MUGHAL RULE IN INDIA

BY THE LATE

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PREFACE

OF the making of books concerning the Mughal period of Indian history there is no end, and many volumes dealing with the lives of the emperors and with various aspects of Mughal administrative activity testify to the spell exercised upon the minds of men by the story of the Timurids of Delhi. In preparing the present book our main object has been to offer to the public, within the convenient compass of a single cover, a comprehensive record of the main facts and subsidiary details of Mughal sovereignty which are to be found both in original sources and in the numerous and occasionally costly works of modern writers. On these lines we have sought to provide a book which will appeal not only to the ordinary reader, who has neither inclination nor leisure to delve in a large collection of records and printed publications, but also particularly to the student, who is prevented by the question of expense from purchasing for the purpose of study a variety of authoritative works, such, for example, as Dr. V. A. Smith's *History of the Fine Arts in India and Ceylon* and Mr. Percy Brown's *Indian Painting under the Mughals*.

As regards the political and administrative features of the period, our account is primarily based upon well-known original sources—the *Memoirs* of Babur, the *Memoirs* of Jahangir, the immortal work of Abu-l Fazl, and so forth. We have been able thereby to show, incidentally, that religious intolerance, which is usually supposed to have had its origin in the bigotry of Aurangzeb, was not wholly unknown in the reigns of Jahangir and Shah Jahan. In the later chapters we have likewise made use of the records of early

European merchants and travellers in respect of the general circumstances of the Mughal empire, and throughout the work we have derived great assistance from the authoritative publications of Professor Jadunath Sarkar. For the details of trade and the economic system we are indebted to Mr. W. H. Moreland's two valuable volumes, which also throw much light upon social conditions in the Mughal age and upon the defects of Mughal administrative practice. For actual quotations our thanks are due to W. H. Beveridge, Esq., for permission to quote from Mrs. Beveridge's translation of the *Babur-Nama*; to Messrs. Heinemann, for permission to quote from Vicomte d'Humières' *Through Isle and Empire*; to Messrs. Longmans, Green & Co. and Professor Jadunath Sarkar, for permission to quote from his three books, *History of Aurangzeb*, *Shivaji and his Times*, and *Studies in Mughal India*; and to Mr. John Murray, for permission to quote from Irvine's translation of Manucci's *Storia do Mogor*. In conclusion, we can only express a hope that our joint work, to which Mr. Garrett has contributed Chapters I-V and Mr. Edwardes, Chapters VI-IX, may be held to have achieved its object.

S. M. E.
H. L. O. G.

PART I

CHAPTER I

THE COMING OF THE MUGHALS. BABUR. HUMAYUN

¶ *Introductory.*

WITH the advent of the Mughals begins a clearly defined period of Indian history. It is, moreover, a period for which the material is much more plentiful than that of the preceding epochs. Our knowledge of these is of a somewhat indistinct character. Here and there we obtain a clear picture. Megasthenes, for example, gives us a detailed description of the Court and Government of Chandragupta Maurya. Ibn Batuta draws a striking picture of that strange 'mixture of opposites', Muhammad bin Tughlak. But it is not until we reach the Mughal period that we find anything in the nature of real bibliography. Apart from the actual memoirs of the rulers themselves—and the value of these cannot be over-estimated—there are a number of contemporary writers worthy of consideration. But the student of Indian history should be warned to use these authorities with great caution. The manipulation of historical facts to suit the ideas of the author is unfortunately all too common. But it is nowhere worse than in India, and in many cases there has been (and is still unfortunately to-day) a deliberate distortion of facts, before which the political bias of a work like Macaulay's *History of England* pales into insignificance.

§ *Condition of India.* It will be well at this stage to consider briefly the political condition of India at the time of the advent of the Mughals. As had happened more than once in past history, the internal dissensions of the country made it an easy prey to a determined invader. The old Sultanate of Delhi was reduced to a state of helpless impotence under a series of weak and feeble rulers, and its authority extended to a mere remnant of territory in the vicinity of the capital.

In Rajputana, the perpetual jealousies of the various chiefs were fatal to anything in the nature of unity. In the centre and south, the weakness of the Delhi Government had led to the formation of a number of States occasionally combining together, but more often mutually hostile and suspicious. In the far south the great Hindu kingdom of Vijayanagar still preserved a vigorous existence, but was too remote to have any influence upon affairs in the north.

With all this political disunion, however, there were forces of a different nature at work which were destined to have a profound influence on the future history of the country. The century before the coming of the Mughals was a period of great religious activity. The eclectic teaching of such men as Chaitanya, Kabir, Guru Nanak, and others led to a new conception of the Deity. This religious movement, which found advocates and followers in many parts of the country, has been styled the *bhakti* movement, and its importance has been overlooked in its relation to the rule of the Mughals. At their coming the movement was in its infancy, but to it were ultimately due two forces, destined to be vital factors in the disruption of the Mughal Empire. Without such a movement it is most improbable that either the Marathas or the Sikhs would have formed themselves into the powerful combinations which they afterwards became.

§ *Period of Mughal rule.* Such then was the condition of India at the hour of the advent of the Mughals. While 1526, the year of Babur's final invasion, is generally accepted as the beginning of the Mughal Empire, there is considerable difference of opinion as to the date of its termination. Some writers consider that it ceased with the death of the last great ruler, Aurangzeb, in 1707. Others insist that it ended in 1857 with the removal of Bahadur Shah II. The latter view is hardly tenable in view of the relations of the Delhi monarchs with the Company in the preceding years. A ruler who is put on a fixed allowance, prohibited from granting marks of distinction, and forbidden

to leave his palace without permission, can hardly be considered a ruler at all, and certainly not from an Asiatic point of view.

On the whole it seems reasonable to consider the conclusion of the Empire as dating from 1803, when the Emperor Shah Alam, blind and helpless, put himself under the protection of General Lake, fresh from his victories over the Marathas, though it is equally justifiable to assert that the Empire of the great Mughals ceased to exist as a political and administrative entity from the date of Nadir Shah's invasion.

§ *Coming of Babur.* It was in 1519 that Babur, the founder of the Mughal Empire, first appeared in India. In so doing he was following a family tradition. His ancestors, Chenghiz Khan and Timur the Lame, had both invaded India, the former in the thirteenth and the latter in the fourteenth century. Neither of these invasions had any lasting effect, though Babur declared that the principal object of his invasion was to recover the lost possessions of his family. 'As it was always in my heart to possess Hindustan, and as these several countries, Bhira, Khush-ab, Chin-ab and Chiniut had once been held by the Turk, I pictured them as my own and was resolved to get them into my hands, whether peacefully or bv force.' [1] He writes this in 1519.

§ *His early days.* Zahiru-d din Mohammed, surnamed Babur (the Tiger), was in his thirty-seventh year when he invaded India, having been born in 1483. His life had hitherto been a series of wild adventures, in which, to judge by his own writings, he took a positive pleasure. Had he been born a century earlier in Europe, he would have made an ideal knight-errant. Originally ruler of the tiny kingdom of Farghana (Khokand), which he inherited from his father, he was soon expelled. Then followed several fruitless attempts to occupy Samarkand—another lost possession of the family. Finally he established himself, after many vicissitudes, as King of Kabul, and it was from Kabul that he set out on his first expedition to India in February 1519.

[1] Beveridge, *Babur-Nama*, vol. i, p. 380.

§ *First invasion.* Fording the river Sindh, he made his way to the Jhelum, meeting with little or no opposition on his march. Most of the local chiefs submitted at once and were ordered to bring in tribute. Babur always maintained that he was merely recovering his ancestral property, as stated above, and this view logically involved the levying of tribute. Further, as he regarded the inhabitants as his own subjects, he was resolved to take them under his own protection. 'As it was represented to me that some of the soldiery were behaving without sense and were laying-hands on Bhira people, persons were sent who caused some of those senseless people to meet their death-doom, of others slit the noses and so led them round the camp.' [1]

Babur now attempted to secure the cession of further territory by diplomatic means. He therefore dispatched an ambassador with letters to Ibrahim Lodi, the reigning Sultan of Delhi, and to Daulat Khan Lodi, the representative of the Sultan at Lahore. The ill-success of the embassy may be related in Babur's own words. 'People were always saying, "It could do no harm to send an envoy, for peace' sake, to countries that once depended on the Turk."' [2] Accordingly Mulla Murshid was appointed to go to Sultan Ibrahim. 'I sent him a goshawk and asked for the countries which from of old had depended on the Turk. Mulla Murshid was given charge of writings for Daulat Khan and writings for Sultan Ibrahim; matters were sent also by word-of-mouth; and he was given leave to go. Far from sense and wisdom, shut off from judgment and counsel must people in Hindustan be, the Afghans above all; for they could not move and make stand like a foe, nor did they know ways and rules of friendliness. Daulat Khan kept my man several days in Lahore without seeing him himself or speeding him on to Sultan Ibrahim; and he came back to Kabul a few months later without bringing a reply.' [3]

[1] Beveridge, *Babur-Nama*, vol. i, p. 383.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 384.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 385.

Babur completed the work of pacification in the territory which he had occupied, and had commenced his return journey to Kabul, when he was persuaded to undertake a punitive expedition against the Gakkars. The latter were one of the warlike tribes of the Salt Range, and were constantly at feud with the other tribes of this district, all of whom were renowned for their bravery—a reputation which they have maintained to the present day. It was largely at the instance of another of these tribes, the Janjua, that Babur was induced to attack Parhalah (Pirala), the Gakkar stronghold. The attack was completely successful and the fortress was captured. Hali Khan, the Gakkar leader, fled and subsequently sent in his submission. Babur then resumed his homeward march and reached Kabul at the end of March 1519. The expedition cannot be said to have achieved any permanent result. It was rather in the nature of a reconnaissance. But the knowledge gained of both the country and the people was destined to prove of use in his later expeditions. Again, his claim to possession and his clemency towards the inhabitants are in marked contrast with the policy of mere raiders such as Mohammed of Ghazni.

§ *More invasions.* Babur made two other expeditions to India, but on neither occasion did he remain long in the country. In 1524, however, he led a much larger force into India, this time with greater prospects of success. Treachery was at work among the members of the Lodi family. Daulat Khan, the Governor of Lahore, who had quarrelled with the Sultan Ibrahim, appealed to Babur for assistance, and another member of the family, Alam Khan, the uncle of the Sultan and himself a claimant for the throne, had fled to Babur for protection. With this local support Babur was enabled to advance much farther than on previous occasions, and ultimately reached Sirhind. But further progress was rendered impossible by the behaviour of Daulat Khan—described by Babur himself as 'rude and stupid'. Daulat Khan apparently intended to use the Mughal as a mere tool for the furtherance of his own ends, and

when Babur declined to fill this role, further co-operation between them ceased. Babur therefore returned to Kabul, where he reorganized and reinforced his army.

§ *Final invasion.* In November 1525 his final invasion began. On November 17th, 1525, 'the Sun being in the Sign of the Archer, we set out for Hindustan'.[1] His route lay by way of Peshawar and Sialkot. His army was not a large one for the task that lay before it. Vincent Smith puts his total force, including camp followers, at not more than 12,000. Indeed, the smallness of the force caused much depression among the soldiers, which Babur had no little trouble in relieving. At Sialkot he learned of the defeat of his so-called allies, Alam Khan and Daulat Khan. These two chiefs, who had been joined by a number of other malcontents, had marched southward and laid siege to Delhi. On the approach of Sultan Ibrahim to the relief of his capital, they raised the siege and advanced to meet him. According to Babur himself, Alam Khan and his supporters hoped to secure a considerable number of desertions by delivering a night attack. This, however, did not take place, and in the battle which followed the Sultan's forces won a complete victory. Alam Khan, Daulat Khan, and the other chiefs fled northwards. This was the news which reached Babur at Sialkot. As he was thoroughly distrustful of Daulat Khan and his adherents, he determined to secure their submission before proceeding further. He therefore went in pursuit of Daulat Khan in person. The latter soon surrendered himself and was allowed to retain a portion of his estates. Having sent a small detachment in pursuit of the remainder, Babur 'placed his foot in the stirrup of resolution and his hand on the rein of trust in God', and marched against Sultan Ibrahim, who was advancing from Delhi. A minor engagement took place near Ambala, in which Babur's son, Humayun, won his spurs.

§ *Battle of Panipat.* Finally the two armies faced each other on the plains of Panipat, the cockpit of India, which has wit-

[1] Beveridge, *Babur-Nama*, vol. ii, p. 445.

nessed three decisive battles. The disparity of numbers was very great. Babur had probably about 9,000 men. Sultan Ibrahim's numbers are given by Babur himself as 100,000 men and 1,000 elephants. The latter is an exaggeration, and Firishta's 100 is probably accurate.

Babur placed much reliance upon his artillery, a new development in Indian warfare, and on reaching Panipat he took up a strong position, with his guns chained together in pairs and connected by a line of breastworks. His right was protected by the town of Panipat. The armies lay inactive for some days, except for an unsuccessful night attack by one of Babur's generals. Finally, on the 21st April 1526 the Sultan's army advanced to the attack. The struggle was long and protracted. But Babur's line stood firm and his artillery did him useful service. The decisive stroke which gave him the victory was an enflanking movement by his cavalry—the same manœuvre, Vincent Smith points out, as that which had given Alexander his victory over Poros. At the end of the day Sultan Ibrahim's vast army had disappeared, and he himself lay dead on the field with 15,000 of his men. There is an almost Cromwellian ring about the language in which Babur chronicles his victory:

'When the incitement to battle had come, the Sun was spear-high; till mid-day fighting had been in full force; noon passed, the foe was crushed in defeat, our friends rejoicing and gay. By God's mercy and kindness, this difficult affair was made easy for us! In one half-day, that armed mass was laid upon the earth. Five or six thousand men were killed in one place close to Ibrahim. Our estimate of the other dead, lying all over the field, was 15 to 16,000, but it came to be known, later in Agra from the statements of Hindustanis, that 40 or 50,000 may have died in that battle.' [1]

Babur lost no time in following up his victory. A flying column was at once dispatched, under Prince Humayun, to occupy Agra. The conqueror himself followed with the main

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 474.

body; and the third day found him at Delhi. Here he remained a few days. While that natural curiosity which was always a marked feature of Babur's character led him to spend much of his time in visiting the tombs, public buildings, gardens, &c., of the ancient city, he took effective measures to secure his newly won possession.

A governor and a military commandant were appointed for the city. The treasuries were taken over, and it was made clear to the citizens of Delhi that a new ruler had come among them. This was still further emphasized by the recitation of the *khutba* in Babur's name at the public Friday prayers. Delhi secured, he passed on to Agra, which he entered in triumph on the 10th May 1526. Agra at the time ranked almost equal to Delhi as an imperial city, and the fate of these two populous centres marked the extinction of the last Afghan dynasty and the commencement of the Mughal era.

§ *More operations.* The new ruler was faced by many difficulties. There were still a number of powerful Afghan chiefs who had not made their submission. With most of these Babur managed to establish friendly relations by the help of that mixture of clemency and tact of which he was a past master. Another pressing problem was the restoration of the morale of his army. The fierce heat of an Indian May proved fatal to many of the northerners and caused general alarm and despondency, which even the rich spoils they had secured [1] failed to assuage. Babur therefore called a council of his leading chiefs and addressed them as follows: 'There is no supremacy and grip on the world without means and resources; without lands and retainers sovereignty and command are impossible. By the labours of several years, by encountering hardship, by long travel, by flinging myself and the army into battle, and by deadly slaughter, we, through God's grace, beat these masses of enemies in order that we might take their broad lands. And

[1] One diamond alone, presented to Humayun by the Gwalior family, whom he had taken under his protection, was valued by Tavernier at £880,000.

BABUR VISITING THE PALACE OF JALAL KHAN NEAR AGRA

An Illustration from the BABUR-NAMA

now what force compels us, what necessity has arisen that we should, without cause, abandon countries taken at such risk of life? Was it for us to remain in Kabul, the sport of harsh poverty? Henceforth, let no well-wisher of mine speak of such things! But let not those turn back from going who, weak in strong persistence, have set their faces to depart!'[1] The appeal was successful and all the chiefs with one exception, Khwaja Kalan, swore to stand by their master. True to his promise, Babur sent Khwaja Kalan home, laden with rich presents for the ladies of Babur's family, to whom he always displayed the warmest affection.

§ *Battle of Khanua.* Babur had now to face a more serious opponent than Ibrahim Lodi. This was the celebrated warrior Rana Sangram Singh of Mewar—usually called Sanga—a veteran of many years' military experience. Having ascended the throne of Mewar in 1509, he soon became the principal chief of Rajasthan. He now advanced to meet the invader at the head of a very large army 'composed of the contingents of 120 chiefs, and including 80,000 horse with 500 war elephants' (Vincent Smith).[2] Though the Rana's host is usually described as a Hindu confederacy, it contained some of the Afghan chiefs whom Babur had failed to conciliate. Another important member was Hassan Khan Mewati of Alwar. The latter, though an adherent of the Afghans, was a Khanzada of Mewat and either a convert or the descendant of a convert to Islam. Badaoni describes him as 'an infidel who used the Kalima'. As the two armies drew near each other, the great disparity in numbers caused despondency in the ranks of Babur's small force. But he was equal to the occasion. First he resolved to give up his favourite habit of drinking; and, to use his own words:

'The flagons and cups of silver and gold, the vessels of feasting,
I had them all brought;
I had them all broken up then and there.
Thus eased I my heart by renouncement of wine.

[1] Beveridge, *Babur-Nama*, vol. ii, p. 525. [2] *History of India*, p. 323.

That night and next day some 300 begs and persons of the household, soldiers and not soldiers, renounced wine.'[1] He then made an eloquent appeal to his army. 'Begs and braves!

(*Persian*)
Who comes into the world will die;
What lasts and lives will be God.

(*Turki*)
He who hath entered the assembly of life,
Drinketh at last of the cup of death.

He who hath come to the inn of life,
Passeth at last from Earth's house of woe.

Better than life with a bad name, is death with a good one.

(*Persian*)
Well is it with me, if I die with good name!
A good name must I have, since the body is death's.

'God the Most High has allotted to us such happiness and has created for us such good-fortune that we die as martyrs, we kill as avengers of His cause. Therefore must each of you take oath upon His Holy Word that he will not think of turning his face from this foe, or withdraw from this deadly encounter so long as life is not rent from his body.'[2]

Babur's words made an instant impression upon his men. 'All those present, beg and retainer, great and small, took the Holy Book joyfully into their hands and made vow and compact to this purport.'[3]

The armies finally met on the 16th March 1527 at Khānua, a village not far from Agra. It was a decisive victory for Babur. His small, well-disciplined force cut the huge hordes of the Rajputs to pieces, inflicting very heavy losses upon them. Rana Sanga managed to escape, but most of the other chiefs, including Hassan Khan, perished on the field. In celebration of this victory Babur assumed the title of *Ghazi*.

§ *Chanderi captured.* The battle practically destroyed the

[1] Beveridge, *Babur-Nama*, vol. ii, p. 552.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 556.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 557.

Rajputs as a fighting force; but the fortress of Chanderi was still held by a strong garrison under Medini Rao. An offer of terms having failed, Babur advanced to attack the fortress. The outworks were occupied without difficulty, but the citadel was not taken without a stout resistance. Many of the garrison, seeing that all was lost, made an end of themselves.

§ *Defeat of Afghans.* The Rajputs were thus disposed of; but Babur had still to deal with the Afghan rulers of Behar and Bengal. In his first operations against them in 1528, he threw a bridge over the Ganges and dispersed a small force at Kanauj. In 1529 he crossed the river Gaghra and inflicted a decisive defeat upon them.

§ *Babur's death.* This victory brought Babur's campaigns to a close, and in the next year (1530) he died. He was a comparatively young man, being only in his forty-seventh year; but the hard life he had led had certainly enfeebled his constitution, and the climate of India proved fatal. The story of his death is well known. Humayun, his eldest son, fell dangerously ill. Babur, believing that only the sacrifice of his own life could save that of his son, prayed earnestly in the name of a Muslim saint that Heaven would grant his desire, and then walked three times round his son's bed, crying: 'On me be all thy suffering.' His prayer was answered, Humayun soon recovered, but Babur passed away on the 26th December 1530. He lies buried, as he directed, at Kabul, in a favourite garden near the city. Close to his unpretentious grave a mosque was erected many years later by his descendant, Shah Jahan.

§ *Character of Babur.* 'Ferocious Timurid' though he was, Babur is one of the most human and attractive characters in Asiatic history. His memoirs reveal a genuine joy of life and love of nature which are not usually associated with a ruthless conqueror. Judged by the standards of his age, he was not cruel. Again and again he pardoned and showed clemency in strong contrast with the practice of his time and race.

Lane-Poole in a well-known passage remarks: 'Babar is the link between Central Asia and India, between predatory hordes

and imperial government, between Tamerlane and Akbar. The blood of the two great Scourges of Asia, Chingiz and Timur, mixed in his veins, and to the daring and restlessness of the nomad Tatar he joined the culture and urbanity of the Persian. He brought the energy of the Mongol, the courage and capacity of the Turk, to the listless Hindu; and himself a soldier of fortune and no architect of empire, he yet laid the first stone of the splendid fabric which his grandson Akbar achieved.... His permanent place in history rests upon his Indian conquests, which opened the way for an imperial line; but his place in biography and in literature is determined rather by his daring adventures and persevering efforts in his earlier days, and by the delightful *Memoirs* in which he related them. Soldier of fortune as he was, Babar was not the less a man of fine literary taste and fastidious critical perception. In Persian, the language of culture, the Latin of Central Asia, as it is of India, he was an accomplished poet, and in his native Turki he was master of a pure and unaffected style alike in prose and verse.'[1]

§ *Position of Mughals at death of Babur.* Babur's early death left the Mughal power in India in a precarious position. He had had no time to consolidate his conquests or to establish any permanent machinery of government. What he had won, he had won by the sword, and it is not until the reign of his grandson Akbar that active and orderly administration can be said to have existed. While upper India and the plains of the Ganges were in Mughal hands, Bengal remained unsubdued, and it was from this quarter that a danger arose which temporarily eclipsed the fortunes of the new dynasty.

§ *Babur's sons.* Babur left four sons: Humayun, the eldest, a young man of twenty-three, who had been of material assistance to his father in his invasion, and three younger princes, Kamran, Hindal, and Askari.

§ *Humayun's difficulties.* Humayun, ascending the throne of Delhi, found himself in difficulties from the outset. His

[1] *Babar*, by Stanley Lane-Poole ('Rulers of India' Series), 1899, pp. 9, 10.

brother Kamran was already Governor of Kabul, and Humayun was obliged also to transfer the Punjab to him. This seriously weakened his resources at a time when men and money were badly needed. Kamran proved thoroughly disloyal throughout his brother's reign, until he met with a well-deserved fate. With him begins that fraternal hatred which became so marked a feature of the later generations of the Mughal dynasty.

§ *Humayun's character.* Humayun, though possessed of many good qualities, was a far less able man than his father, and seemed incapable of a sustained and continuous policy. Much of his weakness was probably due to his excessive use of opium. Though his reign is reckoned as lasting from 1530–56, he actually spent most of the period in exile, being driven out in 1540 and only regaining his throne in 1556, a short time before his death.

§ *Early campaigns.* At the beginning of his reign he showed considerable energy in military operations. His first campaign was against Muhammad Lodi, a descendant of the dispossessed dynasty, who had captured Jaunpur. Humayun easily defeated him and drove him out of the country. With his subsequent death in Behar the Lodi family disappears from history. Humayun followed up this success by a series of campaigns against Bahadur Shah, the powerful king of Gujarat and Malwa, who had received at his court Muhammad Zaman Mirza, a fugitive who had plotted against Humayun. Bahadur Shah's refusal to surrender the traitor was the signal for hostilities, and in 1535 Humayun totally defeated the forces of his adversary at Mandsur. Bahadur Shah fled to Mandu, the capital of Malwa. But the imperial troops took the town without difficulty, and he was forced to flee to Gujarat, hotly pursued by Humayun. Champaner, one of the strongest fortresses in the country, was taken after a siege of four months. Humayun, never a great general, was personally without fear, and on this occasion he distinguished himself by the reckless bravery with which he took part in the assault. Having made himself master of Gujarat, Humayun showed his characteristic lack of purpose.

Though trouble was brewing in every direction, he was content for the time being to remain inactive. The treachery of his brother Askari, who commanded a portion of his army, and the return of Bahadur Shah with a considerable force, threatened his position. His continued absence from the north was provocative of rebellion. Finally, most dangerous of all, the rising power of Sher Shah forced him to abandon all thoughts of conquest in the West and to turn his attention to the East.

§ *Sher Shah's early life.* Sher Shah was one of the most remarkable characters in India's history. The exact date of his birth is unknown, but is usually supposed to have occurred in the last fifteen years of the fifteenth century.[1] He was thus nearing his fiftieth year when he rose to fame. Originally named Farid, he was a pure Afghan by descent, and his family had not long been in India, as his grandfather Ibrahim was invited into the country by Sultan Bahlol Lodi. His earlier years were spent in the management of part of his father's estates, in which task he early showed those signs of administrative capacity, particularly in the collection of the revenue, which were to make him famous in after years. Succeeding to his father's estates in due course, he made his way to Agra and entered the service of Babur. According to Abbas Khan, the author of the *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, he soon conceived the idea of ousting the Mughals from the country. Rumours of his intention reached the ears of Babur, who had already been attracted by the young Afghan. 'Keep an eye on Sher Khan' (the name he had now assumed), the Emperor is reported to have said to one of his Ministers; 'he is a clever man and the marks of royalty are visible on his forehead. I have seen many Afghan Nobles, greater men than he, but they never made an impression on me; but as soon as I saw this man, it entered into my mind that he ought to be arrested, for I find in him the qualities of greatness and the marks of mightiness.' The arrest

[1] Qanungo, in his life of Sher Shah, gives 1486 as the date of Sher Shah's birth.

did not take place, for Sher Shah suspected the Emperor's design and retired to his own estates in 1528. He then entered the service of Sultan Muhammad of Behar. On the death of the latter he became Regent for the Sultan's son, Jalal Khan, but the latter became jealous of his able servant and fled to Bengal.

Sher Shah thus remained ruler of Behar and soon afterwards strengthened his position by the acquisition of the important fortress of Chunar, which he effected by marrying Lal Malika, the widow of its last owner, Taj Khan.[1] This brought him into direct conflict with the Mughals. One of Humayun's armies besieged the fortress so closely that Sher Shah submitted and handed over one of his sons as a hostage. Notwithstanding his surrender, the Emperor, from this time onward, seems to have been profoundly suspicious of Sher Shah and his designs. The suspicion was mutual, and in the *Tarikh-i-Farid Shahi* Sher Shah is frequently mentioned as accusing the Emperor of breach of faith. Meanwhile, Humayun was busy with his Gujarat campaign, but he was forced to relinquish it soon afterwards by a rebellion in the North, which he successfully crushed in a battle near Lucknow. Sher Shah was present on the rebel side, but took no part in the fighting. This, however, did not save him from the emperor's vengeance, and the latter laid siege to Chunar, which he captured after a six months' siege. Sher Shah then possessed himself of the important fortress of Rohtas. There is considerable difference in opinion as to how he obtained possession, but obviously he employed some form of stratagem. While the Emperor was still engaged in the siege of Chunar, Sher Shah busied himself in adding a part of Bengal to his dominions and laid siege to Gaur, the capital, which he ultimately captured.

§ *Humayun and Sher Shah; the latter is victorious and seizes the throne of Delhi.* Sher Shah now opened negotiations with

[1] This is the version of Abbas Sarwari. It is not held by Qanungo, Sher Shah's latest biographer.

Humayun and offered to surrender Behar if he were allowed to hold Bengal as a feudatory. Though the Emperor at first approved of the proposal, mutual suspicion prevented any permanent agreement.

Whether Sher Shah was in earnest or not is doubtful: Afghan faith is usually in the nature of *Punica fides*. However, when the imperial armies moved against him, Sher Shah claimed to be the aggrieved party. In 1538 Humayun entered Bengal in person and recovered Gaur; but his usual lack of energy made the success of little value. Instead of a vigorous prosecution of the campaign, he idled away a precious three months at Gaur, during which Sher Shah managed to recover Chunar and his territories in Behar. At length the Emperor was forced to retreat. It was the rainy season, and floods were threatening his communications. The army was running short of supplies, and, to crown all, came the news of a formidable rebellion at Agra, where Humayun's brother, Mirza Hindal, had declared himself Emperor. The rebellion was soon quelled, mainly owing to the action of Kamran, who marched down from the north and compelled Hindal to submit. But he failed to send reinforcements to the Emperor, whose retreating army was greatly in need of them.

Humayun now attempted to negotiate with Sher Shah, and dispatched Shaikh Khalil as envoy to the camp of the latter with offers of peace. But the envoy proved faithless. According to Abbas Khan's account Sher Shah asked the Shaikh privately what he advised. The Shaikh replied: 'War with the Emperor Humayun is more for your advantage than peace; for this reason, that in his army the most complete disorder exists, he has no horses or cattle, and his own brothers are in rebellion against him. He only makes peace with you now from necessity, and will not eventually abide by the treaty. Look at this opportunity as so much gained, and do not let it out of your grasp, for you will never again have such another.'[1] The advice was quite to

[1] Elliot and Dowson, vol. iv, p. 372.

the taste of Sher Shah, who knew the condition of the imperial army. He therefore set his forces in motion, prefacing his march with a long address to his chiefs, in which he accused Humayun of 'playing with him'.

§ *Battle of Chausa.* In June 1539 he fell upon the Emperor at Chausa on the Ganges. The imperial army was surprised and utterly routed, all the imperial baggage and treasure falling into Sher Shah's hands. The Imperial harem was also captured, but the ladies were kindly treated and sent to Agra. Humayun, who was wounded, managed to cross the river on a water-skin. Years afterwards he rewarded its owner by seating him, as he had promised, upon the throne for one day. He contrived to make his way to Agra, where he was well received by his brothers, who had realized too late the fatal mistake of disunion in the face of the Afghan peril. But his army had ceased to exist, and his losses in battle are said to have been 8,000. Sher Shah now proclaimed himself Emperor under the title of Sher Shah Adil, and called on the chiefs of Malwa and Gujarat to assist him in the final expulsion of the Mughal. The army of the Afghan daily became stronger, while Humayun met with little success in reorganizing his forces. Kamran, disgusted at not being given the chief command, retired to the Punjab, taking his troops with him. In May 1540 the armies once more met at Kanauj. Mirza Haidar, the author of the *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, and a relation of Humayun, took part in the battle and describes in detail the demoralization of the imperial army. Such a force had little chance against the Afghan hordes, flushed with victory. On Sher Shah's advance they broke into a disgraceful panic, and Humayun's last chance was gone. He escaped from the battle with great difficulty; but his throne was lost and he spent the next fifteen years in exile.

§ *Sher Shah compels Punjab and Rajputana to submit.* Before recounting the story of these years of exile it will be convenient to describe the rule of Sher Shah and the subsequent history of the Sur sovereigns. Sher Shah was no mere free-booter.* In his

short reign he proved himself not only a successful soldier, but one of the ablest rulers who ever occupied the throne of Delhi. His first task was the restoration of order. He marched into the Punjab and forced the turbulent Gakkars to submit. Campaigns in Rajputana and central India followed. His victories in this direction were marred by his savage slaughter of the garrison of Raisin. This is one of the few occasions on which he exhibited cruelty. As a general rule he was good-tempered and merciful, and treated his defeated adversaries with a leniency unusual in one of his race.

§ *His administrative and other reforms.* Though busied with fighting during his brief reign, Sher Shah found time to organize a regular system of government, and in particular to initiate the revenue system, upon which his fame as a ruler chiefly rests. The later system of Akbar is better known, but he and his minister Todar Mal really built upon the foundations laid by Sher Shah. Like earlier sovereigns in Indian history, he was a great builder of roads and of rest-houses for travellers. He also found time to issue a new and better coinage. Few men have crowded more into the short space of five years than this able and conscientious man. In Vincent Smith's opinion, 'if Sher Shah had been spared he would have established his dynasty, and the "Great Moguls" would not have appeared on the stage of history'.

§ *Death of Sher Shah, and the later Kings of the Sur dynasty.* His brief reign was brought to an end in May 1545, when he was fatally injured by the bursting of a tumbril at the siege of Kalanjar. Like many other great men, Sher Shah left no worthy successor. His second son ascended the throne as Islam (or Salim) Shah. But he proved an unsatisfactory ruler, and his policy of disregarding the leading Afghan chiefs weakened the position of his dynasty. With his death in 1553 ensued a period of anarchy, during which several claimants disputed the throne. This gave Humayun his chance, and the Mughal restoration took place in 1555.

§ *Later history of Humayun.* It is now time to turn to the dreary odyssey of Humayun. The principal material for this is derived from the *Tazkirat-ul-Wakiat* of Jauhar, a body-servant of the exiled Emperor, who accompanied him on most of his wanderings. Humayun, as usual, was badly served by his own brothers, Kamran and Askari, declining to continue the struggle with the Afghans any longer and retiring to Kabul. Humayun, with a small body of followers, made his way to Sind, where he hoped to find a refuge. But he was unsuccessful; and having failed to capture Bakhar, on the Indus, he was driven hither and thither in that sandy and inhospitable country, suffering the greatest hardships from hunger and thirst. Many of his followers left him. At this time he was supported by the faithful Bairam Khan, who had fled from the fatal field of Kanauj and now managed to rejoin his master. The most faithful of all the Mughal adherents, he played an important part in the reign of Akbar. In 1542 while Humayun was enjoying a temporary refuge with the Raja of Umarkot, his sorrows were partially alleviated by the birth of a son. On 23rd November 1542 Hamida Begum gave birth to a prince, afterwards the famous Emperor Akbar. So poor had Humayun become that the only present he could offer his followers was a musk bag, which was broken in pieces and divided among them.

§ *Humayun flees to Persia; wins Kandahar and Kabul.* Humayun was determined to make for Kandahar; but his brothers had no intention of allowing this, and he soon received news that Askari was advancing against him. Humayun was in no condition to resist. He therefore resolved to escape to Persia, to whose ruler, Shah Tahmasp, he had already written to ask for protection. In his flight he was forced to leave his infant son behind him. The latter was seized by Askari and taken to Kandahar, where he was handed over to Sultan Begum, Askari's wife, who treated the child with great kindness. Shah Tahmasp received the exile with courtesy and treated him with all the

respect due to a brother sovereign. But, as he belonged to the Shia sect, he demanded that his guest should also conform to that branch of Islam. Whether Humayun actually did so is doubtful. Probably necessity forced him to outward compliance with the Shah's wishes.

After some time Shah Tahmasp was persuaded (probably by Bairam Khan, who belonged to the Shia sect) to give Humayun a force to conquer Kandahar, and in 1544 Humayun started on his march. It was a condition of the grant of assistance that Kandahar should be handed over to the Persians. After a vigorous siege Askari, who commanded the garrison, agreed to surrender. Though the town was, in accordance with the agreement, given up to the Persians, Humayun had no intention of letting it remain in their hands, and, on the death of Mirza Murad, the Shah's son, who had been sent with the expedition as the Shah's representative, he seized the town by a surprise attack. Humayun then went on, took Kabul, and for a time recovered his little son. A series of long and tedious campaigns then followed with varying fortunes on either side, until the final victory fell to Humayun. Hindal, the brother who had supported him, was killed in battle. Askari, who was captured, was sent to Mecca, where he died, and Kamran, the source of all the trouble, to whom Humayun had again and again showed his usual clemency, was blinded and also sent to Mecca.

§ *Humayun recovers India.* With Afghanistan again in his hands, Humayun had a base for the recovery of his Indian empire, and the anarchy which followed the death of Salim Shah gave him his opportunity. Late in 1554 he set out with a large force, he himself commanding the advance guard and the faithful Bairam Khan being in charge of the rest of the army. Most of the Punjab, including Lahore, was occupied without resistance, as the Afghans were taken by surprise and were too disunited to offer any serious opposition. At length Sikandar Sur, one of the various claimants to the throne, and for the time the possessor of Delhi, sent a force to meet the Mughal

advance. Early in 1555 a battle was fought at Machhiwara (in the Ludhiana district of the Punjab), in which the Afghan army was utterly defeated, mainly owing to the panic caused by the town catching fire; Humayun followed up this victory by another at Sirhind in June 1555. Sikandar Sur fled, and the way was clear to Delhi, which the Emperor entered in July 1555. Further disorder in the Punjab was checked by the appointment of the young Prince Akbar as Governor, with Bairam Khan as his adviser.

§ *His death, 1556.* Humayun's reconquest was far from complete when his reign was brought to a close by his sudden death. The story [1] is thus related by Nizamu-d din Ahmad in the *Tabakat-i-Akbari*:

'On January 17th, 1556,[2] at sunset the Emperor ascended to the roof of the library and there stood for a short time. As he was descending the Muezzin cried aloud the summons to prayer, and he reverently sat down on the second step. When he was getting up again, his foot slipped and he fell down the stairs to the ground. The people in attendance were greatly shocked, and the Emperor was taken up senseless and carried into the palace. After a short time he rallied and spoke. The Court physicians exerted all their powers, but in vain. Next day he grew worse and his case was beyond medical help. Shaikh Juli was sent to the Punjab to summon Prince Akbar. On January 24th, 1556, at the setting of the sun, he left this world for Paradise.'

[1] This may be described as the courtly version of the Emperor's death. Other writers ascribe the accident to his being under the influence of opium at the time.

[2] Authorities differ as to the exact date. Beveridge and Vincent Smith hold that it was the 24th January. In any case his death was kept secret for several days.

CHAPTER II

THE REIGN OF AKBAR (1556–1605)

¶ *Accession of Akbar.*

THE news of Humayun's death reached Akbar at Kalanaur in the Gurdaspur district, where he was carrying on operations against Sikandar Sur, who had taken refuge in the Fort of Mankot. Bairam Khan at once took steps to proclaim Akbar Emperor of India, and had him formally enthroned in a garden at Kalanaur on the 14th February 1556, a brick throne being improvised for the occasion. He had previously been proclaimed at Delhi on the 11th February.

§ *Akbar's position at Accession.* The throne to which young Akbar succeeded was by no means secure. Three members of the Suri house were contesting the claim of the Timurids to the throne of India. Muhammad Adil Shah had become King after murdering his nephew, but was forced to retire to Chunar, in Bengal, before the end of the year, by his cousin Ibrahim Sur, who in his turn was ousted from Delhi by another nephew of Sher Shah Sikandar, defeated by Humayun at Sirhind. Sikandar was the only serious rival in the Punjab and was still awaiting a suitable opportunity to regain the throne. Akbar's territories were ill-defined. His father had been practically master of Delhi and Agra only, while in the Punjab the operations against Sikandar were still in progress. Kabul, though normally under Akbar, was in reality administered as independent territory on behalf of Hakim Mirza, the younger half-brother of Akbar.

§ *Hemu's success.* Meanwhile King Adil, who had retired to Chunar, had raised Hemu, a Bania of Rewari, to the position of Chief Minister, and sent him to the east to oppose Humayun and recover Delhi. On his way he defeated Ibrahim Sur, and at the time of Humayun's death he was in the field at the head

of a vast Afghan army, to contest the throne of Hindustan with Akbar. Advancing by way of Gwalior and Agra he encamped near old Delhi. The Mughal forces were defeated, and much valuable booty fell into the hands of the victor. Tardi Beg Khan, the Governor of Delhi, offered a feeble defence and disgracefully abandoned his charge. The capture of both Delhi and Agra placed Hemu in a very strong position. Tardi Beg Khan fled to Sirhind, where he met the Emperor and was secretly put to death by Bairam Khan with the tacit consent of Akbar. Many authors condemn the deed as murder; yet the effect of the execution was wholesome and showed the Mughal nobles that the Regent and the Emperor were both in earnest.

§ *Battle of Panipat.* News of Hemu's success, the vast number of his troops, and the terrible famine that was raging in the country at the time, made the spirits of most of the Chaghatai nobles waver. They proposed a retreat to Kabul, as their numbers were no more than 20,000, while Hemu could boast of an army of more than 100,000, and they were in the midst of a hostile population, who sympathized more or less with the enemy. But Bairam Khan refused to entertain the idea of retreat and declared that the throne of Hindustan was not one to be abandoned without a struggle. Akbar gave him his hearty support, and, inspired by the example of their young sovereign, the Mughals determined to advance upon Delhi. Hemu, whose head had been turned by his prosperity, and who styled himself Maharaja Vikramajit, marched against them, confident of victory. The two armies met on the historic battle-field of Panipat on the 5th November 1556. In a preliminary engagement Hemu's park of artillery fell into the hands of the Mughal vanguard. But, in spite of this loss, Hemu possessed a considerable superiority of strength, though he relied rather too much on his elephants. On the 5th November he succeeded in throwing into confusion the right and left wings of his foe, and sought to secure a decisive victory by charging the Mughal centre with all his elephants. He would probably have suc-

ceeded, but for a stray arrow which struck him in the eye and rendered him unconscious. The almost victorious Afghan army finding its leader no longer visible, was seized with the idea that he was dead and fled in all directions without any further attempts at resistance. Hemu's elephant was captured and Hemu himself was brought before Akbar and Bairam Khan by Shah Qulihan Mehram. On Bairam Khan's advice the young Emperor drew his sword and dispatched the defeated general on the spot. A later and more courtly version of this incident states that Akbar merely touched Hemu with his sword and then left it to his attendants to put him to death. The former version is that now generally accepted. Hemu's head was sent to Kabul, while his body was hung at one of the gates of Delhi.

§ *Akbar's capture of Delhi and Agra.* The victory at Panipat was decisive, the pursuit vigorous, and the victors entered Delhi in triumph on the 6th November. Agra was soon recovered and the vast treasures of Hemu fell into their hands. Akbar halted at Delhi for about a month and then returned to the Punjab to complete the operations against Sikandar Sur. The Mughals marched from Sirhind to Lahore, and, continuing the pursuit, forced Sikandar to take refuge once more in the fortress of Mankot, where he surrendered in May 1557, after a protracted siege. Sikandar was treated generously and received *jagirs* in Behar, where he died two years later. Of the remaining two Sur claimants, Ibrahim Khan withdrew from the contest, and Adil was killed in 1557, while making a vain attempt upon Bengal. Akbar was now left without any rival in the country, though from time to time his younger brother, Hakim Mirza, made some feeble attempts to secure the Punjab.

§ *Regency of Bairam Khan.* At Mankot, Akbar was rejoined by his mother and other ladies of the family, and marched back to Lahore, halting on the way at Jullundur, where Bairam was married to Salima Sultan Begum, a niece of Humayun—a mark of the sovereign's regard for his distinguished services. From Lahore the Emperor marched to Delhi and, leaving the

ladies there, he established his court at Agra, the Lodi capital. Bairam Khan made arrangements for the education of his ward, which met with slight success; for, instead of devoting himself to books, Akbar spent his time in hunting, in elephant-fights and other such pursuits, leaving the actual work of the administration to Bairam Khan. The Regent carried on the work most successfully, and the strong fortress of Gwalior and the rich province of Jaunpur were annexed to the Empire, though an attempt upon Ranthambor failed. He was also planning operations for the reduction of Malwa, when he was interrupted by the intrigues and troubles which brought about his fall.

§ *Events leading to fall of Bairam Khan.* The events which led to his downfall are described by historians at great length and from different points of view. It must be remembered that Bairam Khan was a Shia, and as such was obnoxious to the Sunni Chaghatai nobles of the Court, who, though impressed by the execution of Tardi Beg, had never forgiven him for it. The Emperor, on entering his eighteenth year, began to feel the bonds of dependence and resented the galling tutelage in which he was kept by Bairam Khan. Moreover, the Emperor had no privy purse, and while his own household was quite poor, he took offence at the prosperity of Bairam Khan's entourage.

His foster-Mother, Maham Anaga, to whom he was devotedly attached, fanned the flame of discontent and was helped in her task by Hamida Bano Begum, the Emperor's mother, Adham Khan, her son, and Shihabu-d din, her son-in-law. They began to poison the mind of the Emperor by insinuating that Bairam Khan had become virtual master of the kingdom and was actually thinking of setting Akbar aside and of placing a son of Kamran upon the throne.

In the meantime certain events occurred that widened the breach between the two. One day while the Emperor was witnessing an elephant fight, one of the beasts ran through the ropes of the tent of the minister, who took it as a personal affront. The Emperor, however, protested that no indignity was in-

tended. Though Bairam Khan was apparently satisfied, yet the royal mahout was punished. Another day a *mast* elephant ran into the river Jumna, while Bairam Khan was boating, and charged at the boat. The Khan was in danger of his life, but the mahout succeeded in mastering the elephant, and Bairam Khan was saved. On receipt of the news, the Emperor sent the mahout a captive to the Regent, who once more punished him. Several other incidents of this type fanned the Emperor's growing dislike of the Regent, while the dismissal of Mulla Pir Muhammad, the royal tutor, still further offended the Emperor. While out hunting, Akbar received news of his mother's illness and, sending word to Bairam Khan, proceeded to Delhi. The Governors of Delhi and Lahore were won over to the imperial cause, and measures were taken to secure Kabul as well. Maham Anaga and her supporters now denounced Bairam Khan as harbouring designs of treason and rebellion. While the Emperor was still wavering, Maham Anaga, pretending to be afraid of the Regent's resentment, asked permission to proceed to Mecca, well knowing that Akbar would never allow her to go. This decided the attitude of the Emperor, who resolved to dispense with the services of the great minister, and feeling strong enough to carry out his design, sent him a message to this effect: 'As I was fully assured of your honesty and fidelity, I left all important affairs of State in your charge, and thought only of my own pleasures. I have now determined to take the reins of government into my own hands, and it is desirable that you should now make the pilgrimage to Mecca, upon which you have been so long intent. A suitable *jagir* out of the *parganas* of Hindustan shall be assigned for your maintenance, the revenues of which shall be transmitted to you by your agents.' [1]

§ *Murder of Bairam Khan.* Bairam Khan's counsellors were divided in opinion as to the course he should pursue, and some of them advised an appeal to arms. After some hesitation Bairam Khan's natural integrity and lifelong loyalty prevailed,

[1] Elliot and Dowson, vol. v, p. 264.

and he acknowledged the royal command, sending his insignia to Akbar. But the appointment of Mulla Pir Muhammad, a former ungrateful protégé of Bairam Khan, to watch his movements and arrange for his leaving the imperial domains, so enraged him that he determined upon armed resistance. He accordingly moved to the Punjab, after placing his family in the fortress of Bhatindah. His forces, however, were defeated by the imperial troops near Jullundur, and while retiring to the hills he was captured near the river Beas and brought before Akbar by Munim, the former regent at Kabul. Akbar very generously accepted his submission and, to show his entire forgiveness, offered him three alternatives: first, to receive an honourable post at Court; secondly, to receive the Governorship of any province that he chose; or thirdly, to carry out his original design of proceeding to Mecca. Bairam Khan was, however, too broken-hearted to show any further anxiety for worldly possessions and decided to proceed to Mecca, though he had received *jagirs* and allowance befitting his rank and eminent past services. Marching through Rajputana, he eventually reached Patan, in Gujarat. While at that town he was attacked by a band of Afghans and stabbed to death by a man whose father had been killed fighting against him at Machchiwara. His camp was plundered and his family was brought to Ahmadabad with great difficulty. Akbar, remembering his past services, gave orders for the family to be brought with great honour and respect to Court. His widow, Salima Sultan Begum, was married to the Emperor, and his young son, Abdurrahim, was brought up under the protection of Akbar and rose to be Khan Khanan, like his father. Whatever impression the later doings of Bairam Khan may convey, his services are too great to be consigned to oblivion, and both Akbar and his father were deeply indebted to him for the recovery and security of their throne.

§ *Beginning of an aggressive imperial policy. Conquest of Malwa.* Akbar had freed himself from the control of Bairam Khan, but he was not yet entirely his own master; neither was

he old enough to care to be so. For some years he remained largely under the control of his foster-mother, Maham Anaga, who did not prove a very capable adviser. Her one idea was to advance her son, Adham Khan, a man of very bad character, to high office. She further showed her incapacity by bringing into office Pir Muhammad Shirwani, a cruel and brutal man. Under his new advisers, Akbar's career of conquest now began, though he had at first little or nothing to do with it. The Mughal kingdom was still a comparatively small State, and it was now decided to commence an aggressive policy of expansion. The first victim was Baz Bahadur, the ruler of Malwa. In 1560 an expedition was sent against him under the command of Adham Khan and Pir Muhammad. The expedition was successful and Baz Bahadur was defeated. But the conquerors marred their victory by savage cruelty, murdering hundreds of their prisoners. Their most famous victim was Rupmati, the beautiful wife of Baz Bahadur, who poisoned herself rather than become the mistress of the brutal conqueror.[1] The story of these atrocities reached Agra, and so enraged the young Emperor that he resolved to take action himself, and having made up his mind, acted, as he always did, with great promptitude. Taking only a few followers, he set off at once for Adham Khan's camp and arrived there before Maham Anaga had time to warn her son of his coming. Adham Khan, taken by surprise at his sovereign's sudden arrival, was obliged to humble himself and to express his sorrow for all that he had done. Akbar then returned to Agra, having made a remarkably short journey at the hottest time of the year. Vincent Smith, in his life of the Emperor, compares him to Alexander, who showed the same indifference to heat or cold. Further stories of this period testify to Akbar's remarkable bodily strength. On his way back to Agra he killed a lioness with a blow of his sword. He also delighted in controlling elephants known to be of vicious temper and in riding these animals when they were made to fight one another. In his

[1] Her story is the subject of a well-known Indian ballad.

Memoirs, Akbar's son, Jahangir, relates several stories of this kind about his father.

§ *Akbar takes greater interest in the government of his kingdom.* With the year 1562 Akbar began to show much more active interest in the government of his kingdom, though it was some time before he took the complete control into his own hands. He began to find out all he could about his people and, like several other famous rulers in history, made a practice of going out at night in disguise, to see what he could discover for himself. Abu-l Fazl, in his account of Akbar's reign, gives a description of some of those evening excursions, and relates how on one occasion the Emperor was nearly recognized and only saved himself by a trick.

§ *Akbar marches against Governor of Jaunpur.* No sooner had Akbar humbled Adham Khan than he heard that the Governor of Jaunpur, Ali Quli Khan Uzbeg, was plotting treason against his master. Once again he acted with his accustomed promptitude. In the heat of July he hurried off to deal with his disloyal servant, and the latter was compelled to humble himself as Adham Khan had done.

§ *End of Pir Muhammad.* Akbar's Court now fortunately lost one of its worst members. Akbar had recalled Adham Khan from Malwa, leaving Pir Muhammad in charge there. The latter now started a new campaign and captured Asirgarh and several other important places, behaving, in each case, with the same brutality as before. But his evil career was soon brought to an end, for while retreating before the army of Baz Bahadur, he was drowned in the Narbada. 'Few of the smaller Indian tyrants, however, have a worse record than this Pir Muhammad.' [1]

§ *Akbar's alliance with Rajputs.* Early in 1562 Akbar took a step which had a very important effect on the whole history of his reign. While on a pilgrimage to Ajmer to visit the tomb of a famous saint who was there buried, he was met by

[1] Kennedy, *History of the Great Mogbuls*, vol. i, p. 238.

Raja Bihari Mall, the Rajput Chief of Jaipur. The latter, to show his loyalty to the Emperor, offered him his daughter in marriage. The offer was accepted and the lady became the wife of Akbar and the mother of Jahangir. This marriage had far-reaching results. It led Akbar to take a much more favourable view of Hinduism and his Hindu subjects. Further, it showed the people of India that Akbar was not content to remain the leader of a band of foreign conquerors, as his father and grandfather had been, but that he intended to be a really Indian ruler and to found an Indian dynasty. The marriage also secured for the Emperor the support of many Rajput rulers, from among whom he drew some of his leading counsellors. For example, on his marriage with Raja Bihari Mall's daughter, Akbar summoned to his Court the latter Chief's nephew, Raja Man Singh, and gave him an office there. He was the first of a number of Rajputs who were well content to enter the service of the Emperor and his successors, until the intolerance of the Emperor Aurangzeb alienated their regard.

§ *Subjection of Malwa.* The final subjection of Malwa was now completed by Abdullah Khan Uzbeg. Baz Bahadur ultimately made his submission to the Emperor and was given a command in the imperial service.

§ *End of Adham Khan.* The period of the control of Maham Anaga and her worthless son was now drawing to a close. Akbar had appointed as his principal minister Shamsu-d din Muhammad Atga Khan, and with his help was bent on freeing himself from the control of his foster-mother. In May 1562 Adham Khan made an attempt to retain his position by the murder of Shamsu-d din. Adham Khan and some of his followers suddenly entered the palace, where the minister was engaged in his duties, and treacherously murdered him. The murderer then attempted to enter the royal apartments where Akbar was sleeping at the time. But the Emperor, warned by his servants of what had occurred, armed himself, and, entering the hall suddenly, struck Adham Khan to the ground and then had him

thrown from the palace terrace. So ended this cruel and worthless villain.

§ *Death of Maham Anaga and assumption of royal power by Akbar.* Maham Anaga did not long survive her son's death. When Akbar reported what had happened, she replied: 'Your Majesty has done well.' Some days later she died also. Akbar had mother and son buried in a costly tomb at Delhi, near the Kutb Minar. He could afford to be generous in this matter, for it represented his freedom. His days of dependence were over. Henceforth the Emperor was to take supreme control of affairs.

§ *Abolition of Pilgrim tax.* In the autumn of 1562, the year of the disappearance of Maham Anaga and her son, Akbar's mind seems to have undergone a change. He was no longer the youth intent on sport and amusements. He seems to have realized now what his responsibilities were as ruler of a great country. Previous events had taught him that those responsibilities must be borne by himself alone and that he could not trust others to share them. Henceforth it was by his own efforts that the various reforms which he had conceived were to be carried out. One reform was introduced early in 1563. This was the abolition of the tax levied on pilgrims. The Emperor discovered its existence when in camp near Mathura, a city which is well known as a resort for pilgrims. Akbar at once ordered that all taxes on pilgrims should be abolished.

§ *Abolition of the jizya, 1564.* This was the prelude to a more important reform the following year (1564), namely, the abolition of the *jizya*, the poll-tax, which every one who was not a Muhammadan had to pay. This tax, which had originally been imposed by the Caliph Omar, had been introduced into India in the eighth century by Muhammad bin Kasim, the conqueror of Sind. It seems to have been levied more or less spasmodically by various Sultans of Delhi who were strong enough to collect it. Sultan Firoz Shah Tughlak (1351–1388) was the first to levy the tax upon the canonical scale, and included

Brahmans who had hitherto escaped or evaded payment. Its abolition was part of Akbar's definite policy of gaining the loyalty and support of his Hindu subjects. His successors also followed his example and never imposed the tax, until the bigotry of the Emperor Aurangzeb led to its reintroduction.

§ *Conquest of Gondwana.* In spite of his internal reforms Akbar found time to extend his dominions and to prosecute his policy of expansion. His first victim was Gondwana. This district, which now forms the northern part of the Central Provinces, was governed at the time by a clever and able woman, the Rani Durgavati, who was regent for her young son. Akbar had really no reason to attack her, but was urged by the desire to extend his dominions. An army was sent against her under Asaf Khan; and after a brave resistance the Rani was killed, and her capital city, Chauragarh, with an enormous quantity of spoil, fell into Asaf Khan's hands. The latter kept a large part of this for himself and did not send it to the Emperor, as he should have done.

§ *Rebellion of Khan Zaman.* Akbar had now to face a rebellion on the part of Khan Zaman-Ali Quli Khan Uzbeg. This officer, the leader of the Uzbeg nobles, had rendered services to the Emperor in the past second only to those of Bairam Khan. The decisive victory of Panipat had been largely the result of his efforts. But he and his party had become dissatisfied. They disliked the Emperor's centralizing policy and they disapproved of his 'Persianized ways'. They desired the royal authority to be confined to the vicinity of Delhi, leaving the feudatories a free hand in their own dominions. Ali Quli Khan, who held the post of Governor of Jaunpur, had already been in rebellion once and had been forced to submit. But now he was again at the head of the formidable party who had conceived the idea of deposing the Emperor and placing his nephew, the son of Prince Kamran, on the throne. To prevent this, Akbar had the Prince privately executed in 1565. This was the signal for a series of rebellions which lasted intermittently from

1565 to 1567. The Uzbeg nobles were finally crushed by Akbar in June 1567 at the battle of Manikpur near Allahabad, Ali Quli Khan being among the slain. 'A centralised rule as Akbar desired, and a feudal aristocracy such as that of which Khan Zaman was the representative could not co-exist. European history is full of similar instances.' [1]

§ *Building of Fort of Agra.* Like his son and grandson, Akbar was a great builder, and at this date he initiated a number of schemes, the earliest of which was a country retreat near Agra, to which he gave the name of Amanabad. Like nearly all Mughal buildings, it was surrounded by beautiful gardens. This earliest work has disappeared, but part of his next work stands to-day (the great fort at Agra). This was begun in 1565 and took some fifteen years to complete. Most of it was pulled down by Shah Jahan, but parts of Akbar's building still remain.

§ *Hakim Mirza's invasion of India.* Akbar's architectural and other plans were for a time interrupted by an invasion of India by his brother Hakim Mirza, the Governor of Kabul. Akbar marched north against him and reached Lahore, but his brother retreated on his approach and the danger passed away.

§ *Siege of Chitor, 1567.* Freed from these dangers Akbar was free to proceed with his policy of expansion and the year 1567 witnessed the capture of the fortress of Chitor, one of the strongest in India and the stronghold of the Rana of Mewar, the greatest of the Rajput Chiefs. Chitor stands on a high rock in the middle of a flat plain and was considered to be impregnable. Akbar resolved to capture it. He was annoyed at the attitude of the Ranas of Mewar towards his own family, whom they regarded as strangers and inferiors. Moreover Baz Bahadur, the fugitive Sultan of Malwa, had sought refuge with the Rana, who, feeling secure in his impregnable fortress of Chitor, had refused to surrender him. Akbar could not let this act of hostility go unpunished without loss of prestige, and decided to march upon Chitor in person in October 1567. It

[1] Kennedy, *History of the Great Mogbuls*, vol. i, p. 244.

was his good fortune to be opposed to Ude Singh, the unworthy son of a worthy sire, Rana Sanga. According to Tod,[1] 'Udai Singh had not one quality of a sovereign; and wanting martial virtue, the common heritage of his race, he was destitute of all'. His own son and successor, Rana Partap, is said to have bewailed the misfortunes of his country and race by exclaiming: 'Had there been no Ude Singh between me and Rana Sanga, the Turks would not have become masters of India.' Ude Singh fled to the Aravali Hills, but Jaimal, the heroic defender of Mairta, who had entered the services of the Rana, refused to follow the disgraceful example of his master and decided to defend Chitor to the last. Realizing the great natural strength of the place, Akbar decided to reduce the fort by a regular siege. A column of stone still marks the site of his encampment and is up to this day known as Akbar's *diwa* (lamp). All attempts to mine the fort were unsuccessful. Then by a stroke of fortune Akbar, noticing a man on the ramparts, shot him dead with his own hand. The man turned out to be Jaimal, the gallant defender of the fort.

The death of the commander, as is customary with Indian forces, decided the fate of the garrison, in spite of the heroic resistance offered by Fath Singh of Kailwa, commonly known as Fatta. The Rajput garrison, realizing the hopelessness of their cause, performed *jauhar*,[2] and 8,000 Rajputs, determining to sell their lives as dearly as possible, perished to a man rather than surrender. Akbar's victory was very dearly bought and his treatment of the vanquished was unnecessarily harsh. About 30,000 of the country people who had taken part in the defence are said to have been put to the sword by way of punishment. The fall of Chitor inflicted a deep wound upon Rajput sentiment, and no successor has dared to enter the sacred limits of their ancestral home. A new city, Udaipur, became the seat

[1] Tod's *Annals*, &c., Crooke, vol. i, p. 372.

[2] Immolation of the women on funeral pyres to save them from dishonour. A common practice with the Rajputs when driven to extremities.

of their government. The bravery of the Rajput chiefs was commemorated later by Akbar by the erection of statues of Jaimal and Fatta at the entrance of the Agra fort known as Hathipol.

§ *Reduction of Ranthambor.* Akbar next gave his attention to Ranthambor, and though obliged to give up his designs for a time, owing to the rebellion of the Mirzas, the siege was opened in 1569. It threatened to be of long duration. The fortress was held by a Hara army under Rao Sujan of Bundi, a fief holder of Mewar, who offered a stout resistance to the imperial forces. But before a month was over Rao Sujan had been bribed into surrender by a promise to be allowed to hold his fief, consisting of fifty-two districts, direct of the Emperor. The story of the surrender is a romantic one. Raja Man Singh took advantage of the Rajput code of chivalry to visit Rao Sujan in his fortress. Akbar, with his usual daring, is said to have accompanied him, disguised as a mace-bearer. A relative of the Rao recognized Akbar and carried away by an impulse of respect for royalty, he took the mace from Akbar's hands and led him to the *gadi* of the governor of the castle. Akbar did not lose his presence of mind and asked Rao Sujan his intentions. Man Singh anticipated the Rao by proposing the surrender of Ranthambor, on condition that the Rao should receive honourable employment in the Emperor's service. The Rao was confirmed in possession of all the territories in his charge as a direct vassal of the Emperor, besides being allowed to name his own terms for the maintenance of his honour and position.

Tod[1] gives us a graphic account of the treaty agreed to between the parties. 'A treaty was drawn up upon the spot, and mediated by the prince of Amber, which presents a good picture of Hindu feeling: 1. That the chiefs of Bundi should be exempted from that custom, degrading to a Rajput, of sending a *dola* to the royal harem. 2. Exemption from the jizya, or poll-tax. 3. That the chiefs of Bundi should not be compelled to cross

[1] Tod's *Annals*, &c., Crooke, vol. iii, p. 1482.

the Attock. 4. That the vassals of Bundi should be exempted from the obligation of sending their wives or female relatives "to hold a stall in the Mina Bazar" at the palace, on the festival of Nauroza. 5. That they should have the privilege of entering the Diwan-i-amm, or "hall of audience", completely armed. 6. That their sacred edifices should be respected. 7. That they should never be placed under the command of a Hindu leader. 8. That their horses should not be branded with the imperial dagh. 9. That they should be allowed to beat their nakkaras, or "kettledrums", in the streets of the capital as far as the Lal Darwaza or "red-gate"; and that they should not be commanded to make the "prostration" on entering the Presence. 10. That Bundi should be to the Haras what Delhi was to the king, who should guarantee them from any change of capital.'

§ *Surrender of Kalanjar.* The above account throws much light upon the manner in which Akbar continued to win the friendship of his former Rajput foes. The fall of Ranthambor, so shortly following that of Chitor, added immensely to the prestige of the Emperor, and the chief of Kalanjar surrendered his fortress to the imperial commanders without offering any resistance. The surrender of Kalanjar, the last great fortress, secured Akbar's position in northern India, and left him free to pursue his ambitious designs in other directions.

§ *Rana Partap resists the Emperor.* One chief, however, was still in the field against him. Ude Singh, though leading a life of slothful ease and incapable of retaking his ancestral domains, was secure in his Aravali fastnesses. He was succeeded in 1572 by his son, the renowned Rana Partap Singh. As his capital and his dominions were in the hands of the Emperor, the Rana decided to make a bid for his ancestral possessions, and gathering a band of his gallant Rajputs, commenced operations against the imperial garrisons and recovered a number of strongholds. Chitor, however, remained in Mughal hands and Akbar's forces defeated the Rana at Haldighat Pass in 1576. On this occasion

the Jhala Chief saved the life of the Rana by taking up his position under the royal banner and umbrella, while the Rana was escaping from the field. The Jhala Chief's devotion cost him his life, but the royal banner and umbrella are still possessed by his descendants as a mark of appreciation from Rana Partap. Rana Partap led a life of constant peril and danger and was on more than one occasion reduced to starvation. His pride, however, would not allow him to contemplate submission, and all Akbar's attempts to reduce him to subjection failed. His death in 1597 gave Akbar a chance of destroying the Rana's power altogether. But his hands were already full in other quarters and the appointment of Prince Salim to the command against the young Rana Amar Singh came to nothing, owing to the rebellion of that prince. The Rana accordingly was allowed to enjoy his freedom in peace up to the end of Akbar's reign.

§ *Birth of Prince Salim, 1569; the building of Fathpur-Sikri.* Though Akbar had several wives, none of his children so far had survived. In order to secure a son, he was in the habit of constantly visiting the shrines of famous saints at Ajmer and other places. Among others he visited Sikri, at a little distance from Agra, and the residence of the holy Shaikh Salim. The latter assured the Emperor that his prayers would be heard and that he would have a son. In August 1569 this promise was fulfilled by the birth of his eldest son, who was named Salim, after the Shaikh. In the following year a second son, Murad, was also born there.

Accordingly the Emperor determined to mark his gratitude by erecting a splendid city at Sikri, the name of which was changed to Fathpur-Sikri. The building of the city took about fourteen years, and it continued to be Akbar's capital till 1585, when he abandoned it altogether. It was not used by his successors and stands to-day in much the same condition as Akbar left it. The most famous building in it is the *Buland Darwaza*, the huge gateway of the mosque, which is described in Chapter VIII of this work.

§ *Invasion of Gujarat.* Akbar was persuaded to invade Gujarat by the dissensions existing among its various rulers, and set out at the head of his army in July 1572. The resistance offered was not great, and in November Akbar captured Ahmadabad, the capital of the country, and possessed himself of the person of Muzaffar Shah, the nominal ruler of the district.

§ *Capture of Surat and reduction of Gujarat, 1573.* Akbar now visited Cambay and went for a sail on the ocean, which he saw for the first time. But the news of Ibrahim Hussain Mirza's rebellion brought him hurriedly back; and marching against the latter's head-quarters, Surat, he defeated Ibrahim Mirza in the hard-fought battle of Sarnal in December 1572. This was followed by the siege of Surat in January 1573. Here he met Europeans for the first time, as a small Portuguese force had arrived from Goa to help in defending Surat. Instead of fighting, however, they made proposals of peace to the Emperor, which resulted in a regular treaty between him and the Viceroy of Goa, the main result of which was to facilitate the journey of pilgrims to Mecca. The operations ended in the surrender of Surat in February 1573. But a fresh rebellion in Gujarat broke out shortly afterwards under Muhammad Hussain Mirza. Akbar resolved to act at once, though it was the height of the hot season. On the 23rd August 1573 he left Fathpur-Sikri at the head of a small force of about 3,000, while the enemies were known to number at least 20,000. Akbar, like Napoleon, was a believer in rapidity of movement, and by his sudden appearance on the scene took his enemies by surprise. They were still watching the town of Ahmadabad, which was held for the Emperor by Khan-i-Azam, when, on September 2nd, Akbar suddenly fell upon them. The rebels were utterly defeated and their leader captured. On the 5th October 1573 Akbar was back in his capital. The whole campaign had occupied forty-three days—'the quickest campaign on record'.[1]

§ *Akbar and the Rajputs.* Akbar's relations with the Rajputs

[1] V. A. Smith, *Akbar.*

AKBAR INSPECTING THE BUILDING OF FATHPUR-SIKRI

form a very important part of the history of his reign and must be dealt with in detail.

'Of all the dynasties that had yet ruled in India', says an English historian, 'that of Tamerlane was the weakest and most insecure in its foundations.' The house of Timur had as yet obtained no secure footing in the country. Their enemies, both Hindu and Muslim, were numerous as well as formidable. Akbar's father and grandfather had both been forced by continuous warfare to lead a camp-life and had no chance of establishing an organized form of civil administration. The Muslims looked upon the new-comers as strangers and felt no loyalty towards them. The expulsion of Humayun and the elevation of the Suris to the throne had shown quite clearly that the Muslim elements in India could not be trusted. The chances of obtaining reinforcements from Afghanistan or Turkistan were small owing to the establishment of Hakim Mirza as ruler of Kabul. The veterans of Babur and Humayun were declining in numbers through the hazards of warfare. Moreover, feeling that the Emperor owed his all to them, they at times showed an insubordinate temper. On more than one occasion his generals kept the spoils of war for themselves, and it was not till the Emperor had proceeded in person to the spot to assert his authority that they submitted.

The Hindu Rajput Chiefs had been the mainstay of Hindu opposition throughout the Pathan period. Every king of Delhi had been forced to wage constant war against them, yet the Rajputs proclaimed their independence as soon as they felt the relaxation of the central authority. Amongst them the Rana of Mewar was the acknowledged chief, and though Chitor, the Mewar capital, had been sacked by Alau-d din Khilji, the Rana had weathered the storm and his house still enjoyed its undisputed superiority. Rana Sangram Singh had been the chief opponent of Babur, and was not only a warrior of tried merit, but was at the same time the head of a powerful Rajput confederacy. Though the battle of Khanua was a decisive victory

for Babur, yet the Rana remained independent. His death in 1529 brought Raja Maldeo of Mewar into prominence. Sher Shah had also fought against Maldeo and, though successful, lost so heavily that he is said to have exclaimed: 'How nearly had I thrown away the Empire of Delhi in seeking for a handful of Bajri [millet].'

Akbar's friendly relations with the Rajputs began with his marriage to the daughter of Raja Behari Mall—an important step, which profoundly influenced his future policy. Bhagwan Das and Man Singh, the son and grandson of the Raja, were enrolled amongst the nobility and received high commands. Akbar, who had already realized that his best policy was to act in such a manner that the recollection of past rivalries should be forgotten and that his subjects should unite together as one people, now decided to carry his ideas into practice by arrangements designed to exhibit himself as a protector against danger and oppression, to assure them of the free exercise of their ancient rights and privileges, to open to them high office in the State irrespective of race or creed, and to maintain a uniform standard of justice. The Rajputs had been the chief bulwark of Hinduism in the past, and if they could only be won over to the imperial cause, his task would be lightened. His marriage with the Rajput princess offered a suitable opportunity, and he decided to make the most of it. Rajput princes were not only raised to high commands, but they were in all respects treated as near relatives of the imperial family and were advanced in their official careers in accordance with their merits. Military service, which had so far been confined to Muslims, was thrown open to them, and the Rajputs, by their deeds and actions, justified the favour and confidence of the Emperor. But while realizing that a policy of reconciliation towards the Hindus in general and the Rajputs in particular was essential, he did not forget that rivals must be crushed before peace and order could be established in the country. While quite willing to receive the Rajputs with open arms as his friends and auxiliaries, he was

determined to leave no independent Rajput State unconquered, and the capture of Merta was planned while his marriage festivities were proceeding. In 1570 he married two more Rajput brides from Bikaner and Jaisalmir, thus still further allying himself with the Hindu chivalry.

These matrimonial alliances and Akbar's wisdom in the Council chamber and prowess in the field, coupled with his conciliatory attitude towards the Rajputs, endeared him to their hearts. Rana Partap was admired, yet no Rajput chief was willing to help him against the Emperor. The Rajputs supported the imperial cause whole-heartedly, and proved to be the stoutest defenders of the Emperor's person and crown in his struggles against his foes. They were raised to the highest offices in the State, and a Rajput Prince was appointed Viceroy at Kabul on the death of Hakim Mirza, the younger brother of the Emperor.

§ *His social reforms.* But though anxious to conciliate his Rajput and Hindu subjects, Akbar did not forget the broader demands of humanity. Female infanticide was forbidden. No marriage was regarded as valid without the consent of the bride and the bridegroom. Trial by ordeal and animal sacrifices were discouraged. The re-marriage of widows was legalized, and though he did not succeed in suppressing *sati*, he gave orders that it must be voluntary and on more than one occasion is said to have interfered in person, rather than allow the widow to be forced to burn herself against her will.

§ *His administration.* The administrative system of Akbar requires careful study as it has served as the basis of the administrative system of British India. His financial arrangements are of special importance in this respect as, in several provinces, the principles and practice of the Settlement Department are essentially the same as those elaborated by Akbar and his ministers. It is also to be remembered that he was the first great Muslim Sovereign of India who tried to promote co-operation between the various creeds and communities of this vast

country. The details of his administrative arrangements are described at length in Chapter VI of this work.

§ *His religious views.* Alau-d din Khilji founded the first Muslim empire in India early in the fourteenth century, conquering nearly the whole of northern India, and overrunning the Deccan far into the south. Besides aiming at being a second Alexander, he 'dreamed of emulating the blessed Prophet and founding a new religion'. A'tau-l Mulk, *kotwal* of Delhi, counselled him wisely to leave religion-making to the prophets, and the Sultan followed this advice.

Akbar too, now that his Empire was consolidated, thought of founding a new faith. The circumstances of the growth and development of his religious convictions are so mingled with his early political history, that it is well to give an account of them.

The condition of affairs at the beginning of his reign necessitated a policy of union with the Rajputs and a conciliation of all classes. During his struggle with the military aristocracy, Akbar was fighting for his crown no less than in his contests with the successors of Sher Shah. Akbar's ideal was to weld the different States of India into one compact Empire, and he soon perceived that he could never hope to achieve this without the co-operation of the Hindus, who formed a large majority of his subjects. Circumstances operated to increase his natural tolerance. He was, from many points of view, the type of a modern ruler. He fully realized the important principle that to rule well and effectively, he must not make any distinction between people professing different religious views. Efficiency was what Akbar sought in his subordinates. If a man served him well, it mattered little to him to what religion he belonged. This was the principle which underlay his inclination towards the Rajputs. This was the principle on which he married the Princesses of Jaipur and Marwar. This was the policy which allowed him to bestow honours upon men, irrespective of sectarian considerations. This tolerant policy was not at first

prompted by any doubts about the fundamental truth of the Muhammadan faith. He, however, listened to the doctrines of other faiths, and was eventually involved in enmity with the orthodox members of his own.

Akbar's religious history may properly be divided into three parts. Up to the year 1575 he was an acknowledged Musalman of the Sunni sect, regular in prayers, a zealous builder of mosques, and a constant pilgrim to the tombs of the saints, particularly that of the saint at Ajmer. For three years, from 1575–8, he was engaged in listening to the doctrines of Islam as expounded by orthodox teachers. Their constant quarrels convinced him that the law was not indubitable since there were so many differences between the doctors themselves. Instead of unity in the creed of Islam, he found a number of divisions. Abu-l Fazl, who had been introduced to him in 1574 by his elder brother Faizi, took a subordinate part in these discussions. Their father, Shaikh Mubarak, was meanwhile preparing the ground for the great step which he took in 1579.

In that year the Shaikh introduced one evening in the discussions of the *I'badat Khana* (the house of worship)—a building specially used by Akbar for these meetings—a subject which led to a long debate. His theme was that a king should be regarded not only as a temporal but also as the spiritual guide of his subjects. This doctrine struck at the fundamental principle of Islam, according to which the Koran is the highest authority. The orthodox doctors of religion, who had differed widely from one another during the past three years, could not wholly oppose this doctrine. A compromise was therefore arrived at. A document was drawn up, in which the Emperor, who was acknowledged a just ruler, was given the title of 'Imam-i-A'dil' (a just leader). While the Ulama were pacified by the insertion of a proviso that the Emperor should not alter the laws of Islam, the effect of the document was to constitute Akbar the supreme interpreter of those laws.

The result of this was important, and marks a turning-point

in the life and reign of Akbar. Sages and learned men of all creeds began to be invited to the Court. Perfect toleration was openly established, so far as other religions were concerned, but orthodox Muslims were humiliated. The Emperor once displaced the regular preacher at Fathpur-Sikri, and himself mounting the pulpit recited verses composed by Faizi. In 1580 he is said to have forbidden the use of the name of Muhammad in public prayers. One of his first actions after obtaining his new title was to dismiss orthodox Muhammadans from the judicial bench, thereby indicating that religious considerations were not to enter into the question before the judge or magistrate. As a result of these innovations, Akbar had to make head against a sea of troubles. The year 1581 proved to be one of the most critical in his life. All the influential Muhammadans were opposed to him; traitors surrounded his person; and the eastern provinces were in revolt.

§ *Invasion of Hakim Mirza.* A serious danger was a threatened invasion by his brother Hakim. After defeating him, Akbar felt much relieved, and could thenceforth wield his authority unopposed. The year 1582 marks the third stage in his religious career. The discussions in his presence of religious topics by learned men—Jains, Parsis, Hindus, and Christians—had completely shaken his belief in Islam. There is a well recorded incident of a discussion between a Mulla and a Jesuit missionary, the latter preparing to jump into the fire, and the former declining to do so.

§ *The Din Ilahi (Divine Religion).* Meanwhile Akbar had thought of founding a new religion suitable to Hindus and Muhammadans alike. He realized that hostilities among different faiths gave birth to political factions in the kingdom, and he wished to introduce religious uniformity in the land. In the year 1582, therefore, he proclaimed the *Din Ilahi*, declaring himself to be the vice-regent of God on earth, and the authorized exponent of His will. This religion seems to have been pure deism. There is only one God, and all must bow in rever-

ence to Him. All must subdue evil passions and practise virtues. All must bow to reason, and not to the 'authority of any Man'. If any manifestation of Divinity was needed, the sun, the planets, and fire were to be worshipped. There was to be no priest and no public worship. Akbar is believed to have sanctioned this devotion to the stars from regard for the prejudices of the people, but in fact he was himself influenced by Parsi ideas and ritual. Akbar believed in no prophets, except perhaps intermittently in himself. 'His appeal on all occasions was to human reason, and his right to interfere at all with religion was grounded on his duty as civil magistrate.'

While Akbar chiefly relied on the art of persuasion in inducing others to accept his faith, he sometimes used force and bribery also to intimidate or tempt others to follow him. Whatever the case may be, the new religion did not appeal to the masses, who could not comprehend it. Even some of his own trusted courtiers declared their dislike to it. The Rajput Raja Bhagwan Das was the first dissentient voice. Some years later his adopted son, Kanwar Man Singh, repeated the same sentiments: 'If discipleship means willingness to sacrifice one's life, I have already carried my life in my hand: what need is there of further proof? If, however, the term has another meaning and refers to faith, I certainly am a Hindu. If you order me to do so, I will become a Musalman, but I know not of the existence of any other religion than these two.'

Close observation of Akbar's religious policy indicates that his toleration was not equally shown towards all. Whereas the Hindus were treated with exceptional leniency, whereas the pilgrim's tax and the *jizya* were abolished early in the reign, whereas Rajput girls were taken in marriage by the Emperor, and all methods of conciliation followed, undue severity was shown to everything Muhammadan. People were not allowed to give the name of Muhammad to their children. The study of Arabic was discouraged. The practice of shaving the beard was introduced. The Muslim era was changed for a solar year.

The custom of prostration before the King was also introduced, to the disgust of orthodox Muslims. No new mosques were built, and the old ones were not repaired. Akbar's mode of life, on the whole, ceased to be that of a Muslim, and constantly approached the Hindu ideal of *dharma*, as modified by himself. This intolerance towards the religion of his birth indicated the swing of his mind, to the other extreme. Akbar twice invited Jesuit missionaries to his Court from Goa. Aquaviva came there in 1583 for thefirst time. The Emperor certainly favoured Christianity though he had never been eager to profess it. He allowed one of the missionaries to instruct Prince Salim, and generally showed reverence to the figures of Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary.

He was very prejudiced against the spirit of bigotry shown towards Hindus by doctors of Muslim law. In addition to his policy of religious toleration he was inclined for political reasons to favour the Hindus. He adopted some of their customs; he encouraged others. It is a natural supposition that the Rajput ladies in his harem exercised much influence on the already tolerant Emperor. But in spite of all this, Akbar's toleration did not extend to countenancing inhuman and unjust religious practices. He ordered that no one should force a woman to perform the rite of *sati*. He also legalized the re-marriage of widows, disregarding the effect that these changes would have upon the Hindus.

§ *The Deccan campaign.* Northern India is geographically, and in other respects, a different and a separate country from the Deccan plateau. In spite of the extension of communications the south, even to-day, differs widely from the north. The historical traditions also are very dissimilar. The Vindhya range forms the barrier between the two. In the absence of proper means of navigation, the north was the principal scene of historical action in India up to the sixteenth century. It was always a question of the penetration of the south by the north, not of the reverse process.

The problem of the conquest of the Deccan always presented itself to a ruler who had mastered the whole of the north. The truth of this is apparent from the earliest times. Leaving aside the early advances into the south of the Aryans and the Buddhists, the profitable southern expeditions led by Malik Kafur, the successful general of Alau-d din Khilji, are well known in history. The work of the Sultan, however, was not confined even in the north, much less in the south. The next great Sultan was Muhammad bin Tughlak—'a man of ideas'. His kingdom included portions of the Deccan. But decay in the north led to disruption in the south also, and the establishment of a number of independent southern kingdoms.

Of the Mughals, Akbar was the first who had leisure to think of the south. The existence of an independent group of powers in the Deccan was an offence to his victorious armies. He desired more wealth and power, and was anxious at the same time to gain a foothold in the south, to 'drive his Christian friends into the sea'.

Akbar resided at Lahore for about thirteen years, to ward off any danger from the Tartar Abdullah Khan Uzbeg in the north-west. During this period he sent four diplomatic missions to the south, with the object of securing the Sultans' submission without fighting. The embassies met with success nowhere, except partially in Khandesh.

