjeet Singh.

† Dhokul Singh grounds his claim chiefly on having received the horse and spear of Jey Singh before the death of that chief, and having been by him appointed his successor. The question was long under discussion, and was referred to the decision of the Rajas of Odeypoor, Jeypoor, Boondoe, Kota, Seopoor, and Narwar.



always been deemed subordinate to the Lalawut,\* or elder branch.

When it is considered that all the territories of Ragoogurh had been usurped by Sindia, and that it was merely for a name that the parties were contending, this disputed succession, which was as warm as if the contest had been for an empire, may excite a smile. It may be deemed a quarrel for a shadow; but such was not the case. It was a dispute for the allegiance and devoted attachment of three or four thousand as brave and hardy soldiers as any in India. These were now divided, and the early submission of one chief, Adjeet Singh, on terms mediated by the British Government, attached some of them to the cause of orders; but Dhokul Singh continued his opposition till his adherents, after several defeats from a contingent of Sindia's acting under the command of British officers, almost all deserted him: he was recently made prisoner and sent to Gualior. The testimony given by the officers employed on this service to the courage and enterprise of the Rajpoots of Kycheewarra, gives reason to conclude, that, had not the British Government interposed its mediation and aid, it might have been long before this gallant tribe would have been completely subdued. The character of their last chief, and of the feelings he entertained, in common with all his race, towards the Mahrattas, is well expressed in a letter from the British Resident at the Court of Gualior.† "Dhokul Singh,"

\* The names of Lalawut and Bejawut, into which the Ragoogurh family are divided, take, as has been stated, their origin from Lal Singh and Beeja Singh, the two sons of Ghureeb Doss, the founder of the principality enjoyed by this race of chiefs in Malwa.

† Vide paragraph 14, Dispatch from Captain Stewart, to the Political Secretary to Government, 20th January, 1821.



he observes, "is a man of the most daring courage, which "is evinced by the numerous marks he bears of the "wounds he has received in action. It is to be regretted "that his character is so deeply stained with deeds of "cruelty. He had been allowed, while in confinement "at this Residency, to retain his sword and shield, and "would have also been permitted to wear them in the fort "of Gualior; but, when he was about to be delivered over to "the Mahrattas, he sent them to me with a message, stat- "ing that he would never have surrendered them to a "Mahratta but with his life, and that his only hope of "ever taking them up again rested on the favour of "the British Government."

The fort and town of Ragoogurh, with an estate of fifty-five thousand rupees, have been restored to the families, with an engagement that a few of the adherents are to be always in Sindia's service. These terms were with difficulty obtained through the mediation of the British Government.

The Raj, or principality of Kotah, which forms, in its later history, a complete contrast to that of Ragoogurh, originated in one of the Ranas of Odeypoor having, in consequence of a long cherished feud with the chiefs of Boondee, adopted the cause of a younger brother of the reigning prince, whom he settled first in Kotah as a Jahgeerdar, and afterwards so effectually aided in a war against his superior, that the latter was compelled to purchase peace by the cession of half his territories to form the principality\* of Kotah, the ruler of which assumed the title of Maha Row, or the great chief.

\* I find some variation from this account in other MSS., but the difference does not merit notice.



It is nearly two centuries since this event occurred. The first prince of Kotah was Bishen Singh, whose family continued to enjoy the reality as well as the name of the power, till the elevation of the late Maha Row Omeid Singh. This prince, either from taking alarm at the state of confusion into which the whole of Central India had been thrown, or his own inefficiency, had so entirely lost all authority over his principal chiefs and subjects, that he was unable to pay seventy-five thousand rupees per annum, which had been fixed as the Mahratta tribute. Kotah seemed on the verge of destruction, when it was not only saved, but raised to the first rank among the Rajpoot principalities, by one of the most remarkable men who have appeared in the modern history of India.

Zalim Singh, of the Hara tribe of Chowan Rajpoots,\* was son of Pirthee Raj, an officer of rank in the service of Gooman Singh, Raja of Kotah. Pirthee Raj must have been in high estimation, as we find not only one of his daughters married to his prince, but the son, at the age of twenty, commanding a force against the troops of the Raja of Jeypoor, whom, with the aid of Mulhar Row Holkar, he defeated. Some time after this event, a misunderstanding between Gooman Singh and his young leader induced the latter to go to the court of Odeypoor, the ruler of which employed him against the Mahrattas with such success, that they were driven from Mewar; but in a subsequent action fought near Oojein, Zalim Singh not only experienced a reverse, but fell a wounded

