

The Story
of
Ichalkaranji

By H. GEORGE FRANKS.

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Printed by the Scottish Mission Industries Co., Ltd. (J. R. Eason,
Manager) East Street, Poona, and published by H. George Franks,
Poona.

1929.

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PREFACE.

The sole idea of this monograph is to give a concise and interesting account of the Founder of Ichalkaranji State and of the history and character of the subsequent rulers. Ichalkaranji, which was a small village in the eighteenth century, has now grown into a good-sized town, and is the capital of a State whose rise and growth forms one of the most romantic and thrilling tales that the annals of Maharashtra can produce. One of America's most famous men found his birth in an humble cabin, and later was installed in the President's White House as Lord and Master; but here is a tale even more romantic, for it is the tale of a boy whose tenacity of purpose and whose personal bravery, encouraged by a wondrous mother-love, took him from the rudest of huts in an obscure Konkan village, first to the position of trusted companion of one of the greatest generals Maharashtra had ever produced, then to the high office of Minister of a flourishing Empire, and finally to place his name in the world's history books as the Founder of an important State.

This summarised account is based largely on the history of Ichalkaranji State written in Marathi by the late Wasudeo Shastri Khare of Miraj, who has been recognised as one of the most careful students of Mahratta history; but additional

material has been introduced as the result of other researches, although these entail no responsibility on the State either as regards facts or the conclusions drawn therefrom. Most of the spadework of this brief story was done by Professor C. G. Bhanu, to whom the most grateful thanks are given.

Mahratta history is, and always will be, full of surprises for the enterprising student; and that is why the present task has been so interesting, so romantic, and, at times, so thrilling, especially when the stirring days have been lived over again in the writer's imagination. And as for the battles of wits as well as arms of the Indian Amazons, no story is deserving of greater attention, and it is the author's only regret that in this work the doings of Maharashtra's famous women Queens could receive such scant attention.

Thanks are also due to Mr. A. D. Parasnis for permitting the reproduction of the paintings of Bajirao I, Shahu with Balaji Bajirao, and Madhavrao I from the famous Parasnis collection at Satara; whilst we also tender thanks to the Chitra Shala Press for the use of the pictures of Bajirao, Tarabai, and Mahadji Scindia.