Confusion then ensued in the kingdom of Ahmadnagar. There were several parties, each supporting a different claimant to the throne. The party in power sought the aid of Akbar, who placed Prince Murad and Abdurrahim, the Khan Khanan, in charge of the operations, which commenced in 1593. Chand Sultana, or Chand Bibi as she is popularly called, heroically defended her capital. In full armour she superintended the repairs of a breach made by the Mughals, and remained bravely at her post throughout the night. At last, by a treaty signed in 1596, the King of Ahmadnagar surrendered to the Emperor his claim on Berar. Thus closed one scene in the drama.

Murad soon realized that the question of the settlement of the boundaries of Berar was not an easy one. He found himself face to face with the combined armies of Ahmadnagar, Bijapur, and Golkonda, Khandesh alone taking his part. The result was an indecisive victory. For some time past, also, the Mughal cause had suffered seriously owing to dissensions between Prince Murad and the Khan Khanan. Akbar decided to withdraw both, to appoint Abu-l Fazl in their place, and to march himself to the Deccan. Daulatabad had been captured before his arrival in 1599. Ahmadnagar was besieged and, since Chand Bibi had been murdered, the town was easily taken in August 1600. The young king was sent to the fort of Gwalior, but another puppet king was set up, and the Nizam-Shahi dynasty was not finally extinguished till 1633. Before the capture of Ahmadnagar, Miran Bahadur Shah, the king of Khandesh, had thrown off Mughal authority. Akbar at once resolved to attack him. Early in 1599 he entered Khandesh and took the capital, Burhanpur. He then decided to besiege the impregnable fort of Asirgarh, than which 'it was impossible to conceive a stronger fortress, or one more amply supplied with artillery, warlike stores and provisions'. The King, Miran Bahadur Shah, having been invited to visit the Emperor for the purpose of negotiations, was treacherously detained; but still the garrison did not yield. Force failing to achieve its object, the Emperor tried bribery. Some of the principal officers were bought over, and the gates of the fortress were opened. Akbar hastened to achieve this, his last conquest, by perfidy and bribery, because Salim, his eldest son, whom he left in charge at Ajmer to carry on war against Udaipur with the aid of Raja Man Singh, had rebelled and assumed the imperial authority at Allahabad. The newly conquered kingdoms were at once organized into three new *subahs*, and Prince Daniyal was placed in charge of them, together with Malwa and Gujarat. This raised the total number of *subahs* to fifteen. This work accomplished, Akbar returned to Agra in May 1601, to deal with the rebellious Salim.

§ *Prince Salim's Conduct.* Akbar wrote a temperate letter to his son, reminding him of his duty. The Prince made some show of repentance, and was appointed Governor of Bengal and Orissa. But in 1602 he again outraged his father's feelings by causing Abu-l Fazl, one of the Emperor's closest friends, to be murdered on his return from the Deccan. Akbar, who did not know his son's share in the plot, sent a lady of the imperial family to effect a reconciliation. Salim visited the Court and, having made his submission, was again ordered to carry on the war against the Rana of Udaipur, but put off his march on various pretexts. The Emperor then allowed him to stay idly at Allahabad, where he indulged in debauchery and committed acts very displeasing to his father. Akbar summoned him to the Court, and Salim, probably under the threat of being supplanted by Khusru, his own eldest son, came to Agra. The Emperor rated him soundly, slapped his face, confined him for some time, and put him in the charge of a physician. The punishment proved adequate, and for the remainder of the reign Salim's behaviour was satisfactory. Akbar was all the more anxious for a reconciliation, as Salim was now his only surviving son.

Murad had died of drink in the Deccan in May 1599, and Daniyal also succumbed to the effects of the same vice five years later (April 1604). Thus there was no one but Salim as the acknowledged heir to the throne, although the Khan-i-Azim, Raja Man Singh, and some others favoured the cause of Khusru, whose claim they supported chiefly from motives of interest.

Akbar was now nearing his end. In the autumn of 1605 he was attacked by severe dysentery, and in the middle of October the disease took a fatal turn. The last scene is described by his son. Having summoned all his nobles, he asked forgiveness of each and reconciled them with his successor. Salim fell at his father's feet weeping, and Akbar signed to him to bind on the royal scimitar in his presence. He exhorted him to look to the comfort of the harem, and to respect his old friends and advisers.

On the 17th October 1605 he passed away. He was buried at Sikandara, near Agra, in a tomb partly planned by himself. In 1691 his tomb was rifled by the Jats, who, not content with robbing it of its ornaments, disinterred the Emperor's remains and burnt them.

After his death there were persistent rumours that he had been poisoned, but the evidence is not sufficient to support a definite verdict on the matter.

§ *Conclusion.* Akbar's real work had been accomplished. His whole reign is a record of well-used opportunities. As a conqueror, as a statesman, as a ruler, he stands out as the greatest of the Mughals. He had succeeded to a kingdom which consisted of the Punjab, excluding the hill-country and Multan, and certain portions of the modern Umbala and Meerut Divisions. Kabul had been left by his father to a younger son. His hold on the Punjab was doubtful, as Sikandar Sur was still in the field with a large army. Two other Sur rivals were contesting his hold upon the little he possessed of Hindustan. Shortly after his accession to the throne news arrived that Hemu, defeating other rivals, had taken possession of Agra and Delhi and was marching upon the Punjab. Most of the veteran commanders of his father were in favour of a retreat to Kabul, but the youthful sovereign of fifteen summers decided to fight manfully for his throne. This determined spirit proved of great use to him in after-life. The various claimants to the throne were defeated and disposed of and within twelve months the Mughal dominions of Babur acknowledged the sway of his grandson. The career so auspiciously begun proved to be one of the most glorious in the annals of Mughal India. Within twenty years of his succession to the throne his authority had become firmly established from the confines of Assam to those of Khorasan. The Rajput Princes, who had proved a thorn in the side of his predecessors, had, with one solitary exception, been subdued and converted into his devoted servants. The Muhammadan kingdoms of Multan, Sind, Gujarat, Kashmir,

Malwa, and Bengal had ceased to exist, and Akbar's sway over the whole of northern India and Afghanistan was established on a firm basis. Rebellion after rebellion was crushed with a heavy hand, and the Emperor's power grew stronger with every challenge offered to his authority. His victorious arms even made their way across the Vindhya, and before his death three Deccan provinces had been added to his dominions and he stood forth as one of the most powerful sovereigns of the East. On the Indian continent no sovereign dared withstand him, and but for Salim's rebellious conduct there might have been further consolidation of his power in the Deccan.

Akbar's character. In person Akbar was of middle stature and possessed of immense bodily strength. His complexion was rather dark, but he had a commanding countenance and looked every inch a king. His eyes sparkled brightly. In later years he shaved his face in the Hindu manner. His manners were charming, and he is praised for his pleasant address and kindness of heart by all who came in contact with him. Extremely moderate in his diet, he had a great liking for fruit. He was addicted to the use of strong liquor and opium, like his father and grandfather, showing in later years a marked preference for the latter drug.

He was a clever mechanic and took particular pleasure in making guns and in founding and modelling cannon. Workshops were maintained on a large scale within the palace, and he was credited with many inventions and improvements.

So far as one can tell, he never learnt to read and write; yet he was not an ignorant man. He was very fond of having books read aloud to him, and took a keen delight in the conversations of the learned. His wonderful memory stood him in great stead and his alleged illiteracy[1] never proved an obstacle to excellent administration. His knowledge of detail was marvellous. To the qualities of a good administrator and a capable general he united an organizing skill in peace and war which

[1] This question is discussed at length in Chapter VI.

evoked general admiration. He was intimately acquainted with the works of great authors and could refer to them with ease. Keen in debate, his talk always impressed people with the idea that he was well-read and well-informed. Like other Indian sovereigns he was fond of elephant-fights, hunting, polo, and other amusements. Possessed of a naturally quick temper, he had schooled himself in self-control; but when at times his temper got the upper hand, he was capable of going to any length. Such lapses, however, were rare.

The ruling passion of his life, however, was ambition. His whole career was devoted to territorial aggrandizement. According to him 'a monarch should be ever intent on conquest; otherwise his neighbours rise in arms against him. The army should be exercised in warfare, lest from want of training they become self-indulgent'.[1] Throughout the whole of his long reign he was engaged in hostilities, and though generous to vanquished rulers who submitted to his authority, he did not readily forgive those who dared to question his power. One cannot admire the manner in which he waged war against Rana Partap nor his treatment of Muzaffar Shah of Gujarat and Bahadur Shah of Khandesh. In religious affairs he was an inquirer and his inquiries led him into difficulties. It is contended that, despite these inquiries, Akbar never really lost the faith of his youth. But it is difficult to reconcile this with the many instances which testify to his almost complete apostasy from Islam. His disregard of the commands and prohibitions of the Islamic law, his dislike of the name Muhammad, his childish order that such words as contained letters peculiar to the Arabic language should be misspelt, his destruction of mosques, and many of his recorded sayings, one of which runs, 'Not being Muslim myself, it was unmeet to force others to become such,' are clear evidence of this. He certainly lost reverence for the saints of Islam, and in his later years entirely abandoned his pilgrimages to the shrine of Muinu-d din Chishti at Ajmer.

[1] Vincent Smith, *Akbar*, p. 346.

Akbar proved his worth in different fields of action. He was an intrepid soldier, a great general, a wise administrator, a benevolent ruler, and a sound judge of character. His personal ascendancy over his followers was great. Autocracy to some extent spoiled him, yet his great personal qualities shielded him from the consequences of his errors. Though loved by the people who came in personal contact with him, he was feared by his subjects, and it was due to the feeling of dread which he inspired that, despite rebellions provoked by his religious and political vagaries, only one attempt upon his life is recorded—that of Fulas at Delhi in 1564—during his long reign of nearly fifty years.

He was a born leader of men and can rightly claim to be one of the mightiest sovereigns known to history. The military adventurer, who had to contest the dominion of India with rivals possessing greater resources than his own and a personal following in the country, not only consolidated his own position, but at the same time, during a reign of nearly fifty years, built up a powerful empire which could vie with the strongest, and established a dynasty whose hold over India was not contested by any rival for about a century. His reign witnessed the final transformation of the Mughals from mere military invaders into a permanent Indian dynasty.

CHAPTER III

JAHANGIR

¶ *Accession of Jahangir, October 1605.*

AKBAR on his death-bed had desired that his only surviving son Salim should succeed him, and the latter now ascended the throne (21st October 1605) under the title of Nuru-d din Muhammad Jahangir Padshah Ghazi. Jahangir (world-grasper) is the title by which he is usually known. The new Emperor, who was in his 38th year, possessed undoubted ability. Vincent Smith sums up his character as 'a strange compound of tenderness and cruelty, justice and caprice, refinement and brutality, good sense and childishness'. A habitual indulgence in drink and opium undermined the fine constitution he had inherited from his family, and during the latter part of his reign he became a nerveless tool in the hands of his wife and her ambitious family. With all these faults he was not destitute of good points. He was a keen supporter of art and literature, and like his ancestor Babur, wrote his own memoirs. The *Wakiat-i-Jahangiri*, believed to have been written by the Emperor with his own hands, embraces the period 1605–42. Written in the same frank style as the memoirs of Babur, they make no concealment of the faults and failings of the author. They also show that Jahangir, like Babur, possessed a keen appreciation of the beauties of nature.

Jahangir's only serious rival was his own son Khusru. While the attempt to substitute the son for the father as heir to the throne during the last days of Akbar had failed, Khusru was possessed of a personality that made him extremely popular, and secured for him numerous supporters. To conciliate the latter, prominent among whom was Raja Man Singh, Jahangir promised a general amnesty to those who had espoused the cause of his son.

This was accompanied by a profession of orthodoxy and a promise to protect Islam.

§ *Jahangir's edicts issued at time of accession.* The new reign opened with the promulgation of twelve edicts:

1. Prohibition of cesses (Jakat).
2. Regulations about highway robbery and theft.
3. Free inheritance of property of deceased persons.
4. Prohibition of the sale of wine and of all kinds of intoxicating liquors (in the *Wakiat-i-Jahangiri* the Emperor comments on his own performances in this direction and states that he is endeavouring to cut down his own allowance and to confine himself to drinking only at night and 'only to promote digestion of my food').
5. Prohibition of the taking possession of houses and of cutting off noses and ears of criminals.
6. Prohibition of taking forcible possession of property (Ghasbi).
7. Building of hospitals and appointments of physicians to attend the sick.
8. Prohibition of the slaughter of animals on certain days.
9. Respect paid to Sunday (a tribute to the memory of his father who held that day in great veneration).
10. General confirmation of Nawabs and Jagirdars.
11. Confirmation of aima [1] lands.
12. Amnesty for all prisoners in forts and in prisons of every kind.

§ *Rebellion of Prince Khusru; his subsequent career.* These edicts, which are reminiscent of those issued by Asoka and other monarchs, had however little practical effect, and the Emperor soon had more serious business on hand than the promulgation of decrees. Prince Khusru broke into rebellion and fled to the

[1] Described in the *Wakiat-i-Jahangiri* as 'lands devoted to the purposes of prayer and praise'. The form of feudal tenure known as frankalmoign forms a possible parallel.

Punjab. Jahangir showed unusual activity in dealing with the outbreak, and hurried off in pursuit of his son at the head of a large force. Dilawar Khan, one of his generals, threw himself into Lahore and resisted Khusru's attempt to seize the fort. The Prince's forces were easily dispersed, and he himself was captured with a few followers, while attempting to cross the river Chenab. The captured Prince was brought to his father, who had reached Lahore, and the latter in his vengeance showed the typical ferocity of the race of Timur. Hussain Beg and Abdul Aziz, Khusru's chief followers, who had been captured with him, were first disposed of. 'I ordered these two villains to be enclosed in the skins of a cow and an ass, and to be placed on asses, face to the tail and to be paraded round the city. As the skin of a cow dries quicker than the skin of an ass, Hussain Beg lived only to the fourth watch and then died. Abdul Aziz, who was in the ass's skin and had moisture conveyed to him, survived.[1] The *Iqbal-Nama* adds other unsavoury details. The principal offenders were then dealt with. 'To strengthen and confirm our rule I directed that a dense row of stakes should be set up from the garden to the city and that the rebels and others who had taken part in this revolt should be impaled thereon and thus receive their deserts in this most excruciating punishment.' Jahangir himself rode in state through the lines of his victims, followed by the wretched Khusru. The Prince was then blinded, but not totally, and having thus been rendered unfit to succeed, the Emperor's next son, Prince Parviz, was declared his heir. For ten years the Prince remained in a captivity which gradually became less severe. Even though partially blind and a prisoner, his personal charm survived. Terry, Sir Thomas Roe's chaplain, writes: 'For that Prince, he was a gentleman of a very lovely presence and fine carriage, so exceedingly beloved of the common people, that as Suetonius writes of Titus, he was *amor et deliciae, etc.*, the very love and

[1] This particular form of punishment was also used by General Avitabile in the days of Ranjit Singh, in preserving order in the town of Wazirabad.

delight of them ; aged then about thirty-five years [Smith puts his age at twenty-nine]. He was a man who contented himself with one wife, which with all love and care accompanied him in all his streights, and therefore he never would take any wife but herself, though the liberty of religion did admit of plurality.'

After ten years of comparatively mild captivity Jahangir was prevailed upon to transfer Khusru to the care of Asaf Khan, the brother of Nur Jahan. Asaf Khan was a supporter of Prince Khurram, the Emperor's third son and the next in succession after Prince Parviz. From the custody of Asaf Khan the unfortunate Khusru passed in 1620 into the hands of his brother, Prince Khurram. As was only to be expected, his existence soon came to an end. Prince Khurram was not likely to be a sympathetic jailer. Prince Parviz, the official heir, was already drinking himself to death, and the half-blind captive was the only obstacle between Prince Khurram and the throne. Early in 1622 it was officially announced that Khusru had died of colic, and Jahangir accepted this version in his diary. Actually he had been strangled by a ruffian named Raza Bahadur at the order of Prince Khurram. Khusru's personal popularity resulted in his being regarded as a saint after his death. The unfortunate Prince and his nephew Prince Dara Shikoh, with their faithful and loyal wives, form one of the saddest little groups in Mughal history.

§ *Execution of the Sikh Guru, Arjun; persecution of the Jain priests.* Khusru's unsuccessful rebellion also involved the death of Arjun, the fifth Guru of the Sikhs, and the author of the *Granth Sahib*. The Guru had been imprudent enough to assist Khusru with a sum of money. Jahangir sentenced him to a heavy fine, and, on his refusal to pay, tortured him to death. As Vincent Smith points out, this was not an act of religious persecution, but a punishment for aiding the rebellion. In this connexion it may be pointed out that the view so often held that from Akbar to Aurangzeb the Emperors pursued a tolerant

policy towards their non-Muslim subjects cannot be upheld. We find instances of religious persecution in the reigns of both Jahangir and Shah Jahan. The *Intikhab-i-Jahangir Shahi* gives the following account of Jahangir's treatment of the Jains of Gujarat. 'The Emperor ordered them to be banished from the country and their temples to be demolished. Their idol was thrown down on the uppermost steps of the mosque, that it might be trodden upon by those who came to say their daily prayers there. By this order of the Emperor the infidels were exceedingly disgraced and Islam exalted.'

§ *Nur Jahan.* Jahangir's life and reign were deeply influenced by his marriage in 1611 to Nur Jahan, whose original name was Mihru-n-Nisa. She was the daughter of a Persian nobleman, Mirza Ghias Beg. The latter had come to India with his family in the reign of Akbar to seek his fortune, and on the way Mihru-n-Nisa was born at Kandahar. The family was well received by Akbar, and Ghias Beg, who was a man of considerable literary ability, was raised to the office of superintendent of the household. Mihru-n-Nisa was afterwards married to Ali Kuli Beg, otherwise known as Sherafgan, who was subsequently given by Jahangir the *jagir* of Burdwan in Bengal. The old story that Jahangir had seen the girl at Court in his father's life-time and fallen in love with her, and that Akbar had arranged her marriage to get her out of the way seems to have no foundation in fact. Akbar, however, did undoubtedly keep a very jealous eye on the ladies of the Court, for there is the well-known case of Anarkali, who was buried alive by Akbar's order under suspicion of having become too intimate with his son. The beautiful tomb, with its passionate inscription, subsequently erected by Jahangir over her remains in Lahore,[1] proves that the suspicion was well justified.

Soon after receiving his Bengal *jagir* Sherafgan fell under the displeasure of the Emperor, who sent his foster-brother Kutbu-d din to arrest him and bring him to his Court. Sheraf-

[1] Used as a parish church from 1857 to 1887, and now the Record Office.

gan resisted, and in the scuffle which followed both he and Kutbu-d din met their deaths. Sherafgan's widow was sent to Court, where she was placed for a time in the care of Rukiya Sultana, one of Akbar's widows. The sequel may be related in the words of the *Iqbal-Nama*. 'She remained some time without notice. Since, however, Fate had decreed that she should be the queen of the world and the princess of the time, it happened that on the celebration of the New Year's day, in the sixth year of the Emperor's reign (1611), her appearance caught his far-seeing eye and so captivated him that he included her among the inmates of his select harem.' Day by day her influence and dignity increased. First of all she received the title of Nur Mahal, 'Light of the Harem', but was afterwards distinguished by that of Nur Jahan Begum, 'Light of the World'. All her relations and connexions were raised to honour and wealth. No grant of lands was conferred upon any woman except under her seal. In addition to giving her titles that other kings bestow, the Emperor granted Nur Jahan the rights of sovereignty and government. Sometimes she would sit in the balcony of her palace while the nobles would present themselves and listen to her dictates. Coins were struck in her name with this superscription: 'By order of the King Jahangir, gold has a hundred splendours added to it by receiving the impression of Nur Jahan the Queen Begum.' On all *farmans* also receiving the imperial signature the name of 'Nur Jahan the Queen Begum' was jointly attached. At last her authority reached such a pass that the Emperor was such only in name. Repeatedly he gave out that he had bestowed the sovereignty on Nur Jahan Begum and would say: 'I only require a seer of wine and half a seer of meat. It is impossible to describe the beauty and wisdom of the Queen. In any matter that was presented to her, if a difficulty arose, she immediately solved it. Whoever threw himself upon her protection was preserved from tyranny and oppression; and if ever she learnt that any orphan girl was destitute and friendless, she would bring about her marriage and give her a wedding

portion. It is probable that during her reign no less than 500 orphan girls were thus married and portioned.'

Nur Jahan must have been a remarkable woman. Unlike most Eastern women she retained her good looks, if contemporary portraits are to be believed, until quite late in life. As is plain from the above-quoted passage, her influence over the Emperor, sodden with drink and opium, was enormous. She was his constant companion and shared his delight in sport and camp-life. The following passage from the Emperor's diary proves that she was no mere spectator in the chase:

'My huntsmen reported to me that there was in the neighbourhood a tiger which greatly distressed the inhabitants. I ordered his retreat to be closely surrounded with a number of elephants. Towards evening I and my attendants mounted and went out. As I had made a vow not to kill any animal with my own hands, I told Nur Jahan to fire my musket. The smell of the tiger made the elephant very restless and he would not stand still, and to take good aim from a howdah is a very difficult feat. Mirza Rustam, who after me has no equal as a marksman, had fired three or four shots from an elephant's back without effect. Nur Jahan, however, killed this tiger at the first shot.'

Nur Jahan further strengthened her position at Court by marrying her daughter by her first husband to the Emperor's youngest son, Prince Shahryar. Her father, who was given the title of Itimadu-d daulah, became one of the most influential members of the Court. He lived till 1621 and Jahangir thus comments on his death in his diary: 'I felt inexpressible sorrow at the loss of such an able and faithful minister, and so wise and kind a friend.' Nur Jahan's brother, who received the title of Asaf Khan, was also one of the Emperor's most trusted advisers. The presence of this inner circle round the person of the Emperor was bitterly resented by the older nobles, and their unpopularity was aggravated by their mismanagement of the finances of the Empire.

§ *War with the Rana of Mewar and ruler of Ahmadnagar.* The

imperial forces were engaged in several wars in the early part of the reign. Minor disturbances in Bengal were easily suppressed. But two wars of greater importance followed. There was the war with Mewar—a legacy of earlier days—which was finally ended in 1614 by the surrender of Rana Amar Singh and his son Karan to the imperial army under Prince Khurram. Jahangir, in conformity with his father's policy of conciliating the Rajputs, treated the ruler of Mewar with great generosity, and though Mewar became a tributary State, the terms granted were extremely generous. In the Deccan the imperial armies were less fortunate. Throughout the reign a desultory campaign dragged on against the forces of Ahmadnagar. The latter were commanded by an Abyssinian eunuch, Malik Ambar, who proved an able commander, and employed guerrilla tactics with great success. The difficulties of the imperial forces were aggravated by continual dissension among the commanders. The nominal commanders were Prince Parviz and subsequently Prince Khurram. But the real control was in the hands of the Khan Khanan, Abdurrahim, and other leading chiefs. These spent their time in quarrelling among themselves and in reporting one another to the Emperor. In 1616 a partial success was achieved by Prince Khurram's capture of Ahmadnagar. For this success he was given the title of Shah Jahan and a very large reward. But the capture did not end the war, which lasted throughout the reign. Malik Ambar survived until 1626. The *Iqbal-Nama* thus describes him: 'Ambar was a slave but an able man. In warfare, in command, in sound judgment and in administration he had no rival or equal. He well understood that predatory warfare which, in the language of the Deccan, is called *bargi-giri* (kazzaki). He kept down the turbulent spirits of that country and maintained his exalted position to the end of his life, and closed his career in honour. History records no other instance of an Abyssinian slave arriving at such eminence.' His death was a loss from which the Deccan kingdom never really recovered.

§ *Capture of Kangra.* In one direction Jahangir succeeded where Akbar failed. This was in the capture of the strong fortress of Kangra, which had defied more than one Indian ruler. According to the *Wakiat-i-Jahangiri* it was believed to be impregnable. 'Since the day that the sword of Islam and the glory of the Muhammadan religion have reigned in Hindustan, not one of the mighty Sultans had been able to reduce this fort.' This, however, is not strictly true, for although a fortress of very great natural strength, it had fallen both to Mahmud of Ghazni and to Firoz Shah Tughlak.

Jahangir subsequently visited the place and celebrated his victory in a manner that cannot have been pleasing to the Hindu inhabitants. 'On the 24th of the month I went to pay a visit to the fortress and I gave orders that the Kazi, the Chief Justice, and others learned in the law of Islam, should accompany me and perform the ceremonies required by our religion. After passing over about half a kos we mounted to the Fort, and by the grace of God, prayers were said, the *Khutba* was read, a cow was killed and other things were done such as never had been done before from the foundation of the Fort to the present time. All this was done in my presence and I bowed myself in thanks to the Almighty for his great conquest, which no previous monarch had been able to accomplish, I ordered a large mosque to be built in the fortress' (*Wakiat-i-Jahangiri*).

§ *Jahangir's religion.* This public profession of faith might no doubt have satisfied the orthodox, but Jahangir, in spite of his profession, was never a devout Muhammadan. Like his father, his religious tendencies were distinctly deistic. He delighted in hearing disputes between the Jesuits who visited his Court and the Mullahs. Always a lover of art, he surrounded himself with a number of religious pictures, mostly of a Christian nature, which gave offence to many of his courtiers. He even went so far as to employ a seal inscribed with Christian emblems.

§ *Rebellion of Shah Jahan.* The Emperor's last years were clouded by rebellion and disaster. His health was failing, and

his sons waited eagerly for the succession. Absence at such a time would be fatal to the chances of any one of them. Consequently, when in 1622 Kandahar was captured by the Persians and Shah Jahan was ordered to lead an army for its recovery, the Prince refused to obey and broke into rebellion. The rebel Prince was joined by Abdurrahim, the Khan Khanan, an old man who had enjoyed the imperial favour for many years. His defection was bitterly resented by the Emperor. 'Khan Khanan, who had held the exalted dignity of being my tutor, had now turned rebel, and in the seventieth year of his age had blackened his face with ingratitude. But he was by nature a traitor and a rebel. His father [Bairam Khan] had acted in the same shameful way towards my revered father. He had but followed the course of his father and disgraced himself in his old age' (*Wakiat-i-Jahangiri*). Shah Jahan's original intention was to march on Agra and seize the immense treasure stored there. But an army under Prince Parviz as nominal commander, with Mahabat Khan as his adviser, was hastily sent to bar his way. The armies met at Balochpur to the south of Delhi and Shah Jahan was completely defeated. He fled southwards, pursued by Mahabat Khan. The aged Khan Khanan surrendered at discretion and was kindly treated. Shah Jahan, after traversing Malwa and the Deccan, seized Bengal, where he organized another army. But Mahabat Khan gave him no rest and drove him, after another battle, to the Deccan. For the next few years he wandered about, seeking allies, among them Malik Ambar.

Finally he was reconciled to his father in 1625, and his sons, Dara Shikoh and Aurangzeb, appeared at Court, probably to act as hostages for his good behaviour. He himself remained in the south until his father's death.

§ *Rebellion of Mahabat Khan.* The rebellion of Shah Jahan was hardly ended when a new danger appeared. Mahabat Khan, the victorious general, had by his successes excited the jealousy of Nur Jahan and her brother Asaf Khan. Making a pretext of the fact that he had not handed over to the Emperor the elephants

he had captured in Bengal, and also that he had realized large sums of money due to the State, they succeeded in persuading Jahangir to recall him to Court. Mahabat Khan was shrewd enough to see that this meant ruin. 'This recall was owing to the instigation of Asaf Khan, whose object was to bring him to disgrace and to deprive him of honour, property and life' (*Iqbal-Nama*). He therefore resolved to rebel. Jahangir and Nur Jahan were at the time on their way to Kabul. Mahabat Khan, by a rapid march, came up with the imperial party at the river Jhelum. Surrounding the camp, he made the Emperor a prisoner, while Nur Jahan managed to escape. All attempts to rescue the Emperor by force proved a failure, and he ultimately arrived in Kabul as a prisoner of Mahabat Khan. Here Nur Jahan skilfully played upon the feelings of Mahabat Khan, and so lulled his suspicions that she and her husband were finally able to make their escape to Rohtas, where the Emperor's adherents had collected a considerable force. Mahabat Khan, seeing that he was outwitted, made a virtue of necessity and agreed to submit to the Emperor's orders. At the same time he released Asaf Khan, whom he had made a prisoner. Jahangir then ordered him to go to Tatta, in Sind, in pursuit of Shah Jahan, who was rumoured to be attempting to seize that fortress and to be contemplating a fresh rebellion. Instead of fighting, however, Mahabat Khan made his peace with the Prince, whose position was strengthened by the death of his brother, Prince Parviz, his only possible rival for the throne. This occurred in October 1626. Prince Parviz had been a habitual drunkard for years and his death was probably due to intemperance. But there were strong rumours that he had been poisoned by Shah Jahan, and this accusation was levelled many years later by Aurangzeb against his father. In a letter (quoted by Prof. Sarkar in his *History of Aurangzib*[1]) Aurangzeb writes: 'How do *you* still regard the memory of Khusru and Parviz, whom you did to death before your accession and who had threatened no injury to you?'

[1] Vol. iii, p. 155.

§ *Death of the Emperor.* Shah Jahan had not long to wait. Continual excess had worn out the constitution of the Emperor, who was also suffering from severe asthma. In the autumn of 1627 he started back from his usual visit to Kashmir. While engaged in hunting, a fatal accident overtook one of his shikaris, who fell over a precipice and was killed before the Emperor's eyes. 'The fate of the poor man greatly affected the Emperor. It seemed as though he had thus seen the angel of death. From that time he had no rest or ease and his state was entirely changed. The journey was continued two days. On the next day he called for a glass of wine, but when it was placed to his lips he was unable to swallow. Towards night he grew worse and he died early on the following day in the 22nd year of his reign' (*Iqbal-Nama*). His remains were brought to Lahore and buried in a beautiful tomb at Shahdara, on the banks of the Ravi. The personal character of Jahangir has already been described. Speaking of the reign in general, Vincent Smith remarks: 'The administration generally was conducted on the lines laid down by Akbar, and the reign of Jahangir may be regarded as a continuation of that of his father, marked by a certain amount of deterioration due to Jahangir's personal inferiority when compared with his illustrious parent.'[1]

§ *Relations of Mughal Emperors with European Powers.* While the political and military events of the reign are not of any great importance, the relations of the Mughal Empire with European powers are a very important feature of the period. More than a century earlier, Vasco da Gama had brought the flag of Portugal into the harbour of Calicut, and from this small beginning the Portuguese had built up a formidable power in the Indian Ocean. Goa, their principal Indian Settlement, had been acquired from the Bijapur kingdom by their great Viceroy, Albuquerque. They had settlements in the Persian Gulf and in the Straits of Malacca. But their power was on the wane for a variety of reasons. Their violent intolerance made them

[1] *History of India*, p. 387.

extremely unpopular, particularly with broad-minded rulers like Akbar. Their policy of expansion was exhausting Portugal, itself a poor and backward country and unfit to maintain a large Empire, while the temporary absorption of Portugal by Spain (1580–1640) was another fatal blow to Portuguese ambition. This absorption resulted in the appearance of a second European power in Eastern waters—the Dutch. The young Republic was at war with Spain, and as Spain and Portugal were now one, the Dutch soon came into the field as their rivals for the trade of the East.

During the reign of Jahangir a third European power—England—appeared. The great sailors of the days of Elizabeth had largely confined their operations to the western world, and it was not until the very end of Elizabeth's reign (1600) that the East India Company came into being. With the accession of James I and the initiation of a pro-Spanish policy, involving abandonment of designs on the Spanish dominions in the New World, increasing interest was shown in pushing the fortunes of England in the East. In 1608 Captain William Hawkins arrived at Surat, the earliest scene of the operations of the East India Company, armed with a letter from James I to Jahangir, with the object of securing trading privileges for the Company. Hawkins's arrival was bitterly resented by the Portuguese, who at that time enjoyed special privileges at the Mughal Court, and they threw every obstacle in his way. He managed, however, to make his way to the imperial presence and soon won the favour of the Emperor. Jahangir gave him an official appointment and a salary, and found him a genial bottle-companion in his nightly orgies. This lasted for three years, till, in 1611, tired of the incessant intrigues of the Portuguese, which prevented his obtaining anything of practical value for his countrymen, Hawkins quitted the Court and returned to his ship. His memoirs form an interesting contemporary description of the Mughal Court.

In the next year open hostilities broke out between the Portuguese and the English. Two English ships, the *Dragon* and the *Osiander*—the latter a mere cockboat—put up a suc-

cessful fight against a large Portuguese fleet—a fight almost comparable to that of Grenville in the *Revenge*. The news of this victory much impressed the Emperor, who formed a high opinion of the bravery of the English. It is worthy of notice in this connexion that the Mughal Empire, even at the height of its power, never possessed any navy worth considering, a fact which Vincent Smith considers one of the contributory causes of its subsequent collapse.[1] The Portuguese still continued their career of arrogant intolerance and in 1613 ventured to attack and plunder some of the imperial ships. This wanton act of aggression led to retaliatory measures. Most of the Portuguese, resident in Jahangir's dominions, were arrested or expelled, and the tolerance hitherto shown to the Christian religion was withdrawn. Taking advantage of the fall in Portuguese fortunes, William Edwards arrived at Court in 1615 with another letter from James I. He was well received by the Emperor, who was glad to find rivals to the now hated Portuguese, but accomplished nothing definite. In the same year a much more formal embassy arrived from England. Sir Thomas Roe was a veteran soldier and diplomat, and probably no better man could have been found for the purpose. He bore formal credentials from James I and a number of ceremonial presents for the Emperor, which he had considerable difficulty in delivering, as several attempts were made to steal them on the way. Roe, who was very well received by the Emperor, stayed three years at his Court. His journal and that of his chaplain, Terry, are very valuable sources of information about the daily life of the Mughal Court. Of the two volumes that of Terry is the better, as it contains a wealth of detail which is not found in that of Roe. Though no actual treaty was ever signed the embassy was undoubtedly successful. Roe secured definite recognition and privileges for his countrymen, and from that time the existence of the East India Company as a factor in Indian affairs may be considered to have commenced.

[1] See Chapter IX of this work.

CHAPTER IV

SHAH JAHAN

¶ *The struggle for the throne.*

SHAH JAHAN was still in disgrace in the Deccan when his father died in October 1627 at Chingiz Hatli, near Bhimbar. Nur Jahan at once sent a message secretly to Prince Shahryar, who was married to her daughter by Sherafgan, advising him to collect as many men as he could and hasten to her. Shahryar lost no time in proclaiming himself Emperor at Lahore. He seized the provincial treasury and managed to secure the allegiance of the army and nobility by a lavish gift of money.[1] In the meantime Asaf Khan, Nur Jahan's brother, busied himself in the interest of Prince Shah Jahan, who had married his daughter, Mumtaz Mahall. In consultation with Iradat Khan, another noble who had accompanied the Emperor to Kashmir, Asaf Khan placed Nur Jahan practically in the position of a prisoner, and sent a fast runner to the distant Deccan, to inform Shah Jahan of what had happened. Asaf Khan had also taken care 'to get possession of Shah Jahan's sons, the Princes Muhammad Dara Shikoh, Muhammad Shah Shuja, and Muhammad Aurangzeb, who were in the female apartments with Nur Jahan'. Prince Dawar Bakhsh, son of the late Prince Khusru, who was now under the charge of Iradat Khan and with the retinue of the Emperor in Kashmir, was placed temporarily on the throne, pending the arrival of Shah Jahan from the south. The *khutba* was therefore read in Dawar Bakhsh's name at Bhimbar, where the funeral rites of the late Emperor were also duly performed. The party then started for

[1] It is said that in the course of one week Shahryar distributed seventy *lacs* of rupees among the members of the army and nobility. Of these, about forty-five *lacs* were recovered after his fall. *Jahangir*, by Beni Prasad, pp. 436–7.

Lahore, Asaf Khan and Iradat Khan with their troops 'taking care to keep one day ahead of Nur Jahan'.

Shahryar, while himself remaining in the vicinity of Lahore, sent his troops across the river Ravi under the command of his cousin Mirza Baisinghar, son of the late Prince Daniyal, to oppose the march of Asaf Khan. But Baisinghar's raw levies were no match for the trained and experienced imperial troops, and the fight did not last long, as his troops gave way at the first attack from Asaf Khan's regulars. Baisinghar retreated to the city, while the cowardly and incapable Shahryar,[1] having lost his nerve, took shelter in the female apartments in the fort of Lahore. He was, however, soon brought out by a eunuch and made to perform homage to the new Emperor, after which he was thrown into prison, where he was blinded a few days later. Thus ended the short struggle. In the meantime Shah Jahan was slowly approaching the capital. No sooner did he receive the message from Asaf Khan than he set out for Agra by way of Gujarat, sending an express message to his father-in-law at Lahore 'to the effect that it would be well if Dawar Bakhsh, the son, and [Shahryar], the useless brother of Khusru, and the sons of Prince Daniyal, were all sent out of the world'. Passing through Mewar, where he was loyally received by Rana Karan in his capital at Goginda [2] and where he celebrated his thirty-eighth birthday, Shah Jahan reached Agra at the beginning of February 1628, and was proclaimed Emperor at the metropolis. His success was largely due to the activity and alertness of Asaf Khan, who had taken such prompt measures to place Nur Jahan under restraint. The latter, had she been left free to act, might have prolonged the struggle. As it was, all resistance ended with the defeat and capture of Shahryar. The farce of Dawar

[1] Shahryar, from his want of capacity and intelligence, had received from Shah Jahan the nickname of *Na-shudani*, 'Good-for-nothing', and was commonly known by that appellation. Elliot and Dowson, vol. vii, p. 5.

[2] It was on this occasion that Shah Jahan conferred upon Rana Karan, as a mark of honour, a sword and a turban which are still in the possession of the family.

Bakhsh's sovereignty ended as soon as the news of Shah Jahan's march upon Agra was received by his father-in-law at Lahore. The wretched Prince Dawar was quietly removed from the throne and thrown into prison, but was subsequently allowed to retire to Persia, where he spent the rest of his life living on the charity of the Shah. He was fortunate, however, to have escaped with his life, since the rest of his collaterals, in obedience to Shah Jahan's orders, were all 'sent out of the world'. By the law of retributive justice Shah Jahan paid the penalty for this act of inhumanity, ending his days as a captive by the order of his own son.

§ *Rebellions of Raja Jhujhar Singh and Khan Jahan Lodi.* In the first year of Shah Jahan's reign, the turbulent Bundela Rajputs, taking advantage of the difficult nature of their country, Bundelkhand, revolted under the leadership of their valiant chief, Raja Jhujhar Singh. Jhujhar Singh was the son of Raja Bir Singh Bundela, a friend and favourite of Jahangir. He was the man with whose help Jahangir, then Prince Salim, had contrived the murder of Shaikh Abu-l Fazl. 'After the accession of Jahangir to the throne,' writes the author of the *Padshah-Nama*, 'Bir Singh rose into favour and distinction through this wicked deed. But his evil nature was unable to bear his prosperity, and towards the end of the reign of Jahangir he became disaffected. . . . He died three or four months before Jahangir and was succeeded by his son Jhujhar Singh.' Jhujhar Singh broke into open rebellion and 'set about raising forces, strengthening the forts, providing munitions of war and closing the roads'.[1] A force was accordingly sent against him, under the command of Mahabat Khan, who quickly suppressed the rebellion, but Jhujhar Singh eluded the grasp of the imperial forces and took shelter in his mountain retreat. From that vantage-point he continued to give trouble to the imperialists till five years later (1634), when another serious effort was made to put an end to his mischievous activities. The important Bundela strongholds were taken one by one, and Jhujhar Singh with his

[1] Elliot and Dowson, vol. vii, pp. 6–7.

family, pursued by the imperial forces, was compelled to fly from his country. In the course of his flight he was killed in a chance skirmish with the Gonds, who occupied the wild regions through which he passed. But Khan Dauran, the imperial general, had been so worried and annoyed by the Bundela chief that he would not leave him unpunished even after death. 'He rode forth to seek their bodies,' writes Abdul Hamid Lahori in the *Padshah-Nama*, 'and having found them, cut off their heads and sent them to Court.'

In the second year of the reign of Shah Jahan, a powerful Afghan noble named Khan Jahan Lodi allied himself with Nizamu-l Mulk, the last of the Nizam Shahi rulers of Ahmadnagar, and broke into rebellion in the south, 'carrying out the traditional hostility of the Afghan chiefs to the Mogul dynasty'.[1] The revolt of Khan Jahan, it may be remarked, was of more moment than that of the Bundela chief, since it became ultimately the cause of greater interference in, and control over, the affairs of the Deccan than had ever yet been exercised by the Mughal sovereigns of Delhi. During the interval of three months between the death of Jahangir and the accession of Shah Jahan, Khan Jahan, taking advantage of his position as governor of the Deccan, made an alliance with Nizamu-l Mulk, and after making over to him the Balaghat country, himself proceeded to Mandu with a large force, with the intention of taking possession of Malwa. But in the meantime Shah Jahan had reached Agra and been proclaimed Emperor in February 1628. This fact altered the situation, at least for the time being. Khan Jahan's Rajput adherents began to desert him, and he himself was obliged to obey the royal summons and proceed to Agra. He lived at Court for some time till false rumours about his intended arrest upset his equanimity and forced him quietly to leave the capital. 'After the first watch of the night,' writes Abdul Hamid Lahori, 'Khan Jahan, with his nephew Bahadur and other relations and adherents, began his flight. As soon as the Emperor

[1] Vincent Smith, *History of India*, p. 392.

was informed of it, he sent Khwaja Abu-l Hassan in pursuit of the fugitive. The latter overtook the Afghans at Dholpur on the banks of the river Chambal about thirty-five miles from Agra and forced them to combat. The desperate Afghans of Khan Jahan for a time repelled the imperialists, thus enabling their own men to cross the river.' [1]

Khan Jahan thus got safely into the Bundela country, and assisted by Jhujhar Singh's son, Bikramjit, escaped by unfrequented roads to the Deccan and joined Nizamu-l Mulk. The serious nature of the situation was not lost upon Shah Jahan, who realized that if Khan Jahan succeeded in forming a confederacy of the southern powers and himself took the lead of their combined armies, it would be difficult to retain the southern provinces of the Empire. He therefore sent his best available troops to suppress the rebellion. The resourceful imperial general Azam Khan proved more than a match for Khan Jahan. The Lodi rebel was driven from place to place till his Maratha and Muhammadan partisans left him in despair and he himself escaped to the Punjab in the hope of obtaining some help from the disaffected Afghans of that country. But the Emperor, having anticipated such a movement on the part of Khan Jahan, had taken the necessary precautions, and he was therefore never able to reach that country. Khan Jahan then proceeded to Bundelkhand in the hope of obtaining aid from his old friend Bikramjit. But this chief had received timely warning from the Emperor, and, instead of assisting him, opposed his further march. Baffled in his attempt to escape, and having lost all his relations and friends in battle, Khan Jahan became desperate and made his last stand against the pursuing column of the imperialists, commanded by Muzaffar Khan. The story is thus told by the author of the *Padshah-Nama*: 'Khan-Jahan was much afflicted at the loss of his sons and faithful followers. All hope of escape was cut off; so he told his followers that he was weary of life, that he had reached the end of his career, and there was no longer any

[1] Elliot and Dowson, vol. vii, p. 9.

means of deliverance for him; he desired, therefore, that every man should make off as best he could. A few determined to stay by him to the last, but many fled. The advanced forces of the royal army under Madhu Singh now came up. Khan-Jahan, with his son 'Aziz, who was the dearest of all, and Aimal, and the Afghans who remained constant, placed their two remaining elephants in front, and advanced to meet Muzaffar Khan. They made their charge, and when Khan-Jahan found that they were determined to take him, he alighted from his horse and fought desperately. In the midst of the struggle Madhu Singh pierced him with a spear, and before Muzaffar Khan could come up the brave fellows cut Khan-Jahan, and his dear sons 'Aziz and Aimal, to pieces.'[1] Thus ended the career of this brave Lodi noble, who had for three years defied the efforts of the imperial troops to subdue him.

§ *Famine in the Deccan and Gujarat, 1630–2.* In the fourth and fifth years of the reign of Shah Jahan, the Deccan and Gujarat were visited by severe famine, following the failure of the rains. The historian, Abdul Hamid Lahori, gives a detailed description of the appalling sufferings undergone by the inhabitants of these provinces. 'The inhabitants of these two countries were reduced to the direst extremity. Life was offered for a loaf, but none would buy; rank was to be sold for a cake, but none cared for it; the ever-bounteous hand was now stretched out to beg for food; and the feet which had always trodden the way of contentment walked about only in search of sustenance. For a long time dog's flesh was sold for goat's flesh, and the pounded bones of the dead were mixed with flour and sold. When this was discovered, the sellers were brought to justice. Destitution at length reached such a pitch that men began to devour each other, and the flesh of a son was preferred to his love. The numbers of the dying caused obstructions in the roads, and every man whose dire sufferings did not terminate in death and who retained the power to move wandered off to the towns and villages of other countries.'[2]

[1] Elliot and Dowson, vol. vii, p. 21. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 24.

§ *Capture of Hugli, 1632.* Another event of note in the early years of Shah Jahan's reign was the destruction of the Portuguese settlement at Hugli, in 1632. The town of Hugli had of late risen to importance and the Portuguese had 'erected large and substantial buildings, which they had fortified with cannons, and other implements of war. On one side of it was the river; on the other three sides was a ditch filled from the river.' The Portuguese trade grew in volume and the neighbouring markets of Satgaon declined in proportion, thus adversely affecting the provincial revenues of Bengal. But apart from this, Portuguese indulgence in the slave-trade and the religious activities of the Portuguese traders inflamed the wrath of the Emperor. 'Some of the inhabitants by force, and more by hopes of gain, they infected with their Nazarene [Christian] teaching, and sent them off in ships to Europe. . . . These hateful practices were not confined to the lands they occupied, but they seized and carried off every one they could lay their hands upon along the sides of the river. These proceedings had come under the notice of the Emperor before his accession, and he resolved to put an end to them if ever he ascended the throne, that the coinage might always bear the stamp of the glorious dynasty, and the pulpit may be graced with its *khutba*. After his accession, he appointed Karim Khan to the government of Bengal, and impressed upon him the duty of overthrowing these mischievous people.' [1]

Preparations were accordingly made, and towards the close of the month of June 1632 the siege of Hugli began. A large army, said to number 150,000 men of all arms, was sent by Karim Khan, under the command of his son, assisted by Allan Yar Khan, the ablest officer in the Bengal Mughal army. The Portuguese garrison consisted of about 300 Europeans with 700 Indian Christian soldiers. The siege lasted for nearly three months, and it says much for Portuguese military discipline that this small garrison of a thousand men made so heroic a resistance

[1] Elliot and Dowson, vol. vii, p. 32.

and defended the town and their factory against such heavy odds. The number of casualties on the imperial side is recorded as one thousand, and Abdul Hamid Lahori records that 'from the beginning of the siege to the conclusion, men and women, old and young, altogether nearly 10,000 of the enemy were killed, being either blown up with powder, drowned in water, or burnt by fire'.[1] More than 4,000 Christians were made prisoners and brought to Agra to the presence of the 'faith-defending Emperor'. They were offered the choice between conversion to Islam and confinement or slavery under abjectly severe conditions. Few of them cared to save their bodies at the cost of their souls, and, as the author of the *Padshah-Nama* remarks, 'many of them passed from prison to hell'. Their religious images were broken up and thrown into the river Jumna.

§ *Destruction of Hindu temples, 1632.* About the same time as the Christian prisoners of Hugli were given the choice of Islam or death at Agra, the Hindus of Benares also suffered heavy losses on religious grounds at the hands of this 'faith-defending Emperor'. 'It had been brought to the notice of His Majesty,' writes Abdul Hamid Lahori, in the *Padshah-Nama*, 'that during the late reign many idol temples had been begun, but remained unfinished, at Benares, the great stronghold of infidelity. The infidels were now desirous of completing them. His Majesty, the defender of the faith, gave orders that at Benares, and throughout all his dominions in every place, all temples that had been begun should be cast down. It was now reported from the province of Allahabad that seventy-six temples had been destroyed in the district of Benares.'[2]

Since there is no record of destruction in other parts of the Empire, it is difficult to estimate the loss suffered by the Hindus. But without doubt the destruction must have been considerable, especially in those provinces where the rulers were filled with the same zeal for Islam as the Emperor himself. Jahangir's dislike

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 35. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 36.

of Hinduism[1] was inherited, it seems, in a more developed form by his son and successor, Shah Jahan, who bequeathed it in his turn to Aurangzeb, by whom, as we shall see later, it was carried to such extremes as to estrange the loyalty of a large number of his subjects.

§ *End of Mumtaz Mahall, 1631.* Mumtaz Mahall or Nawab Aliya Begam, whose tomb at Agra is regarded as one of the wonders of the world, died in June 1631, to the great grief of her husband, the Emperor. Arjumand Bano Begam, subsequently entitled 'Mumtaz Mahall', 'the ornament of the Palace', was the daughter of Nur Jahan's brother, Asaf Khan, and was married to Shah Jahan (then Prince Khurram) in 1612. The bridegroom was then twenty years and three months old, and the bride just fourteen months younger. The youthful couple enjoyed a happy married life for about nineteen years, when Mumtaz Mahall died in child-birth at Burhanpur at the age of thirty-nine.

Mumtaz Mahall is said to have been a devout Muslim who spent large sums of money in relieving the poor and the needy. Shah Jahan, who loved her both for her personal charms and for her moral virtues, faithfully cherished her memory and never married again, though he survived her by thirty-five years.

§ *Operations against Kandahar.* By virtue of its strategical position as the principal commercial station on the trade-route between India and Persia, the city of Kandahar was of immense value both to the Shah of Persia and the Emperor of India, and had, therefore, long been an object of contention between the two potentates. Humayun first captured the town in 1545 from his brother Askari and held it for some time as a province of Delhi; but during his days of exile, Kandahar again became a Persian province. Akbar recovered it in April 1595, through

[1] We have had occasion to refer in the previous chapter to Jahangir's acts of religious aggression, namely, the persecution of the Jains in Gujarat, the killing of cows in the sanctuary of the temple of Kangra, and the execution of Guru Arjun, the latter prompted both by political and religious motives.

the 'good offices' of the Persian governor of the town. It then remained attached to Delhi for about twenty-eight years, until in 1623, during the reign of Jahangir, Shah Abbas the Great regained possession of it after a short siege of forty-five days. Owing to domestic troubles, the rebellion of Prince Shah Jahan and the revolt of Mahabat Khan, Jahangir was unable to make any serious effort to resume this frontier province of his Empire; and the town of Kandahar therefore remained in the hands of the Persians for another fifteen years. In 1638 Shah Jahan directed the Governor of Kabul to open negotiations with Ali Mardan Khan, the Persian governor of Kandahar. The astute Mughal governor at last succeeded in seducing Ali Mardan Khan from his allegiance to the Shah and in persuading him to surrender the fortress to Shah Jahan. 'On the approach of the imperial forces,' writes the author of the *Padshah-Nama*, 'Ali Mardan Khan conducted them into the fortress, and gave it up to them. The governor of Kabul was directed to proceed to Kandahar, and to present a *lac* of rupees to Ali Mardan Khan. He was then to take the Khan to Kabul and to send him under escort to the Imperial Court with all his family and dependants.'[1] Ali Mardan Khan was received with great honour at Agra, where the Emperor bestowed upon him various important offices.[2]

Thus the Persians had once again lost Kandahar owing to the treachery of their governor, Ali Mardan Khan; but Shah Akbar would not rest until he recovered this important town on his eastern frontier. Accordingly, in 1648, Shah Akbar dispatched a large expeditionary force against Kandahar and the neighbouring fortresses of Bast and Zamindawar. These latter forts held out stoutly for some time; but Daulat Khan, the incapable governor of Kandahar, lost his courage and, anxious only for

[1] Elliot and Dowson, vol. vii, p. 64.

[2] Ali Mardan Khan was appointed at different times Governor of Kashmir and Kabul. In the history of India this engineer-general is best known for the public works which were executed under his guidance, such as the Shalimar gardens at Lahore and the great canal near Delhi.

his own safety, made no serious effort to prolong the defence until the arrival of reinforcements under Prince Aurangzeb. He capitulated on the 11th February 1649, and Kandahar was for ever lost to the Emperor of Delhi. Early in the month of May, when the snow was off the ground, Prince Aurangzeb, with the chief minister Sadullah Khan, was sent to recover the fortress, but their attack on the city failed before the superior military skill of the Persians. Shah Jahan, however, would not abandon his design of retaking Kandahar. Accordingly in May 1652, exactly three years after the first attempt had failed, the Emperor again sent Aurangzeb and Sadullah Khan with a heavy siege-train to Kandahar, camping himself at Kabul to supervise the arrangements for supplies of provisions and munitions of war. Again, however, the imperial troops met with no better success. Another effort was made in the following year (1653), but Dara Shikoh, the 'Prince of the Lofty Fortune',[1] proved as unlucky as his younger brother. The much contested fortress of Kandahar was finally lost, and no ruler of Delhi made any subsequent attempt to recover it.

As at Kandahar, so in Balkh and Badakhshan, the two other important Central Asian territories of his ancestor Timur, the armies of Shah Jahan failed completely during their campaigns in those mountainous regions in 1645–9. The operations demonstrated the weakness of the Mughal army when directed against foreigners. The decline certainly commenced during the lifetime of Shah Jahan, though it became noticeable only during the later years of his successor's rule.

§ *Deccan affairs, 1630–56.* During the whole of this period and throughout the reign of Shah Jahan, war with the Sultans of the Deccan continued. It will be convenient therefore to give in one place a connected account of the imperial policy and military operations carried on in the Deccan during the twenty-five years of Shah Jahan's reign.

[1] Shah Buland Iqbal. He was the Emperor's favourite son, and was given this title by his father.

It has been mentioned in an earlier chapter that during the last five years of his reign Akbar was almost constantly engaged in campaigns against the Nizam Shahi State of Ahmadnagar. He had succeeded in conquering Khandesh and had also annexed a portion of Berar, but the revolt of Prince Salim and his own sudden death prevented him from further pursuing his ambitious schemes. The forward policy in the Deccan was, however, transmitted as a kind of family legacy to his successors, and each one of these, Jahangir, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb, contributed his share towards that end—the last, Aurangzeb, achieving his object by destroying the two surviving sultanates of Golkonda and Bijapur.

The Nizam Shahis of Ahmadnagar, being nearest to the Mughal frontier in the south, were the first to come into collision with Jahangir. But their able *Wazir*, Malik Ambar, successfully faced the situation and saved the state of Ahmadnagar as long as he lived.

With the death of Malik Ambar in 1626, however, the fortunes of the Nizam Shahi dynasty began to wane. The alliance of Nizamu-l Mulk with Khan Jahan Lodi, the rebellious governor of the Deccan, gave Shah Jahan an excuse for attacking Ahmadnagar. Internal dissensions in the State assisted the Emperor's designs. The Sultan had quarrelled with his minister, Fath Khan, son of Malik Ambar, and the latter, to avenge his wrongs, placed himself in communication with the Imperial Government and informed Shah Jahan that 'he had placed the Sultan Nizamu-l Mulk in confinement on account of his evil character and his enmity to the imperial throne, and that for this act of his he hoped to receive some mark of favour'. 'In answer he was told', writes the author of the *Padshah-Nama*, 'that if he wished to prove his sincerity, he should rid the world of such a worthless and wicked being. On receiving this direction, Fath Khan secretly made away with Nizamu-l Mulk, declaring that he had died a natural death. He placed Nizamu-l Mulk's son, Hussain Shah, a lad of ten years old, on the throne

as his successor.'[1] Fath Khan now became the chief figure in the State. But he proved as faithless to Shah Jahan as he had been to his own master. In 1631, when Mahabat Khan, on behalf of the Emperor, had marched to relieve the fortress of Daulatabad, which was being besieged by Bijapur troops assisted by Shahji Bhonsle, Fath Khan changed sides and refused to surrender the fortress to him. Mahabat Khan straightway invested it; but, the fort being strongly fortified, the garrison held out until at the end of two months the Khan-i-Khanan, despairing of success, bought off Fath Khan and the garrison. 'Khan-Khanan sent him (Fath Khan) his own elephants and camels and several litters, also ten *lacs* and fifty thousand rupees in cash, belonging to the State, and demanded the surrender of the fortress. Fath Khan sent the keys to Khan-i-Khanan; and set about preparing for his own departure.'[2]

Daulatabad having surrendered, the boy Sultan Hussain Shah was consigned to lifelong imprisonment in the fort of Gwalior and the kingdom ceased to exist. Fath Khan was rewarded for this treacherous conduct by Shah Jahan by enrolment in the imperial service and the grant of a liberal salary.

Of the five Sultanates of the Deccan into which the Bahmani Empire had broken up towards the close of the fifteenth century, two disappeared and were absorbed in the ever-expanding Mughal dominions, namely, the Imad Shahi of Berar and the Nizam Shahi of Ahmadnagar. Muhammad Adil Shah of Bijapur and Kutbu-l Mulk of Golkonda were still powerful, though the Barid Shahi Sultans of Bidar[3] were no more. Shah Jahan next turned his attention towards these.

The territory of the Kings of Golkonda stretched along the eastern coast of India almost as far north as Orissa. It was from this side, contiguous to the imperial frontier, that an actual invasion of Golkonda territory took place for the first time, in

[1] Elliot and Dowson, vol. vii, p. 27. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 41.

[3] The Barid Shahi of Bidar represented the residue of the original Bahmani kingdom, and had been annexed by Bijapur in 1619.

1629. In the beginning of the cold weather of that year, Bakir Khan, the imperial governor of Orissa, attacked the fort of Mansurgarh, which had been built by Golkonda State to command 'a very narrow pass between the territories of Kutbu-l Mulk and Orissa'. Although the Golkonda forces had all the advantages of a defensible situation, yet they were not able to withstand the assault of the Imperialists, and the garrison, as the Abdul Hamid Lahori puts it, 'took grass between their teeth, as is the manner of that country, and begged for quarter'. In the following year another imperial general, Nasiri Khan, was instructed to invade Telingana, then the north-eastern province of the Golkonda kingdom. The imperial forces took possession of the fortress of Kandahar and reduced nearly one-third of the province of Telingana. Thus commenced the encroachments of the Delhi Government on Golkonda territory.

More important, however, were the wars against Muhammad Adil Shah, the ruler of Bijapur. In 1631, when the imperial troops advanced against Ahmadnagar, Muhammad Adil Shah of Bijapur, fearing a similar fate for his own kingdom, had made common cause with Nizam Murtaza. He thus incurred the wrath of the Emperor, who sent Asaf Khan to besiege him in his capital. But the Bijapur troops stoutly defended their city and, assisted by their Maratha allies, so harassed the Mughal army, that it was eventually forced to abandon the siege. Bijapur was saved. Shah Jahan returned to Agra, where the loss of his beloved wife, Mumtaz Mahall, in the same year, involved the suspension for the time being of operations against the Deccan Sultanates.

In 1635–6 the campaign in the south was resumed, this time with much greater vigour than before. This was necessitated by the proceedings of the Maratha chieftain, Shahji or Sahu, who had set up another Nizam Shahi boy as the nominal Sultan of the now defunct kingdom of Ahmadnagar and had reoccupied, in his name, the whole of the western portion of the old dominion as far as the sea. The Emperor sent written commands

to the Sultans of Golkonda and Bijapur, requiring them to recognize his suzerainty, to pay tribute regularly, and to abstain from support of Shahji and his allies of Ahmadnagar. In case of refusal they were threatened with an invasion of their kingdoms. The ruler of Golkonda had already felt the weight of the Mughal arms. He had lost a commanding situation at Mansurgarh in 1629, and a year later had been deprived of a part of the province of Telingana. Unable, therefore, to resist the might of the Mughals he quietly submitted and complied with all the demands of the Emperor. 'When Abdu-l Latif, the envoy to Golkonda, approached the city', writes the author of the *Padshah-Nama*, 'Sultan Kutbu-l Mulk came forth five *kos* to receive him and conducted him to the city with great honour. He had the *khutba* read aloud in the name of the Emperor; he several times attended when the *khutba* was read, and bestowed gifts upon the reader, and he had coins struck in the Emperor's name, and sent specimens of them to Court.'[1]

The Sultan of Bijapur, on the other hand, feeling strong enough to resist, was less inclined to obey the imperial behest. Shah Jahan accordingly made preparations to invade his territory and ordered his troops 'to kill and ravage as much as possible in the Bijapur territories'. The imperial forces were divided into two portions; one under Khan Zaman was to advance against Shahji, and the other, under the command of Khan Dauran, was directed to besiege the capital of the Bijapur Sultan. The Bijapur troops employed the time-honoured tactics of harassing the enemy by cutting off his supplies and by poisoning the wells. But their efforts were not attended with the usual success; for while they contrived to save the city of Bijapur, the rest of the country was mercilessly plundered by the imperial troops, the population being massacred without regard to age or sex. In the town of Kalyan, for instance, as many as 2,000 men were killed, while in another place about the same number were made prisoners, both male and female, and were subsequently sold as

[1] Elliot and Dowson, vol. vii, p. 53.

slaves. The Sultan was then constrained to sue for terms of peace. A treaty was drawn up in May 1636, and Muhammad Adil Shah agreed to pay a 'peace offering' of twenty *lacs* of rupees and respect the integrity of Golkonda, which the Emperor now claimed as a tributary State. In return the Sultan received a slice of territory from the Ahmadnagar kingdom of the value of eighty *lacs* of rupees a year. The second division of the army under Khan Zaman was equally successful, and obliged Shahji, who realized the futility of further resistance, to make his submission to the Emperor.

The sequel to the Mughal success was twenty years of comparative quiet in the Deccan. Ahmadnagar had ceased to exist, while the rulers of Golkonda and Bijapur were forced to accept the position of vassals of the Emperor of Delhi. Shah Jahan, having now no more to do in the south, set out for Agra in July 1636, leaving Prince Aurangzeb as viceroy of the Deccan. Aurangzeb's charge, or the Mughal Deccan, at this time comprised Khandesh, Berar, Telingana, and Daulatabad—a fairly extensive country, containing about sixty-four strong forts and estimated to yield an annual income of five crores of rupees. Out of this income Aurangzeb was expected to defray all expenses, civil and military. The young Prince, though very much embarrassed financially, carried on the administration of his province for nearly eight years. In 1644, however, when he proceeded to Agra to see his sister Jahanara, who was seriously ill, he was made to resign his appointment and retired for a while into private life.

The settlement in the Deccan, effected in 1636, had lasted for about twenty years when hostilities broke out afresh during the second viceroyalty of Aurangzeb. This Prince, after his resignation of the Deccan Government, was posted as governor of Gujarat in 1645, and was subsequently employed on distant expeditions in Central Asia, namely, to Balkh, Badakhshan, and Kandahar, during 1649–52. These expeditions, as previously stated, had ended in failure. Aurangzeb was unable to stay at Court owing to the enmity of his elder brother, Dara Shikoh, and

the displeasure of his father. He was happy in the Deccan and therefore insisted on resuming charge of this distant province, to which he was reappointed in 1653, almost immediately after his return from Kandahar. He crossed the Narbada at the beginning of 1653, and once more assumed his old position as provincial governor.

Aurangzeb's first care was to reorganize the finances of the country. During his absence of eight years the province had been misgoverned by a succession of incompetent officers who had been superseded at frequent intervals. Aurangzeb fortunately had in his service an exceptionally skilled revenue officer named Murshid Kuli Khan, who reorganized his finances and also extended to the Deccan Todar Mall's system of survey and assessment, with slight modifications suited to local conditions. The Prince then turned his attention to the Sultanates of Golkonda and Bijapur. The independence of the Shia rulers of these kingdoms was a standing menace to the growing Empire of the Sunni rulers of Delhi. Excuse for interfering in their affairs was never lacking. Golkonda, which had already accepted the position of a tributary State, was frequently in arrears in payment of tribute. Other reasons for displeasure against the Sultans could be easily found when desired. Early in January 1556 Prince Muhammad Sultan, son of Aurangzeb, was instructed to commence hostilities against Sultan Kutbu-l Mulk. The Prince accordingly entered Hyderabad, and his soldiery plundered the country. A few weeks later, Aurangzeb himself followed and besieged Golkonda. But for the intervention of Shah Jahan, who was induced by Prince Dara Shikoh to put a stop to the war, Aurangzeb would have annexed the whole kingdom.

A pretext for invading Bijapur was afforded by the internal disturbances in that State which followed on the death of Muhammad Adil Shah in November 1656. With the help of the traitor Mir Jumla,[1] Aurangzeb invaded the kingdom early

[1] Mir Jumla was a Persian merchant from Ardistan. A shrewd business man, he entered the service of the Sultan of Golkonda, and gradually carved

in January 1657, and after a prolonged siege succeeded in reducing the fortress of Bidar and Kalyan. The territory of Bijapur was being cruelly ravaged when the intervention of Shah Jahan saved the Adil Shahis, as it had saved the Kutb Shahis in the previous year, from the grasping ambition of Aurangzeb. As a condition of peace, the ruler of Bijapur was forced to surrender Bidar, Kalyan and Parenda, and to pay a heavy indemnity. Had Aurangzeb stayed longer in the Deccan he would in all probability have prevailed upon his father to give him a free hand in conquering the two Sultanates. But, as it was, the sudden illness of Shah Jahan, early in September 1657, involved Aurangzeb in a war with his brothers for the succession to the throne of Delhi, and prevented him from further aggression in the Deccan. The Sultanates thus obtained a respite for nearly thirty years.

§ *War of Succession, 1657–8.* Shah Jahan had four sons, Dara Shikoh, Shuja, Aurangzeb, and Murad Bakhsh, who were all of mature age in 1657 when the struggle for the throne commenced. (Dara Shikoh was the eldest and was aged 43, Shuja 41, Aurangzeb 39, and Murad Bakhsh about 33 years.) All four had served in various military and administrative appointments and had acquired considerable experience in the art of government. In his capacity of provincial Governor, each of the brothers had a large standing army under his orders. Dara Shikoh was the governor of the Punjab, Shuja of Bengal, Aurangzeb of the Deccan, and Murad Bakhsh of Gujarat. Each of the four brothers had developed marked traits of character and conduct which had no small share in deciding the issue of the struggle. Dara Shikoh, who was the eldest, generally stayed at the Court and was a great favourite with his father. His considerable

out for himself an almost independent dominion in the Karnatik country yielding an annual revenue of forty *lacs* of rupees, with which he maintained a considerable army especially strong in its park of artillery manned by European gunners. When coerced into obedience by his nominal master of Golkonda, Mir Jumla started his intrigues with Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb.

natural abilities were associated with certain serious faults of character which greatly minimized his chances of success. His violent temper and proud and haughty demeanour had made him several enemies among the nobility. He is said to have been too outspoken and wholly contemptuous of advice. Further, his catholicity of view in religious matters militated against his political interests, as some of the orthodox Sunni Muslims of Aurangzeb's way of thinking regarded the Prince as a heretic who did not deserve their sympathies. Shuja, the second son, had a much less distinctive character. Personally he was brave, and appears from contemporary evidence to have been quite a capable governor in Bengal, but in the annals of the period his individuality does not stand out so prominently as either that of Dara Shikoh or of Aurangzeb. He was also much addicted to pleasure and luxury, which ultimately impaired his mental faculties and rendered him incapable of taking prompt action at the decisive moment. Shuja had a further disadvantage, in that he professed the Shia faith, and had thus incurred the displeasure of the orthodox Sunni section of the Court. On the other hand Aurangzeb, the third son of Shah Jahan, who subsequently emerged victorious in the struggle for the throne, stands out very distinctly. Besides possessing unquestionable capacity for government, he was, unlike Dara Shikoh and Shuja, a Musalman of the most rigid type, and enjoyed the fullest confidence of the orthodox Sunni nobles of the Empire, who, since the days of Akbar, almost always formed a very strong party at Court. Like Murad or Shuja, not wanting in military daring and courage, Aurangzeb was also deep in counsel, crafty in action, and cool and calculating by nature. Murad Bakhsh, the youngest, was a brave soldier, but dissolute, intemperate, and brainless. He was also simple-minded and easily deceived.

Such were the characters of the four brothers who were about to fight for the Empire. They cherished no mutual brotherly love, although all were born of the same mother. A disputed succession had, in fact, become a tradition in the Mughal family.

Though they shed little or no blood, Humayun and Akbar had both been compelled to combat the rivalry of their near relatives for succession. So also had Jahangir, for though his two brothers had predeceased their father, he found a rival in his own son Khusru. Shah Jahan himself had to wade to the throne through blood; and now his sons in turn had drawn their swords, each prepared to press his claims to the succession.

In September 1657 Shah Jahan suddenly fell ill. The daily darbar was stopped, and for a week or ten days the Emperor ceased even to show his face to the public from the *jharokha* or balcony, as was his wont every morning, while all access to his sick bed was prevented by the order of Prince Dara Shikoh. Immediately the wildest rumours spread through the Empire that Shah Jahan was dead. As soon as the news reached the provinces, his sons occupied themselves in making the necessary preparations for the impending struggle. Shuja in Bengal and Murad in Gujarat were the first to assume the imperial title. Both struck coins in their own names, and Shuja moved out of Bengal with a large army *en route* to the capital. He had hardly reached the neighbourhood of Benares when he was suddenly attacked by the imperial troops sent against him under Dara Shikoh's eldest son, Sulaiman Shikoh. Sulaiman's Rajput contingent under Mirza Raja Jai Singh inflicted a crushing defeat upon Shuja and forced him to retire to Bengal.

Aurangzeb, cool and calculating as he was by nature, refrained from hasty action, but took every precaution to conceal his movements. He posted strong guards over all the ferries on the Narbada and put himself in communication with his sister Roshanara [Roshan Rai], so as to keep himself informed about all that was going on in the capital at Agra. He then began to cajole the simple-minded Murad into an agreement for the division of the Empire. In a letter to Murad he wrote: 'I have not the slightest liking for or wish to take any part in the government of this deceitful and unstable world, my only desire is that I may make a pilgrimage to the temple of God. But whatever course

you have resolved upon in opposition to the good-for-nothing and unjust conduct of our disgraceful brother (*biradar-i-be-shukoh*), you may consider me your sincere friend and ally.' [1]

Letters on this subject passed quickly between Aurangzeb and Murad, and the two soon matured a plan of concerted action. Aurangzeb's confidential officer, Aqil Khan Razi, gives a few details of the terms of alliance between the two brothers. 'Aurangzib, deeming it politic to be united with Murad, sent him a loving letter begging him to come to him, and making this solemn promise and agreement: (1) one-third of the booty would belong to Murad Bakhsh and two-thirds to Aurangzib; (2) after the conquest of the whole Empire, the Panjab, Afghanistan, Kashmir and Sind would belong to Murad, who would set up the standard of kingship there, issue coins, and proclaim his own name (*khutba*) as king.' [2] Murad was won over by these fair promises, and the two brothers now moved upon Agra and effected a junction outside Dipalpur, in Malwa. They met with no opposition until they were in the neighbourhood of Ujjain, where they fell in with Dara Shikoh's army, commanded by Raja Jaswant Singh of Marwar and Kasim Khan. The hostile armies met at Dharmat (near Ujjain) on the 15th April 1658. The divided command of Raja Jaswant Singh and his Muslim colleague, Kasim Khan, bore evil fruit. The Imperialists were utterly defeated in spite of the desperate fight waged by the Rathor contingent of Maharaja Jaswant Singh. Only five or six hundred of them escaped, while the rest were cut to pieces. The victorious princes hurried forward and were able to secure the passage of the Chambal. Dara Shikoh thereupon

[1] Elliot and Dowson, vol. vii, p. 217. The terms of the agreement as related by Aqil Khan are confirmed by Aurangzeb's own letter to Murad, quoted by Professor J. N. Sarkar, *Aurangzib*, vol. i, p. 336: 'I shall keep my promise, and, as previously settled, I shall leave *to him* [Murad—addressed in third person] *the Panjab, Afghanistan, Kashmir, and Sindh*,—the whole of that region to the Arabian Sea, and I shall make no objection to it. : . . As to the truth of this desire I take *God and the Prophet as witnesses*!'

[2] Sarkar, *Aurangzib*, vol. i, p. 337.

collected a large force and marched forth to meet the advancing army of Murad and Aurangzeb. He had already dispatched towards Benares, against Shuja, a strong force of about 22,000 men under his most trusted friends and best generals, and thus greatly weakened his position at Agra. His father and his friends counselled him to wait until the arrival of Raja Jai Singh and Prince Sulaiman Shikoh from Benares. But rash and headstrong as he was, he would brook no advice. The sympathies of the army which he now had with him, especially those of the Muslim section, probably lay more with Aurangzeb than with himself. The opposing armies met at Samugarh, within a few miles of Agra, on 29th May 1658. It was believed by both parties that the action of Samugarh would decide the fate of the Empire. Princes Murad and Aurangzeb, who had all at stake, themselves fought in the forefront of the battle and risked their lives without hesitation. The younger Prince received three wounds in the face, and the howdah of his elephant was riddled with arrows. The Rajputs on the side of the Imperialists fought most desperately under their brave young leader Ram Singh, and 'did honour to the traditions of their race'. He and his followers perished to a man, in a desperate charge upon the division of Prince Murad. Dara Shikoh, who led the attack upon Aurangzeb in person, was ever amongst the foremost, striving to come to close quarters with the brother he well knew to be his greatest rival. In the beginning everything seemed to be going in favour of Dara Shikoh, when unluckily his elephant was badly wounded by an arrow and he was persuaded to mount a horse in its stead. 'That action', as Vincent Smith observes, 'settled the fate of the battle.' His troops missed his presence and a general panic ensued among them. The ranks of the Imperialists were broken, and Dara Shikoh fled from the field, leaving his camp and guns to be captured by the victors. Aurangzeb had won the day and the throne of Hindustan. All subsequent efforts to retrieve the lost cause, whether made by Dara Shikoh himself, by his son, Sulaiman Shikoh, or by Shuja, were in vain.

The victorious army now marched upon Agra, which the aged Emperor, after a short and feeble resistance, surrendered on the 8th June 1658. Shah Jahan was made a prisoner and all the treasures in the fort were seized by Aurangzeb and Murad.

§ *Aurangzeb's treatment of his brothers.* For about five days after the surrender of Agra, Aurangzeb was busy in receiving the homage of the principal Umara and in making necessary changes in the administrative personnel of the central government. On the 13th June, the two brothers, Aurangzeb and Murad, set out from Agra towards Delhi in pursuit of Dara Shikoh and arrived at Rupnagar, near Mathura, ten days later. Here they lay encamped for a few days. Of late there had been some jealousy in the mind of Murad, who suspected power was slipping from his hands, since every Amir of importance was doing homage to Aurangzeb. He therefore lived mostly in his own camp, and not only ceased to pay visits to Aurangzeb, but began to act in opposition to him and to assert his own will. He was, however, no match for his brother, who had already formed his plans. Nuru-d Din, a personal attendant of Murad, was secretly corrupted by Aurangzeb, and on the morning of the 25th June, when the Prince was returning from hunting, this traitor induced him to enter Aurangzeb's camp. Murad was received at the gate by his brother and taken into his tent. From that moment his fate was sealed. Dinner was laid for both brothers and 'the hungry hunter did full justice to it'. According to the account given by Bernier, some wine was also served with the dinner, and Murad 'who always loved a glass of wine scrupled not to drink of it to excess'. He then lay down to rest on a bed close at hand, while Aurangzeb retired for a while to his harem. No sooner had Murad fallen into a profound slumber than Aurangzeb ordered his arrest, and the hapless Prince woke to find himself loaded with heavy chains. He upbraided his brother with treachery to a guest, but further resistance on his part was hopeless. Under a trusted escort of cavalry, the unfortunate prisoner was sent to Delhi and 'deposited in the State-

prison of the fort of Salimgarh'. Thence he was removed to the fortress of Gwalior in January 1659, where he was executed three years later (December 1661) on a charge of murder[1] levelled against him at the instigation of Aurangzeb. As Vincent Smith points out, Aurangzeb resembled Henry VIII of England in preferring to dispose of his victims with all the forms of law. Murad being disposed of (26th June 1658), Aurangzeb resumed his march against Dara Shikoh and arrived in the environs of Delhi on 5th July, Dara Shikoh having by that time reached Lahore. Aurangzeb therefore halted at Delhi for about three weeks to give some rest to his troops after their long march, and also utilized that respite in making the necessary preparations for his coronation in the imperial city. On the 21st July, the day fixed by astrologers, he took his seat on the throne as Padshah, assuming the title of Alamgir—'Conqueror of the Universe'. Six days afterwards he resumed his march towards Lahore.

After his defeat at Samugarh on the 29th May 1658, Dara Shikoh had proceeded to Delhi, which he reached with about 5,000 troopers on the 5th June. When news was brought of the surrender of Agra and of the captivity of the Emperor, he left Delhi for Lahore, where he possessed much property, and where there was an important imperial arsenal and magazine. He was also counting upon the warlike population of the Punjab, from amongst whom he could enlist any number of mercenaries, with the treasures in the Lahore fort at his disposal. Reaching Lahore on the 3rd July, he spent a month and a half there in recruiting new men and completing his preparations to encounter

[1] The charge of murder was brought by the son of Ali Naqi, who demanded justice against Murad Bakhsh for having shed the blood of his innocent father. This Ali Naqi, who was well known for his ability and honesty, was sent by Shah Jahan as revenue minister to Murad when he was Governor of Gujarat. When Shah Jahan was ill, and Murad had crowned himself at Ahmadabad, Naqi's enemies saw their chance: they forged a letter under his seal, professing adhesion to the cause of Dara Shikoh. The Prince, on seeing the letter, summoned the minister to his presence, and ran him through with his spear.

the pursuing army of Aurangzeb. In a short time he had recruited about 20,000 men, and had also taken steps to guard the ferries over the Sutlej, to prevent Aurangzeb crossing that river into the Punjab. He also hoped that, since the rainy season had set in, the many rivers and miry roads of the Punjab would prevent Aurangzeb, for some time, from following him to Lahore. 'But in hoping thus', as Professor Sarkar observes, 'he had counted without Aurangzib's energy and strength of will, before which every obstacle—human or physical—gave way.'[1] Aurangzeb advanced steadily during the rains; so that barely a month had passed after Dara's arrival at Lahore before his rival's advance guard crossed the Sutlej. A few days afterwards, on the 14th August, he himself reached that river with his main army. Dara Shikoh, finding resistance hopeless, was compelled to leave Lahore, and on the 18th August hastened to Multan with his family and with all the treasures he had obtained in the fort of Lahore. Finding that Aurangzeb was still on his track, Dara Shikoh was compelled to abandon Multan also, and on 13th September, proceeding down the Indus, he made for the fortress of Tatta. Aurangzeb was now obliged to leave the task of pursuit to his trusted officers, and himself to turn back from Multan to meet a new danger from Bengal, where Shuja was again creating trouble.

It has been stated that on receiving the news of Shah Jahan's illness Shuja had crowned himself in Bengal, and, about the middle of February 1658, had started for Agra. Dara Shikoh sent a strong force under his son Sulaiman and Raja Singh to oppose him. The two armies met at Bahadurpur (near Benares), where Shuja was defeated. Shuja thereupon retreated to his province. But, in the meantime, Dara Shikoh's own defeats at Dharmat and Samugarh in May, by the combined troops of Aurangzeb and Murad, compelled him to recall his son Sulaiman and to forgo the pursuit of Shuja. At the same time Aurangzeb wrote to Shuja an affectionate letter, promising him some in-

[1] Sarkar, *Aurangzib*, vol. ii, p. 105.

crease of territory to his governorship of Bengal. 'As you had often before begged the Emperor Shah Jahan for the province of Bihar, I now add it to your viceroyalty. Pass some time peacefully in administering it and repairing your broken power. When I return after disposing of the affair of Dara, I shall try to gratify your other wishes. Like a true brother I shall not refuse you anything that you desire, be it land or money.'[1] Shuja knew Aurangzeb and his methods and took the letter for what it was worth; but its receipt gave him a respite and an opportunity to reorganize his resources. Now that Aurangzeb was absent in the Punjab (September 1658) pursuing Dara Shikoh, Shuja's ambition revived and he determined to make another bid for the throne. Accordingly, in October 1658, he moved out with his army from Patna. Rohtas, Chunar, and Benares all opened their gates to him, and in the third week of December he had advanced as far as Allahabad. But none of the brothers had, perhaps, rightly studied Aurangzeb. He was a man of untiring energy and vast resources. As soon as he received the news of his brother's movements he hastened back from the Punjab, and reaching Khajwah, near Allahabad, by forced marches, prepared to give battle to Shuja on the 3rd January 1659. In the ensuing action, Shuja's army was utterly routed, and he was compelled to seek safety in flight. Mir Jumla was then dispatched to pursue the retreating army, and ultimately chased the Prince across Bengal to the Deccan, and thence over the Arakan frontier in May 1660. Nothing more was heard of Shuja, and it is assumed that he and his family were murdered by the Arakanese.[2]

[1] Sarkar, *Aurangzib*, vol. ii, p. 137.