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\* The tribe of Hara have produced many celebrated men. Ram Singh Hara, who was an Omrah of high rank and a commander of nine thousand horse, was esteemed one of Aurungzeeb's best Generals.





prisoner into the hands of his enemies. He was at this period a chief of reputation. The prince of Odeypoor had bestowed upon him a Jahgeer, and had added to the title of Raja, to which he had a hereditary right, the appellation of Rana. He had been before invited by his nephew, Omeid Singh, Raja of Kotah, to take upon himself, as Minister, the settlement of that principality; and he now contemplated this proposition as a means of restoring his fallen fortune. During his confinement he became acquainted with several of Sindia's officers, but particularly with a Brahmin of the name of Lallajee Bellal, who had the charge of the collection of the tributes of the Rajpoot princes. Zalim Singh made a proposal, that he should be sent to Kotah, supported by Sindia's authority, by the aid of which and his own efforts he not only expected to reduce the rebellious lords of that principality to obedience, but to restore the country to a state of prosperity that would enable it to pay its tribute regularly;—and as a farther inducement to incline the Mahratta prince to adopt this measure, an increase of twenty-five thousand rupees was offered to be made in the annual amount. This proposition was accepted: and Zalim Singh, accompanied by his friend Lallajee Bellal, and a small party of Sindia's Pagah, or household troops, went to Kotah, where his arrival was welcomed by Omeid Singh, who immediately appointed him his minister, and voluntarily resigned into his hands the exclusive administration of affairs. The impression made by this act, combined with the energetic character of Zalim Singh, and the decided support of the Mahrattas, prevented any formidable opposition to the establishment of his authority; and in the progress of the



contest in which he became engaged with the refractory Thakoors, or Barons of Kotah, he exhibited a severity which struck terror into his enemies. Averse to war, he appears early to have commenced that system by which he has in the course of forty-five years raised a principality, whose revenue, when he was appointed minister, or rather regent, was not more than four lacs of rupees, to forty lacs. Amidst scenes of plunder, confusion, and anarchy, when violence, weakness, rapacity, and ambition, led alike to ruin; the calm temper, the clear mind, the profound art, and the firm energy of Zalim Singh, took advantage of the errors of all around, without ever committing one himself. He early shewed that, at a period when none were trusted, he might be confided in. His character for courage and wisdom was soon so well established, that it was deemed dangerous to have him as an enemy; and so far was he from offering provocation, that, instead of assuming the high tone of a Rajpoot chief, he readily acknowledged the paramount authority of the Mahrattas, terming himself a Zemindar, or landholder and cultivator. He was, in fact, too well satisfied with the substance of power to quarrel about its shadow. Bred to business, he was at once the farmer, the merchant, and the minister. In every transaction his tone was that of fairness and moderation; and though he, no doubt, from the first, cherished objects of the greatest ambition, these were never paraded, nor did good fortune (and the lives of few men offer a parallel of success so complete and uninterrupted) ever alter, or in the least disturb, his equal course. He appears, within a very short period of his first advancement to power, to have enjoyed the same





character he does at this moment ; and while his territories were kept in the highest state of cultivation, the additions made to them were obtained more by art, intrigue, and accident, than by force. But the greatest increase of revenue arose from the confiscation and improvement of the large and ill-managed estates of the nobles of the principality, which were chiefly usurpations upon the weakness of former princes. To enable him to give full effect to these changes in the internal administration of the country, Zalim Singh was most sedulous in establishing and maintaining links of amicable connexion with every foreign prince and chief, from the principal monarchs of India to the most desperate freebooters. In a sea of trouble, the territories of Kotah became a harbour where there was comparative repose ; and the convenience which all found in having occasional resort to this asylum, created a general interest in its continued security. The policy of Zalim Singh led him to purchase at any price, except a violation of his faith, the friendship and protection of the prevailing power of the moment ; which gave him confidence to pursue his views of aggrandisement at leisure. His object was never lost through hurry to obtain it. All means, except such as might compromise a reputation which was his strength, were employed to effect his purposes : neighbouring districts were rented, fugitives received, treasure taken in deposit, powerful leaders conciliated, those in distress relieved, and every act had, both in substance and manner, a discrimination as to time and the temper of the parties concerned, which gave to this extraordinary man all the chances of the troubled period, with few, if any, of the hazards. But against the latter he



took care to be well provided : he formed at an early period a small but efficient body of troops, which were gradually augmented in numbers with his increasing resources, and were always, from their formation, equipment, good pay, and the high character of their selected commanders, among the very best of their class.

