



THE FALL



OF THE

MOGHUL EMPIRE

OF HINDUSTAN.

A NEW EDITION,
WITH CORRECTIONS AND ADDITIONS.

BY

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P R E F A C E.

Two editions of this book having been absorbed, it has been thought that the time was come for its reproduction in a form more adapted to the use of students. Opportunity has been taken to introduce considerable additions and emendations.

The rise and meridian of the Moghul Empire have been related in Elphinstone's "History of India: the Hindu and Mahometan Period;" and a special study of the subject will also be found in the "Sketch of the History of Hindustan" published by the present writer in 1885. Neither of those works, however, undertakes to give a detailed account of the great Anarchy that marked the conclusion of the eighteenth century, the dark time that came before the dawn of British power in the land of the Moghul. Nor is there is any other complete English book on the subject.*

The present work is, therefore, to be regarded as a monograph on the condition of the capital and neighbouring territories, from the murder of Alamgir II. in 1759 to the occupation of Dehli by Lake in 1803. Some introductory chapters are prefixed, with the view of showing how these events were prepared;

* One or two English writers, however, have dealt with portions of this history; and reference to their works will be found hereafter; most of them are of old date, and scarce.

and an account of the campaign of 1760-1 has been added, because it does not seem to have been hitherto related on a scale proportioned to its importance. That short but desperate struggle is interesting as the last episode of mediæval war, when battles could be decided by the action of mounted men in armour. It is also the *sine quâ non* of British Empire in India. Had the Mahrattas not been conquered then, it is exceedingly doubtful if the British power in the Bengal Presidency would ever have extended beyond Benares.

The author would wish to conclude this brief explanation by reproducing the remarks which concluded the *Preface* to his second edition.

“There were two dangers,” it was there observed; “the first, that of giving too much importance to the period; the second, that of attempting to illustrate it by stories—such as those of Clive and Hastings—which had been told by writers with whom competition was out of the question. Brevity, therefore, is studied; and what may seem baldness will be found to be a conciseness, on which much pains have been bestowed.”

“The narrative,” it was added, “is one of confusion and transition; and chiefly interesting in so far as it throws light on the circumstances which preceded and caused the accession of the East India Company to paramount power in India.” The author has only to add an expression of his hope that, in conjunction with Mr. S. Owen’s book,* what he has here written may help to remove doubts as to the benefits derived by the people of India from the Revolution under consideration.

* *India on the Eve of the British Conquest*, 2nd Ed. (W. H. Allen, 1887.)

Finally, mention should be made of Mr. Elphinstone's posthumous work, "The Rise of British Power in the East."* That work does not, indeed, clash with the present book; for it did not enter into the scope of the distinguished author to give the native side of the story, or to study it from the point of view here presented. For the military and political aims and operations of the early British officers in Madras and Bengal, however, Elphinstone will be found a valuable guide. His narrative bears to our subject a relation similar to that of the "Roman de Rou" to the history of the Carling Empire of Northern France.

* *Edited by Sir E. Colebrooke.* (Murray, 1887.)

OXFORD, 1887.

CONTENTS.

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

	PAGE
Preliminary Observations on Hindustan and the City of Dehli	1

CHAPTER II.

Greatness of the Timurides	15
Causes of Empire's decline	17
Character of Aurungzeb	18
Progress of disruption under his descendants	20
Muhamadan and Hindu enemies	20
The stage emptied	22

CHAPTER III.

Muhamad Shah	23
------------------------	----

CHAPTER IV.

Ahmad Shah	27
Alamgir II.	34

CHAPTER V.

Afghan invasion	39
---------------------------	----

CHAPTER VI.

Overthrow of Mahrattas at Pānipat	44
---	----

PART II.

CHAPTER I.

A.D. 1760-67.

	PAGE
1760. Movements of Shahzada Ali Gohar, after escaping from Dehli	63
Shojaa-ud-Daulah	64
His Character	64
Ramnarayan defeated	65
M. Law	68
1761. Battle of Gaya	69
1762. March towards Hindustan	70
1763. Massacre of Patna	71
1764. Flight of Kasim and Sumroo	72
Battle of Buxar	74
1765. Treaty with British	75
1767. Establishment at Allahabad	77
Legal position	77

CHAPTER II.

A.D. 1764-71.

1764. Najib-ud-Daula at Dehli	79
Mirza Jawan Bakht Regent	79
The Játs	80
„ attacked by Najib	83
Death of Suraj Mal	84
1765. Játs attack Jaipur	84
1766. Return of Mahrattas	87
1767. Ahmad Abdáli defeats Sikhs	87
1768. Mahrattas attack Bhartpur	87
1770. Rohillas yield to them	88
Death of Najib-ud-Daula	88
State of Rohilkand	89
Zábita Khan	91
1771. Mahrattas invite Emperor to return to Dehli	92

CHAPTER III.

A.D. 1771-76.