[2] Nothing definite is known about Shuja's fate. A Dutch merchant named Jan Tak reported to Aurangzeb from Arakan that, having been encouraged by Mughal and Pathan dwellers in Arakan, Shuja set on foot a plot to slay the King of Arakan and seize his throne. The plot being discovered in time, Shuja fled into the neighbouring jungle. The Maghs pursued the poor prince, cutting his body into pieces. Sarkar, vol. ii, p. 287. See also G. E. Harvey, *History of Burma*, 1925, pp. 146–7.

Aurangzeb had left Dara Shikoh in the fortress of Tatta, when he himself returned to the east to crush the opposition of Shuja. The pursuit was left in the hands of Aurangzeb's chief officers, who hunted the unfortunate Prince from place to place. Driven from Tatta, he was compelled to cross the Indus delta and entered Cutch. But even there he found no rest. His followers were fast deserting him; and feeling his position insecure, Dara Shikoh now proceeded to Kathiawar. Here the leading chiefs offered him presents and provisions, and Dara Shikoh was enabled, with their help, to take shelter in Gujarat. The Governor of the province, Shah Nawaz Khan, who was favourably inclined towards him, opened the city gates, and then assisted him to occupy Surat. Dara Shikoh spent about five weeks in Gujarat, and with the help of some ten *lacs* of rupees belonging to Murad, which he obtained from the treasury of Ahmadabad, he was able to raise a fresh army (22,000 men).

Dara Shikoh had now a chance to escape to the Deccan, where he could very well count upon the help of the Sultans of Golkonda and Bijapur, who had recently suffered so heavily at the hands of his rival Aurangzeb. He had interceded, on their behalf, with the Emperor, and secured lenient terms for them, and with their help and support he might become a dangerous rival to his brother. But he was constitutionally unfitted to take a calm and dispassionate view of affairs, or to preserve his equanimity at a crisis. Nor had he an organized or efficient system of intelligence enabling him to keep in touch with the movements of his enemies. Lured by false rumours of Aurangzeb's defeat by Shuja (January 1659), Dara Shikoh relinquished the idea of crossing to the Deccan and decided to take advantage of the absence of Aurangzeb in the east by making a dash on Agra from the west and restoring Shah Jahan to power. As Ajmer was on his way, he entered into correspondence with Raja Jaswant Singh. Jaswant Singh promised his help, and Dara Shikoh, unhappily trusting in his word, proceeded in that direction (February 1659). Jaswant Singh was in the meantime

restored to favour by Aurangzeb through the mediation of Raja Jai Singh, and consequently, unlike the chivalrous race to which he belonged, determined to throw over Dara Shikoh. News of his defection reached Dara Shikoh on his arrival near Ajmer, and caused him bitter surprise that a Rajput chief should prove false to his promise. He was in a miserable plight. To return to Ahmadabad (Gujarat) was impossible, for it was distant nearly a month's march. By this time, too, Aurangzeb had arrived near Ajmer, and a battle could not be avoided. As Bernier puts it: 'Tis as good, saith he, to perish here; and although the match be altogether unequal, let us venture all and give battle once more.'

Dara Shikoh took up his position near the narrow pass of Deorai, about four miles from Ajmer, where he hoped to be able to restrain with his small army the much larger force of his assailants. He was, indeed, right in avoiding a pitched battle in the open plain with the overwhelming host of Aurangzeb, for, as Khafi Khan relates, the enemy tried and tried in vain for three successive days, the 12th to the 14th April 1659, to carry the position; and Dara Shikoh's final defeat on the fourth day was due partly to a vigorous attack, pushed home by the Rajput troops, and partly to the incompetence of Shahnawaz Khan.[1] The Prince fled to Ahmadabad; but this time he found the gates of the fortress shut against him. He therefore turned towards Tatta, where he met with no better fortune.

Thence Dara Shikoh could have easily escaped to Kandahar, where, like his fugitive ancestor Humayun, he would in all probability have secured some help from the Shia ruler of Persia against his brother, the orthodox Sunni Emperor of India. But as ill-luck would have it, Dara Shikoh did not choose that course. He turned to the north and entered the country of Malik Jiwan

[1] It was suspected by Dara Shikoh that Shahnawaz Khan had disclosed all his plans to Aurangzeb. Bernier also suggests the same. Professor Sarkar, however, does not seem to support this view. See also Sarkar's *Aurangzib*, vol. ii, p. 176, footnote.

Khan, chief of Dadar, a place in the vicinity of the Bolan Pass. At this moment the unfortunate Prince lost his faithful and devoted wife—Nadira Begum—who had shared in all his wanderings and hardships. She died as the fugitives approached Dadar, and her death threw Dara Shikoh into such a frantic state of grief that his fate now appeared to him a matter of indifference. 'The Timurid princes, notwithstanding their polygamous habits and the freedom of their relations with women, often showed a capacity for feeling the passion of conjugal love in its utmost intensity.'[1] Malik Jiwan Khan was indebted to Dara Shikoh; but in the hour of the Prince's misfortune, this faithless Afghan forgot all past obligations and betrayed his host to his pursuers. On the 23rd June 1659, Dara Shikoh with his second son, Sipihr Shikoh, and two daughters, was delivered to Bahadur Khan, and two months later the party arrived outside Delhi, on the 23rd August. A week after his arrival the royal captive was paraded in the bazaars of Delhi. 'On 29th August the degrading parade was held. To complete his humiliation, Dara was seated in an uncovered *hawda* on the back of a small female elephant covered with dirt. By his side was his second son, Sipihr Shikoh, a lad of fourteen; and behind them with a naked sword sat their gaoler, the slave Nazar Beg, whose heart shrank from no act of cruelty or bloodshed at the bidding of his master. The captive heir to the richest throne in the world, the favourite and pampered son of the most magnificent of the Great Mughals, was now clad in a travel-tainted dress of the coarsest cloth, with a dark dingy-coloured turban, such as only the poorest wear, on his head, and no necklace or jewel adorning his person. His feet were chained, though the hands were free. Exposed to the full blaze of an August sun, he was taken through the scenes of his former glory and splendour. In the bitterness of disgrace he did not raise his head, nor cast his glance on any side, but sat "like a crushed twig".'[2] This spectacle, in which the traitor Malik Jiwan Khan appeared

[1] Vincent Smith, *History of India*, p. 414.

[2] Sarkar, *Aurangzib*, vol. ii, p. 211.

riding on a horse beside Dara Shikoh, excited popular resentment, which on the following day culminated in a riot directed against Malik Jiwan Khan. Aurangzeb was already thinking of putting an end to the life of his brother, and the riot precipitated this action. A decree was obtained from the Doctors of Muslim law that Dara Shikoh deserved death on the ground of infidelity and deviation from Islamic orthodoxy. On the night of the 30th August, the executioners tore away Sipihr Shikoh from his father's arms, and after a violent struggle beheaded Dara Shikoh. The severed head was sent to Aurangzeb to satisfy him that his rival was really dead; and the corpse, by the Emperor's order, was placed on an elephant and paraded through the streets a second time and then buried in a vault under the dome of the tomb of Humayun.

The story of Sulaiman Shikoh, the eldest son of Dara Shikoh, still remains to be told. His fate was no different from that of his father or that of his two uncles. After his victory over Shuja at Bahadurpur in February 1658, he received a summons from his father to return quickly to him, as Aurangzeb had defeated the imperial forces at Dharmat. But he had already reached Karah, about 100 miles west of Allahabad, when he received the news of Dara Shikoh's crushing defeat at Sumugarh on the 2nd July 1658, which, as remarked before, had turned the tables finally against Dara Shikoh and Shah Jahan. The young Prince was in great perplexity and could not decide what course to adopt. His father wished him to join him in Delhi with his troops. But the imperial officers, like Raja Jai Singh and Diler Khan with their contingents, were no longer prepared to support a losing cause. They therefore parted company with him, and their example was followed by several others. Only 6,000 men, less than one-third of the original strength of his army, were left with him, and the road to Delhi was blocked by Aurangzeb's troops. Sulaiman Shikoh therefore returned to Allahabad, and leaving his women, surplus property, and heavy baggage in the fort in the charge of Sayad Kasim Khan of Barha, he crossed the

Ganges and proceeded towards Hardwar. Even on this side however, his path to the Punjab was barred by Aurangzeb's forces. In despair, therefore, the Prince resorted for help to the Hindu ruler of the Garhwal hills, who extended his hospitality to his guest in distress, lodged him in a mansion befitting his dignity and served him attentively.

For one year Sulaiman Shikoh was allowed to live in peace, but at the end of the year Aurangzeb commenced to put pressure on Raja Prithvi Singh to yield to him the person of the fugitive Prince. Prithvi Singh resisted for a year and a half, declining to betray his guest; but the Raja's son and heir, Medni Singh, partly from fear and partly from hope of rewards from Delhi, overruled his father. The imperial troops under Raja Jai Singh and his son Kumar Ram Singh had already established a few outposts on the frontiers of Garhwal, and were now threatening the capital Srinagar with an invasion. On the 27th December 1660, Medni Singh delivered Prince Sulaiman to Kumar Ram Singh, and after seven days the party arrived at Delhi on the 2nd January 1661. He was then brought before his uncle, the Emperor Aurangzeb, who addressed him politely and said: 'Be comforted; no harm shall befall you. You shall be treated with tenderness. God is great, and you shall put your trust in Him. Dara, your father, was not permitted to live, only because he had become a *kafir*, a man devoid of all religion.'[1] The captive was then sent to the State-prison of Gwalior, where, in violation of all solemn promises, he was put to death, 'by the slow poison of *posta*, or infusion of opium-poppy heads', in May 1662.

Aurangzeb had now disposed of almost all[2] possible rivals to the throne: Dara Shikoh had been executed in August 1659; Shuja had been driven to Arakan beyond the frontiers of India

[1] Sarkar, *Aurangzib*, vol. ii, p. 235.

[2] The lives of the two younger princes, Sipihr Shikoh, son of Dara Shikoh, and Izid Bakhsh, the son of Murad, were spared, and they were brought up under the strict care of their uncle, and ultimately each married a daughter of Aurangzeb.

in May 1660; Murad had been put to death on a charge of murder in December 1661; and Sulaiman Shikoh, Dara Shikoh's eldest son, was killed by slow poison in May 1662. The Emperor Shan Jahan was made captive in the fort of Agra on the 8th June 1658, and about six weeks after that date the new Emperor (Aurangzeb) celebrated his hurried coronation at Delhi on the 21st July. Thus the reign of Shah Jahan, which had begun with a scene of bloodshed, may be said to have closed in an even more tragic manner.

§ *Concluding remarks.* The reign of Shah Jahan, which covers nearly thirty years, from 1627 to 1658, is usually regarded as the golden period of Mughal rule. It was outwardly a period of great prosperity. Foreign wars were few and unimportant; at home there was peace and apparent plenty, and the royal treasury seemed full to overflowing. Yet despite the vast treasure which Shah Jahan had inherited from his father and grandfather; despite the growth of a large trade between India and western Asia, which was rendered possible by the existence of a strong Government in Persia; despite the establishment of the export trade with Europe, which certainly brought some profit to the Mughal Empire; and in spite of other apparent advantages, the reign of Shah Jahan sounded the knell of the Empire and of its economic system. To meet the expenditure of Shah Jahan's extravagent bureaucracy and to pay for the splendid architectural monuments, which alone would render his reign memorable, an insupportable burden was laid upon the agricultural and industrial masses, upon whom the very life of the Empire ultimately depended. Thus was engendered the national insolvency which, becoming more marked during the reign of his successor, proved one of the most potent factors in the subsequent disintegrations of the great organization which he inherited from Akbar and Jahangir. Moreover, as we have already pointed out, the liberal and catholic spirit which had guided Akbar's policy as ruler, and which had helped to win the sympathies of the people of Hindustan and to cement the Empire,

was relinquished when the power of the Mughals seemed to be firmly established. His son and successor, Jahangir, in his zeal for Islam, shed the blood of the Jains of Gujarat, and Shah Jahan gave proof of similar sectarian intolerance by the destruction of Hindu shrines at Benares and other places. This policy was brought to fruition by Aurangzeb, who not only persecuted 'Hindu idolaters', but also compassed the ruin of the Shia Sultans of the Deccan, whose kingdoms were overthrown and absorbed in the territories of the Empire.

CHAPTER V

AURANGZEB, 1658–1707

¶ *Reign of Aurangzeb. Division of the period.*

AURANGZEB'S long reign of fifty years is naturally divided into two equal parts, each of about twenty-five years' duration, and, as the latest authority [1] observes, each part is marked by certain well-defined features which distinguish the one from the other. During the earlier of these two periods, namely, from 1658 to 1681, the Emperor himself stays either at Delhi or at Agra; and almost all important developments, both civil and military, concern northern Indian, while the south figures as a distant and more or less negligible factor. In the second half of the reign the situation is reversed, and the centre of political gravity is shifted from the north to the south. The Emperor with his family, his Court and the bulk of the army, moves southward in 1681, and spends the rest of his life in a long and unprofitable struggle with the Muslim powers of the Deccan and with the Marathas. Aurangzeb succeeded in destroying the ruling Muslim houses of Bijapur and Golkonda, but failed wholly to crush the nascent power of his despised Hindu opponents. All the resources of the Empire were concentrated in the Deccan, to meet the challenge thrown down by the Marathas; yet despite an inordinate expenditure of time and money, the issue remained undetermined. The struggle was disastrous for the Empire, and in conjunction with the other factors to be mentioned in the following pages, precipitated the dissolution of the Mughal power. The visible decline of imperial authority occurred in the reign of Aurangzeb. When he ascended the throne in 1658 the Empire of Delhi was apparently in a most prosperous state; yet at his death, in 1707, symptoms of decay were already well marked.

[1] J. N. Sarkar, *Aurangzib*.

The great political edifice erected by the genius of Akbar and preserved more or less intact by Jahangir and Shah Jahan now showed signs of impending disruption and actually collapsed within two decades after Aurangzeb's death. It is this feature of Mughal history which lends special interest to the study of Aurangzeb's reign.

§ *Accession of the Emperor.* The events preceding Aurangzeb's seizure of the Empire have been recounted in the previous chapter. It has also been mentioned that Aurangzeb went through an informal ceremony of enthronement on the 21st July 1658, but postponed to a later date the regular celebration. The actual ceremony took place in June 1659, when the *khutba* was read in his name and Aurangzeb assumed the title of Alamgir. The occasion was also commemorated by the adoption of certain relief measures which had become imperatively necessary.

§ *Famine and distress; remedial measures.* During the war of succession (1657–8) the civil administration had broken down in most parts of the Empire, and the failure of the rains had aggravated the administrative *débâcle.* Grain was selling at famine prices and the people found great difficulty in paying the various inland transit-duties, which were collected by the Government officials with great rigour and severity. Khafi Khan's testimony as to the general situation is as follows:

'To comfort the people and alleviate their distress, the Emperor gave orders for the remission of the *rahdari* (toll) which was collected on every highway (*guzar*), frontier and ferry, and brought in a large sum to the revenue.[1] He also remitted the *pandari*, a ground or house cess, which was paid throughout the Imperial dominions by every tradesman and dealer, from the butcher, the potter, and the greengrocer, to the draper, jeweller, and banker. Something was paid to the government according to rule under this name for every bit of ground in the market,

[1] 'In the Crownlands alone the road-police tax (*rahdari*) yielded 25 lakhs of rupees a year, and if we add to this the collection made in the tracts under the jagirdars and zamindars, and the perquisites of the office underlings, we shall not be far wrong in putting the total loss of the merchants on this head at a *crore* of rupees.' Sarkar, *Aurangzib*, vol. iii, p. 89.

and for every stall and shop, and the total revenue thus derived exceeded (*lacs*) of rupees. Other cesses, lawful and unlawful, as the *sar-shumari*, *buz-shumari* [tax on goats], the *charai* (grazing tax) of the *Banjaras*, the *tuwa'ana*, the collections from the fairs held at the festivals of Muhammadan saints, and at the *jatras* or fairs of the infidels, held near Hindu temples, throughout the country far and wide, where *lacs* of people assemble once a year, and where buying and selling of all kinds goes on. The tax on spirits, on gambling-houses, on brothels, the fines, thank-offerings, and the fourth part of debts recovered by the help of magistrates from creditors. These and other imposts, nearly eighty in number, which brought in *crors* of rupees to the public treasury, were all abolished throughout Hindustan. Besides these, the tithe of corn, which lawfully brought in twenty-five *lacs* of rupees, was remitted in order to alleviate the heavy cost of grain.' [1]

Several of these imposts had been abolished by Firoz Shah Tughlak in the fourteenth century, and subsequently by Akbar also, but they had been reimposed by later rulers or had been locally renewed by grasping revenue officials and *zamindars*; and as mentioned in a later chapter, Aurangzeb's orders on this occasion remained largely a dead letter.

§ *Foreign embassies.* Two years after his second enthronement (June 1659), Aurangzeb received a series of embassies from the Muhammadan States which had trade relations with India. The envoys of these States were treated to a sight of the lavish splendour of the Mughal Court. 'His policy at the beginning', remarks Professor Sarkar, 'was to dazzle the eyes of foreign princes by the lavish gift of presents to them and their envoys, and thus induce the outer Muslim world to forget his treatment of his father and brothers, or at least to show courtesy to the successful man of action and master of India's untold wealth, especially when he was so free with his money.'[2] The more important from amongst these embassies were those sent from Persia, Basra, Mawara-un-Nahr, the Sharif of Mecca, the Prince of Abyssinia, and the Dutch Eastern Colonies. The scenes at the meetings between the Emperor and some of these envoys are

[1] Elliot and Dowson, vol. vii, pp. 246–7.

[2] Sarkar, *Aurangzib*, vol. iii, p. 115.

recorded by Bernier, Manucci, and some Persian writers of the time. The details of the reception given to Budaq Beg, the envoy from Shah Abbas II of Persia, as given by Professor Sarkar, are worth quotation. The ambassador reached Delhi on the 22nd May 1661, and was received with all possible respect. 'Soldiers were posted on both sides of the street, a league in length, through which the ambassador would pass. The principal streets were decorated with rich stuffs, both in the shops and also at the windows, and the ambassador was brought through them, escorted by a number of officers, with music, drums, pipes, and trumpets. On his entering the fort, or royal palace, he was saluted by all the artillery. . . . It was a fine sight to see the ambassador followed by his 500 horsemen, almost all of the same height and appearance, large-limbed and handsome men, with huge moustaches, and riding excellent and well-equipped horses.'[1] The Emperor received him with much civility and was pleased to see the presents from Persia, which 'consisted of 66 swift Iraqi horses and a round pearl weighing 37 carats and valued at Rs. 60,000—the whole being worth Rs. 4,22,000'.[2] After a stay of two months at Court, the envoy was given leave to depart on the 27th July, after receiving from the Emperor gifts to the total value of about Rs. 5,35,000.

§ *Wars on Eastern frontier, 1661–6.* After the conquest and consolidation by Akbar of the whole of northern India, little occurred to disturb the peace of Hindustan, and his successors, Jahangir and Shah Jahan, as has been mentioned, were chiefly occupied in fighting against the Shah of Persia for the retention of Kandahar or in reducing to submission the Shia Muslim kingdoms of the south. Aurangzeb's officers also, not having much to do within the limits of northern India, found some scope for their energies on the eastern frontier of the Empire.

[1] Sarkar, *Aurangzib*, vol. iii, p. 122.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 123.

At the extreme north-eastern corner of the Mughal Empire lay the kingdoms of Cooch Behar and Assam. This part of the country is well protected by nature: dense, impenetrable forests, wooded hills and rocky valleys encircle it on all sides and make it extremely difficult for an invading army to penetrate into the interior. For a long time, therefore, these two eastern kingdoms had been practically unaffected by the Muhammadan invasions of India and their population had led their own national and independent existence. Towards the close of the sixteenth century, however, the kingdom of Cooch Behar, which lay nearer to the Mughal frontier, experienced the power of the Emperor of Delhi. Owing to domestic quarrels and the consequent dismemberment of this kingdom, the district of Kamrup, together with a strip of territory east of the river Sankosh, became a separate principality under Raghudev, the nephew of Nar Narayan, the ruler of Cooch Behar. As a result of the family feud thus established, Lakhshmi Narayan, the son and successor of Nar Narayan, persuaded the Mughal governor of Dacca to invade the territory of Parikhshit, the son and successor of Raghudev. This resulted in the conquest of the kingdom of Kamrup by the Mughals and its annexation to their dominion in A.D. 1612. The Mughals thus came in contact with the Ahom kings of eastern Assam.

The Ahoms were a people of Mongoloid origin, who had migrated to Assam from Upper Burma in the thirteenth century. Being hardier and more warlike than the indigenous population of Assam, they soon succeeded in establishing their supremacy in the country, and throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the Ahom kingdom continued to expand. In the course of their stay in Assam, the Ahoms fell gradually under the influence of Indian civilization and the Hindu religion. They married into Cooch Behar families and permitted the entry into Assam of Hindu priests and artisans. Within a period of about fifty years the country of the Ahom kings became covered with Hindu temples dedicated to the god Vishnu, while the kings

and their subjects adopted the Hindu faith and Hindu names. By the close of the sixteenth century the Ahoms had become almost completely Hinduized, or, as Khafi Khan puts it, 'became identified with the idolaters of Hind'. Despite their absorption of Hindu ideas, however, they appear to have retained some of their original practices, such, for example, as those concerned with burial, which are described by the same Musalman historian in the following words: 'When the Raja of that country or a great *zamindar* dies, they dig a large tomb or apartment in the earth, and in it they place his wives and concubines, as also his horses and equipage, carpets, vessels of gold and silver, grain, etc., all such things as are used in that country, the jewels worn by wives and nobles, perfumes and fruit, sufficient to last for several days. These they call the provisions for his journey to the next world, and when they are all collected the door is closed upon them.' [1]

As mentioned above, the conquest and annexation of Kamrup in 1612 brought the Mughal Government into contact with the Ahom kings of eastern Assam, and Khafi Khan's testimony shows clearly that during the reign of Shah Jahan the Mughals had to wage a long war with the Ahoms, who were addicted to raiding the Mughal frontier of Kamrup. 'They were in the habit of attacking the imperial territories in the province of Bengal, and of carrying off the ryots and Musulmans as prisoners. So great injury was done to life and property, and great scandal was cast upon the Muhammadan religion.' [2]

During the war of succession (1656–8), the rulers of Cooch Behar and Assam, taking advantage of the defenceless state of the eastern frontier, descended upon the imperial dominions and seized a portion of Kamrup. For three years they were unmolested, but in June 1660, when the civil war was finally ended, 'the time came for retribution'. Aurangzeb instructed

[1] Elliot and Dowson, vol. vii, pp. 264–5. The authors state also that these sepulchres were opened by the Mughal soldiers, who took out a large quantity of gold and silver.

[2] *Ibid.*

Mir Jumla, the governor of Dacca, to recover the lost possessions of the Empire and to teach the Assamese a lesson which they should never forget.

In November 1661 Mir Jumla started from Dacca with an army of 12,000 horse and 30,000 foot, together with 'artillery, provision for sieges, and a number of boats, which are of great importance for carrying on war in those parts'. The capital of Cooch Behar was reached in about three weeks. The Raja had already fled to Bhutan, and his son tendered submission. The kingdom of Cooch Behar was annexed and the 'Khan-Khanan had the *Khutba* read and money coined in the name of the Emperor'. The old government of the country was abolished and a Muslim garrison was placed at the capital. After a fortnight's halt the general left Cooch Behar to punish the Assamese. Be it said to the credit of Mir Jumla that he shared with the humblest private every hardship that nature imposed upon the invading army and continued his 'triumphal march' for three and a half months, till he reached the capital of the Ahom kingdom on the 17th March 1662. The defending forces were easily repulsed, and the more important Ahom fortresses were occupied and garrisoned by Muslim soldiers. Raja Jayadhwaj fled, leaving his capital and all his property at the mercy of the invader. 'The spoils taken in Assam were enormous:—82 elephants, 3 lakhs of rupees in cash, 675 pieces of artillery, 1,343 camel-swivels, 1,200 *Ramchangis*,[1] 6,750 matchlocks, 340 *maunds* of gunpowder, a thousand and odd boats, and 173 store-houses of paddy, each containing from 10 to 1,000 *maunds* of grain.'[2]

With the military occupation of the capital, Mir Jumla's success ended. What the defenders were unable to do, nature accomplished. On the approach of the rainy season Mir Jumla's troops had perforce to go into cantonments and there suffered much from the unhealthiness of the climate and from want of food. 'In the Mughal camp fever and flux carried off hundreds daily. Medicine had no effect, and the dead could

[1] Muskets.

[2] Sarkar, *Aurangzib*, vol. iii, p. 183.

not be given a decent burial on account of their vast number. . . . In the Mughal camp no suitable diet or comfort was available for the sick; all had to live on coarse rice; no wheat, no pulse, no *ghee*, no sugar, and no opium or tobacco except a little at fabulous prices.'[1] The Ahoms also, who were by no means crushed, soon rallied their forces and resumed the offensive. Discontent was so rife among the Mughal forces, that some of the officers, after consultation, decided to decamp, leaving Mir Jumla to his fate. But the general received timely information of this plot, and making a virtue of necessity, he ordered an instant retreat. When the Assamese obtained intelligence of the movements of the Mughal troops, they attacked them; but the latter were still capable of fighting, and the gallant Diler Khan inflicted a crushing defeat upon the enemy and compelled Raja Jayadhwaj to sign a humiliating treaty. According to Khafi Khan, he agreed to pay '120,000 *tolas* of silver, and 2,000 *tolas* of gold, and to present fifty elephants and one of his ugly daughters to the Emperor. He also agreed to present fifteen elephants and another daughter to the Khan-khanan, together with some cash and goods.'[2] The Mughal Emperor also annexed permanently to the imperial dominions a few forts and towns in the cultivated districts near the frontier of Bengal. The conclusion of the Assam campaign was marked by the loss of one of Aurangzeb's best generals. The hardships of the campaign proved fatal to Mir Jumla, who died on the 30th March 1663, while on his way back to Dacca.

The new governor of Bengal, Shayista Khan, who had been recently recalled from the Deccan,[3] soon found occupation on the eastern frontier. Owing to the disorganized state of the

[1] Sarkar, *Aurangzib*, vol. iii, p. 194.

[2] Elliot and Dowson, vol. vii, p. 268. The figures regarding the quantity of gold and the number of elephants given by Professor Sarkar are slightly different.

[3] Shayista Khan was Aurangzeb's maternal uncle. Owing to his failure against Shivaji he was recalled from the Deccan (1664).

Mughal fleet,[1] the King of Arakan had grown very bold and had gradually increased his naval power by the infusion of a foreign element, composed of Portuguese adventurers and their half-cast offspring. He also encouraged the settlement, on the coast, near Chittagong, of Portuguese adventurers, whose main occupation was piracy in the Bay of Bengal. Their ravages extended to Dacca and caused much annoyance to the governor of Bengal. 'The Arakan pirates, both Magh and Feringhi' (Portuguese), writes a contemporary Muslim historian, 'used constantly to come by the water-route and plunder Bengal. They carried off the Hindus and Muslims that they could seize, pierced the palms of their hands, passed thin strips of cane through the holes, and threw them huddled together under the decks of their ships. Every morning they flung down some uncooked rice to the captives from above, as we fling grain to fowl. On reaching home the pirates employed some of the hardy men that survived such treatment in tillage and other degrading pursuits. The others were sold to the Dutch, English, and French merchants at the ports of the Deccan. . . . As they continually practised raids for a long time, Bengal daily became more and more desolate and less and less able to resist them. Not a house was left inhabited on either side of the rivers lying on their track from Chittagong to Dacca.'[2] Bernier also gives them the worst possible character: 'These people were detestable, massacring or poisoning one another without compunction or remorse, and sometimes assassinating even their priests, who were too often no better than their murderers.' Shayista Khan, with the approval of the Emperor, enlarged the Bengal flotilla by the addition of several new vessels, and in January 1666, forced the King of Arakan to cede Chittagong, the pirates' stronghold, and also captured the island of Sondip in the Bay of Bengal. Apart

[1] As has been pointed out elsewhere, the Mughals even at the height of their power never attempted to maintain an efficient navy—their failure or inability to do so being one of the indirect causes of the decline of the Empire.

[2] Shahabu-d din Talash. Sarkar, *Aurangzib*, vol. iii, p. 225.

from these successes, however, little was done to check the progress of piracy, which flourished throughout Aurangzeb's reign.

§ *Afghan War, 1667–8.* The campaign on the eastern frontier was hardly ended when trouble commenced on the north-western frontier of the Empire. It began with the Yusufzai Pathans, inhabiting the valleys of Swat and Bajaur. Brave, hardy and warlike, these people have for ages lived on rapine and plunder. Their homes and hamlets lie in the Swat and Bajaur valleys and the plain of north Peshawar, forming a rough semi-circle bounded on three sides by the Indus, Kabul, and Swat rivers, and on the fourth by the lower hills of Kashmir. There they have lived in comparative security from external attack, and thence they swoop down on the plains to levy blackmail from the wealthy cities of the north-western Punjab. This has been their practice ever since their migration to these valleys in the beginning of the sixteenth century. Akbar had made a definite effort to impose peace on the north-western frontier, but the clansmen defied all efforts of the imperial army to reduce them to obedience. Further, the terrible disaster of 1586, when the Imperialists under Raja Birbal were cut off in a Swat defile and the Raja lost his life, had inspired widespread fear of Afghan prowess. Akbar at last relinquished his attempts and secured a hollow truce by pensioning the tribal leaders and overlooking their depredations. Under Jahangir and Shah Jahan matters remained *in statu quo*. But Aurangzeb was more determined than his father and grandfather. He would not brook insubordination on the part of a provincial governor, nor would he let the imperial prestige suffer in any part of the Empire. He therefore determined to restore peace on his frontiers even at the cost of prolonged and expensive military operations, first against the Assamese and then the Afghans.

The trouble began early in 1667, when a Yusufzai leader, named Bhagu, organized a force of about 5,000 clansmen and invaded Pakhli, in the Hazara district. He easily dislodged the imperial officers, while other Yusufzai bands began to ravage

imperial territory along the bank of the Kabul river in the western Peshawar and Attock districts. The Emperor accordingly instructed the governor of Attock to march against the rebels with all available troops in his neighbourhood. Orders were also dispatched to the governor of Kabul to advance with his contingent of 13,000 men and attack the Yusufzai country, and a force of about 10,000 troopers with artillery was sent from the Court. A desperate battle was fought at the ferry of the river Harun early in April, in which Kamil Khan, the *faujdar* of Attock, inflicted a crushing defeat upon the enemy. But the Mughal force was not strong enough to attempt an invasion of the Yusufzai country. Kamil Khan therefore made a long halt at Harun, till the reinforcements arrived from Lahore and Kabul about the first week of May. The Afghans were now systematically subdued, their houses were burnt and their property looted. The Mughal victory was complete, though skirmishes continued till the end of September. For a time the Yusufzais seemed to have been cowed by these severe measures, since there was no disturbance of the public peace on the frontier districts for a number of years.

Further trouble, however, again broke out in 1672. One Acmal Khan,[1] who had acquired a great ascendancy over the Afridi clan, crowned himself king and proclaimed war against the Mughals. The Khaibar clans were already discontented with Mughal rule, and on Acmal Khan's proclaiming war, they joined him in large numbers. From the Khaibar Pass to Ali Masjid, Acmal's men now held the route to Kabul, and in the spring of 1672, when Muhammad Amin Khan, the governor of Kabul, returned to his head-quarters after passing the winter in Peshawar, he found his road completely blocked. Ignorant of the strength of his enemy, Muhammad Amin Khan foolishly risked an engagement with the Afghans, in which the Mughal army suffered heavy losses. Speaking of the confusion caused in

[1] This is the spelling adopted by Sarkar. Other authorities give the name as 'Aimal'.

the Mughal ranks a contemporary historian remarks: 'Every one fled to the hill or deserts. . . . Sons were separated from fathers, daughters from mothers, wives from husbands, masters from servants. . . . Ten thousand men fell under the enemy's sword in the field, and above two krores of Rupees in cash and kind was looted by the enemy. They captured twenty thousand men and women and sent them to Central Asia for sale.'[1] Muhammad Amin and a few of his senior officers managed to escape to Peshawar with their lives. This signal victory increased the prestige of Acmal Khan in the eyes of clans other than his own and enabled him to attract still larger numbers to his banner. The movement increased considerably in extent and magnitude, and almost the whole Pathan population from Kandahar to Attock was up in arms. On receiving the news of this disaster, the Emperor took all precautions to guard against an Afghan incursion into the Punjab. The governor of Lahore was instructed to hasten to Peshawar with all his available troops, and the veteran Mahabat Khan was sent as governor of Kabul to replace Muhammad Amin Khan, who was degraded and sent to Gujarat. Maharaja Jaswant Singh, who was at that time holding the outposts of Jamrud, was also instructed to co-operate with Mahabat Khan. The latter was now nearly seventy and incapable of much exertion. He remained long inactive at Peshawar and was only persuaded to make a move towards Kabul by repeated orders from the Emperor. Another imperial division was sent from the south, under Shujaat Khan, who had recently (1672) made a name for himself by quelling the Satnami rising. The forces thus placed at the disposal of the commanders should have been ample for the purpose. Unfortunately there was lack of co-operation between the several officers of the imperial army. Mahabat Khan and Jaswant Singh regarded Shujaat Khan as a low-born individual, who had risen to his present position by a freak of fortune, and Shujaat Khan in his turn behaved with the insolence of an upstart. Disregarding all advice, he pushed

[1] Sarkar, *Aurangzib*, vol. iii, p. 262.

on to Kabul, and in February 1674 ascended the Karapa Pass. The enemy surrounded him on all sides and assailed the Imperialists with a storm of missiles. Shujaat Khan was killed, and his leaderless troops found themselves in a critical condition. They were, however, saved by the timely arrival of a gallant Rathor contingent of 500, which Maharaja Jaswant Singh had wisely sent to support Shujaat Khan's division.

The Karapa disaster convinced Aurangzeb that a supreme effort must be made to restore the imperial prestige. He himself went to Hassan Abdal, a convenient half-way station between Rawalpindi and Peshawar, and stayed there for over a year directing the operations. The Emperor took with him almost all the veterans who had seen service in the Afghan country in previous reigns; Agha Khan, who had distinguished himself by fighting against the Afghans on previous occasions, being recalled from the Deccan to accompany him. Force and diplomacy were both tried, and the Emperor was able, in a short time, to restore peace in the neighbourhood of Peshawar. Mahabat Khan was removed from his post of Viceroy of Kabul,[1] and Fidai Khan was appointed in his place. Agha Khan was directed to escort Fidai Khan and to keep open the Khaibar Pass. At Gandamak, Agha Khan engaged in an action with the enemy, who were thirty to forty thousand strong. Both sides lost heavily; but the vengeance taken by the Mughals was so extreme that for years after this event the dreaded name of Agha Khan was a byword among the mothers and children of Afghanistan.[2]

[1] Aurangzeb suspected Mahabat Khan of having connived at the destruction of Shujaat Khan. Mahabat Khan in self-defence wrote a very bitter letter to the Emperor, wherein he defended his own character and that of Jaswant Singh, and attacked the Emperor for employing low favourites like Shujaat Khan. Mahabat Khan did not long survive this disgrace, for he died three months after this event (December 1674).

[2] This will remind the reader of the similar but more recent instance of Hari Singh Nalwa—the brave Sikh general—with whose name Pathan women still frighten their children.

Two decisive actions were fought during the following year (1676) when the resistance of the Afghans was finally broken, and Aurangzeb's combined policy of reconciliation and terrorism came to a triumphant conclusion. From that date until the close of Aurangzeb's reign the peace of the frontier was never seriously disturbed.

§ *Growth of Aurangzeb's religious policy.* Aurangzeb had claimed the throne as the champion of orthodox Islam against the heretical practices and principles of his elder brother, Dara Shikoh. Now that he was undisputed master of the country, he proceeded to carry out the promises made in his manifesto at the commencement of the war of succession. Accordingly he issued in 1659 various ordinances 'to restore the rules of Orthodox Islam in the administration and to bring the lives of the people into closer accord with the teaching of the Koran'. The Emperor set the example himself. He abolished the practice, followed by previous Mughal Emperors, of stamping the *Kalima* (Muhammadan confession of faith) on his coins, lest the holy words be defiled by the touch of unbelievers. The celebration of the Persian festival of Nauroz was also forbidden since Aurangzeb believed that it was an innovation on the orthodox practice of Islam. Similarly ordinances were issued against the astrologers, forbidding them to draw up almanacs or forecasts of events since they were inconsistent with the practice of Islam. In the eleventh year of his reign this Puritan monarch even forbade the playing of music at Court, and the State musicians and singers, who had hitherto enjoyed honour and rank, were pensioned off.[1] Aurangzeb's standard of personal and private life was very high. He abstained scrupulously from the slightest indulgence in prohibited food, drink, or dress, and, as already stated, even refused to enjoy the pleasures of music. He strove to live up to the ideal of a strict orthodox Muslim; and this was, perhaps, one of the main reasons of his failure as a sovereign. The country over which he was destined to rule was, unfortunately, not

[1] See Chapter VIII, p. 337, *post.*

a purely Muhammadan country, the bulk of its population being composed of Hindus, whom the Emperor disliked for religious reasons. These he converted into bitter enemies by a policy of zeal for Islam, as interpreted by himself and his Sunni Ulamas. It is true that his father and grandfather had not been very tolerant of Hindu sentiment. Jahangir, it will be remembered, ordered the execution of several Jain priests in Gujarat, and on another occasion exhibited his spite against the priests of the Kangra temple by desecrating its precincts with the blood of cows. Shah Jahan had issued an order in the sixth year of his reign (1632) prohibiting the Hindus from building new temples, and had destroyed those that were yet unfinished. 'His Majesty, the defender of the faith, gave orders that at Benares, and throughout all his dominions in every place, all temples that had been begun should be cast down.' But Aurangzeb carried this anti-Hindu policy to its extreme limits, and exhibited no little cunning in his early attacks upon those whom he regarded as pagans.

In the first year of his reign, in a charter granted to a priest of Benares, Aurangzeb reiterates the order of his father that his religion forbade him to allow the building of new temples, but did not enjoin the destruction of old ones. 'It has been decided according to our Canon Law', runs the *farman*, 'that long-standing temples should not be demolished, but no new temple allowed to be built.... Information has reached our... Court that certain persons have harassed the Hindus resident in Benares and its environs and certain Brahmans who have the right of holding charge of the ancient temples there, and that they further desire to remove these Brahmans from their ancient office. Therefore, our royal command is that you should direct that in future no person shall in unlawful ways interfere with or disturb the Brahmans and other Hindus resident in those places.'[1] If Aurangzeb had only confined his action to this prohibitory order, the evil would not have been aggravated and the Hindus

[1] Aurangzeb's Benares *farman*. Sarkar, vol. iii, pp. 319–20.

would probably have quietly submitted to their fate. But this was not to be. With advancing years Aurangzeb's bigotry developed, and in 1669 he issued a general order to demolish all the schools and temples of the Hindus. 'On the 17th Zi-l ka'da, 1079 (18th April 1669), it reached the ear of His Majesty, the protector of the faith, that in the provinces of Thatta, Multan, and Benares, but especially in the latter, foolish Brahmans were in the habit of expounding frivolous books in their schools, and that students and learners, Musulmans as well as Hindus, went there, even from long distances, led by a desire to become acquainted with the wicked sciences they taught. The "Director of the Faith" consequently issued orders to all the governors of provinces to destroy with a willing hand the schools and temples of the infidels; and they were strictly enjoined to put an entire stop to the teaching and practising of idolatrous forms of worship.' [1]

The Muslim governors executed the order with a hearty will. In August 1669 the great temple of Vishwanath at Benares was pulled down, and in January of the following year (1670) Aurangzeb had the satisfaction of learning that the grandest shrine at Mathura, Kesav Rai's temple, built in the reign of Jahangir at a cost of thirty-three *lacs* of rupees by Raja Bir Singh Bundela, had been levelled to the ground. The foundations of a large and costly mosque were laid on the site. In recording the destruction of this temple, the author of *Ma-'Asir-i'Alamgiri* piously ejaculates: 'Thirty-three *lacs* were expended on this work. Glory be to God, who has given us the faith of Islam, that, in this reign of the destroyer of false gods, an undertaking so difficult of accomplishment has been brought to a successful termination! This vigorous support given to the true faith was a severe blow to the arrogance of the Rajas, and, like idols, they turned their faces awe-struck to the wall. The richly-jewelled idols taken from the pagan temples were transferred to Agra, and there placed beneath the steps leading to the

[1] Elliot and Dowson, vol. vii, pp. 183–4.

Nawab Begam Sahib's mosque, in order that they might ever be pressed under foot by the true believers.'[1] About the same time the second temple of Somnath, built by Bhima Deva (1143–74), was also destroyed, while, during and after the Rajput war (1679–80), we are told that as many as 240 temples, big and small, were demolished in Mewar alone.

The Emperor's next step in his policy of persecution was the exemption of goods belonging to Muslim traders from customs or transit duties, whereas those on the goods of Hindu traders were retained at the old level (May 1667). 'Apart from the political immorality of favouring one creed above all others,' remarks Professor Sarkar, 'the direct sacrifice of public revenue was very great, and the real loss to the State was likely to be still greater, as the Hindu traders had now a strong temptation to pass their goods off as the property of the Muslims, in collusion with the latter.'[2]

In pursuance of his plan of putting economic pressure on the Hindus, the Emperor issued another ordinance in 1671 'that the rent-collectors of the Crownlands must be Muslims, and all viceroys and *taluqdars* were ordered to dismiss their Hindu head clerks (*peshkars*) and accountants (*diwanian*) and replace them by Muslims.'[3]

§ *Reimposition of Jizya.* Aurangzeb's policy may be said to have reached its climax in 1679 when he reimposed the *jizya* on the 'unbelievers', in order to 'spread Islam and put down the practice of infidelity'. It certainly helped the spread of Islam, since 'many Hindus', as Manucci observes, 'who were unable to pay turned Muhammadan, to obtain relief from the insults of the collectors'.[4] The same contemporary observer

[1] Elliot and Dowson, vol. vii, pp. 184–5.

[2] Sarkar, *Aurangzib*, vol. iii, p. 313.

[3] Sarkar, *Aurangzib*, vol. iii, p. 315. Professor Sarkar further mentions that later on, when it was found impossible to carry on the administration without the help of the Hindus, the Emperor allowed half the *peshkars* of the Revenue Minister's and Paymaster's Departments to be Hindus and the other half Muhammadans.

[4] Manucci, *Storia*, ii, p. 234.

adds that 'Aurangzeb rejoices that by such exactions these Hindus will be forced into embracing the Muhammadan faith'. As to the reception of this tax by the Hindu population of Delhi, Khafi Khan writes thus: 'Upon the publication of this order, the Hindus all round Delhi assembled in vast numbers under the *jharokha*[1] of the Emperor on the river front of the palace, to represent their inability to pay, and to pray for the recall of the edict. But the Emperor would not listen to their complaints. One day when he went to public prayer in the great mosque on the sabbath, a vast multitude of Hindus thronged the road from the palace to the mosque, with the object of seeking relief. Money-changers and drapers, all kinds of shopkeepers from the Urdu *bazar*, mechanics, and workmen of all kinds, left off work and business, and pressed into the way. Notwithstanding orders were given to force a way through, it was impossible for the Emperor to reach the mosque. Every moment the crowd increased, and the Emperor's equipage was brought to a stand-still. At length an order was given to bring out the elephants and direct them against the mob. Many fell trodden to death under the feet of the elephants and horses. For some days the Hindus continued to assemble in great numbers and complain, but at length they submitted to pay the *jizya*.'[2]

Besides this direct economic pressure, Aurangzeb employed other means to induce Hindus to apostatize. Posts in the Revenue Department were given to Hindus on condition of their embracing Islam, and sometimes the converts were also 'carried in procession through the city to the accompaniment of a band and flags'. In March 1695, as Khafi Khan relates, the Emperor issued another proclamation that with the exception of the Rajputs no Hindus could be allowed to ride in *palkis*, or on elephants or thoroughbred horses, or to carry arms. Restrictions were also placed on some of the Hindu religious fairs.

§ *Outbreaks of discontent. Hindu reaction.* The conduct of

[1] The balcony on which the Emperor showed himself daily to the people.

[2] Elliot and Dowson, vol. vii, p. 296.

the Emperor was bound to provoke discontent and rebellion amongst the majority of his Hindu subjects, but it is difficult to believe that Aurangzeb, who was otherwise so intelligent, failed to anticipate the ultimate consequences of his policy. The explanation seems to be that, although he was not blind to the political results of his actions, yet as an orthodox and sincere Muslim, he believed that his spiritual gains would outweigh the material loss which he or his Empire might suffer by the alienation of his Hindu subjects. Early in 1669 the Jats of the Mathura District, infuriated by the destruction of the splendid temple of Kesav Rai, rose in revolt and gave the imperial forces much trouble for years afterwards.[1]

§ *Satnami rebellion.* In March 1672 occurred another outbreak among a sect of Hindu devotees, known as Satnamis. These men lived in the *parganas* of Narnaul and Mewat, and though they dressed like fakirs, were mainly traders and agriculturists. Kkafi Khan relates that from small beginnings the rebellion soon assumed formidable proportions, and 'it taxed the imperial power seriously to exterminate these 5,000 stubborn peasants fighting for faith and home'. After the Satnamis had captured Narnaul and defeated the imperial forces, a representation was made to the Emperor 'that swords, arrows, and musket-balls had no effect upon these men, and that every arrow and ball which they discharged against the royal army brought down two or three men. Thus they were credited with magic and witchcraft, and stories were currently reported about them which were utterly incredible. They were said to have magic wooden horses like live ones, on which their women rode as an advanced guard.'[2] The imperial officers were therefore afraid of fighting in the front rank, with the result that the rebels advanced to within twenty-five miles of Delhi. On hearing this news, Aurangzeb resorted to a stratagem. With a view to dispelling the fears

[1] Besides this formidable popular rising some frantic attempts were made on the Emperor's life, but they all ended in failure. Sarkar, vol. iii, p. 330.

[2] Elliot and Dowson, vol. vii, p. 295.

of his men, the Emperor prepared some prayers and amulets with his own hand and attached them to the imperial standards, telling his men that these would counteract the magic of the infidels. At last, after a most obstinate battle, two thousand of the Satnamis fell on the field, while many more were slain during the pursuit. 'Very few of them escaped, and that tract of country was cleared of the infidels.'

§ *Rajput rebellion.* In 1679 the Rajputs broke into open rebellion. Maharaja Jaswant Singh of Jodhpur died at Jamrud (December 1678) while still serving the Emperor as commandant of the frontier posts in the Khaibar.[1] Aurangzeb immediately sent his officers to take possession of the kingdom and after some delay placed on the throne Indra Singh, Rao of Nagor, a relative of Jaswant Singh, but a court noble and entirely loyal to the Emperor. Aurangzeb had long coveted the important kingdom of Marwar and only awaited a favourable opportunity to seize it.[2]

In the meantime two widows of the late Jaswant Singh arrived in Lahore and were shortly afterwards delivered of two sons. One of these children soon died but the other, Ajit Singh, survived. The Rajputs then approached the Emperor with the request that Ajit Singh should be recognized as heir to his dead father. The Emperor, however, gave no definite undertaking

[1] Tod and Manucci both imply that he was poisoned by the Emperor's orders.

[2] In the eyes of Aurangzeb the kingdom of Marwar was important for more than one reason. The shortest and easiest trade-route from the Mughal capital to the rich manufacturing city of Ahmadabad and the busy port of Cambay lay through its limits. Naturally, therefore, if such a province formed a part of the imperial dominions, Mughal traders and Mughal armies would be able to pass easily from the capital to western India and the Arabian sea. Besides its strategic importance, the independent or even semi-independent position of Marwar under Jaswant Singh was a standing annoyance to Aurangzeb. After the death of Rana Partap, the position of Udaipur declined and the ruler of Marwar was regarded as the leading Hindu chief. Sarkar, *Aurangzib*, vol. iii, pp. 366–9.

to do this, but ordered the boy to be brought up in his harem, and, according to one authority, made Ajit Singh's acceptance of Islam a condition to his succession to his father. The Rajputs were much perturbed at the Emperor's attitude and resolved to carry the boy and his mother away to a place of safety. Their plans were carefully laid under the leadership of Durgadas, a son of Jaswant Singh's minister Askaran. After some fierce fighting in the streets of Delhi, in which most of them lost their lives, they managed to accomplish their object, and Durgadas conducted the fugitives safely to Marwar. Ajit Singh was kept hidden for many years on Mount Abu and ultimately succeeded his father. The widows now claimed the protection of Udaipur (Mewar), which was readily granted by the reigning Maharana, Raj Singh. War thus began between the Imperialists and the Rajputs, who were already incensed by the series of provocative edicts against Hinduism, though Jaipur (Amber) held aloof and continued to support the imperial cause.

The war assumed a threatening aspect from the very beginning. The Rajputs made it a national cause and almost the whole of Rajasthan was up in arms in defence of country and religion. The Emperor therefore started for Ajmer in August (1679) to direct the operations in person. Heavy reinforcements were called up from different provinces[1] and the three princes, Muazzam, Azam, and Akbar, were put in command of separate divisions of the army. The Rajputs fought with their usual valour, and although Marwar was formally annexed to the Empire towards the end of 1679, the conquest was far from complete. Nor did the Mughal arms meet with better success in Mewar. The districts of Udaipur (January 1680) and Chitor (February 1680) were secured and the country-side was devas-

[1] Aurangzeb must now have realized the unwisdom of prolonging the Afghan War (1667–76) since it made the employment of the Afghans impossible in his struggle against the Rajputs, though they were just the class of soldiers who would have been most useful in a rugged and barren country like Rajputana.

tated, but Maharana Raj Singh remained firm and secure in his mountain fastnesses. He had taken up a position on the crest of the Aravali range whence he could make sudden descents and deal crushing blows on the Mughal armies stationed both in Mewar and Marwar, the two countries being situated respectively on the east and on the west of this range. During the ten months preceding the rebellion of Prince Akbar (January 1681) the Rathor and the Sisodia bands of Rajputs made frequent raids on the Mughal army, cut off supply-trains and stragglers, and made the outposts of the enemy extremely unsafe. In fact, they created such fear of their prowess in the imperial army that 'the command of Mughal outposts went a-begging, captain after captain declining the dangerous honour and offering excuses'. Aurangzeb threw the blame on Prince Akbar, and in high wrath removed him from his command of Chitor and sent him to Marwar.

§ *Prince Akbar's rebellion.* Akbar was now twenty-three years of age—full of vigour, hopes, and ambition. He was smarting under the disgrace of his removal, and for some time even ceased writing to the Emperor. The Rajputs naturally thought it was time to strike a serious blow at Aurangzeb's power. They had a genuine grievance against him, for he had destroyed their temples and idols—their most cherished possessions, and had re-imposed the 'hated *jizya*'. What wonder is it if they thought of replacing Aurangzeb on the throne of Delhi by one of his sons, who would prove more tolerant of their creed and would undertake to reverse the policy of invidious distinction between his Hindu and Muhammadan subjects which the Emperor had introduced? Their eyes turned towards Prince Akbar, and in Tahavvur Khan, the second in command to the Prince, they found an intermediary for negotiations. 'The Maharana Raj Singh and Durgadas, the Rathor leader, told Akbar how his father's bigoted attempt to root out the Rajputs was threatening the stability of the Mughal empire, and urged him to seize the throne and restore the wise policy of his forefathers if he wished

to save his heritage from destruction. In this attempt to place a truly national king on the throne of Delhi they promised to back him with the armed strength of the two greatest Rajput clans, the Sisodias and the Rathors.'[1] The offer was a tempting one. As Aurangzeb, twenty-five years before, had seized the throne from his father, Akbar thought to play a similar part by placing himself at the head of the Rajputs. In the end, therefore, he agreed to the Maharana's proposal, and 'the 2nd of January 1681 was fixed as the day when Akbar would begin his march on Ajmer to contest the imperial throne'. On that date Prince Akbar and his rebel army of about 70,000 men, 'including the best blades of Rajputana', moved out in the direction of Ajmer and arrived within a distance of three miles of the imperial camp on the 15th of January. That day was indeed critical for the Emperor. The two main divisions of his army were quartered far away—near Chitor and the Raj Samudra lake. Even the faithful imperial guard was absent on distant service. But Aurangzeb always displayed his capabilities in adversity. He was, as we know, a past-master of diplomacy and cunning and it was his cunning that saved him on this occasion. By means of a letter, which he contrived should fall into the hands of the Rajputs, he conveyed to them the suspicion that Akbar was playing them false. Aurangzeb's ruse proved successful, and Akbar's Rajput adherents suspecting treachery, melted away during the night. On the morning of the 16th January, Prince Akbar was left alone, and, collecting his treasures in haste, 'rode away for dear life in the track of the Rajputs'. A few days afterwards, when the truth about Aurangzeb's false letter became known, Durgadas returned to the Prince and safely escorted him in May 1681 to the Deccan, where he lived upwards of a year at the court of Shivaji's son Sambaji. The Prince then repaired to Bombay and thence embarked in an English ship for Muscat, from which port he proceeded to Persia, where he lived for many years, dying shortly before his father.

[1] Sarkar, *Aurangzib*, vol. iii, p. 404.

§ *Rajput rebellion.* The war between Rajput and Mughal dragged on for some time, though active operations were brought to a close by the flight of Prince Akbar to the Deccan. Early in June 1681 a peace was patched up with the Maharana of Udaipur, in which both sides made concessions. The Maharana ceded a few *parganas* in lieu of the *jizya* demanded from his kingdom, and the Emperor did not press his demand for that 'odious impost'. In Marwar, however, the war continued with varying fortunes for another thirty years, until Aurangzeb's son and successor, Bahadur Shah I, in 1709, acknowledged the right of Ajit Singh to rule over the State of Jodhpur. The main result of the impolicy of the Emperor was that the Rajputs, who had been since the days of Akbar the hereditary supporters of the Mughal house, were henceforth permanently alienated from the throne of Delhi. 'With the two leading Rajput clans openly hostile to him', observes Professor Sarkar, 'Aurangzeb's army lost its finest and most loyal recruits. Nor was the trouble confined to Marwar and Mewar. It spread by sympathy among the Hada and Gaur clans. The elements of lawlessness thus set moving overflowed fitfully into Malwa and endangered the vitally important Mughal road through Malwa to the Deccan. In the incessant wars which fill the remainder of his reign, the Bundela clan and a few Hada and Kachhwah families supplied the only Rajput soldiers he could secure for fighting his battles. This was the harvest that Jalaludin Akbar's great-grandson reaped from sowing the whirlwind of religious persecution and suppression of nationalities.'[1]

§ *Execution of Guru Tegh Bahadur; progress of the Sikhs.* Many a saintly soul was caught in the whirlwind of religious persecution raised by Aurangzeb. But perhaps few religious executions had such far-reaching consequences as that of the Sikh Guru, Tegh Bahadur, which exercised a decided influence upon the subsequent history of the Punjab. It will be convenient here to summarize the history of the Sikhs, who played

[1] Sarkar, *Aurangzib*, vol. iii, p. 425.

an important part in the political history of the province during the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century. The founder of the Sikh religion was Guru Nanak, and the movement was one phase of that general religious revival which characterizes the history of India in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Nanak was born in 1469 at Talwandi, now known as Nankana Sahib, situated 35 miles south-west of Lahore. From his childhood he was of a contemplative turn of mind; and as he grew up his love for spiritual inquiry increased, until he resigned the position which he held under Daulat Khan Lodi and took to a life of religious peregrination and preaching. Nanak was a true *bhakt* (devotee), and the essence of his creed was belief in the one true living God and the shaping of every man's conduct in such a way as to realize that God. He devoted his life to the purification of the Hindu religion and the reformation of society. Like Kabir and other Indian saints before him, Nanak preached against the hollowness of conventional beliefs and mechanical rites, and urged his hearers to go back to a personal and living faith. He asserted most emphatically that the Brahmans and the Mullahs, who followed religion as a profession, were not the true guides to truth, that they were blind men leading the blind, and that salvation lay only in devoting one's self to the service of God.

Nanak died at the age of seventy (1539), leaving the work of his mission in the hands of a disciple named Angad (1538-52). Angad and his successor Amar Das (1552–74) were chosen for their superior character. But after the third Guru the succession to the pontificate became hereditary. Ramdas, the fourth Guru, was succeeded by his son Arjun Dev (1581–1606), and it was under the leadership of the latter that the Sikh Church assumed a definite shape. Some elements of unity were already present among the Sikhs, and the sagacious Guru Arjun now took measures to strengthen further the foundations of his Church. He compiled the *Adi Granth*, which, in the estimation of the Sikhs, at once assumed a position equal to that of the

Bible, the Koran, and the Vedas. The Guru also transferred his own head-quarters to Amritsar, which gradually became the central place of pilgrimage of the Sikhs. Arjun Dev also organized the finances of the Church by making it obligatory on his followers to contribute one-tenth of their total income for the upkeep of the Church. In short, the Sikhs now formed a theocratic State; they had their religious code in the *Granth*, their Holy City in Amritsar, and a chief in the person of their Guru. The power and prestige of the Guru increased considerably after the pontificate of Arjun.

§ *Aurangzeb and Shivaji.* While Aurangzeb was occupied with his religious propaganda in the north, Shivaji was waging the war of Maratha liberation in the south. But before we consider the tale of the rise of Shivaji, it seems necessary to deal succinctly with the previous history and characteristics of the Marathas.

Maharashtra, the country of the Marathas, is situated on the eastern side of the western Ghats and comprises the north-western part of the peninsula. The characteristic features of this country are the great mountain ranges which enclose it on two sides—the Sahyadri range running from north to south, and the Satpura and the Vindhya ranges running from east to west. The hill-forts on the summit of these ranges form an additional protection to a naturally guarded country and have played an important part in its political history. The people of Maharashtra also enjoy a good and bracing climate. Owing to the uncertain rainfall and the rocky nature of the country, the soil is poor and yields to much labour a bare measure of subsistence. Hence the country is sparsely inhabited. But such a country and climate have their compensating advantages too. They develop certain moral virtues such as self-reliance, courage, perseverance, and simplicity, which are not always the heritage of a people living in rich and fertile plains. The Marathas have developed these qualities, and they are active, laborious, hardy, and persevering. With these qualities was combined a sense of equality,

fostered by the popular religion of Maharashtra. The leaders of the *bhakti* cult taught devotion to God, and equality or oneness of all true believers before God, without any distinction of class or birth. The literature and language afforded another bond of union, for the religious reformers composed their devotional songs in the Marathi language and a large quantity of Marathi literature was produced during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The themes of this literature were taken from the ancient scriptures and epics which are the common heritage of all Hindus.

Thus a remarkable community of language, creed, and life was attained in Maharashtra in the seventeenth century, even before political unity was conferred by Shivaji. Even in political training also, the people of this country were not deficient. They had acquired the necessary experience of both military and civil administration under the Muhammadan rulers of the southern kingdoms. Large numbers of Marathas were employed by the rulers of Golkonda and Bijapur in the revenue and finance departments of their States. At times even the highest ministerial appointments were filled by Deccani Brahmans. Madan Pandit, Yasu Pandit, and several others served with distinction at the Courts of the Adil Shahi rulers of Bijapur. Maratha soldiers freely enrolled themselves in the army as *silledar*[1] and *bargir*[2] troopers and are said to have made excellent skirmishers. About the commencement of the seventeenth century, when the Mughal Emperors of Delhi began to extend their dominions beyond the Narbada river, the rulers of the southern States employed these Maratha soldiers in still larger numbers, specially for garrisoning their hill-forts on the Ghats. The Marathas made full use of this opportunity to advance their national interests. Maratha statesmen and Maratha warriors now controlled the various departments of the Muslim States of Ahmadnagar, Bidar, Golkonda, and Bijapur.

§ *Birth of Shivaji, 1627.* 'And as it happened, almost exactly

[1] Supplying their own horses. [2] Mounted by the State.

at this time was born in the year 1627 *Chatrapati* Shivaji, who possessed all the necessary qualities of a born leader of men. Before he died in 1680 at the age of fifty-three, he had succeeded in creating a national Maratha State which in course of time dominated the political destinies of the whole of India, till it was dislodged from that position by a better organized foreign power in the first quarter of the nineteenth century.'

Shivaji was the son of a Maratha *jagirdar* named Shahji Bhonsle and his wife Jijabai. Shahji took service as a trooper in the army of the Sultan of Ahmadnagar, gradually rose to fame, and acquired considerable territorial possessions in that State. He was subsequently employed by the Bijapur State, and, as we had occasion to remark in an earlier page, he played an important part in the politics of both these States during the early years of Shah Jahan's reign. It was in the service of the Sultan of Bijapur that Shahji obtained a large *jagir* in the Karnatic, in addition to the property at Poona which he had acquired during his service under the sultans of Ahmadnagar. And it was on his estate in Poona that the young Shivaji acquired some training in the art of administration under his guardian Dadaji Kondev. Dadaji was an honest, intelligent, and shrewd Brahman who was employed by Shahji to administer his Poona estates. He displayed an almost paternal affection for Shivaji, and gave his young ward the necessary training in fighting, riding, and other accomplishments. He also taught him the more valuable secret of how to organize and control undisciplined forces.

Shivaji's mother is also said to have had a large share in moulding the character of her promising son. She has been described by some writers on Maratha history as a very pious and devout Hindu lady, who taught Shivaji the old Puranic and Epic legends of bravery and war, and by example and precept did much to stimulate his zeal in defence of Brahmans, cows, and caste, the three principal objects of Hindu veneration. 'If ever great owed their greatness to the inspiration of their mothers,' re-

marks Mr. Justice Ranade, 'the influence of Jijabai was a factor of prime importance in the making of Shivaji's career, and the chief source of his strength.' Shivaji himself seems to have realized the debt he owed to his mother's influence; for so long as she lived he is said to have consulted her in all the great crises of his career.

§ *Shivaji's early days.* In his younger days Shivaji attached to himself a number of Mawali leaders of his own age, and during his wanderings in the company of these friends he made himself thoroughly familiar with the spurs and valleys of the Ghats. Such close intimacy with the Mawalis and his own knowledge of the hill-country proved of immense value to Shivaji in subsequent years; for it was from these people that he drew his best soldiers, and in this country that he opened his career as a soldier of fortune. Like Ranjit Singh of the Punjab, Shivaji developed quickly, and like him also he commenced his public career at the early age of nineteen. In 1646 he captured the hill-fortress of Torna, about twenty miles south-west of Poona. Close to this fort and on the crest of the same spur, he captured and rebuilt another stronghold, famed afterwards as Rajgarh. In the next year or two he seized Kondana, which he renamed *Singarh*, and a fourth fort named Purandhar. Now that his guardian Dadaji was dead and his father Shahji was absent on his estates in the Carnatic, Shivaji proceeded to establish systematically his own authority over the estates of his father in Poona. He wrested Supa from his maternal uncle Shambuji, who had been left by his father as manager of that *jagir*. Shivaji also brought under more direct control two other forts in his father's *jagir*, Baramati and Indapur, which were situated to the south-east of Poona.

Shivaji thus became possessed of a considerable estate, protected by a strong chain of hill-forts. His aggressive proceedings were not regarded seriously by the Bijapur Government, partly because the State itself was in confusion owing to a recent invasion by the Mughals, and partly because Shivaji had managed to secure the services of agents at the Bijapur Court, who did not

hesitate to bribe freely all whose business it was to look into his misdoings. In fact the Sultan was persuaded to believe that these forts were seized in the general interest, by way of protecting the family estates. Speaking of Shivaji's proceedings at this stage of his career, Khafi Khan remarks: 'This was the beginning of that system of violence which he and his descendants have spread over the rest of the Kokan and all the territory of the Dakhin. Whenever he heard of a prosperous town, or of a district inhabited by thriving cultivators, he plundered it and took possession of it. Before the *jagirdars* in those troublous times could appeal to Bijapur, he had sent in his own account of the matter, with presents and offerings, charging the *jagirdars* or proprietors with some offence which he had felt called upon to punish, and offering to pay some advanced amount for the lands on their being attached to his own *jagir*, or to pay their revenues direct to the Government. He communicated these matters to the officials at Bijapur, who in those disturbed times took little heed of what any one did. So when the *jagirdar's* complaint arrived, he obtained no redress, because no one took any notice of it. The country of the Dakhin was never free from commotions and outbreaks, and so the officials, the *raiyats*, and the soldiery, under the influence of surrounding circumstances, were greedy, stupid, and frivolous; thus they applied the axe to their feet with their own hands, and threw their wealth and property to the winds. The greed of the officials increased, especially in those days when the authority of the rulers was interrupted, or their attention diverted. In accordance with the wishes of this disturber, the reins of authority over that country fell into his hands, and he at length became the most notorious of all the rebels.'[1]

Shivaji next turned his attention to the Konkan, the rich strip of broken ground between the western Ghats and the sea. A body of Maratha horsemen under Abaji Sondev gained possession of the important town of Kalyan, whence Shivaji

[1] Elliot and Dowson, vol. vii, p. 257.

marched southwards into the Kolaba district and there excited the sympathy and secured the support of the local chiefs in the common cause of throwing off the Muslim yoke.

As already stated, so long as Shivaji confined his activities to the hill region distant from the capital of Bijapur, the authorities of that State took little notice of him. But when he began to seize seaport towns in the Kalyan and Kolaba districts, the Bijapur Government thought it time to quell his activities and proceeded to do so in a highly characteristic manner. His father Shahji, who was still in the service of the Bijapur Government, was ordered, under the threat of imprisonment, to check the activities of his son. His asseverations that Shivaji was in revolt against him, as well as against the Bijapur Government, were not believed, and at last, when his attempts to bring Shivaji to heel had failed, he was cast into a dungeon with the object of thus forcing Shivaji to make his submission. The jeopardy in which his father stood compelled Shivaji to abstain for a time from further aggressions. But as Shivaji could not endure submission to Bijapur, involving the sacrifice of all his gains and ambition, he cunningly resorted to diplomacy, offered his services to the Emperor Shah Jahan through Prince Murad Bakhsh, then Viceroy of the Deccan, and also requested him to intercede for the release of his father. Through his own agents at Bijapur, Shivaji moved the leading nobles of the Court on behalf of his father and succeeded in the end, through the good offices of his benefactors Sharza Khan and Randaula Khan, in securing his release [1] (December 1649). Since Shahji's release was conditional, Shivaji remained at rest for another five years (1649–55), so far as Bijapur was concerned; but he utilized this

[1] Professor J. N. Sarkar attributes the release of Shahji almost entirely to the exertions of Sharza Khan and Randaula Khan—the two greatest nobles of the Bijapur Court. Regarding Shahji's imprisonment also, Professor Sarkar holds the view that he was imprisoned owing to his insubordination to the Bijapur commander Nawab Mustafa Khan during the siege of Jingi by the Bijapur troops. (*Shivaji*, pp. 35–6).

respite in consolidating his conquests and in organizing their administrative arrangements.

In 1655, however, when Aurangzeb, then Viceroy of the Deccan, marched against Bijapur, Shivaji seized the opportunity of resuming his activities. He offered his services to the prince (Aurangzeb), and on his behalf began to attack the Konkan, while the Mughal troops were busily besieging Bijapur. In the following year Aurangzeb was called away by the war of succession in the north; the Bijapur State was ruled by a minor;[1] consequently by the year 1657 Shivaji had a free hand to prosecute his ambitious schemes. He thereupon seized almost the whole of the Konkan, the various seaports of which rendered it a very valuable possession.

§ *Murder of Afzal Khan.* The most famous event in the struggle between Shivaji and Bijapur during the period 1657–62 is the defeat and murder of Afzal Khan. In 1659 the Bijapur authorities, temporarily relieved from internal strife and anticipating no immediate danger from the Mughals, decided to check the growing power of Shivaji. With that object they sent a force numbering about 10,000 cavalry, with a number of mountain-guns under a veteran officer named Afzal Khan, 'to bring back the rebel [Shivaji] dead or alive'. Afzal Khan seems to have succeeded at first in repulsing some of Shivaji's troops, but the character of the country made an approach to Shivaji's mountain strongholds difficult. He therefore sent Krishnaji Bhaskar, a Maratha Brahman, as envoy to Shivaji, inviting the latter to a conference. Shivaji treated the envoy with great respect, and at night met him in secrecy and solemnly appealed to him as a Hindu and a priest to tell him of the Khan's real intentions. 'All he had done', so Shivaji said, 'was for the sake of Hindoos and the Hindoo faith; that he was called on by Bhowanee herself to protect Bramins and kine, to punish the violators of their temples and their gods, and to resist the enemies of their reli-

[1] Muhammad Adil Shah of Bijapur died in Nov. 1656. He was succeeded by his only son (Sikandar Ali Adil Khan), a youth of eighteen.

gion; that it became him as a Bramin to assist in what was already declared by the deity; and that here, amongst his cast and countrymen, he should hereafter live in comfort and affluence.'[1]

To this appeal Krishnaji yielded so far as to hint that the Khan intended mischief. Shivaji was therefore on the alert, and having made his preparations went to the meeting-place with concealed weapons, prepared to meet craft by craft, if occasion so demanded. Afzal Khan, a man of prodigious size and strength, greeted the short Maratha with an embrace and then suddenly 'tightened his clasp and held Shivaji's neck in his left arm with an iron grip, while with his right hand he tried to run him through with his sword'. The hidden armour of Shivaji rendered the blow harmless, and the agile Maratha chief retaliated fiercely, and with the help of the *waghnuk* (tiger-claws)[2] forced the Khan to relax his grip, and then stabbed him with his dagger. The attendants of the two leaders joined in the affray, while Shivaji's troops, who lay in ambush, came forth and completely routed the leaderless troops of Bijapur.[3]

The war with Bijapur continued with varying results during the next three years. At first all the advantage lay with Shivaji, who captured important places southward to Panhala and along the banks of the Krishna. A Bijapuri army under Rustam Khan was defeated, and Shivaji followed up his victory by leading his army to the very gates of the capital of Bijapur, while his generals plundered the rich seaport of Rajpur. The last expedition in 1661–2, which was led by the Bijapur Sultan in person, failed of effect, and after a few more months of desultory fighting, the Bijapur Government was obliged to send Shahji to

[1] Grant Duff, *History of the Mahrattas*, edited by S. M. Edwardes, 1921, vol. i, p. 132.

[2] Khafi Khan calls this weapon *bichua*—a scorpion. An illustration of one can be found in some editions of Grant Duff.

[3] For the details of this incident we have followed Kincaid and Parasnis, *History of the Maratha People*, vol. i, pp. 157–64, and Sarkar, *Shivaji and his Times*, pp. 62–73.

negotiate peace on the basis of acknowledging Shivaji as ruler of the territories he had won during the last few years.

§ *Defeat of Shayista Khan.* Shivaji, being hard pressed by the Mughals at this time, was in need of peace. In 1660 Aurangzeb had appointed Shayista Khan, his maternal uncle and a veteran general, governor of the Deccan, with instructions to suppress the activities of Shivaji. He gained a few victories over the enemy and succeeding in capturing a few of Shivaji's forts; but the defeated Marathas, as a rule, fell upon the Mughal baggage and carried off whatever they could. 'The daring free-booter Sivaji', writes Khafi Khan, 'ordered his followers to attack and plunder the baggage of *Amiru-l umara*'s [Shayista Khan's] army wherever they met with it. When the *Amir* was informed of this, he appointed 4,000 horse, under experienced officers, to protect the baggage. But every day, and in every march, Sivaji's Dakhinis swarmed round the baggage, and falling suddenly upon it like Cossacks, they carried off horses, camels, men, and whatever they could secure, until they became aware of the approach of the troops.'[1] Thus harassed by the enemy, Shayista Khan at last retired to Poona for the monsoon, intending to renew his campaign after the cessation of the rains. But by this time Shivaji had made his peace with Bijapur and could turn his whole attention to the Mughals. As usual, he trusted to cunning in preference to force. The Mughal general had, unfortunately for him, taken up his residence in the house in which Shivaji was born and had passed his boyhood. The latter knew every inch of the city and every nook and corner of the house, and utilizing his knowledge to the full, he entered the city one night (5th April 1663) with a picked band of 400 men and delivered a night attack upon Shayista Khan. The latter, whose son was killed, was thankful to escape with the loss of three fingers. Khafi Khan gives the following details of this incident, which reveal the agility, cunning, and bravery of Shivaji. 'A regulation had been made that no person, especially

[1] Elliot and Dowson, vol. vii, p. 261.

no Mahratta, should be allowed to enter the city or the lines of the army without a pass, whether armed or unarmed, excepting persons in the imperial service. No Mahratta horseman was taken into the service. Sivaji, beaten and dispirited, had retired into mountains difficult of access, and was continually changing his position. One day a party of Mahrattas, who were serving as foot-soldiers, went to the *kotwal*, and applied for a pass to admit 200 Mahrattas, who were accompanying a marriage party. A boy dressed up as a bridegroom, and escorted by a party of Mahrattas with drums and music, entered the town early in the evening. On the same day another party was allowed to enter the town on the report that a number of the enemy had been made prisoners at one of the outposts, and that another party was bringing them in pinioned and bare-headed, holding them by ropes and abusing and reviling them as they went along. They proceeded to the place agreed upon, where the whole party met and put on arms. At midnight they went to the cook-house, which was near the women's apartments. Between the two there was a small window stopped up with mud and bricks. They proceeded by a way well known to them, and got into the kitchen. It was the month of the fast. Some of the cooks were awake and busy in preparing the vessels for cooking, and others were asleep. The assailants approached noiselessly, and, as far as they were able, they attacked and killed unawares those who were awake. Those who were asleep they butchered as they lay. So no great alarm was raised. They then quickly set to work about opening the closed window in the palace. The noise of their pickaxes and the cries of the slaughtered men awoke a servant who was sleeping in a room next to the wall of the cook-house. He went to the *Amiru-l umara* (Shayista Khan) and informed him of what he had heard. The *Amir* scolded him, and said that it was only the cooks who had got up to do their work. Some maid-servants then came, one after another, to say that a hole was being made through the wall. The *Amir* then jumped up in great alarm and seized a bow, some arrows,

and a spear. Just then some Mahrattas came up in front, and the *Amir* shot one with an arrow; but he got up to the *Amir*, and cut off his thumb. Two Mahrattas fell into a reservoir of water, and the *Amiru-l umara* brought down another with his spear. In the midst of the confusion two slave-girls took Shayista Khan, the *Amiru-l umara*, by the hand, and dragged him from the scene of strife to a place of safety. A number of Mahrattas got into the guard-house, and killed every one they found on his pillow, whether sleeping or awake, and said: "This is how they keep watch!" Some men got into the *nakar-khana*, and in the name of the *Amiru-l umara* ordered the drums to be beaten; so such a din was raised that one man could not hear another speak, and the noise made by the assailants grew higher. They closed the doors. Abu-l Fath Khan, son of Shayista Khan, a brave young man, rushed forward and killed two or three men, but was himself wounded and killed.' [1] It was believed at the time that this attack was made with the connivance of Maharaja Jaswant Singh. On receiving the latter next morning Shayista Khan remarked, 'I thought the Maharaja was in His Majesty's service when such an evil befell me'. This veiled censure would seem to imply that Shayista Khan had some suspicion of the Maharaja. The humiliated general retired to Aurangabad for greater safety, but was immediately (May 1663) recalled by the Emperor, who ascribed his defeat to his negligence and incapacity. Maharaja Jaswant Singh, who was next in command to Shayista Khan, was allowed to stay on till March 1664.

In January 1664 Shivaji performed an exploit not less daring, but certainly more profitable, than the Poona escapade. He attacked and sacked Surat, the chief seaport belonging to the Mughals, and decamped with a quantity of booty; only the British and the Dutch factories resisted him, and so escaped plunder.

The failure of Shayista Khan and the sack of Surat roused the indignation of Aurangzeb, who decided to send his best and most

[1] Elliot and Dowson, vol. vii, pp. 269–70.

trusted officers to the Deccan. Prince Muazzam had already been appointed to succeed Shayista Khan, and the Emperor now selected Raja Jai Singh and Diler Khan, with other capable lieutenants, to command the expeditionary force to the Deccan. Jai Singh relieved Jaswant Singh at Poona early in March 1665, and forthwith proceeded to make the necessary preparations for an attack on Shivaji's territories. Purandhar was besieged and for a time maintained a stout resistance during which its commandant was killed with an arrow by Diler Khan. Even Rajgarh, the seat of Shivaji's government, was seriously threatened, and throughout the countryside flying columns of Mughal light cavalry ravaged the Maratha villages. Shivaji, realizing the danger of further resistance, sent messages to Raja Jai Singh offering to surrender and was escorted to Purandhar under a safe conduct. There, after negotiations, he consented to surrender twenty of his forts and to take service against the Sultan of Bijapur, while in return he was given an assurance that his right to collect *chauth*[1] in a few districts of the Bijapur kingdom would be recognized by the Emperor. This was the treaty of Purandhar, made in June 1665.

In the beginning of the following year Shivaji was persuaded by Jai Singh to attend the Court at Agra, being assured that high honours there awaited him; but he was received coldly at the public Darbar by the Emperor and was not treated with the respect that he considered his due. He was only given a seat among the third-grade *mansabdars*[2] of 5000, and this he deeply resented. Shivaji loudly expressed his dissatisfaction to Jai Singh's son Kanwar Ran Singh and others in the presence of the Emperor, and in a fit of anger is also said to have addressed words of reproach to the latter. Aurangzeb, who said nothing at the moment, issued orders next day which practically made Shivaji a prisoner in his house. He moved every official at the Court to persuade the Emperor to allow him to return home, but in

[1] Literally a fourth. A land tax of one-quarter of the authorized revenue assessment.

[2] Military commanders.

vain. Shivaji thereupon resorted to stratagem, which usually never failed. Feigning illness for a time, he kept almost entirely to his bed; then pretending to recover, he commenced sending out of his house every evening large baskets of fruit and sweetmeats for the Brahmans and mendicants, as a thanksgiving offering for his recovery. This custom, being common amongst the people of the country, occasioned no remark. After a few days, when the guards over the house relaxed their vigilance and allowed these baskets to pass unsearched, Shivaji and his son one night escaped in one of them. Once safely outside the city, both father and son disguised themselves as *gosavis* or Hindu ascetics and hastened towards Mathura. Leaving his son under the care of a Deccani Brahman at that town, Shivaji made his way home through Eastern Bengal, Orissa, and Gondwana, with a view to avoiding the imperial police, who were guarding the usual road to the Deccan through Berar and Khandesh. Thus Aurangzeb lost the best chance he ever had of restoring tranquillity to the Deccan. There is little doubt that Shivaji was afraid of the imperial forces, and that if Aurangzeb had only recognized his actual position as the most important figure in the Deccan, Shivaji would have been content with his lot. In alliance with an imperial general, Shivaji would have had little difficulty in conquering for the Emperor both the Muslim States of Bijapur and Golkonda, and thus, with himself a vassal of the Emperor, the whole Deccan would have actually become, for a time at any rate, a part of the Mughal Empire. But this was not to be. Aurangzeb did not believe in alliances with the infidels, and had already initiated his policy of crushing the Hindus by doubling the customs duties on goods belonging to them, while at the same time taxing the goods of Muslim merchants at the old rate.

Raja Jai Singh in the meantime had been doing his best to subdue the Bijapur kingdom. But he was suddenly recalled in May 1667, and Raja Jaswant Singh was sent a second time against Shivaji. Raja Jai Singh was soon afterwards poisoned

by his son Kirat Singh, in all probability under instructions from Aurangzeb, who was jealous of him. This change of command was all in favour of Shivaji, who had again begun to make himself felt. Muazzam was weak and indolent, while Jaswant Singh was inclined to be friendly. There was little to fear from Delhi, while the Deccan itself was being drained of the best Mughal troops for service on the north-west frontier. In September 1666 the Punjab was threatened by an invasion from Persia, and again in March of the following year, the Yusufzai rising in Peshawar, of which we have spoken, taxed the resources of the empire for a period of nearly ten years. Shivaji made such good use of his opportunity that in this period of one decade, from 1666 to 1676, his career reached its climax.

From 1666 to 1668 Shivaji spent his time in organizing his internal administration. He also requested Prince Muazzam and Raja Jaswant Singh to persuade the Emperor to grant him the title of Raja and raise his son Sambaji to the rank of a *mansabdar* of 5000. These requests were granted, and in addition Shivaji was also given a *jagir* in Berar, in settlement of his claims to *chauth* in the Ahmadnagar territories. In 1670 his officers exacted from the local authorities of certain districts in Khandesh written promises to pay Shivaji or his deputies one-fourth (*chauth*) of the yearly revenue due to Government. This was the earliest instance in Shivaji's career of the system of blackmail levied on districts directly subject to Mughal control, though the practice had been followed at an earlier date by the chief of Ramnagar (now Dharampur) towards the possessions of the Portuguese in Daman. In the same year Shivaji plundered Surat for the second time. As on the previous occasion, the English and the Dutch defended their factories manfully and escaped without loss, but the town was plundered and the loot included the property of a Muslim Prince from Mawara-un-Nahr, who was on his way back from Mecca. This was sufficient to arouse the anger of Aurangzeb and hostilities were again renewed between the Mughals and Shivaji. Maharaja Jaswant

Singh, whom Aurangzeb suspected of being friendly to Shivaji, was removed from the Deccan, as also was Prince Muazzam a little later, Khan Jahan Bahadur and Mahabat Khan being sent to succeed them. The change of officers, however, proved of no advantage; fortune continued to favour Shivaji.