To detail minutely all the steps by which Zalim Singh has raised Kotah to its present condition, would be tedious. His character, talents, and the means he used, have therefore been thus generally described ; a short account of his progress to the great power and influence he has obtained will suffice.

The town of Kotah, and its original lands, are chiefly situated in Harrowtee,\* one of the largest provinces in the Soobah of Ajmeer ; but the possessions of this Raj, or principality, have gradually extended over other parts of Central India. Among the first possessions which Zalim Singh obtained, were the fort and lands of Shahaabad : the garrison of which, being seduced by him from their duty, put their governor to death. The relations of the latter hastened with their complaints of this violence to Madhajee Sindia ; but with him Zalim Singh had a powerful mediator in his friend Lallajee Bellal, and the payment of a sum of money, with the promise of a regular tribute for Shahabad, not only obtained pardon for the act, but a grant from the nominal emperor of Delhi, vesting the government of that place in the prince of Kotah, in whose name Zalim Singh always acted.

\* This province, which adjoins Malwa, is stated by some to have received its name from the tribe of Hara. This, however, appears a doubtful etymology.





Hardly a year passed after the accession of Zalim Singh to full power, in which he did not add to his territories by obtaining grants or leases of districts or villages, or by giving protection to small Kotrees, or estates of Rajpoot lords, who repaid him with their service and attachment. The fall of the Rajas of Narwar, and neighbouring petty States, and the decrease of the influence and power of the Puar family of the Mahrattas, were alike turned to his benefit. But the greatest advance of his fortune may perhaps be attributed to Ambajee Ingolia. This powerful and wealthy leader, who had been held in high estimation by Madhajee Sindia, when nominated by his successor Soobahdar of Gualior, contracted the most intimate ties with Zalim Singh; and while he made Kotah the residence of his family and depôt of his treasures, he took every opportunity of favouring and adding to the strength of its ruler. The same description of connexion, established\* with Ambajee, was cultivated with the other high officers of Dowlet Row Sindia, who governed countries or commanded armies in his vicinity. His friendship indeed was the first object of all these, as it gave them a respected asylum for themselves or families in the hour of trouble; and the care Zalim Singh took to be on good terms with the principal ministers of Sindia, whose necessities he occasionally relieved, made him certain that no casual or temporary protection he might give to offenders, and public defaulters, would be seriously resented. The fact is, for

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\* Zalim Singh was, in the latter years of Ambajee's life, the only person he trusted; and it is generally believed that a considerable part of the wealth which he had accumulated was deposited at Kotah, and became, on his death, the property of the regent.



reasons that have before been stated, nothing could be more useful or desirable to a Government like Sindia's, than to have those half-dependent leaders of its armies and managers of its provinces, with whose services it could not dispense, but whose power it could not always control, look to such protection as that afforded by the regent of Kotah, who, though firm in maintaining the pledges he gave, was not only moderate and conciliating, but leaned always to the superior power. His wealth (and he early became rich) made him a convenient medium: for in all settlements between Mahratta States and their offending servants, a fine is the first object. The security of Zalim Singh, if he did not advance the money, was so good, that no banker hesitated a moment in accepting it; and we find him extending this aid, not merely to high officers of State, but, as in the case of Kurreem Khan, already mentioned, to the most lawless characters. From all these settlements he must have derived great profit, for the parties in favour of which he interposed had commenced with giving him the pledge of their wealth and family, and placing themselves, in fact, completely in his power. The most alarming event which ever threatened his deep-laid schemes of policy, was the rise of Jeswunt Row Holkar, a prince unrestrained by any common obligations, and to whose violence and rapacity the prosperity of Kotah offered a tempting point of attack. The mode in which this danger was evaded for a course of years, exhibits a remarkable illustration of the ability of Zalim Singh. The principality he governed had at one time paid tribute to each of the three great Mahratta families, Sindia, the Puar, and Holkar; but it was the policy of





all Rajpoot princes, to give no tribute unless to those who could enforce the right. The condition of the Holkar Government after the death of Ahalya Bae, had deprived it of the power to enforce its claims; and a large arrear was due. This was demanded by Jeswunt Row, and paid; but farther exactions were dreaded. To evade these, Zalim Singh established the most intimate friendship with Ameer Khan; and when that chief selected Sheergurh, one of the forts of the principality of Kotah, as a place of security for his family and property, he gave a complete pledge that his whole influence, then great among the plunderers of India, would at all times be exerted to save that country from their depredations. To this connexion may, in a great degree, be attributed the profound tranquillity that State enjoyed during the very worst times with which Central India has been afflicted.