	PAGE
Agency of Restoration	93
Madhoji Sindhia	95
Emperor's return to Dehli	95
1772. Zābitā Khan attacked by Imperial force under Mirza Najaf Khan	96
Flight of Zābitā	97
Treaty with Rohillas	98
Zābitā regains office	99
Mahrattas attack Dehli	100
1773. Desperation of Mirza Najaf	101
Mahrattas attack Rohilkand	102
Opposed by British	103
Advance of Audh troops	104
Restoration of Mirza	105
Abdul Ahid Khan	105
Suspicious conduct of Rohillas	109
Tribute withheld by H. Rahmat	109
1774. Battle of Kattrā	111
1775. Death of Shojāa-ud-Daula	112
Zābitā Khan rejoins Jāts	113
Najaf Kuli Khan	114
Successes of Imperial army	115
1776. Zābitā and the Sikhs	116
Death of Mir Kāsim	117

CHAPTER IV.

A.D. 1776-85.

Vigour of Empire under M. Najaf	119
Zābitā rebels again	120
1777. Emperor takes the field	121
And the rebellion is suppressed	122
Sumroo's Jaigir	122
1778. Abdul Ahid takes the field against the Sikhs	123
Unsuccessful campaign	124
1779. Sikhs plunder Upper Doab	125

	PAGE
	126
1780. Dehli threatened, but relieved	126
Mirza Najaf's arrangements	127
Popham takes Gwalior	128
Death of Sumroo	123
1781. Begam becomes a Christian	130
1782. Death of Mirza	133
Consequent transactions	134
Afrasyab Khan becomes Premier	135
Mirza Shaffi at Dehli	138
1783. Murder of Shaffi	139
Action of Warren Hastings	140
1784. Flight of Sháhzádah Jawán Bakht	141
Madhoji Sindhia goes to Agra	142
Afrasyab murdered	143
1785. Tribute demanded from British, but refused	144
Death of Zábítá	145
ndhia supreme	146
Chálisha Famine	147
State of Country	147

CHAPTER V.

A. D. 1786-88.

1786. Gholám Kadir succeeds his father Zábítá	149
Siege of Rághogarah	150
1787. British policy	151
Measures of Sindhia	152
Rájput confederacy	153
Battle of Lalsot	154
Mohammad Beg's death	155
Defection of his nephew Ismail Beg	156
Greatness of Sindhia	158
Gholám Kadir enters Dehli	159
But checked by Begam Sumroo and Nájaf Kuli	161
Gholám Kadir joins Ismail Beg	162
1788. Battle of Chaksána	164
Emperor proceeds towards Rajputana	164
Sháhzáda writes to George III.	165
Najaf Kuli rebels	166
Death of Sháhzáda	166

	PAGE
Siege of Gokalgarh	167
Emperor's return to Dehli	167
Battles of Fatihpur and Firozabad	168
Confederates meet at Dehli	170
Sindhia is inactive	172
Benoit de Boigne	172 <i>n</i>

CHAPTER VI.

A. D. 1788.

Defection of Moghuls and retreat of Hindu Guards	174
Confederates obtain possession of palace	175
Emperor deposed	177
Palace plundered	178
Gholam Kadir in the palace	179
Emperor blinded	180
Approach of Mahrattas	182
Apprehensions of the spoiler	183
Moharram at Dehli	184
Explosion in palace	185
Gholam Kadir flies to Meerut	186
His probable intentions	186
His capture and punishment	188
Sindhia's measures	190
Future nature of narrative	191
Poetical lament of Emperor	192 <i>n</i>

PART III.

CHAPTER I.

A. D. 1788-94.

Sindhia as Mayor of palace	207, 208
British policy	209
1789. Augmentation of Sindhia's Army	210, 211

	PAGE
1790. Ismail Beg joins the Rajput rising	199
Battle of Pātan	200
Sindhia at Mathra	202
Siege of Ajmir	204
Jodhpur Raja	205
Battle of Mirta	205
Rivals alarmed	207
French officers	208
1792. Sindhia's progress to Puna	209
Holkar advances in his absence	210
Ismail Beg taken prisoner	211
Battle of Lakhairi	211
Sindhia rebuked by Lord Cornwallis	213
His great power	214
Rise of George Thomas	215
1793. He quits Begam's service	216
Sindhia at Puna	217
1794. His death and character	218

CHAPTER II.

A.D. 1794-1800.

	Daulat Rao Sindhia	221
	Thomas adopted by Appa Khandi Rao	222
1795.	Revolution at Sardhana	223 ff.
	Begum delivered by Thomas	226
	Becomes a wiser woman	227
	Movements of Afghans	229
	Battle of Kurdla	230
1796.	De Boigne retires	230
1797.	General Perron	231
	Musalman intrigues	233
	Afghans checked	233
	Succession in Audh	234
1798.	War of the <i>Bais</i>	235
1799.	Afghans and British, and treaty with the Nizam	236
	Rising of Shimbunath	237
	Thomas independent	237
	Revolt of Lakwa Dāda	238
1801.	Holkar defeated at Indor	239
	Power of Perron	240