§ *Shivaji ascends the throne.* Continued success and prosperity emboldened Shivaji to assume formally the title of King. A grand durbar was held at Rajgarh in June 1674, where the ceremony of enthronement was solemnly performed with full Vedic rights; after which date Shivaji was regarded as sovereign ruler of Maharashtra, while the Marathas claimed that they, like those who owned allegiance to Delhi, were the subjects of a kingdom. As usual with the founders of royal houses, Shivaji established a new era dating from his enthronement. He lived six years after his coronation, and during the whole period was constantly engaged in hostilities with the Mughals and with Bijapur.

Aurangzeb, as we have had occasion to remark before, was unable to attend to the affairs of the Deccan since he was so deeply occupied with the affairs on the north-west frontier. Relieved of Mughal pressure, Shivaji extended his conquests in the south. In four years, 1676 to 1680, he fought a series of brilliant campaigns, capturing Jinji, Vellore, and many other important fortresses. The expedition to Jinji has been described by Grant Duff as 'the most important expedition of Shivaji's life', for his acquisitions during the campaign resulted in his kingdom embracing a large part of the old Hindu empire of Vijayanagar, notably the districts in the western Carnatic extending from Belgaum to the banks of the Tungbhadra, opposite to the Bellary district of the Madras Presidency.

§ *Death and character of Shivaji.* When he died in 1680, Shivaji left a large and well-organized kingdom to his son and successor. His total annual revenue has been estimated, at its highest, at nine crores of rupees, although the sum actually realized every year is believed to have been much less than this.

This was the result of Shivaji's own personal efforts; and when we consider that he achieved this success during the reign of one of the greater figures of the Mughal line, our estimate of his military ability must necessarily be high. His achievements have been viewed by historians in very varying ways. By contemporary Muhammadan historians Shivaji is described merely as a plunderer and a marauder; but this estimate of his character cannnot be accepted in its entirety. If he had only been a successful marauder, as Kennedy observes, he could hardly have left a mark on his age, as unquestionably he did. Hindu historians, on the other hand, hold the view that Shivaji deserves a distinguished place in the history of his country and that he is to be considered one of the greatest historical figures of his time. 'Before his rise', observes Professor Sarkar, 'the Maratha race was scattered like atoms through many Deccani kingdoms. He welded them into a mighty nation. And he achieved this in the teeth of the opposition of four great Powers like the Mughal empire, Bijapur, Portuguese India, and the Abyssinians of Janjira. No other Hindu has shown such capacity in modern times.'[1] As to the private character and personal virtues of Shivaji the contemporary Muhammadan historian, Khafi Khan, though naturally inclined to paint him in unfavourable colours, makes the following comments: 'But he [Shivaji] made it a rule that wherever his followers went plundering, they should do no harm to the mosques, the Book of God, or the women of any one. Whenever a copy of the sacred Kuran came into his hands, he treated it with respect, and gave it to some of his Musulman followers.'[2] In another place the same historian observes that he 'was careful to maintain the honour of the women and children of Muhammadans when they fell into his hands. His injunctions upon this point were very strict, and any one who disobeyed them received punishment.'[3]

§ *Shivaji's government.* Shivaji's methods of government

[1] Sarkar, *Shivaji and his Times*, p. 442.

[2] Elliot and Dowson, vol. vii, p. 260.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 305.

reflect much credit on him. His soldiery were kept under the strict control and check of their officers. No plunder or individual blackmailing was allowed, and they were bound to account for all the plunder they might obtain in an enemy country. The organization of the various departments of the Government was based on the principles laid down in ancient Sanskrit books on polity such as those of Kautilya and Sukracharya. A council of state, as recommended by these writers, was formed, consisting of eight ministers; while eighteen different departments of public service were established. The council and departments formed the central government, and the provincial governments were based more or less on that model. The consolidated portion of the kingdom was divided into three provinces, each placed under a viceroy. The immemorial Hindu institution of the *panchayat*[1] was preserved intact and almost all civil disputes were decided by that body.

§ *Land revenue.* The land in every province was measured and an estimate made of the expected produce of each *bigha*, three parts of which were left to the peasant and two parts taken by the State. The State also encouraged cultivation by making advances from the Treasury for the purchase of seed and cattle to new *rayats* who settled on uncultivated lands. These advances were recovered in easy annual instalments. The existing practice of farming out land revenue to hereditary landlords (*mirasdars*) was abandoned by Shivaji, the State dues being collected by government revenue officials who were paid regular salaries from the Treasury. When a State official was not paid in cash from the Treasury, he received an assignment of revenue on a certain district; but he had no political powers over the inhabitants of the district. These rules of civil government, it may be remarked, were applied only to the territories known as *swaraj*, under the direct rule of Shivaji. There were other districts, collectively known as *Mughlai* territory, under the government of other powers, over which the Marathas claimed

[1] A jury of neighbours.

suzerainty and from which they exacted the yearly payment of *chauth* and *sardesmukhi*. The latter payment was an extra tenth extorted in addition to the *chauth* or one-fourth of the authorized land revenue assessment of a district.

§ *Organization of army.* Shivaji possessed a capacity for military as well as civil organization. The Maratha army originally consisted mostly of cavalry, and it had been the practice of Maratha yeomen to work half the year upon their fields, and to spend the dry season on active service. Shivaji attempted to improve the system and to check some of its abuse. He introduced a regular standing army, and during the rainy season provided quarters for his troopers and their horses and also gave them regular pay for these months. The army was organized in a regular manner with a due gradation of officers. In the cavalry the unit was formed by twenty-five troopers; over twenty-five men was placed one *havaldar*, over five *havaldars* one *jumladar*, and over ten *jumladars* or 1,250 men one *hazari*. Still higher ranks were the *5-hazaris* and the supreme commander (*sar-i-naubat*) of cavalry. For every twenty-five troopers there were a water-carrier and a farrier. In the infantry, whether fort garrisons or militiamen, there was one corporal (*nayak*) to every nine privates; over five *nayaks* one *havaldar*, over two (or three) *havaldars* one *jumladar*, and over ten *jumladars* one *hazari*. There seem to have been not *5-hazaris* but *7-hazaris* among the infantry, with the *sar-i-naubat* of infantry at their head. The troopers comprised *bargirs* mounted by the State, and *silledars* who provided their own horses.

Since the forts played a very important part in the Maratha kingdom, their garrisons were carefully constituted and every possible precaution was taken against the commandants being corrupted. Every fort was placed under three officers of equal status, viz. the *havaldar*, the *sabnis*, and the *sar-i-naubat*, who were to act jointly and thus serve as a check upon one another.[1]

[1] This account is taken from Professor Sarkar's *Shivaji and his Times*, pp. 414–16.

Shivaji also built a considerable fleet, which was stationed at Kolaba, to check the power of the piratical chiefs of Janjira and to plunder Mughal trading-vessels.

§ *Aurangzeb and the Deccan, 1680–1707.* The death of Shivaji in 1680 in no way improved the political situation in the Deccan, over which Aurangzeb was determined to establish his ascendancy. Shivaji had infused a new spirit in the Maratha people, who were fired with the hope of freeing their country from the Muslim yoke. Sambaji, their new ruler, was no less daring a raider than his father, and moreover had the rebel Prince Akbar living at his court as prisoner. Aurangzeb apprehended, and perhaps rightly, that Akbar might be used against imperial interests in the Deccan. The Muslim kingdoms of Bijapur and Golkonda were still strong and powerful, although the best Mughal officers had from time to time been sent to reduce them. Aurangzeb, as a staunch Sunni, disliked the Shia rulers of these States as much as he disliked the Hindus; and as the imperial officers, Khan Jahan and his lieutenants, who were at this date stationed in the Deccan, were suspected of corruption, Aurangzeb believed, and perhaps with reason, that his ascendancy over these States could only be secured by his personal conduct of the Deccan campaign. Thus it was that he made a move from Ajmer (where he had encamped for the war in Rajputana) early in September 1681 'with a large army composed of men of all the northern nations of the empire, a magnificent train of artillery, and the most gorgeous camp-equipage that had ever been seen in the Deccan before'. Thenceforth, practically, the rest of his life was spent in camp. He reached Aurangabad in the third week of March 1682, and in November of the following year the imperial camp was pitched at Ahmadnagar. Fresh troubles arose in the Deccan on the arrival of the Emperor. Officers in this distant part of the empire had been slack in the collection of the *jizya*, but with the Emperor's arrival the tax had to be collected at all costs. In consequence, most towns in the imperial domains were the scene of disturbances.

The preliminary operations were rapidly taken in hand. Two large divisions of the imperial army, commanded by Princes Muazzam and Azam, were dispatched against the Marathas and Bijapur. Two years were spent in an unsuccessful attempt to capture the rebel Prince Akbar, who contrived to escape to Persia. The Imperialists after a prolonged struggle succeeded in capturing a few Maratha forts, but the campaign, on the whole, proved thoroughly disastrous owing to the unhealthiness of the climate of the Konkan. Speaking of the siege of the fort of Ramdarra by the army under Prince Muazzam, Khafi Khan writes as follows: 'The air of the place did not suit the invaders. The enemy swarmed around on every side, and cut off the supplies. On one side was the sea, and on two other sides were great mountains full of poisonous trees and serpents. The enemy cut down the grass, which was a cause of distress to man and beast, and they had no food but coco-nuts, and the grain called *kudun*, which acted like poison upon them. Great numbers of men and horses died. Grain was so scarce and dear that wheat flour sometimes could not be obtained for less than three or four rupees. Those men who escaped death dragged on a half existence, and with crying and groaning felt as if every breath they drew was their last. There was not a noble who had a horse in his stable fit for use. When the wretched state of the royal army became known to Aurangzeb, he sent an order to the officers of the port of Surat, directing them to put as much grain as possible on board of ships, and send it to the Prince's succour by sea. The enemy got intelligence of this, and as the ships had to pass by their newly-erected fortresses, they stopped them on their way, and took most of them. A few ships escaped the enemy, and reached their destination; but no *amir* got more than two or three *palas* of corn. The order at length came for the retreat of the army, and it fell back fighting all the way to Ahmadnagar, where Aurangzeb then was.' [1]

The second division commanded by Prince Azam and directed

[1] Elliot and Dowson, vol. vii, p. 314.

toward Bijapur met with no better fortune. The Prince captured Sholapur; but on advancing to the capital he found himself incapable of capturing the town and was forced to retire after suffering much privation. To add to the misfortunes, the Marathas had seized the occasion of the absence in the south of a large part of the Mughal troops to sack Broach and Burhanpur.

§ *Fall of Bijapur.* Meanwhile the Emperor had advanced southwards from Ahmadnagar, and having formed a junction with his son Prince Azam, proceeded in person to invest Bijapur. The siege was begun early in April 1685, and a practicable breach was soon effected in the outer walls of the city. The garrison held out gallantly; but at length provisions in the city fell short and the garrison capitulated in October 1686. Sikandar Ali Adil Khan was captured and placed in strict confinement and his kingdom was annexed. Thus ended the illustrious dynasty of the Adil Shahi kings, which had reigned, for the most part in great splendour and prosperity, for nearly two hundred years.

After Bijapur came the turn of Golkonda. An excuse for the attack was easily found. The Emperor had always grounds of complaint against the governments of both Bijapur and Golkonda for helping the Marathas. While this was the ostensible cause of complaint, the fact seems to be that Aurangzeb, who was a staunch Sunni, disliked the idea of a powerful independent Shia kingdom as his neighbour in southern India. Moreover, he was following the policy of aggressive imperialism, initiated by Akbar in the sixteenth century and encouraged by his successors, Jahangir and Shah Jahan. Of the three independent monarchies of the south, those of Ahmadnagar and Bijapur had already been absorbed in the imperial domains, and Golkonda alone remained. According to the standards of an aggressive race, the process of absorption is never complete as long as anything remains to be absorbed. Aurangzeb therefore issued a declaration of war. Amongst the charges made against Abu-l Hasan, the ruler of Golkonda, were prominently mentioned the employment of Brahman ministers, the alliance with the infidels

(the Marathas), and accusation of perpetual profligacy. 'The evil deeds of this wicked man', writes Aurangzeb in one of his letters, 'pass beyond the bounds of writing; but by mentioning one out of a hundred, and a little out of much, some conception of them may be formed. First, placing the reins of authority and government in the hands of vile tyrannical infidels; oppressing and afflicting the *saiyids*, *shaikhs*, and other holy men; openly giving himself up to excessive debauchery and depravity; indulging in drunkenness and wickedness night and day; making no distinction between infidelity and Islam, tyranny and justice, depravity and devotion; waging obstinate war in defence of infidels; want of obedience to the Divine commands and prohibitions, especially to that command which forbids assistance to an enemy's country, the disregarding of which had cast a censure upon the Holy Book in the sight both of God and man. Letters full of friendly advice and warning upon these points had been repeatedly written, and had been sent by the hands of discreet men. No attention had been paid to them; moreover, it had lately become known that a *lac* of *pagodas* had been sent to the wicked Sambha. That in this insolence and intoxication and worthlessness, no regard had been paid to the infamy of his deeds, and no hope shown of deliverance in this world or in the next.' [1]

§ *Fall of Golkonda.* The war dragged on for some time. Aurangzeb himself arrived before Golkonda in January 1687. But the fortress was so well provided with food and ammunition, that it seemed capable of holding out indefinitely. Attempts to carry the town by assault and mining failed as they had failed a century before in the case of the siege of Asirgarh by Akbar. 'The emperor, therefore, following the precedent of his ancestor, had recourse to bribery, and gained admittance through the treachery of one of the officers of the garrison, who opened a gate.' [2] The infection now spread amongst other nobles of

[1] Elliot and Dowson, vol. vii, p. 325.

[2] Vincent Smith, *History of India*, p. 442.

Golkonda, and one by one they all deserted their King and joined the imperial troops. One chieftain alone, Abdu-r Razzak Lari, is mentioned as adhering honourably to the falling cause. He spurned Aurangzeb's most tempting offers of money and fought bravely till he fell covered with seventy wounds. At last the King Abu-l Hasan, accepting the inevitable, surrendered 'in a most dignified manner to the Emperor's second son Prince Azam', and was sent as prisoner to Daulatabad. With him ended the Kutb Shahi dynasty.

§ *End of Sambaji.* The object of Aurangzeb's Deccan campaign, as we have stated before, was twofold. He desired to extend the limits of his Empire by subverting the Shia monarchies of Bijapur and Golkonda, and to suppress the Maratha polity. One of these two objects he had now completely achieved, and he was therefore free to devote his whole attention to the ruin of the Maratha power. Sambaji, though brave, was dissolute. He had as his chief adviser a Brahman from northern India named Kalusha, who was quite as dissipated as his master. The conduct of both alienated many of the Maratha chiefs. If at this juncture Sambaji had exerted himself, he might have saved Bijapur or Golkonda or both. But he remained entirely inactive, and gave himself up to pleasure and debauchery. While in this condition and residing at Sangmeshwar, he was captured by a clever *coup de main.* Mukarrab Khan, an energetic Deccani officer, accompanied by his son Ikhlas Khan and a small mixed force of horse and foot, marched with great celerity from Kolhapur to Sangmeshwar, taking Sambaji and Kalusha completely by surprise. A short fight ensued and most of his followers managed to escape; but Sambaji, his son, and his favourite Kalusha were seized and conveyed to the Emperor's head-quarters. When they were brought into his presence Aurangzeb descended from his throne, and thrice made solemn obeisance to Heaven, in thankful recognition of the favour vouchsafed him. The Brahman minister Kalusha interpreted this act of Aurangzeb as an involuntary homage to the majesty

of his own king Sambaji and is said to have repeated certain Hindi lines of which the following is a translation: 'O Raja, at the sight of thee the King 'Alamgir (Aurangzeb), for all his pomp and dignity, cannot keep his seat upon the throne, but has perforce descended from it to do thee honour.'[1]

According to Khafi Khan,[2] after their capture it was suggested to Aurangzeb that the lives of the captives might be preserved and that they might be made instruments whereby the Mughals could take possession of the Maratha fortresses, now so numerous in the Ghats. But Aurangzeb knew no mercy for an infidel. The captives, on being invited to embrace Islam, are said to have used abusive language to the Emperor in his presence. The Emperor therefore gave orders that 'the tongues of both should be cut out, so that they might no longer speak disrespectfully. After that, their eyes were to be torn out.'[3] They were then put to death with a variety of tortures on the 11th March 1689. Seven months after the execution of Sambaji the imperial forces succeeded in capturing Rajgarh, the capital of Shivaji's kingdom. Raja Ram, the brother of Sambaji, escaped, but the rest of the family, including Sambaji's mother, his wife, and his young son Sahu, were made prisoners. Aurangzeb now pushed his conquests southwards and for the time being was able to levy tribute even as far south as Tanjore and Trichinopoly.

§ *Deccan Campaign.* The year 1690 may be taken as marking the farthest advance of the Mughal power. Aurangzeb was now the lord paramount of the whole of the Indian Peninsula—from Kabul to Chittagong and from Kashmir to Cape Comorin. He had attained what he considered to be the main purpose of his Deccan campaign. The Shia Sultanates of Bijapur and Golkonda had been wiped out and their territories annexed to the Empire of Delhi. Shivaji was dead, his son and successor Sambaji executed by the order of the Emperor, several important Maratha forts captured including their capital Rajgarh, and the heir to the Maratha throne, Sahu, was a prisoner in the

[1] Elliot and Dowson, vol. vii, pp. 340–1. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *Ibid.*

imperial camp. All seemed to have been gained by Aurangzeb, but, as Professor Sarkar rightly observes, in reality all was lost. It was the beginning of the end. The continued absence of the Emperor from the north resulted in the administration in that part of the empire growing inefficient and corrupt. Indiscipline reigned supreme at Agra and Delhi; and the chiefs and *zamindars* of the northern provinces defied the authority of the provincial viceroys. The Jats and the Sikhs were in open rebellion. The expensive and wasteful wars in the Deccan exhausted the imperial treasury, while there was no adequate financial return from the newly conquered provinces, as these were not yet regularly settled. In extent also the empire had grown too large to be ruled by one man or from one centre.

The impolicy of destroying the Sultanates had no inconsiderable share in bringing about the ultimate evils of Aurangzeb's Deccan campaign. A wise statesman could have anticipated that the conquest of these monarchies, however practicable and consonant with the previous forward policy of the empire, was bound to produce mischievous results, especially when the Marathas continued unsubdued. For it would entail new and serious administrative obligations, and a 'severe strain on a system which was already exhibiting signs of weakness and inefficiency'. Moreover, the Shia subjects of Golkonda and Bijapur had been attached to their respective dynasties, and were not disposed to welcome the Sunni conquerors from Delhi. The disbanded officers and troops of these States joined the Marathas and swelled the ranks of the enemy. The destruction of these States also meant the annihilation of the only two bulwarks of Muhammadan government in the south and the offer of a clear field to the Marathas. In other words, the achievement of one object only increased Aurangzeb's difficulties in accomplishing the other, and the empire had to suffer from the consequences of his mistaken military policy.

§ *Further operations against Marathas.* To resume the narrative of the war with the Marathas. It has been mentioned that

Raja Ram, the younger brother of Sambaji, luckily escaped when Rajgarh was captured. He managed to reach Jinji, a very strong Maratha fortress in the far south, while the other Maratha leaders undertook the task of defending the forts nearer home. The history of these eighteen years (1689–1707) is a long and tedious tale, a story of futile skirmishes, of long and tiresome sieges, of much country overrun, but of little retained, and of the gradual draining of the Mughal strength. Briefly told it is as follows: Zulfikar Khan, one of the best imperial generals, was sent with a large force to besiege the fort of Jinji in 1691, and several other divisions were detailed to capture the various strongholds in the Maratha country. Other large forces were dispatched to different localities, to take over the forts and provinces of the Bijapur and Golkonda kingdoms from their local officers, many of whom had set up independent principalities for themselves. The Mughal army was thus scattered; and it became difficult for the Emperor to send reinforcements, when the siege of Jinji was unusually prolonged.[1] Jinji was one of the strongest forts in southern India and its Maratha garrison under Raja Ram defied every effort of Zulfikar Khan to take it. Prince Kambakhsh, who was associated with Zulfikar Khan and his father Asad Khan in the command at Jinji, was recalled in 1694, as he was suspected of traitorous correspondence with the enemy. Zulfikar Khan was also recalled soon afterwards for his failure to reduce the fort. Other generals were then tried between 1694–7, but they too failed. Zulfikar was sent again and the fort was finally taken by escalade in January 1698, Raja Ram and some of the Maratha chiefs escaping to Satara. The other divisions sent against the Maratha hill forts had fared no better than the army at Jinji, as individual Maratha leaders like Santa Ghorpura and Dhanina Jadu with their plundering host ravaged the country, cutting off Mughal convoys and spreading terror and confusion everywhere. They repeatedly defeated

[1] Vincent Smith suggests that Zulfikar Khan deliberately 'played with' the siege.

the imperial commanders, thoroughly broke their spirit, frequently captured them, and, as was characteristic of the Marathas, released them on payment of heavy ransom. Khafi Khan makes the fullest admissions on the subject. Thus he says of Santa Ghorpura: 'Santa more especially distinguished himself in ravaging the cultivated districts, and in attacking the royal leaders. Every one who encountered him was either killed or wounded and made prisoner; or if any one did escape, it was with his mere life, with the loss of his army and baggage. Nothing could be done, for wherever the accursed dog went and threatened an attack, there was no Imperial *amir* bold enough to resist him, and every loss he inflicted on their forces made the boldest warrior quake.'[1]

Santa Ghorpura did not long survive the capture of Jinji, but Raja Ram, who had escaped to Satara, assembled a considerable army and resumed the struggle in the northern Deccan, where the Emperor had now concentrated his forces. In the year 1698 Aurangzeb, who had established a cantonment at Barhampur on the Bhima river, a central position, made his disposals for a new campaign. Since the mutual jealousies of his generals had proved disastrous, Aurangzeb, now aged eighty-one, proposed to lead a part of the army in person against the fortified strongholds of the Marathas; while the other part under Zulfikar Khan should act in the open country against Raja Ram, Dhanina Jadu, and other Maratha leaders. The first place of consequence to be besieged was Satara, which it took the imperial army more than a year to reduce. During the operations the besieging army suffered heavy losses owing to the unexpected explosion of some mining works. Satara surrendered on terms in April 1700. A month previously Raja Ram had died, and his gallant widow Tara Bai then took the lead and carried on the struggle. The imperial army at first succeeded in capturing about half a dozen forts of the outer line of the Maratha defences, but behind them lay many others equally strong and more inaccessible. More-

[1] Elliot and Dowson, vol. vii, p. 347.

over, what the Mughals won one day was regained the next by the Marathas, so that the war was protracted interminably. Famine, pestilence, and flood caused havoc in the Mughal army, and 'the very elements seemed to combine against the Mughals'. Speaking of one flood in the Bhima river where the royal camp was pitched, Khafi Khan says: 'The waters began to overflow at midnight, when all the world was asleep.... The floods carried off about ten or twelve thousand men, with the establishments of the King and the princes and the *amirs*, horses, bullocks and cattle in countless numbers, tents and furniture beyond all count.... Great fear fell on all the army.... The King wrote out prayers with his own hand, and ordered them to be thrown into the water, for the purpose of causing it to subside.'[1] But these suppliant charms were as ineffectual to arrest the course of nature as his arms to stem the human tide of war which he had provoked, and which Providence had decreed was to submerge his empire.

§ *Death of Aurangzeb.* It was in the midst of such reverses that in October 1705 Aurangzeb was attacked with a severe illness and was consequently persuaded by his ministers to retire to Ahmadnagar. Pursued by skirmishing bodies of exultant Marathas 'slowly and with difficulty' the emperor reached Ahmadnagar on the 20th January 1706, 'where he had encamped twenty-four years earlier, filled with hopes of conquest and glory'.[2] Here he lingered for a year—an old man of ninety with very little strength of body or mind, and at length, on the morning of Friday, 20th February 1707, his weary spirit found peace. Death came to him in the height of a great storm which formed a fitting accompaniment to the passing of the last of the great Mughals. His remains were carried to Daulatabad, where they were interred in the precincts of the tomb of the celebrated Muhammadan saint Burhanu-d din.

§ *Character of Aurangzeb.* The puritan Emperor died as he

[1] Elliot and Dowson, vol. vii, p. 361.

[2] Vincent Smith, *History of India*, p. 446.

had lived, simple, pious, and austere. Before his death he is reported to have issued instructions that there should be no unnecessary pomp and show at his funeral, and that the expenses of his burial should be defrayed from what he had saved from his own earnings. Accordingly his coffin was covered with a simple piece of white canvas, and the cost, about five rupees in all, was met from the sale proceeds of caps quilted by the Emperor during his life-time. Aurangzeb also left instructions that another sum of three hundred rupees, which he had earned by making copies of the Koran, should be distributed among the poor. Aurangzeb's ideal of personal and private life was indeed very high. All accounts of his life agree that he abstained scrupulously from the slightest indulgence in prohibited food, drink, or dress. He lived or at least strove to live up to the ideal of a strict orthodox Muslim, and this was perhaps one of the chief reasons why he failed to prove a successful sovereign. He believed that the Hindus had been allowed, by Akbar's innovations, to usurp a position of political and social equality with their Muhammadan rulers and conquerors, and that this course was both inappropriate and undesirable. He therefore determined to reverse this process, and accordingly, early in his reign, adopted a distinctly anti-Hindu policy. Hence the *jizya* was reimposed on his Hindu subjects and goods belonging to Hindu merchants were subjected to a custom's duty twice as heavy as that demanded from Muhammadan traders. Every Hindu, with the exception of the Rajputs, was forbidden to ride in a *palki*, on an elephant or thoroughbred horse. Hindu temples with their idols were destroyed, and the Hindu schools and colleges were forcibly closed by the orders of the Emperor.[1] The

[1] To the student of comparative history it is not without interest to recall that this policy was not confined to India alone. Almost at the same time that Aurangzeb commenced his persecution of Hindus, the ministers of Charles II were building their series of disqualifying statutes culminating in the Test Act of 1678, while a few years later Louis XIV, almost a Mughal in his magnificence, brought his persecution of his Huguenot subjects to a head.

result of such unwisdom, as may have been anticipated by Aurangzeb himself, was the exasperation of his Hindu subjects beyond the point of endurance. Indeed, the Emperor witnessed the beginning of the Hindu political revival during his own lifetime although he failed to realize its significance. Even if the rebellion of the Satnamis and the revolt of the Jats of Bhartpur and Agra are regarded as mere local *émeutes*, the actions of Guru Gobind Singh in the Punjab and of Shivaji in the Deccan were genuine efforts for the assertion of Hindu political liberty. Aurangzeb realized towards the end of his career that his long reign of fifty years had been a colossal failure, and is reported to have uttered the morose foreboding, 'After me will come the deluge' (*Az-ma-ast hamah fasad baqi*). Even of his fate in the after-world the aged Emperor seems to have been seriously apprehensive. In his letters which he wrote to his sons on his death-bed, the old man, smitten with remorse for certain of his acts, pours out his heart in most pathetic language. To Prince Azam he wrote: 'Health to thee, my heart is near thee. Old age has arrived: weakness subdues me, and strength has forsaken all my members. I came a stranger into this world, and a stranger I depart. I know nothing of myself, what I am, and for what I am destined. The instant which passed in power, hath left only sorrow behind it. I have not been the guardian and protector of the empire. My valuable time has been passed vainly. I had a patron in my own dwelling [conscience], but his glorious light was unseen by my dim sight. Life is not lasting, there is no vestige of departing breath, and all hopes from futurity are lost. The fever has left me, but nothing of me remains but skin and bone. My son (Kam Bakhsh) though gone towards Bijapur is still near: and thou, my son, art yet nearer. Shah Alam, is far distant: but my grandson (Azimu-sh Shan), by the Grace of God, is arrived near Hindustan. The camp and followers, helpless and alarmed, are like myself, full of affliction, restless as quicksilver. Separated from their Lord, they know not whether they have a master or not. I brought nothing into

this world, and carry nothing out except the infirmities of man. I fear for my salvation, and dread the torments with which I may be punished. Though I have strong reliance on the mercies and bounty of God, yet (regarding my actions) fear will not quiet me: Come then what may, I have launched my vessel on the waves. Though Providence will protect the camp, yet the endeavours of my sons are indispensably incumbent. Give my last prayers to my grandson (Bedar Bakht) whom I cannot see, but the desire to do so affects me. The Begam (his daughter) appears afflicted, but God is the only judge of hearts. The foolish thoughts of women produce nothing but disappointment. Farewell. Farewell.'

To Prince Kam Baksh, his youngest and favourite son, he wrote: 'My son, nearest to my heart. Though in the height of my power, and by God's permission I gave you advice, and took with you the greatest pains, yet, as it was not the Divine will, you did not attend with ears of compliance. Now I depart a stranger, and lament my own insignificance, what does it profit me? I carry with me the fruits of my sins and imperfections. I came here alone and alone I depart. The leader of this caravan hath deserted me. The fever which troubled me for twelve days, hath left me. Wherever I look I see nothing but the Divinity. My fears for the camp and followers are great; but alas, I know not myself. My back is bent with weakness and my feet have lost the powers of motion. The breath which rose is gone, and left not even hope behind it. I have committed numerous crimes and know not with what punishments I may be seized. Though the Protector of mankind will guard the camp, yet care is incumbent on the faithful and my sons. When I was alive, no care was taken, and now I am gone; the consequence may be guessed. The guardianship of a people is the trust by God committed to my sons. Azimu-sh Shan is near. Be cautious that none of the faithful are slain, or their miseries will fall upon my head. I resign you, your mother and son, to God, as I myself am going. The agonies of death come upon me fast. Bahadur Shah is still

where he was and his son is arrived near Hindustan. Bedar Bakht is in Gujarat. Hayat-un Nisa, who has beheld no afflictions till now, is full of sorrows. Regard the Begum as without concern. Your mother was a partner in my illness, and wishes to accompany me in death; but everything has its appointed time.' These letters are full of the deepest pathos, and even 'the sternest critic of the character and deeds of Aurangzeb can hardly refuse to recognize the pathos of those lamentations or to feel some sympathy for the old man on his lonely death-bed'.[1]

§ *Sequel.* With the death of Aurangzeb Mughal rule in India may be said to have ceased to exist as an effective force. None of his successors proved men of any ability. Delhi became a mere cockpit of warring factions, and the throne was occupied by a series of *rois fainéants* under whose feeble rule the disintegration of the empire rapidly proceeded. The eagles gathered greedily round the prostrate carcass. From the north came Nadir Shah the Persian, and after him the Afghan. The Sikhs flung off the Mughal yoke and set up their rule in the Punjab. From the south the armies of the Maratha confederacy swept unchecked towards Delhi until the field of Panipat (1761) decided that the throne of Delhi should know no Maratha occupant. From the east came the armies of the East India Company destined in the end to outstrip all its rivals. In just under a century after the death of Aurangzeb, his helpless descendant Shah Alam was taken under British protection, and though a Timurid sat on the throne of Delhi till 1857 it was as a mere pensioner of the new rulers of India.

[1] Vincent Smith, *History of India*, p. 448.

PART II

CHAPTER VI

MUGHAL ADMINISTRATION

¶ *Principles and system.*

THE principles and system of Mughal administration in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were mainly the product of the genius of Akbar, and depended for their success upon the industry and natural capabilities of the autocrat who had to apply them to the governance of an extensive but not wholly subjugated territory. Consequently, as a well-known authority has remarked, they 'necessarily lost much of their efficacy when their author died'.[1] Neither Babur nor Humayun had any chance of elaborating a system of civil government, for during their adventurous lives they were fully occupied in fighting to secure possession of northern India and to lay the foundations of an imperial line. Thus when Akbar succeeded to the throne in 1556, he had no more than a precarious footing in parts of the country between Agra and Peshawar and in Afghanistan; and even the additional territories which he conquered were not wholly assimilated at the close of his reign. It is conceivable that Babur, if vouchsafed the opportunity, might have perfected a set of civil institutions, comparable in some measure with those of his famous grandson; for he was a highly cultivated man, with a fine literary taste, and combined in himself 'the energy of the Mongol' and the 'courage and capacity of the Turk'.[2] Humayun, on the other hand, though well-read, lacked the promptitude and ability which distinguished his father, and probably weakened his natural capabilities to some extent by addiction to opium.

[1] V. A. Smith, *Akbar the Great Mogul*, p. 354.

[2] Rulers of India Series, *Babar*, S. Lane-Poole.

Both Babur and Humayun were obliged by circumstances to follow the policy of their predecessors in power, the Sultans of Delhi, who usually left the Hindu Rajas and other landholders undisturbed in their possessions, provided that they regularly paid their tribute. When, therefore, Babur speaks in his *Memoirs* of the revenues of the territory held by him 'from Bhira to Bihar' amounting in 1528 to 52 crores (£4,212,000), he is referring to the money collected through the agency of his army of occupation, and to the tribute paid by Hindu and Musalman chiefs and *zamindars*, who actually administered the country upon which he had imposed his authority by force of arms.[1] This practice was dictated by the need for some form of civil government in the provinces, and by the fact that during the earlier period of their rule in India, the Muhammadans were not sufficiently numerous or sufficiently capable to administer more than a limited area in the neighbourhood of the capital. Muhammad Khilji, son of Bakhtyar, organized a purely Muhammadan provincial administration in Bengal in A. D. 1200. The Sultans Balban and Alau-d din Khilji ruled solely through their armies, refused to employ Hindus, and maintained their supremacy by atrocious cruelty and an organized system of espionage. Under Muhammad bin Tughlak the internal administration, such as it was, fell into ruin; and the milder rule of Firoz Shah, who left the government of his territories in the hands of his converted Hindu minister, Khan Jahan, failed to restore vitality to a system which, both at head-quarters and in the provinces, was an arbitrary despotism, practically unchecked except by rebellion and assassination.

While credit, however, is due to Akbar for establishing principles of government and an administrative machinery which differed widely from the methods of the Sultans of Delhi, it must be remembered that he was assisted materially in two directions—first, by the example of Sher Shah, who, both in his own territory in Behar and during his stormy reign of five

[1] Beveridge, *Babur-Nama*, vol. ii, p. 520.

years at Delhi, displayed a remarkable aptitude for civil government, and secondly, by the fact that at the commencement of the sixteenth century the Moslem population of India had sufficiently increased by the triple method of immigration, conversion, and birth, to admit of the employment in the civil offices of state of far larger numbers than had been possible during the earlier days of the Sultanate. Moreover, the barrier which at first divided the Moslem from the Hindu had, by the date of Akbar's accession, been largely broken down, the mutual intercourse, which naturally ensued, resulting in the evolution of a special language, Urdu, which was intelligible to both parties and gradually became the vernacular of the Muhammadans of India.

§ *Sher Shah's administration.* Sher Shah's success lay in the creation of a complete administrative organization, directly subordinate to the ruler or central authority. He divided his territory into *parganas*, administered by an *amin* or civil arbitrator and revenue official, assisted by a *fotadar* (treasurer) and a clerical staff, and by a *shiqdar* or military police officer with limited powers. A group of *parganas* formed a *sarkar* or division, which was in charge of a chief *shiqdar* and a chief *munsif*. Of these, the latter supervised the subordinate civil offices of the division and acted as a circuit judge for the settlement of civil causes and the redress of local grievances. All correspondence concerning the revenue and ancillary matters went direct from the *pargana* offices to Sher Shah's secretariat, the official heads of which obtained the orders of the ruler on all matters of importance; and as each *pargana* contained numerous villages and townships, the head of the administration was in fairly direct touch with the peasantry. His land revenue system was designed with the same object; for he abolished the system of granting fiefs for military service, substituting in its place rewards in cash, and reverted to the practice, introduced originally by Alau-d din Khilji, of surveying or measuring the village lands for purposes of assessment.

But whereas Alau-d din took one-half of the assessed produce, Sher Shah limited the State demand to one-fourth, payable in cash or in kind at the peasant's option, and issued formal deeds specifying the revenue payable in each individual case. His arrangements certainly served as a model to Akbar's revenue minister, Raja Todar Mall, and may also be said to have formed the basis of the British system of revenue settlement. Sher Shah reformed the coinage by abolishing the various metal currencies and introducing a new unit, the copper *dam*, divided into sixteenths for revenue purposes; and he also issued an abundance of silver money, excellent in both fineness and execution. His authority was maintained by means of a powerful army, including 150,000 cavalry, and his scheme of branding horses in the government service, in order to check the evil of fraudulent musters, was copied directly by Akbar. Justice of a rough type was administered under his personal supervision, and the responsibility of village communities for crimes committed within their borders was sternly enforced. Both in this direction and in the provision of well-shaded high roads, wells, and rest-houses for the accommodation of both Hindu and Musalman travellers, Sher Shah's administration attained a standard which must have impressed the greatest of his Mughal successors.[1]

§ *Moslem population.* As regards the growth of the Muhammadan population in India, it is known that during the five or six centuries preceding the establishment of Akbar's Empire, there had been a steady inflow of adventurers from the west and north-west, who had effected conversions on a very considerable scale. These foreigners were chiefly Afghans and Mughals, the latter being known as 'Turani' Mughals, who were Sunnis by sect, or 'Irani' Mughals, who were Shias, hailing chiefly from Shiraz and comprising physicians, poets, lawyers, and other professional men. The Turani Mughals, owing to their numbers and ability, formed a powerful clique both in the military and civil departments of the State, and were much in favour with

[1] R. C. Temple, 'A New View of Sher Shah Sur', *Indian Antiquary*, vol. li.

the emperors. The Afghans, including Rohillas from the hilly tracts south-west of Peshawar, though primarily fighting-men, displayed a talent for forming settlements, which was not shared by the Mughal or the Persian; but their general rusticity and illiteracy debarred them as a rule from any share in the civil administration. In Shah Jahan's reign they were employed as little as possible; but their military aptitude restored them again to favour as soon as Aurangzeb commenced his long and fruitless campaign in the Deccan. Opposed to the above classes were the Hindustani Muhammadans, who were the Indian-born descendants of the early foreign immigrants, and were already well assimilated to the Indian population when the Mughals first appeared on the scene. In the struggles waged by local rulers against Babur and Humayun they usually took the Indian side, and by Akbar's time they could be truthfully described as Indian Moslems, in contradistinction to the men who accompanied him to India or followed thither on the establishment of his authority. Men of this class were mostly employed in subordinate civil offices, which they shared with Hindus of various castes, such as Khatris from the Punjab, Agarval Banias and Kayasths, and also with a fair number of Muhammadans from Kashmir, who had the reputation of being efficient secretaries and good men of business. Included also in the Mughal administration were a few Arabs, Habshis or Abyssinians, Rumis or Turks, and Firangis or Europeans. Of these the Habshis usually provided the eunuchry of the imperial palace, and sometimes filled an executive office like that of the chief of police in Delhi, while the Arabs and Turks would be found serving in the artillery branch of the imperial army.[1]

§ *Mughal public service.* The influx of foreign Muhammadans, which was essential for the maintenance of the military strength of the Empire, gradually declined from the latter half of Akbar's reign, as a result of his policy of 'India for the Indians'.

[1] W. Irvine, *Later Mughals*, vol. i; W. H. Moreland, *India at the Death of Akbar*.

But this class was sufficiently numerous by the middle of the sixteenth century to supply most of the *personnel* of the various departments and offices created by Akbar. The Mughal public service, in fact, was predominantly foreign. Blochmann assserts, on the careful scrutiny of the *Ain-i-Akbari*, that most of Akbar's officials were foreigners, *seil*, Persians and Afghans, and that there were very few Hindustani Muhammadans in the upper grades of the army and civil service; while Moreland estimates that about 70 per cent. of the officials belonged to families which had either accompanied Humayun to India or arrived after Akbar's accession, and that the remaining 30 per cent. consisted of Indian Muhammadans and Hindus.[1] Regarding the employment of Hindus, Akbar is rightly credited with acceptance of the view that a great Empire could not be maintained on the principles followed by the Sultanate, and that the grant to Hindu and Moslem of equal opportunities of serving the State was bound to be an important factor in promoting its stability. Yet, although in theory the public service was thrown open as a career to Hindus, in actual practice the number of appointments held by them was decidedly limited. Moreover, most of these places were conferred upon Rajputs, to the exclusion of other castes—a fact which indicates that Akbar's choice of incumbents was dictated rather by policy than by the more liberal theory of '*la carrière ouverte aux talents*'. In the matter of the Rajputs, he realized that 'a constant exhibition of authority would not only be ineffectual but dangerous, and that the surest hold on their fealty and esteem would be the giving them a personal interest in the support of the monarchy'.[2] Thus, in the course of forty years, he bestowed *mansabs* or offices of more than '500' on twenty-one Hindus, of whom seventeen were Rajputs, including the chiefs of Amber, Marwar, Bikaner, Jaisalmir, and Bundel-

[1] *Ain-i-Akbari*, trans. by H. Blochmann, vol. i; Moreland, *ibid.*

[2] J. Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, edited by W. Crooke, vol. i, p. 178.

khand; and offices of less then '500' on thirty-seven Hindus, of whom thirty consisted of the Rajput princes of Chanderi, Karauli, and Datia, and the Rajput feudatories of the larger States. Of the four remaining appointments in the upper grades, i. e. *mansabs* of '500' to '5,000', one was granted to Raja Birbal, the Court wit, the second to Raja Todar Mall, the revenue administrator, the third to Todar Mall's son, and the fourth to another Khatri.

It seems fairly clear that Akbar's employment of non-Muhammadans in the public services was mainly dictated by the desire to consolidate his hold over the Rajput chiefs who submitted to his suzerainty, and he endeavoured to establish his authority still more firmly by arranging marriage-alliances between members of the Mughal imperial family and the daughters of the ruling houses of Rajputana. It is equally clear that one of the factors in the decline of the Mughal Empire was the abandonment by the bigoted Aurangzeb of the policy of binding the leading Hindu families to the throne by official and personal ties. Throughout the reigns of Jahangir and Shah Jahan, the general character of the public service remained unchanged, though a certain deterioration in the quality of the work which it performed was visible during the reign of the former, and became more marked under Shah Jahan. Aurangzeb, on the other hand, departed from the policy of Akbar by deliberately excluding Hindus from holding office so far as possible, and imposing upon them insulting regulations, in the belief that the precedent of the early Khalifas obliged him to act in this manner, while he failed at the same time to keep a firm hand upon his Moslem subordinates. As a result, his third son, Prince Akbar, was able in 1681 to write openly and truthfully that 'The clerks and officers of state have taken to the practice of traders, and are buying posts with gold and selling them for shameful considerations. Every one who eats salt destroys the salt-cellar.'

§ *Bureaucratic system.* The bureaucracy of the Mughal

Empire was graded on a system borrowed by Akbar directly from Persia and essentially military in character. Each official was the holder of a *mansab* or official appointment of rank and profit, and, as such, was theoretically obliged to supply a certain contingent of troops and auxiliaries for the service of the State. In 1573–4 these *mansabdars* were classified in thirty-three grades, ranging from 'commanders of 10' to 'commanders of 10,000', those in command of '10' to '400' being commonly styled *mansabdar*, those in command of '500' to '2,500' being called *amir*, and of '3,000' and upwards, *amir-i-azam* or *umda*. Up to the middle of Akbar's reign, the highest grade open to the ordinary official was a *mansab* of '5,000'; the more exalted positions were strictly reserved for princes of the imperial family, as for example Prince Salim, who at the date of the compilation of the *Ain-i-Akbari* held a command of '10,000'. But towards the close of the reign the '5,000' limit was relaxed, and under Akbar's successors the members of the superior service were permitted on occasions to rise to much higher positions. Each grade carried a definite rate of pay, out of which the holder was required to defray the cost of his quota of horses, elephants, beasts of burden, and carts. But even in Akbar's day and despite his regulations, the number of men actually supplied by the *mansabdar* rarely agreed with the number indicated by his rank. A 'commander of 1,000' was not taken seriously to task if he produced a somewhat smaller contingent, and '"a commander of 5,000" would have done unusually well if he produced 4,000 cavalry, and ordinarily would not be asked for more than a thousand or so'.[1] In the reign of Jahangir this practice had become more pronounced, according to the testimony of the Rev. Edward Terry, and it continued to expand until, in the eighteenth century, the various ranks became purely honorary, so far as concerned the supply of military contingents. At the same time the number of appointments in the ranks of '5,000' downwards was appreciably

[1] V. A. Smith, *Akbar the Great Mogul*, p. 363.

increased during the reigns of Akbar's successors, as will be apparent from the following table compiled by Blochmann (*Ain-i-Akbari*):

Number of Commanders of	*Under Akbar*	*Under Jahangir*	*Under Shah Jahan*
5,000 down to 500	249	439	563
400 „ „ 200	163	438	not known
150 „ „ 10	1,388	2,064	„ „

Inasmuch as all office-holders did their best, as a rule, to cheat the Government, and were not prevented even by the active supervision of Akbar from frequently indulging in malpractices, it can well be understood how the increase of *mansabs* shown in the table contributed to the general deterioration of the public service during the seventeenth century.

In addition to the *mansab* or class rank, which was regarded as a personal (*zat*) distinction, an official was also granted *suwar* rank, as a privilege, in return for maintaining a supplementary contingent of *suwars* or cavalry. The pay of this additional force was drawn from the Treasury, and the *mansabdar* was permitted to retain 5 per cent. of the pay-bill for himself. The size of this cavalry contingent in each case determined the position of the *mansabdar* within the grade. Thus 'from 5,000 downwards, an officer was First Class [or grade], if his rank in *zat* [personal class] and *suwar* were equal; Second Class, if his *suwar* was half his *zat* rank; Third Class, if the *suwar* were less than half the *zat*, or there were no *suwar* at all'. According to this grading, a *mansabdar* of '3,000', who provided 3,000 *suwar*, belonged to the first class; one of '3,000', with 1,500 *suwar*, belonged to the second class; and one of '3,000', with 500 *suwar*, was placed in the third class. The salaries of these classes differed slightly, a *mansabdar* of 3,000 being entitled to Rs. 17,000 a month if he belonged to the First Class; and Rs. 16,800 and Rs. 16,700 a month if in the second and third classes respectively.[1]

[1] V. A. Smith, *Akbar the Great Mogul*; W. H. Moreland, *India at the Death of Akbar*; Blochmann and Jarrett, *Ain-i-Akbari*.

Thus the permanent officials of the Mughal Empire belonged to a service which was framed on definite military lines, and, at any rate in Akbar's day, were expected to perform military duties, in addition to their general administrative and judicial functions. The Emperor personally made appointments to the Service, fixing the rank of the successful candidate according to the circumstances of the case. An aspirant for employment had generally to obtain an introduction to the Emperor through a friend or patron of standing at the Court, and had to rely for success on creating a favourable impression upon the autocrat, who observed no recognized test of fitness and followed no general rules in the matter of promotion. Raja Behari Mal was in this way appointed direct to a *mansab* of '5,000', though usually a new-comer had to be content with a more humble class and was expected to earn the higher prizes of the Service by his own efforts and capabilities. Akbar's power of judging a man's character was so remarkable that no ill result attended his practice of appointing, promoting, degrading, or dismissing his officials as he pleased. On the contrary; it is open to question whether any other system would in the circumstances of that epoch have been equally successful. But directly the natural capacity and personality of the ruler fell short of the standard of Akbar, a steady decline in the character of the official nobility commenced. This deterioration was noticeable under Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb, though the presence of many officials of the right type from Bukhara, Khurasan, Iran, and Arabia saved the civil and military administration of their reigns from the hopeless decrepitude which characterized the public service under the later Mughal rulers.

Implicit obedience to the Emperor's orders was the chief duty of the Mughal State officials, whose names were recorded in two registers, one for those in attendance on the Emperor, the other for those holding definite appointments. 'Officers on the first list had nothing to do beyond appearing regularly at Court, maintaining their military force, and being ready to

carry out any order which the Emperor might give. The appointments held by those on the second list were of very various kinds; they might be employed on strictly military duties, they might hold governorships or other posts in the provinces, or they might be attached to one of the departments of the Imperial Household, in the band, or the stables, or the fruitery, as the case might be. There was very little specialization of appointments, and an officer might be transferred at a moment's notice to an entirely novel form of employment: Birbal, after many years at Court, met his death in command of troops on the Frontier, while Abul Fazl, the most eminent literary man of the time, did excellent service when sent to conduct military operations in the Deccan.'[1]

§ *Salaries and allowances.* The salaries of the officials of the Mughal Government were paid in two ways. Either they received them in cash from the Treasury, or they were granted a temporary estate (*jagir*), consisting of a village or group of villages or a *pargana* or even larger area, the estimated revenue of which was sufficient to defray all their official expenses. Sher Shah, as has been mentioned, disapproved of the grant of *jagirs*; and Akbar followed his example, in the well-founded belief that the system was expensive and conferred too much power and independence on the holders. For precisely the same reason the Maratha chieftain, Shivaji, was hostile to the grant of *saranjams* or fiefs for military services, and preferred to reward his adherents in other ways. There is no doubt that every *jagirdar* was practically uncontrolled within the limits of his own domain, and might be tempted, as actually happened in later days, to flout the imperial authority and assert his independence. Moreover, a tyrannous and exacting official might cause unmerited suffering to the cultivators, upon whose industry the welfare of the Mughal State ultimately depended. Akbar was perfectly justified, therefore, in preferring to remunerate his officials by cash payments, and in converting *jagirs*

[1] W. H. Moreland, *India at the Death of Akbar*, pp. 70, 71.

into Crown lands (*khalsa*), whenever the opportunity arose. For the Crown lands were administered directly by the Emperor's own revenue officials—a course which not only enhanced the imperial authority, but also resulted, in most cases, in greater pecuniary advantage to the State. The confusion and maladministration to which the *jagir* system could give rise are well illustrated by Shihabu-d din Talish's account of the condition of Bengal at the date of Shayista Khan's appointment as governor of that province. 'The mansabdars', he writes, 'had their jagirs situated in different parganahs, and the multiplicity of co-partners led to the ryots being oppressed and the parganahs desolated. Large sums were wasted [in the cost of collection], as many *shiqdars* and *amlas* had to be sent out by (every) jagirdar.'[1]

The officials of the Mughal Government much preferred the *jagir* system of cash payments, partly because the Treasury was dilatory in its disbursements, and partly because it was often possible for an officer, by means of favouritism or roguery, to secure an estate yielding a larger revenue than was ascribed to it in the official records. The widespread objection of the public service to cash payments was probably responsible for the fact that Akbar attained only partial success in his policy of abolishing *jagirs*, and that under Jahangir this objectionable system was again widely adopted. Whether paid in cash or in the form of revenue-bearing estates, the sanctioned scale of emoluments for officials of all classes was, according to modern ideas, enormous. According to the *Ain-i-Akbari*, the monthly salary of a first-grade *mansabdar* of '5,000' was 30,000 rupees, of a second-grade official of the same class, Rs. 29,000, and of a third-grade official, Rs. 28,000—the rupee of Akbar's coinage being equivalent to two shillings and threepence and possessing, according to Mr. Moreland's calculations, a purchasing power six times greater than that of the British rupee of 1912. The lower classes of *mansabdars* were remunerated on the same lavish

[1] J. N. Sarkar, *Studies in Mughal India*, p. 155.

scale, the three grades of '1,000' drawing respectively Rs. 8,200, Rs. 8,100, and Rs. 8,000, a month; while those of '500' received Rs. 2,500, Rs. 2,300, and Rs. 2,100; those of '100', Rs. 700, Rs. 600, and Rs. 500; and those of '10', Rs. 100, Rs. 82½, and Rs. 75. From these emoluments the officials had to deduct the monthly cost of the military forces which they were severally bound to maintain; and allowing for this expenditure and other incidental and necessary charges, Mr. Moreland calculates that a *mansabdar* of '5,000' received a net monthly salary of at least Rs. 18,000, one of '1,000' at least Rs. 5,000, and a 'commander of 500' at least Rs. 1,000 a month.[1] These salaries, however, it was possible for an officer to augment indirectly, by economies in his military expenditure or by securing a profitable *jagir*. It is an established fact that fraud was constantly practised in connexion with the supply of troops and horses by the *mansabdars*. Akbar exerted himself to check it by requiring detailed descriptive rolls of every man, by introducing the practice of branding horses, which Sher Shah and Alau-d din Khilji had also adopted, and by insisting upon continual musters and inspections. Yet he was not entirely successful. 'False musters', as Irvine remarks,[2] 'were an evil from which the Moghul army suffered even in its most palmy days. Nobles would lend each other the men to make up their quota, or needy idlers from the bazaars would be mounted on the first baggage pony that came to hand and counted in with the others as efficient soldiers.'

Possibly it was the knowledge of such roguery on the part of the officials that led Shah Jahan to pay the various salaries for less than the full twelve months of the year. In some cases only four months' pay was allowed, in the hope of neutralizing the unauthorized profits of the *mansabdars*. This practice was apparently followed also in the case of the ordinary soldier, for Manucci, the Italian traveller, speaks of the troops receiving only six or eight months' pay for twelve months' service, and

[1] W. H. Moreland, *India at the Death of Akbar*, pp. 66 ff.

[2] W. Irvine, *Army of the Indian Mughals*, p. 45.

in respect of two months out of the six, they received clothes and old raiment instead of cash.[1] The system of short payments to the *mansabdars* continued during the reign of Aurangzeb, but had little or no effect in checking dishonesty, with the result that the imperial army in his time was never up to strength and was of little military value. It is interesting to remark that in this matter of payments to their officials and soldiers the Maratha Government followed the Mughal practice. The Peshwas frequently paid the *karkuns* in the district establishment for only ten months out of twelve, and every Maratha soldier was familiar with '*baramahi chakri* and *dahamahi* or *akramahi pay*'.[2]

§ *Drawbacks of public service.* Allowing for all possible deductions, the salaries paid to the officials of the Mughal Government were very high, and were calculated to attract to the imperial service the ablest and most enterprising men from western Asia;[3] and throughout the Mughal period the best Muhammadan recruits for civil administration and war alike were foreign adventurers and converted Hindus. But the former class rapidly deteriorated on Indian soil, and a vigorous standard of public administration could only be maintained by a constant supply of foreign immigrants. When the inflow ceased, as it did after the reign of Aurangzeb, 'the Empire shrivelled like a tree cut off from its sap'.[4] Handsomely paid as the service established by Akbar certainly was, and attractive as a career, yet it had certain definite drawbacks. The expense of maintaining the standard of living required of an officer was very heavy; payments, if made in cash from the Treasury, were irregularly received; *jagirs* were not always as lucrative as they appeared on paper. The most serious disability, however, was the embargo laid upon thrift and upon the gradual accumulation

[1] Manucci, *Storia do Mogor*, ed. Irvine, vol. ii, p. 379.
[2] S. N. Sen, *Administrative System of the Marathas*, p. 573.
[3] W. H. Moreland, *ibid.*
[4] W. Irvine, *Later Mughals*, vol. ii, p. 308.

of capital by careful living. No official dared to establish his family in open independence; no official was expected or permitted to bequeath rank or fortune to his heirs. Any wealth which an officer contrived to accumulate by his own efforts became at his death the property of the Emperor, and the most that he could expect was that the Emperor would grant an adequate subsistence allowance to his family after his demise, and that he would confer suitable appointments on his sons.[1] Thus there was no incentive to thrift, for money saved was either sequestrated on one pretext or another during life, or reverted to the ruler after death. Consequently, the average official spent on luxuries all and more than he earned, and tended more and more to become a shameless exploiter of the poor. *L'appétit vient en mangeant*, according to the French proverb; and the lavish extravagance which characterized the official nobility of the Mughal Empire became more marked as time went on, and ultimately proved a potent factor in its decline. In the matter of promotion, transfers, and the like, the Mughal official was wholly at the mercy of the autocrat, and often learnt by experience that the surest passports to advancement were plausibility and a capacity for counteracting intrigue against himself. During the reign of Jahangir, a system of constant transfer of officials from one district or appointment to another was adopted, which naturally caused them considerable expense. Possibly this was the Emperor's equivalent of the short payments favoured by Shah Jahan. The increased expenditure which had thus to be shouldered

[1] According to a Dutch report, which is probably exaggerated, Shah Jahan realized nineteen crores of rupees on the death of Asaf Khan in 1641. Jahangir tried to apply the same practice of escheat to the property of the English chief of the Ahmadabad factory; but the claim was abandoned in 1624 (Moreland, *From Akbar to Aurangzeb*, p. 278). Aurangzeb confiscated in this way the estate of Shayista Khan, his own maternal uncle, and of Mahabat Khan. When Amir Khan, governor of Kabul, died, the authorities were ordered to seize the whole of his property, so that 'even a piece of straw should not be left'. (*Letters of Aurangzeb*, ed. Bilimoria, Nos. xcix, cxxviii, cxlvi.)

ultimately fell upon the agricultural and working population, who were exploited without mercy by the provincial officials.

§ *Chief ministers.* Though the Mughal Emperor had absolute power and was bound by no laws or rules, except, perhaps, those Koranic precepts which were binding upon all Muhammadans, he found it convenient in practice to appoint ministers to assist him in the daily administration of the country. During the reign of Akbar the chief ministers, who may be regarded in one sense as the heads of the Mughal civil service, were the *vakil* or prime minister, the *vazir* or *diwan*, who was finance minister, the head *bakhshi*, and the *sadr* or *sadr sudur*. The head *bakhshi*, according to Irvine, combined in himself a variety of functions;[1] for while he has been correctly described as paymaster-general, he was also responsible for the recruiting of the army, for the maintenance of various registers, such as the list of *mansabdars* or high officials, the roster of the palace guards, the list of officials paid in cash, the rules regarding grants of pay, and so forth; and lastly, whenever a battle was imminent, for supplying the Emperor with a complete muster-roll of the imperial forces. It was his duty also on such an occasion to allot their positions on the field to the several commanders; and if the conflict was important, he was generally expected himself to assume a high command.[2] In ordinary times the head *bakhshi* was always present at the public durbar held by the Emperor in the *Diwan-i-Am*, which until the reign of Shah Jahan consisted merely of handsome canvas awnings stretched on poles,[3] and was accustomed to submit petitions from the *mansabdars* and receive the Emperor's orders thereon, and also his instructions regarding promotions and transfers. He would also introduce provincial officials who were on a visit to the capital of the Empire. The *sadr*,

[1] W. Irvine, *The Army of the Indian Moghuls*, p. 38.

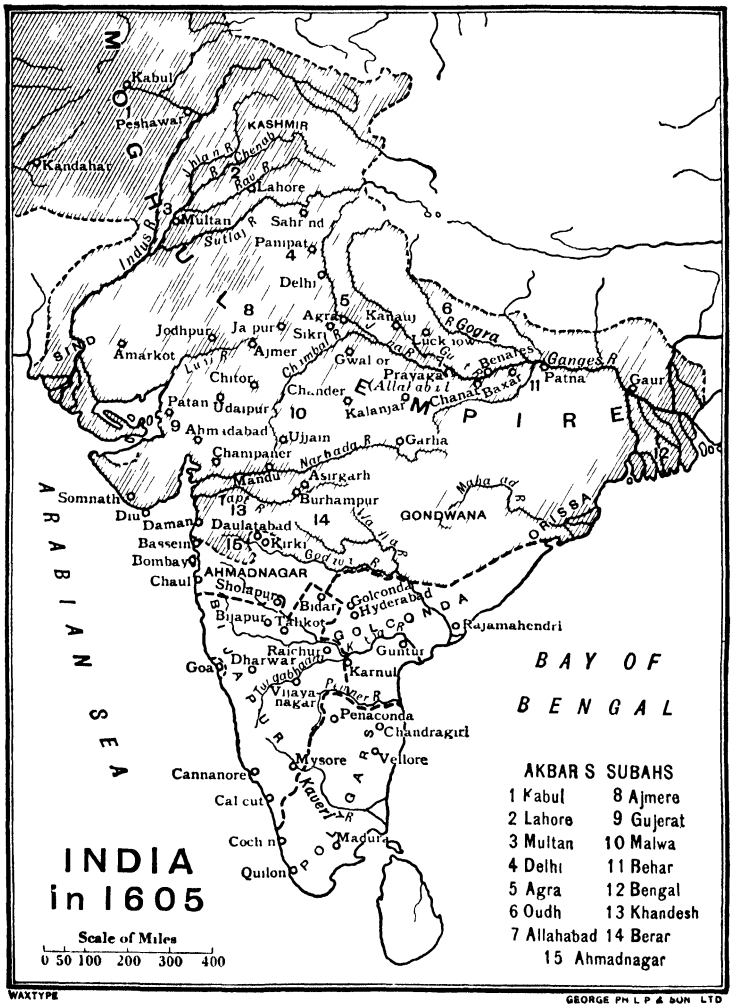
[2] V. A. Smith, *Akbar the Great Mogul*, p. 358.

[3] The present *Diwan-i-Am* of red sandstone, supported on forty pillars, was built by Shah Jahan in 1638. J. N. Sarkar, *Studies in Mughal India*, p. 6.

during the earlier years of Akbar's reign, was an office of great dignity, as it had been also under his predecessors. 'The holder ranked as the fourth official in the empire, was the head of all the law officers, and was vested with almost unlimited authority in the conferment of grants of lands devoted to ecclesiastical or benevolent purposes. He also exercised powers which may be fairly described as equivalent to those of the Inquisition, extending even to the infliction of the capital penalty for heresy.'[1] In 1578, however, Akbar, whose adherence to Islamic doctrines had been growing steadily weaker, deprived the office of its control of ecclesiastical and charitable grants, known in Turki as *sayurghal* and in Persian as *madad-i-maash*; and three years later (November 1581) he abolished the appointment altogether, substituting in its place six provincial *sadrs*, for (1) Delhi, Malwa, and Gujarat; (2) Agra, Kalpi, and Kalanjar; (3) Hajipur to the Sarju or Ghaghra river; (4) Behar; (5) Bengal; (6) Punjab. In each of the larger cities Akbar at the same time appointed a head *kazi* to supervise the subordinate judicial officers, with the object of placing a check upon fraud, bribery, and delay. His plans were at the best only partially successful. The *kazis* as a class were notoriously corrupt, and their department became a byword and a reproach from the reign of Akbar onwards. The popular experience and judgement, indeed, have been handed down from Mughal days in many a proverbial saying, indicating the duplicity and untrustworthiness of these ornaments of the law. The *sadrs* and the *kazis* were the only considerable civil officials who did not take rank as army officers, like the rest of the administrative staff.

§ *The army*. As regards the military organization of the Mughals, no large standing army was maintained. The Emperors depended for the purposes of war and internal defence upon four different classes of troops, namely, (*a*) irregular contingents raised and commanded by autonomous but tributary

[1] V. A. Smith, *Akbar the Great Mogul*, p. 42.



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chiefs; (*b*) similar forces supplied by the *mansabdars* in accordance with their grade in the official hierarchy; (*c*) *dakhili* or supplementary troops, paid by the State and placed under the command of the *mansabdars*; and (*d*) *ahadis* or a body of gentlemen-troopers, composed of young men of position and good family, who were not fortunate enough to secure a *mansab* on their first application to the Emperor. As regards the first category, the local administration of various parts of the Empire was in the hands of Rajas and Chiefs who are generally described in the *Ain-i-Akbari* under the colourless name of *zamindars*, which in practice signified any person, other than a *mansabdar* or official, who stood between the Emperor and the revenue-paying peasantry. Under Akbar the administration of such areas was of a severely practical character. If the Raja or landholder desired to avoid the possibility of being killed, imprisoned, or ousted from his possessions, he had to recognize the paramount authority of the Emperor and give practical proof of such recognition by attending Court from time to time, presenting valuable gifts (*peshkash*), paying a reasonable revenue or tribute, and providing military assistance in time of war. At the height of his power Akbar is said to have been attended by twenty such chiefs and princes, each of whom provided a contingent and generally commanded it in battle.[1] Concerning the second category, something has already been said. The troops provided by the *mansabdars* were chiefly cavalry, each office-holder being bound, as mentioned above, to provide and equip a certain number of men, horses, and elephants. These men were not required to drill, were dressed and armed in various fashions, and looked upon the individual officer by whom they were recruited as their personal chief. Akbar is said to have placed more reliance on these contingents of the *mansabdars* than on the other classes of troops, notwithstanding that fraud in the provision of men, horses, and equipment was

[1] W. Irvine, *Later Mughals*; V. A. Smith, *Akbar*; Moreland, *India at the Death of Akbar*.

very common; and doubtless the rules and regulations which he framed went some way towards maintaining the efficiency of this branch of the imperial forces. Under the less active supervision of his successors, their value as a fighting force greatly deteriorated, and by 1739 they were vastly inferior to the *Qizilbashes* (Turks and Turkomans) who followed Nadir Shah to Delhi.

The third class of *dakhili* or State-paid troops were not as a rule very numerous. Monserrate records that in 1581, when Akbar made his expedition to Kabul against his rebellious half-brother, Muhammad Hakim, the force equipped and paid from the State treasury included 45,000 cavalry, 5,000 elephants, and innumerable infantry and followers. But this was a special occasion, demanding extraordinary expenditure; and Blochmann calculates that in ordinary circumstances the State-paid troops could not have exceeded 25,000 men. The fourth class of *ahadis* or gentlemen-at-arms were usually chosen from the same social class as the *mansabdars* and could, if fortune favoured them, obtain promotion to a *mansab* after a period of approved service. They were under the separate command of a great noble, had a *bakhshi* or paymaster of their own, and were employed on a variety of duties. Some served as aides-de-camp or king's messengers, others as guards of the imperial harem, while others again filled offices in the imperial camp, fruitery, library, and so forth. The pay of an *ahadi* was higher than that of an ordinary trooper, who drew nominally Rs. 7 or Rs. 8 a month, after deduction of the maintenance charges for his horse and equipment; and, according to the *Ain-i-Akbari*, several *ahadis* drew more than Rs. 500 a month. On the other hand, the *ahadi* received only nine and a half months' pay out of the twelve, the balance of two and a half months' pay being retained by the Treasury to defray the cost of horse and equipment.[1]

The artillery was wholly imperial or State-paid, and was

[1] Blochmann and Jarrett, *Ain-i-Akbari*; Moreland, *India at the Death of Akbar*; V. A. Smith, *Akbar*.

administered as a department of the household, the monthly pay of a soldier in this branch ranging from Rs. 3 to Rs. 7. The first distinct evidence of the use of artillery is by Babur at the battle of Panipat in 1526; Humayun had swivel-guns, carrying a heavy ball. Akbar, who was 'much interested in the mechanical arts and often worked at them himself', paid special attention to the founding of cannon and the manufacture of matchlock guns, and possessed some very heavy cannon, each dragged by several elephants and a thousand oxen. He seems, indeed, to have set the fashion in heavy artillery, which went on increasing in size during the decadence of the Mughal Empire. For it is to the latter period that we owe the enormous field-pieces, still preserved in various parts of India, such as the *Malik-i-Maidan* at Bijapur, the *Lilam Top* at Junagadh, and the great gun of Agra. The Indian ordnance from the reign of Akbar onwards was too cumbrous to be of any real value; its fire was slow and inaccurate; and the heaviest of Akbar's guns failed to make any impression upon the walls of a really strong fortress like Asirgarh. The Portuguese artillery in the sixteenth century was far superior to any guns possessed by the Mughal army, while in the eighteenth century the latter were outclassed by the *jazair* or swivel-guns, manned by Nadir Shah's disciplined gunners.[1] The infantry, which was recruited from ordinary peasants and townsmen, was equally disappointing, and included all manner of people besides regular soldiers. The *Ain-i-Akbari* speaks of matchlock-men, who were paid from Rs. 3 to Rs. 6 monthly, porters who received from Rs. 2½ to Rs. 3, gladiators and wrestlers who drew a monthly wage of from Rs. 2 to Rs. 15, and slaves whose wages varied from 1 *dam* to one rupee *per diem*. The men were not properly drilled and were very inefficient in the use of fire-arms, and during the seventeenth century the only musketeers of any value in the army of Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb were the Hindus of Buxar, the Bundelas, the Karnatakis, who were chiefly employed by the Sultans of

[1] W. Irvine, *Later Mughals*, vol. ii; Crooke, *Things Indian*.

Bijapur, and a small class of hunters called Bahelias, who were recruited in the province of Allahabad.[1] Irvine sums up the general character of the infantry in the statement that 'until the middle of the eighteenth century, when the French and English had demonstrated the vast superiority of disciplined infantry, the Indian foot-soldier was little more than a night-watchman and guardian over baggage, either in camp or on the line of march'.[2] There is no doubt that under the rule of Akbar and his immediate successors, the cavalry was the only branch which was considered respectable and fit for a gentleman to join; while other branches were regarded as little better than menial establishments, with the possible exception of the artillery, which employed an increasing number of foreign experts.

The exact numbers of the Mughal army cannot be definitely stated. Professor J. N. Sarkar puts the strength of Shah Jahan's army in 1648 at 440,000, comprising 200,000 cavalry, 8,000 *mansabdars*, 7,000 *ahadis*, 40,000 infantry musketeers and artillerymen, and 185,000 cavalry commanded by princes and nobles. These numbers were exclusive of the local militia posted in the *parganas* and commanded by the *faujdars*, *kroris* and *amlas*.[3] These militia forces were known as *bumi* and consisted chiefly of infantry, but occasionally included also cavalry and elephants, guns and boats. Each *sarkar* was responsible for its own contingent. Shah Jahan himself, in a letter written just before his captivity, speaks of being master of 900,000 troopers; but in all probability the total number actually available for service in the field was less than this. In Akbar's day, at any rate, no precise estimate of the total Mughal military strength can be given; the cavalry, in which Pathans and Rajputs predominated, may have numbered about 250,000,[4] but sufficient trustworthy data are not available for the rest of the forces.

[1] W. Irvine, *Later Mughals*, vol. ii.
[2] W. Irvine, *Army of the Indian Mughals*, p. 57.
[3] J. N. Sarkar, *Studies in Mughal India*, p. 20.
[4] W. H. Moreland, *India at the Death of Akbar*.

But although the forces at the disposal of Akbar and his successors were considerable, no commissariat service existed, and in the matter of transport each man was expected to make his own arrangements. 'Supplies were provided by huge bazaars marching with the camp, and by the nomadic tribe of Banjaras, who made a profession of carrying grain with which to feed armies.'[1] These primitive arrangements lasted throughout the Mughal period and down to quite modern times; for as late as 1792 we find Lord Cornwallis's army, in its campaign against Tipu Sultan, being supplied by an immense supplementary force of 400,000 Banjaras. And later instances can be found.

It will be clear from the preceding paragraphs that the Mughal military organization possessed certain weaknesses, which rendered it no match for the better kinds of contemporary European troops, and ultimately brought about its decay. So long as Akbar was alive, the personal vigour and martial qualities of the Emperor maintained the army, with all its shortcomings, in a wonderful condition of efficiency; but under Jahangir and Shah Jahan the inevitable deterioration set in, and became so marked under Aurangzeb that Manucci asserted, probably with justification, that 30,000 good European soldiers could easily sweep away the authority of the Mughal and occupy the whole Empire. One of the chief obstacles to military efficiency was the pomp and display maintained in camp and on the march. On occasions Akbar was able to break away from the custom which transformed the imperial force into an unwieldy moving city; as, for example, in 1573 when he rode fifty miles a day, with a small escort, from his capital to the outskirts of Ahmadabad. But usually he followed the time-honoured practice, and permitted the army to be encumbered with all the lavish paraphernalia of the imperial court, including a proportion of the harem and its attendants, mounted on elephants and camels, a travelling audience-hall, musician's gallery, offices, workshops, and bazaars. Strings of elephants and camels carried

[1] V. A. Smith, *Akbar*, pp. 361–2.

the treasure; hundreds of bullock-carts bore the military stores; an army of mules transported the imperial furniture and effects. One cannot help comparing these spectacular progresses of the imperial army with the severely practical arrangements adopted by the Maratha leader, Shivaji, whose mobile light cavalry would probably have made short work of Akbar's cumbrous encampment. When one reads the account left by Father Monserrate of the expedition to Kabul in 1585, and the description of the imperial camp given by Abu-l Fazl, one is reminded of Carlyle's reference to the campaign of Louis XV in Flanders, with 'his *Maison-Bouche* and *Valetaille* without end, his very Troop of Players, with their paste-board coulisses, thunder-barrels, their kettles, fiddles, stage-wardrobes, portable larders (and chaffering and quarrelling enough); all mounted in wagons, tumbrils, second-hand chaises,—sufficient not to conquer Flanders, but the patience of the world'.[1] But the paraphernalia of the most Christian king and the pomp and circumstance maintained by Akbar were trifling by comparison with the opulence and luxury of Aurangzeb's imperial encampment. Grant Duff has recorded a vivid picture of the grand camp of the latter at Ahmadnagar, and adds that 'the magnificence of such a spectacle, which formed a remarkable contrast with the plain and even austere personal habits of the Emperor, was intended to strengthen his power by the awe with which it impressed his subjects; but as his state was imitated by his nobles, it proved a serious encumbrance to the movements of his army, while the devouring expense of such establishments pressed hard on his finances, and soon crippled even the most necessary of his military and political arrangements.'[2] Such was the Nemesis attendant upon reckless luxury and lavish display. Long before Aurangzeb's death the military power of the State had become contemptible; the authority of the Emperor could be defied with impunity.

§ *Sea and river flotillas.* In the time of Akbar the Mughal

[1] Carlyle's *French Revolution*, Chap. II.

[2] Grant Duff, *History of the Mahrattas*, vol. i, p. 255.

Empire had no navy in the modern sense of that term, and the use by some modern writers of the words 'Admiralty' and 'Naval Department' in reference to the functions of boat-building and river transport, described by Abu-l Fazl, is apt to be misleading. The main objects of the department mentioned in the *Ain-i-Akbari* under the style and title of *Mir Bahri* were (1) the building of boats of all kinds for river transport, from mere cargo-boats to large pleasure-boats, carrying floating markets and flower gardens; (2) the supply of men conversant with coasts, tides, channels, &c., from the *nakhoda*, or master of the vessel, down to the common seaman; (3) the watching of the rivers, and the regulation of fords, ferries, and wharves; and (4) the imposition, realization, and remission, of river duties and tolls. Akbar is stated to have remitted a large number of miscellaneous duties by way of encouraging trade, but he maintained a regular system of river-tolls, of which one-half or one-third, as the case might be, was paid to the State, and the balance was retained by the ferryman or boatman, and also a duty of two and a half per cent. on imports and exports at the ports and harbours, the proceeds of which were credited to the State. The nearest approach to a naval establishment proper was a fleet of 768 armed vessels and boats, which was stationed at Dacca to protect the coast of Bengal against the Mugs and foreign pirates of the Arakan coast. This flotilla appears for the first time in a revenue-statement for Bengal prepared in 1582 by Raja Todar Mall, and was estimated to cost about Rs. 29,000 a month. The revenue of certain *parganas* was set aside for its maintenance, and any deficiency was met by a boat-building tax, varying from 8 annas to Rs. ¼, and levied upon all boats visiting or leaving the flotilla head-quarters, the crews of which were not residents of the Dacca district. The exploits of the Mug and Feringi pirates, chronicled in a contemporary Persian account of Shihabu-d din Talish, indicate that in Akbar's time the Dacca flotilla was very inefficient, and by 1605 the pirates had become so daring that the Bengal Governor decided to

strengthen the fleet. This apparently produced little effect; and in 1639, when Prince Shuja was acting as Viceroy, the establishment was practically ruined by the corruption of the revenue officials in charge of the *parganas* assigned for its maintenance. Matters improved a little during the active administration of Aurangzeb's Viceroy, Mir Jumla; and again, under Shayista Khan in 1664, an attempt was made to refurbish the flotilla and deal a blow to piracy.[1] But at its best the naval establishment in Bengal was limited and inefficient, and appears never to have been a match for its Arakanese opponents, either under Akbar or his successors. Moreland estimates that at the date of Akbar's death the aggregate tonnage of 'fighting-ships' for all India did not exceed 20,000 *tuns*,[2] and as this figure includes the Portuguese navy and the forces maintained by the pirates of the coasts, it is obvious that the so-called naval strength of the Mughal Empire must have been negligible. During Akbar's reign Portuguese naval power was supreme in the East, and the Emperor tacitly acquiesced in their supremacy by making no effort to challenge their authority, and by taking out licences for the ships which he sent to the Red Sea. The absence of a Mughal navy is further indicated during the reigns of his successors by the occasional requests made by the Muhammadan authorities at Surat for one or two Dutch or English vessels to assist them in protecting their harbours against attack.[3]

In the reign of Aurangzeb a new figure appeared in the naval affairs of the Empire in the person of the Sidi of Janjira. This individual, who is often styled the Habshi or Abyssinian, had originally been in the service of the Adil Shahi Sultan of Bijapur, guarding the coasts and shipping with his fleet; but finding that the Sultan was either unable or indisposed to assist him, when he was attacked by Shivaji, the Sidi in 1670 offered his services

[1] R. Mookerji, *A History of Indian Shipping, &c.*, Mahommedan Period, Chap. II.

[2] W. H. Moreland, *India at the Death of Akbar.*

[3] W. H. Moreland, *From Akbar to Aurangzeb*, Chap. I.

to Aurangzeb. The Emperor, who had had experience of Shivaji's capacity for mischief, accepted the proposals of the Sidi and arranged to pay him a subsidy for the use of his fleet against the Maratha. But despite the fact that he was nominally under the orders of the Mughal governor of Surat and was subsidized by the imperial exchequer, the Sidi was, as the English in Bombay soon discovered, practically an independent power. Aurangzeb professed to regard him as part and parcel of the imperial organization, and on one occasion (1682) fitted out an additional fleet at Surat, to co-operate with him against the Maratha naval forces; but the Sidi was neither more nor less than a naval *condottiere*, beyond the real control of the Mughal Emperor, and, so far as the East India Company was concerned, he was actually a separate power to be dealt with.[1]

§ *The Police.* From a consideration of Mughal military arrangements we pass naturally to the organization responsible for internal peace and security. The police administration can best be surveyed under the threefold category of village, district, and urban police. So far as the village police were concerned, the Mughal authorities paid little or no attention to rural arrangements for the prevention and detection of crime.[2] At the commencement of their rule, they found existing in most parts of India a system of immemorial antiquity, under which the headman of the village and his subordinate watchmen were wholly responsible for the police arrangements of their village; while the body corporate of the villagers were bound to make good any loss due to crime committed within the village limits, except in cases where they were able to trace the offenders and recover the stolen goods, or to fix responsibility for the crime upon a neighbouring village. The system was in existence when the East India Company first assumed political power, and has been fully described by officials engaged in the settlement of the country at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the

[1] R. and O. Strachey, *Keigwin's Rebellion.*

[2] See S. N. Sen, *Administrative System of the Marathas*, p. 584.

nineteenth century. It is unnecessary, therefore, to enter into details of the arrangements, which were one of the chief features of the corporate life of the old autonomous village community. It has been previously stated that Sher Shah Sur vigorously maintained the system; and there is little doubt that Akbar and his successors took no steps to alter or interfere with time-honoured arrangements, which, though lacking perfection and liable to deteriorate rapidly under a weak administration, did at the same time afford a fair modicum of security in remote rural tracts.

The maintenance of law and order in the district or *sarkar*, which was composed of several *parganas*, was usually the task of the Mughal revenue authorities, and in particular of the *faujdar*, or commandant of the district, who functioned as a deputy of the *sipah salar*, the provincial governor of Akbar's administration. In later times the designation of the *sipah salar*, described in the *Ain* as 'the vicegerent of the Emperor' in the province, was altered to that of *subahdar* or *subadar*, but the title of the *faujdar* remained unchanged throughout the whole period of Mughal rule. The *faujdar's* primary duties were the policing of the roads, the suppression of disorder of any kind, and the extraction by force of the State dues from recalcitrant or contumacious villagers. If one may trust the account of Father Monserrate, there were constant outbreaks of disorder, even in Akbar's day, and it is very unlikely that the provinces were any less disturbed under the less competent government of his successors. The *faujdars* were expected to deal summarily with such disturbances, and undoubtedly managed to maintain their authority by means of their troops and by the infliction of swift and often cruel punishments. In the matter of highway robbery and theft, the *faujdar* was bound by a rule of undoubted antiquity, inherited from preceding Hindu governments, which obliged him either to recover the property or to compensate the owner for its loss. Manucci, the Italian traveller, records that in the reign of Shah Jahan the *faujdar* had to pay

compensation to any one who was robbed on the roads in daylight, but that if the robbery occurred at night, the traveller was held to be at fault for not having halted earlier, and received no consideration or compensation at all.[1] Though no definite reference to it can be traced, it is probable that the same liability was imposed on the *faujdar* in Akbar's reign, for the rule was too ancient and too widely accepted to undergo revision or cancellation.