While Zalim Singh, by that singular union of art, pliancy, firmness, and wisdom, which has been described, not only continued to preserve himself, but also to increase his territories amid the wars and revolutions of Central India, his ambition led him to interfere with the politics of the Rana of Odeypoor. It is not meant to enter on the details of the intrigues and operations this interposition occasioned. These, after occupying him for thirty-five years, have terminated in a manner that has neither added to the advancement of his interests, nor his reputation. We may believe that the motives which originally led Zalim Singh to meddle with the affairs of this celebrated but decayed principality, were worthy of his name; but, disappointed, in the first instance, in his higher and juster views by the weak



character of the Rana, as well as by the feuds and vices of the nobles, and next, foiled in his intrigues by the baser art and greater rapacity of the Mahrattas, his measures degenerated into those of a mean and selfish policy. Latterly, to accomplish a marriage between the Rana and the daughter of the Maha Row of Kotah (which was a great honour for the latter), he made a show of recompense to this unfortunate State by splendid promises of rich presents, and renewed efforts to relieve the country from the intolerable miseries still inflicted by the Mahratta leaders; but the expectations he excited on this occasion were poorly fulfilled; and he brought forward accounts and claims against the Rana, swelled by items,\* to the amount of twenty-nine lacs of rupees, that would have disgraced the character of the most sordid Hindu banker. The liberal policy, however, of the British Government, which sought to conciliate all parties, prevented the farther discussion of this question. Several districts† in Odeypoor, of which Zalim Singh had possession, were restored to the Rana; whilst the tribute of Shahabad, and some other rights, were ceded in perpetuity to Zalim Singh, as a compensation for what he had lost by this arrangement.

By the treaty concluded at Delhi, Zalim Singh was

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\* The Rana, besides being loaded with numerous petty charges for clothes and other articles at advanced prices, with high compound interest upon bonds granted by ministers whose acts he had disowned, was charged nearly nineteen lacs of rupees due for expenditure beyond receipts on the districts of Jehazpoor and Sauganeer, the possessions which Zalim Singh had wrested from him.

† Jehazpoor and Sauganeer.





exempted from all farther tribute\* to the Mahrattas; but he agreed to pay an equal amount to the British Government. This was a mode of settlement he had long wished for; and though his wary policy had excited some doubts of his sincerity† during the contest in which the British were engaged sixteen years ago with Dowlet Row Sindia and Jeswunt Row Holkar, the result proved that he had not acted unwisely: for when he perceived that the British Government had at last decided on the course it meant to pursue, and had resolved to assume that paramount authority among the States of India which belonged to the magnitude

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\* The tribute formerly paid to the Mahrattas is now paid to us. We account to Sindia for his share; Holkar's and a small tribute to the Paishwah we gain, which is all that Kotah pays for our protection. That State also engages to furnish troops, at our requisition, according to its means.

† Zalim Singh's sincerity was doubted by Colonel Monson, who, when he reached Kotah in his flight before Holkar, desired more from this chief than he could have been expected to grant. But there are two occurrences of that period which should be mentioned, as illustrative of Zalim Singh's sense of honour and his habitual caution. When Holkar reached Kotah, where he halted some days, he learnt that there were two of Colonel Monson's guns in the place, and demanded them. The Rana, though he paid a considerable contribution without much difficulty, yet resisted the demand for the guns with the greatest pertinacity; nor would he give them up till Holkar actually invested the place, and obliged him to comply. He is said to have been so much distressed by this occurrence, that he ate no food that day. While Holkar remained at Kotah, the Rana refused to visit him; but after he had crossed the Chumbul with his army, a meeting of a singular kind was agreed on: Holkar in one boat with a few armed men, and the Rana in another with an equal number, pushed off at the same moment from the opposite banks; they met in the middle of the stream, and after a conference of a few minutes, returned.



of its power, Zalim Singh did not then hesitate regarding the part he was to act. He at once rejected all his former connexions, and attached himself exclusively to that State, to which, as an instrument for the restoration of peace and good order, he became the most important ally. The promptitude and energy with which he entered into the war against the Pindarries and Holkar, were early rewarded by the cession of four fine districts,\* valued at four lacs of rupees, and rendered more desirable to him from their contiguity to his territories. Zalim Singh has lost no subsequent opportunity of evincing the sincerity of his friendship to the British Government. In every effort to establish order in countries adjoining the territories of Kotah, great benefit has always been derived from his aid. In the settlement of Sondwarra, one of the most turbulent districts in Malwa, his troops, which co-operated with those of the British, acted with a forwardness that proved at once the disposition of their prince, and their own gallantry. The storming of Narella was an achievement which reflected the highest credit upon their zeal and efficiency.

