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The History Of Hindostan; From The Earliest Account Of Time, To The Death Of Akbar; Translated From The Persian Of Mahummud Casim Ferishta Of Delhi

Together With A Dissertation Concerning the Religion and Philosophy of the Brahmins ; With An Appendix, Containing the History of the Mogul Empire, from its Decline in the Reign of Mahummud Shaw, to the present Times ; In Two Volumes

Ferishta, Mahummud Casim

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Section III. The history of Shere Shaw, the Afghan.

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A. D. 1541.
Hig. 948.

other side, and both meeting a little below, form the hill into a triangular peninsula. There is a very deep valley on the third side, full of impervious woods, which spread all over the mountains, and render all access that way next to impossible.

Shere Chan had now a secure retreat for his family, and his friends began to acquire fresh spirits by this piece of success. Humaioon, in the mean time, spent three months in luxurious pleasures, at Gour, or Lucknouti. He there received advices that Mirza Hindal, his brother, had revolted in Agra and Mewat; that he had put Shech Phoul to death, and coined money in his own name.

Humaioon
marches back
towards
Agra.

He therefore left Jehangire Kulli Beg, with five thousand horse, in Gour, and returned towards Agra.

By the excessive rains and bad roads, the king's cavalry and beasts of burthen perished in great numbers, on his march, by fatigue and want of forage. Shere Chan, who had now raised a numerous army, entrenched himself on the banks of the Jossa, in a place by which the king must of necessity pass, and, by treachery, defeated him with great slaughter, in the manner which we have already related. Shere did not immediately push forward to the capital. Anxious to leave no enemy behind him, he returned to Bengal, engaged Jehangire Kulli Beg in several battles, defeated him, and, at length, cut him and his army to pieces.

Is totally
overthrown
by Shere
Chan.

SECTION III.

The history of the reign of **SHERE SHAW**, the Afghan.

Shere Shaw
assumes the
imperial ti-
tle.

SHERE SHAW, immediately after the reduction of Bengal, assumed the imperial title, struck the coin, and read the chutba, in his own name. He marched, the next year, with a great army, towards Agra. The unfortunate Humaioon was, by this time, deserted

by



By his brother Mirza Camiran, and hated by his Mogul omrahs, on account of his attention to his Turkuman mercenaries. He, however, crossed the river with one hundred thousand horse, and met Shere Chan, who had but fifty thousand. Shere, as we have already mentioned, defeated Humaion, and pursued him to Agra, Lahore, and Choshâb; from which place the king retreated towards Sind.

A. D. 1542.
Hig. 949.

Ismaiel Chan, Ghazi Chan, Fatti Chan, and Billoche Dudai, all omrahs of that country, joined Shere Shaw. The sultan, observing a hill, among the mountains of Balnat, proper for a fortress, ordered one to be built, which he named Rhotas. Chawâs Chan, his faithful slave, to whose bravery and conduct he owed himself greatly indebted for his fortune, was now made Amir ul Omrah, with a pension of a tenth of the royal revenue.

Makes Chawâs Chan captain general.

Having left the Amir ul Omrah, and Hybut Chan Neazi, with a great army, in the north west, Shere Shaw returned towards Agra. He was in that city informed, that Chizer Chan Sirik, whom he left suba of Bengal, had married the daughter of Mahmood, the former sultan of that province, and held the state of a sovereign prince. Having experienced, in his own fortune, the danger of permitting such behavior to go unpunished, he marched immediately to Bengal. Chizer Chan being unexpectedly surprized, submitted without trouble, and was imprisoned. Shere Shaw very prudently divided the kingdom of Bengal among a number of omrahs, independent of one another, and appointed Kafi Fazilit, a native of Kurrah, famous for his learning and policy, to superintend the whole. He himself, after these transactions, retired to Agra.

Reduces the suba of Bengal.

In the year nine hundred and forty nine, Shere made a motion towards Malava. Having advanced as far as Gualier, Suja Chan Afghan, who had before invested the place, on the part of Shere Shaw, found means to settle matters with Abul Casim Beg, governor of Gualier.