In the cities and towns of the Mughal Empire all police duties, including the maintenance of public order and decency, were entrusted to the *kotwal*, who wielded autocratic powers. In the absence of a *kotwal*, his duties were carried out by the collector of revenue. A perusal of the multifarious duties of this official enumerated in the *Ain-i-Akbari* leads inevitably to the conclusion that, as in the case of the village police, the Mughal Government borrowed the practice of ancient Hindu states, and that, in brief, the Mughal *kotwal* was merely a sixteenth-century replica of the *Nagaraka* or Town Prefect of Mauryan days. For the *kotwal* kept a register of houses and roads; divided the town into quarters, and placed an assistant in direct charge of each quarter, who had to report daily arrivals and departures; he kept a small army of spies or detectives; was bound to apprehend thieves and discover stolen goods, on pain of being held responsible for the loss; he enforced a curfew-order; kept an eye on the currency; fixed local prices and examined dealers' weights and measures; kept inventories of the property of persons dying intestate; set apart wells and ferries for the use of women; stopped women riding on horseback; prevented cattle slaughter; kept a check on slavery; expelled religious enthusiasts, calendars, and dishonest tradesmen, from the urban area; allotted separate quarters to butchers, sweepers, and hunters; set apart land for burial-grounds; and arranged for the illumination of the town on the occasion of festivals and

[1] Manucci, *Storia do Mogor*, ed. Irvine, vol. ii, p. 451; S. N. Sen, *Administrative System of the Marathas*, p. 587.

holidays. This by no means exhausts the tale of the *kotwal's* duties. He was expected to know everything about everybody; to visit condign punishment upon any one who demeaned himself by consorting and drinking with a public executioner; to prevent *sati*, if the woman was disinclined to sacrifice herself; to put a stop to circumcision before the age of twelve; to prevent the slaughter of oxen, buffaloes, horses, and camels; and, during the reign of Akbar, to enforce also the observance of the *Ilahi* calendar and of the special festivals and ritual prescribed by the Emperor.[1]

The accounts left by several travellers mention the personal liability of the *kotwal* for the value of goods stolen, in cases where he failed to discover the property. We have remarked the working of the same principle in the case of the village police and the district police authority; but in all three cases, and especially in the case of the *kotwal*, there were ways and means of evading and minimizing that responsibility in practice. Thévenot, for example, records that during his sojourn in Surat, an Armenian, whose goods had been stolen and had not been recovered, was threatened with torture by the *kotwal* unless he withdrew his complaint,[2] and there is little doubt that the *faujdar* and the village community were likewise able, on occasions, to circumvent their obligations. The two chief weapons employed by the *kotwal* for dealing with crime and breaches of the regulations were torture and espionage; and he was authorized to punish offenders with penalties which included impalement, trampling by elephants, beheading, amputation of the hand, and merciless flogging. In the case of the death penalty, it is possible that he required the previous sanction of higher authority; but in all other cases he was practically uncontrolled; and even in the infliction of capital punishment upon a highway robber or the member of a criminal tribe, he accepted responsibility for executing the sentence as an integral part of his primary duty of

[1] *Ain-i-Akbari*, trans. Jarrett, vol. ii; Smith, *Akbar*, pp. 381, 382.

[2] Quoted by Moreland, *India at the Death of Akbar*, p. 39.

preserving order and public security. Urban administration under the Mughal Emperors was, in fact, quite as despotic as it was under Chandragupta Maurya, and the duties and powers of the *kotwal* were quite as comprehensive as those ascribed to his Hindu prototype in the famous *Arthasastra* of Kautilya.[1]

The police arrangements outlined above produced a certain standard of order, though the state of the public security varied greatly from place to place and from time to time. Professional robbers lurked in the hills and wooded country; bands of marauders were frequently encountered in the open plains; no reliance could be placed on the road watchmen.[2] During Akbar's reign theft and robbery on the roads had been fairly common, for one of Jahangir's earliest orders after his accession concerned the improvement of the control of certain roads which had become very unsafe. Conditions grew worse after his death. William Finch, on his journey from Surat to Agra in 1609, found the roads very 'theevish', particularly between Burhanpur and Gwalior, and near Panipat he saw 'the heads of some hundred theeves newly taken, their bodies set on stakes a mile in length'.[3] Four years later (1613) Nicholas Withington had a still more unhappy experience on his long march from Ahmadabad to Tatta in Sind;[4] while William Hawkins (1608–13) records that 'the country is so full of outlawes and theeves that almost a man cannot stirr out of doores throughout all his [Jahangir's] dominions without great forces'.[5] Matters improved not at all under Shah Jahan's administration; for according to Peter Mundy, a most prosaic and matter-of-fact observer, who travelled to and from Patna in the years 1630 to 1633, the neighbourhood of that city, 'as all the rest of India, swarms with rebels and thieves'.[6] The outskirts of the large cities were

[1] See *Arthasastra*, Chap. xxxvi, *et passim*, Shamasastry's translation.
[2] W. H. Moreland, *India at the Death of Akbar*, pp. 41 ff.
[3] W. Foster, *Early Travels in India*, pp. 157–8.
[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 190 ff.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 113.
[6] *Oxford History of India*, p. 417.

frequently marked by *chor minars* or masonry pillars studded with the heads of alleged criminals, set in plaster; at one place in the Cawnpore district the traveller counted 200 such pillars, and these had been increased by 60 at the date of his return a few months afterwards. The testimony of Bernier proves that at the close of Shah Jahan's reign and during the earlier years of Aurangzeb's rule the condition of the upper provinces was equally unsatisfactory, and the ruin which was there engendered by the mismanagement and tyranny of the imperial officials found its counterpart in the Deccan in the interval between the first and second viceroyalty of Aurangzeb. The Jat rebellions of 1669, 1681 and 1688, the Satnami insurrection of 1672, and the birth of the Maratha power under Shivaji were facilitated by maladministration, under a system which aimed at nothing more than 'the maintenance of imperfect public order in a rough and ready fashion under the sanction of ferocious punishments, inflicted arbitrarily by local despots'.[1]

Before leaving the subject of the police and public security, it is well to remember that during the seventeenth century the condition of the roads in Europe was far below the standard of modern days, and that the highway robbers who molested travellers in the dominions of the Great Mughal had their counterpart in the Claude Duvals, the Jonathan Wilds, and the Jack Sheppards of England. On the other hand, the very fact that the state of security on English highways at that date was, according to modern ideas, thoroughly bad, lends additional weight to the testimony of contemporary English travellers in India, who discovered the roads, in the words of Finch, to be 'desart rascally wayes, full of theeves'. Another matter for remark is that the crime of *thagi*, which was ultimately suppressed by Sir William Sleeman and his assistants between 1830 and 1837, must have existed during the most brilliant period of Mughal rule; for Ziau-d din Barani, author of a contemporary history of Jalalu-d din Khilji, Sultan of Delhi (1290–6), relates

[1] Smith, *Akbar*, p. 382.

that during the reign of that Sultan about one thousand *thags* were arrested in Delhi; and, owing to the misplaced clemency of the ruler, were merely shipped off to Lakhnauti (Gaur) in Bengal, where, being liberated, they doubtless proceeded to lay the foundations of the system of river *thagi*, well known in later centuries. It is unlikely that an organization which was of great antiquity and was certainly flourishing in the thirteenth century, diminished appreciably in extent during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It is true that no mention is made of it in the contemporary histories of Akbar's reign, but both Meadows Taylor and Balfour affirm that many *thags* were executed at that period, and the latter asserts, probably on the basis of oral tradition, that they numbered five hundred and belonged to the Etawah district, in Agra province, which has always been notorious for *thagi* and cognate crime. In regard to Shah Jahan's reign we have the definite evidence of Thévenot that the road between Delhi and Agra was infested by *thags*, who 'use a certain slip with a running-noose, which they can cast with so much slight about a Man's Neck, when they are within reach of him, that they never fail; so that they strangle him in a trice'.[1] It may be reasonably inferred that this criminal organization, which probably dated from remote ages and was well established in the days of Jalalu-d din, was actively prosecuting its murderous activities during the whole period of Mughal rule.

§ *Law and justice.* The Mughal judicial system, viewed in the light of modern ideas, was very imperfect. No code of criminal or civil law existed, except in so far as the individuals acting as judges thought fit to follow Koranic precepts; no records of proceedings, civil or criminal, were kept, all proceedings being purely verbal and usually summary; no regular judicial service existed, unless the *kazis* can be considered to have formed one; punishment was entirely discretionary with

[1] Thévenot's *Voyages*, Eng. trans. 1686, Part III, p. 41. See also Sleeman's *Rambles and Recollections*, revised ed. 1915, p. 652.

the trying officer, and might assume any form; and little or no attention was paid to witnesses or oaths. The instructions issued to the governor of a province in Akbar's reign warned him not to be satisfied with witnesses and oaths in judicial investigations, but to 'pursue them by manifold inquiries, by the study of physiognomy and the exercise of foresight, nor, laying the burden of it on others, live absolved from solicitude'.[1] Broadly speaking, the redress of individual grievances and the punishment of wrong-doing were considered to be the duty and the prerogative of the Ruler, or in actual practice, the executive authority; and consequently we find that every superior official in the Mughal service exercised judicial powers, especially in criminal cases. Shihabu-d din Talish, in his *Continuation* of the *Fathiyyah-i-ibriyyah*, includes among the good deeds performed by Shayista Khan during his administration of Bengal, his holding open durbar every day for the administration of justice and the redress of wrongs;[2] and just as the Governor (*sipahsalar* or *subadar*) exercised civil and criminal judicial functions for the province as a whole, so the *faujdar* exercised them in the district or *sarkar*, and the *kotwal* in urban areas. The existence of these arrangements during Akbar's reign is proved by the written testimony of Abu-l Fazl; while in regard to Jahangir, Edward Terry, who was in India from 1616 to 1619, speaks of the dispensation of justice by the Emperor, and adds: 'The governours in cities and provinces proceed in like forme of justice. I could never heare of law written amongst them; the King and his substitutes will is law'.[3]

The precise position of the *kazi* cannot be clearly stated, as the extent of his jurisdiction is nowhere definitely described. The Dutchman, Van Twist, remarks that during Shah Jahan's reign (1648) the Government of Ahmadabad and the surrounding villages rested with 'the Coutewael [*kotwal*] and the Judge,

[1] *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. ii, pp. 37–8.
[2] J. N. Sarkar, *Studies in Mughal India*, p. 160.
[3] W. Foster, *Early Travels in India*, p. 326.

whom they call Casgy [*kazi*]'; while Fryer, who visited the country in 1672 during Aurangzeb's reign, speaks of 'their law-disputes being soon ended, the Governor hearing and the Cadi or Judge determining every morning'.[1] In all probability the *kazi*, being the repository of Muslim law, attended the hearing of cases by the executive authority, whether governor, *faujdar*, or *kotwal*, and assisted the latter to arrive at a decision consonant with Koranic precept; and it also seems likely that civil disputes were as a rule left to the *kazis*, to be settled under the same law. The other judicial official mentioned in the *Ain-i-Akbari*, namely the *mir adl*, was merely a justiciary, appointed by the executive authority, as occasion arose, to carry out the *kazi's* finding. Whatever the precise extent of the *kazi's* jurisdiction may have been, he certainly did not rank high in the public estimation.[2] According to Professor J. N. Sarkar, the *kazis* of Mughal days were notoriously corrupt. Every provincial capital had its local *kazi*, who was appointed by the chief *kazi*; and these appointments were frequently purchased by bribery. Popular dislike and contempt of these exponents of civil law are enshrined in the adage: 'When the *kazi's* bitch died, the whole town was at the funeral: when the *kazi* himself died, not a soul followed his coffin.'

Above the urban and provincial authorities was the court of the Emperor himself, who was regarded as the fountain of justice and the final tribunal of appeal. Akbar was accustomed to spend several hours of the day in the disposal of judicial cases and appeals, and sometimes would order the transfer to his own tribunal of original civil suits of importance. Terry speaks of Jahangir 'moderating [i. e. mediating] in all matters of consequence which happen near his court, for the most part judging *secundum allegata et probata*'; Shah Jahan held his court every Wednesday in the *Diwan-i-Khass*, and after hearing the plaints reported by his judicial officers in the presence of the parties,

[1] See Yule and Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson*, s.v. Cauzee.

[2] *Indian Antiquary*, vol. liii (1924), pp. 255–6.

and ascertaining the law from the *ulama* (canon-lawyers), pronounced judgment on the facts submitted to him: Aurangzeb, likewise, dispensed justice daily in his private chamber (*khilwatgah*). Aggrieved persons, either from the capital or the provinces, were ushered into his presence by officials of the department of justice, were personally examined, and had their cases decided either in accordance with Koranic injunctions, where these were applicable, or otherwise, according to custom and the Emperor's discretion.[1] The quality of the justice dispensed by successive Emperors was, perhaps naturally, by no means uniform. Akbar certainly tried to do justice honestly, in the summary fashion of his age and country. 'If I were guilty of an unjust act,' he is reported by Abu-l Fazl to have remarked, 'I would rise in judgment against myself'; and contemporary observers speak of his being 'zealous and watchful' in the administration of justice, 'deliberate in inflicting punishment,' and, in all cases where capital punishment or mutilation had been decreed, requiring that he should be reminded three times before the sentence was carried out.[2] Jahangir was far more capricious than his illustrious father, and possessed a violent temper, aggravated by habitual and excessive intemperance. He was capable alike of great cruelty and almost childish tenderness —a curious mixture of extremes, as Terry observed. The deliberation which characterized the infliction of punishment by Akbar was absent from Jahangir's dispensation of justice. 'Tryals are quicke', said the same observer, 'and so are executions: hangings, beheading, impaling, killing with dogges, by elephants, serpents and other like, according to the nature of the fact.'[3] Shah Jahan was capable of even greater ferocity and cruelty than Jahangir, and took a savage pleasure in witnessing the execution of the punishments which he decreed. Manucci and others have eulogized his justice and descanted upon the ad-

[1] J. N. Sarkar, *Studies in Mughal India*, pp. 14, 65.
[2] Smith, *Akbar*, p. 344.
[3] W. Foster, *Early Travels*, p. 326.

DURBAR OF SHAH JAHAN

From a MS. in the Bodleian Library

mirable character of his administration; but the story related by the former of the execution of Muhammad Said, the corrupt *kotwal*, in the presence of the Emperor, and the indiscriminate cruelty of the provincial governors, who modelled their justice on that dispensed in the *Diwan-i-Khass*, indicate that Shah Jahan's judgments were often characterized by caprice and an almost entire lack of compassion. Aurangzeb, on the other hand, in his efforts to attain the ideal of a strict Muslim ascetic and to follow the law and traditions of Islam in every detail of his administration and personal conduct, erred in the opposite direction. He wished all judicial proceedings to be conducted according to the spirit and the letter of Muslim law, but, to quote the words of Khafi Khan, 'from reverence for the injunctions of the Law he did not make use of punishment, and without punishment the administration of a country cannot be maintained'. It is a reasonable assumption that the ancient Hindu conception of the art of Government as *dandaniti*, or the law of punishment, was better suited to the India of Mughal days than the strict doctrines and precepts of the Hanafa school, and that Aurangzeb's inability to recognize and accept that view involved the diminution of his own personal authority and the rapid deterioration of the imperial administration.

Evidence exists to prove that throughout the Mughal period the administration of justice was marred by much bribery and corruption, and a suitor who possessed influence and influential friends had a far better chance of obtaining a speedy and favourable decision on his plaint than one who was not so fortunately circumstanced. In the absence of any body of written law, the executive officials and the *kazis* were nominally guided by Moslem and Hindu law, but frequently acted according to the dictates of custom or their own personal prejudices; and although an appeal to the Emperor himself provided a safeguard against glaring injustice, the length and difficulties of a journey to head-quarters and the question of expense must often have debarred a suitor from carrying his grievances to the

palaces of Agra and Delhi. Communal pressure could also be usefully employed at times to secure the cancellation or mitigation of a manifestly unfair decision; for the provincial official of Mughal days was generally anxious to avoid becoming the subject of open complaint or scandal at the imperial court. The *hartal*, or its equivalent in Mughal days, could be made to subserve the ends of justice and bring the acts of the local officer into accord with public opinion. The cruel punishments inflicted in criminal cases had their counterpart in the drastic processes operative in the sphere of civil litigation. Debtors were liable not only to see their houses and personal effects sold in satisfaction of a decree, but also to be themselves sold into slavery or handed over as serfs to their creditors. The debtor's only hope of escape from these penalties lay in the possibility of the creditor not having sufficient influence or sufficient funds to bribe the authorities into ordering these processes and seeing them carried out.[1] To set the Mughal civil law in motion was not always the cheapest or most politic method of securing the redress of private wrongs. There was much truth in the popular adage that 'To trust a *kazi* is to court misfortune'.

§ *Fiscal system.* The Mughal Empire's fiscal system was based on a division of revenue and expenditure into imperial or central and provincial or local; and the major heads of imperial revenue were land revenue, customs, mint, inheritance, presents, monopolies, and indemnities. Of these, by far the most important item was the land revenue, which was estimated in the *Ain-i-Akbari* to amount to 363 *karors* of *dams*, and according to the *Badshah-nama* rose to 880 *karors* of *dams* in the reign of Shah Jahan. Inheritance included all the estates of nobles and others, which, as a matter of course, escheated to the Emperor on the death of the owner; while monopolies, as for example the indigo monopoly of 1633, were from time to time established by imperial order, whenever the conditions of the market appeared to offer chances of a handsome profit. In-

[1] W. H. Moreland, *India at the Death of Akbar*, p. 37.

demnities comprised the fines and tribute imposed upon newly-conquered territories, as in the case of the Golkonda kingdom in 1636, and were therefore not a regular source of imperial revenue. From the resources provided under these main heads of revenue the imperial exchequer had to defray the expenses of the army, the entire cost of the general administration, including all grades of the civil service, the expenditure of the court and imperial palace, and the outlay on buildings and other public works. By far the larger portion of the revenue was absorbed by the army and the bureaucracy, both of which were maintained on a lavish and improvident scale. The army, though it was never up to its nominal strength, was much larger than it need have been, and lacked training; while the imperial officials, whose salaries were extravagant in Akbar's day, were preposterously overpaid for their services in the reign of Shah Jahan.

The revenues of the provincial governor, whose chief duty it was to see that the income ear-marked for imperial needs was duly credited to the imperial treasury, consisted of the assignments of land revenue granted to himself and his officials as remuneration of their appointments, miscellaneous taxes and cesses, transit dues and duties, and fines, presents, and bribes. Despite the lavish scale of their official remuneration, most of the Mughal officials were in debt, particularly during the reigns of Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb, and were therefore compelled to supplement their incomes by the imposition of a large number of miscellaneous taxes, distinct from those collected for the imperial treasury. In some places they levied a duty on salt, in others they drew a revenue from excise. Peter Mundy records the imposition of heavy penalties for the distillation and sale of liquor in 1632; yet the imperial prohibition did not prevent the Governor of Surat about the same date from farming out liquor-producing palm-trees. As Gibbon wrote, 'the wines of Shiraz have always prevailed over the law of the Prophet'; and in Mughal India, likewise, the toddy of the western coast and

the *mahua* spirit of inland districts were too popular and too productive of revenue to permit of the Emperor's orders being strictly enforced by covetous local officials. In the matter of miscellaneous taxes, the imperial orders were similarly disregarded. Each Emperor made spasmodic attempts to abolish these imposts; but there is plenty of contemporary evidence to show that the local authorities continued to levy for their own wants. In the matter of fines, bribes, and presents, there was no limit to the exactions of local officials, who, provided that their administration did not become the subject of complaint or scandal at Court, were left to act very much as they pleased. In their judicial capacity, the governors pocketed all fines imposed for criminal offences, with the result that fines only, instead of capital punishment, were frequently awarded to persons found guilty of murder, while in some cities the local officials were in actual collusion with gangs of armed robbers who infested the outskirts and approaches, and drew direct and indirect profits from their felonies. Dutch commercial reports of the seventeenth century indicate that all fines imposed on traders became the perquisite of the official by whom they were imposed; the letters of English merchants during the same period show that large presents to local officials was the recognized method of securing concessions or redress of grievances; while the flagrant extortion in which they sometimes indulged is apparent from the action of Mir Jumla at Dacca, who mercilessly flogged the grain-merchants of that town until they paid him Rs. 50,000, on the pretext that the presence of his camp had brought them profits aggregating twice that amount.[1]

Before considering the details of the Mughal revenue administration, it is necessary to remark that the Empire was by no means a homogeneous entity, and that in some parts the fiscal system introduced by Akbar could not have been imposed without infringing the prerogative of the local chiefs or land-

[1] These two paragraphs on the fiscal system are based on W. H. Moreland's *From Akbar to Aurangzeb*.

holders, who expected to be left undisturbed in their territories, provided they formally acknowledged the suzerainty of the Emperor and paid their fixed tribute to the imperial treasury. Such, for example, was the case of Rajputana. The Rajputs had been left for the most part to themselves, until in 1527 Babur inflicted a crushing defeat upon Rana Sanga Sisodia of Mewar near Fathpur-Sikri. 'Akbar carried the process of conquest further, obtained wives from some of the leading houses, and took many of the chiefs into his military service.' At the best, however, the country was only indirectly governed by the Mughals, who maintained their hold on the country by means of garrisons in certain strategically important towns and forts, and by enforcing on the Rajput leaders the obligation to serve in the imperial army. The focus of Mughal authority was Ajmer, where lived the *subadar* or provincial governor; *faujdars* and *qiladars* were posted at Bairath, Sambhar, Biana, Ranthambor, and other places. The *suba* of Ajmer included all the Rajput States, except those of the Bundelas, and thus brought nominally within the orbit of the imperial administration a large tract of country which was actually subject to little more than a military occupation. Within the confines of their own territories the Rajput chiefs retained their own authority and their own methods of assessment and collection of revenue.[1]

§ *Revenue system.* A modern writer has stated that the two main objects of the Mughal administration were, first, the assessment and collection of sufficient revenue, and secondly, the supply of adequate contingents for the army; and regarding the former, it was considered imperative that, as far as possible, the Emperor or his nominees should collect the revenue direct from the actual cultivator, without the intervention of the middleman. As has been shown in the case of Rajputana, this ideal was not always practicable; and in various parts of the Empire, therefore, the local fiscal arrangements were in the hands of a *zamindar*, who was merely responsible for payment of a

[1] W. Irvine, *Later Mughals*, vol. i.

fixed revenue annually and was at liberty to squeeze as much more as he could out of the peasantry.[1] Apart from these special cases, the basis of the Mughal revenue system was the division of the Empire into *subas* or viceregal governments, *sarkars* or districts, and *parganas* or, as these areas were sometimes styled, *mahals*, which was introduced by Akbar in 1579–80, the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth years of his reign. Within these areas, as we have seen, a single set of officials was entrusted not only with the duty of recovering the revenue and recruiting military forces, but also with the task of keeping the public peace and performing every kind of miscellaneous and emergent work.

Prior to the date above mentioned, Akbar had made several attempts to reform the financial confusion of his territories and check embezzlement, which was constant and widespread. In 1570–1, for example, Muzaffar Khan Turbati, assisted by Todar Mall, was entrusted with the preparation of a revised estimate of the land revenue, based on estimates framed by the local *kanungos* and checked by ten superior *kanungos* at headquarters. Thus, for the first time since the establishment of the Mughal power, was the local knowledge of the old hereditary revenue officials employed in determining the amount of the State demand. In 1573 Todar Mall was ordered to determine the land-revenue assessment of the newly-conquered province of Gujarat, and, commencing with a systematic measurement and survey of all the lands in the area taken under direct administration, he eventually fixed the assessment according to certain principles, which subsequently formed the basis of his later 'settlement' in northern India. Two years later, 1575–6, Akbar made a fresh and disastrous experiment by abolishing the old traditional revenue areas, called *parganas*, and dividing the Empire as it then existed, with the exception of the provinces of Bengal, Behar, and Gujarat, into artificial blocks of territory, each yielding a *karor* (crore) or ten millions of *tankas*

[1] W. H. Moreland, *India at the Death of Akbar.*

(Rs. 250,000), and placed in charge of an official styled *karori* or *amil*, who combined the duties of revenue-collector and colonization officer.[1] The *karori's* primary duty was to foster an extension of cultivation within the absurdly short time-limit of three years. Unfortunately, according to Badaoni, the men so appointed disregarded completely the interests of the State, and ruined the country by their selfish rapacity. To such a pitch of despair were the *rijots* reduced by their tyranny that many of them sold their wives and children, and permanently deserted their villages. Many of the *karoris* were brought to account by Todar Mall and suffered punishment for their misdeeds; but the experiment, which ended in disaster, was very properly abandoned. The artificial jurisdictions of the *karoris* were again replaced by the ancient local divisions or *parganas*, though the title *karori* long survived and was in use during Shah Jahan's reign.[2]

The reforms carried out by Akbar in 1579–80 divided the Empire into twelve *subas*, containing in the aggregate more than 100 *sarkars*, each of which in turn comprised a varying number of *parganas*. The *suba* of Agra, for example, comprised thirteen *sarkars* and 203 *parganas*, out of which 31 *parganas* were included in the *sarkar* of Agra.[3] For convenience of administration the *parganas* were grouped in what were known as *dasturs*, or tracts in which particular codes of local usage and custom were current. These codes, styled *Dasturi-i-Amal* or 'Customary Practice', contained a variety of instructions and tables for the use of revenue officials in particular areas, and were compiled by the *kanungos* or hereditary officials conversant with the details of land-tenures in northern India. According to Thomas, they also comprised 'a court guide, a civil list, an army list, a diary of the period, summaries of revenue returns, home and foreign; practical hints about measures,

[1] Smith, *Akbar*; *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. ii.

[2] Badaoni (A.S.B. trans.), vol. ii; Smith, *Akbar*, pp. 139–40; Moreland, *ibid.*

[3] *Ain-i-Akbari*, quoted in Smith's *Akbar*, p. 372.

weights and coins, with itineraries, and all manner of useful and instructive information'.[1] The *subas*, which Vincent Smith compares with the Governor's provinces of modern times, increased from twelve in the year of reform to fifteen at the date of Akbar's death, and to twenty-one in the late years of Aurangzeb's reign, owing to the number of the Deccan provinces being increased from three to six, and to Tatta or southern Sind, Kashmir, and Orissa being created separate *subas*, instead of respectively forming part, as in earlier days, of Multan, Kabul, and Bengal. The twelve original provinces were Allahabad, Agra, Oudh, Ajmer, Ahmadabad, Behar, Bengal, Delhi, Kabul, Lahore, Multan, and Malwa, to which were subsequently added by conquest Berar, Khandesh, and Ahmadnagar, the total land revenue of the twelve *subas* in 1579–80 has been estimated at about Rs. 90,744,000;[2] while, according to the figures given by President van den Broeeke for the year 1605, the total collections from the fifteen *subas* amounted at that date to Rs. 174,500,000.[3] Forty-three years later the revenue had risen from seventeen to twenty crores of rupees, while the Crown-lands supplied Shah Jahan's privy purse with three crores or three and a half million pounds sterling.[4] Under Aurangzeb the imperial revenues seriously declined: 'the endless war in the Deccan exhausted his treasury; the Government turned bankrupt; the soldiers, starving for arrears of pay, mutinied; and during the closing years of his reign the revenue of Bengal, regularly sent by the faithful and able diwan, Murshid Quli Khan, was the sole support of the Emperor's household and army.'[5]

While the *suba* was a miniature replica of the Empire, the unit of administration was the *Sarkar* or district, which was in charge of a *faujdar* or military commander, already mentioned, and an *amalguzar* or collector of revenue. It was on the revenue

[1] E. Thomas, *Revenue Resources of the Mughal Empire*, p. 14 n.

[2] *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. ii, Jarrett. [3] Smith, *Akbar*, p. 380.

[4] J. N. Sarkar, *Studies in Mughal India*, p. 16. The rupee was worth 2*s.* 3*d.* in 1648. [5] J. N. Sarkar, *ibid.*, p. 51.

of the *sarkar* that the State depended for defraying the lavish expenditure of the imperial Court and the princely salaries of the graded officials, and the bulk of that revenue was drawn from the land. In order to determine with approximate accuracy what amount of land revenue the several divisions could yield, Todar Mall, following the precedent set by Sher Shah, and guided by the arrangements he had himself introduced into Gujarat, established throughout northern India an improved 'survey settlement', based on a tolerably accurate measurement of the cultivated area and a classification of the kind of soil. The nature of the crop grown and the mean prevailing market prices were also taken into consideration in fixing the final assessment. This system, which was a very decided improvement on the arbitrary assessments of preceding years, lasted throughout the Mughal period, and may be said in some respects to have formed the model of the 'survey settlement' of British India. During the viceroyalty of Aurangzeb, Murshid Quli Khan applied Todar Mall's system of survey and assessment to the Deccan, which up to the year 1656 had been assessed in a rough-and-ready fashion by the imposition of a small charge on the land cultivated by each plough. He was wise enough, however, not to interfere too drastically with local custom; he retained the old system of fixing a lump sum for each plough-land, wherever Todar Mall's more scientific arrangements appeared practically unsuitable; he agreed to accept payment in kind; arranged for the division of the crop by various methods; and offered advances freely to the peasantry for the restoration of cultivation.

The three salient features of the Mughal land-revenue system, thus introduced in Akbar's reign, were (*a*) measurement of land, (*b*) classification of land, and (*c*) fixation of rates. As regards measurement, Akbar and Todar Mall abolished several old units of measurement, and established in their place the Ilahi *gaz* (yard), which was assumed to equal 41 digits or about 33 inches; the *tanab* (tent-rope) or *jarib* ('chain')

of 60 *gaz*, which was a bamboo rod clamped by iron rings, in place of the old tent-rope which contracted in moist air; and the *bigha* of 3,600 square *gaz*, as the unit of superficial measure. The classification of land was fourfold, viz. (1) *polaj* or land annually cultivated, (2) *parauti* or land left fallow for a time to recover its strength, (3) *chachar* or land that had lain fallow for three or four years, (4) *banjar* or land uncultivated for five years or longer. As regards the rates, the area under each crop had its own rate, and as the crops were of various kinds and practically identical with those grown to-day, the number of rates was unusually large. Moreover, the area sown with each crop was recorded season by season, and the demand on each peasant was determined by applying the sanctioned rates to the area which he had cultivated. Thus in Agra he paid 67 *dams* per *bigha* of wheat, 49 *dams* per *bigha* of barley, 156¼ *dams* for indigo, and 239 *dams* per *bigha* on sugar-cane.[1] The use of so many different rates naturally involved complicated calculations, and when we read in the *Ain-i-Akbari* that one set of rates was compiled for the spring and another for the autumn harvest, we realize that the statistical work performed by Abu-l Fazl and his clerical staff at head-quarters must have been colossal.[2] Only the area actually under cultivation was measured and assessed; and in order to arrive at the average produce of land belonging to one of the first three classes above-mentioned, each of these classes was again subdivided into three grades, of which the mean was assumed to represent the average of the main class. *Parauti* land, if cultivated, paid the same as *polaj*; *chachar* and *banjar* land, when brought under cultivation, were taxed progressively until in the fifth year they reached the *polaj* standard. No time limit was fixed for the duration of the 'settlement'.

The revenue system of Todar Mall, as applied to northern India, Gujarat, and, with modifications, to the Deccan, was

[1] See Moreland, *India at the Death of Akbar*.

[2] *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. ii; Moreland, *ibid.*; Smith, *Akbar*.

rayatwari; that is to say, the revenue was collected direct, as far as possible, from the individual cultivator, and was payable in cash. The original Indian system consisted in dividing the produce at harvest time between the State and the cultivator, who shared the profits or losses of the season; and to this system Akbar adhered in the case of Kashmir and Sind. The division of the actual crop lasted, indeed, in the latter province until its annexation by the British in 1843. But elsewhere, and throughout northern India from Behar to Lahore and Multan, the Mughal Emperor took from the *rijot* a cash payment equivalent to one-third of the average yield of his land, calculated on the principles outlined above. The share thus taken by the State was heavy; it was much in excess of the one-sixth prescribed by Hindu law and custom; and, according to Moreland's calculations, it represented about twice the amount demanded as rent by the modern landholder. In modern currency the Mughal assessment per acre was roughly as follows for the chief crops: Wheat, Rs. 17 to Rs. 20; Barley, Rs. 11 to Rs. 13; Gram, Rs. 10 to Rs. 12; *Jowar*, Rs. 9 to Rs. 10; *Bajra*, Rs. 7 to Rs. 8; Sugarcane, Rs. 36 to Rs. 42; Cotton, Rs. 26 to Rs. 30; Indigo, Rs. 43 to Rs. 50.

According to the *Ain-i-Akbari*, the peasants were fully compensated for the heavy Government demand of one-third by the abolition of many miscellaneous cesses and taxes. Among some of those which Akbar cancelled were a capitation tax, a poll-tax at places of worship, a tax per head of oxen, a tree tax, a tax on artificers, imposts on the sale of cattle, and on hemp, blankets, oil and hides, fees on the purchase and sale of houses, and several others, including presents and fees to *darogas*, *tahsildars*, and treasurers. But the comparative independence of control enjoyed by officials in outlying provinces and districts, coupled with the fact that proclamations abolishing these miscellaneous taxes had often to be repeated, leads one to suspect that the *rijot* did not invariably obtain the ordained relief; and while under the Mughal system he shouldered most of the risks

attendant upon agriculture, it is questionable whether he always secured all the extra profit which, in theory at any rate, should have accrued to him. Abu-l Fazl testifies to a regular scale of remissions of assessment in the case of lands subject to inundation, and there is little doubt that remissions were also granted in seasons of drought and distress. But there is no evidence as to the amount of the relief thus afforded, nor to what extent the local revenue officials adhered to the instructions and rules issued from head-quarters. The *rijot*, even in Akbar's day, obtained very little help from his environment; facilities for marketing his produce at favourable rates were lacking; the community as a whole did nothing to assist the progress of agriculture; in times of famine the cultivator bore his burden unaided, except perhaps for a remission of the State demand. In later years his position was probably worse. An order issued early in Jahangir's reign proves that officials and *jagirdars* were in the habit of seizing the *rijot's* land and cultivating it themselves, while de Laet speaks of cultivators being compelled to change their holdings every season, either because the administration required them, or because they were to be handed to another party. He thus enjoyed no real fixity of tenure in many cases, and was debarred on that account from showing any enterprise.

On the other hand, the system did give the *rijot* a certain amount of security and a personal interest in his undertaking, while it prevented, or at least minimized, fluctuations of the State revenue. Moreover, the comparative peace which Akbar's conquests assured, and which lasted throughout the reigns of Jahangir and Shah Jahan, must have engendered a certain standard of agricultural prosperity, which was indirectly aided by the cheapness of food and a considerable volume of trade. It must also be admitted without hesitation that the principles of the land-revenue system were thoroughly sound, and were conveyed to the officials in a series of instructions which were all that could be desired. One has only to read the rules for the

guidance of the collector of revenue, included in the *Ain-i-Akbari*, to realize that fact. The collector was directed to be the friend of the agriculturist; to advance money to the needy *rijot* and recover it gradually; to give remissions in order to stimulate cultivation; to grant every facility to the *rijot*, and never to charge him on more than the actual area under tillage; to receive the assessment direct from the cultivator and so avoid intermediaries; to recover arrears without undue force; and to submit a monthly statement describing the condition of the people, the state of public security, the range of market prices and rents, the condition of the poor and all other contingencies. The instructions also deal with various details of the revenue collection, and prove incidentally that, although cash payments were the rule, payment in kind, i. e. by a share of the crop, was not forbidden. Four different methods of crop-division were laid down for the guidance of the collector, who was warned never to entrust the village headman with the task of settling the shares, but always to deal direct with the cultivator.

§ *Revenue staff.* The outdoor staff subordinate to the collector must have been large. Apart from the village accountant, who throughout the Mughal period was a servant of the village and not of the State, the system involved the employment of an army of measurers and *karkuns*, whose duty it was to prepare the seasonal crop statistics. Each of these received a fixed sum daily, together with a daily allowance of grain for his services, or was placed on a monthly diet of flour, oil, grain, and vegetables, a proportion of which must have been provided by the peasantry. Another important figure was the *kanungo* (lit. 'expounder of the law'), who corresponded to the ancient *deshpande* of the Deccan, as being the hereditary repository of all information relating to land and local custom. As the record-keeper of the *pargana*, the *kanungo* existed long before Akbar's age and shared the *patwari's* fee of two per cent. on revenue collections. Under Akbar, his duties consisted in keeping the *taksim* account of the revenue payable by each village; the

mauzina account showing the area of lands, the average rent per *bigha*, the area of cultivated and waste land, and the list of those who paid the assessment or were exempt from doing so; and, thirdly, the *wasul* or account of receipts and arrears of revenue. The office of *kanungo* subsequently became hereditary, and its holders grew in the eighteenth century into a close corporation.[1]

In each district there were several *kanungos*, who maintained also a register of all cases of alluvion and diluvion, of sales, leases, gifts of land, &c., reported to them by the *patwaris* or village officers. Prior to Mughal rule the *kanungos*, as stated above, were paid a percentage on collections or from a special cess; but under Akbar's system they were graded in three classes and granted fixed allowances equivalent to Rs. 20, Rs. 30, and Rs. 50 a month. Two *sadr* or head *kanungos* were appointed to receive the accounts of the provincial *kanungos* and transmit them to imperial head-quarters. Other members of the subordinate revenue staff were the *shiqdar*, who appears to have collected the revenue from a certain division of land, but had to report to the collector all his transactions; the *amin*; and the *munsiff*, who in those days was an executive officer, and not, as in modern times, a judge. These three officials appear to have been borrowed by the Mughal administration from the earlier organization of Sher Shah, though their precise duties are not distinctly specified. According to Abu-l Fazl they were remunerated by a commission of one *dam* for every *bigha* measured by them.

To assist him in the revenue management of his district, the collector had a *bitikchi* or accountant, whose duty *inter alia* it was, when the survey of a village had been completed, to determine the assessment of each cultivator and specify the revenue of the whole village, and a *fotadar* (Mhr. *potdar*) or district treasurer, whose duties are explained by Abu-l Fazl. The work performed in the fields by the village and revenue staffs, from

[1] See 'The Kanungo', by R. B. Ramsbotham, in *Journal of Indian History*, vol. iii, pt. 2 (1924), pp. 205 ff.

the *karkun*, *mukadam* or *patwari* up to the *amalguzar* or collector, must have necessitated a large clerical establishment at the administrative head-quarters of the *suba*, and a gigantic statistical office at the seat of the imperial government, for the examination of the masses of records submitted by the provincial governments. Despite Akbar's express orders that the revenue officials were to make no exactions and receive no perquisites, such as the *balkati* or fee paid by a village when the harvest was ready for reaping, one may feel tolerably certain that during Akbar's reign, and certainly during the reigns of his successors, the villagers had to give presents to the subordinate staff, and that exactions of various kinds were tolerably common. As a modern historian has remarked, 'all the resources of the modern Anglo-Indian Government often fail to secure such conformity [of practice with precept], and in Akbar's time supervision undoubtedly was far less strict and searching'.[1] It may also be reasonably inferred that, as the collection of a large revenue was one of the two major objects of the Mughal administration, and as special inducements were offered to the village head-man to assist the local authorities in collecting the *full* rental—a fact clearly stated in the *Ain-i-Akbari*—the pressure of the land revenue demand upon the individual cultivator must have been heavy, and have allowed him little or no margin of profit upon which to fall back in evil days. At the best he retained as much of the produce of his field as was considered necessary for existence; the rest went to the State; and in addition he had frequently to satisfy the appetite of the officials, whose duty it was to determine his liabilities and see that they were duly met.

§ *Customs duties, cesses, &c.* The land revenue formed the largest and most important share of the imperial income, but a considerable revenue was also derived from customs duties, inland transit dues, and miscellaneous cesses (*abwab*). The duties on foreign imports were levied at all the ports of the Empire, which for administrative purposes were usually in charge of a special

[1] Smith, *Akbar*, p. 377.

official, styled *shahbandar* or port officer. It is to this official that William Hawkins (1608–13) refers in the words, 'so I went unto the Chiefe Customer, which was the onely man that seafaring causes belonged unto'. The duties were not high, as Terry testified in 1617—amounting, indeed, to not more than two and a half per cent.; but as it was the usual practice throughout the period of Mughal rule to farm out the customs to contractors, the character of the *shahbandar*, or local port and customs officer, was a matter of some importance to merchants. The English and Dutch merchants in Surat, for example, suffered a good deal in 1663 from the behaviour of Inayat Khan's son, 'a pert, nimble man', and had to ask his father, who was governor of the town and district, to remove him from office.[1] Nicholas Scrivener, writing from Tatta in September 1656, described the corruption and rapacity of the customs officials in Sind, asserting that in the case of a boat, on which the duty amounted to three-quarters of a rupee, he had to pay Rs. 6 in bribes to subordinates and a further bribe of Rs. 88 to the *daroga*.[2] But the provincial governors and viceroys were in a better position than even the local customs officials to make things unpleasant for shippers and traders, and they were certainly not less avaricious and corrupt. In 1650 Shah Jahan issued a *farman* absolving English merchants in Bengal from paying road dues on goods, which they sent down to the coast for shipment from Agra, Oudh, and other places. There seems little doubt that the order was valid only for territories directly administered by the Mughal civil service, and not for districts, like Rajputana, under the control of semi-independent chiefs, and also that it was not intended to apply to the customs duty of two and a half per cent. levied at the sea-ports. Yet the English contended that they were not liable for customs duty; and James Bridgman contrived to secure the approval of the viceroy, Prince Shuja, to this contention in 1651 by the simple

[1] W. Foster, *English Factories in India, 1661–4*, pp. 203, 204.

[2] *Ibid.*, *1655–60*, pp. 80, 81.

expedient of a bribe of Rs. 3,000.[1] The same question again arose in 1660, the first year of Aurangzeb's reign; but the payment of another *douceur* of Rs. 3,000 to the viceroy, Mir Jumla, enabled the English to avoid the liability for all customs duties.[2] Meanwhile at Surat, the chief port on the west coast, the East India Company paid the full customs duty of two and a half per cent. on imports, and continued to do so until Shivaji's raid on the town in 1664, when, in recognition of the stout and resolute defence made by the English, Aurangzeb issued a *farman* allowing all their imports to pass free of customs duty for one year, and thereafter in perpetuity at a reduction of half per cent. The value of the concession was discounted eventually by the reimposition of the extra half per cent. in 1679, as recorded in the diary of Streynsham Master.[3]

The letters written by the East India Company's servants during the reign of Aurangzeb refer on several occasions to the misgovernment of the local officials. 'The Governors in these parts', runs a letter to Surat from Balascore of April 28, 1663, 'by reason of the Nabob (Khankhanan) his so long absence and distance, have bin so insolent and illimitable in their extortions that they have very much impaired the trade here.' Again in a letter of the 21st June 1664, the factors at Hugli complain bitterly of Shayista Khan, who had been transferred from the Deccan command to the Bengal viceroyalty in December 1663, declaring that 'so dishonourable and covetious a person never came into these parts for a Governor'.[4] It must, however, be admitted that there is no evidence to show that the English were obliged to pay a heavy bribe to Shayista Khan, as they had to Shah Shuja and Mir Jumla; their chief complaint was that he insisted on keeping the monopoly of certain commodities in his own hands and generally obstructed their transactions.

[1] W. Foster, *ibid.*, *1655–60*, pp. 109, 110.

[2] *Ibid.*, *1655–60*, p. 416. Mir Jumla's *parwana* was granted to Jonathan Trevisa, the chief English agent in Bengal.

[3] *Ibid.*, *1661–4*, pp. 314, 315.

[4] *Ibid.*, *1661–4*, pp. 288, 395.

Shihabu-d din Talish, on the contrary, praises Shayista Khan's administration, declaring that he abolished the *zakat* and the *hasil*, which had been exacted in the past from every trader, and declined to follow the example of his predecessors in holding the monopoly of articles of food and clothing.[1] Possibly Shayista Khan was a trifle less corrupt than some of his contemporaries, but his ideas of duty cannot have been widely at variance with the spirit of the age; and the general proposition may be accepted that throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the local officials, from the *subadar* or viceroy of a province down to the toll-collector, paid little heed to precepts issued from the capital of the Empire, and sought by questionable methods, if not by actual extortion and bribery, to make as much private profit as possible. It was open to a high official, like the *subadar*, to permit free trade or to take over the goods of merchants and have them sold for his own profit, and the owners of the stock might consider themselves fortunate if the Governor ever paid them anything at all. In 1615, during Jahangir's reign, one reads of the Governor of Surat seizing the best of the East India Company's imports, and either omitting to pay for them at all, or, after inordinate delay, paying the Company's agents much less than their real value.[2] Confiscatory practices of this nature more than discounted the advantage of reduced rates of import duty conceded by the ruler himself.

Inland transit and customs dues were levied by the Hindu rulers of India in ancient times, and the earlier Muhammadan conquerors accepted as a legitimate source of revenue the taxes which they found in existence in various parts of the country. We read in Babur's days of a duty levied on goods at the frontier, and of 'transit duties on merchandize transported from one part of the country to another'.[3] According to Abu-l Fazl,

[1] J. N. Sarkar, *Studies in Mughal India*, pp. 160, 161.

[2] W. H. Moreland, *India at the Death of Akbar.*

[3] Erskine, *A History of India under the first two sovereigns of the House of Taimur*, vol. i, p. 530.

Akbar remitted inland transit dues on two occasions at least; but in outlying districts the local officials probably paid little attention to these orders, and by the end of his reign the system of transit dues seems to have been fairly universal. Jahangir endeavoured with equal unsuccess to carry out his father's policy, and prohibited the levy of road and river tolls, as well as other imposts, which the *jagirdars* of most districts had imposed for their own profit.[1] The testimony of Peter Mundy, Thévenot, and Tavernier clearly proves that, despite the imperial order, the system of transit-dues was widely enforced, Thévenot, in particular, remarking that between Aurangabad and Golkonda there were no fewer than sixteen taxing-stations.[2] The prevalence of the system in Shah Jahan's reign is indicated in the *nishan* granted by Prince Shuja to the English in 1656, in the course of which the Viceroy orders 'present and future *mutasaddis* (accountants) . . . *jagirdars*, *faujdars*, *karoris* (revenue collectors), *zamindars*, *rahdars* [collectors of road dues], *guzarbans* [collectors of ferry-tolls], *chaukidars* and the guards of the imperial highways', not to stop the goods of the English in transit or 'buy them forcibly', as they have been exempted from all duties.[3]

Aurangzeb in his turn prohibited *rahdari* (road dues), 'which was collected on every highway, frontier and ferry', and *pandari*, a ground or house cess, paid by traders; but with no greater effect than his predecessors. 'Although his gracious and beneficent Majesty', writes Khafi Khan, 'remitted these taxes, and issued strict orders prohibiting their collection, the avaricious propensities of men prevailed, so that, with the exception of *pandari*, which, being mostly obtained from the capital and the chief cities, felt the force of the abolition, the royal prohibition had no effect, and *faujdars* and *jagirdars* in remote places did not withhold their hands from these exactions.' The *rahdari*,

[1] W. H. Moreland, *India at the Death of Akbar*.
[2] *Ibid.*; S. N. Sen, *Administrative System of the Marathas*.
[3] W. Foster, *English Factories in India, 1655–60*, p. 111.

according to the same writer, was universally condemned as an iniquitous burden on travellers and traders, but it was more shamelessly exacted by the local officials and landholders of Aurangzeb's reign than ever before.[1] Considering the prevalence and long-standing of the system of inland tolls and duties, it is not surprising that the Peshwas of Poona should have followed the example of the Mughals, as Mr. Surendranath Sen has clearly shown, and have imposed a variety of taxes and dues, some of which were borrowed directly from the Mughal Government, others being a legacy of more ancient Hindu despotisms.[2] It is clear that throughout the period of Mughal rule, merchants, traders, and travellers had to pay frequent and heavy charges in the course of a journey to the toll-collectors and other officials, besides being obliged to expend large amounts for escorts over dangerous roads, and by way of blackmail to local chieftains in the wilder parts of the Mughal dominions. Under the rule of the Peshwas in the Deccan some relief was afforded to the trader by the rise of a class of middlemen, styled *hundikaris*, who, in return for a single lump payment, undertook to transport the merchant's goods without hitch to their destination.[3] The unfortunate merchant in the north of India and in Bengal appears to have had no assistance of this kind, and had to depend upon his own exertions and *savoir faire* to safeguard his purse and his property on the imperial highways.

§ *Miscellaneous taxes.* At the beginning of their rule the Mughal Emperors found a large number of miscellaneous taxes and cesses (*abwab*) in existence, which had been imposed by the preceding Muhammadan and Hindu Governments. Some of these were retained, others were abolished. Abu-l Fazl gives a list of about forty cesses abolished by Akbar, and his example was followed by Jahangir. Among them was a *sardarakhti*, or tax

[1] Elliot and Dowson, vol. vii, pp. 247, 248.

[2] S. N. Sen, *Administrative System of the Marathas*, pp. 562 ff.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 565.

on trees, which was revived in later years, and was also borrowed by the Maratha Government. 'Thanks to Almighty God', wrote Jahangir, 'that no revenue on fruit trees has been taken during my reign; and I gave order that if any one were to plant a garden in cultivated land, he was not to pay any revenue.'[1] Despite the imperial orders, many of the officials and local authorities at a distance from the capital continued to collect these imposts, or reimposed them after a few years. In a *farman* or memorandum of instructions to one of his revenue-collectors (*karori*), Rasik Das, Aurangzeb bade him 'strongly urge the *amins*, *amils*, *chaudhuris*, *qanungos* and *mutasaddis* to abolish *balia* (or *halia*?), exactions (*akhrajat*) in excess of revenue, and forbidden *abwabs* (cesses),—which impair the welfare of the *rijots*. Take security from them that they should never exact *balia* or collect the *abwabs* prohibited and abolished by His Majesty.'[2] As Aurangzeb had abolished seventy of these *abwabs*, it is clear that little or no attention had been paid to his orders in some parts of the Empire. Among the taxes retained or imposed by Akbar was one on marriage (the *lagnapatti* of Maratha days), which had originally been levied, but was afterwards abolished, by the Hindu rulers of Vijayanagar. Akbar, who disapproved of high dowries and ill-assorted unions, appointed two marriage overseers (*taibegi*) to inquire into the circumstances of prospective brides and bridegrooms, and levied the tax on both parties, according to their wealth and social position. In the case of *mansabdars*, the tax varied from Rs. 4 to 10 *muhars*, while ordinary people of middle-class paid one rupee, and the lower population one *dam*.[3] Another important tax, mentioned by both Abu-l Fazl and Manucci, was levied on horses, and varied from two to three rupees per head according to the breed of the animal.[4] More than a hundred thousand

[1] Elliot and Dowson, vol. vi, p. 365; S. N. Sen, *ibid.*, p. 561.
[2] J. N. Sarkar, *Studies in Mughal India*, p. 194.
[3] *Ain-i-Akbari*, trans. Blochmann, vol. i, p. 278.
[4] *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 215.

horses, according to the Italian chronicler,[1] were imported annually into India from Balkh, Bukhara, and Kabul, and on these, besides the imperial tax described by Abu-l Fazl, an import duty of twenty-five per cent. *ad valorem* was levied at the passage of the Indus.

The *jakat*, which in origin was an offering of one-fortieth portion of his worldly goods, set apart annually by every Muhammadan for the service of the poor,[2] was naturally collected by the earlier Musalman rulers of Delhi, but appears to have developed into a tax on goods, capriciously recovered by local officials from both Musalman and Hindu. This, at any rate, seems to be the only possible interpretation of the account given by Shahabu-d din Talish of the collection of the tax in Bengal, prior to the appointment of Shayista Khan. According to him, the *rah-dars* (toll-collectors) 'considered it an act of unparalleled leniency if no higher *jakat* was taken from rotten clothes worn (on the body) than from mended rags, and a deed of extreme graciousness if cooked food was charged with a lower duty than uncooked grains'.[3] Apparently Firuz Shah Tughlak forbade these unjust exactions; but after his reign they were restored and levied with gradually increasing severity, until Aurangzeb issued orders to his viceroys and officials to cease demanding them. So orthodox and strict a Muslim as Aurangzeb would scarcely have forbidden the levy of *jakat* had it not lost its original religious significance, and degenerated into a general and illegal demand, to which Hindu as well as Muhammadan travellers were subjected; and this supposition is confirmed by the practice of the Peshwas, who treated the *zakat* as a source of State revenue,[4] and also by an English letter of the 3rd

[1] Manucci, *Storia do Mogor*, ed. Irvine, vol. ii, p. 571.

[2] Meer Hassan Ali, *Observations on the Mussulmauns*, 1917, ed. Crooke, pp. 67, 135.

[3] J. N. Sarkar, *Studies in Mughal India*, pp. 161, 162.

[4] See Surendranath Sen's account, *Administrative System of the Marathas*, pp. 566, 567.

February 1656 from Agra to Surat, which mentions the *jakat* as 'road-dues' paid on merchandise.[1]

Except in the case of one important tax, Aurangzeb appears to have followed the policy of his predecessors in abolishing many of the miscellaneous cesses which pressed hardly upon the people at large; but, as in the case of Akbar and Jahangir, the practical success of his intentions depended upon the integrity of the provincial officials, many of whom were admittedly tyrannous and corrupt. It is probable that in many places, and particularly in remote districts, the orders of the Mughal Emperors remained a dead letter, and the taxes continued to be locally collected until the Empire fell into ruin. The exception above mentioned was the *jizya* or poll-tax on non-Muslims, originally instituted by the Khalifa Omar, who fixed it in three grades of 48, 24, and 12 *dirhams*.[2] Firuz Shah Tughlak had imposed the tax on Hindus in Delhi, including even the Brahmans, who had been exempt under previous Muslim rulers. The rates were 40, 20, and 10 *tankas* respectively, and for Brahmans 50 *kanis* or *jitals*;[3] and these rates, with the substitution of rupees for *tankas*, probably remained in force during the reigns of Babur and Humayun. Akbar had been only seven years on the throne when he remitted the whole tax, thereby sacrificing a very large amount of revenue, but giving practical proof of his desire to be just to all his subjects, irrespective of sect and creed. Jahangir and Shah Jahan made no attempt to revive a tax which was undeniably burdensome and was deeply resented by all Hindus; but Aurangzeb, framing his policy upon the precedent set by the early Khalifas, reimposed the *jizya* in 1679, and towards the end of his life was even prepared to subject the imperial camp to inconvenience rather than allow any relaxation in the collection of the tax.[4] The only persons exempted by his orders were Jews and Christians, apostates, minors,

[1] Foster, *English Factories in India, 1655–60*, p. 63.

[2] Smith, *Akbar*, p. 66. [3] Ishwari Prasad, *Medieval India*, p. 517 n.

[4] J. N. Sarkar, *Anecdotes of Aurangzib*, p. 142.

women, slaves, the maimed, the blind, the blemished, and the aged poor; the rest, for the purposes of collection, were divided into (*a*) the poor, paying 12 *dirhams* or roughly Rs. 3 3*as.* 6*p*, (*b*) the middle-class, paying 24 *dirhams* or roughly Rs. 6 7*as.* 0*p*, and (*c*) the rich, paying 48 *dirhams* or Rs. 12 14*as.* 0*p*. Precise rules for collection were drawn up, which were very galling to Hindus of the upper classes. For the payer was bound to appear in person, bare-footed, before the collector, who, placing his hand upon the payer's head, lifted up the money and pronounced a formula in Arabic, signifying 'I accept the poll-tax from this dependant'. Liability for payment ceased only on death or on conversion to Islam. As has been remarked in the case of other taxes, the collectors of the *jizya* frequently transgressed the orders regarding exemptions, and did not hesitate to levy contributions, on the pretext of expenses of collection, even from widows. The precise amount of revenue thus accruing to the State in Aurangzeb's reign is not known; but at the time of the abolition of the *jizya* by Muhammad Shah in 1720, thirteen years after Aurangzeb's death, it was estimated to yield annually four crores of rupees.[1]

§ *Currency and mints.* The management of the currency, the control of the Mint, and the provision of treasuries were important features of the Mughal administration. Prior to Akbar's reign, the coinage of northern India had been in a chaotic state ever since 1330, when Muhammad bin Tughlak developed his scheme of a forced currency, consisting entirely of copper tokens. Sher Shah, as remarked in an earlier paragraph, did his best to reform irregularities by introducing a rupee of 175–178 grains and the copper *dam*; but neither under Babur, who struck *ashrafis* and *dirhams* such as were used in Turkestan, nor under Humayun, was any definite effort made to regulate the currency of the Empire.[2] In December 1577 Akbar com-

[1] W. Irvine, *Later Mughals*, ed. J. N. Sarkar, vol. i, pp. 338–9. For a full account of the *jizya* see J. N. Sarkar, *Aurangzib*, vol. iii, chap. 34.

[2] Yule and Burnell, s.v. Rupee.

menced his reform of the currency by appointing Khwaja Abdus Samad of Shiraz, an eminent painter and calligrapher, to be master of the Imperial Mint at Delhi, and by placing each of the chief provincial mints, hitherto supervised by minor officials styled *chaudhuri* or foremen, under one of the more important imperial officials. In this way Raja Todar Mall became master of the Bengal Mint, and four other superior officers took charge of the mints at Lahore, Jaunpur, Ahmadabad, and Patna respectively.[1] According to Abu-l Fazl, the permanent staff of the mint at Delhi consisted of a *daroga*; an assayer (*sairafi*); an *amin*, assistant to the *daroga*; a keeper of the day-book (*mushrif*); a merchant, who purchased gold, silver, and copper for the mint; a treasurer; a weighman; a melter of ore; and a plate-maker.[2] A similar staff was no doubt appointed for the other mints. Under Shah Jahan one of the most important mints was at Surat. Early in his reign it was enlarged and ranked as the chief mint of Gujarat.

The coins issued by Akbar were gold, silver, and copper, and of gold coins there were twenty-six varieties of different weights and value, from the *shansah*, weighing a little over 101 *tolas*, to the *ilahi*, which was worth ten rupees; besides gold coins of smaller value.[3] These gold coins in the later years of Akbar's reign were struck at four mints only—Delhi, Bengal, Ahmadabad, and Kabul. The chief silver coin was the rupee of 172½ grains, equivalent in value to about two shillings and three pence sterling, and worth in its purchasing power about six British India rupees of 1914.[4] Akbar also issued a square silver rupee (*jalali*), the first of which were struck at the time of the reform of the mint in 1577. Of the copper currency the chief coin was the *dam*, also called *paisa* or *fulus*, which was borrowed from Sher Shah's currency. This coin, which formed the ready money of both prince and peasant, weighed 323·5 grains or

[1] Smith, *Akbar*, p. 156.
[2] *Ain-i-Akbari*, trans. Blochmann, vol. i.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] Moreland, *India at the Death of Akbar.*

nearly twenty-one grammes, and for account purposes was divided into twenty-five *jitals*. Forty *dams* were equal to one rupee of 172½ grains.[1] Abu-l Fazl records that during Akbar's reign one crore of *dams*, in rough bags, was always kept in the imperial palace for distribution to the poor, silver and gold coins being kept ready for the same object in the *Diwan-i-Am*. All mercantile transactions were carried out in round gold *mohurs*, rupees and *dams*, and continued to be so during the reigns of Akbar's immediate successors.

The Mughal coinage, in general, was very much superior to that of contemporary European sovereigns, and Akbar's coins in particular were excellent in respect of purity of metal, fullness of weight, and artistic execution. The ancient Semitic injunction against the making of images, which was repeated in the Koran, obliged Muhammadan sovereigns, as a rule, to ornament their coinage with calligraphic devices, though occasionally they found it convenient to disregard the prohibition. Akbar, despite his unorthodoxy, adhered to the Koranic restriction and covered his coins with various examples of artistic calligraphy; on three occasions only he issued commemorative medals bearing figures upon them. Jahangir, on the other hand, though supposed to be more orthodox, put his own portrait on coins intended for circulation, and published for all time the fact that he was fond of liquor by having a wine-cup depicted in his right hand. He also issued an unusual series of silver coins, on which the signs of the zodiac were shown. But with these exceptions, his currency followed the orthodox type, one of them—the gold coin of five *muhars*—being noteworthy for the beautiful calligraphy of the legend.[2] The character of the Mughal coinage remained practically unaltered during the reigns of Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb, though in 1659 the English merchants remarked in a letter to their home authorities that 'the new king, Oran Zeeb, hath rais'd his coine [silver] to ⅝ per cent. finer then formerly;

[1] *Ain-i-Akbari*; Smith, *Akbar*; Moreland, *ibid.*

[2] Smith, *History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon*, p. 422 f.

which hath causd much trouble and contention betwixt the merchants of Surat and the Governor'.[1]

The gold and silver used for coinage was all imported from abroad, the Portuguese settlements at Sofala and Mozambique being responsible for the supply of gold from East Africa, and several countries, both in the east and west, providing the silver. Abu-l Fazl speaks loosely of gold being found in abundance 'in the northern mountains of the country, as also in Tibet', but declares at the same time that the Empire depended upon imports from abroad.[2] The same was the case with silver, which no one was permitted to export from India in any appreciable quantity. Terry, who visited India during Jahangir's reign, declared that the Mughals welcomed the people of any nation 'that bring in their bullion and carry away the other's merchandise; but it is looked on as a crime that is not easily answered, to transport any quantity of silver thence'.[3] The East India Company from its earliest days made a practice of exporting bullion to India, which produced considerable agitation in England from time to time. In 1601, towards the close of Akbar's reign, the total amount sent to India was valued at about £22,000; by 1616 the value had risen to £52,000; and in Aurangzeb's reign, between 1697 and 1702, the annual value of the exports of bullion to India was at least £800,000. In one year alone, 1681, the bullion consigned to Bengal was worth £320,000.[4] Only a portion of this steady influx of treasure was used in the mints and in the manufacture of articles of luxury: the balance, as William Hawkins shrewdly remarked, was 'buried', i.e. hoarded by the ruling sovereigns, the custodians of religious institutions, and occasionally by a few nobles and wealthy merchants.[5] The copper used in northern India was

[1] W. Foster, *English Factories in India, 1655–60*, p. 211.

[2] *Ain-i-Akbari*, trans. Blochmann, vol. i.

[3] Moreland, *India at the Death of Akbar*, pp. 283 ff.

[4] S. A. Khan, *East India Trade in the Seventeenth Century*, under Gold, Silver.

[5] Moreland, *ibid.*

obtained mainly from mines in certain parts of Rajputana, though a small quantity may have come from the Himalayan region, which is mentioned by Abu-l Fazl as one of the main sources of supply. Southern India and the Deccan, which possessed no copper mines of any value, depended in Mughal times on imports. If one may judge from the price paid for copper at the Imperial Mint in Akbar's reign, viz. 1,044 *dams* for one maund, the metal must have been costly, and on this account it was probably not in great demand, except for coinage. It appears that the copper mines of Rajputana and central India ceased working some time during the reign of Jahangir, for an appreciable rise in the price of copper before 1630 served the Dutch as good grounds for opening an import trade into Gujarat in that metal.[1]

§ *Treasuries.* Several treasuries were scattered throughout the Empire, one treasurer, assisted by *bitakchis*, being appointed for each *karor* of *dams*. There was also a separate treasurer for each imperial workshop, numbering nearly 100 in the aggregate, whose duty it was to keep daily, monthly, and yearly accounts of receipts and disbursements. One of the most important Court functionaries was the Treasurer-General, who, with the assistance of a *daroga* and clerical staff, supervised the treasuries at headquarters, some of which were reserved for hard cash and others for jewellery and precious stones. A separate treasurer was appointed for *peshkash* (tribute) receipts, another for intestate property, another for *nazrs* (presents), and another for moneys expended in weighing the royal person. The last-named practice, known as *tula-dana*, appears to have been borrowed by the Mughal rulers from Hindu princes, who regarded it as a special rite. Abu-l Fazl records that Akbar was weighed twice a year against gold and other valuables; the weighing of Jahangir is described both by Sir Thomas Roe and by Tom Coryat; while Manucci, Tavernier, and Bernier all speak of the custom being followed in Aurangzeb's reign. As Aurangzeb abolished the

[1] W. H. Moreland, *From Akbar to Aurangzeb*, Chap. V.

custom for himself, their evidence must refer to the weighing of his sons on their recovery from illness.[1] The treasury arrangements were elaborate and, according to Dr. Vincent Smith,[2] were 'much the same as those in force some years ago in the United Provinces, and no doubt still maintained for the most part'. Comprehensive rules for receipts and disbursements existed, including regulations for valuing current coin, which were several times modified after they were first published by Akbar. These regulations afford fair proof that the mint and treasury officers were not always above suspicion and required supervision. The mint officials were suspected of issuing light coin, while the official treasurers were apt to reduce the weight of the coins received by them thereby setting a bad example to the dealers, who were not above using false weights. At times the strict orders regarding deficiency in weight were ignored; while in the provinces the treasury officers occasionally insisted on the State dues being paid in coins of particular denominations, presumably because they and their friends had 'made a corner', or possessed a temporary local monopoly of these coins.[3] The business of dealing in money was highly developed in India during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and there were expert dealers in all the trade centres of the Mughal Empire. It is probable that treasury officials were exposed to many temptations and had constant opportunities of making illicit profit. The elaborate rules and procedure framed by Akbar may have prevented wholesale malversation of the public funds, but probably did not prevent occasional lapses from honesty on the part of the State officials connected with the mint and treasuries.

§ *Education.* A modern writer[4] has stated in the course of an inquiry into the condition of India in the reign of Akbar, that he can trace no sign of a system of popular education, and that he has failed to find anything in the nature of a list of useful

[1] *Qanun-i-Islam*, ed. Crooke (1921), p. 191.
[2] Smith, *Akbar*, p. 376
[3] Moreland, *India at the Death of Akbar.*
[4] Moreland, *ibid.*, pp. 263 *n.*, 278.

foundations or endowments established during that period. This verdict appears to be somewhat too sweeping. It is quite true that India under the Mughals could show nothing approaching the system of primary and secondary education which is encouraged and directed by some modern democratic Governments; but neither could England nor other western countries in the time of the Tudors claim to have progressed very far in that direction. On the other hand some form of education, both primary and secondary, was in existence during the reigns of the first six Mughal Emperors; and although the State did not actually disburse any portion of its revenue, as a matter of course, on the establishment and maintenance of schools and colleges, the rulers themselves and some of the learned men who were attracted to their Court, frequently founded such institutions, or gave support and encouragement to those already in existence. Again, there seems no reason to suppose that the advent of the Muhammadans in the eleventh and twelfth centuries put an end to the ancient Brahmanic system of education, or indeed to the Hindu vernacular schools—the prototype of the Mahajani schools of later ages—in which the children of the trading and agricultural classes were afforded a rough primary education. The capture of Nadia by the Muhammadans in 1203 did not prevent that town retaining its well-deserved reputation as a centre of Sanskritic learning: its *tols*, in which erudite *pandits* taught logic, law, and grammar to hundreds of students, were still performing their ancient educational function when Professor Cowell visited the town in 1867; and this diffusion of Sanskrit[1] learning has been steadily proceeding ever since its foundation in 1063 by one of the Sena Kings of Bengal. Occasionally some of the more ruthless, or more orthodox, of Muhammadan sovereigns destroyed Brahman places of learning and scattered their students; but Brahman learning continued in spite of these temporary disasters; and it seems reasonable to assume that throughout the period of Mughal

[1] F. E. Keay, *Ancient Indian Education*, pp. 51 ff.

sovereignty the ancient Sanskritic and vernacular schools were carrying out their recognized tasks.

Of the progress of Muhammadan education more definite evidence is forthcoming. The settlement of the Muhammadans in India and numerous conversions to Islam connoted the establishment of mosques, which were often centres of instruction and literary activity.[1] The earlier Muhammadan rulers not infrequently appear as patrons of learning on Muhammadan lines. Among them was Muhammad Ghori, who is said to have built mosques and colleges at Ajmer, in place of the temples which he destroyed;[2] Sultan Kutbu-d din, who built many mosques, which were centres of education as well as of religious worship;[3] Iltutmish, who built a *madrasah*; Nasiru-d din and Balban, under whom Delhi became a great centre of learning; the Tughlak rulers, particularly Firuz Shah, who repaired schools and maintained them by grants from State funds, and who, according to Firishta, built no less than thirty colleges with attached mosques, and provided stipends and scholarships for the students and professors of the college which he founded at Firuzabad;[4] and lastly Sikander Lodi, in whose reign Agra became prominent as a literary centre,[5] and the translation of Hindu works into Persian by Muhammadans and the study of Persian by Hindus showed a remarkable advance.[6] Nor was this educational movement confined to northern India; for during the fifteenth century colleges were built in Bijapur, Golkonda, Malwa, Khandesh, Jaunpur, Multan, and Bengal, and much encouragement was given to education. The college built at Bidar by Mahmud Gawan, in the reign of Muhammad Shah Bahmani, is said to have possessed a library of three thousand volumes.[7]

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 114.

[2] N. N. Law, *Promotion of Learning in India during Muhammadan Rule*, pp. 17, 18.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 19, 20. [4] Keay, p. 117. [5] N. N. Law, *ibid.*, p. 73.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 75. [7] *Ibid.*, pp. 99–113; Keay, *ibid.*, p. 119.

Thus when the Mughals arrived in India there must have been many Muhammadan educational institutions of the *maktab* and *madrasah* type in various parts of the country. The *maktab* signifies a primary school attached to a mosque for teaching a boy those parts of the Koran which he must know by heart for the purpose of his devotions, and also sometimes for teaching elementary reading, writing, and ciphering; while the *madrasah* is a school or college for higher learning.[1] It is therefore a little difficult to understand Babur's remark in his *Memoirs* that Hindustan possessed no colleges. At times, no doubt, schools and colleges founded by royal patrons or rich nobles languished or were deserted, when the founder died or lost interest in them; sometimes the schools mentioned by contemporary chroniclers were little more than classes attached to a mosque; and doubtless the reputation of Indian schools and colleges at the beginning of the sixteenth century had not spread beyond the borders of the country. But allowing for these possibilities, and assuming also that Babur's remark referred only to upper India, it is yet difficult to accept it without qualification.[2] The court-writers of the early Muhammadan rulers may have exaggerated the degree and quality of the patronage extended to education by the latter; but allowing also for this fact, there must, at the date of Babur's arrival in India, have been several centres of Muhammadan higher education, and many mosques with *maktabs* attached to them. It is probable also that several learned men made a practice of teaching pupils in their own houses.[3]

Whatever the precise facts may be in respect of pre-Mughal education, it is unquestionable that the Mughal Emperors themselves were naturally disposed to favour learning. For they were all accomplished men, possessed of literary tastes.

[1] Keay, *Ancient Indian Education*, p. 115.

[2] Keay, *ibid.*, 120, 121; H. Beveridge in Introduction to N. N. Law's *Promotion of Learning in India*, p. xxv.

[3] Keay, *ibid.*, p. 120.

Babur, though a soldier of fortune, was endowed with a fastidious critical perception, was an accomplished Persian poet, and 'in his native Turki was master of a pure and unaffected style, alike in prose and verse'.[1] His Turki poems, Persian *masnawi*, a work on prosody and other books, are less well-known than his autobiography, the *Babur-nama*, which has been described as 'one of those priceless records which are for all time, and fit to rank with the confessions of St. Augustine and Rousseau and the memoirs of Gibbon and Newton. In Asia it stands almost alone.'[2] Babur's Court was graced by the presence of several learned men, among them being Khundamir, the grandson of Mirkhund, and Shaikh Jain Khwafi;[3] but he himself did not live long enough after his conquest of India to give any stimulus to education. Humayun was also a scholar, and during his chequered career built a college in Delhi and gave much encouragement to learned men, among whom may be mentioned Mir Abdul Latif, author of *Lubbul Tawarikh*.[4] Humayun was accustomed to carry a small library with him on his expeditions, and was fond of studying geography and astronomy. The latter science was in much favour in Mughal times: as was also its handmaid, astrology. Humayun was a skilled astrologer. Terry speaks of the confidence reposed in astrology by Jahangir;[5] while in the reign of Aurangzeb, according to Bernier, Delhi swarmed with Hindu and Musalman astrologers, among whom was a mendacious Portuguese half-caste from Goa, whose only stock-in-trade consisted of an old mariner's compass and a couple of Romish prayer-books.[6] A college and a school were founded near Agra by private individuals during Humayun's reign, and for some years an important *madrasah* was housed in the Emperor's tomb at Delhi.[7]

[1] S. Lane-Poole, *Babar*, Rulers of India Series, p. 10.
[2] S. Beveridge, *Calcutta Review*, 1897.
[3] N. N. Law, *ibid.*, pp. 121–4.
[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 131, 132.
[5] W. Foster, *Early Travels in India*, p. 310.
[6] W. Crooke, *Things Indian*, p. 37.
[7] N. N. Law, *ibid.*, p. 134.

The question whether or not Akbar, the most brilliant representative of the line of the Great Mughals, was able to read and write, has not been definitely settled. It is known that as a boy he was idle, and far preferred martial exercises, riding, sword-play and so forth, to the reading of books; and one at least of the tutors selected to train his mind chose the line of least resistance, and taught him the art of pigeon-flying instead of the rudiments of letters.[1] The belief in his inability to read and write, held by some modern historians, is based chiefly on a statement to that effect by Father Monserrate, who spent two years at Akbar's Court; but it seems nevertheless unlikely that the descendant of cultured literary students like Babur and Hamayun, one who was naturally endowed with quite unusual intelligence and a prodigious memory, and whose education was entrusted, with one exception, to a succession of able and learned men, should have been wholly incapable of reading or signing his own name.[2] Akbar's personal tastes lay rather in the direction of the mechanical arts and mechanical invention—subjects which naturally appealed to his very practical character—and it seems certain that he never took any pains to foster in himself any literary ability; but, whether or no he was able to read and write, he was certainly not illiterate in the ordinary meaning of that term, and he possessed a keen appreciation of literary education. He took an active interest in ancient Sanskrit literature, and ordered Persian translations and adaptations of the famous epics and other works to be prepared for the imperial library at Agra; he ordered translations of Greek and Arabic books; at his bidding, the Khan Khanan rendered Babur's *Memoirs* into Persian, and Faizi produced a version of the *Lilavati*, a treatise on arithmetic; he built up a splendid library, containing 24,000 books, valued at nearly six and a half millions of rupees; and he gave constant and active encouragement to the art of fine writing or calli-

[1] Smith, *Akbar*, p. 22.

[2] N. N. Law, *Promotion of Learning in India during Muhammadan Rule*, pp. 207–12; F. E. Keay, *Ancient Indian Education*, p. 121.

graphy, which he esteemed as highly as the delicate masterpieces of his Court painters and draughtsmen.[1] The growth of Urdu and its acceptance as the *lingua franca* of a great part of India, was directly fostered by Todar Mall's order that all official accounts should be kept in Persian.[2]

In the establishment of educational institutions, Akbar did not fall short of the standard set by previous Muhammadan rulers, for he built colleges at Fathpur-Sikri, Agra, and other places; and, in pursuance of his policy of religious toleration, he arranged in the later years of his reign for the education of Hindu youths in the Muhammadan *madrasahs*.[3] Private benefactors followed the Emperor's example; a *madrasah* was built by Maham Anaga, Akbar's nurse, near the western gate of the *Purana Qil'ah*; another was built by Khwaja Mu'in, in which Mirza Muflis, one of the many learned men attracted to Akbar's court, taught pupils for three years.[4] The remarkable statement in the *Ain-i-Akbari* concerning Akbar's regulations for education has been summarily rejected by some historians, as bearing no relation to facts and as recommending a curriculum which no school in India or elsewhere could possibly attempt to introduce.[5] After explaining the best method of teaching boys to read and write, the statement advocates the reading of 'books on morals, arithmetic, the notation peculiar to arithmetic, agriculture, mensuration, geometry, astronomy, physiognomy, household matters, the rules of government, medicine, logic, the *tabii*, *riyazi*, and *ilahi* sciences, and history; all of which may be gradually acquired'.[6] This is certainly an advanced and ambitious programme, obviously intended for the use of *madrasahs* rather than *maktabs* or primary schools; and it is improbable that Akbar intended the whole curriculum to be followed by every single *madrasah*. This would

[1] N. N. Law, *ibid.*, pp. 139 ff.; Keay, *ibid.*, p. 122; Smith, *Akbar*, pp. 423 ff.
[2] G. Grierson, *Literature of Hindustan*, p. 35; Keay, *ibid.*, p. 122.
[3] Keay, *ibid.*, p. 122. [4] N. N. Law, *ibid.*, pp. 165–8.
[5] Smith, *Akbar*, p. 387. [6] *Ain-i-Akbari*, trans. Blochmann, vol. i, p. 279.

have been impossible. It seems more reasonable to assume that Akbar intended merely to indicate those subjects which, in his opinion, might most profitably be studied. The character of the programme recommended lends support to this view; for scientific subjects preponderate, and the order in which they appear indicates a preference for those of practical utility, such as would naturally be favoured by a man of Akbar's tastes. The advice as to the teaching of reading and writing may perhaps be accepted as the result of Akbar's acquaintance with the more rapid progress made in Hindu schools, which appear to have anticipated the modern Montessori system in teaching writing before reading, in contradistinction to the Persian schools of Akbar's day, which followed the reverse process.[1] One cannot assume that the Muhammadan schools of Akbar's day invariably translated the imperial suggestions into practical effect, for the schools cherished conservative traditions and were often so situated as to escape the supervision of the ruler or his educated nobles. The regulations must in many cases have been directly disregarded; but even so, the statement in the *Ain-i-Akbari* is valuable as showing that Akbar took an active interest in education, and realized that the time-honoured system which had developed under his predecessors required reform.

The doubt attendant upon a decision as to Akbar's ability to read and write disappears in the case of his son. Jahangir, who was a lover of books and paintings, and could read and write Turki, wrote his own Memoirs (*Wakiat-i-Jahangiri*) with the aid of two professional historians,[2] and took a library with him on his journey to Gujarat. Jan Jahan Khan, author of *Tarikhi-Jan-Jahan*, records that he repaired *madrasahs* which had been ruined and desolate for thirty years, and filled them with students and professors; while Khafi Khan attributes to him a regulation ordaining that the property of any rich man who died intestate

[1] F. E. Keay, *Ancient Indian Education*, pp. 124, 125, 166.

[2] N. N. Law, *Promotion of Learning in India during Muhammadan Rule*, p. 174.

should escheat to the State, and be utilized for the erection and repair of *madrasahs*, monasteries, and similar institutions.[1] Bernier draws a rather sombre picture of the state of education in Shah Jahan's reign, but possibly relied overmuch on casual observation and the statements of interested critics. So far as is known, Shah Jahan in no way reversed the policy of his predecessors and was certainly a patron of the fine arts. But his personal tastes lay rather in the erection of magnificent buildings, and it is possible that he stimulated less actively than Akbar the foundation of purely educational institutions. On this account some of the schools and colleges said to have been founded in previous reigns may have languished for lack of support, and the richer nobles and others may have relinquished the habit of devoting their surplus wealth to the promotion of education. We read of the foundation of only one college at Delhi, and of the repair of another, during Shah Jahan's reign; and this, despite the fact that in Prince Dara Shikoh the imperial family possessed one of the greatest scholars that it ever produced. A master of Arabic, Persian, and Sanskrit, he was the author of several notable works, including Persian translations of the *Upanishads*,[2] of the *Bhagavadgita*, of the *Jog-Vasistha Ramayana*, a calendar of Muslim saints and various works on Sufi doctrine.[3] A pathetic memorial of his love for his wife is still preserved in the Library of the India Office in the form of a beautiful album, bearing the following inscription in his own handwriting:

'This album was presented to his nearest and dearest friend, the Lady Nadirah Begam, by Prince Muhammad Dara Shukoh, son of the Emperor Shah Jahan, in the year 1051' (= A. D. 1641–2).

Perhaps Sir William Sleeman was right in thinking, as he mused over the grave of the ill-starred prince, that had he lived to

[1] N. N. Law, *ibid.*, pp. 174, 175; Keay, *ibid.*, p. 128.

[2] It was through this translation of the *Upanishads* that Schopenhauer came to know of the system of Hindu metaphysics which so profoundly influenced his own thinking. (Binyon, *Court Painters of the Grand Moguls*, Introd.)