The death of Omeid Singh, the Maha Row of Kotah, which occurred a short time ago, has been seriously felt by Zalim Singh; and it was certainly, next to the death of the latter, the event most likely to disturb the tranquillity of that State. The late Maha Row and the Raj Rana had for nearly half a century maintained their mutual relations with the most perfect concord. The former, devoted to his religious duties, appears neither to have had the desire nor the ability to manage the

\* Gungraur, Dug, Putchpahar, and Garrote.





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affairs of his principality ; and while he devolved every thing upon his uncle, the Raj Rana, the latter, pleased with the substance of power, studiously gave all its exterior to his nominal prince, whom he treated on every occasion with habitual regard and respect. A natural desire, however, to perpetuate the influence of his family, made Zalim Singh stipulate, when he formed an alliance with the British Government, that it should maintain his descendants as ministers, or, in other words, as Regents of Kotah. This engagement, from the actual condition of the parties, has already produced great embarrassment ; which may be expected to increase on the death of Zalim Singh, already above eighty years of age, blind and paralytic, and to all appearance on the very verge of dissolution. A few months will probably terminate his long, laborious, and eventful life. This incident, whenever it does occur, will be a serious misfortune to his country and to Central India ; for his influence and example confer benefit beyond the limits of his own possessions. The character of Zalim Singh has been already given, and events have been narrated which shew that it is not without very serious defects : to these must be added, the weakness of superstition, and a firm belief in witchcraft. But though we may be disgusted with his avarice, and condemn the art and worldly policy he has on many occasions displayed, it will be difficult to find an example of a prince similarly situated, who has preserved and increased his territories, while he promoted the peace and happiness of his subjects, at so few sacrifices of reputation. If his mind has had recourse to art, it was to escape from evils which he could by no other means avert : if he has been



eager for gain, it was less with a desire of hoarding, than to possess himself of powerful means of defence against the dangers with which he was surrounded. His wealth enabled him to meet demands he could not evade, to purchase assistance when urgently required, and to maintain a force that made him always in some degree feared and respected. His avowed object was to avoid war; though he was above seeking exemption from that evil by a sacrifice of his pledged faith. When Jeswunt Row Holkar was in distress after his defeat by Sindia at Indore, his agent and a banker, who had gone to Kotah to realize the tribute due by that State, were peremptorily demanded to be delivered up by Balaram Ingolia, one of Dowlet Row Sindia's generals, who was at the head of a large force in the vicinity of the city. The demand was firmly resisted; nor did the preparations for an assault on the town alarm Zalim Singh into any compromise of his character; and the affair terminated in the advancement of his fame, and the increased reliance of all ranks upon his protection.

It has been already mentioned that Zalim Singh rented a number of districts from other States, which were a source both of profit and influence. His manner of managing his territories is singular, and partakes of the energy that belongs to his whole character. He seldom rents any large districts to one person, but places them under the administration of well-qualified officers, who have regular pay, and who, dividing the whole into small portions, either rent, or give them in management, or settle some other way with the villagers, or Ryots, as suits the usages of the inhabitants, or convenience of the period.





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The peasantry are treated by Zalim Singh with justice, not tempered, however, by kindness or indulgence. Throughout his country a strictness, if not a spirit of severity, mixes with his management; and he has endeavoured, with success, to establish a very complete command over his ryots, by possessing himself of a number of moveable ploughs and labourers, who, on any symptoms of local insubordination, or refusal to accede to his terms, are sent in detachments to cultivate the fields of the disaffected. In any other times than those of the last thirty years, this rigid system would not have succeeded; but the territories of Kotah have always afforded a security to life and property, which has made crowds of fugitives resort to them, and not only enabled him to bring large tracts into cultivation, but to build some new towns, and improve others in an extraordinary degree: above all, Jalra Patun\* has been the favourite object of his care. This child of his creation, for such it may be termed, whether we refer to the regularity of the plan, the spaciousness of the principal streets, the excellent construction of some of the houses, the beauty of the buildings, or the wealth of the inhabitants, already vies with the proudest cities of India, and will long remain a monument of the taste as well as liberal munificence of Zalim Singh.

It is not necessary, after the details given of the princes of Ragoogurh and Kotah, to enter minutely into the history of any other chiefs of the same class; a very cursory mention will suffice.