Gualier



A. D. 1543. Gualier for Humaioon, and he delivered up that strong fortrefs into
 Hig. 953.
 Takes Gualier his hands.

Reduces Malava. Shere Shaw having entered Malava, Mullu Chan, governor of that
 lava. province, submitted without a blow. Being, however, a few days
 after, alarmed by something, he fled from the king's camp, and
 Hadjee Chan was appointed to that government; Suja Chan had also
 a jagier conferred upon him in that country. Shere Shaw having
 marched from thence to Rintimpore, Mullee Chan fell upon the go-
 vernor of Malava, and upon Suja Chan, but he was defeated. Suja
 Chan having acquired all the honor of the victory, Hadjee Chan was
 superfeded and recalled, and the government conferred upon Suja.

Takes Rintimpore. Shere Shaw arriving before Rintimpore, had the address to get
 possession of that important fortrefs, from the governor, on the part
 of Sultan Mahmood Lodi, who had still kept it. The emperor,
 after taking Rintimpore, returned to Agra. He remained in that city
 a whole year, settling the internal police of the empire, and regulating
 his army. He, in the mean time, ordered Hybut Chan to wrest
 Moultan from the Bellochies. This Hybut soon effected by defeating
 Fatti Chan Bellochi, and entirely subduing that country. He had, on ac-
 count of this exploit, the title of Azim Humaioon conferred upon him.

He marches against Raja Paran, for keeping two thousand concubines. In the year nine hundred and fifty, Paran Mull, the son of Raja
 Suckdeo Parbia, having conquered some neighbouring pergunnahs,
 kept no less than two thousand concubines and dancing girls in his
 zinnana. The king, resenting this indignity, marched and invested
 him in the fort of Raifein. The siege being protracted for a long
 time, Paran Mull began to treat of a capitulation. This was granted
 to him upon the honorable terms of marching out, with all his
 arms, treasure, family, garrison, and effects. Paran accordingly
 marched out with four thousand rajaputs, and, trusting to the faith
 which had been pledged, encamped at a small distance.

But

But Shere Shaw, who never kept the faith of treaties, was easily persuaded, by his base ministers, particularly by Amir Ruffi ul Dien Suffvi, infamously to violate his honor. He surrounded the rajaputs, and ordered them all to be massacred. He, however, paid very dear for this horrid piece of cruelty and treachery. The rajaputs, placing death in one eye and revenge in the other, fought till every man of them was laid dead on the plain, and above double their number of the assassins.

A. D. 1543.
Hig. 950.
His treachery
and cruelty.

Shere Shaw, after this infamous transaction, returned to Agra. Having remained there a few months, to refresh and recruit his army, he marched towards Marwâr. During his march he intrenched himself every night, as well for security, as to exercise his troops, and make them expert in this necessary service. When he came to cross the sands, he formed redoubts all round him with gabions. In this manner he entered the country of the raja of Nagor and Todpoor, whose name was Maldeo, and esteemed the most powerful raja in Hindostan. He opposed the king, with fifty thousand rajaputs, and both armies lay thirty days in fight of one another.

He marches
towards Mar-
wâr.

Shere Shaw would now have been glad to retreat quietly. But the danger was too great, at the same time the enemy was so advantageously posted as to render an attack too hazardous. In the midst of this alarming situation, a successful stratagem suggested itself to the king. Raja Maldeo having conquered that country, to which he had no right by inheritance, Shere Shaw forged a letter, in the Hindoo language and character, in the name of the raja's generals, addressed to himself, setting forth, "That, being conquered by the raja, they had, through necessity, served him till then with fidelity; but that they were, in secret, very weary of his yoke. That if he would therefore, reinstate them in their former possessions, they were willing to make him a due acknowledgement for the favor." On this letter Shere super-
scribed, as usual, in Persian, That they should fear nothing, desiring
them

and, by a
stratagem,
deceives the
enemy.



A. D. 1544. them to persevere in their intentions, and that they might rest assured,
 Mig. 951. that he would comply with their demand.

This letter was purposely thrown into the way of the raja, who, being always in dread of his omrahs, was easily deceived. He therefore declined the battle, which he intended to give that day. He was even more and more confirmed in his unjust suspicion, by the eagerness which they expressed to engage. Upon the fourth day he ordered a retreat; but Cunia, one of his principal omrahs, having found out in what manner the raja had been deceived by these forgeries, endeavoured to persuade him of his mistake. Having found that the raja's suspicions could not be removed, he told him, That the suspected treachery was unprecedented among true Rajaputs, and that he was determined to wipe off the stain which the raja had thrown upon their reputation, by his own blood, or the conquest of Shere Shaw, with his own tribe.

Gallant proposal of a Rajaput omrah.

He returns with his own tribe, and attacks Shere.