[3] N. N. Law, *ibid.*, pp. 184–6.

ascend the throne, the character of the education, and therewith the destinies of India, would have been very different.[1]

The educational policy of Aurangzeb was coloured by the bigotry of his religious views. He cared nothing for the promotion of Hindu learning, and in 1669 actually ordered his provincial governors to destroy Hindu schools and temples, and abolish their tuition and religious practices.[2] To Muhammadan education, on the other hand, he gave every encouragement, founded 'numberless colleges and schools',[3] and on one occasion confiscated some buildings in Lucknow belonging to the Dutch and converted them into a *madrasah*.[4] The *Mirat-i-Alam* records that in all the cities and towns of India learned professors were awarded pensions and allowances and lands, and scholars were provided with stipends, according to their qualifications,[5] money was sanctioned for the repair of *madrasahs* in Gujarat; and villages were granted an *inam* for the support of a college founded in 1697 in Ahmadabad by Akramuddin Khan Sadr.[6] Aurangzeb took a keen personal interest in the education of the Bohra community of Gujarat, appointing teachers for them and ordering them to undergo monthly examinations, the results of which were to be reported to him personally.[7] The Emperor's personal interest in Muhammadan education led to the establishment of many *madrasahs* by private benefactors, and to the rapid expansion of Sialkot as a centre of Muslim learning. Aurangzeb himself was fairly well educated; he was acquainted with Turki and was highly proficient in Persian and Arabic; he knew the Koran and the Hadis (Traditions) by heart, and was well grounded in Muhammadan theology; he added many volumes, chiefly theological, to the imperial library. And yet, if one may judge from the tale told by Bernier of his rebuke

[1] Sleeman's *Rambles and Recollections*, ed. V. A. Smith, pp. 511–13.
[2] Sarkar, *Anecdotes of Aurangzib*, p. 11. [3] Keene's *Mughal Empire*, p. 23.
[4] N. N. Law, *Promotion of Learning in India during Muhammadan Rule*, p. 188. [5] F. E. Keay, *Ancient Indian Education*, p. 131.
[6] N. N. Law, *ibid.*, p. 188. [7] *Ibid.*, p. 189.

to the old tutor of his youthful days, Aurangzeb was profoundly dissatisfied with the character of the education usually given to princes and young nobles of that epoch. 'Were you not aware', he cries in the course of his indictment, 'that it is during the period of infancy, when the memory is commonly so retentive, that the mind may receive a thousand wise precepts, and be easily furnished with such valuable instructions as will elevate it with lofty conceptions, and render the individual capable of glorious deeds?' And again, towards the end of his outburst, 'Answer me, sycophant, ought you not to have instructed me on one point at least, so essential to be known by a King; namely, on the reciprocal duties between the sovereign and his subjects?'[1]

The whole speech, reported by Bernier, deserves perusal as indicating the weak features of the educational system of the Mughal age. Bigoted, and narrow in his outlook on many questions, as Aurangzeb undoubtedly was, he was yet shrewd enough to realize that the tuition given in the *maktabs* and *madrasahs* had grown too formal and scholastic, and that 'the formation of character on the basis of a broad humanism and high ideals was far more valuable than the teaching of grammar and the discussion of dry, metaphysical trivialities'. It is true that the *madrasahs* did sometimes teach science, literature, and history, the last-named subject being particularly in favour with Muhammadans; it is equally true that the *maktab* endured, when other Muhammadan educational institutions decayed, as an integral part of that system of popular elementary education which lasted down to the days of British rule. Yet at its best, the Mughal educational system did little to develop the character and fit the pupil for his vocation in life; and such a demand for the wider extension of scholastic facilities as might have existed among the general population was stifled by the poverty of the country and the rapacity of the public officials.[2] The defects of the system, the spasmodic nature of the encouragement

[1] Bernier's *Travels*; Keay, *Ancient Indian Education*, pp. 132–5.

[2] Keay, *ibid.*, pp. 136, 140–3.

given to education, which was an inevitable result of despotic rule, must not, however, blind us to the fact that the Mughal rulers did try, according to their own ideas and limitations, to foster the establishment of scholastic institutions, and that two of the greatest of them appear in the records left by contemporary writers to have advocated some of the very reforms which are being sought by the leading educationalists of the present day.[1]

A word may be said about female education, which was practically non-existent among both Hindus and Muhammadans in Mughal days. The author of *Qanun-i-Islam* speaks of girls being taught the Koran from end to end and elementary reading;[2] but their studies ceased at such an early age that they cannot have learnt much. Occasionally also the daughters of the imperial house and of rich nobles were given tuition within the precincts of the harem, as for example at the palace in Fathpur-Sikri, in which certain rooms were specially set apart for this purpose by Akbar.[3] Some of the ladies so taught distinguished themselves in the paths of literature; Babur's daughter, Gulbadan Begam, wrote the *Humayun-nama*; Humayun's niece, Salima Sultana, was the author of many Persian poems; Jahangir's queen, Nur Jahan, was highly educated and well-versed in Persian and Arabic literature; so also was Mumtaz Mahall, wife of Shah Jahan. Jahanara Begam, daughter of Shah Jahan, was taught the Koran and the Persian language by a learned Persian lady, Satiu-n nissa, who eventually became *sadr* or superintendent of the harem; in the same way Aurangzeb's daughter, Zebu-n nissa, was educated by Hafiza Mariam, whose family originally hailed from Naishapur in Khurasan. Zebu-n nissa, who inherited her father's intellect and the family taste for literature, was a fine Arabic and Persian scholar, was an expert in calligraphy, and collected a valuable library. The

[1] F. E. Keay, *Ancient Indian Education*, p. 137.

[2] *Qanun-i-Islam*, ed. Crooke (1921), p. 51.

[3] N. N. Law, *Promotion of Learning in India during Muhammadan Rule*, p. 202.

garden on the outskirts of Lahore, known as the Char-Burji, the only remains of which to-day are a semi-ruined gateway, is said to have belonged to the princess and to have been the scene of her literary labours. Her literary studies must have done much to lighten the captivity which she underwent by Aurangzeb's orders, as a punishment for her complicity in Prince Akbar's rebellion, and from which she was only released by death in May 1702. One cannot help expressing a word of regret that modern vandalism in the guise of the constructors of the Rajputana railway should have demolished the tomb which Aurangzeb ordered to be built for her remains in the 'Garden of Thirty Thousand Trees', outside the Kabuli gate of Delhi.[1] Besides the princesses who have been mentioned, there were doubtless other women of high family who were given a literary education in the parental home; but their numbers can never have been large; while the general population of Muslim women of the upper, middle, and lower classes, were considered sufficiently educated if they were conversant with the internal economy and management of a household. Female education, in the modern sense of the term, was wholly foreign to the ideas and customs of Mughal India.

§ *Communications.* Before describing the imperial household and its management a reference may be made to communications by road and river in the Mughal Empire. In speaking of the roads of those days one must remember that the best of them were imperfectly levelled and unmetalled, and provided here and there with a causeway over the small ravines and streams, and generally with a ferry wherever the route crossed one of the larger rivers. The council at Surat in a letter to the Company in 1666 remarked that 'here are no beaten roads or mending of high wayes; but the first carts that travail must cut them anew with their wheeles, that makes it very tedious and troublesome travelling in the first of the yeare'.[2] A magnificent

[1] J. N. Sarkar, *Studies in Mughal India*, pp. 79–90.

[2] Foster, *English Factories in India*, 1665–7, p. 157.

bridged and metalled highway, like the modern Grand Trunk road, running from Calcutta through the Punjab, had not been dreamed of in the sixteenth century, nor indeed at the commencement of the nineteenth; for Sleeman, writing in 1835, remarked that 'all roads in India soon became watercourses—they are nowhere metalled; and, being left for four or five months every year without rain, their soil is reduced to powder by friction, and carried off by the winds over the surrounding country'.[1] The provision of unmetalled thoroughfares in India dates back to remote antiquity. The Mauryan dynasty, founded by Chandragupta, built many main roads, which were kept in order by a department of the administration and furnished with pillars, marking the distances at intervals of ten *stadia* (half an Indian *kos*);[2] the Buddhists had an extensive road system, of which Rhys Davids gives a full account; and the account of his travels left by Fa-hien, the Chinese pilgrim, proves that the Gupta rulers fully accepted the principle, originally laid down in the *Arthasastra*, that road-making is one of the duties of a king. But when Akbar turned his attention to the matter of communications, he found an example of activity much less remote in time than the early Hindu dynasties. Sher Shah Sur was the first great road-builder of the Mughal age, and to him India owed at least four great roads, which opened up the Ganges Delta to the Punjab and Rajputana. He 'made the road which now runs from Delhi to Agra (*scil.*, that which runs west of the Jumna through Mathura), by cutting through jungles, removing obstacles, and building *sarais*'.[3] Before that time travellers between those two centres had to pass through the tract on the east of the Jumna, between that river and the Ganges. These roads he provided with no less than 1,700 *sarais* or hostelries, and planted the sides with shade-giving trees.

When, therefore, Akbar drove a highway from Upper India

[1] Sleeman, *Rambles and Recollections*, ed. Smith (1915), p. 301.

[2] *Oxford History of India*, p. 91.

[3] Nuru-l Hakk in Elliot and Dowson, vi. 188.

to the Deccan through a gap in the Satpura range, and built the royal road between Lahore and Agra, he was merely continuing a policy sanctioned by ancient Hindu ideals of government and translated into practical effect by Humayun's capable antagonist. The Lahore–Agra road, which was more than 400 miles in length, aroused the admiration of successive travellers. William Finch mentions it in 1611;[1] Tom Coryat (1612–17) speaks of 'a row of trees on each side of this way where people doe travell, extending it selfe from the townes end of Lahore to the townes end of Agra; the most incomparable shew of that kinde that ever my eies survaied';[2] while Terry describes it as 'one of the rarest and most beneficial works in the whole world'.[3] Most of the main routes, constructed or repaired during Akbar's reign, were marked by fine avenues of trees and by walled *sarais* for the use of travellers. Finch describes the *sarai* at Chaparghata on the Sengur as more like 'a goodly castle then an inne to lodge strangers; the lodgings very faire of stone, with lockes and keyes, able to lodge a thousand men'.[4] Excluding the main highways, however, the roads of Mughal days were not good, and permanent bridges, over even the smaller rivers, were not numerous. The most substantial structure of this kind was the great bridge of ten arches erected at Jaunpur, between 1564 and 1568, by Munim Khan, which is still in use. Usually the rivers had to be crossed by fords, ferries, or bridges of boats, and when they were in flood, the passage became one of considerable difficulty. According to Abu-l Fazl, the construction of roads and bridges, as well as forts, &c., was entrusted to an administrative department, presided over, in Akbar's reign, by an official who combined the functions of head of the Admiralty and First Commissioner of Works (*Mir Barr u Bahr*).[5] This double appointment was held by Kasim Khan, who superintended the rebuilding of Agra Fort, and was specially skilful in constructing

[1] W. Foster, *Early Travels in India*, pp. 185–6.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 244.
[3] Terry's *Voyage* (ed. 1655), p. 81.
[4] W. Foster, *ibid.*, p. 179.
[5] *Akbar-nama*, ii, p. 373.

bridges of boats for the passage of Akbar's army. He built several such bridges in 1581 in the Punjab, and was probably responsible also for those which were maintained at Agra and other cities for the benefit of ordinary traffic.

Akbar's policy in the matter of road-making seems to have been followed by Jahangir; for Bernier speaks of a double row of trees, planted by his orders, and 'continued for one hundred and fifty leagues, with small pyramids or turrets, erected from kosse to kosse, for the purpose of pointing out the different roads'. Departmental arrangements for their upkeep, similar to those established by Akbar, must have existed under Shah Jahan; and it is certain that Aurangzeb, who was constantly on the march, paid much attention to the roads by which his army was supplied during his protracted campaign against the Marathas. It was during the confusion and anarchy attending the disruption of the Mughal Empire that these fine public works fell into disrepair, and were eventually superseded by the metalled highways and railroads projected during the Governor-generalship of Lord Dalhousie. The navigation of the large rivers, like the Ganges, the Indus, and the Jumna, formed a useful adjunct to the land-routes of the Mughal age. A large proportion of the heavy traffic of northern India was water-borne, and the waterways of Bengal carried, as they still do, a large volume of traffic.[1]

Apart from roads and rest-houses, little money was spent by the Mughals on public works of general utility, though the expenditure on buildings for religious and personal purposes was very heavy during the reigns of Jahangir and Shah Jahan. The former constructed waterworks at Burhanpur, mainly for the benefit of his military forces; under the latter, Ali Mardan Khan repaired or built the Ravi canal in 1639; but the cost of the latter —one *lac* of rupees—is trifling by comparison with the 10 *lacs* expended by Shah Jahan on the mosque at Daulatabad, or the 60 *lacs* sunk in the imperial palace at Delhi. The nobles and well-to-do merchants followed the example set by the

[1] W. H. Moreland, *India at the Death of Akbar*, p. 7.

Emperors, and the building of tombs, *sarais*, &c., became a fashionable method of spending money. Many of these buildings, however, were suffered to decay after the death of the individual who erected them, and thus lost any value which they might have possessed as specimens of architecture or as public conveniences.[1]

§ *Urban areas.* Travellers in India during the reigns of Akbar and Jahangir were much impressed by the wealth and prosperity of the cities and larger towns, and there is no reason to suppose that urban conditions suffered any appreciable alteration under Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb. Fitch (1583–91) spoke of Agra as 'a very great citie . . . and very populous', and was struck by the size of Benares and Patna; Finch (1608–11) described Surat as a 'citie of good quantitie, with many faire merchants houses therein'; he visited 'the strong and rich towne of Joulnapoure' (Jalna), and has much to say of Ahmadabad, Allahabad, and Lahore. Both Agra and Lahore seemed to him much larger than London; and his testimony is corroborated by Terry (1616–19) and by Monserrate, who asserted that Lahore in 1581 was 'not second to any city in Europe or Asia'.[2] At the same time, the Portuguese priest who undertook the journey from Surat to Agra, and accompanied the Emperor on his march to Kabul, found that the narrow streets and jostling crowds rendered every city less attractive at close quarters than at a distance, and that the rich dwellings, pleasure gardens, and ornamental fountains of the well-to-do were in striking contrast with the miserable huts and hovels of the mass of population. 'To have seen one city', he wrote, 'is to have seen all'—a description of which, in the words of Moreland, 'is substantially applicable at the present day to those cities which have not as yet passed under the hands of the town-planning expert, or developed residential areas on the familiar Anglo-Indian lines'.[3]

[1] W. H. Moreland, *From Akbar to Aurangzeb*, pp. 195–7.

[2] W. Foster, *Early Travels in India*, pp. 17, 20, 23, 133, 137, 161, 173, 177, 182, 292; Smith, *Akbar*, p. 395.

[3] W. H. Moreland, *ibid.*, p. 9.

§ *Famine.* Just as the hovels inhabited by the lower classes formed a sombre setting to the prosperous pleasure-halls of the Mughal nobility, so famine brooded like a dark shadow behind the splendour and luxuriance of the imperial Court. The year of Akbar's accession was marked by an appalling famine in the upper provinces of India, especially in Agra and Delhi; the capital was devastated; and Hemu, the minister of King Adali, a claimant to the throne, displayed complete indifference to the sufferings of the people by feeding his elephants on rice, sugar, and butter, while men and women ate one another.[1] Gujarat was stricken with famine and pestilence in 1573–4, so that 'the inhabitants, rich and poor, fled the country and were scattered abroad'.[2] According to Abu-l Fazl, serious and widespread scarcity prevailed in 1583 or 1584, whereby 'the means of subsistence of many people came to an end';[3] but the most terrible famine of Akbar's reign was that which commenced in 1594 and lasted till 1598. It was accompanied, as is usually the case, by pestilence, which depopulated houses, villages, and cities. 'Men ate their own kind,' writes a contemporary chronicler, 'the streets and roads were blocked up with dead bodies, and no assistance could be rendered for their removal.'[4] Equally grave was the famine which wasted the Deccan and Gujarat in 1630–2, during the fourth and fifth years of Shah Jahan's reign. The horror of the calamity can be dimly grasped from the statements of the official historian, Abdu-l Hamid, that 'the pounded bones of the dead were mixed with flour and sold', and 'the flesh of a son was preferred to his love'. Peter Mundy, the English traveller, also records that on his journey from Surat to Agra he found a large part of the country between the former town and Burhanpur so thickly strewn with corpses that he could hardly find room to pitch a small tent.[5] The first year of Aurangzeb's reign was likewise

[1] *Oxford History of India*, p. 344; *Badaoni*, trans. Ranking, i. 549–51; Elliot and Dowson, v. 490–1; *Ain-i-Akbari*, iii. 475.

[2] Smith, *Akbar*, p. 397.

[3] *Akbar-nama*, vol. iii, chap. 74.

[4] *Oxford History of India*, p. 362.

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 393–4.

marked by a famine of intense severity, which caused unspeakable suffering in northern and central India. Tod, describing its effects in Marwar, said: 'There was no longer distinction of caste, and the Sudra and the Brahman were undistinguishable.... Fruits, flowers, every vegetable thing, even trees were stripped of their bark, to appease the cravings of hunger: nay, *man ate man*! Cities were depopulated. The seed of families was lost, the fishes were extinct, and the hope of all extinguished.'[1]

In spite of the liability of India to recurring periods of distress and acute famine, the Mughal administration does not appear to have made any comprehensive or prolonged effort to provide relief. Heavy mortality, the enslavement of children, and cannibalism were the normal accompaniments of serious famines in Mughal times, as they had been in past ages.[2] In the catastrophic visitation of 1595–8, Akbar made an effort to relieve distress by placing Shaikh Faris of Bokhara, a naturally warm-hearted man, on special duty to superintend relief measures. But although no record of his arrangements has come down to us, it is certain that, with the organization at his disposal, he could not have done more than provide food for the starving in some of the towns and cities. Muhammad Amin-i-Qazwini, author of the *Badshah-nama*, asserts that during the horrible famine of 1630–2, Shah Jahan opened a few soup-kitchens, gave 1½ *lacs* of rupees in charity spread over a period of twenty weeks, and remitted one-eleventh of the land-revenue assessment. Apart from that, no assistance, so far as Mundy could see, was forthcoming for the starving people; and the propriety or possibility of collecting ten-elevenths of the land revenue, which is obviously implied by the remission of one-eleventh, from a country 'reduced to the direst extremity' and retaining 'no trace of

[1] Tod, *Annals, &c.*, ed. Crooke (1920), vol. i, p. 455. W. H. Moreland estimates that between 1614 and 1659, both inclusive, there were twelve famines or periods of great scarcity in India, of which ten occurred during Shah Jahan's reign. (*From Akbar to Aurangzeb*, pp. 208 ff.)

[2] Moreland, *India at the Death of Akbar*, p. 266.

productiveness', strikes one as highly questionable. It is certain that the people died in myriads of starvation and the pestilence that accompanied it; and even weavers and other industrial workers resident in the towns, suffered equally with the agricultural population. The weavers of Gujarat, indeed, collapsed so completely that they abandoned their homes wholesale, and the English factors could not procure cargo for their ships.[1] The famine of 1658–60 was apparently just as severe, particularly in Sind, where, according to a letter from the Surat factors to the East India Company, 'it hath swept away most part of the people'. In the year following (1660) they remarked in a letter of April 13th that 'neaver famine raged worse in any place, the living being hardly able to burye the dead'.[2] Aurangzeb's efforts to lighten the burdens of his subjects were confined to the issue of an order remitting more than seventy vexatious taxes and cesses of various kinds, and strictly prohibiting their collection. Even the relief thus intended was denied to the people; for, according to Khafi Khan, the royal prohibition had no effect, and the local officials continued to collect for their own benefit nearly all the prohibited taxes.[3]

The evidence of contemporary records obliges us to hold that the Mughal administration provided practically no relief in these periodical visitations, and that both in ordinary seasons of distress arising from a deficiency of rainfall, and in the calamitous and prolonged famines mentioned above, the peasant was left to bear the burden unaided; and inasmuch as the demands of the State, aggravated by the rapacity and corruption of the Mughal civil service, prevented his acquiring any economic reserve, he could do naught but succumb to misfortune. The lack of a suitable organization for relief measures, the want of rapid means of communication between different parts of India, and a certain fatalistic outlook upon mundane affairs, all

[1] *Oxford History of India*, p. 394; Moreland, *ibid.*, pp. 127–8, 188.

[2] W. Foster, *English Factories in India, 1655–60*, pp. 210, 307.

[3] *Oxford History of India*, p. 423.

combined to prevent any serious attempt to save human life. Indeed, it was not until a hundred and seventy years after Aurangzeb's death that the preservation of human life, even at enormous cost, was accepted and extolled as the guiding principle of a comprehensive policy of State relief.

§ *Imperial household.* We turn from the dark picture of human suffering to consider some of the featues of the imperial household, which was conducted on a lavish scale. In 1595 Akbar's household and palace, which contained more than a hundred separate offices and workshops, were maintained at an annual cost of 309,186,795 *dams*, or at the rate of 40 *dams* to the rupee, 7,729,670 rupees.[1] The annual expenditure was probably more under Shah Jahan, for both he and his father showed a fixed determination to enjoy to the full the treasure accumulated by the efforts of their forbears, and the revenues which had been won by the fighting instinct and prowess of Babur, Humayun, and Akbar. The two chief officials of the palace were the first *bakhshi*, who is probably identical with the *Mir Arz* or Lord of Requests, and the Palace Commandant, who are referred to by Edward Terry (1616–19) in his account of Jahangir's Court, as 'the Treasurer' and 'the Master of his Eunuches (who is Steward and Comptroller of his House)'.[2] The other principal officials of Jahangir's palace were the Secretary, the Master of the Elephants, the Tent-master, and the Keeper of the Wardrobe. All the departments of the household were carefully organized by Akbar on military lines, including the kitchen, water-supply, stables, fruitery, gardens, and so forth. The kitchen department, for example, was in charge of a *mir bakawal*, who in Akbar's reign ranked as a *mansabdar* of '600', and, in the person of Hakim Humam, was a personal friend of the Emperor. He controlled a large staff of assistants, treasurers for cash and stores, tasters, writers, and 'cooks of all countries', most of whom were members of the *ahadis* and other military forces, and drew pay according

[1] *Ain-i-Akbari*, trans. Blochmann, vol. i.

[2] Smith, *Akbar*, p 359; W. Foster, *Early Travels*, &c., p. 327.

to their rank. A kitchen menial with the rank of a foot-soldier received from 100 to 400 *dams* a month. The *mir bakawal* was responsible for fixing the price of every eatable, for seeing that the stores were replenished every quarter, and that an annual kitchen budget was prepared. Special slaughter-houses were maintained outside the city close to the river or to tanks, in which all the meat intended for the imperial household was washed, before being placed in sealed sacks and dispatched to the kitchen. For fresh vegetables a kitchen garden was maintained, but certain special vegetables, as also ducks and water-fowl, were imported at regular intervals from Kashmir.[1] In Akbar's reign the kitchen department must have had little leisure throughout the twenty-four hours; for although the Emperor only ate one meal during that period, he adhered to no fixed hour, and expected at least one hundred dishes to be ready within an hour of his decision to dine.

The *Abdar Khana* or water-supply department was responsible for maintaining supplies of Ganges water for drinking, and of water from the Jumna and Chinab for cooking. It was cooled by being filtered through saltpetre. Ice, which was used by all ranks during the hot season, was imported daily by carriers, post-carriages, and boats from Panhan, ninety miles from Lahore. Ten boats, each carrying from six to twelve *sers* of ice according to the temperature, are said to have been regularly employed for the carriage of ice daily to the capital, where the sale price in the bazaars varied from two to three *sers* to the rupee. The fruitery was responsible for importing fruit at much expense from Kabul and Kashmir, and even from Badakshan and Samarkand. The stables swarmed with men as well as with animals. William Hawkins (1608–13) states that Jahangir possessed 12,000 elephants and 12,000 horses,[2] and the stables contained about the same numbers in his father's time. To each elephant four servants were ordinarily allotted, but those intended for the Emperor's personal use had seven attendants

[1] *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. i, Ain, 26, &c. [2] W. Foster, *Early Travels*, p. 104.

apiece. As horse-breeding was carried on in many parts of the Mughal Empire, the stables contained many animals of local breed, those from Cutch being reckoned the best; but a very large number were also imported from Turan and Iran. The entire management of the stables department was in the hands of the *atbegi*, a grandee of high rank, assisted by a *daroga* for each stable, *mushrifs* or accountants, inspectors, *akhtachis* in charge of harness, trappings, &c., *chabuksowars*, and grooms innumerable. Besides their sanctioned pay, the *atbegi* and his staff received a perquisite whenever a horse was given as a present; for the price of a gift horse was always calculated at 50 per cent. higher than its real value, and the recipient was expected to express his gratitude for the gift by paying ten *dams* for every *mohur* of the price—which amount was then divided in certain fixed proportions between the *atbegi* and the stable staff. The department was also in charge of the imperial camels—those of Gujarat breed, which were highly esteemed, the racing camels which came from Ajmer, and the burden camels, of which the best were bred in Tatta (Sind); also of the mules, either bred between Kashmir and Attock or imported from Irak; and finally of the oxen, in enormous numbers, which were required to drag Akbar's heavy artillery or transport the vast paraphernalia of the imperial camp. Besides the elephants, horses, camels, and oxen, the imperial mews contained large numbers of deer, dogs, buffaloes, tame lions, hunting-leopards or cheetahs, hawks, pigeons, and singing-birds. One feels no surprise at Jourdain's statement that 'the Kinge [Jahangir] is at greate charge in expence of his howse and for his beasts, as horses, camells, dromedaries, coaches, and elaphannts. It was crediblie reported to Captaine Hawkins in my presence by the Kings purveyour for his beasts, that every daie in the yeare he spent in meate for them 70,000 ripeas [rupees], which is 35,000 rialls [*reals*] of eight'.[1]

The imperial harem contained 5,000 women, each of whom had a separate apartment; and for the purposes of control, the

[1] *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. i; Foster, *Early Travels*, p. 104 *n*.

women were divided into sections, each under a female *daroga* or commandant, who was responsible for the management and discipline of her respective section. The women were paid monthly salaries ranging from 1,000 to 1,600 rupees. These salaries, coupled with the wages of staff, guards, &c., and current and miscellaneous charges, brought the expenditure on the harem to a very high figure, calculated by Hawkins during Jahangir's reign at 30,000 rupees a day.[1] A special staff of writers, cash-keepers (*tahwildar*), and a head cash-keeper, who corresponded direct with the Emperor's Treasurer-General, was employed to keep the accounts and check the expenditure.[2] A body of armed female guards protected the inside of the harem enclosure; outside it were the eunuchs; and beyond them again were posted companies of Rajputs. To ensure complete security, other troops were employed at a greater distance. The imperial zenana with its women, servants, porters, female guards, eunuchs, and military guards practically formed a separate town.

When the Emperor was on the march or on a hunting expedition, the camp was organized and conducted with the same lavish disregard of expenditure. The imperial harem, the audience hall, and the musicians' gallery (*naqqarah khana*) were pitched on a stretch of ground measuring 1,530 yards in length; on two sides and at the rear of this ground, an open space of 360 yards was set apart for the tents of members of the imperial family. None but the guards were allowed to enter this enclosure. At some distance behind their tents, the offices and workshops were located, and behind them again, at the four corners of the camp, the bazaars. The whole formed the grand enclosure, outside which were the encampments of the nobles, arranged according to their rank.[3] Hawkins was greatly impressed by the size of Jahangir's camp, and remarked that 'when hee rideth on progresse or hunting, the compasse of his tents may bee as much as the compasse of London and more; and I may say that of all sorts

[1] W. Foster, *Early Travels*, p. 104. [2] *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. i.
[3] *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 47.

of people that follow the campe there are two hundred thousand, for hee is provided as for a citie'.[1] Abu-l Fazl corroborates his testimony as to the huge extent of the camp by his statement that each encampment, forming the whole, required for its transport 100 elephants, 500 camels, 400 carts, and 100 bearers. Several thousand servants of various kinds were employed, including *farashes*, who were natives of Persia and India, pioneers, water-carriers, carpenters, tent-makers, torch-bearers, leather-workers, and sweepers. Added to these were the military guards, the armed women (*urdu-begis*), and an army of female servants. Some idea of the size of the menial staff employed may be gathered from Abu-l Fazl's statement that the *farash-khana* was able to contain more than 10,000 persons, and that one thousand *farashes* took a week to erect it with the aid of machines.[2] The spectacle presented by Shah Jahan's camp, as it moved slowly to the valley of Kashmir in 1633, must have been remarkable. 'A city of canvas, 100,000 horseman, 50,000 men on foot, as many functionaries, slaves, and eunuchs, the whole retinue of the Queens, Princesses, and favourites escorting them. The elephants sniffed the snow of the passes. At night, in front of the master's purple pavilion, a giant beacon signalled the sovereign will that moved this tumultuous mass, the soul of the horde. They travelled by short stages. There were two camps, so that one was always pitched on the arrival of the train. On the road they hunted the wild boar, the tiger, the lion even, which was then found in Hindustan, by means of nets, of armies of beaters, or of a donkey drunk with opium that served as a bait.'[3]

§ *Daily work of the Emperor.* Descriptions of the luxury and life of the Mughal Court, to which further reference will be made hereafter, must not blind us to the fact that the administration of the Empire depended primarily upon the will and capacity of the Emperor, and consequently that Akbar and

[1] W. Foster, *Early Travels*, p. 106. [2] *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. i.

[3] Vicomte D'Humières, *Through Isle and Empire*, p. 212.

his three immediate successors on the Mughal throne had to perform a great deal of hard work. A modern historian has rightly remarked that 'an Empire like that of the "Great Mughals" in its best days could not have been a dead machine; administration, arts, and wealth could not have developed, as they did develop in that period, if we had had only *fainéants* on the throne, in the council-chamber, and at the head of armies'.[1] The later history of the Empire founded by Babur proves the contention of that authority; for when the imperial line degenerated into a succession of phantoms, the fabric which depended for its very existence upon the personal ability of the autocrat fell into irretrievable ruin. A wide gulf lies between the lust of conquest and the organizing wisdom, inherited by Akbar from Timur, and the titular sovereignty of poor, old, blind Shah Alam, 'seated under a small tattered canopy' to receive Lord Lake in 1803.

Contemporary writers have fortunately bequeathed to us fairly comprehensive accounts of the daily routine of the Emperors in the golden age of the Mughal Empire. Shortly after sunrise Akbar was accustomed to show himself to his subjects of all ranks, 'who watched eagerly for the *darsan*, or view of him on whom their good or evil fortune depended. Before retiring he often disposed of matters of business. His second formal public appearance generally took place after the first watch of the day, but sometimes at a later hour. Only persons of distinction were then admitted. He also frequently appeared informally at other hours at the window (*jharokha*) opening on the audience hall, and would sometimes stand there for two hours, hearing petitions, receiving reports, disposing of judicial cases, or inspecting parades of men and animals. Usually he preferred to stand, but would sometimes sit, either cross-legged on cushions in the Asiatic manner, or on a raised throne after the European fashion. The princes and great nobles were ranged near him according to their several degrees. The proper officers, who came on duty

[1] J. N. Sarkar, *Studies in Mughal India*, p. 2.

in accordance with a regular roster, presented petitions or persons with due form and solemnity, and orders were passed at once. Scribes stood by who took accurate notes of every word which fell from his lips.'[1]

Jahangir, who led a much less strenuous life than Akbar and had more of the contemplative voluptuary in his nature, followed his father's practice, and, according to Terry (1616–19), showed himself three times a day—'first, at sun-rising at a bay-window toward the east, many being there assembled to give him the salam, and crying *Padshah salamat*, that is: *Live, O King.* At noone he sees his elephants fight or other pastimes. A little before sun-set he shewes himselfe at a window to the west, and, the sunne being set, returneth in with drums and wind instruments, the people's acclamations adding to the consort. At any of these three times, any sutor, holding up his petition to be seene, shall be heard. Betwixt seven and nine he sits privately, attended with his nobles.'[2] Hawkins (1608–13), who became a *mansabdar* of '400' and a grandee of the Court, gives a much more detailed account of Jahangir's daily routine,[3] which on the whole differed little from that of Shah Jahan. The latter commenced the day at 4 a.m. with prayer and reading, appeared at the windows before his people at 6.45, and then witnessed elephant combats and cavalry manœuvres; at 7.40 he held his public durbar in the *Diwan-i-Am*, followed by the private audience in the *Diwan-i-Khass* at 9.30. Both these sittings were devoted to administrative work and public affairs, and were followed at 11.40 by confidential consultations on secret and political matters in the *Shah Burj* or royal tower. From noon until 4 p.m. the Emperor remained in the harem, performed his midday devotions, ate a meal, took a siesta, and superintended the distribution of charity to women of all classes. At 4 p.m. the public audience again took place and lasted until 6.30 p.m., when he presided over administrative matters in the *Diwan-i-Khass.* This func-

[1] Smith, *Akbar*, p. 383.

[2] W. Foster, *Early Travels*, p. 326.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 114 ff.

tion was usually enlivened by song and dance, when urgent work was finished; and then, after a second discussion of confidential matters at 8 p.m. in the *Shah Burj*, Shah Jahan retired to the harem, where he listened to music, and had books read aloud to him, until sleep exerted her sway.[1]

The character of the work performed by the Emperor at the public and private audiences has been briefly alluded to in an earlier paragraph. Speaking generally, it included everything which would naturally be settled by an uncontrolled autocrat, upon whose personal wishes and views the whole imperial administration was based and conducted. But the amount and quality of the work so performed necessarily varied to some extent in accordance with the temperament and capacity of the Emperors. Neither Jahangir nor Shah Jahan can have toiled as strenuously as Akbar, who rightly regarded the administrative system of the Empire as his own 'child', nor were their judgments and decisions characterized by the same broad-mindedness and impartiality. Aurangzeb approached more closely to the standard set by Akbar, and showed more seriousness of purpose and less desire for amusement than his father. According to the Court historian, he devoted only three hours out of the twenty-four to sleep, and led a sombre and strenuous life.[2] His formal programme of daily work, which commenced at 7.30 a.m. with the dispensation of justice in the *Diwan-i-Khass* and ended with the dismissal of the Court at 7.40 p.m., followed the lines laid down by his predecessors; but a larger portion of his working hours was devoted to acts of devotion prescribed by the Koran and the Traditions. Thus, the evening work in the hall of private audience was abruptly broken off, directly the voice of the *muezzin* was heard intoning the call to prayer from the minaret of the mosque, and Aurangzeb himself repeated the prescribed responses to the crier's summons. From the eleventh year of his reign (1668) he abolished the musical and dancing parties which in the days of his predecessors had enlivened the evening

[1] J. N. Sarkar, *Studies in Mughal India*, pp. 3 ff. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 71.

AURANGZEB

(from a miniature, enlarged)

gatherings in the *Diwan-i-Khass*.[1] The quality of his administrative work was marred by intense suspiciousness and by 'over-reliance on mere cunning as the principal instrument of statecraft. He never trusted anybody, and his austere and calculating temperament rarely permitted him to feel affection for any man or woman.' He was consequently ill-served by his officials and subordinates, and despite constant application to the task of governing his realm, he failed to secure that grip upon the administration which rendered Akbar's rule so remarkable and in many ways so beneficent. Had Aurangzeb shown a little more understanding of the frailties of human nature, a little more sympathy with the lighter side of Indian life, he would have been a more attractive personality and therefore a greater ruler; and perchance, on his death-bed he would not have given utterance to those expressions of regret and disillusionment which lend so poignant an interest to his final message. 'I have no knowledge of myself, who I am, or for what purpose I am. . . . My years have gone by profitless. . . . The army is confounded, and without heart or help, even as I am: apart from God, with no rest for the heart.'[2]

§ *Professions*. A feature of the Mughal administration which must strike the modern inquirer was the complete absence of specialized departments, such as those concerned with medical aid, excise, forest conservancy, and technical industry, which absorb a recognized share of modern governments. Even had these matters been considered a suitable field for administrative activities, no educated middle-class, such as exists in India to-day, was available to organize, staff, and conduct the necessary departments. 'In Delhi', remarked Bernier, 'there is no middle state. A man must be either of the highest rank or live miserably.' In other words the professional classes—those engaged in the practice of medicine, in the pursuits of literature, art and music—could only hope for an adequate income by attaching themselves to the imperial Court or to the entourage of a provincial gover-

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 70. [2] Bilimoria, *Letters of Aurangzebe.*

nor, who modelled his surroundings on those of the sovereign. There was no large middle-class population, on whom they could depend for the purchase of their artistic masterpieces or for the employment of their professional services. In consequence, the number of medical men and specialists in the Mughal Empire was not large, and the field for Indians was still further restricted by the fact that the patronage of the Emperor, which alone could ensure an adequate income, was largely extended to foreigners from Persia and other parts of Asia. Blochmann has calculated that three-fourths of the poets and more than one-third of the doctors and musicians at Akbar's Court were foreigners, and their sole remuneration was derived from the *mansab* or *jagir* or cash-stipend which they were fortunate enough to obtain from the Emperor. Several of them learnt also by experience that a professional career at the imperial Court was marred by a large element of insecurity. The royal favour was apt to be withdrawn as suddenly as it was granted: the allocation of the stipends or *jagirs* was vested in the department of the *sadr*, which was notoriously corrupt and untrustworthy; and on occasions when reductions of expenditure occupied the attention of the budget authorities, these grants and stipends were often cancelled or reduced in value. Outside the Court and the imperial service, there was no market for the services of the medical man, the *littérateur*, and the artist. The mass of the people—traders, agriculturists, industrial workers, servants and slaves—were too uneducated or too poor to think of employing them. Possibly in some of the towns a *vaid* or *hakim* may have earned a precarious living, but the general mass of the people doctored themselves with herbs, or relied on the efficacy of magic to cure their ills.

§ *Forests.* The forest area in Mughal times was larger than it is to-day. Finch, the European traveller, speaks of the road from Jaunpur to Allahabad passing through a continuous forest; Abu-l Fazl describes forests along the southern bank of the Goghra, where now stands the congested district of Azam-

garh; Moreland points out that the submontane forests of northern India extended much farther into the United Provinces and Behar than is now the case, and that the frontier of settled cultivation might be roughly defined by a line drawn very little to the north of Bareilly, Gorakhpur, and Muzaffarpur.[1] The more remote and inaccessible forests probably yielded no income to the Mughal treasury; while those within easy reach of towns and villages produced little more than the dues which the local revenue authorities exacted from the people in return for permission to collect timber, fuel, and minor produce. We know that in the Deccan in later years the Peshwa's government obtained a small revenue by selling permits to cut wood, but that, as a rule, it preserved forest areas rather for the actual produce than for the revenue which they might yield. In the absence of definite evidence to the contrary, it may be assumed that the policy of the Mughal Government was much the same, and that the forests were not regulated in the modern sense of the term. The absence of scientific management, however, can hardly be regarded as a serious defect in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when we remember the wholesale waste of fine timber which was permitted in England at the same period, and also that a scientific and far-sighted policy of conservation and afforestation was not applied to the forests of India until the year 1855. Moreover, allowing that the State lost a considerable revenue through the absence of comprehensive forest rules and regulations, the rural population reaped a distinct advantage by obtaining for its own use larger supplies of forest produce than are possible in these days.

§ *Slavery*. The subject of slavery may be considered germane to a review of Mughal administration. Although Megasthenes in the fourteenth century B.C. was led to believe that no slaves existed in India, he was certainly misinformed. There is ample evidence to show that in most parts of the country slavery in various forms existed from time immemorial; while

[1] W. H. Moreland, *India at the Death of Akbar*, p. 7.

as regards the immediate predecessors of the Mughal dynasty, we have the testimony of Ziau-din Barani that Firuz Shah Tughlak 'was very diligent in providing slaves, and he carried his care so far as to command his great fief-holders and officers to capture slaves whenever they were at war, and to pick out and send the best for the service of the court. . . . Altogether, in the city and in the various fiefs, there were 180,000 slaves, for whose maintenance and comfort the Sultan took especial care. The institution took root in the very centre of the land, and the Sultan looked upon its due regulation as one of his incumbent duties.'[1] The fact is that slavery and the capture of slaves were recognized by both Hindu and Moslem law; and consequently, both in the Mughal and preceding periods, it was considered natural and reasonable to augment the supply of slaves from time to time by raiding inoffensive villages and carrying off the inhabitants, and also by inflicting servitude as a penalty on criminals and insolvent debtors. A third method of recruitment was the sale of children by their parents in seasons of famine and scarcity—a process which was certainly followed during the reign of Akbar, and for two centuries after his death. In one direction, however, Akbar did endeavour to put a check upon the trade. 'It had been the custom', writes Abu-l Fazl, 'of the royal troops, in their victorious campaigns in India, to sell forcibly and keep in slavery the wives, children, and dependants of the natives. But His Majesty, actuated by his religious, prudent, and kindly feelings, now issued an order that no soldier of the Royal Army should act in this manner.'[2] The chronicler's description of this order as 'the abolition of enslavement' is hardly apposite, for slavery continued to be a recognized institution throughout Akbar's reign: on the other hand, the Emperor did very wisely prohibit his soldiers from participating in a system which had led to serious abuses.

It is doubtful whether the prohibition was observed during the reigns of his successors. If we can credit Finch's description

[1] Smith, *Oxford History of India*, p. 249. [2] *Akbar-nama*, vol. ii.

of the *kamargha*—a favourite form of sport during the reign of Jahangir—the wild tribes of the forest and other lowly people were regarded as on the same footing as wild beasts. The sport consisted in the enclosure by a line or circle of military guards of a considerable tract of the country, and the gradual contraction of the circle until a large quantity of game was hemmed in, within a convenient space. The wild beasts thus captured were killed or otherwise disposed of; while the human beings, 'poor miserable, thievish people, that live in woods and deserts', were dispatched to the market at Kabul to be bartered for horses and dogs. This probably refers to the Dravidian and Kolarian forest tribes—people like the Santal, Gond, Bhil, Mina, and others, who were considered in the Mughal age as entirely outside the pale of humanity, and were shamelessly entrapped and massacred under Maratha rule. Kidnapping flourished also under the Mughal administration, particularly in Bengal, which, according to several writers, supplied a large number of eunuchs.[1]

But India was not the sole source of the supply of slaves. Foreign slaves, who were costly and ranked as articles of luxury, were imported from Africa as well as from western Asia: Abyssinians in particular were in much demand: a regular traffic existed in the natives of Mozambique; and large numbers of slaves were brought from Persia and more distant regions. In this matter the Mughal Government was certainly no more, and in some respects much less, to blame than some of the Christian governments of that age. The slave-dealing of the Portuguese became such a scandal towards the close of Akbar's reign that in 1599 the King of Portugal issued an order regarding the cruelty with which slaves were treated. One of their chief hunting-grounds was the Sunderbunds and the islands off the coast of Bengal, which they almost depopulated in the seventeenth century; and one cannot help feeling that Shah Jahan's treatment of the whole Portuguese population of Hugli in 1629,

[1] Account of Bengal in the *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. ii.

when he sent them as slaves to Agra, was but a fitting retribution for their gross maltreatment of his Indian subjects. The Dutch were very little better; but they dealt chiefly in Abyssinian slaves (*habshis*), who have left their traces in a curious mixed race in Kanara on the western sea-board.[1] It should be borne in mind that, unlike the Portuguese, the Mughals did not as a rule treat their slaves badly. Islam regarded the slave, not as a miserable chattel to be persecuted, but as a well-treated dependant of the household, who might conceivably rise to a position of affluence and responsibility. The careers of Kutbu-d din Aibak, Yalduz, Kubacha, and Iltutmish prove that a slave was not debarred from aspiring to the position of a provincial governor, or even from founding a ruling dynasty.

§ *Predial slavery.* This domestic slavery must be distinguished from the predial slavery or agricultural bondage, which almost certainly existed in rural tracts during the age of the Great Mughals. Village serfdom was probably an institution of old standing, dating from a period long anterior to the sixteenth century; and it may be assumed that the main difference between the constitution of the rural population in Mughal days and at present lies in the existence during the former period of a large class of landless labourers and menial servants, 'who were not free to choose their masters, but were bound to work for the cultivator or cultivators, to whom they were assigned by the custom or tradition of the village'. The position of the agricultural serf of Mughal days cannot have been attractive. In normal times he probably received just enough to subsist on: in times of scarcity and famine 'he had the choice between the certainty of starvation at home and the probability of starvation on the roadside on in the jungle'. He was not free to leave his village in search of work, and presumably would only have received the permission of his masters to go, when the number of labourers available was in excess of the requirements of the village. On the other hand, a fortunate and

[1] W. Crooke, *Things Indian*, s.v. Slavery.

hard-working serf might occasionally rise to the position of an independent cultivator: evidence exists that in later times servile labourers were sometimes allowed to hold plots of land, which they could cultivate when their labour was not required elsewhere; and, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, one may perhaps assume that similar concessions were granted in Mughal times, and that by dint of thrift and good management a labourer might gradually extend his holding, until he had acquired sufficient status to justify his exclusion from the category of predial slaves. But, when all the circumstances of the age are considered, such instances must have been few: the great majority of the landless workers must have died, as they lived, in a state of servitude, trusting perhaps to secure in a future birth some portion of the independence and comfort which had been denied to them during their lifetime.

§ *Defects of administrative system.* The facts set forth above point to the conclusion that the Mughal administrative system, of which the principles and most of the details were devised by Akbar, contained certain inherent defects which ultimately brought about its dissolution. In the first place it admitted of no organic development, and depended far too much for practical success on the personal capacity and work of the ruler. So long as the Emperor's ability did not fall far short of the standard attained by the founder of the system, the administration was tolerably efficient and on the whole fulfilled the requirements of the Empire. But directly the occupants of the Mughal throne degenerated into a line of *rois fainéants*, incapable of initiative and addicted to self-indulgence, the fabric fell rapidly into ruin. Secondly, the system made no appeal to popular sentiment, and drew no support from ancient tradition. By most Indians it must have been regarded as a foreign system, despite Akbar's endeavour in several directions to follow the policy of the Hindu rulers of past centuries; and the fact that the upper grades of the public service were filled almost entirely by men hailing from Persia and countries beyond

the Indian frontier must have impressed on Hindu minds the alien character of Mughal institutions. Akbar, endowed by nature with almost uncanny vision, detected this weakness, and sought to counteract it by successfully enlisting the interest of the most powerful Hindu families. But the erroneous policy of Shah Jahan and the fanaticism of Aurangzeb brought Akbar's plans to naught, thus depriving the administration of the only support which could in any degree serve as a substitute for popular favour. Thirdly, the standard of living expected of those appointed to translate the principles of government into practice was far too exalted and luxurious to admit of their remaining honest and incorruptible. Thrift in the public service was definitely discouraged, and the only safeguard against wholesale corruption was the constant and active control of the Emperor. When that control slackened, as was bound in time to happen, the imperial officials became the merest parasites and oppressors and by their exactions and general misgovernment produced widespread poverty and ultimately financial ruin. The sinister influence of this luxurious and improvident standard of living is clearly apparent in the history of the imperial army. Akbar's exceptional ability and military prowess enabled him to construct an army far superior to that of other contemporary Indian States, and despite a certain deterioration under the rule of Jahangir and Shah Jahan it remained tolerably efficient until the middle of Aurangzeb's reign. After that date, however, the incapacity of the imperial princes, whose powers of initiative had been ruined by ill-judged parental control, and the enervation of the nobles and leaders by excessive luxury, wrecked the efficiency of the imperial forces and left them powerless in the face of the challenge thrown down by the hardy and determined Marathas.

Nevertheless, despite its defects, Akbar's administrative system lasted practically intact for a century and a half. This, indeed, could not have been so had not Akbar's three immediate successors been, each in his own way, men of outstanding ability.

At the same time, as one reads of the splendours of the imperial Court, of the lavish expenditure on peerless architectural monuments, of the costly treasures of the Emperors, one realizes that the appetite for conquest and the will to live, so powerfully resilient in each generation of the Timurids, began to grow weak after Akbar's death. 'In Aurangzeb the old atavistic fighting instinct reappeared, coloured by fanaticism; but this time it was too late, the heroic age was accomplished: after the son of Shah Jahan, the mighty line slipped away in phantoms.' The Mughals, from Timur downwards, seem to have had a profound conception of destiny and of universal vanity, and perhaps instinctive realization of the fleeting nature of worldly things, which expresses itself in Timur's answer to his captive, Bayazid, and in Akbar's message upon the prodigious triumphal gate of Fathpur-Sikri, may have insensibly produced that atrophy of the talents and the will-power which gave the earlier representatives of the line their victories in the military and administrative spheres.

And yet, could he have foreseen it, Akbar would have realized that the work which he accomplished was not wholly doomed to extinction. Nearly two hundred years later, when all traces of his elaborate administrative system seemed to have disappeared, 'the newly-constituted Anglo-Indian authorities began to grope their way back to the institutions of Akbar. They gradually adopted the principal features of his system in the important department concerned with the assessment of the land revenue, or crown share of agricultural produce, known in Indian official language as the Settlement Department. In several provinces of the existing Indian empire the principles and practice of the Settlement Department are essentially the same as those worked out by Akbar and his ministers. The structure of the bureaucratic framework of government also still shows many traces of his handiwork.'[1] In brief, the verdict of the historian rightly reminds us that modern India owes

[1] Smith, *Akbar*, p. 355.

much more than is superficially apparent to the administrative genius of the Great Mughal.

It is also permissible to state that, had the principles of the revenue administration formulated by Akbar been rigidly observed by his successors, the administrative and economic decline of the Mughal Empire would have been less rapid. Neither Jahangir nor Shah Jahan in their later years, nor Aurangzeb during the greater part of his reign, can be compared with Akbar as regards administrative genius; and contemporary records indicate that Shah Jahan's capacity rapidly deteriorated as he grew older.[1] Both he and Jahangir, as well as Aurangzeb, relinquished the two salient features of Akbar's land revenue arrangements, upon which the prosperity of the Empire mainly depended—namely, the payment of official salaries in cash, and the obligation on the collectors of revenue to deal direct with individual cultivators. Jahangir's own memoirs prove that assignments of land, in lieu of cash remuneration, were the normal method of paying for official services, and that the evils of this system were aggravated by constant transfers, which practically obliged the officials to squeeze as much as they could out of the peasantry within the time at their disposal. Shah Jahan transferred his officials less frequently; but it is calculated that about seven-eighths of the whole of the land revenue was assigned during this reign, and under Aurangzeb the proportion was even greater. Consequently the agricultural population were left to deal with various types of assignee or grantee, each of whom was bent upon collecting the largest amount of money for his own personal ends, instead of with the official collector of revenue, who played so important a part in Akbar's organization.

Besides the multiplication of assignments, the practice of farming the revenue, and of summary village 'settlements', the enhancement of the standard of assessment from one-third to one-half of the gross produce, and the extension of the area of

[1] W. Foster, *English Factories in India*, vol. v, p. 204; vii, p. 302; viii, p. 51.

cultivation by sheer force, were some of the measures adopted during the century following the death of Akbar. The latter had forbidden the farming system, yet it had become a common practice by 1616; he had likewise forbidden the village settlement system, whereby the head-man contracted to pay a lump sum for the village as a whole, yet orders issued by Aurangzeb in 1665–6 prove that this system was normally followed at that date. The raising of the standard of assessment was rendered necessary by the lavish expenditure of the Court in Shah Jahan's reign; but in doing so, the Emperor strained the economic system past recovery and paved the way for national bankruptcy. Bernier, referring to the year 1656 in his letter to Colbert, shows that the peasants were absconding from their villages and land was falling rapidly out of cultivation, in consequence of the unbearable burden of the land-revenue demand and the tyrannous methods by which it was assessed and collected. It was left finally to Aurangzeb to authorize the official assessors of the revenue in 1668 to enforce the extension of cultivation by flogging. It is hardly surprising that both Bernier and Tavernier should have commented upon the extreme poverty of the agricultural population in the middle of the seventeenth century; for the oppression practised by the Mughal officials and the flight of the peasantry to the territories of Hindu chiefs were two matters which came directly under their observation. And their testimony is corroborated by other contemporary writers, who show that the mass of the population had 'no incentive to energy and no chance of escape except by emigration', that is to say, either by 'flight to some region where conditions for the moment seemed to be more favourable or surrender of personal freedom in return for the promise of subsistence in a foreign country'.[1] Between the instructions to Akbar's revenue officials contained in the *Ain-i-Akbari* and Aurangzeb's order to his assessors to flog the peasantry into cultivating their fields,

[1] W. H. Moreland, *From Akbar to Aurangzeb*, pp. 246 ff. The last three paragraphs of this chapter are based on this authority.

how wide a gulf is fixed! As the former may serve to indicate the beneficent intentions of the greatest and most active of the descendants of Timur, so the latter order is symbolical of the ruin of the Mughal administration. By the close of Aurangzeb's reign the Empire was ripe for dissolution, and one of the most potent factors of decay was the increasing tyranny and oppression of the Mughal bureaucracy.

CHAPTER VII

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL FEATURES OF THE MUGHAL AGE[1]

¶ *Agricultural system.*

AGRICULTURE was, as it still is, the staple industry of Mughal India and the chief source of the imperial revenue. The main features of the agricultural system and the character of the crops grown in different parts of the country differed little from those of to-day; though the huge jute industry of modern times, the growth of indigo cultivation in Behar, and the immense development of wheat and sugar-cane in the United Provinces were, of course, unknown in the Mughal age. Excluding these comparatively recent developments of production, the main differences between the agricultural system of Akbar's reign and that of modern times consist in the comparative lack of artificial irrigation, the existence of predial slavery as a normal feature of rural life, and the heavier incidence of the State demand, all of which characterized the former period. Mr. Moreland points out that the average amount remaining at the disposal of the peasant, after satisfying the claims of the Government and others, was distinctly smaller than it is now. Under Akbar's successors the agricultural system remained unchanged in character, but the stimulus to productive effort on the part of the *rijot* was steadily weakened by a reduction of the surplus income available for his personal use and enjoyment; and this, in combination with the increasing tyranny and exactions of local officials, led to the abandonment of tillage in many areas. The land revenue, which is stated in

[1] Except where otherwise mentioned in footnotes, the facts and conclusions in regard to economic conditions and trade are taken from Mr. W. H. Moreland's two important works, *India at the Death of Akbar* and *From Akbar to Aurangzeb*.

the *Ain-i-Akbari* to have amounted to 363 crores of *dams* in Akbar's reign, had, according to the *Badshah-nama*, risen in the time of Shah Jahan to 880 crores of *dams*; and in addition to the large enhancement of the State demand indicated by these figures, the extravagant habits of Shah Jahan's costly bureaucracy and the steady growth of their indebtedness involved the imposition upon the rural population of all manner of local taxes, cesses, and transit dues, which were often levied in open defiance of the imperial orders. In consequence, the agriculturist had practically no margin to live upon and therefore no incentive to cultivate his land. The requirements of English and Dutch merchants during the seventeenth century must have stimulated the cultivation of silk and cotton in some parts of India; but, broadly speaking, the only innovation in agriculture after the death of Akbar was the cultivation of tobacco, the knowledge of which was brought to India by the Portuguese. It seems to have been hardly known before the reign of Jahangir and to have been first cultivated in Gujarat, where the leaf was obtainable in 1613. That the practice of tobacco-smoking was becoming popular in 1617 is indicated by Jahangir's order in that year prohibiting smoking. But, as in other matters, the order appears to have had little practical effect; for, according to Manucci, the tobacco farm at Delhi brought a large sum to the treasury in the early years of Aurangzeb's reign, which, even assuming the actual figures given by Manucci to be exaggerated, proves that the habit had widely spread.

The chief items of non-agricultural production in the Mughal age were fisheries, which brought in a comparatively trifling revenue, minerals, salt, sugar, opium, indigo, and liquor. The mines of central India and Rajputana provided a certain quantity of copper during Akbar's reign, but probably ceased working soon after Jahangir's accession: iron, which was needed for tools, implements, arms and so forth, was produced in many parts of India: quicksilver, tin, lead, and zinc were generally imported from abroad. Salt, which was much dearer than at present, was

recovered by various processes from the mines of the Punjab, from the Sambhar Lake, and from the waters of the sea; while Bengal supplied a tolerably refined class of sugar, which was exported by sea to the Malabar coast and also up the Ganges to the Mughal capital.. The bulk of the population probably used *gur* (molasses), as the white sugar in favour at the imperial Court, which cost 128 *dams* per maund, was far too costly for them to purchase. The cultivation of opium in Malwa and Behar was of long-standing: indigo was produced at Biana and other centres, and, as remarked above, must have benefited by the demand of European merchants during the century succeeding Akbar's death. As regards liquor, Akbar bade his *kotwals* restrict manufacture as far as they could; Jahangir, who was a heavy drinker himself, prohibited manufacture. But the order failed of effect, as apparently the preparation of *tadi* in the south and of *mahua* liquor in the north of India continued unabated. The most noteworthy feature of non-agricultural production during the reigns of Akbar's successors was the enhanced demand for saltpetre, the production of which gave employment to considerable numbers of workmen.

§ *Industry and crafts.* Neither under Akbar nor his successors was there any industrial organization in the modern sense of the word. The weaver, the carpenter, and the artisan, who produced a large quantity of commodities, some of which were valuable, were financed almost entirely by middlemen, who exploited them to their heart's content. The only classes which might by constant purchase of their products have absolved the worker and handicraftsman from dependence upon the middleman, were the nobility and high officials; but the tastes of the latter, as elsewhere remarked, lay rather in the direction of costly foreign commodities and novelties than of indigenous manufactures.. The cost of materials was high, the burden of taxation was heavy; and the workers were therefore unable to avoid subjection to the middleman, who left them no margin of profit with which to meet periods of scarcity and

distress. Akbar endeavoured to relieve their condition by abolishing many cesses and taxes, levied on artificers, products, and occupations; but the remissions were probably only temporary and were collected by local officials in defiance of the Emperor's orders.. Mr. Moreland calculates the rates of daily wages paid during Akbar's reign to have beeen as follows in modern currency: ordinary labourer, 5½ annas; superior labourer, 8½ to 11 annas; carpenter, 8½ annas to Rs. 1¼; builder, 14 annas to Rs. 1¾. The lowest grade of slaves in the imperial Court received 12 annas a month, and few menials or foot-soldiers drew any larger monthly wage than Rs. 3. Though there is no evidence of the wages earned by artisans, they are generally represented in contemporary records as having been badly circumstanced throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The same may be said of the craftsmen and industrial workers, who frequently had to pay fines and *dasturi* to their superiors, and were often forced to work for nothing during the reigns of Akbar's successors. Their circumstances, indeed, seem to have steadily deteriorated under Jahangir and Shah Jahan, and resulted in the time of Aurangzeb in constant migration under stress of poverty from rural to urban areas.

Among the principal crafts of the Mughal age were the manufacture of wooden bedsteads, chests, stools, and boxes; of leather goods in small quantities; of paper; of pottery, which was extensive; and of bricks. Edward Terry noticed that 'many curious boxes, trunks, standishes (pen-cases), carpets, with other excellent manufactures' were procurable in the Mughal dominions. Many of the craftsman's productions possessed artistic merit; but, generally speaking, their value consisted as much in the cost of the materials used in their manufacture as in the skill applied; while the market for such goods was determined by the requirements of the extravagant ruling classes and of a small and fluctuating foreign demand. There was consequently little opportunity of expansion in this class of manufacture. Silk-weaving was similarly restricted in scope during the Mughal

age, as the wearing of silk clothes was confined to the upper classes, who formed a mere fraction of the total population, and the products of Indian looms had to face the competition of silk goods imported from the Far East, central Asia, Persia, and the lands abutting on the eastern end of the Mediterranean. Akbar's patronage and interest in this industry provided a considerable stimulus to the demand in Court circles and were directly responsible for the expansion of silk-weaving in Lahore, Agra, Fathpur-Sikri, as well as in Gujarat. His influence was likewise felt in the shawl and carpet-weaving industries, the shawls, which were woven mainly from hair and originated in Kashmir, being manufactured at Lahore, and the carpets at Lahore and Agra. Abu-l Fazl speaks of skilful masters and workmen settling in India to teach the people an improved method of manufacture; of Akbar himself acquiring a practical knowledge of the whole weaving trade; and of hair-weaving and silk-spinning of all kinds being brought to perfection. In order to foster a demand for such goods, Akbar ordered people of certain ranks to wear particular kinds of locally woven coverings—an order which resulted in the establishment of a large number of shawl manufactories in Lahore; and inducements were offered to foreign carpet-weavers to settle in Agra, Fathpur-Sikri, and Lahore, and manufacture carpets to compete with those imported from Persia. . The imperial weaving-shops turned out special carpets priced at Rs. 1,800, and a large variety of *jajams*, *shetrinjis*, *baluchis*, and silk mats. One of the most famous carpets woven in the imperial factory at Lahore was that presented to the Girdler's Company of London by their master, R. Bell. Abu-l Fazl, however, admits that the import of Persian carpets was nevertheless considerable, and, apart from the stimulus provided by the Emperor's personal encouragement, the industry does not appear to have made any marked progress. Woollen goods woven on Indian looms consisted chiefly of coarse blankets, which were all that the general mass of the population could afford to purchase. The *Ain-i-Akbari* shows that velvet and

broadcloth, particularly the scarlet cloth affected by the upper classes, were all imported from Europe in Akbar's reign; and this was also the case during the seventeenth century.

By far the most extensive industry in India during the Mughal period was the manufacture of cotton goods, which were sold both locally and abroad. Excellent cotton goods were woven at Benares, as Fitch remarked in 1585; at Agra, in Malwa, the Deccan, and Gujarat, and at various other centres: muslin of exceedingly fine quality, 'the best and finest in all India', according to Terry, was produced at Sonargaon, in the Dacca district: miscellaneous goods, such as cotton carpets, coverlets, rugs, ropes, bed-tapes and so forth, were woven everywhere. 'The aggregate production [of cotton goods]', says Moreland, 'was one of the great facts of the industrial world of the year 1600'; and even allowing for the fact that the clothing of the bulk of the population was very scanty, and that in Bengal the wearing of sackcloth made from jute may to some extent have superseded cotton clothing, it is no exaggeration to say that every Indian wore cloth produced in the country. Besides feeding her own markets, India also supplied the east coast of Africa, Arabia, Egypt, Burma, Malacca, the Straits, and certain minor Asiatic markets. The industry, which was well established in Akbar's day, continued to flourish under Jahangir and Shah Jahan, and received a great stimulus from the operations of Dutch and English traders, who brought India into direct touch with western markets. At the date of Jahangir's death the English had laid the foundation of the Gujarat export trade in calicoes; by the close of Shah Jahan's reign, Madras calicoes were a leading item of the export trade of the eastern coast. The new demand for cotton goods from Europe necessarily resulted in increased production; and though the profits obtained by the producer were confined to certain distinct areas, India may be held to have obtained direct benefit from the enterprise of the foreign merchants who established the trade with western Europe.

§ *Foreign trade.* The foreign trade and commerce of India, which had originally been organized by the Muhammadan trading classes of the west coast, and remained largely in their hands, even after the arrival of the Portuguese in eastern waters, attained considerable dimensions during the Mughal period. Both Akbar and Jahangir interested themselves in the foreign sea-borne trade, though they played no part in the struggle for the supremacy of the marine trade-routes. Akbar himself indulged in trade and, according to Father Monserrate, was eager for commercial profits,[1] but, as stated elsewhere, he made no effort to challenge Portuguese control of the sea, and readily obtained licences from the latter for the ships which he dispatched from Gujarat to the Red Sea ports. In Akbar's reign the principal outlets for foreign sea-borne trade were the ports of Cambay and Surat; Bengal, in particular Satgaon, 'a faire citie for a citie of the Moores, and very plentifull of all things';[2] the Coromandel coast; the Indus; and, for the pepper trade, the coast of Malabar. The Bengal ports were probably less popular than the others; for as late as 1627, the last year of Jahangir's reign, the Governor-General of Batavia declared that constant wars and rebellions and frequent administrative changes had rendered trade in Bengal precarious, and that the estuaries of both the Hugli and the Meghna swarmed with pirates, who preyed upon trade and shipping. On land the export trade followed two main routes, namely, from Lahore to Kabul and from Multan[3] to Kandahar; but the traffic was restricted and irregular, as all merchandise had to be carried on pack-animals and there was constant danger of robbery and violence *en route.*

The chief exports of the Mughal Empire during Akbar's reign

[1] See V. A. Smith, *Akbar*, p. 411.

[2] Ralph Fitch in W. Foster, *Early Travels in India*, p. 26.

[3] The Multanis were particularly adventurous traders. In the early eighteenth century they had a settlement on the Caspian Sea at Baku, and are said to have built a temple there. For details see article by L. Parma Nand in *Panjab Historical Society's Journal*, vol. viii.

were textiles, pepper, indigo, opium and other drugs, and miscellaneous goods; while imports from abroad included bullion, horses, raw silk, metals, ivory, coral, amber, precious stones, textiles (silk, velvet, brocade, broadcloth), perfumes, drugs, China goods, European wines, and African slaves. China goods consisted of large consignments of fine Chinese porcelain, which found much favour with the Emperor and his Moslem nobles. Akbar's dinner, for example, was always served on porcelain dishes. 'When he died in 1605, he left in Agra alone more than two millions and a half of rupees worth of "most elegant vessels of every kind in porcelain and coloured glass". The glass probably came from Venice. Little or nothing of that vast store now exists, but the Indian bazaars still yield occasionally, or yielded some years ago, good specimens of porcelain imported during the Mogul period. The favourite ware was that known to European connoisseurs as "celadon", but at Delhi called "ghori". . . . Most of the good Indian examples seem to belong to the Ming period (A.D. 1368–1644), but a few pieces may go back to the Sung period (A.D. 960–1280). The ware was specially esteemed because it was believed to split or break if brought into contact with poisoned food.'[1]

As compared with the trade of modern times, the total foreign trade of India at the opening of the seventeenth century was small; for there was no market for European goods among the mass of the people, who were too poor to purchase them, while the upper classes were attracted chiefly by costly trifles and novelties. At the same time India's exports were restricted by the fact that, though eager to sell her products, she usually required gold or silver in exchange, and, as remarked elsewhere, there was strong opposition in England to the free export of bullion to the east. Nevertheless, after Akbar's death, when foreign merchants gradually opened new markets for Indian calicoes, saltpetre, indigo, raw silk, and other commodities, Europe was obliged to supply her agents in India with the money they needed for these

[1] V. A. Smith, *Akbar*, pp. 411, 412.

purchases. The rates of interest on loans raised in the Indian market were usually heavy; and consequently the free export of gold and silver bullion to India formed the only feasible method of financing the new trade with the west. It was to this export of bullion that Sir Thomas Roe referred in his remark that 'Europe bleedeth to enrich Asia'; and it was on this account that the East India Company had to face constant and sometimes violent criticism in England during the seventeenth century.

During the reigns of Jahangir, Shah Jahan, and Aurangzeb, the salient feature of the trade of the Empire was the commercial activity of the Dutch and English, who modified the trend of Indian commerce with the East African coast and Asia, and established, on lines which admitted of unlimited expansion, a direct trade between eastern and western markets. The period of Jahangir's rule was occupied by both European nations in testing the requirements and possibilities of the new trade: by 1625 the trade in indigo and calicoes had been established, and Surat on the west coast had become the principal centre for European imports and exports. Then occurred the frightful famine of 1630–2, which obliged English traders again to prospect a large part of India, with the object of supplementing the temporarily reduced supplies of Gujarat; and by the year 1650, less than a decade before the end of Shah Jahan's reign, the English and Dutch were firmly established in all the chief marts of the coast, from Sind to Bengal, and were actively prosecuting commercial enterprises over a large part of Behar and the area now styled the United Provinces. The calicoes of Madras, the saltpetre of Behar, and the silk and sugar of Bengal were four of the chief items of India's trade with Europe during the reign of Aurangzeb. The demand for European goods in India was, as already stated, small, and the East India Company was therefore forced to finance its agents' operations by large shipments of gold and silver; but the new trade with Europe did afford the wealthy upper classes in India wider opportunities of indulging

their taste for costly knick-knacks, which were entered in English export lists under the general category of 'Toys', intended for presentation or sale to the Indian nobility.

In this matter the Emperors themselves set the fashion. Jahangir was described as an amateur of all rarities and antiquities', and displayed an almost childish love of toys. Covert describes how he presented the Emperor with 'a small whistle of gold, weighing almost an ounce, set with sparks of rubies, which he took and whistled therewith *almost an hour*':[1] the Dutch factor, van Ravesteyn, asked his superiors in Europe to send out curiosities, 'particularly for the Great Mogul', including 'pictures, mirrors as tall as a man with frames wrought with festoons'. The presentation by the Dutch to Shah Jahan of a large copper lantern procured for them certain trade concessions, and was followed by a request from the Emperor for lacquered palanquins from Japan. 'Fine greyhounds and some strong dogs which will tackle tigers' scarcely fall within the category of 'toys'; but they were certainly novelties in India at that date, and more than one of the Mughal Emperors showed keen interest in dogs imported from Europe. Terry gives an amusing account of two mastiffs brought to Jahangir by Sir Thomas Roe. Each was carried in a little coach, and one of them was plucky enough to attack an elephant. The Mughal was so delighted that he allowed four attendants to each dog, and had them carried about in palanquins. He even had a pair of silver tongs made, that he might feed them with his own hands. He finally commissioned Roe to procure him another pair of mastiffs and some Irish deer-hounds.[2] Edwards, an English merchant, had previously obtained a worthless *farman* and a present of Rs. 3,000 from the same Emperor in return for a mastiff, which 'pincht' a young leopard to death and tackled a wild boar.[3] Bernier records that Aurangzeb used to keep

[1] H. G. Rawlinson, *British Beginnings in Western India*, p. 84 *n.*

[2] W. Crooke, *Things Indian*, p. 143.

[3] H. G. Rawlinson, *British Beginnings in Western India*, p. 73.

Uzbeg or central Asia hounds, and had a little red coat made for each of them ; while an original letter of John Child, President of the Surat Factory, dated the 23rd April 1683, shows that on one occasion he induced the Mughal governor of Surat to change his mind by a present of two toy spaniels.[1]

Mr. Moreland warns one against the assumption that the European trade-pioneers had matters all their own way during the seventeenth century. They found that the markets in India exhibited much the same features as markets in other parts of the world, with their commercial monopolies and rings, their brokers, their machinery for credit, exchange and insurance, their keen competition between buyer and seller, and their search for exclusive information. They discovered that Indian merchants were, in the words of William Finch, 'as subtle as the devil', or, in plain English, quite as capable men of business as themselves. The ability which the Indian could bring to bear on commercial problems is shown by the career of the famous Virji Vora, who between 1619 and 1670 financed the transactions of English merchants, practically controlled the whole trade of Surat, and was popularly supposed to be the richest merchant in the world. The chief danger that merchants had to face during the reigns of Akbar's successors was the possibility of interference by the local Mughal governor or other high official, who might appear in the market at any moment, either personally or by nominee, as 'buyer or seller of practically any commodity'. When this occurred, 'it meant that competition was for the time being displaced by force'. He might also set up a monopoly, as the governor of Ahmadabad did in indigo in 1647, or form a 'corner' or combine, as the governor of Surat did in food-grains in 1632, when the district was still suffering from famine. He might even monopolize the whole trade of a port, as happened at Hugli in 1635–6, and indulge in wholesale and lengthy commercial operations, after the fashion of Mir Jumla, who at the height of his career owned ships and land transport and carried

[1] R. and O. Strachey, *Keigwin's Rebellion*, pp. 37, 38.

on a large trade with foreign countries. The inconvenience which such an official might cause to traders is indicated in an English letter of 1659, to the effect that Mir Jumla had ordered the doors of the English factory at Kasimbazar in Bengal to be closed, and had forbidden any one to trade with the English, until the latter had paid him a formal visit.[1] The treatment accorded to Indian merchants was sometimes even more unpleasant. A rich trader was always liable to barefaced extortion, as happened in 1638 to Virji Vora himself, who was cast into prison and suffered 'most barbarous tyranny' by order of the Governor of Surat. Added to the possibility of obstruction by local magnates, the time and cost of transporting goods across India and between India and Europe added a large element of speculation to all trading transactions; and this was not fully obviated until the scientific discoveries of the nineteenth century—the submarine cable, the telegraph and wireless installations—were made to subserve the requirements of commerce.

§ *Economic system.* In considering the economic system of the Mughal period, one is struck by the wide gulf separating producers from consumers. Excluding the wild forest tribes, who were regarded as outside the pale of humanity and fit only to be captured and sold into slavery, the producers comprised the agricultural population, the industrial workers, and the traders. The consuming classes consisted of the imperial public service, civil and military, the professional and religious classes, servants, and slaves; and most of these classes were numerically overstocked, or, in other words, all the requirements of the State and society could have been met by the employment of much smaller numbers in each category. The hosts of religious mendicants performed no useful function, and much of the domestic service rendered by the crowds of retainers and menials was quite unnecessary. A small well-trained army would have been less costly and more efficient than the large Mughal host, which lacked training and organization and proved of very little use

[1] W. Foster, *English Factories in India*, 1655–60, p. 286.

against hardy and well-disciplined troops like Shivaji's *mawalis* and *hetkaris*. In short, a large portion of the income of the Mughal dominions was wasted or spent on superfluous services, and the cost of this extravagance had ultimately to be shouldered by the producing classes. The nobles and high officials, who were comparatively few in numbers and were mostly foreigners, were highly paid by Akbar and extravagantly remunerated by Shah Jahan, and they spent their incomes lavishly on objects of luxury and display. As has been remarked elsewhere, these habits of extravagance were practically forced upon them by the order that all the wealth of which they might be possessed at the time of their death should escheat to the imperial treasury. They thus had no encouragement to practice thrift, and they ran the risk also of losing during their lifetime any wealth which they might be discovered to have saved. The only course open to them was to waste their large incomes during life on heavy dowries for their daughters, on the construction of costly mausolea and commemorative monuments, and on lavish staffs and foreign luxuries. They also spent enormous sums on food, using ice, which was very costly, all the year round, and importing fruit at great expense from Samarkand and other distant regions. Their extravagance in dress is indicated by Abu-l Fazl's custom of distributing his whole wardrobe annually among his servants; they paid high prices for jewellery, for elephants, for horses, which cost from Rs. 200 to Rs. 1,000 apiece, and for elephant trappings; they wasted much wealth on sport and gambling, on the decoration of their tents, and on costly presents to the Emperor and persons of influence. Their menial staffs comprised literally hundreds of servants. This improvident style of living produced its inevitable nemesis. Bernier, who was in India during the reign of Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb, records that most of the nobles and high officials at that date were impoverished and in debt, and in their efforts to stave off financial ruin they resorted to heartless oppression of the peasantry.

The gulf which lay between the upper and lower classes was apparent in the reign of Akbar, and grew wider during the rule of Jahangir and Shah Jahan. The chief of the Dutch factory at Agra, reviewing conditions in the year 1626, remarked that, while immense power and luxury were the portion of the rich, the general mass of the population was indescribably poor. Though nominally free men, the workman, the peon, and the shopkeeper were little better than slaves. The workman, in particular, was the victim of low wages and oppression; he was at the beck and call of the members of the bureaucratic hierarchy, any one of whom, if he required his services, would seize him, flog him if he protested, and, on the conclusion of his forced task, would pay him half what was rightly due, or sometimes nothing at all. His personal belongings were few, his food was bad, his home was a mere hovel. Servants and peons were little better off; they were paid only for part of the month; their wages were trifling and were often months in arrears. The shopkeeper or retail-dealer enjoyed rather more independence; but if he was tolerably well-off, he was obliged to conceal the fact, lest a false charge might be concocted against him and his goods be seized; and he was almost always forced to sell his wares to the nobles at less than half-price. This official tyranny was specially noticed by Bernier at the close of Shah Jahan's reign; and both he and his compatriot Tavernier show that the conditions outlined above lasted up to 1670. The upper classes might have atoned in some measure for their oppression of the lowly by promoting the economic development of the Mughal territories. In point of fact they did nothing of the kind, and they hoarded in unproductive forms such part of their income as was not wasted in luxury. Their patronage of European merchants certainly produced an indirect benefit to the country, for it facilitated the opening of new channels of trade and prepared the way for later economic developments; and although it was directed wholly towards securing luxuries and novelties for their own personal gratification, the traders, the men of

business, and the small middle-class population, who were people of moderate means, did reap some advantage from the trade established by the foreigners. Whatever profits they may have made, however, they were careful to conceal; for any overt display involved the risk of arousing the cupidity of the officials, who were prone to confiscate a trader's possessions on the flimsiest pretexts. The only persons of the middle class who lived in any style during the reigns of Jahangir and Shah Jahan were some of the Indian merchants resident on the west coast; but even they were not always immune from the unpleasant attentions of the local Mughal officials.

Members of the professional class could not expect to earn anything like a fair income, unless they had the good fortune to be attached to the imperial Court, and they were therefore usually in poor circumstances. But the poorest of all were the lower classes, who even in the reign of Akbar lived on the very verge of starvation, and suffered terribly in seasons of scarcity and famine. A minimum of clothing and a few household utensils were their sole possessions; they were strangers to social service or communal benefits. In the background of their lives brooded the shadow of famine, which from time to time produced economic chaos and usually involved the break-up of their homes, the sale of their children into slavery, and sheer starvation. Their circumstances deteriorated rapidly after the death of Akbar. Several European travellers—Linschoten, Hawkins, Salbank, Jourdain, Sir Thomas Roe, Pyrard de la Valle, de Laet—have testified to this fact, while Bernier and Tavernier both lay stress on the oppression practised by the official classes. The land was often tilled only under compulsion, and there was continuous emigration to the territories of Hindu Rajas by persons weary of the tyranny of the Mughal bureaucracy. 'So much is wrung from the peasants', wrote the chief of the Dutch factory at Agra in 1616, 'that even dry bread is scarcely left to them for their food'; and Methwold and the Council at Surat, in describing the gradual recovery of the country from famine,

remarked 'that the villages fill but slowly, yet it betters with them also; and if the excessive tyranny and covetousness of the governor of all sorts would give the poor people leave but to lift up their head in one year's vacancy from oppression, they would be enabled to keep cattle about them, and so to advance the plenty which the earth produces'. The artisans in the cities were not much better circumstanced: van Twist laid emphasis on the contrast between the comfort of the merchant and the poverty of the craftsman, and all contemporary accounts agree in describing the weavers of the towns as very poor.

A remarkably exhaustive study of the economic conditions of the Mughal Empire, of which the preceding paragraphs form a *résumé*, has led Moreland to the following general conclusions. The chief features of the economic life of India during Akbar's reign were inadequate production and faulty distribution, and as there were no causes tending to enhance the former or improve the latter, a period of increasing impoverishment was practically inevitable. The radical evil was 'administrative exploitation, which in Akbar's time and from a much earlier period dominated and sterilized the energies of the population of India'. The producer was at the mercy of men accustomed to lavish display and luxury, who held office in circumstances and under conditions which debarred them from all effort to develop the moral and material welfare of the agricultural and industrial masses, and which at the same time obliged them to sequestrate for their own benefit an unduly large proportion of the worker's gross income. A certain change in the situation necessarily followed the arrival in India of English and Dutch traders, and during the reigns of Jahangir, Shah Jahan, and Aurangzeb, an increased demand for commodities and the introduction of new staples and improved processes, for which those traders were responsible, did bring some benefit to the Mughal Empire. But the poverty of the masses, who were forced to contribute 'half their gross income to the support of a relatively small number of economic parasites', and the disinclination of the small

middle class to indulge in expenditure which might arouse the rapacity of the Mughal civil service, effectively prevented any marked development of the import trade, which was largely confined to commodities designed to attract the caprices of the Mughal nobility. On the other hand, the advantage derived from the opening of new markets for such Indian exports as indigo, calico, and saltpetre was at the best partial, and the trade activities of the Dutch and English, valuable as they were, produced no universal increase of the general income of the community.

All chance of economic progress, based upon the opening of new markets and growing trade, was frustrated by the Mughal administrative system, which left the producer barely sufficient for his subsistence and wasted most of the proceeds of his labour on unproductive pursuits. Official exploitation was not unknown in Akbar's reign, despite the Emperor's efforts to hold it in check; it increased steadily in the reigns of his successors, in proportion as the general standard of administration set by Akbar deteriorated, until at the date of Shah Jahan's imprisonment by Aurangzeb, the economic system was verging on complete collapse. National bankruptcy brooded like a dark cloud over the whole period of Aurangzeb's rule, and eventually, in conjunction with other political and social factors, brought about the ruin of the Empire. The sinister features of the Mughal economic system during the major portion of the seventeenth century have been well described by Moreland in the following words:

'Weavers, naked themselves, toiled to clothe others. Peasants, themselves hungry, toiled to feed the towns and cities. India, taken as a unit, parted with useful commodities in exchange for gold and silver, or, in other words, gave bread for stones. Men and women, living from season to season on the verge of hunger, could be contented so long as the supply of food held out: when it failed, as it so often did, their hope of salvation was the slave-trader, and the alternatives were cannibalism, suicide, or starvation. The only way of escape from that system lay through an increase in production, coupled with a rising standard of life, but this road was barred effectively by the administrative methods

in vogue, which penalised production and regarded every indication of increased consumption as a signal for fresh extortion.'[1]

It is a justifiable assertion that Nadir Shah did little more than give the *coup de grâce* to an Empire which had already been ruined irretrievably by the selfish extravagance and tyranny of its own *mansabdars*.