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\* Jalra Patun is upon the Chandrabhaga river.



The Rajpoot prince of Doongurhpoor\* claims to be a senior branch of the reigning family of Odeypoor; and this right is tacitly admitted by the highest seat being always left vacant when the prince of the latter country dines. No race of men are more particular in giving and demanding those distinctions which relate to birth, than the Rajpoots; nor are the rights of the individual at all affected either by his being in a reduced condition, or the adopted child of the family whose inheritance he claims. The allegiance to persons who have no title to it from blood, leads to a conclusion, that this, like every part of the Hindu system, was constructed with the view of giving permanence to that separation of classes by which it is distinguished. Dynasties could have been perpetuated by no means except by a latitude in the law of adoption, which renders it almost impossible a family should ever be extinct from want of a representative.

The princes of Doongurhpoor have among their military adherents a few Thakoors, or lords, and some Rajpoots of their own tribe; but the majority of their subjects are Bheels; and there can be no doubt they conquered the greater portion of their principality from that race. The ancestors of the present family became, at an early period, dependent on the Emperors of Delhi, and remained so until the Mahrattas invaded Central India, when they were compelled to pay tribute to the chiefs of that nation. When Malwa and the neighbouring provinces fell into their late state of anarchy, the

\* Doongurhpoor is the principal town in the small province of Bagur, that hilly tract which lies between Guzerat and the country of Odeypoor.





prince of Doongurhpoor, with a view of saving his country from being plundered, entertained bands of Arabs and Sindies, who soon, however, despising his authority, laid waste the country they were hired to protect. From these insolent and insubordinate soldiers, the principality of Doongurhpoor was relieved by the British Government, under whose protection it is fast recovering from the misery and desolation to which it had been reduced.

The history of Banswarra, which is also in the province of Bagur, is nearly the same as that of Doongurhpoor. Its princes are descended from a younger brother of that family, and their adherents and subjects are composed of the same classes. Like Doongurhpoor, it has also been rescued from a condition of extreme misery, and has become a dependency of the English Government, to which both States pay a small tribute.

The Raja of Pertaubgurh is descended from a junior branch of the family of Odeypoor. His principality occupies nearly the whole of the small province, or rather district, of Kantul. The ancestors of the reigning prince were officers of the Delhi emperors; and one of them, Salim Singh, was a favourite with Mahomed Shah, who granted him permission to coin money in his own name: the revenue of the countries immediately West of the river Chumbul is paid in rupees of this currency.\* The present Raja, Sawut Singh, who is the son of Salim Singh, was tributary to Holkar, but is now a dependent on the British Government.

The Rajas of Jabooah and Rutlam have been already

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\* Called Salim Shae.



noticed. The descendant of Kishen Doss still rules over the former principality, and is tributary to the Holkar State: his country is chiefly inhabited by Bheels, but they are of the cultivating class, and the town and territories of Jabooah, though they have suffered much, are rapidly improving.

Purbut Singh, of Rutlam (who is a tributary to Dowlet Row Sindia), is a weak, incompetent prince; but, from being at the head of a large and powerful family, has great influence, and can upon emergency call a numerous band of his kindred and clansmen into the field. This he evinced, when threatened, a few years ago, with an attack by Bappoo Sindia, to whom his tribute had been assigned. The Mahratta chief no sooner marched towards Rutlam, accompanied by a small army, and with the avowed intention of using force to realise his claims, than a summons was sent by Purbut Singh to all his relations and adherents, who, though most of them were subjects of other States, deeming the duty of rallying round their chief paramount to every call, hastened to his relief. In three or four days a body of twelve hundred Rajpoots (almost all mounted) was collected, and hostilities would have ensued but for the interference of the British Government, which guaranteed an engagement for the future regular payment of the tribute due by this Raja to Sindia, on condition that the peace of the country should not be again disturbed, or its prosperity checked, by the visitation of Mahratta troops. The benefits of this guarantee were afterwards extended to a number of petty chiefs, similarly situated in condition and relation to their Lords Paramount with the Raja of Rutlam. It is to be remarked, that chiefs of the class





here mentioned, have never drawn any subsistence from plunder, and stand quite distinct from those leaders who are described under the general term of Grassiahs,\* a name not limited to the Malwa province, but known in several others, particularly Guzerat, where it denotes, as in Central India, chiefs who, driven from their possessions by invaders, have established and maintained a claim to a share of the revenue, upon the ground of their power to disturb or prevent its collection.

