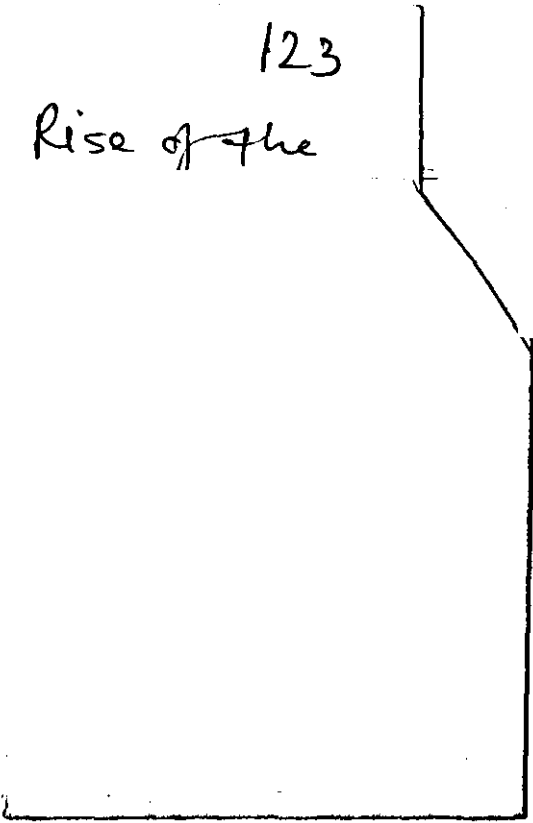


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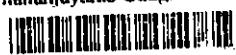
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Maratha History. Vol. I.

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# Rise of the Maratha Power.

BY

M. G. RANADE, M.A., LL.B., C.I.E. &C.,  
*Judge of her Majesty's High Court of Judicature, Bombay.*

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THE Publishers think it their duty to acknowledge their gratitude to the Honble. Mr. Justice M. G. RANADE, for his permitting them to publish the first edition of this volume.

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## PREFACE BY THE AUTHOR.

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IT was in the first quarter of the seventeenth century that two apparently insignificant events occurred on the Western Coast of India—the establishment of an English Factory at Surat in 1612, and the birth in 1627 at Shivnér, near Junnar, of a son to a petty Maráthá Jahágirdár of the Ahmednagar Nizám Sháhi Kingdom. Though neither of these events attracted much notice at the time, they heralded the birth of two mighty powers, which were brought into strange contact with one another during the next two centuries, and now as allies, and again as foes, they competed for supremacy in India, till at last the more organized foreign power prevailed in the struggle, and displaced the disorganized native power from its position as supreme ruler. The object of the following narrative is to present to the English and Indian reader a bird's eye view of the history of the rise and progress

of the latter power—the power of the Maráthá Confederacy, which, for one hundred years at least, occupied the foremost place among the native rulers of the country, and whose orders were obeyed at one and the same time far off in the west at Dwárká, in the east at Jagannáth, at Haridwár in the north, and Ráméshwar in the south of the Indian Continent. It is not intended to go over the beaten tracks of the detailed story, which has been so elaborately treated in our native Bakhars, and authoritatively described by Mr. Grant Duff, the historian of the Maráthás. Materials for a fuller account of the detailed narrative are being made available by the labours of our native scholars, and they will have in time to be worked up systematically, but the limits assigned to these stray chapters on Maráthá History would of themselves preclude any such ambition. My aim is rather to present a clear view of the salient features of the history from the Indian standpoint, to remove many misapprehensions which detract much from the moral interest and the political lessons of the story, and, above all, to enlist the sympathy of the representatives of the conquering British power in the fortunes of its worsted rival. Now that all jealousies are

laid at rest, the tribute of justice may well be paid to the departed great, whose names are cherished by millions in India as the sweet memories of an irrevocable past.

The writer of these chapters claims no other merit for his work. He would not have undertaken the responsibility connected with it but for the fact that it has been handed over to him as a legacy by a revered friend, since deceased, who had, jointly with him, undertaken the work from a feeling of true patriotism, and who would, if he had been spared, have worthily completed, what he no doubt intended to be, the *magnum opus* of his brilliant career.

The twelve chapters which are now published relate to the rise of the Maráthá Power. The second volume will treat about the progress of the confederacy. The manuscript notes are nearly ready; but as, since these notes were first written, the Government of Bombay has made available to the public the records in the Poona Daftar, it has been deemed advisable to delay the publication of these succeeding chapters for the present. When such fresh materials have been made available, it would not be proper to write on this part of the subject

without a careful study of these hitherto neglected sources of information. At the desire of appreciative friends, a contribution from the pen of the late Mr. Justice Telang is added at the end as a fitting conclusion to this volume. Mr. Telang's paper, "Gleanings from the Maráthá Chronicles," represents the true spirit in which native historians should treat the past history of their country. As this work presupposes a general acquaintance with the facts of Maráthá History, and only seeks to suggest and enforce its lessons, it has not been deemed necessary to overload the book by references to English and Native authorities. The lessons it seeks to illustrate are (1) that the rise of the Maráthá power was not a mere accident due to any chance combination, but was a genuine effort on the part of a Hindu nationality, not merely to assert its independence, but to achieve what had not been attempted before—the formation of a Confederacy of States animated by a common patriotism, and (2) that the success it achieved was due to a general upheaval social, religious, and political of all classes of the population. The attempt failed; but even the failure was itself an education in the highest virtues, and possibly intended to be a preparatory discipline to cement the union of the Indian races under British guidance.