§ *Social life; epidemics, &c.* Little evidence exists on which to base an account of the social life of the people in the Mughal age. Contemporary writers, particularly Muhammadan historians, tell us practically nothing of the common people and their mode of life, and confine their record to 'a chronicle of kings, courts, and conquests, rather than one of national and social evolution'.[2] Indeed, from one standpoint, the history of the Empire may be regarded as little more than the history of the rulers of three towns—Lahore, Delhi, and Agra.[3] On the other hand, there was perhaps little to chronicle in the lives of the rural population, which, owing mainly to poverty and lack of education, must have been indescribably dull and monotonous. In fact, the general character of the daily life of the masses can have changed but little since the day when Megasthenes visited the Court of the Mauryan Emperor, Chandragupta. Rather more information is forthcoming in regard to the great calamities which from time to time shattered the even tenor of their frugal existence. Mention has already been made of the famines which at intervals swept away the rural population by thousands: serious epidemics—cholera, bubonic plague, and severe forms of fever—also reduced the population from time to time: devastating floods were not unknown, and it may perhaps be assumed that, owing to the wider extent of forests in the days of Mughal rule, the possibility of loss of human and animal life, and of damage to fields and crops from the attacks of wild beasts, was greater than it is nowadays.

[1] Moreland, *From Akbar to Aurangzeb*, pp. 304–5.

[2] V. A. Smith, *Akbar*, p. 386.

[3] P. Kennedy, *History of the Great Moghuls*, i. 3.

As for disease, it is certain that cholera existed in India during the seventeenth century and must have been periodically spread throughout the country in more or less epidemic form by gatherings of pilgrims at such centres as Hardwar, Prayag (Allahabad), and Puri, in Orissa. Even allowing for the lack of roads and other communications in the period of Mughal rule, the crowds which assembled at the great *tirthas* must have been considerable, although naturally they were nothing like so numerous as they are at the present day. Plague suddenly appeared in the Punjab early in 1616, at the close of the tenth year of Jahangir's reign, and was marked by the very symptoms which have become familiar since the disease reappeared at Bombay in 1896. Mohammad Khan, author of the *Iqbal-nama*, records that 'when the disease was about to break out, a mouse would rush out of its hole, as if mad, and striking itself against the door and the walls of the house, would expire. If, immediately after this signal, the occupants left the house and went away to the jungle, their lives were saved; if otherwise, the inhabitants of the whole village would be swept away by the hand of death.' The writer may claim the credit of having established three hundred years ago two facts about plague which are now widely accepted by modern medical science, viz. the association of the rat (or mouse) with the spread of the disease, and the need of evacuating infected areas without delay. The epidemic of 1616, which was raging in Agra at the time of Tom Coryat's arrival there and is mentioned by Jahangir in his *Memoirs*, spread to almost every part of northern and western India and lasted eight years. The virulence of the disease and the absence of any system of medical attendance and relief must have caused a very high rate of mortality. A second outbreak, which is clearly described by Khafi Khan, occurred in 1689 in Aurangzeb's camp at Bijapur,[1] and yet a third epidemic, also in the Deccan, in 1703–4. As regards other forms of epidemic, Abu-l Fazl

[1] Elliot and Dowson, vol. vii, p. 337; Grant Duff, *History of the Mahrattas*, ed. 1921, vol. i, p. 274 and note.

describes 'a strong wind of destruction', which prevailed in 1575 in the eastern provinces of the Empire. The disease was particularly violent at Gaur, where, in the words of Badaoni, 'things came to such a pass that the living were unable to bury the dead, and threw them head-foremost into the river'. Munim Khan, Khan Khanan, and large numbers of his officers and men perished in this outbreak, which was probably some virulent type of malaria. Another violent epidemic, the precise nature of which is unknown, swept through Ahmadabad during Jahangir's visit to that city in 1618, and caused heavy mortality among both Europeans and Indians. A modern writer has suggested the identity of this epidemic with the so-called 'influenza' which caused such heavy loss of life in India in 1918, but the identification is by no means certain.[1]

The serious inundations to which parts of India have always been liable were exemplified during the Mughal period in the great flood which occurred in 1584–5 in the Meghna delta. The area which suffered most was the Bagla Sarkar, corresponding to the southern portion of the modern district of Bakarganj, where, according to Abu-l Fazl, 'nearly 200,000 living creatures perished in this flood'.[2]

§ *Forests and fauna.* The wider extent of forest in Mughal times and the prevalence of wild animals in areas now thickly populated are attested by various contemporary records. Babur himself remarks in his *Memoirs* that 'in many places the plain [of Hindustan] is covered by a thorny brushwood to such a degree that the people of the *pargana*, relying on these forests, take shelter in them, and, trusting to their inaccessible situation, often continue in a state of revolt, refusing to pay their taxes'.[3] William Finch (1608–11) declares that the road from Jaunpur to Allahabad lay through a continuous forest; Abu-l Fazl speaks in the *Akbarnama* of forests lying along the southern bank of

[1] See *History of Jahangir*, by Beni Prasad (Allahabad University Studies in History).

[2] V. A. Smith, *Akbar*, p. 399.

[3] See P. Kennedy, *History of the Great Moghuls*, i. 145.

the Gogra; and there is no doubt that the submontane forests extended much farther into the United Provinces and Behar than they do now.[1] In Babur's day the rhinoceros abounded in the country adjacent to the Gogra river and also in the neighbourhood of Peshawar: wild elephants were found at Karrah in the modern Allahabad district and were hunted by Akbar in places like Agra, Malwa, Marwar, and Behar, where they are now quite unknown. Practically the whole area of the modern Ghazipur district seems to have been a forest swarming with herds of elephants and rhinoceros; tigers were shot by Akbar near Mathura, and were sometimes killed in other districts where none are now to be found; lions, of which only a few specimens now survive in Kathiawar, roamed over the greater part of north-western and central India. William Finch records the presence of lions and tigers on the road to Jalaur;[2] Edward Terry describes how lions troubled his encampment at Mandu (now in the Dhar State), and speaks of the surrounding forest swarming with 'tigers and other beasts of prey, and many wild elephants'.[3] The Emperor Jahangir and his suite used to hunt lions and kill them with 'bows, carbines, and launces', and a fine Mughal painting dating from A.D. 1623, now preserved in the Indian Museum at Calcutta, depicts the Emperor shooting a lion in the Rahimabad *pargana* of the Bari Doab.[4] At one of these lion-hunts which took place in 1611, Jahangir was suddenly attacked by a wounded lion, and, as Finch relates, was pluckily saved by a Rajput military officer, Anup Rai. Anup Rai himself would have been killed had not Prince Kurram (afterwards Shah Jahan) rescued him and slain the beast.[5] The Emperor rewarded Anup Rai for his loyalty and valour with a *mansab* of '5000'. Shah Jahan's prowess in the face of danger

[1] H. W. Moreland, *India at the Death of Akbar*, p. 7.

[2] W. Foster, *Early Travels in India*, p. 174.

[3] See V. A. Smith, *Akbar*, p. 401.

[4] *Memoirs of Jahangir*, vol. ii, p. 284; P. Brown, *Indian Painting*, &c., p. 132.

[5] W. Foster, *Early Travels in India*, p. 154.

was not confined to this incident, for a remarkable Mughal cameo, sold in London in 1854, commemorates another feat performed by him in cleaving asunder a lion which was mauling one of his courtiers.[1] The prevalence of forest in Mughal days is also indicated by the fact that extensive hunting-grounds were maintained near the imperial capital of Agra, and probably near other urban centres also. While these doubtless afforded plenty of sport to the Emperor and the Mughal nobility, the agricultural crops must have suffered to some extent from the destructive habits of the large and small game which they contained.

§ *Outdoor sports.* All the earlier Mughal Emperors had an inherited taste for outdoor exercise and sport. Babur, whose life was for the most part one continuous campaign, had less opportunity than some of his successors for indulging his taste in this direction; but such leisure as he had was devoted to hunting, and he strove to keep himself physically fit and counteract the evil effects of heavy drinking by swimming across every river that came in his way. Only a year before his death he swam the Ganges; 'counting every stroke', as he writes in his *Memoirs*. 'I crossed it with thirty-three, then, without resting, swam back again. I had swum the other rivers, the Ganges had remained to do.'[2] Of Humayun's sporting achievements less information is available; but, in spite of his indulgence in opium, he was quite as brave as the other early Timurids, and as a soldier was ready for any deed of prowess and daring. He sometimes carried bravery to the point of rashness, as for example, when he climbed up the almost inaccessible side of one of the strongest forts in India.[3] Akbar, after he had established his authority by force of arms, had leisure to indulge in the chase, to which he was passionately devoted, and he expected the leading nobles of his Court to participate in his costly hunting excursions. Sport and gambling, in fact, were two of the methods by which

[1] V. A. Smith, *History of Fine Art in India*, p. 424.

[2] L. Binyon, *Court Painters, &c.*, Introduction by T. W. Arnold, p. 13.

[3] P. Kennedy, *History of the Great Mogbuls*, vol. i, p. 172.

AKBAR HUNTING

From a MS. in the British Museum

the Mughal nobility sought to spend their large incomes. Akbar himself knew all about horses, camels, elephants, and dogs, was a fine rider, and, as Jahangir mentions in his *Memoirs*, was able to control the fiercest elephants. In order to exercise his cavalry, he was accustomed to organize a great hunting expedition before commencing a new military campaign. 'He took great pleasure in chasing antelopes with specially trained leopards (*cheetahs*). He was ready to encounter any beast, however fierce, tiger, lion or other, and was prepared to undergo any amount of fatigue in order to run down the game.' A fine Mughal painting, which depicts him on horseback spearing antelopes at full gallop, is preserved in the British Museum.[1] Once in the Bikaner Desert, when he came across a herd of wild asses, he pursued them so keenly that he became separated from his attendants and nearly perished of thirst.[2] Hawking was also a favourite sport of Akbar; Abu-l Fazl gives full details of the imperial staff of falconers and of the varieties of his birds, and adds: 'His Majesty, from motives of generosity and from a wish to add splendour to his Court, is fond of hunting with falcons, though superficial observers think that merely hunting is his object.' The number of hawks, as well as other birds and animals, kept by the Emperor impressed the traveller, Ralph Fitch (1583–91), and judging by the testimony of William Hawkins (1608–13), the number of birds maintained by Jahangir was quite as large.[3]

Unquestionably the Mughal imperial line inherited their love of hunting from their Mongol ancestors, whose favourite national amusements were war and hunting. The great winter hunt of Chengiz Khan resembled a campaign. 'An enormous tract of country was enclosed; little by little the circle contracted, and into the inmost circle thus formed, first the Khan, his wives, for they lived the same outdoor life as their husband, and his immediate attendants entered; then, when they were

[1] See L. Binyon, *Court Painters, &c.*, p. 28.

[2] Smith, *Akbar*, p. 339.

[3] W. Foster, *Early Travels*, pp. 17, 104.

tired of killing, the great chiefs had their turn, and finally the circle was open for all.'[1]

The attraction which hunting possessed for Jahangir is proved by the fact that once in his seventh regnal year he hunted for two months and twenty days in succession. Apparently a record was regularly kept of the game killed on these excursions, for in 1616, when he was forty-seven years old, he ordered a list to be made of all the animals which he had killed in the chase since the age of twelve. The total, according to his *Memoirs*, was 17,167, excluding an additional 11,365 head of game killed in his presence, two-thirds of which number represented grass-feeding animals or birds.[2] Antelope-hunting with *cheetahs*, according to Edward Terry, was quite as popular as in Akbar's reign.[3] Unlike Babur and Jahangir, Shah Jahan wrote no personal memoirs, and probably on this account we know less of his sporting proclivities. But as a young man he certainly followed the family custom of hunting, and on one occasion, referred to in an earlier paragraph, gave proof of his strength and intrepidity. More is known of Aurangzeb's hunting excursions from the pages of Bernier, who records the fact that the killing of a lion by the king was considered a favourable omen, but that the escape of such a beast was regarded as pregnant with evil for the State. It was Aurangzeb's custom to camp in the jungle for three or four days at a time, and any lion which he killed was carefully measured, and details of its teeth and claws were recorded. Bernier incidentally repeats a story current in Court circles, that whenever an ass was tied up as a bait for a lion, it was heavily drugged with opium, with the object of stupefying the wild beast; but he adds, on the authority of Aurangzeb's chief huntsman, that such a practice was not in vogue, and in fact was quite unnecessary, as a lion gorged with its kill is always disposed to sleep.

Another favourite pastime of the Mughal Emperors and their

[1] P. Kennedy, *History of the Great Mogbuls*, vol. i, p. 20.

[2] *Ibid.*, vol. ii, p. 16. [3] W. Foster, *Early Travels*, p. 312.

courtiers was animal-fighting, which took place in the large open space overlooked by the *darsan jharokha*, at which the Emperor appeared daily before the eyes of his subjects. Elephants, buffaloes, rams, and other beasts and birds took part in these contests, which as a matter of fact were not a Mughal innovation, but had been practised in northern Indian centuries before the Mughal age. European travellers were specially impressed by the elephant-fights, among them being Tom Coryat (1621–17), who states that 'Twice every week elephants fight before him, the bravest spectacle in the world. Many of them are thirteene foot and a halfe high; and they seem to justle together like two mountaines; and were they not parted in the middest of their fighting by certaine fire-workes, they would exceedingly gore and cruentate one another by their murdering teeth.' [1] Edward Terry describes these fights in Jahangir's reign in much the same terms and asserts that the *mahouts* were rarely hurt.[2] If this is a fact, conditions must have changed since Akbar's day, when these elephant battles frequently ended in the death of the riders. William Finch (1608–11) tells us that these fights took place at noon on every day of the week except Sunday, when there was no fighting; 'but', he adds, 'Tuesday on the contrary is a day of blood, both of fighting beasts and justiced men, the King judging and seeing execution'.[3] The contests in front of the imperial Court were not always confined to wild animals. Akbar is reported to have shocked the Fathers Aquaviva and Monserrate by witnessing gladiatorial contests between men after the fashion of ancient Rome, and this form of amusement continued during the reigns of Jahangir and Shah Jahan.[4] We catch a glimpse also of fights between men and animals in Hawkins' account of how Jahangir ordered a Pathan to wrestle with a savage lion, and after the man had been killed, he sent for ten more men to wrestle with the beast. All the ten were seriously wounded, and three of them lost their lives. 'The

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 247. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 306. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 184.
[4] V. A. Smith, *Akbar*, p. 340.

King', added Hawkins, 'continued three moneths in this vaine, when he was in his humors, for whose pleasure sake many men lost their lives and many were grievously wounded.'[1] A strong strain of cruelty was one of the less pleasing characteristics inherited by the Mughal Emperors from their Mongol and Tartar ancestry; and there is no doubt that Napoleon's famous remark, *L'homme n'est qu'un chien* (Man is but a dog), was peculiarly applicable to Mughal India, the rulers of which, from the Emperor himself down to the lowest *faujdar*, had very little regard for human life.[2]

The Mughals had several outdoor games devoid of any element of cruelty such as marred the exhibitions mentioned above. Among the most popular forms of amusement were wrestling, polo, and pigeon-flying. Wrestling, one of the best-known forms of Indian athletics, has always been patronized by the Indian Princes. The imperial establishment in Akbar's reign included wrestlers and boxers from Persia and Turan, as well as from northern and western India. Abu-l Fazl, who gives a list of the famous athletes of the day, states that two well-matched pairs used to contend daily before the Emperor for large rewards.[3] Polo, known as *Chugan* or *Chaugan*, which originated in the East, was a favourite game of the Sassanid rulers of Persia, of Nuru-d din the Just, the great Saladin, and other Moslem potentates, and was introduced into India by the early Muhammadan rulers of Delhi. Sultan Kutbu-d din Aibak met his death when playing the game at Lahore. Apparently it differed in certain respects from the game now played in India, Europe, and America, which is identical with the game surviving in 1864 at Manipur on the borders of Assam and Burma, and at Balti and Chitral on the upper course of the Indus. Babur mentions the game in his *Memoirs*, and Akbar was devoted to it. 'Superficial observers', writes Abu-l Fazl, 'regard the game as a mere

[1] W. Foster, *Early Travels*, p. 111.

[2] P. Kennedy, *History of the Great Moghuls*, vol. ii, p. 3.

[3] *Ain-i-Akbari*, trans. Blochmann, vol. i, p. 253.

amusement, and consider it mere play; but men of more exalted views see in it a means of learning promptitude and decision. Strong men learn, in playing the game, the art of riding; and the animals learn to perform feats of agility and to obey the reins. It tests the value of a man and strengthens bonds of friendship. Hence His Majesty is very fond of this game. Externally the game adds to the splendour of the Court; but viewed from a higher point, reveals concealed talents.' In 1564, during his stay at Nagarchain, the hunting-box which he built at Kakrali to the south of Agra, Akbar played polo continuously, especially on dark nights, when he used luminous balls, made of the wood of the *dhak-* or *palas*-tree (*Butea frondosa*), which smoulders when ignited. 'For the sake of adding splendour to the game', adds his Court biographer, 'His Majesty has knobs of gold and silver fixed to the tops of the *chaugan* sticks. If one of them breaks, any player that gets hold of the pieces may keep them.'[1] The Mughal courtiers were expected to attend regularly, both to play and watch the game, and were permitted by Akbar to bet on the result. Less is heard about the game in the reigns of Akbar's successors, although the Princes of the imperial house and the younger members of the upper and wealthy classes probably indulged in it. As one of the chief forms of amusement practised by the Court it probably lost popularity as the strain of manliness inherited from the Mughals of the central Asian steppes grew fainter, until it disappeared altogether during the supine rule of the later Mughals. As regards pigeon-flying, it is conceivable that Akbar may have inherited his fondness for these birds from his great-grandfather, the father of Babur, who bred tumbler-pigeons, and actually met his death by the collapse of a tower from which he used to watch their flight. At any rate he learnt the art of pigeon-flying at an early age from one of his tutors, who so far forgot his duty as to employ his pupil's time in this way rather than in teaching him to read and write. After he came to the throne,

[1] *Ibid.*, vol. i, pp. 247, 298 ff.

Akbar kept more than 20,000 pigeons, divided into ten classes, and was never tired of watching their antics, which he styled *ishkbazi* or 'love-play'.[1] The amusement must have been practised in Jahangir's reign, for William Hawkins states that that Emperor kept a large number of birds of various kinds, including 10,000 pigeons; but no evidence exists as to the popularity of pigeon-flying in later years. The sport, however, must have been common in various centres besides the Mughal capital, and at Lucknow and other places has lasted into modern times.

§ *Indoor games.* Mughal society was partial to several indoor games, including chess (*chaturanga*), which probably originated in India in old days, and shortly after the sixth century A. D. spread thence to Arabia, Persia, and China. 'In their houses', writes Edward Terry in his account of India in Jahangir's reign, 'they play much at that most ingenious game we call chesse, or else at tables.'[2] Under the Arabic name of *shatranj*, the game, which differs in certain respects from European (*farangi*) chess, was popular among Muhammadans, as it was the only game allowed to be lawful by Moslem doctors of law.[3] Another popular game, styled 'tables' by Terry in the above-quoted extract, was *chaupar* or backgammon, which is described in the *Ain-i-Akbari*.[4] It was played on a cloth-board in the form of a cross, each arm of the cross being divided into twenty-four squares in three rows of eight each. Apparently this board also served the purpose of three other games, namely *phansa*, which was played with dice, *pachisi*, played with cowries, and *chandel-mandal*. Of these the two latter were favourite games of Akbar. *Pachisi*, an ancient Hindu game, represented in a painting in the caves of Ajanta, is said to have been played by Akbar on the marble squares of a quadrangle in Agra Fort and in the Khas Mahal at Fathpur-Sikri, with young slave-girls in place of the coloured

[1] *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. i, pp. 298–301.
[2] W. Foster, *Early Travels*, p. 312.
[3] Herklots, *Qanun-i-Islam*, ed. Crooke, p. 331.
[4] *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. i, p. 303.

ivory pieces.[1] Abu-l Fazl gives a description of the playing-cards used in Mughal circles, which differed widely from the modern English pack. With these Akbar appears to have played a very elaborate game.

§ *Intemperance.* No account of the social life of the Mughal age would be complete without a reference to intemperance, which was the besetting sin of the earlier Mughal Emperors. With the exception of Aurangzeb, who was very abstemious, and in a lesser degree Shah Jahan, all the representatives of the dynasty indulged in wine-drinking to excess—a failing which, despite the Koranic injunction, was almost universal in the east during the fifteenth century.[2] Babur, as his own *Memoirs* show, was for some few years an inveterate toper, and both his brothers died from excess. To be intoxicated with wine was one of Babur's chief pleasures, and he loved to pass his leisure hours lying in a condition of semi-intoxication with his boon companions, in the shade of a wood or near a running stream. He writes quite openly about his drinking-parties; and yet, when the crisis of his career arrived, on the eve of his struggle with Rana Sanga and the Rajputs at Khanna, he was sufficiently strong-willed to break his wine-cups and abjure drinking for the remainder of his life—a vow which, so far as we know, he religiously observed. Humayun was addicted rather to opium than drink; but that he did indulge in the latter is clear from the statement in Jahangir's *Memoirs* as to his renunciation of the habit. Akbar from time to time condemned excessive drinking, but he maintained the family tradition and often drank very heavily. Jahangir in his *Memoirs* speaks of his father 'in his cups and in his sober moments'; the extant record of the first Jesuit mission to Akbar's Court under Father Aquaviva proves that Akbar drank to excess in 1582; and Bartoli, in another passage, remarks that the Emperor used to drink arrack, a heady palm-wine, and also *post*, a preparation of opium diluted with modified

[1] Herklots, *Qanun-i-Islam*, ed. Crooke, p. 334.

[2] P. Kennedy, *History of the Great Moghuls*, vol. i, p. 122.

spices.[1] On more than one occasion, when under the influence of liquor, Akbar indulged in mad freaks, such, for example, as fighting with his own sword; and although his fine constitution enabled him to resist the ill-effects of constant intemperance, his example reacted unfavourably on those around him, particularly his sons Murad and Daniyal, both of whom died of *delirium tremens*.

In his *Memoirs* Jahangir leaves us in no doubt as to his drinking habits; and to his own frank statements may be added the testimony of William Finch,[2] who writes: 'After his going in from the derbar in the evening, some two houres after he comes out againe, sitting forth in a small more inward court behind the other, close to his moholl, into which none but the grandes, and they also with tickets to be renewed with every moone, are permitted to enter; where he drinkes by number and measure, sometimes one and thirtie, and running over, mixing also among severe judicatures. Jahangir himself says that if he remained an hour without liquor, his hands began to shake and he could neither sit still nor rest: he contrived to reduce his daily allowance of drink, but remarks that 'as drink seems not less necessary than meat for the sustenance of man, it seems very difficult, if not impossible, for me to discontinue its use altogether'. In later years the Empress Nur Jahan exercised her influence over him to check the habit; and that fact, coupled with Jahangir's remarkably strong constitution, prevented his suffering seriously from the effects of prolonged intemperance.

The example set by the rulers was happily not generally followed by the population. That a certain amount of drinking took place is to be inferred from Akbar's order permitting the sale of wine in the bazaars, to which the religious orders took strong exception, and also from Jahangir's order, given under priestly admonition, prohibiting the sale of beer and hemp, and, according to some accounts, of wine also. We know also that in Akbar's reign, and probably in later years, a great many of the

[1] V. A. Smith, *Akbar*, p. 114. [2] W. Foster, *Early Travels*, p. 185.

nobles died from intemperance, like Mirza Jani Beg of Sind, who drank himself to death in the Deccan, and Shah Beg Khan, who drank a mixture of wine, hemp, and opium.[1] But outside Court circles, the vice of intemperance was not common in decent Indian society. It may be admitted that members of the castes which permitted drinking sometimes indulged to excess in liquor, and that in some parts of western India a good deal of drink was from time to time consumed. Streynsham Master, for example, speaking of the people of Surat in 1672, during Aurangzeb's reign, remarks that 'none of them will eat the flesh of cows and oxen, or calves, and almost as few of them forbear wine; for those that eat no flesh will gulch abundance of strong drink'. Yet, allowing for the prevalence of the drinking habit among the lower classes and even for occasional intemperance among persons of the upper class unconnected with the imperial Court, we may accept the verdict of the Rev. Edward Terry (1616–19) as to the general sobriety of all ranks of the population. 'For the temperance of many,' he writes, 'both among the Mahometans and Gentiles, it is such as that they will rather die than eate or drinke any thing their law forbids. Such meate and drinke as their law allowes they use onely to satisfie nature, not appetite; hating gluttonie, and esteeming drunkennesse (as indeed it is) a second madnesse, and therefore have but one word in their language (*mest*) for a drunkard and a mad-man.'[2] The habits of the population in relation to drink and drugs were probably much the same in the Mughal age as they are now: the opinion of the general body of Hindus and Muhammadans was decidedly hostile to intemperance.

§ *Fairs and pilgrimages.* Among the Hindu people pilgrimages were as popular as they are in these days; but the lack of good communications and of facilities for rapid travel must have prevented many people from taking part in them.[3] Up to the

[1] V. A. Smith, *Akbar*, p. 406.

[2] W. Foster, *Early Travels, &c.*, p. 317.

[3] W. H. Moreland, *India at the Death of Akbar*, p. 277.

reign of Akbar, too, it had been customary for the Moslem Governments to levy a tax on pilgrims, which produced a large revenue; but in 1563, while camping at Mathura, Akbar, who apparently heard of the practice for the first time, ordered the tax to be abolished throughout his dominions, on the ground that it was contrary to the Divine Will to levy dues from people assembled to worship the Creator.[1] According to Abu-l Fazl, the abolition of the tax meant a loss to the exchequer of millions of rupees. Allowing for exaggeration, the statement shows that the number of pilgrims to the sacred places of Hinduism must have been large. It was at Thanesar, the famous place of pilgrimage to the north of Delhi, that Akbar witnessed the sanguinary fight between two factions of Sanyasis in 1567, and ordered some of his fighting retainers to support the weaker side. Although Aurangzeb reimposed the *jizya* or poll-tax on non-Moslems and followed a policy of destroying as many Hindu temples as possible, he apparently did not reimpose the pilgrim-tax; but it seems probable that his attitude towards Hindus, which was faithfully reflected by his local Moslem officials, caused during his reign some diminution in the numbers of those attending the *tirths* and sacred places of Hinduism.

The Moslem pilgrimage to Mecca was naturally an annual event of importance during the Mughal age, though in this case the number of persons who sailed to Jeddah from India can have been nothing like so large as the number to which we are accustomed in the twentieth century. As early as the fifteenth century Nicolo Conti and other travellers had noticed very large Indian-built vessels on the west coast, which were maintained solely for the pilgrim-voyage to the Red Sea. There were about six of them in existence—huge ships, emulating the carracks built by the Portuguese, but not much good in rough weather.[2] They started annually from Surat and other ports on the gulf of Cambay, and besides serving as pilgrim-vessels, they carried

[1] V. A. Smith, *Akbar*, p. 64.

[2] W. H. Moreland, *India at the Death of Akbar*, p. 171.

merchandise as well, the Red Sea trade and pilgrim-traffic being as closely connected as they are in modern times.[1] The unusual size of the pilgrim-vessels seems to have been a feature of the traffic to the Hedjaz throughout the Mughal period; for in 1612 Captain Saris measured two of them, the *Rahimi* and the *Muhammadi*, which must each have been of about 1,500 tons burthen,[2] while a year or two later Edward Terry remarked in his account of the Mughal Empire, 'The ship that usually goeth from Surat to Moha [Mokha] is of exceeding great burthen. Some of them, I beleeve, at the least fourteene or sixteene hundred tunnes; but ill built, and, though they have good ordnance, cannot well defend themselves. In these ships are yeerly abundance of passengers; for instance, in one ship returning thence, that yeere we left India, came seventeene hundred, the most of which number goe not for profit but out of devotion to visite the sepulchre of Mahomet at Medina.'[3]

During the early years of his reign Akbar showed considerable interest in the pilgrimage to Mecca and was prepared to give every assistance, financial and other, to pilgrims. About 1575 he issued a general order that any one who wished to perform the pilgrimage might charge his expenses to the public treasury, and doubtless a large number of his Moslem subjects availed themselves of this concession. Among persons of note who journeyed to Mecca at this date were Akbar's aunt, Gulbadan Begam, and Bairam Khan's widow, Salima Sultan Begam, who had married the Emperor. Although the ladies were forced to wait a whole year at Surat, until they could secure a pass from the Portuguese, they ultimately performed the pilgrimage and returned safely in 1582.[4] Akbar also initiated the system of pilgrim-caravans in charge of a leader, well supplied with money for the expenses of the whole party, and appointed Sultan Khwaja to be Mir Haji or pilgrim-leader; he even expressed a wish to join himself

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 205. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 230 *n.*

[3] W. Foster, *Early Travels, &c.*, p. 301.

[4] V. A. Smith, *Akbar*, pp. 134, 135.

in the pilgrimage in 1576, and on being dissuaded from this course by his ministers, he seized the opportunity of the departure of the caravan to strip himself, don the *ihram* or pilgrim's dress, and walk some paces with Sultan Khwaja, as the latter set forth on his long march to the coast.[1] Akbar, like other Muhammadan sovereigns, occasionally made use of the pilgrimage to rid himself of ministers or nobles, whose continued presence was held for political reasons to be undesirable.[2] This happened in the case of Bairam Khan, the Protector, who was informed by Akbar in 1560 that he had decided to take the reins of government into his own hands, and that consequently Bairam Khan should make his long intended journey to Mecca.[3] Conditions changed greatly in later years, when Akbar had become estranged from Islam. Badaoni, after speaking of the Emperor's early zeal, remarks that 'the reverse is now the case, for he cannot now bear even the name of such a thing; and merely to ask leave to go on a pilgrimage is enough to make a man a malefactor worthy of death.'[4]

In their annual voyages to the Red Sea and back, the Mughal pilgrim-ships naturally came into constant touch with the Portuguese and other European nations, who were struggling for control of the Indian seas. Akbar continued to maintain fairly friendly relations with the Portuguese and thus secured a safe conduct for the pilgrims to Mecca; but in later years the Portuguese, who insisted upon the pilgrim-ships paying licence-fees and bribes like other shipping, occasionally proved very troublesome. William Finch (1608–11) describes how early in Jahangir's reign they threatened to seize and carry to *Diu* a pilgrim-ship belonging to 'the Queen Mother', unless they were paid 100,000 *mahmudis* (Rs. 40,000), and eventually compounded their claim for about 1,000 *reals* (about Rs. 2,000) and

[1] Herklots, *Qanun-i-Islam*, ed. Crooke, p. 115.

[2] Moreland, *India at the Death of Akbar*, p. 263.

[3] V. A. Smith, *Akbar*, p. 44. See also Finch's reference in W. Foster's *Early Travels in India*, p. 165.

[4] Badaoni, ii. 246.

'divers presents, which the Mogolls were faine to give them'.[1] The Portuguese were not the only offenders in this respect during Jahangir's reign; for in 1612 Captain Middleton, who desired revenge for having been imprisoned and robbed by the Arabs at Mocha, blockaded the mouth of the Red Sea with his fleet and held many Muhammadan ships to ransom, including the *Rahimi*, a large pilgrim-ship, which paid 15,000 *reals*.[2] There are various references to the pilgrimage in Aurangzeb's reign. Occasionally European vessels carried pilgrims of distinction to Jeddah, such as the dowager Queen of Bijapur, who sailed in February 1661 in a small Dutch vessel. According to Manucci, this lady performed the pilgrimage four times.[3] Dr. John Fryer records that Aurangzeb, as befitted his orthodoxy, maintained four ships, 'huge, unshapen things', always in pay at Surat for the conveyance of pilgrims free of cost, and these occasionally fell a prey to European pirates. The most notable case was that of the pilgrim-ship *Ganja Sawai* (styled 'Gunsway' in the English letters of the period), belonging to the Emperor himself, which was seized by the notorious pirate John Avery (or Every) in 1695. As she carried, besides her pilgrims, about fifty-two *lacs* of rupees, the result of the season's trade in the Red Sea, she was a valuable prize; and her capture so enraged the Musalman population of Surat, when the news reached them, that the Mughal governor was forced to arrest all the English residents, including the President of the factory, and put them in irons, to prevent their being killed by the mob.[4] The English merchants were, of course, blameless in the matter; but there is no doubt that Aurangzeb held the Company responsible in some measure for the misbehaviour of their piratical compatriots, and on one occasion at least, in 1689, ordered the Sidi to attack Bombay in revenge for piracies committed on

[1] W. Foster, *Early Travels*, p. 129.
[2] H. G. Rawlinson, *British Beginnings in Western India*, p. 49.
[3] W. Foster, *English Factories in India, 1661–4*, p. 88 *n.*
[4] *Bombay City and Island Gazetteer*, vol. ii, p. 85.

Mughal pilgrim-ships.[1] The scattered evidence given above indicates that the pilgrimage to Mecca was a regular feature of Moslem life during the reigns of Akbar and his successors, though naturally the number of those who performed this act of devotion cannot have resembled the huge annual exodus with which India was familiar during the decade preceding the year 1914.

§ *Classes of population.* This chapter may suitably end with a few remarks on the various classes inhabiting the Mughal Empire. As Mr. Moreland points out,[2] the Hindu caste system existed in full vigour, as it does to-day, though the English documents and records of the period do not as a rule differentiate the various tribes, castes and classes. Just as they refer to all Hindus under the generic title of 'Gentus', i.e. Gentiles, so they apply the term 'Moor' to all classes of Muhammadans. European letters, however, frequently make separate mention of three important classes of Hindus, the Banias, Brahmans and Rajputs. The first-named naturally bulk largely in the commercial correspondence of the period, as it was chiefly with them that the Dutch and English traders did business; the Brahmans are mentioned by travellers, and by English merchants in reference to their relations with Shivaji during Aurangzeb's reign; while the Rajputs are described by many European writers, like Barbosa in 1516, Bocarro in 1614, Mandelslo in 1638, van Twist in 1648, and Fryer in 1673. English merchants who visited the Mughal Empire during the seventeenth century were not able to distinguish the different tribes and classes of Hindus; and as the Rajputs were known to be addicted to depredation and forays, they applied the term Rajput indiscriminately to all classes of highway robbers. Thus, while Barbosa, Bocarro, van Twist, and Fryer all refer to their exceptional martial qualities, which Akbar recognized by enrolling them in the imperial army, Mandelslo speaks of them as 'a sort of Highway-men or Tories'; and English letters of Shah Jahan's reign speak of highway robbery

[1] *Bombay City and Island Gazetteer*, vol. ii, p. 83.

[2] W. H. Moreland, *India at the Death of Akbar*, p. 23.

perpetrated on European merchants by 'Rashbootes', who may well have been maurauders of an entirely different class.[1] The Sikhs are mentioned in the reign of Akbar, who, disagreeing with the opinion of Raja Birbal, was inclined to approve the doctrines of the Sikh religion.[2] This tolerant view was not shared by Aurangzeb, who, in the words of Khafi Khan, 'ordered these deputy *Gurus* to be removed and the temples [Sikh] to be pulled down'. 'The sect', he adds, 'consists principally of *Jats* and *Khatris* of the Panjab and of other tribes of infidels.'[3]

Little is heard of the regular forest tribes—the Santals, Bhils, and others, for they were universally regarded as outside the pale of civilization. But they must be the class of people to whom William Finch refers in his account of Jahangir's hunting expeditions. 'He [the Emperor] causeth, with choise men, a certain wood or desart place to bee incircled, so contracting themselves to a neerer compasse till they meet againe; and whatsoever is taken in this inclosure is called the Kings *shikar* or game, whether men or beasts; and whosoever lets ought escape without the Kings mercy must lose his life. The beasts taken, if mans meat, are sold and the money given to the poore; if men, they remain the Kings slaves, which he yearely sends to Cabull to barter for horse and dogs; these beeing poore, miserable, theevish people that live in woods and desarts, little differing from beasts.'[4] It will be observed that Jahangir's system of enclosing a large area of jungle and gradually restricting the circle closely resembles the practice mentioned in an earlier paragraph as followed by Chengiz Khan and the Mongols. His treatment of the jungle tribes was a degree less cruel than the treatment accorded to them by the Marathas, who trapped and slew them in numbers as pests and outcasts.

The Muhammadans of India at this date were roughly divided

[1] W. Foster, *English Factories in India, 1655–60*, p. 105.
[2] V. A. Smith, *Akbar*, p. 237. [3] Elliot and Dowson, vol. vii, p. 413.
[4] W. Foster, *Early Travels in India*, p. 154.

into those of the north-western region and those of the coast. The former included not only the Mughals and Persians who entered India during the reigns of Babur and his successors, but also a large body of indigenous Muhammadans, descended from immigrants who had entered India in a steady stream during the five centuries preceding the advent of the Mughals. The Muhammadans of the coast, on the other hand, were primarily traders, hailing originally from Arabia and the Persian Gulf. During the course of several centuries before the year 1500 these Arab and Persian merchants had made a considerable number of converts, and by means of marriage and formal or temporary unions with the Hindus of the coast had given rise to Muslim communities of mixed origin, like the Navayats of western India, the Mappillas or Moplahs of Malabar, and the Lubbyes or Labbais of the eastern coast of the peninsula. These Arabs, Persians, Navayats and others had established a maritime trade before the arrival of the Portuguese in the east, and even when the latter had gained control of the Indian seas, they proved powerless to drive the Musalman trading classes wholly out of business, in which they continued to prosper during the reigns of Shah Jahan, Aurangzeb, and the later representatives of the Mughal line. Included in the Muslim population also were a fair number of Habshis or Abyssinians, who were mostly imported in the first instance as slaves. The Portuguese writer, Barros, refers in 1553 to 'three Abeshis of the country of the Prester John', who came to sell provisions to the Portuguese ships, and nearly a century and a quarter later Fryer makes a definite reference to this class of Muhammadan. These Habshis occasionally rose to high office, as for example the man who was master of the Horse to Raziyya (1236–40), the only woman who ever ruled in Delhi. The chief of the island-principality of Janjira, who figures so largely in the history of the west coast of India, is the descendant of one of these Abyssinian families.

India of Mughal days was by no means a closed country to the

rest of the world. Besides the permanent population, visitors and temporary residents, hailing from Europe, Arabia, Persia, Armenia, China, and Japan, were to be found on the coast and occasionally in the inland cities in the sixteenth century. Some of these foreigners settled more or less permanently in India for the purpose of trade; as for example the Armenians, who formed a small but important element in trade-centres like Surat. We hear of them, and some Turkish merchants also, securing themselves and their goods in a *sarai*, when Shivaji attacked Surat in 1664,[1] among them doubtless being 'Cojah Minaz', who was mentioned in an English letter of 1663 as a prominent Armenian merchant.[2] Armenians are also mentioned in the list of the various communities inhabiting Surat, contained in an order of Aurangzeb's diwan relative to Shivaji's raid on the town;[3] Edward Terry describes Armenians as the chief wine-merchants in India; and Bernier mentions an Armenian envoy sent by the King of Abyssinia to Aurangzeb. Like the Armenians, the Jews also formed a small but important section of the trading community. One of them, a native of Constantinople, is stated by Bernier to have shown great pertinacity at the time of Shivaji's raid on Surat. 'Seva-Gi', he writes, 'knew that he [the Jew] was in possession of most valuable rubies, which he intended to sell to Aurang-Zebe; but he persevered in stoutly denying the fact, although three times placed on his knees to receive the stroke of a sword flourished over his head. This conduct was worthy of a Jew, whose love of money generally exceeds his love of life.'[4] These foreign Jews, who visited India for trading purposes during the Mughal period, had no connexion with the Jews of Cochin or with the Bene-Israel of the northern Konkan, who at this date were chiefly carpenters and oil-pressers.

Though relatively small in numbers, the Parsi community acquired considerable importance during the reign of Akbar. During the early years of the sixteenth century they had not

[1] W. Foster, *The English Factories in India, 1661–4*, p. 297.
[2] *Ibid.*, 1661–4, pp. 189, 207. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 214. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 310.

commenced to leave Naosari and other Gujarat districts, in which their ancestors had settled on their arrival in India, and supported themselves for the most part by agriculture, carpentry, and similar occupations. During Humayun's reign they are mentioned as resident in Bombay by the Portuguese physician, Garcia da Orta; but they do not acquire much prominence until 1578, when Dastur Meherji Rana, a leading *mobed* of Naosari, the head-quarters of the Parsi priesthood in India, attended Akbar's court and gave the Emperor instruction in the mysteries of the Zoroastrian faith. The Dastur taught Akbar the ordinances, rites and ceremonies of his creed, and so impressed the monarch that he was regarded as having become a convert to the faith of Zarathushtra. He was supposed to have adopted the *sadra* (sacred shirt) and *kusti* (girdle), worn by every Parsi, and he certainly ordered a fire, kindled according to Zoroastrian rules, to be kept in the imperial palace, making Abu-l Fazl responsible for its perpetual maintenance. To the Dastur Akbar gave a heritable grant of 200 *bighas* of land, and after the Dastur's death in 1591 he increased the grant to 300 *bighas* in favour of his son, who also paid a visit to the Emperor. Whether or no Akbar was wholly sincere in his attachment to the Parsi religion, the fact remains that from the year 1580 he began to prostrate himself in public before the sun and fire, and ordered all his courtiers to rise respectfully when the lamps were lighted at eventide.[1] In the reign of Jahangir the Parsis still retained a certain amount of influence at the imperial court, and the Persian names which the Emperor gave to his sons—Khusrau, Khurram, Jahandar, Shahryar, and Hoshang—are supposed to have been the direct result of that influence. It was probably in the same Emperor's reign that the Parsis commenced tentatively to relinquish their agricultural pursuits in favour of commerce, for which they have since shown such extraordinary aptitude. By the end of Shah Jahan's reign they had established their right to be regarded as a trading as well as an agricultural

[1] V. A. Smith, *Akbar*, pp. 162–4.

community, and were employed in many kinds of business connected with commerce, and with foreign commerce in particular. The chief broker of the English factory at Surat in 1660 was a Parsi, Rustom Manek, who proved extremely useful to his employers;[1] another Parsi whose name has been handed down in history was Kharshedji Pochaji, who in 1664 held the contract for building the Bombay fortifications.[2] They formed the vanguard of that large company of Parsi merchants who helped to lay the foundations of Bombay's commercial importance in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

As regards the European element in the population, it need only be said that up to the end of the sixteenth century the Portuguese alone held a position of any importance, by reason of their possession of Goa and other places on the west coast, and of S. Thomé on the east coast. They also possessed trading-stations at the mouths of the Indus and Ganges; while at Chittagong and in the Bay of Bengal they were not ashamed of living by open piracy. The story of the Portuguese missions to Akbar's court needs no repetition. In the seventeenth century the scene changes, and in consequence of the new trade relations with the west an increasing number of English, Dutch, Danish and other European nationals sought the maritime and inland cities of the Mughal Empire. Nor was the European population confined to merchants and other persons directly connected with trade; for, according to Manucci, in 1656, just before the end of Shah Jahan's reign, Mir Jumla had no less than eighty Europeans in his employ as artillerymen and gunners.[3] They were the forerunners of the considerable body of European soldiers and adventurers who took service with various Indian rulers during the troubled times which marked the final dissolution of the Empire founded by Babur and organized by his famous grandson.

[1] D. F. Karaka, *History of the Parsis*, ii. 9.

[2] *Gazetteer of Bombay City and Island*, vol. i, p. 152 *n.*

[3] Manucci, *Storia do Mogor*, i. 226

CHAPTER VIII

MUGHAL ARCHITECTURE AND THE ARTS

¶ *Architecture.*

SLEEMAN in his *Rambles and Recollections* quotes a saying of Shaikh Sadi that 'The man who has left behind him great works in temples, bridges, reservoirs, and caravanserais for the public good, does not die'.[1] The poet's words apply with even greater force to the mosques, the mausolea, the palaces, and the gateways of the Great Mughals. They and their empire, their military and executive arrangements, have passed beyond recall; but their architectural achievements, expressive of their genius and personality, have rendered them immortal. The Moslem architecture of India, like the Muhammadan style in other countries, is primarily derived from the ancient vaulted architecture of Mesopotamia, as modified by later developments under the Sassanids, and is therefore closely related to the style in vogue at Baghdad in the days of the Abbasid Khalifas. The dome, which is so prominent a feature of Mughal building, and which is unknown in Hindu architecture, has been supposed by some scholars to be a copy of the bell-shaped tents of the Turcomans of central Asia; but whatever be its origin, the dome, like the arch, was well known in Baghdad, and thence spread throughout the Muhammadan world.[2] When the Muhammadans first arrived in India, the Hindu masons whom they were forced to employ in the erection of their mosques and other monuments were unable to construct arches with true key-stones in the Muslim style; but by the fourteenth century they had overcome this disability and no longer depended on their own structural methods in carrying out the designs of their conquerors. On the

[1] Sleeman, ed. V. A. Smith, p. 410.

[2] Smith, *History of Fine Art, &c.*, p. 392; J. N. Sarkar, *Studies in Mughal India.*

other hand, contact with Hindu ideas and architectural styles exercised a gradual but steady influence upon Muhammadan designs, and was probably directly responsible for the variety of style which characterized the Muhammadan buildings erected in different parts of India during pre-Mughal times. The simple massiveness, for example, of the monuments of the Tughlak dynasty has little in common with the Moslem style which developed under the independent Muhammadan Kings of Bengal; the styles associated with the Sultanates of Bijapur and Golkonda differ from one another, and are both easily distinguishable from the beautiful provincial style of Gujarat, which bears very markedly the impress of Hindu and Jain architecture.[1]

Hindu influence upon architectural style lasted throughout the Mughal period, and expressed itself in the narrow columns, pilasters, corbel brackets, and other ornamental features of Mughal buildings. It was particularly noticeable during the reign of Akbar, who, while showing a certain partiality for the culture and language of Persia, drew deliberately, in matters of architecture, upon Hindu sources, thus consecrating his rupture with his native land. The gradual submission of the Mughal imperial line to the influence of their Indian environment is seen, indeed, most clearly in the disposition of their tombs: 'The ancestor lies at Samarkand; Babar wished his body to be carried back from Agra to Kabul; Humayun is at Delhi; Akbar at Sikandarah; Shah Jahan at Agra.'[2] But while the buildings of the Mughal period owed much to Hindu ideas of decorative detail, as can be seen in the ornamental pillars at Fathpur-Sikri and the corbel brackets of Shaikh Salim Chishti's tomb, the type and architectural principles of them all are fundamentally Muhammadan. This is particularly evident in such buildings of Babur and Humayun as still survive; they exhibit no traces of Indian influence and, whether intact or half-ruined, are distinctly foreign and Muhammadan. The salient features of Mughal architec-

[1] Smith, *ibid.* [2] D'Humières, *Through Isle and Empire*, p. 198.

ture are the pronounced dome, the slender turrets at the corners, the palace halls supported on pillars, and the Indo-Saracenic gate, 'which takes the form of a huge semi-dome sunk in the front wall and bearing an admirable proportion to the building, while the actual entrance is a small rectangular opening under this arch.'[1] The finest example of this style of gateway is the *Buland Darwaza* at Fathpur-Sikri, which was erected in 1601–2 to commemorate Akbar's conquest of Gujarat.

With the exception of Aurangzeb, who showed more eagerness to destroy Hindu temples than to erect the shrines of his own creed, all the early Mughal Emperors were great builders. Brief though his Indian reign was, Babur found leisure to summon from Constantinople pupils of the famous Albanian architect, Sinan, who had designed many important buildings in the Ottoman Empire, and set them to work on mosques and other architectural monuments commemorating his conquest of Hindustan. He mentions in his *Memoirs* (*Babur-nama*) that 680 Indian stone-masons worked daily on his buildings at Agra, and that nearly 1,500 were employed daily on his buildings at Sikri, Biana, Gwalior and other places.[2] Only two of his buildings survive—a large mosque built at Panipat after his victory in 1526, and the Jami Mosque at Sambal in Rohilkhand. Time has dealt hardly with Humayun's buildings also, for of those which he found leisure to erect during his stormy career, only two remain in semi-dilapidation. One of these a mosque at Fathabad in the Hissar District of the Punjab, is a massive well-proportioned building, decorated in the Persian manner with enamelled tiles, and was probably built about 1540, when Humayun was on his way to Sind. Probably the best designed and most dignified building in the Indo-Persian style erected in northern India before the reign of Akbar is the mausoleum of Humayun's rival, Sher Shah, built on a high plinth in the middle of a lake at Sahasram in the Shahabad district of Bengal.

[1] J. N. Sarkar, *Studies in Mughal India*, p. 287.

[2] *Babur-nama*, trans. A. S. Beveridge, vol. ii, [illegible]

Here the architecture is wholly Muhammadan, but Hindu corbelling and horizontal architraves are used in all the inner doorways; and the style generally has been described as intermediate between 'the austerity of the Tughlak buildings and the feminine grace of Shah Jahan's masterpiece'.[1]

With the accession of Akbar, Mughal architecture attained unrivalled magnificence; and the monuments of his reign which have been bequeathed to posterity fully justify the declaration of Abu-l Fazl that 'His Majesty plans splendid edifices and dresses the work of his mind and heart in the garment of stone and clay'.[2] It is certain that Akbar, with his usual thoroughness, mastered every detail of the working of his department of Public Works, and himself supplied ideas which were translated into practical form by the experts whom he gathered around him; and consequently, whether we study the buildings of Fathpur-Sikri, the Jahangiri Mahal at Agra, the tomb of Muhammad Ghaus at Gwalior, or the mausoleum of Humayun at Delhi, we detect the impress of superlative tact and genius. Nor did Akbar confine his activities to the great masterpieces of architecture which have made his name world-famous; he also built fortresses, villas, towers, *sarais*, schools, tanks, and wells; he fixed the wages of workmen and the price of building materials. And while he still adhered to Persian ideas, inherited doubtless from his mother, his natural attraction towards Hinduism, combined with his deliberate policy of binding his Hindu subjects to the imperial throne, led him to introduce Hindu styles of architecture in many of his buildings. This fashion appears very clearly in the Jahangiri Mahal in Agra Fort, which might well pass for the palace of a Hindu Raja; it is visible again in some of the buildings at Fathpur-Sikri, a city which conformed resolutely with the traditions of the conquered nation, and in which the conqueror asserted himself in only one building, for that matter incomparable—the mosque. On the other hand, Akbar's Persian

[1] Smith, *History of Fine Art*, p. 406.

[2] *Ain-i-Akbari*, trans. Blochmann, vol. i, p. 85.

sympathies are portrayed in the famous mausoleum of Humayun at Old Delhi, which was completed early in 1569; although even in this case the ground-plan of the tomb is Indian, and the outward appearance of the edifice is differentiated from the purely Persian style by the free use of white marble, which was uncommon in Persia, and by the absence of the coloured tile decoration, which Persian builders so greatly favoured. This building is also remarkable as offering the earliest example in India of 'a double dome with slightly swelling outline, standing on a high neck'—a form of construction which appears in the tombs of Timur and Bibi Khanam at Samarkand, and is ultimately traced back to the Umayyad mosque of Damascus, built towards the close of the eleventh century.[1]

Speaking generally, the buildings of Akbar's reign combine both Hindu and Muhammadan features—sometimes the former, at other times the latter, predominating—and are therefore correctly described as being of mixed Hindu-Muhammadan style. Fathpur-Sikri, which he built around the hermitage of the pious Shaikh Chishti, and which was the seat of the imperial court from 1569 to 1584, constitutes perhaps the most remarkable evidence of Akbar's genius. 'It is a more complete creation than Versailles in this sense, that subsequent reigns have added nothing to it. And Versailles displays one fault of taste—the only one—that of repeating indiscreetly the servile apotheosis of a personality which was certainly imposing by the sense of its prerogative and dignity, but which was intellectually limited and devoid of philosophy and human anxiety. How differently ample is the character of an Akbar! What a lesson is his eclecticism for a contemporary like Philip II or for the monarch of the *Dragonnades* a century later!'[2] Many of the principal buildings of Akbar's deserted city still remain almost intact, but much has been irretrievably ruined. Yet enough survives—the Khwabgah ('house of dreams'), the record-room, the *Diwan-i-Khass*, the *Diwan-i-Am*, the great mosque and so on—to enable one to

[1] Smith, *Akbar*, p. 435. [2] D'Humières, *Through Isle and Empire*, p. 194.

realize the former magnificence of the mass of buildings which, crowning the summit of a red sandstone ridge, formed the acropolis of the richest monarch in the world. A modern traveller has remarked that it is difficult to imagine a more picturesque conception than that of the *Diwan-i-Khass*.

'A central pillar, whose exquisite carvings recall, by a perhaps voluntary coincidence, the ornaments of the tomb of the emperor at the top of the mausoleum of Sikandarah, itself, one would say, conceived in a recollection of the terraces of the Panch Mahal, where the princesses used to come to sleep, spreads into an immense circular capital. From this capital, four balconies, with low open trellis stone balustrades, diverge to the corners of the pavilion, where secondary platforms communicate with the ground by staircases. The emperor, like a god in the cup of a lotus-flower, sat in the centre of the corbelled capital; a minister occupied each of the angles; through the bays, either open or closed with screens of interlaced stone, the eye discovers the whole of the wide and almost circular horizon. The will of the master here radiated like a glowing hearth to the four corners of the sky, shot forth to the confines of empire; and I know no more poetic realization of a will of power and responsibility.'[1]

Perhaps the grandest feature of Akbar's city is the *Buland Darwaza*—the Great Portal, built of marble and sandstone, which forms the southern gateway of the Mosque. High authority has described it as 'one of the most perfect architectural achievements in the whole of India'; and the effect which it produces on the mind of the layman can be best understood from the following description recorded by a French visitor to Fathpur-Sikri:

'This mass, one hundred and fifty feet high, the central arch opening upon a half-dome, the four minarets at the four corners of the trapezium that forms the plan, the broad steps that lead up to the entrance, the declivity in the ground continuing the slope of the steps make of this gate a monument unequalled in its kind. Seen from below, on the edge of the village whose humble hovels are heaped up at the foot of the hill, the effect is sublime. It lies in the very disproportion between that titanic mass and its surroundings, in the proud upward leap of that stone canopy, whose minarets look like the poles that formerly, in the

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 199–200.

native steppes, carried skins of beasts or motley carpets over the conqueror in state. I know only one other monument in which the verticals reach the same pitch of magnificence, and that is Beauvais Cathedral. It is the same *Hosannah in excelsis!* For the rest, the Moslem epigraph, with so just a lyricism, exclaims:

"Its mihrab is like the broad-browed morning, its pinnacles like the Milky Way, its gate cries aloud!.. ."

'A marvellous revelation, an inspired translation of the feeling that takes hold of you before that formidable arch, whence seems to issue as it were a shout of victory, continuous, louder than the trumpets of a hundred Fames, from the top of the pedestal that lifts it proudly on the horizon of Hindustan. And the great cry of pride rings out over the rich plains, the peaceful towns, the unsubdued jungle, to die away absorbed in the astonished murmur of the southern shores.

'Then one thinks of other words, those whose threefold riband forms the rich rectangle in which, according to the almost invariable rite, the arch is cut out with an august simplicity. They say:

"The world is a bridge: pass over it, but build no house upon it. The world endures but an hour: spend it in prayer; who sees the rest? Thy greatest richness is the alms which thou hast given. Know that the world is a mirror where fortune has appeared, then fled: call nothing thine that thy eyes cannot see."

'And mingled with the admiration of those pure lines, of that material grandeur, of that realized miracle of art, is an element of thought, veneration and melancholy that makes up one of those rare sensations of completeness which time cannot impair in our memory and which we would buy at the cost of any exile.'[1]

It can be safely asserted that nothing like Fathpur-Sikri will ever be created again. For, in the words of Fergusson, it is simply a reflex of the mind of the great man who built it.[2] Though long abandoned and bearing the scars of time, it still forms a most impressive revelation of a mighty personality.

Akbar built much more besides the masterpieces of architecture mentioned above; as, for example, the buildings at Sikandarah, the Akbari Mahal at Agra, the fort at Attock, and the Allahabad fort, which William Finch was told had taken more than forty years to build and for some time occupied twenty thousand

[1] D'Humières, *Through Isle and Empire*, pp. 206–7.

[2] Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, ed. 1910, p. 297.

workmen of various denominations. Five thousand men were still at work upon it when Finch visited Allahabad.[1] The number of edifices erected during Jahangir's reign seems poor by comparison with the architectural record of his father. On the other hand, some of them are of exceptional interest and merit. Nothing could be more beautiful than the tomb of Ítimadu-d daula, near Agra, erected about 1628 by the Empress Nur Jahan. Built entirely of white marble, it is decorated with *pietra dura* work in semi-precious stones, which emulates, if it does not surpass, the *chefs-d'œuvre* of this style of decoration in Shah Jahan's reign. Among other notable monuments of Jahangir's reign, at Lahore and elsewhere, is the great mausoleum of Akbar at Sikandarah, which was erected under the Emperor's orders between 1605 and 1612. The plan of the tomb, which is distinguished by five square terraces, diminishing as they ascend, resembles to some extent the Panch Mahall, Akbar's five-storied pavilion at Fathpur-Sikri, and is supposed by some authorities to have been copied from the Indian Buddhist *viharas*. It bears, however, a resemblance, at least equally close, to one of the two main types of ancient Khmer architecture, found in Cambodia and Cochin-China; and, on that account, another authority suggests that the design of Akbar's mausoleum may have been suggested by craftsmen at Jahangir's Court, hailing from the Far East.[2] The suggestion is not wholly improbable, particularly as both Fergusson and another authority agree that the design of the uppermost floor must have included a light dome over the cenotaph, which was never built— a vaulted roof to the top story being a recognized feature of the ancient Cambodian buildings of Khmer origin.

It was, however, in the reign of Shah Jahan that the Indo-Persian style of architecture attained its supreme beauty. The cost of the buildings which he erected was colossal—according to one estimate the Taj Mahal alone cost about 4½ million

[1] W. Foster, *Early Travels in India*, p. 177.

[2] Smith, *H. F. A.*, p. 411; *Indian Antiquary*, vol. lii, 1923, p. 118.

pounds sterling—for besides the palaces, gardens, the Pearl Mosque and the Taj Mahal at Agra, and the palaces, the *idgah* and Jama Masjid at Delhi, he built palaces and gardens at Lahore; a fort, palace, and mosque at Kabul; royal buildings at Kashmir; various buildings at Ajmer, Ahmadabad and other places; palaces at Mukhlispur; and forts at Kandahar and elsewhere. No precise estimate of the expenditure on these buildings is available, but the cost must have run into crores. The style of all Shah Jahan's principal edifices is essentially Persian, but is at the same time clearly distinguished from Persian ideas by the lavish employment of white marble and incomparable decoration. A salient feature also of the work of his reign is the open-work tracery which ornaments the finest buildings and the 'apt combination of spacious design with an almost feminine elegance'. The Taj Mahal, which has been described by so many admirers and is certainly one of the unrivalled beauties of this world, was commenced in 1631, a few months after the death of the Empress Mumtaz Mahall, and was not finally completed until 1653. Twenty thousand men were employed daily on its construction. The precise identity of the architect has always been doubtful, and Vincent Smith's conclusion that the Taj Mahal is 'the product of a combination of European and Asiatic genius' is denied by Maulvi Moinu-d din Ahmad, who awards the credit of the design to one Isa Afandi, a 'Turko-Indian', and gives reasons for disbelieving the supposed participation of French or Italian experts in the plan and construction.[1] In Shah Jahan's original design a monumental bridge was intended to span the river, uniting the Taj Mahal with an equally splendid mausoleum for the Emperor himself. But the conception was never realized; and nothing now joins the river's two banks, 'except at times a flight of green parakeets, skimming over the surface of the water, emerald arrows stolen from the

[1] See Smith, *H. F. A.*, pp. 416–18, for a discussion of the identity of the architect, and Moinu-d din Ahmad, *The Taj and its Environments*, pp. 16–30 (2nd ed., Agra, 1924).

golden quiver of the twilight, a message from desire to death over the waters softly flowing'.[1]

Of the two palaces which Shah Jahan built at Agra and Delhi, the former, according to Fergusson, is in better taste, while the latter, if conceived as a whole, would have revealed the personality of Shah Jahan as clearly as Fathpur-Sikri reflects that of Akbar. Both palaces were magnificent, particularly that of Delhi, in which the *Diwan-i-Khass* with its original ceiling of silver, valued by Tavernier at twenty-six millions of French money, and its mingled decorative scheme of marble, gold, and fine stones, fully justified the Persian inscription which it bore:

Agar firdaus bar ru-yi zamin ast
Hamin ast, u hamin ast u hamin ast.

If on Earth be an Eden of bliss,
It is this, it is this, none but this.

But perhaps the most perfect architectural legacy of Shah Jahan's reign is the Moti Masjid or Pearl Mosque in Agra Fort. In that incomparable building the style introduced by the Great Mughals reached the zenith of purity and elegance.

'There is something more intense in the mystic impression of those denticulated arches, those white and bluey perspectives, than in the flight of the Gothic perpendiculars. The sense of the divine given by the gigantic Tamil pagodas, the largest in the world, seems confused, extravagant, muddy, beside the fervour that shines forth from this act of faith and grace hewn in the most perfect substance wrought by the central fires. The serenity of the Greek temple has not that passion petrified in beauty. The one welcomes the divinity born of the play of the elements, the child of the clouds, the waves and the winds, blossoming from the original myth with no more pains than the flower

[1] The fame of Taj Mahal has overshadowed that of another and earlier tomb, also built by Shah Jahan, the beautiful mausoleum of his father at Shahdara, near Lahore. Though badly damaged in the days of Ranjit Singh it still remains an object of great beauty. As in the case of the Taj Mahal, rumour has for many years ascribed much of the work to European agency. Jahangir's famous consort, Nur Jahan, lies buried close by, in a most unpretentious tomb, an indication perhaps of the comparative oblivion into which she fell after the death of her husband.

from the bud; the other, to which the divinity is the inconceivable, calls to it, evokes it in a poem of fervent stone. It is the same difference as between joy and rapture. Yet let it not be imagined that there is anything strained or sorrowful in the sensation given by the Pearl Mosque. The first emotion is rather one of peace and serenity. It is only later that one begins to feel the ardour which the purified meditation of the believer would there be capable of attaining. Then, a vibration as of metal at white heat sends its waves coursing over those marbles. Next, all is peace once more; the sanctuary is alive, a mysterious soul throbs there between bliss and ecstasy. . . .'[1]

With the accession of Aurangzeb the style of Mughal architecture rapidly degenerated. Aurangzeb built little, as compared with his predecessors, and of several buildings of passable merit erected during his reign, the best perhaps is the mosque at Lahore, which was completed in 1674. It is a copy of the great mosque of Delhi, but distinctly 'inferior to that noble building'. Another building of some distinction is Zinatu-n nissa's mosque at Delhi; but, speaking generally, the Indo-Persian architecture of Aurangzeb's reign is marked by steady deterioration, which ends ultimately in the crude buildings erected by the Kings of Oudh in the eighteenth century. Aurangzeb cannot perhaps be charged with actively discouraging the designing and construction of fine buildings; but he certainly gave no encouragement to architecture or to the craftsmen who had thronged the imperial court in the preceding reigns. Even his own tomb at Aurangabad is insignificant, and seems to bear mute witness that the Moslem creative genius which built two such peerless monuments as the Taj Mahal in Hindustan and the Alhambra in Spain, had fulfilled its destiny, and that the great figures of the Timurid dynasty who, in the words of Bishop Heber, 'built like giants and finished their work like jewellers', had passed beyond recall.

§ *Mughal painting.* The history of Mughal painting resembles that of architecture; it flourished while the Empire flourished, and declined when it decayed. And just as the style and design

[1] D'Humières, *Through Isle and Empire*, pp. 225–6.

of the Mughal buildings were originally introduced by Akbar from Persia and were insensibly transformed by the contact of Hindu ideas into the mixed Indo-Persian or Mughal style, so the art of painting in the Mughal age, though Persian in origin, was actually the joint product of Persian and Hindu ideas, and developed into the two schools of painting, known as Mughal and Rajput, both of which owe their success to the incentive and support of the descendants of Timur. Hindu painting, which was founded on the pictorial art of the Buddhist priests of early ages, is essentially different from the Persian art, which was closely connected with the artistic schools of the Far East; but when the early Mughal Emperors introduced the latter style of painting into India, it rapidly attracted 'many of the indigenous artists of India—hereditary painters—trained for generations to the use of the brush', and was adapted by them to suit their own particular ideas. The methods of the Hindu painters are not dissimilar to those of the Persian school, but 'in its motives, in sentiment, and in temper generally', the school which they evolved strikes an entirely different note. The Mughal school 'confined itself to portraying the somewhat materialistic life of the Court, with its State functions, processions, hunting expeditions, and all the picturesque although barbaric pageantry of an affluent Oriental dynasty', while the Hindu artists, 'living mentally and bodily in another and more abstract environment, and working for Hindu patrons, pictured scenes from the Indian classics, domestic subjects and illustrations of the life and thought of their motherland and its creed'.[1]

The Persian method of painting, imported by the Mughals and thus assimilated by the Hindu craftsmen of India, was itself a provincialized form of Chinese art, owing its peculiar characteristics to the connexion with the Far Eastern schools established by the Mongols and continued by the Timurids. Its two greatest exponents in the period immediately preceding the

[1] P. Brown, *Indian Painting under the Mughals*,

introduction of the art to India were the famous Bihzad of Herat, who invented and developed real portraiture and has been styled the 'Raphael of the East', and his pupil Aga Mirak of Tabriz. Bihzad, indeed, who enjoyed the favour of Sultan Husain Baiqara and subsequently entered the service of Shah Ismail, founder of the Safavide dynasty of Persia, marks the transition of Persian painting from the Mongoloid style of the Timurid age to the more refined style associated with the Safavide rulers.[1] A well-known authority has remarked that the most striking feature of the painting of China and Japan is its line, of Persia its line and colour, and of India its colour.[2] These characteristics were assimilated, mingled, and combined in the products of the artists patronized by the Mughal rulers, resulting on the one hand in the gradual transformation of purely Muslim art, and on the other in a new development of Hindu pictorial representation. The process of decline of the purely Mongoloid or Chinese characteristics and the gradual evolution of the Indian style can be seen in the copy of the *Tarikh-i Khandan-i-Timuria* and a copy of the *Badshah-nama*, both preserved in the Khuda Baksh Library at Patna. In the former the rigidity of the Chinese outline has been softened, and the scenery is distinctly Indian; while in the latter Chinese influence has disappeared altogether, and the Indian style predominates.[3]

Babur, although he could not draw or paint, was a born artist in his power of close observation and his intense interest in Nature. After nights of revelry he would stand in rapt contemplation before an apple-tree, 'admiring the exquisite colours of the autumn leaves, which no painter, however skilful, could depict'. 'He is always keenly observant of the beauties of Nature,' writes Lane-Poole; 'he delights in the discovery of a spikenard, which he had not found before; and he is never weary of expatiating on the loveliness of the flowers in his favourite gardens. Dissipation never dulled his appreciation of such delights, or his

[1] P. Brown, *Indian Painting under the Mughals*; Smith, *H. F. A.*

[2] *Ibid.* [3] J. N. Sarkar, *Studies in Mughal India*, pp. 290, 291.

pleasure in poetry and music.'[1] It does not appear that he made any efforts to foster the art of painting in India; but the Alwar MS. of the Persian version of his *Memoirs* indicates that, like his Timurid ancestors, he had painters working under his patronage, and the illustrations in that manuscript may be assumed to represent the style of painting in vogue during his reign.[2] Humayun's chequered fate left him little opportunity for the encouragement of art in his Indian possessions, and any plans which he may have made in that direction were frustrated by his premature death. But the manner in which he passed the leisure hours of his exile in Persia, and subsequently in Kabul, proves that he shared to the full the family taste of the Timurids for art, and that like Babur he was an enthusiastic admirer of Nature. Besides visiting all the gardens of Khurasan, he acquainted himself with the music and poetry of Persia, and with the studios or schools of the leading artists who flourished at that date under the generous patronage of Shah Tahmasp. In this way he was brought into contact at Tabriz with Mir Sayyid Ali, a pupil of the renowned Bihzad, and Khwaja Abdus Samad, both of whom he persuaded to join his Court at Kabul in 1550. There he and his small son, Akbar, took lessons in drawing, and studied generally the art of painting under those two artists; there also he commissioned Mir Sayyid Ali to prepare the illustrations to the *Dastan-i-Amir Hamzah*, an immense task which lasted for years and required the collaboration of Khwaja Abdus Samad and other artists. 'Indeed, these two protégés of Humayun, working at Kabul with a few assistants, who may have hailed either from Persia or India, formed the nucleus of the Mughal school of painting, which came into prominence during Akbar's reign.[3] There can be little doubt that, in his patronage and encouragement of the painter's art, Akbar was giving practical effect to a policy which Humayun would have carried

[1] S. Lane-Poole, *Babar* (Rulers of India Series), p. 149.

[2] L. Binyon, *Court Painters of the Grand Moguls*, Introd., p. 14.

[3] P. Brown, *Indian Painting under the Mughals*, pp. 53, 54.

out, had he been spared; and it seems likely that the tuition which he underwent at the instance of Humayun confirmed and increased the interest in painting which he inherited from his more remote forbears. To this extent Humayun may be considered the original founder of the Mughal school of painting.

For the first few years of his reign Akbar had little time to spare for the encouragement of art; he was mainly engaged in freeing himself from the tutelage of the *zenana* and the Uzbeg nobles of the Court and in consolidating his power. Meanwhile Mir Sayyid Ali continued to prepare his illustrations to the *Amir Hamzah*, until he set out on the pilgrimage to Mecca, when his work was transferred to Khwaja Abdus Samad, known at that date by the title of *Shirin-Kalam* or 'sweet pen', in allusion to his skill in calligraphy. At this date Persian influence was still predominant, the illustrations to the *Amir Hamzah* being very similar to the style of painting in vogue at Tabriz; but by 1562, when the well-known picture showing the arrival at the Mughal Court of the Hindu singer, Tansen, was painted, the destined fusion of the Mughal and Hindu styles had commenced to manifest itself.[1] A distinct step forward was taken when Akbar decided in 1569 to build Fathpur-Sikri and embellish it with masterpieces of the painter's art. He had already attached to his Court a small number of trained Persian artists, headed by Abdus Samad, who were quite ready to use anything good in the work of Indian artists, and also a considerable number of Hindu artists, trained specially in wall-decoration, who were willing to utilize their skill in the production of the class of painting required by the Emperor. The result was the decoration between 1570 and 1585 of the walls of Akbar's new capital by the joint labours of Persian and Indian painters who, though they may have carried out their work independently, were yet mutually imbibing new ideas and facilitating the establishment of a regular school of Indo-Persian art.[2]

[1] P. Brown, *Indian Painting under the Mughals*, pp. 61 ff.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 61 ff.

It is a remarkable fact that the majority of the artists who formed the imperial school of painting in Akbar's reign were Hindus. The Persian or foreign painters, though they set the style, were comparatively few. They included Khwaja Abdus Samad, who was promoted to be Master of the Mint in 1577, and subsequently became Diwan or Revenue Commissioner at Multan; Farrukh Beg, who was of Kalmuck origin and joined the Court in 1585; Khusrau Quli; Jamshed; and a group of five painters from Kashmir. Of the seventeen really pre-eminent artists of Akbar's reign, no less than thirteen were Hindus who excelled in portraiture—the distinctive feature of the Mughal school. The high standard of art which they achieved can be gauged from the statement of Abu-l Fazl that 'their pictures surpass our conception of things. Few, indeed, in the whole world are found equal to them.' Chief among them were Basawan, Lal, and Daswanth; of whom the last-named belonged to the Kahar or palanquin-bearer caste, and when at the height of his fame became insane and killed himself. Basawan excelled in the painting of backgrounds, the drawing of features, the distribution of colours, and portraiture. The other Hindu artists mentioned in the *Ain-i-Akbari*, such as Kesu, Mukund, Haribans, mostly belonged to the Kayastha, Chitera, Silavat and Khati castes, and followed the practice of collaborating in each picture, in order to obtain the best results.[1] The leading artist would sketch the composition, and each painter would then put in the part at which he was particularly expert. This system was followed in the illustration of the *Razm-nama*—a task primarily entrusted to Daswanth, Basawan, and Lal, who delegated the painting of distinct portions of each separate picture to their fellow-artists.[1]

Akbar undoubtedly shared with Babur and others of his race a deep sense of natural beauty, 'an intense appreciation of the wonder and glory of the world'; and it was this motive, rather

[1] L. Binyon, *Court Painters of the Grand Moguls*, pp. 45, 46; P. Brown, *ibid.*, pp. 120–3; Smith, *Akbar*, pp. 429, 430.

than personal vanity or a desire for self-glorification, which led him to encourage the painter's art in defiance of strict Muhammadan orthodoxy.[1] He himself realized, however, that his more orthodox followers would expect some practical explanation of his reasons for disregarding the Koranic injunction regarding the representation of living forms; and he therefore took the opportunity, when many of them were present at a private party, of delivering the often-quoted opinion on painting, recorded by Abu-l Fazl: 'There are many that hate painting; but such men I dislike. It appears to me as if a painter had quite peculiar means of recognizing God; for a painter in sketching anything that has life, and in devising its limbs, one after the other, must come to feel that he cannot bestow individuality on his work, and is thus forced to think of God, the Giver of life, and will thus increase his knowledge.' That this view was dictated by the need of allaying the apprehensions and objections of his Muhammadan *entourage* seems certain from the words used by his courtly biographer, in introducing the subject of the Emperor's support of the pictorial art. 'Bigoted followers of the letter of the law', he writes, 'are hostile to the art of painting, but their eyes now see the truth.'

Having thus publicly announced his reasons for extending his patronage to painting, Akbar commenced the task of organizing an imperial school and stimulating the production of pictures with his accustomed zeal and grasp of detail. We learn from the *Ain-i-Akbari*[2] that the Emperor gave the art 'every encouragement, as he looks upon it as a means both of study and amusement'; that 'the works of all painters are weekly laid before His Majesty by the *daroghas* and the clerks; he then confers rewards according to excellence of workmanship, or increases the monthly salaries'. In other words, the school was under the direct control and supervision of the Emperor, and the painters, who numbered more than a hundred and worked in a large hall at

[1] L. Binyon, *Court Painters of the Grand Moguls*, pp. 40, 41.

[2] *Ain-i-Akbari*, trans. Blochmann, vol. i, p. 108.

Fathpur-Sikri, were all granted military rank as *mansabdars* or *ahadis*, and drew their salaries according to their grade. Abdus Samad, for example, held the rank of a '*mansabdar of* 400', though the influence which he enjoyed in the imperial circle was much greater than his grade warranted. In addition to the painters' section, the school contained a decorative section, staffed by 'ornamental artists, gilders, line-drawers and pagers', who were classed as infantry soldiers in accordance with the general military scheme of the imperial administration. The work of these craftsmen formed an essential part of the preparation of a Mughal painting or illuminated manuscript. The Emperor also turned his attention to the improvement of the materials used in painting, ascertained and fixed the prices of such articles, and made improvements in the mixing of colours. 'The pictures thus received', says Abu-l Fazl, 'a hitherto unknown finish.' This technical branch of the school's activities was rendered necessary by the fact that the Emperor was introducing a new form of artistic expression, differing widely from that hitherto prevailing in India. 'No longer were artists to paint large scenes on the surface of walls in coarse *tempera* colours, which could be readily repainted when injured by the climate or the passage of time. Instead they were required to adapt this art to small pictures on paper, carefully and minutely drawn and coloured, which were to be a lasting record of each painter's individual skill. Special kinds of paper and pigments were therefore needed, brushes of suitable fineness to be prepared, and all the delicate mediums and adhesives obtained, which this decisive change of technique necessitated. Many of these commodities were little known in India, as for instance paper, which had only just begun to be used. This material, so essential to the art of painting, therefore had to be procured, and was first of all imported from Persia, although afterwards paper manufactories were established in India by the Mughals. Under the Persian artists the preparation of pigments for miniature painting had received much attention, and these, or

the formulae for them, were placed at the service of the Indian artists. The latter had their own palettes, but were ready to add to these any colours or mediums which would aid them in obtaining good results in this new form of pictorial art.'[1]

The artists of Akbar's Court specialized in portraiture and in book illustration, and some of them established a distinct superiority in the art of painting animals and birds. 'Akbar himself 'sat for his likeness, and also ordered to have the likenesses taken of all the grandees of the realm. An immense album was thus formed; those that have passed away have received a new life, and those who are still alive have immortality promised them.'[2] Unfortunately few, if any, of the original portraits included in the Emperor's album have survived; but if the beautiful drawing of Umar Shaikh, the father of Babur, on a hunting expedition, which is now preserved in the British Museum, rightly belongs to the reign of Akbar, we obtain an idea of the delicacy and the felicitous blending of Persian and Indian art which must have characterized the portraits in the imperial collection. On the other hand, many examples of the book illustrations of Akbar's school have survived in the manuscripts preserved in England and India, the most notable of these being the *Razm-nama* at Jaipur, which is said to have cost the equivalent of £40,000, the *Babur-nama* in the British Museum, and the *Akbar-nama* in the Victoria and Albert Museum. The *Babur-nama*, in which the illustrations are, perhaps naturally, rather more Persian than Indian in style, contains several paintings of animals, birds, trees, and so forth, some of which were the work of Mansur, who commenced his career under Akbar and attained fame in the reign of his successor. Another Hindu artist, who appears in this volume as the author of a small but exquisite picture of peacocks, is Jagannath —one of the pre-eminent painters mentioned by Abu-l Fazl. An analysis of the personnel of Akbar's school shows that the

[1] P. Brown, *Indian Painting under the Mughals*, p. 64.

[2] *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. i, pp. 108–9.

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Emperor drew his court painters from a wide geographical radius. The Indians included artists from districts as far apart as Gujarat and the Punjab, while the foreign element was composed of natives of Kashmir, Persia, and Turkestan; and 'this artistic community, comprising many diverse races and several creeds which he had brought together, grew into a school, and flourished; it flourished because it was animated with one object, which was to produce work of such a quality that it would earn the approval of the great mind responsible for its inception'.[1]

It is, however, questionable whether the school would have continued to flourish after Akbar's death, if it had not received the whole-hearted support and patronage of Jahangir. Art at this epoch was dependent for its existence upon the personal enthusiasm of the ruler; and it is to the eternal credit of Jahangir that he extended his powerful protection to the organization founded by Akbar, and by this constant encouragement of the Court painters promoted a steady improvement in the quality of the pictures which they produced, and brought to its maturity the special style of pictorial art associated with the dynasty of the Mughals. Jahangir has been described by a modern critic as belonging to 'the type of rich collector, perennial through the ages', voluptuously appreciative of fine workmanship, an excellent connoisseur, proud of the skill of his painters, and ready to pay heavy prices for any pictures that caught his fancy and satisfied his aesthetic standard.[2] He was certainly an accomplished critic of painting; for, as he himself informs us in his frank and outspoken *Memoirs*, he was very fond of pictures and had such discrimination in judging them, that he could tell the name of the artist, whether alive or dead. 'If there were similar portraits finished by several artists', he proceeds, 'I could point out the painter of each. Even if one portrait were finished by several painters, I could mention the names of those who had drawn the different portion of that single picture. In fact, I could

[1] P. Brown, *ibid.*, pp. 123, 124.

[2] L. Binyon, *Court Painters of the Grand Moguls*, pp. 50 ff.

declare without fail by whom the brow and by whom the eyelashes were drawn, or if any one had touched up the portrait after it was drawn by the first painter.'[1]

Apart from his judgment as an art-crit[illegible] estimate of Jahangir, mentioned above, scarcely does [illegible]te justice to his passionate love of Nature. In his desire f[illegible]el and sport, in his love of self-indulgence, particularly with[illegible]rd to wine, in his *camaraderie*, and in his literary activities, h[illegible]osely resembled his great-grandfather Babur, though the latter was naturally more vigorous and led a much harder life. He resembled Babur still more closely in his love of gardens, flowers, and scenery, in the profound joy which he felt in the presence of the world's beauty. One remembers how Babur in his *Memoirs*, between the story of a night of love and wine, and the episode of a 'minaret of skulls', relates that he wept at the scent of a melon which reminded him of his country; in the same way we find Jahangir so moved by ecstasy at the sight of the flowers and the meadows of Kashmir that he burst into song. His love of Kashmir, indeed, was so intense that he journeyed thither thirteen times during his reign; and whenever he saw a flower or tree or a natural scene that appealed to his aesthetic instinct, he bade his painters reproduce them. Jahangir had many failings; but he possessed an artist's vision, and so long as he lived, he was the soul and spirit of Mughal art.[2] Even in death he sought communion with Nature, asking almost with his last breath that his tomb might lie open to the winds of heaven, and be watered by the rain and the dew. And peradventure Nature could have found no more fitting shrine for his remains than the fair garden at Lahore, in which he sleeps beneath an exquisite sarcophagus of white marble.

Before he ascended the throne, Jahangir had in his employ a celebrated painter of Herat named Aga Riza, to whom he refers in his *Memoirs*. Aga Riza's son, Abu-l Hasan, became one

[1] *Memoirs of Jahangir*, Rogers and Beveridge, 1909, vol. i, p. 20.