The character of the Tankah, or forced tribute of the Grassiah chiefs, merits a few words. The greater part of Central India, since the invasion and conquest of the first Bajerow (and probably long before), has been held on loose and intermixed tenures. The establishment of the usual predatory claims† of the Mahrattas preceded their usurpation of the sovereignty of this country; and to secure the success of the latter measure, the conquerors were obliged to compromise, and, in fact, share the revenues with many of the native chiefs of the military class, who, taking refuge in the woods and mountains, gratified their resentment by destroying possessions they could no longer enjoy. These excesses produced a compact either between the Government and the excluded chiefs, or between the latter and the heads of districts and villages; a settled sum was agreed to be paid, as a Tankah, or contribution, on the condition of the inhabitants being exempt from plunder, and, indeed, an implied one of protection. This usage has existed ever

\* The word Grassiah is derived from Grass, a Sanscrit word which signifies a mouthful; and has been metaphorically applied to designate the small share of the produce of a country which these plunderers claim.

† Chout, Daismookh, &c.



since the Mahratta Government was introduced, with constant variation as to particular parts of the country, but with little as to the general principles on which it was levied. The payment of forced tribute, which originated in necessity, was only continued from the same cause. It followed, therefore, that the chief who succeeded to the power of distressing and plundering the country, was usually recognized as possessing the claim to this contribution.

Large towns seldom paid forced contribution to the Grassiahs; which was principally collected from villages. Of these, and the amount paid by each when the Tankah was fixed, a list was kept by the officers of Government, and it was admitted as a charge in the revenue accounts. This exaction, on its first establishment, was comparatively moderate, seldom exceeding twenty rupees annually, and sometimes as low as two rupees upon a village; but, as the country became desolate, the burden was not diminished, the freebooters compelling the inhabitants who remained to pay for those in their vicinity who had deserted.

On any delay or refusal of the tribute, the Grassiah chief drove away the cattle, or seized some of the inhabitants, often women and children, who were rigidly confined till payment was made. Murders, or even the infliction of wounds, were rare; but when the troops of the State interfered, a regular petty warfare ensued, in which if the Grassiah chief was compelled to fly, he soon returned and repeated his excesses till his demands were complied with.

The Grassiah chiefs are all Rajpoots. They are very numerous in Central India; and from being of the same





tribe, from intermarriages, and from motives of common interest, they were so leagued together, that it would have been difficult, had it been desirable, to destroy them; but the object was to connect their interest with that peace and good order which they had so long violated. This has been effected. Instead of money payments, a commutation has in many cases been given in land, that these plunderers might become industrious; and where this arrangement has not been made, the amount fixed in lieu of their claims is paid by the Government officers, and they are no longer permitted to employ their adherents in collecting it—a practice which, while it was oppressive to the inhabitants, afforded them the means of disturbing the tranquillity of the country.

Several of the Grassiah chiefs had settled in Sondwarra; but this large district, which stretches from Gungraur to Oojein North and South, and from Aggur to the Chumbul East and West, received its name from a class of more ancient and more desperate plunderers, called Sondees. They are often called Rajpoots, but are a mixture of all classes, or rather descendants of a mixed race. In their origin they were probably outcasts; and their fabulous history (for they consider themselves as a distinct people) traces them from a prince, who, in consequence of being born with the face of a tiger, was expelled to the forests, where he seized upon women of all tribes, and became the progenitor of the Sondees, or, as the term implies, "mixed race," some of whose leaders soon after settled in Malwa, where they have ever since maintained themselves as petty Zemindars, or landholders, as well as plunderers.



That the Sondees have a claim to antiquity, there can be no doubt; but we have no record of their ever having been more than petty robbers, till the accident of their lands being divided among four or five local authorities, always at variance and often at war with each other, combined with the anarchy of Central India during the last thirty years, raised them into importance as successful freebooters. Though often opposed to the Grassiahs who are settled in the same tract, a congeniality of pursuit has led to their being much associated with the latter, and particularly since the insanity of Jeswunt Row Holkar. From that date neither life nor property was secure within the range of the lawless bands of Sondwarra, most of whom, from breeding their own horses, were well mounted. At the peace of Mundissor, the Sondees were estimated in number at twelve hundred and forty-nine horse, and nine thousand two hundred and fifty foot, all subsisting by plunder; for the possessions they claimed as their own were in a state of complete desolation. The reduction of this formidable body of robbers appeared essential to the re-establishment of tranquillity; and two strong British detachments (one of which had a battering-train), a few of Holkar's horse, and a very efficient and well-equipped body of Kotah troops under a distinguished leader,\* proceeded on this service. The Grassiah and Sondee chiefs were required to give up their forts, and to surrender their horses to be sold for the benefit of their owners; and to induce them to accept these conditions