The raja continued to retreat, but the gallant Cunia, with a few other chiefs, and ten or twelve thousand men, turned back, with an intent to surprize Shere Shaw's camp. They, however, by some mistake, lost their way, and it was fair day light before they saw the enemy. Shere Shaw immediately formed, and came out against them. Though the king's army, by the smallest computation, consisted of eighty thousand fighting men, this handful of brave Rajaputs repulsed them repeatedly, and would have certainly defeated them, if Jellal Chan Selwani had not at that instant arrived with a fresh reinforcement, to join the imperial army. Shere falling upon the Rajaputs with renewed vigor, broke them; and the brave Cunia, with almost his whole army, were cut to pieces.

After an obstinate battle, the rajaputs are cut to pieces.

Shere Shaw, finding himself in possession of a victory of which he had at one time despaired, exclaimed, "That, for a handful of barley, he had almost given the Empire of Hindostan to the wind." This grain,

Remarkable saying of Shere Shaw.



grain, it seems, was all the scanty produce of that sandy country, ^{A. D. 1545.} for which the inhabitants fought with so much obstinacy. Raja ^{Hig. 952.} Maldeo having heard of this action, and the loss of so many brave men, fell into deep affliction; and being, for his pusillanimity, deserted by the greatest part of his army, he retreated among the mountains of Sodpoor.

Shere Shaw, after this bloody victory, turned his army towards ^{He takes} the fort of Chitor, which was surrendered to him by capitulation. ^{Chitor,} He then directed his march to Rintimpore, and gave that country in jagier to his son Adil Chan, who fixed his residence there. The sultan, in person, moved towards Callinger, which is esteemed one ^{and sits down} of the strongest forts in Hindostan. The raja of Callinger, on ac- ^{before Cal-} count of the king's treacherous behavior to Paran Mull, would make ^{linger,} no submission, but prepared himself for hostilities. Shere Shaw, ^{besieges the} having drawn a line of circumvallation, begun to carry on his ap- ^{place.} proaches to the place; he raised mounds of earth for his artillery, and sunk mines under the rock. The royal batteries were now advanced very near the walls, breaches were made, and a general assault ordered, when a live shell, which had been thrown against the fort by the imperialists, rebounded back into the battery in which the king stood. The shell burst in the midst of a quantity of powder, to which had not been properly secured. Several gunners were blown ^{The king} up; the king, Shech Chalile, Mulla Nizam Danishmund, and Diria ^{burnt by the} Chan Serwani, were burnt in so terrible a manner, that they were ^{blowing up} ^{of powder.} carried for dead to their tents.

In this dreadful condition the king began to breathe, in great agonies; he, however, encouraged the continuance of the attack, and gave orders, till in the evening news was brought him of the reduction of the place. He then cried out, "Thanks to the Almighty God," and expired. The death of Shere Shaw ^{He dies,} happened on the twelfth of Ribbi ul Awil, in the year nine hundred ^{and}



A. D. 1545. and fifty two. He spent fifteen years in a military life before he mounted the throne; and he sat upon the musnud five years, as emperor of Hindostan.

His character.

The character of Shere Shaw is almost equally divided between virtue and vice. Public justice prevailed in the kingdom, while private acts of treachery dishonored the hands of the king. He seemed to have made breach of faith a royal property, which he would by no means permit his subjects to share with him. We ought, perhaps, to ascribe this vice to the ambition of Shere. Had he been born to the musnud, he might have been just, as he was valiant and politic in war: Had he confined his mind to his jagier, he might merit the character of a virtuous omrah; but his great soul made him look up to the throne, and he cared not by what steps he was to ascend.

His magnificence.

Shere Shaw left many monuments of his magnificence behind him. From Bengal and Sennargaum, to the Sind, or Nilab, which is fifteen hundred crores *, he built caravanferais at every stage, and dug a well at the end of every crore. Besides, he raised many magnificent mosques for the worship of God on the highway, wherein he appointed readers of the Koran and Imams. He ordered that at every serai, all travellers, without distinction of country or religion, should be entertained, according to their quality, at the public expence. He, at the same time, planted rows of fruit trees along the roads, to preserve travellers from the scorching heat of the sun, as well as to gratify their taste.

Was the first who established regular horse posts.

Horse-posts were placed at proper distances, for forwarding quick intelligence to government, and for the advantage of trade and correspondence. This establishment was new in Hindostan. Such was the public security during his reign, that travellers and mer-

* About three thousand of our miles.

chants,