[2] P. Brown, *Indian Painting under the Mughals*, p. 71 ff.

of the chief painters of Jahangir's Court, sharing the Emperor's patronage with Farrukh Beg, the Kalmuck artist, who became leader of the school after the death of Abdus Samad; with Muhammad Nadir and Muhammad Murad, both natives of Samarkand, who seem to have been the last foreign artists at the Mughal Court; with Ustad Mansur, the leading animal painter; Bishandas, a skilled portrait painter; Manohar, and Govardhan. These men and others of less note were constantly attached to the Emperor's suite, and were commissioned to paint any incident or scene that struck the Emperor's fancy; and whether engaged in the work of portraiture or in the illustration of books, they were guided by the judgment and taste of the Emperor, who had acquired a first-hand acquaintance with the classical aspects of miniature painting. He sought also to educate their taste by the constant purchase of samples of the best schools of art. This combination of the Emperor's ideals with the craftsmen's skill resulted in the Mughal school of painting reaching the highest pitch of excellence and finally emancipating itself from the tutelage of Persia. The Persian influence, which counted for so much during Akbar's reign, was steadily assimilated during the reign of his son. Persian artists still lingered at Jahangir's Court, and one was employed by ShahJahan; copies were still made by the Court artists from Persian pictures; but the true Persian style grew fainter and fainter and yielded place during Jahangir's reign to a type which was essentially Indian.[1] Thus an art which commenced by being the art of a foreign court, dependent on and directed by patronage, leaned gradually more and more to Hindu tradition, until its foreign or Persian features had been wholly assimilated. Akbar laid the foundations of Mughal miniature painting; but it was his son, Jahangir,

[1] L. Binyon, *Court Painters, &c., passim*; P. Brown, *Indian Painting, &c., passim*. Three beautiful paintings of this period have recently been found in Jaipur—one is believed to be a portrait of the saint Salim Chishti in extreme old age. They are described in detail in the *Punjab Historical Society's Journal*, vol. ix.

born of a Rajput princess, who by his knowledge and artistic intuition guided the new school of Indian art to maturity, and taught it by the influence of his own rare judgment to achieve success.

The real spirit of Mughal art, according to Mr. Percy Brown, died with Jahangir. Shah Jahan had not the same keen appreciation of pictures as his predecessors, and his personal tastes lay rather in the direction of architecture and jewellery. In consequence Mughal painting begins during his reign to show the first symptoms of decline, the pictures which were produced at this date depending for their attraction rather upon rich pigments and a lavish use of gold than upon the harmonious blend of colours which distinguished the products of Jahangir's school. The circumstances of the artists themselves also underwent a change. Shah Jahan reduced the number of Court artists, keeping under his immediate patronage only a limited band of the most expert painters, and thus forced the large concourse of craftsmen, who had depended entirely on the ruler for their livelihood, to seek the patronage of the Court grandees and nobility. The art ceased in fact to be an imperial monopoly though encouragement was still given to it by members of the imperial family, such as Dara Shikoh, whose album of paintings, now in the India Office, proves that he was a patron of the art. But all the painters who thronged the Court at the close of Jahangir's reign could not hope to obtain employment with the leading nobles, and those who failed to secure such patronage were forced to set up small studios in the bazaars of northern India and endeavour to earn a livelihood by selling their pictures to the general public. The public, however, which could appreciate and afford to purchase the artist's productions was very limited, and the status and prestige of those painters who did not enjoy the protection of the Court or the nobility gradually declined, until they ranked little higher than artisans. Bernier, the traveller, describes this aspect of commercial art in the middle of the seventeenth century, stating that the painters

worked in halls in the cities under the eye of a master, had no chance of attaining distinction, and were inadequately remunerated for their work. This system had barely commenced during the reign of Shah Jahan; but it unquestionably originated in that Emperor's restriction of his patronage to a small body of artists, and in the growing inability of the nobles to find the means to support a large body of trained artists in the style to which they had been accustomed in the golden age of Akbar and Jahangir. Portraiture and representations of the imperial durbars continued to be favourite subjects of the painter's art under Shah Jahan; brilliant colours and much gold are to be seen in the durbar of that Emperor preserved in the Bodleian Library at Oxford; but, in Mr. Percy Brown's words, 'one detects behind all the lavish display which is the main characteristic of the painting under Shah Jahan, that sense of over-ripeness which is the sure sign of decline'.[1]

The bigotry and intolerance of Aurangzeb, and his misdirected administrative qualities, sounded the death-knell of the Mughal Empire; and when the Empire fell to pieces, the Mughal arts collapsed with it. But although Aurangzeb personally regarded painting with antipathy, as an infringement of the injunctions of Islam, he did not actually forbid it or treat it as harshly as he did the sister art of Music. He was not, however, above destroying pictures with his own hands; he is reported to have defaced many of the paintings in the Asar Mahal at Bijapur; and Manucci records that under his express orders the figures in Akbar's tomb at Sikandarah were covered with a coat of whitewash. Nevertheless the painters still practised their art during his reign, particularly those who were skilled in portraiture, and the number of paintings actually produced was certainly as large as the number produced under his predecessors. Many of these include a portrait of the Emperor himself, and were therefore presumably painted with his sanction. They depict him hunting, travelling, reading, or commanding his army, as for

[1] P. Brown, *Indian Painting, &c.*, p. 98.

example at the siege of Bijapur in 1686, which forms the subject of a painting preserved in the Rampur State Library. In one instance, referred to by Professor J. N. Sarkar, he actually made use of the painter's skill to provide himself with a record of the health of a rebellious son. During the incarceration of Muhammad Sultan, his portrait was painted at regular intervals by order of the Emperor and submitted to the latter for inspection. He thus kept himself informed of his son's condition, without the necessity of visiting him or having him brought into his presence from the fortress of Gwalior.[1] But, speaking generally, despite considerable activity in the production of pictures, the art of painting showed distinct degeneration during Aurangzeb's reign. It had reached its zenith under Jahangir and had commenced to lose its vitality under Shah Jahan; its decline was hastened by the attitude of Aurangzeb, who regarded the patronage or encouragement of the pictorial art as wholly incompatible with the precepts of the Koranic law.[2]

The paintings executed during the reigns of the early Mughal sovereigns have been justly praised by experts for their artistic qualities, and by historians for the valuable sidelight which they throw on the habits and customs of the ruling classes of that epoch. They also form a valuable commentary on the daily life of the Emperors themselves. We see Babur receiving a deputation in a garden at Agra; we see the masons at work on the walls and towers of Fathpur-Sikri; we see Akbar's elephant in a rage, destroying a boat-bridge; we see the great Emperor himself hunting tigers and deer, or lying asleep under a rock; Jahangir is shown at the moment of killing a lion; and Shah Jahan appears at one time visiting a religious teacher, at another enthroned amid the splendours of the *Diwan-i-Am*. Occasionally one comes across scenes from zenana life, though these are rare in the best period of the art, and probably belong to the

[1] J. N. Sarkar, *Studies in Mughal India*, p. 78.

[2] See L. Binyon, *Court Painters, &c.*, pp. 62 ff.; P. Brown, *Indian Painting, &c.*, pp. 98 ff.

period of slow decay which commenced in the early years of Aurangzeb's reign and ended about the middle of the eighteenth century. The disintegration of the Empire necessarily involved the dispersal of the artists, who migrated from the capital to other centres like Oudh and Hyderabad, where new dynasties had declared their independence and appeared to offer fresh opportunities of employment. Some of the painters wandered eastwards to Patna; others sought the protection of Mysore, and there carried on the old traditions until the middle of the nineteenth century. But the art never recovered its former spirit and excellence; and such support as it received during the period of decline was trivial, both in extent and quality, by comparison with the wealth and inspiration accorded to it by the master-minds of the Great Mughals.[1]

§ *Calligraphy.* Associated with the Mughal art of painting was the art of calligraphy, which has always been highly esteemed in India, Persia, and China. The penmanship of a manuscript, indeed, was often considered of more value and importance than the illustrations; a master of calligraphy could always hope to earn by his work as high, if not a higher reward than that received by a skilful painter. The well-known dictum of Horace —*Poeta nascitur non fit*—aptly expresses the view prevalent in Asiatic countries regarding the genius of the *khushnavis* or fine writers, whose handiwork was collected and preserved in albums as carefully as the finest specimens of pictorial art. For whereas the painters of the Mughal age 'were regarded merely as hereditary craftsmen', who by a long course of training had gradually become adept artists, the calligraphists ranked in popular estimation as the fortunate possessor of a divine talent, which could never be acquired by study and practice.[2] According to Sir John Malcolm, the taste for calligraphy was still existent in Persia in the early years of the nineteenth century, and he mentions that a sum of seven pounds was paid by a connoisseur for four lines written by a celebrated penman, named Darvesh

[1] See P. Brown, *ibid.*, pp. 103–5.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 21.

Majid, who had died several years previously.[1] During the Mughal age painting and calligraphy frequently worked hand in hand, with the result that a picture often bears on the reverse a few lines, written by some eminent master of penmanship, which bear no direct relation to the painting. The calligraphists made a practice of signing and dating their work, and frequently enjoyed a greater reputation throughout Asia than the painters, no matter how pre-eminent the latter might be—a fact which doubtless was responsible for the verdict of a French authority, M. Huart, that 'En l'Orient la miniature n'est que la servante de la calligraphie' ('In the East [i.e. the Muhammadan east] painting is merely the handmaiden of calligraphy').[2]

We hear little of calligraphy under Babur and Humayun, although the former is said to have invented a new style of writing in 1504, known as Baburi.[3] But Abu-l Fazl speaks of eight modes of calligraphy being in vogue in Akbar's reign, of which seven were attributed to Ibni Muqlah, and the eighth, *nastaliq*, which was a special favourite of the Emperor himself and consisted entirely of curved strokes, was invented by combining two of the other seven modes, known as *naskh* and *taliq*.[4] Speaking broadly, these various modes were distinguished from one another by differences in the proportions of the straight and curved lines, the principal 'straight-line' made being the *kufic* and the chief 'curved-line' mode the *nastaliq*. Abu-l Fazl gives the names of the twelve leading calligraphists at Akbar's Court, one of whom, Muhammad Husain of Kashmir, a master of *nastaliq*, was granted the title of *Zarrin-Kalam* or 'Gold-pen';[5] and Firishta, the historian, records that Akbar ordered the fables of Amir Hamza to be written in a beautiful

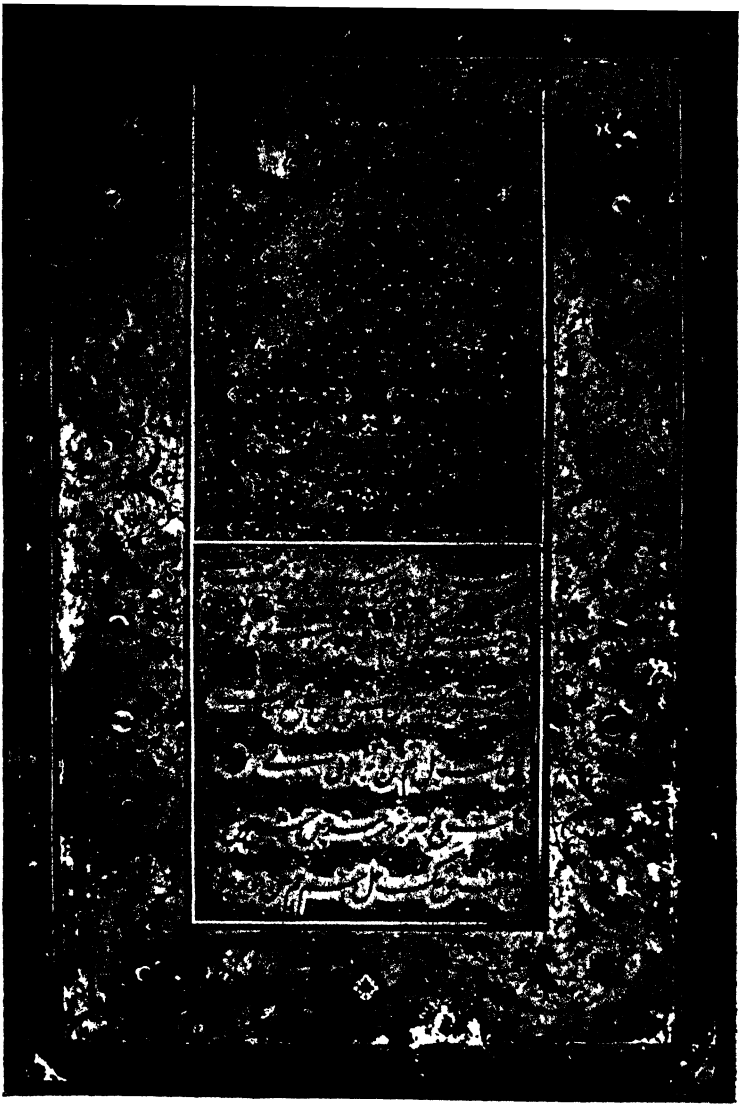
[1] Malcolm, *History of Persia*, 1829, vol. ii, pp. 421 *n.*

[2] Huart, *Les Calligraphes et les Miniaturistes de l'Orient Musulman*, Paris, 1908.

[3] N. N. Law, *Promotion of Learning in India*, p. 123.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 158; Smith, *Akbar*, p. 425; *Ain-i-Akbari*, trans. Blochmann, p 99.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 103.



EXAMPLE OF A GITA, OR SPECIMEN OF ILLUMINATION AND CALLIGRAPHY

By MIR ALI OF HERAT

hand.[1] It is clear, therefore, that Akbar's supposed inability to write himself did not prevent his giving every encouragement to the art of elegant penmanship; and the result is visible not only in the specimens of the writing of his reign, which still survive, but also in the finely engraved inscriptions on his coinage. The excellence of Akbar's coins was secured by the co-operation of the poet, the sculptor, the engraver, and the calligraphist, each of whom played an important role in the preparation of the finished article. Jahangir continued his father's patronage of the penman's art, and was ready to pay very high prices for well-written manuscripts; Mir Hasham, a painter, enjoyed a great reputation as a calligraphist in the reign of Shah Jahan; while Aurangzeb showed much favour to his librarian, Jawahir Raqam, who was a master of the art of writing. Aurangzeb himself was a skilful performer with the pen and is said to have defrayed a portion of his personal expenses by the sale of copies of the Koran, transcribed by his own hand.[2] The art of calligraphy during the Mughal period was employed in several ways. It figures in the beautiful specimens of illumination, known as *qit'a*, of which a fine example prepared by Mir Ali of Herat, who died in 1558–9, is to be seen in the Indian Museum at Calcutta; it was utilized in the engraving of the royal seals, the principal engraver of Akbar's reign, Maulana Ali Ahmad of Delhi, being also a master of *nastaliq*; and it was adapted to the decoration of buildings and monuments, many of which were adorned with texts from the Koran, decoratively arranged to form part of the general design. The skill with which calligraphy was thus employed can be seen in the marble cenotaph of Akbar, on the uppermost story of his mausoleum at Sikandarah, where the oblong sides and top 'are adorned with the ninety-nine titles of the Creator in alto-relievo, set in delicate Arabic tracery', and the words *Allaho Akbar jalla jalalahu* are inscribed on panels at the head and foot, 'surrounded by most beautiful and delicate

[1] See N. N. Law, *Promotion of Learning, &c.*, p. 142

[2] J. N. Sarkar, *Anecdotes of Aurangzib*, p. 52.

floral ornamentation'.[1] The regard for exquisite calligraphy, which was a marked feature of the Mughal Court, may perhaps have inspired the quatrain by an anonymous scribe which hails the Pen as 'lord of the universe, bringing riches to him who holds it and guiding even the unfortunate to the shore of wealth'.[2]

§ *Sculpture.* Turning to other forms of artistic activity, one is struck by the almost complete absence of sculpture in the round or in high relief. Practically no examples exist, excepting the remains of stone elephants, with or without riders, which it was customary to place at the entrance of fortresses. The elephant-gate at Fathpur-Sikri, for example, 'is still guarded by the mutilated figures of two colossal elephants, perched on supports twelve and a half feet high, whose trunks were originally interlocked across the entrance';[3] and small elephants, of no artistic merit, form part of the decorative sculpture of several Mughal buildings. William Finch, who visited Agra in the reign of Jahangir, speaks of the statues of 'two Rajas', erected over one of the gates of that city by order of either Akbar or Jahangir.[4] These figures, which were mounted on elephants, are supposed to have represented two of the grandsons of Raja Bhagwan Das of Jaipur, who were slain in a struggle with some of the nobles of the palace, though possibly they were the statues of Jaimall and Fatta, erected by Akbar. No trace of these statues remains to-day. It is also certain that Jahangir commanded two life-size marble statues of the Rana of Chitor and his son to be erected in the palace-garden at Agra, below the *darsan jharokha*, at which he daily appeared before the eyes of his subjects.[5] These statues, which were probably carved at Ajmer, have also disappeared. Lastly, we have the evidence of Bernier that in 1663, during the early years of Aurangzeb's reign, the Delhi

[1] Smith, *H. F. A.*, p. 430.

[2] See *Indian Antiquary*, vol. liii, June, 1924, p. 136.

[3] Smith, *H. F. A.*, p. 425.

[4] W. Foster, *Early Travels*, p. 183; *Purchas His Pilgrims*, Maclehose, vol. iv, p. 72.

[5] *Memoirs of Jahangir*, Rogers and Beveridge, p. 332.

Gate of Delhi Fort was remarkable for the statues of two men mounted on elephants, who were supposed to represent Jaimall and Fatta, the heroes of the defence of Chitor in 1568.[1] These may have been erected by order of Shah Jahan, when he built the Fort at Delhi. But, like the elephants of the *Hathipol* at Fathpur-Sikri, these Delhi statues were broken up by order of Aurangzeb, whose religious dislike of such effigies may have been aggravated by the fact that in all probability they were originally the handiwork of Hindu sculptors.

§ *Decorative carving.* Decorative relief carving, on the other hand, reached a high pitch of excellence in the reigns of Akbar, Jahangir, and Shah Jahan. The carving on Akbar's tomb has already been mentioned, and includes, besides the calligraphic ornamentation, representations of clouds, plants, flowers, butterflies, insects, and a conventional vase design—all beautifully modelled: the dados at the Taj Mahal are embellished with conventional flowers cut in low relief on the sandstone. But an even higher standard of excellence, both as to design and execution, was attained in stone lattice-work, which, in the form of countless geometrical patterns, is seen on so many Muhammadan buildings. The beautiful traceries at Sidi Sayyid's mosque in Ahmadabad, built about A.D. 1500, prove that the art flourished in pre-Mughal times, and was applied not only to windows, but also to door-panels and tomb-screens. The marble screen-work at Shaikh Salim Chishti's tomb in Fathpur-Sikri, and the admirable marble screen round the cenotaph in the Taj Mahal, show that in the reigns of Akbar and Shah Jahan the art could produce masterpieces of open-work carving comparable with the finest specimens in Gujarat.

§ *Mosaics.* The craftsmen of the Mughal age were proficient in mosaic and inlay decoration. During Akbar's reign this form of ornament was confined to mosaics 'made up after the Roman and Byzantine fashion from small tesserae, which were

[1] Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, ed. Crooke, 1920, vol. i, p. 382 and *n.*

combined in Persian geometrical patterns'. These formed a supplement to the ordinary marble inlay and can be seen in the great mosque at Fathpur-Sikri. Towards the end of Jahangir's reign, however, they appear to have been superseded by the remarkable form of inlay, technically known as *pietra dura*, 'composed of hard precious or semi-precious stones, such as onyx, jasper, cornelian, &c., cut into thin slices and neatly bedded in sockets prepared in the marble'. The earliest specimens of this work are to be seen in the Gol Mandal at Udaipur and the mausoleum of Itumadu-d daula at Agra. Although it is not absolutely certain from what source the Mughal Emperors obtained their knowledge of *pietra dura* work, it was in all probability introduced from Italy by some of the foreign craftsmen employed at the imperial Court. Once it had become known, it was freely employed by Hindu and Muhammadan workmen, and under Shah Jahan it entirely superseded the older mosaic ornamentation. This is apparent in the buildings which he erected at Delhi and Agra, the palaces in both cities and the Taj Mahal being lavishly decorated with *pietra dura* inlay. The tomb at Shahdara and the Shish Mahal and Naulakha in Lahore Fort also offer fine examples of this class of decoration.

§ *Glazed tile-work*. Lastly, there is the work in enamelled or glazed tiles, which is said to have been originally derived from Babylonia and to have spread thence to Khorasan and Samarkand. The particular class of tile used in the walls and domes of Mughal buildings was styled *kashi* or *chini* and appears to have come into favour during Jahangir's reign, though specimens of tile-work can be seen in the earlier tombs of Sher Shah and Humayun. The finest examples of this work are to be found on the minarets of the mosque of Wazir Khan at Lahore, which was built during the reign of Shah Jahan, and on the walls of the Chini-ka-Rauza at Agra, which dates from the early part of Aurangzeb's reign. Though time has dealt harshly with the latter building, there is enough left to show that the whole of the external surface was covered with tile-

mosaic of various patterns. An even more remarkable effort is to be seen on the walls of the Fort of Lahore, where a surface measuring 497 yards in length and 17 yards in height is faced with painted tiles representing elephant fights and other scenes.[1]

§ *Music and singing.* With the exception of Aurangzeb, the Mughal Emperors were fond of music and gave encouragement to the art, which at an earlier date had been improved and developed by the famous Amir Khusru. During his sojourn at the Court of Sultan Ghiyasu-d din Balban (1266–86) he had leisure to revise the musical modes originally introduced from central Asia, and thus incidentally influenced the gradual transformation of the character of Hindu music, which in its later form differed little from the Persian *ghazal.* The Mughal Emperors were not alone in their appreciation of music; for it was cultivated by several Indian rulers, including the Adil Shahi Sultans of Bijapur and Baz Bahadur of Malwa, who was a contemporary of Akbar. Babur is said to have been skilled in the art and to have written a treatise upon it;[2] and although no definite evidence of Humayun's attitude towards music survives, it is probable that he shared the family taste for song and dance. Akbar's courtly biographer leaves us in no doubt regarding his patron's devotion to the art, declaring that the Emperor 'pays much attention to music, and is the patron of all who practise this enchanting art. There are numerous musicians at court, Hindus, Iranis, Turanis, Kashmiris, both men and women. The court musicians are arranged in seven divisions, one for each day of the week'.[3] Akbar's interest in music was not merely that of a cultured listener. He had acquired, according to Abu-l Fazl, 'such a knowledge of the science of music as trained musicians do not possess'; he was no mean performer on

[1] The last four paragraphs on the ancillary arts of decoration are based on Smith's *History of Fine Art, &c.*, pp. 424–8. He includes a reproduction of one of the tiles from the wall of Lahore fort, facing p. 446.

[2] N. N. Law, *Promotion of Learning, &c.*, p. 122.

[3] *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. i, trans. Blochmann, p. 612.

the nakkarah (kettle-drum); he made a special study of Hindu vocalization under Lal Kalawant, who taught him 'every breathing and sound that appertains to the Hindu language';[1] he himself harmonized two hundred old Persian tunes. As a result of Akbar's encouragement of the art, music enjoyed great popularity, and the vocal side of it, with its *rags* and *raginis*, was widely cultivated. Throughout the country the nobility and the wealthy classes emulated the ruler's zeal and exerted themselves to improve the art: skilful singers were often rewarded with costly presents, as for example Ram Das, who received a *lac* of rupees from Abdurrahim Mirza, Khan Khanan,[2] and the famous Mian Tansen, to whom Akbar presented a reward of two *lacs* of rupees. The chief instruments used at this date in instrumental music or to accompany the voice were the *sarmandal*, *bin* (vina), *nai*, *karana*, *tamburah*, *ghichak*, *qubuz*, *surna*, and *qanun*.

Abu-l Fazl gives a list of thirty-six singers and instrumental performers at Akbar's Court, including Baz Bahadur, mentioned above, who was appointed a '*mansabdar* of 1,000', and is said to have been an unrivalled singer. But by far the most skilful and famous vocalist of the day was Mian Tansen Kalavant, who was originally in the service of the Raja of Rewa and had commenced his professional career in the school of music founded at Gwalior by Raja Man Singh (1486–1518).[3] Akbar compelled the Raja of Rewa to surrender Tansen in 1562–3; and the first arrival of the singer at the imperial Court has been immortalized by a painting now preserved in the Indian Museum at Calcutta, which, apart from its historical interest, is a valuable example of the transition of the pictorial art from the Persian to the Mughal style and shows in a marked manner the incipient fusion of the former with the indigenous art of Hindustan.[4] Several tales have been woven by the popular imagination to glorify

[1] *Memoirs of Jahangir*, Rogers and Beveridge, i. 150.
[2] N. N. Law, *Promotion of Learning, &c.*, pp. 155 ff.
[3] P. Brown, *Indian Painting, &c.*
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 57.

Tansen's musical abilities. He is said to have spent much time listening to the simple melodies of the peasants, as they drew water from their field-wells, and to have adapted these to his more finished vocal art; he is credited with the power of stopping the flow of the Jumna by his singing, just as his rival, Birja Baula, is believed to have split a rock with a single powerful note. Birja Baula, who is supposed to have learnt his bass from the noise of the stone grinding-mills, is not mentioned by Abu-l Fazl in his list of eminent musicians, but the story of his rivalry with Tansen is attested by many a legend and folk-tale.[1] It is said that Hindu critics of the musical arts hold Tansen responsible for the deterioration of Hindu music, declaring that he falsified the *rags*, of which two, *hindol* and *megh*, have disappeared completely since his day.[2] Be this as it may, he achieved an unrivalled reputation, and seems to have fully justified Abu-l Fazl's remark that 'a singer like him has not been in India for the last thousand years'.

It seems probable that Tansen was a native of Gwalior, which appears to have been prolific of singers and musicians in the Mughal age, and that shortly after joining Akbar's service he became a Musalman and was granted the title of Mirza. He died in April 1589, and was buried at Gwalior, close to the south-west corner of the sepulchre of Muhammad Ghaus—a position which indirectly proves his conversion to Islam, as no Hindu could have been buried in such a spot. According to Forbes, Tansen's death actually took place in Lahore, his body being removed to Gwalior by the express command of Akbar,[3] in whose name, it may be added, most of his musical compositions were written. By an artistic anachronism, Tansen appears in a picture of a procession at the Court of Jahangir, painted by Manohar in 1605, which has led to the erroneous statement that Tansen lived to see service under Jahangir as well as under

[1] Sleeman's *Rambles and Recollections*, ed. V. A. Smith, pp. 561–2.

[2] Fox-Strangways, *Music of Hindustan*, 1914.

[3] Forbes, *Oriental Memoirs*, 1813, iii. 32.

Akbar.[1] There is no doubt whatever that Tansen was not alive when Jahangir came to the throne, having died in the thirty-fourth year of Akbar's reign. On the other hand, there was nothing to prevent one of Jahangir's Court artists introducing into a scene at his patron's Court the portrait of a renowned singer, whose features had often been reproduced during his lifetime. The fame of Tansen is not doomed to fade: 'His melodies', as Blochmann writes, 'are even nowadays everywhere repeated by the people of Hindustan';[2] his tomb at Gwalior has become a place of pilgrimage for those who adopt music as a profession; and a measure of the harmony which he once evoked still dwells in the leaves of the *nim* tree overshadowing his grave, which are believed, when eaten, to improve the human voice.

His father's taste for music was apparently inherited by Jahangir, who maintained several good singers at his Court. The *Iqbal Nama-i-Jahangiri* records the names of six specialists in the art;[3] and William Finch, in his description of Agra, indicates that Akbar's practice of allotting a separate day of the week for each band of singers was observed during Jahangir's reign. 'Many hundreds [*scil*, singing and dancing girls]', he writes, attend there day and night, according as their severall turnes come every seventh day, that they may bee ready when the King or his women shall please to call any of them to sing or dance in his moholl, he giving to every one of them stipends according to their unworthy worth.'[4] Mention has been made in a previous chapter of the musical entertainments held during Shah Jahan's reign in the *Diwan-i-Khass*, after the more urgent administrative work had been completed. Vocal and instrumental music was the chief feature of these entertainments and seems to have been of a high order of merit; for Tavernier the traveller, who spent some time in India at this date, declares that the music played

[1] P. Brown, *Indian Painting*, &c., p. 155.
[2] *Ain-i-Akbari*, trans. Blochmann, p. 406.
[3] N. N. Law, *Promotion of Learning*, &c., p. 178.
[4] W. Foster, *Early Travels*, p. 183.

at these imperial receptions was sweet and pleasant, making so little noise that it did not disturb the thoughts from the serious business in which the courtiers were engaged. Occasionally the Emperor himself took part in the performance; for, according to the Court chronicler, he was an accomplished vocalist and had so attractive a voice that 'many pure-souled *Sufis* and holy men with hearts withdrawn from the world, who attended these evening assemblies, lost their senses in the ecstasy produced by his singing'.[1] After allowing for Oriental hyperbole, it may be assumed that Shah Jahan had a fine voice and had studied the art of music with as much care as his grandfather, Akbar. Like his predecessors he was a patron of singers, two of the chief vocalists at his Court being Ram Das and Mahapattar; and on one occasion he was so delighted with the performance of a *maestro* named Jagannath, that he had him weighed against gold and gave him the amount as his fee.[2]

With the accession of Aurangzeb, music fell upon evil days. Apart from the active encouragement given to it by the earlier Mughal Emperors, music had always been popular with all classes, as the Rev. Edward Terry noticed during his comparatively brief visit to India.[3] Consequently it must have been with feelings of amazement and dissatisfaction that they learned of the Emperor's orders prohibiting music, and that he had actually created a new department for the express purpose of reducing the number of professional musicians. The officials of the department did their work only too well. According to Manucci, they entered any house or place whence the sound of music and singing was audible and broke the instruments of the performers, and they generally made matters so unpleasant for the singers and their audience that the professional musicians found themselves in danger of losing their livelihood. The latter determined to try and persuade the Emperor to rescind

[1] J. N. Sarkar, *Studies in Mughal India*, pp. 12, 13.
[2] W. Crooke, *Things Indian*, p. 339 f.
[3] W. Foster, *Early Travels*, p. 310.

his order. 'About one thousand of them', writes Manucci, 'assembled on a Friday when Aurangzeb was going to the mosque. They came out with over twenty highly-ornamented biers, as is the custom of the country, crying aloud with great grief and many signs of feeling, as if they were escorting to the grave some distinguished defunct. From afar Aurangzeb saw this multitude and heard their great weeping and lamentation, and, wondering, sent to know the cause of so much sorrow. The musicians redoubled their outcry and their tears, fancying the king would take compassion on them. Lamenting, they replied with sobs that the king's orders had killed Music; therefore they were bearing her to the grave. Report was made to the king, who quite calmly remarked that they should pray for the soul of Music, and see that she was thoroughly well buried.'[1] The Emperor's reply displays a certain grim humour; but his orthodoxy would not allow of any variation of his original order. Notwithstanding the ban which he placed upon music, however, Aurangzeb, according to Manucci's testimony, continued to entertain dancing and singing-girls in the palace, for the diversion of his ladies, and so far unbent as to confer special names on their female superintendents. Bakhtawar Khan states that the Emperor understood music thoroughly and made no attempt to interfere with the art during the first few years of his reign. His subsequent objection to music was based on the teaching of the great Muhammadan Iman, Shafi; and in pursuance of his policy he was prepared even to grant cash allowances or land to musicians who declared themselves to be ashamed of their calling and desirous of relinquishing it.[2]

§ *Jewellery*. The arts of the lapidary and the jeweller benefited from the love of jewels and precious stones which characterized the Mughal Emperors at all times. It was Humayun who first acquired the famous *Koh-i-nur* diamond from the family of Raja Bikramajit, which, after remaining in

[1] Manucci, *Storia do Mogor*, ed. Irvine, ii. 346 f.

[2] Elliot, vii. 156; P. Kennedy, *History of the Great Moghuls*, ii. 76, 79.

Persia with Shah Tahmasp during Humayun's exile, is supposed to have eventually found its way into the treasury of Aurangzeb, as a present from Mir Jumla. Akbar at his death left behind him 'fully forty million pounds sterling in coined money, equivalent in purchasing power to at least two hundred millions now',[1] and an enormous collection of jewels, which he valued highly. Among the latter were a large number of specially fine rubies, which were made into two rosaries, valued at ten *lacs* of rupees apiece; and many of the fine gems which appear in the list of Jahangir's personal possessions, recorded by William Hawkins (1608–13), as well as some of those which were used in the decoration of the famous Peacock Throne, were originally collected by Akbar. Jahangir's jewels included one and a half maunds of unset diamonds, twelve maunds of pearls, two maunds of rubies, five maunds of emeralds, one maund of jade, besides jewelled sword-hilts, poniards, drums, brooches, aigrettes, saddles, lances, chairs of state, flagons, wine-cups, charms and rings.[2] In Shah Jahan the taste for jewels developed into a passion. His personal jewellery was worth five crores of rupees, besides two crores' worth presented to the imperial princes and others. The jewellery which he ordinarily wore was valued at two crores and was kept in the harem in charge of female servants, while the remaining three crores' worth was in the custody of slaves in the outer apartments. The *sarpech* or aigrette of large rubies which he wore in his turban was estimated to be worth twelve *lacs*.[3]

The crowning example of the union of the jeweller's art with the Mughal love of display was the famous Peacock Throne of Shah Jahan, which was valued by a contemporary French jeweller at 150 million francs, and the materials of which, apart from the wages of the craftsmen employed on it, cost a crore of rupees. The throne was made of pure gold, studded with gems valued at sixteen *lacs* of rupees; the inner roof was

[1] Smith, *Akbar*, p. 347. [2] Foster, *Early Travels, &c.*, pp. 102, 103.
[3] J. N. Sarkar, *Studies in Mughal India*, pp. 17, 18.

enamelled, the outer covered with rubies and other jewels; twelve pillars of emerald supported the roof, which was surmounted by the figures of two peacocks, ablaze with precious stones. Between the peacocks was a tree set with diamonds, rubies, emeralds and pearls; three jewelled steps led to the Emperor's seat, which was surrounded with eleven jewelled panels, of which the middlemost bore as its central gem a splendid ruby presented by Shah Abbas I to Jahangir.[1] In the midst of these splendours the Emperor, clad in white garments covered with priceless gems, appeared as we see him in the old Mughal miniatures, 'his forehead girt with a scarcely imaginary halo, holding a flower to his nostrils'. One has only to read Bernier's description of Aurangzeb's durbar in 1663 to see that the son of Shah Jahan was not prevented by his austere orthodoxy from indulging an inherited taste for barbaric ostentation, at any rate during the first few years of his reign. 'The king', he writes, 'appeared seated upon his throne, at the end of the great hall, in the most magnificent attire. His vest was of white and delicately flowered satin, with a silk and gold embroidery of the first texture. The turban, of gold cloth, had an aigrette whose base was composed of diamonds of an extraordinary size and value, besides an oriental topaz, which may be pronounced unparalleled, exhibiting a lustre like the sun. A necklace of immense pearls, suspended from his neck, reached to the stomach, in the same manner as many of the Gentiles wear their string of beads. The throne was supported by six massy feet, said to be of solid gold, sprinkled over with rubies, emeralds and diamonds.'[2] It must have been a similar scene of splendour at Jahangir's Court that Milton had in mind, when he described

> A throne of royal state, which far
> Outshone the wealth of Ormus and of Ind,
> Or where the gorgeous East with richest hand
> Showers on her kings barbaric pearl and gold.

[1] J. N. Sarkar, *Studies in Mughal India*, pp. 18, 19.

[2] See L. Binyon, *Court Painters of the Grand Moguls*, Introduction by T. W. Arnold, p. 33.

Beautiful vessels and cups of jade were collected by Jahangir and Shah Jahan; Aurangzeb, when seated on his throne, 'had brought to him upon a golden saucer, enriched with diamonds, rubies and emeralds, a large cup of rock crystal, all round and smooth, with the same decoration as the saucer';[1] some fine cups of rock crystal, found in the Delhi Palace in 1857, perhaps date back to the age of the Great Mughals. The rage for jewellery and for jewelled knick-knacks was not confined to the imperial palace: the wealthy nobles wore a profusion of jewellery; rare gems were eagerly sought; very high prices were paid for all kinds of precious stones. It was this vast accumulation of wealth, in the form of jewels, gold, and silver plate, and cash, that fell into the hands of Nadir Shah after the capture of Delhi in 1739. Various estimates of the value of the loot seized by him have been given; Frazer mentions seventy crores, out of which the jewels accounted for twenty-five crores, and the Peacock and nine other thrones, together with jewelled weapons and utensils, amounted to nine crores. But the figures are probably exaggerated; greater reliance can be placed upon Anandram, who was attached to the Indian Wazir, when he declares that the conqueror took away sixty *lacs* of rupees in silver coin, several thousand gold coins, gold-ware to the value of nearly one crore, and about fifty crores' worth of jewels, 'most of them unrivalled in the world'.[2]

§ *Gardens.* This chapter may fitly conclude with an account of the art of planning and constructing gardens, which Mr. Havell has described as 'the greatest contribution of the Mughals to Indian art'. The taste for gardens reached the peoples of central Asia in early days by way of Persia, and when the tribes of the steppes eventually pushed their way into Hindustan, they brought the love of the gardens with them. Gardens doubtless existed in India before the advent of the Mughals: Firuz Shah, indeed, is said to have planted twelve hundred gardens near

[1] Bernier quoted by Crooke, *Things Indian*, p. 75.

[2] W. Irvine, *Later Mughals*, ed. J. N. Sarkar, vol. ii, p. 371.

Delhi at the end of the fourteenth century.[1] But these were probably in the old Hindu style, and bore little resemblance to the irrigated pleasaunces associated with the name of the Timurids. Babur, with vivid recollections of his motherland, Farghana, and its 'beautiful gardens of Ush, gay with violets, tulips, and roses in their seasons', laments in his *Memoirs* the lack of fair gardens in Hindustan; and Abu-l Fazl in a passage of his *Ain-i-Akbari* explains that prior to Babur's arrival the Indian garden was planned on no method and possessed no pavilions nor murmuring fountains. The art of garden-building, which Babur brought with him to India and bequeathed to his successors, had been fully developed in Persia and Turkestan: its main characteristic was artificial irrigation in the form of channels, basins or tanks, and dwarf waterfalls, so built that the water brimmed to the level of the paths on either side; and the plan involved a series of terraces on sloping ground, usually numbering eight to correspond with the eight divisions of the Koranic Paradise, but sometimes seven, to symbolize the seven planets.[2] The main pavilion, which has been described as the climax of the garden, usually occupied the topmost terrace, giving wide views on all sides; but was sometimes built on the lowest terrace of all, in order to offer the occupant an uninterrupted vista of the fountains and waterfalls, ranging upwards through the garden. The ground-plan of the Persian and Mughal garden was a square or rectangle, divided into a series of smaller squares or parterres, the whole being encircled by a high wall with serrated battlements pierced by a lofty gateway. The larger gardens were usually provided with four gateways, and small octagonal buildings marked the angles of the outer walls.[3]

The paths in the Mughal gardens were generally raised above the flower-beds which bordered them, and the main squares or parterres were sunk below the level of the paths and their

[1] W. Crooke, *Things Indian*, p. 242.

[2] C. M. Villiers Stuart, *Gardens of the Great Mughals*, pp. 11 ff.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 13 ff.

flower-borders, and were planted with fruit-trees, rose-bushes, and flowers of tall growth. Sometimes the separate squares composing the garden were each consecrated to a single kind of flower—tulip, rose, violet, &c.: occasionally a whole garden was devoted to one special bloom.[1] After the Mughals had become firmly settled in the plains of India, the character of their gardens underwent a certain alteration. Sloping ground was not always to be found; the heat of India rendered a good supply of water vital for bodily coolness. Consequently, by the close of Akbar's reign, the main watercourse of the garden had been much increased in width sometimes to a breadth of twenty feet or more, as can be seen in the Shalamar Bagh built by Jahangir in Kashmir; a little later, the smaller canals were so widened as to require elaborate stepping-stones, which formed an integral feature of the design; and both the reservoirs and canals were furnished with fountains.[2] A typical Mughal garden of the plains, such as usually formed the setting of the tombs and mausolea of princes of the imperial line and the nobility, was the garden of Akbar's tomb at Sikandarah. The ground-plan is the original fourfold plot (*char-bagh*) adopted by Babur —a huge square enclosure laid out in the form of a Cosmic cross. In the middle stands the mausoleum, flanked by tanks with central fountains, supplying the narrow watercourses which once ran down the centre of the stone pathways. In many cases the channels and watercourses were paved with fine ceramic ware, as at the Shalamar Bagh of Lahore. The cypress, the wild pine, the plane-tree and the areca-nut palm grew in the parterres that bordered the channels of the Sikandarah garden. In most of the gardens built by the nobles of the Mughal age the central *baradari* served as a summer-house during the owner's lifetime, and on his death became his mausoleum; and the garden was then devoted to religious purposes, its fruit and flowers being distributed to its custodians or to Fakirs and wayfarers.[3] The garden of the Taj Mahal is based on the same fourfold field plot, but

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 13, 142. [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 101, 102. [3] *Ibid.*, pp. 47–9.

differs from other tomb-gardens in having a beautiful marble tank in the centre of the plot instead of the tomb, which in this case stands at the end of the garden, overlooking the river.[1]

The Mughal garden, however, was not always intended to be the setting of a tomb. Many of the imperial gardens were specially designed as pleasaunces to accommodate the imperial Court on its frequent progresses through the country. All the Mughal Emperors, Jahangir in particular, inherited a love of wandering and camping from their central Asian ancestors. Even Aurangzeb made a royal progress to Kashmir, though most of his tent-life, which lasted for many years before his death, was due rather to military exigencies than to the *envie d'errer* which characterized his predecessors. Jahangir was 'the royal stroller *par excellence*';[2] and time after time his love of Nature and the open country drove him and his Queen to Kashmir, where the Nishat, the Shalamar, the Achebal and the Vernag Gardens bear mute witness to his affection for the Happy Valley. Those pleasure-gardens 'climbing in superposed platforms the gently-ascending hill which sends down upon them in successive falls the mass of its waters, reveal a whole aspect of the pensive, sensuous, pastoral soul of Islam. At the other end of its empire, under the western horn of the Crescent, another garden, that of the Alhambra, preserves the fame of one of the most seductive spots on earth. Both are halting-places of the Believer, palaces or tombs, retreats of voluptuousness or death, flowering limits placed by ironical fate to mark the will of man and the glory of God.'[3] European travellers of the seventeenth century were not slow to recognize the spell of these imperial gardens. Edward Terry (1616–19) remarked the 'curious gardens, planted with fruitfull trees and delightfull flowers, to which Nature daily lends such a supply as that they seeme never to fade. In these places they have pleasant fountaynes to bathe in and other

[1] C. M. Villiers Stuart, *Gardens of the Great Mughals*, pp. 63, 64.

[2] P. Kennedy, *History of the Great Moghuls*, vol. ii, pp. 11 ff.

[3] D'Humières, *Through Isle and Empire*, p. 213.

delights by sundrie conveyances of water, whose silent murmure helps to lay their senses with the bonds of sleepe in the hot seasons of the day.'[1] Bernier in 1665 gave a graphic description of the Shalamar Gardens of Kashmir, in the summer-tide of their beauty, and spoke with admiration of the pavilions, of which the black marble pillars alone now remain. Yet even now, in the twilight of its glory, with 'its masses of purple rock seamed with snow, the light green foliage of the plane-trees, the shrubs and lilac blossoms',[2] the Shalamar Bagh is a pleasant place wherein to dream of the glory of its founder and the Empress Nur Jahan.

Many passages in Babur's famous *Memoirs* portray his close observation and keen interest in Nature, and show that his rude temperament yielded to the subtle influence of flowers.[3] He laid out and improved many of the gardens round Kabul, like the Bagh-i-Kilan and the Bagh-i-Vafa or 'Garden of Fidelity'. The latter and 'the Fountain of the Three Friends' were two of his favourite retreats; and he describes the garden as laid out on an elevated site, overlooking the river and watered by a perennial stream. There he planted sugar-cane and plantains, and orange-trees around the reservoir in the south-western corner. The ground round the latter—'the very eye of the beauty of the garden'—was a mass of clover.[4] After fixing on Agra as his capital he commenced to lay out the Ram Bagh on the banks of the Jumna—the earliest Mughal garden still existing in India, which was chosen later by the Empress Nur Jahan as one of her favourite country retreats. In it he built reservoirs, baths, and private pavilions, and sowed the beds with roses and narcissi. Babur's horticultural taste and knowledge must have been considerable; for, according to Jahangir's *Memoirs*, an avenue of areca-nut palms, which he planted in one of the Agra gardens, had reached a height of 90 feet in the time of his great-grandson,

[1] W. Foster, *Early Travels in India*, p. 303.
[2] W. Crooke, *Things Indian*, p. 24.
[3] S. Lane-Poole, *Babar* (Rulers of India Series), p. 94.
[4] C. M. Villiers Stuart, *Gardens of the Great Mughals*, pp. 16 ff.

while in another garden, which he named the 'Flower-scatterer', he obtained hundreds of pine-apples every year and feasted his eyes on a wealth of red-blossomed oleanders, which he had transplanted from Gwalior. Elsewhere he speaks of getting fine grapes from the vines which he planted in his 'Garden of Eight Paradises'. The other principal garden laid out during Babur's reign was the Zuhara Bagh, a walled enclosure watered by sixty wells, which lay between the Ram Bagh and the Chini-ka-Rauza, and belonged to one of the Emperor's daughters; but several of Babur's courtiers and nobles, spurred by his example, built elegant gardens and reservoirs on the banks of the river at Agra.[1]

To Humayun's brief reign belongs the garden round his tomb at Delhi, which still preserves intact its original plan. The fruit and shade-giving trees have vanished, but the restoration in late years of the stone channels and the fountain-basins enables one to realize the character of this early Mughal pleasaunce. Akbar inherited his grandfather's love of horticulture. 'His Majesty', writes Abu-l Fazl, 'looks upon plants as one of the greatest gifts of the Creator and pays much attention to them. Horticulturists of Iran and Turan have therefore settled here, and the cultivation of trees is in a flourishing state.' Though less passionately attached to gardens than Jahangir and Shah Jahan, he built 'paradises' at Fathpur-Sikri and Sikandarah, and also planned the Nisim Bagh, the first Mughal garden in Kashmir, on the shores of the Dal.

Before he succeeded to the throne, Jahangir had indulged his passion for gardens by laying out several at Udaipur. The origin of the patterns of the Persian floral carpets can be traced in the flower-beds of these Udaipur gardens, which were worked out in bricks covered with fine polished plaster.[2] He describes in his *Memoirs* another which he built at Sahrind, containing a rose-bordered avenue, flanked on either side by evergreens, firs,

[1] C. M. Villiers Stuart, *Gardens of the Great Mughals, passim.*

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 68 *et passim.*

cypresses and plane-trees, which led to a parterre of 'the choicest and most variegated flowers'. One of his gardens at Ahmadabad contained orange, lemon, peach, pomegranate, and apple-trees, and 'among flowering shrubs, every kind of rose'. Two of the most noteworthy gardens in India, constructed during his reign, were the tomb-garden of Itimadu-d daula at Agra, and the Shah Dara, Nur Jahan's 'Garden of Delight', five miles from Lahore, which is built on much the same plan as the garden at Sikandarah and contains a series of raised fountain-tanks, forming eight large *chabutras* round the mausoleum. It was here that the Emperor Jahangir was buried, despite his dying request to be carried back to the Vernag Bagh in Kashmir—the favourite resort of himself and the Empress, which bears upon the wall of its reservoir his own inscription, 'The King raised this building to the skies: the angel Gabriel gave its date—1609.'[1]

If we except the garden of the Taj Mahal, the Shalamar garden at Lahore, which was commenced in 1634 under the supervision of Ali Mardan Khan, is probably the best-known of the gardens built by Shah Jahan. It consists of two *char-baghs*, joined by a narrower terrace, which carries at its central point a large raised reservoir. On either side of the reservoir are pavilions, and the whole circumference is laid out in flower-beds. Another Shalamar Bagh was built at Delhi by Azu-n nissa, one of Shah Jahan's wives, and was described by an English officer in 1793 as laid out with admirable taste. It was in this garden that Aurangzeb was first crowned, after the deposition of his father; it was here that he made his first halt on his journey to Lahore and Kashmir in 1664.[2] Both the palaces at Delhi and Agra contained gardens. In the former the two principal retreats were the 'Life-giving garden' and the 'Moon garden'; but connected with the women's apartments were smaller gardens, one of which is glorified by an inscription on the wall of the Khwabgah:

'Let us celebrate this garden of Haiyut Baksh, which is in the palace

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 68 *et passim.* [2] *Ibid.*, p. 103.

like a lamp in an assembly, and this clear canal, whose limpid water is as a mirror for every creature that sees and, for the sage, unveils the mystic world, and these cascades, each of which, one might say, is the whiteness of the morning or else a tablet stolen from the secrets of fate.' [1]

The Palace at Agra enshrined the Anguri Bagh or Grape garden, in front of the Khas Mahal—a typical old Mughal garden laid out in geometrical stone-edged parterres, with four terraced walks radiating from a central *chabutra*, with a raised fountain-tank. It must have been from some such scheme of flower-beds as still exists in outline in this garden that the craftsmen obtained the design of the old Firdaus ('Paradise') carpets.[2] Other gardens dating from Shah Jahan's reign were the Talkatora Bagh near Delhi, in which the whole terrace at one end formed a roof-garden, and the garden of the unfortunate Dara Shikoh at Kashmir, now styled the Vazir Bagh.

Aurangzeb denied himself many pleasures naturally belonging to humanity, and the passion for gardens and flowers, which distinguished his predecessors, died at the chill touch of his rigid orthodoxy. Such a thought as that which Jahangir once expressed regarding a perfume—'it restores hearts that have gone and brings back withered souls'—could never have occurred to Aurangzeb, who wore the plainest clothes, declined to use vessels of silver and gold, and devoted all his leisure thoughts to religion. Nevertheless, the art of garden-building was not wholly in abeyance during his reign. A fair garden was built round the Badshahi mosque at Lahore; the Emperor's foster-brother, Fadai Khan, built a fine garden at Pinjor (Panchpura), which lies off the road from Ambala to Simla; the Emperor's daughter, Zebu-n nissa, laid out the well-known Char Burji garden in Lahore; and Roshanara Begam lies buried in the white pavilion with creeper-clad walls, which stands on the upper terrace of the pleasaunce that still bears her name. This

[1] D'Humières, *Through Isle and Empire*, p. 224; C. M. Villiers Stuart, *Gardens of the Great Mughals*, p. 117 f.

[2] C. M. Villiers Stuart, *ibid.*, pp. 82 ff.

garden was entered by the usual Mughal gateway, which was linked with the tomb of the princess by a raised canal, bordered by beds of flowers and pricked with a row of small fountains.[1] Time has dealt hardly with the gardens of the Mughal age, and many of those built by the nobility in the reigns of Akbar, Jahangir, and Shah Jahan have vanished entirely. But enough remains of the principal tomb-gardens and 'paradises', as the old English monks styled such retreats, to suggest that their former attractiveness may well have deserved the eulogy inscribed upon the gate of the Shalamar Bagh at Lahore:

> Sweet is this garden, through envy of which the tulip is spotted;
> The rose of the sun and moon forms its beautiful lamp.

§ *Final reflections.* It is perhaps from contemplation of the architectural and artistic legacies of the Mughal age that we receive the most vivid impression of the greatness of the early representatives of the Mughal line. Stories of the military achievements of Babur and Akbar, of the personal bravery of Humayun, of the pomp and splendour of the Courts of Jahangir and Shah Jahan, fail now to excite our admiration to the same degree as the great monuments and fine miniatures completed under their supervision and orders. It has been remarked that the Mughal paintings, which so often contain portraits of individual Emperors, help us directly to realize that these Timurids owed their position as rulers mainly to the fact that they were mentally superior to those around them.[2] Each of them was endowed with a personality, from Babur, the jovial large-hearted giant, and Akbar, with his open nature and consummate genius for organization, to Aurangzeb, whose ambition and cunning were counterbalanced by the virtues of temperance, perseverance, and mercy.[3] The impartial historian rightly reminds us that these Emperors were children of their time and

[1] C. M. Villiers Stuart, *ibid.*

[2] P. Brown, *Indian Painting*, &c., p. 84.

[3] P. Kennedy, *History of the Great Mogbuls*, vol. i, pp. 167, 171–2, 230–1, 310–11; vol. ii, pp. 29 *et passim.*

race, descendants of Chengiz Khan and Timur, that they thought nothing of the sanctity of human life, and were often indifferent to human suffering; that some of them were intemperate and others were addicted to vice, all of which is only too true. Yet they were great men, despite their failings and frailties, and when one turns from the cold catalogue of their defects to consider the unique grandeur of Fathpur-Sikri, the supreme beauty of the Taj Mahal and the Moti Masjid, the magnificence of the Agra and Delhi palaces, and the rare wealth of pictorial and calligraphic art, which owed its excellence to their guidance and inspiration, one feels inclined to re-echo the words of the lady Maréchale of France concerning a peccant member of the old noblesse of the eighteenth century: 'Depend upon it, Sir, God thinks twice before damning a man of that quality!'[1] The fame which they achieved in their own age, and which will endure, was the natural corollary of their marked intellectuality.

[1] T. Carlyle, *French Revolution*, Chap. II.

CHAPTER IX

CAUSES OF THE DECLINE OF MUGHAL POWER

TO the vast majority of the people of India the Mughal Empire was essentially a foreign Empire, and on that account could not expect to secure its existence upon a firm foundation of spontaneous popular support. Alien in its nature and administrative organization, it was powerless to evoke such feelings as those which led the people of Maharashtra to follow and fight for Shivaji: it drew no strength from ancient tradition, which has always exerted so marked an influence upon Hindu ideals and sentiment. Thus deprived by its own extraneous character of those elements of progress and stability which are included under the broad category of patriotism, its existence as an Oriental despotism depended, as has been elsewhere remarked, upon the character of the ruler and upon the standard of his military power.[1] At its best, the Mughal Government sought no higher goal than the maintenance of internal order and the preservation of external peace. The life of the country centred in and was held together by the imperial Court. Consequently, when the administrative machine deteriorated and the Government proved incapable of fulfilling its police duties, and when at the same time the line of the Great Mughals degenerated into a succession of puppets, who were the sport and victims of contending factions, the Empire was deprived of the only factors contributing to its continued stability. The slender bond which held it more or less united was severed. Anarchy supervened.[2]

While accepting the general proposition that the Mughal

[1] V. A. Smith, *Oxford History of India.*

[2] W. Irvine, *Later Mughals*, ed. J. N. Sarkar, ii. 311.

Empire, by its very nature, could only exist so long as it remained tolerably efficient from a police and military standpoint, and so long as it was controlled by an active, capable, and on the whole impartial, autocrat, a closer scrutiny of the facts enables one to attribute its decline to certain specific weaknesses in the administrative, political, and economic spheres. So far as the administration is concerned, the salient facts, which are complimentary to one another, are the decline in the character of the Mughal nobility and the deterioration of the army, which was strikingly apparent within a few years of Aurangzeb's death. It has been remarked in an earlier chapter that a change for the worse was observable in the official nobility of Shah Jahan's time, and this became more marked during the long reign of his successor. But, according to Professor J. N. Sarkar, the wholesale disappearance of the better class of military nobles and officials was accelerated and confirmed by the civil warfare which disgraced the thirty years preceding Nadir Shah's invasion. Within little more than a decade after Aurangzeb's death seven fierce battles for the imperial succession occurred, in which large numbers of princes, nobles, and trained soldiers were slain, while armed hostilities between leading nobles resulted in further waste of superior man-power. The Nizamu-l mulk, for example, was forced to battle with three rivals in order to secure the viceroyalty of the Deccan; the struggle for the governorship of Gujarat was marked by three fatal contests. The loss of life resulting from these internecine feuds was augmented by the mortality caused by punitive operations against the Sikhs, Bundelas, and Marathas.[1] 'To the thoughtful student of Mughal history', writes Professor Jadunath Sarkar, 'nothing is more striking than the decline of the peerage. The heroes adorn the stage for one generation only and leave no worthy heirs sprung from their loins. Abdur-rahim and Mahabat, Sadulla and Mir Jumla, Ibrahim and Islam Khan Rumi, who had made the history of India in the seventeenth century, were

[1] W. Irvine, *Later Mughals*, ed. J. N. Sarkar, ii. 311.

succeeded by no son, certainly by no grandson, even half as capable as themselves.'[1]

The deterioration of the Mughal army was to some extent the natural corollary of the decline of the military nobility, or at any rate was accelerated by the disappearance of the better type of Mughal nobles. Its loss of efficiency may be said to date from the end of Shah Jahan's reign, and to have become noticeable during the later years of his successor's rule. As long as Akbar was alive, the military machine which he constructed was maintained by his experience and vigilance in a satisfactory state of efficiency. The deterioration which insensibly set in after his death was clearly reflected in the disastrous failure of the imperial forces to relieve Kandahar during the reign of Shah Jahan. The three sieges of that town in 1649, 1652, and 1653 proved that the Mughal army was no match for the Persians in military skill and gunnery. The decrepitude of the army was even more apparent during the struggle between Aurangzeb and Dara Shikoh in 1658. The troops which fought under Babur and Bairam Khan in the first and second battles of Panipat would not have broken their ranks and fled, even if their leaders had fallen; but, with the single exception of the Rajputs, the bulk of the imperial army under Dara Shikoh proved to be little better than an undisciplined mob,—full of fire when fortune favoured them, but wholly lacking in tenacity and resource at the slightest repulse.[2] Nevertheless, despite its reduced efficiency, the Mughal army was strong enough to maintain the internal peace of India during the first half of Aurangzeb's reign. After that period its deterioration was rapid and complete. For this result the endless wars in the Deccan throughout the seventeenth century were largely responsible. While there were always military tasks to be carried out, they were never brought to completion; and although this lack of finality perhaps mattered little so long as operations, as in Jahangir's reign, were directed

[1] See W. Irvine, *Later Mughals*, ed. J. N. Sarkar, ii. 308.

[2] P. Kennedy, *History of the Great Mogbuls*, ii. 62.

merely against the Muhammadan Sultanates of the Deccan, who were just as careless of a final settlement as the Mughal generals, the position was entirely altered when the imperial army found itself face to face with the Marathas.[1] The latter had a very clear idea of their goal and of the best way of attaining it, and they quickly exposed the helplessness and inefficiency of the Mughal forces, which were enervated by luxury and demoralized by the sterile and inconclusive contest for the mastery of western India.[2]

In the case of both the nobility and the army the inevitable decline could have been forestalled by one means only, viz. by a constant supply of fresh recruits from outside India. One of the chief sources of the Empire's strength in its early days was the endless stream of warriors which poured into India from the mountains and deserts of central Asia, and the best Muslim recruits for the military and civil services were these foreign adventurers and converted Hindus. But the foreigner is apt to deteriorate rapidly on Indian soil—a fact which in later years the Portuguese discovered in respect of their own dominion in India; and consequently, the only hope for the Mughal State of vigorous life lay in the constant immigration of strong and capable men from the north-western hills and the countries lying beyond the passes.[3] For the task of governing India the real resources of the Chaghatai-Turks or Mughals lay in the hardy populations of Afghanistan and Turkestan, and so long as no obstacle was offered to the free immigration of these, and of the more cultured natives of Persia, the Empire flourished and the Mongol stock remained virile and vigorous. The primary cause of the gradual disappearance of new arrivals, seeking high dignity and fortune under the rule of the Emperor of Delhi, was the policy of 'India for the Indians' enunciated by Akbar.

[1] Oxenden refers to this feature of the Deccan fighting in a note to the consul at Aleppo, printed on p. 152 of Foster's *English Factories in India, 1665–7*. [2] P. Kennedy, *History of the Great Moghuls*, ii. 11.

[3] W. Irvine, *Later Mughals*, ed. J. N. Sarkar, ii. 307 ff.

It is true that Akbar's civil and military departments were staffed chiefly by foreigners; but the principle which he adopted, and which was continued by his successors, of associating Indians more freely with the imperial administration, involved the gradual discontinuance of immigration from beyond the passes. Mughal dominion was thereby deprived of its real strength, and the way was paved for 'the dead rot and corruption which normally grasp an Eastern rule, when vivifying external sources of life are stopped'.[1] By the end of the seventeenth century the vigorous Empire of Babur and Akbar showed clear signs of disintegration, which set in with startling rapidity after the death of Aurangzeb. So far as the army was concerned, Aurangzeb must be held to have erred seriously in failing to obtain an adequate supply of efficient soldiers from beyond the north-western border. Only with such troops could a compact and effective force have been formed; whereas his army was mainly composed of Indian Muhammadans, who were far inferior in virility and physique to troops who had learnt endurance in the temperate climates of Turkestan and Afghanistan. The soldier of central Asia would have been more than a match for the predatory Maratha; but neither the Indian Muhammadan nor the Rajput, despite his bravery and chivalry, was able to resist effectively that hardy foe.[2]

In a review of the administrative causes of Mughal imperial decay, the character of the Emperors demands brief notice, as being closely connected with the deterioration of the Mughal nobility and with the severance of the link between the ruler and the subject. Akbar, Shah Jahan, and Aurangzeb were all possessed of unusual ability, and Jahangir, who was in some respects the weakest of the four, was very far from being incompetent. But none of the Emperors who succeeded Aurangzeb was qualified by natural talent or administrative experience to control the large Empire established by Akbar; and this pheno-

[1] P. Kennedy, *History of the Great Moghuls*, i, pp. 6, 170, 310.

[2] *Ibid.*, i. 14; ii. 155.

menon, while partly due to the extinction of the natural vigour of the Timurids owing to climatic causes and successive intermarriages with Indian princesses, was caused by Aurangzeb's policy of depriving the imperial princes of all initiative and responsibility. Ever mindful of his own treatment of Shah Jahan and naturally indisposed to trust any one, Aurangzeb, who lived to an age far exceeding the limits of efficiency, contrived to stifle by excessive parental control any natural aptitude for affairs which his sons might have possessed. The example thus set by Aurangzeb was followed by his successors, who declined to allow the princes to develop administrative capacity by regular periods of service as viceroys and provincial governors. The heirs to the Mughal throne in the eighteenth century led an inglorious life of luxury and ease at Court, learned to depend for decision and action upon others, and in the absence of any administrative interests contented themselves with the narrow and enervating life of the harem. The duty of controlling the Empire was left in the hands of Vazirs, who were often unworthy of confidence and usually became foci of intrigue and faction at head-quarters. The chroniclers of the Court of Delhi after the death of Aurangzeb offer an unbroken tale of plot and counter-plot on the part of powerful nobles, culminating at intervals in open disorder and fighting, with the titular Emperor serving as the sport and plaything of contending groups. The unrest in the capital was quickly reflected in the provinces, the governors of which were constantly being newly appointed, and as constantly being dismissed, by those whose power chanced for the moment to be in the ascendant. Several of the governors sought to establish or retain their position by open hostilities, which produced a feeling of insecurity throughout the country-side, and caused the peasantry to withhold the payment of land-revenue and the local officials to omit to credit their collections to the treasury. Throughout the eighteenth century the non-payment of taxes, the closing of roads, constant marauding, and frequent rumours of war were the external signs of the rapid dissolution

of the imperial power. The Emperor, emasculated by the life of the harem and a puppet in the hands of degenerate officials, was powerless to stem the tide; he watched a Maratha army enter the capital in 1737; he had to witness the wholesale massacre of his subjects by Nadir Shah in 1739. The last flicker of the active Mughal genius died with Aurangzeb.

The political factors which hastened the disruption of the Empire originated in the bigotry displayed by Aurangzeb towards non-Muslims. Equally disastrous, though more circumscribed in its effects, was the change which gradually occurred in the attitude of the Mughal Emperors towards their nearest male relatives. During the first century of Mughal rule paternal and brotherly affection was a virtue common to most of the occupants of the throne, though in Kamran's disloyalty to Humayun we mark the beginnings of fraternal hostility. Babur, Humayun, and Akbar all gave proof of natural affection, and even Jahangir, though greatly provoked by the rivalry of Khusru, was at times moved by feelings of tenderness towards his son, and, when he was obliged to put a summary end to schemes directed against himself, contented himself with blinding the offender. But from the accession of Shah Jahan onwards the atrophy of all natural affection fell like a blight upon the imperial family. The blinding of Shahryar and the murders of Khusru and of Daniyal's young sons by the express order of Shah Jahan taught his own sons the lesson that 'such of them who might be alive on his death, save one, must, with their sons, be hunted down and destroyed like mad dogs, lest they might get into the hands of the disaffected, and be made the tools of faction'.[1] This development was morally disastrous to the sovereignty of the Mughals: a family, in which fathers, sons and brothers regarded one another as enemies, to be removed from all possibility of rivalry by the hand of the assassin or by the arbitrament of war, was inevitably doomed to lose its political supremacy.

[1] Sleeman's *Rambles and Recollections*, ed. V. A. Smith, p. 335; P. Kennedy, *History of the Great Moghuls*, ii. 38.

Aurangzeb's jealous orthodoxy was the cause of the estrangement of the Shia Muslim population. Akbar, Jahangir, and Shah Jahan had welcomed immigrants from Iran and Khurasan, who belonged to the most gifted race of Islam, and whose inclusion in the Mughal public service was of distinct advantage to the administration. But in the eyes of an orthodox Sunni like Aurangzeb they ranked as heretics, worthy of no encouragement and, at the best, of bare toleration. His letters and the anecdotes recorded of him by Hamidu-din-Khan show that he was strongly biased against them, and his attitude was reflected in that of the general population, which showed still greater antipathy to them. A riot, for example, which broke out at Lahore in 1712 was caused by a proposal of Bahadur Shah to read the *khutba* with a single Shia epithet. The political effect of this sectarian intolerance was most unfortunate. The Shias practically ceased to seek a home and a career in India, and the State was deprived at a most unfavourable juncture of the services of a very able professional class.[1] Aurangzeb's desire was to convert the Empire of the tolerant Akbar into a Sunni Muhammadan State, in which unorthodox Islamic sects, equally with Hindus and other non-believers, were to exist only on sufferance, and were not to be treated as having any rights against the orthodox Sunni population. It was in pursuance of this intention that he abolished the solar year, which since Akbar's reign had been the official financial year, and introduced in its place the Hejira year for both revenue and other purposes. His order was coupled with the abolition of all the festivals of the solar year, which he regarded as the year of fire-worshippers and therefore incompatible with the observance of the Musalman calendar.[2] Action of this kind caused much resentment and helped to pave the way for political disintegration.

It was, however, in reference to the treatment of Hindus that the Mughal Empire suffered most seriously from the impolicy

[1] J. N. Sarkar in Irvine, *Later Mughals*, ii. 310.

[2] Elliot, vii. 241–2; P. Kennedy, *ibid.*, ii. 72.

of the later Emperors. Akbar, and to a less extent Jahangir, both realized that their Empire rested on a truce between the religion of the conquering minority and that of the conquered majority, and they wisely decided 'to leave the infidel to his idols, so long as he paid his taxes and gave no trouble'. This policy of toleration, which was devised by Akbar, was confirmed by his marriage with a Rajput princess, and by his admission to high office of the Rajput chiefs.[1] Jahangir on one occasion subjected the Jains of Gujarat to unmerited persecution, and he treated the temples at Kangra in a manner most repugnant to Hindu sentiment; but the reign of Shah Jahan offers the first convincing indication of the abandonment of Akbar's policy. Soon after the death of Mumtaz Mahall, he ordered the destruction of all temples throughout the Empire, and particularly in Benares, which had been begun but were still unfinished. The order could not be fully carried out; but such a public exhibition of bigotry indicates a distinct relapse from the wise tolerance of the previous reigns. With the accession of Aurangzeb the regression to intolerance became complete.[2] Early in 1669 he ordered the suppression of the Hindu theological schools at Benares; in April of that year the temple of Bishnath was destroyed; in December the great Hindu temple at Mathura was forcibly demolished. Repeated acts of this character and the vigorous reimposition of the *jizya*, coupled with Aurangzeb's attempt to annex Jodhpur on the death of Jaswant Singh and his invasion of Mewar, convinced the Hindu population that the preservation of their honour and liberty of conscience were no longer secure under Mughal rule, and completely alienated the Rajput clans. The latter, realizing that Aurangzeb was jealous of their political independence, determined that their princes should no longer lend their powerful support to the Empire or its ruler. That decision crystallized in the reign of Bahadur Shah in a league of mutual defence, formed by the

[1] T. W. Holderness, *Peoples and Problems of India.*

[2] P. Kennedy, *ibid.*, ii. 49.

rulers of Mewar, Ambar, and Marwar, one of the provisions of which stipulated that in no circumstances should their daughters be suffered to marry into the Mughal imperial family.

The forcible demolition of temples and the construction of mosques in their place, the distribution of honours and lucrative positions to Muhammadan converts, the gradual substitution of Muhammadans for Hindus in high commands, as opportunity occurred, and the drastic prohibition of customs dear to Hinduism, impressed the Hindus with the belief that they could have no abiding place in a Mughal State and that their religion was actually in jeopardy. This belief served at once as the opportunity and the justification for the Maratha revolt. When Shivaji, who possessed 'a will of iron and a genius as intrepid as that of his adversary', discovered the character of his sovereign's policy towards himself and his religion, he determined on organized resistance. Aurangzeb by his bigotry and intolerance lost what Akbar had gained, and what Jahangir and Shah Jahan, with all their faults, had contrived to retain—the affection of his Hindu subjects; and not a little of the ill-success attending the Emperor's operations against the Marathas was due to the fact that his Hindu officers and vassals, who shared the universal Hindu disgust at their master's tyranny, were indifferent or secretly hostile to his cause during his wars with Shivaji and his successors. The belief gained strength as the years passed. Baji Rao I used it during the reign of Muhammad Shah (1719–48) as a lever to unite the Hindu chiefs of Malwa and the Rajput princes of Jaipur and Mewar with the Marathas, against the oppressors of *dharma*; and within thirty-one years after Aurangzeb's death the Mughal Empire could not count upon the assistance of a single Hindu tribe of any military value, and was, moreover, actually at war with the Sikhs, Jats, Bundelas, Rathors, and Sisodias.[1] The rapid disintegration of the Mughal Empire was thus due in great measure to the misguided policy.

[1] J. N. Sarkar in Irvine's *Later Mughals*, ii. 309. See also Pringle Kennedy, *ibid.*, ii. 49, 72, 74, 117, 155, 163.

initiated by Aurangzeb and continued by his invertebrate successors, of direct interference with Hindu sentiment, beliefs, and customs.

The disintegration due to these attacks upon the conscience of Hinduism and other causes was exemplified in the political history of the Empire during the first half of the eighteenth century. In 1739 Nadir Shah annexed the trans-Indus province and Afghanistan, thus planting a strong foreign power on the north-western frontier, in dangerous proximity to the Mughal capital. During the reign of Ahmad Shah (1748–54) the Afghan chief, Ahmad Shah Durrani, obtained the cession of the Punjab from the helpless Mughal Government, thus giving his successors the opportunity of constantly harassing the Mughal territory and capital from their strongholds in Kabul and Lahore. The Sikhs commenced to assert their independence, were a constant menace to the Empire from the close of Muhammad Shah's reign, and ultimately possessed themselves of the entire province. Nadir Shah had no sooner returned to his country from Delhi than the Marathas established themselves securely in the western and southern provinces of the Empire, and thence began to penetrate Orissa, Behar, and Bengal. The Emperor of Delhi was powerless to check their inroads, having neither an army nor a general capable of organizing resistance. The local governors were helpless, or were too deeply engaged in consolidating their own positions, to assist their titular ruler. As early as 1724 Asaf Jah had declared his independence in the Deccan, and his example was followed in the same year by Sa'adat Khan, who became the progenitor of the Kings of Qudh. Similarly Allahvardi Khan, governor of Bengal, ceased to pay tribute or to recognize in practice the sovereignty of the Emperor. The Rohillas, an Afghan clan, seized the rich tract to the north of the Ganges, which was subsequently known as Rohilkhand. Thus, within the space of twenty years after Aurangzeb's death, the Empire, as known to him and his predecessors, had broken up, though the process of decay continued

for a few years longer. Meanwhile the capital was the centre of incessant intrigue and treason; quarrelling among the nobility continued unchecked, until, after the death of Muhammad Shah in 1748, the nobles carried on open hostilities in the streets and armed encounters on the plains outside the walls. This was the prelude to the great anarchy which formed the obsequies of the dead Empire of the Timurids.[1]

Before quitting this review of the political causes of the imperial collapse, it is interesting to reflect on the advantage which might have accrued to the Empire from the possession of an efficient navy. Sea-power could not presumably have prevented the disruption of the Empire, which was rendered inevitable by the facts and circumstances herein described. But it might, if well directed, have offered a serious obstacle to European expansion in India. The position of the English after their forced evacuation of Bengal, which resulted from the East India Company's war policy of 1786, was most unenviable. But it was saved by their power at sea. Sir John Child, from his stronghold on the western littoral, captured Mughal shipping wholesale and 'sent his captains to the Red Sea and Persian Gulf to arrest the pilgrim traffic to Mecca'. It was these reprisals by sea which obliged Aurangzeb to listen to overtures for peace and finally led him in 1690 to grant the English a pardon and a fresh *farman* for trade.[2] Had the Mughal Empire been powerful at sea, it probably could have checked the advance of the European, might have made greater headway against the Maratha power, and have retarded and circumscribed the influences directed towards its own ruin.

For the third main cause of Mughal imperial decay we must turn to the economic conditions of the age, which were pregnant with possibilities of disaster. There can be no doubt that, during the hey-day of the Empire, administrative activities were

[1] V. A. Smith, *Oxford History of India*, p. 456; W. Irvine, *Later Mughals*, ed. J. N. Sarkar, ii. 377 f.

[2] P. E. Roberts, *History of British India*, p. 45.

the most important factor in the distribution of the national income. But the demands made by the Government upon producers were so heavy that the latter had barely sufficient to support life, while the surplus, which would have accrued to them under a more equitable system, was spent by the authorities in rewards to energy and ingenuity employed in unproductive ways. Judged by modern standards, Akbar's financial institutions were severe, but were not necessarily inequitable or destructive of initiative and energy. Under the rule of his successors, his arrangements gradually collapsed; administrative methods gravely deteriorated; the direct demand on the producer was heavily increased; while the reward that fell to his share was reduced to a figure at which it ceased to offer an adequate incentive to productive toil. The evil impressed itself upon the notice of observers in Shah Jahan's reign. 'All the writers of the time', writes Sir William Foster, 'extol the splendour of his [Shah Jahan's] court, the liberality of his rule, and his personal popularity. At the same time they do not conceal the fact that this splendid façade hid a crumbling interior. Such extravagant expenditure was a crushing burden upon the resources of the country; while the venality of the officials and the tyrannical caprice of the local governors added to the misery of the people, who had little or no means of obtaining redress.'[1] In Shah Jahan's reign the standard of assessment was raised by one-half, and the revenue demand rose by nearly the same proportion; 'production was ceasing to be worth while, because life, to the producer, was ceasing to be worth living'. Cultivation had to be enforced by compulsion, as the peasantry were deserting their agricultural occupations for other forms of employment: the authorities, bent upon immediate gain and blind to the ruin they were engendering, laid intolerable burdens upon the cultivators and treated cases of default with ruthless severity.

In short, the economic system of the Empire was strained

[1] W. Foster, *English Factories in India, 1655–60*, pp. 1, 2.

almost to breaking-point by the end of Shah Jahan's reign, and when Aurangzeb died national bankruptcy was assured.[1]

Apart from other causes, the collapse of the economic and financial system would have sufficed to bring about the ruin of the Mughal power; and this proposition lends weight to the assertion that the Empire had really ceased to exist by the year 1740. Shah Alam II, who was nominal Emperor for the space of forty-seven years up to 1806, was never really in control of any part of the Empire, of which he was the nominal overlord. For all practical purposes the Mughal Empire came to an end when Nadir Shah marched out of Delhi with the treasure amassed in that city during nearly three and a half centuries. For a few years longer Muhammad Shah and his successors still remained at the old capital, styling themselves Mughal Emperors and ruling in name over some of the country in the immediate neighbourhood of Delhi. From time to time, also, ambitious chiefs, like Mahadaji Sindia, found the name of the Great Mughal one wherewith to conjure, and under the thin cloak of vassalage assumed control of political affairs at Delhi. But politically, administratively, and economically, the Mughal Empire perished from the moment of Nadir Shah's invasion. Babu Rao Malhar, the Maratha envoy at the Mughal Court, who fled to safety from the carnage, spoke no more than the truth respecting Mughal sovereignty, when he exclaimed: 'God has averted a great danger from me and enabled me to escape with honour! The Chaghatai Empire is gone, the Irani Empire has commenced! Remain there with great caution!'[2]

We may therefore say, in conclusion, that the Mughal State owed its decline and ultimate downfall to a combination of causes, of which perhaps the two most important were the uncontrolled domination of a selfish and extravagant bureaucracy and an inequitable economic system, which steadily im-

[1] W. H. Moreland, *From Akbar to Aurangzeb*, p. 300 *et passim*.

[2] Rajwade VI, No. 131, quoted by J. N. Sarkar in W. Irvine's *Later Mughals*, ii. 360.

poverished the revenue-producing classes of the population. Those two evils, in combination with religious persecution, engendered conditions which prevented the Empire from successfully resisting the attacks of external foes and rendered it an easy prey to internal treachery. The story of its growth and decay enshrines a lesson even for the democratic States of modern times; while in the zenith of its glory it offers an example of that reckless self-assertion (*hybris*) which formed the subject of ancient Greek tragedy. As we watch the shadowy figures of the later representatives of the Mughal imperial line pass across the stage, until the last of all, the ill-starred 'King of Delhi', dies in exile at Rangoon, we seem to catch an echo of the lamentation of Cassandra in the *Agamemnon*:

> *ἰὼ βρότεια πράγματ'· εὐτυχοῦντα μὲν*
> *σκιᾷ τις ἂν πρέψειεν· εἰ δὲ δυστυχῇ,*
> *βολαῖς ὑγρώσσων σπόγγος ὥλεσεν γραφήν*
>
> Alas for mortal lot! when prosperous
> 'Tis but a sketch! and if misfortune comes,
> The wet sponge with its touch blots out the drawing.

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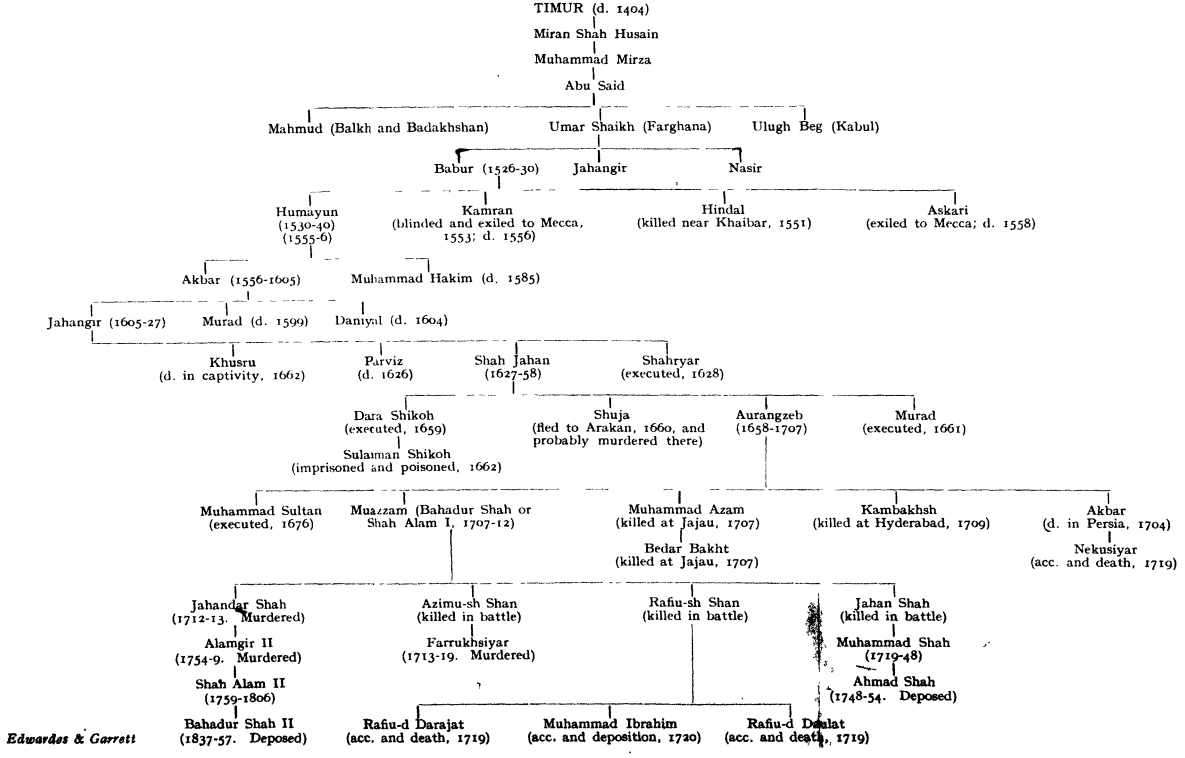

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