\* Mehrab Khan. This able soldier is recently dead, but not before he had established complete security in that part of Sondwarra which belongs to the principality of Kotah.



every attention was promised to their rights as landholders, and lands were offered at their native villages, to such as had none, on very indulgent terms.\* The impression of the power of the English Government, the complete union and cordial co-operation of all the Native States who had possessions in Sondwarra, combined with the active and spirited conduct of the troops employed, particularly those of Raj Rana Zalim Singh, soon made the Sondees lose all hopes of successful resistance. Some of their forts were taken by storm, others were abandoned, several of the strongest were razed to the ground, and the dispirited plunderers, assailed at every quarter, and with all their wonted places of refuge barred against them, had no alternative but to deliver up their horses, and to make, while they could, favourable settlements as cultivators. These they not only obtained, but such of their claims for forced contribution, as had been long recognized and established, were admitted.

The Sondees, since they consented to live as peaceable inhabitants, have been treated with kindness and indulgence; but, from a consideration of their character, it has been thought prudent to keep for some time a force in their country, to prevent the revival of those habits which have so long rendered them the bane and terror of Central India. Complete success has hitherto attended these efforts; and Sondwarra is fast rising into

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\* In the arrangements I made for reducing these freebooters to order, or rather intimidating them into submission, I took care the force should be so much above the service as to preclude every hope of successful opposition. This, in all such warfare, is a most important point, and one to which our singular condition in India requires the greatest attention.



that state of prosperity to which it is entitled from the fertility of its soil.

Another large division of the province of Malwa, which lies almost directly East of Sondwarra, received its name, like that district, from a race of plunderers, who, emigrating some centuries ago from Odeypoor, rose, during the decline of the Moghul empire, into consequence, and who under the direction of two brothers, Mohun Singh, and Purseram, possessed themselves of fifteen hundred small towns and villages. The name of this Rajpoot tribe is Omut; and the country they seized has been called after them, Omutwarra. It was, with the reservation of five districts to mark the superiority of the elder brother, divided equally between Mohun Singh and Purseram, the former taking the title of Rawul, or chief, and the latter of Dewan, or minister;—but they exercised distinct authority over their respective sections; for Omutwarra was not divided by distinct limits of territory, but by the system of intermixed rule\* over the same village, so among the Mahrattas, which was established by the two Rajpoot chiefs throughout their possessions. The successors of the Rawul, who fixed their residence at Rajgurrh, became tributary to Sindia; while those of the Dewan, now established at Nursingurrh,† ranked themselves among the dependents of the Holkar family. The establishment of power in the hands of two powerful chiefs made Omutwarra become a complete con-

\* The countries over which this divided rule is established are called Duamilee, or two Governments.

† Puttun, near Rajgurrh, was the capital fixed upon by Purseram; but Dewan Atchee Singh, the ablest of his successors, built the fort of Nursingurrh.





trast to Sondwarra. It was, before the time of Jeswunt Row Holkar, a well-governed fertile tract, and yielded a considerable revenue; but within the last twenty years it has suffered much, being, from its situation, more exposed than almost any other part of Malwa to the depredations of the plunderers by whom that province has been so long overrun. It is, however, now rapidly recovering, and will, no doubt, early attain its former prosperity.

The rugged tract which lies between the Nerbudda and the Vindhya range has often been mentioned. The banks of that river, from Hindia to opposite Baglee, have been seized by some Gond chiefs, the principal of whom are Kooshal Singh,\* of Eirwass, and Anoop Singh, of Singurh. These and their adherents, after some warfare, have all been settled, through the liberality, or by the mediation, of the British Government. In the same description of country which stretches from below Baglee to Ongkar Mundatta, the banks of the Nerbudda were infested by bands of robbers, of whom the principal was the Bheelalah family of Sillanah, whose chiefs, particularly Rutten Singh and Mundryop Singh, of Buckutgurh, had extended their ravages as far North as Oojein and Indore, and as far South as the vicinity of Asseergurh and Boorhanpoor. They have, like others, submitted to the British Government, which has adjusted their claims to Tankah, or contribution, from the Governments of Sindia and Holkar.

The chiefs on the Nerbudda are generally called Mowassee, which refers to the place they have chosen for their residence. Mowass signifying, in the colloquial dialect of the country, a stronghold or fastness.

\* This chief is lately dead.