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978-1-108-05554-3 - History of the Rise of the Mahomedan Power in India,
till the Year AD 1612: Volume 1

Mahomed Kasim Ferishta Translated by John Briggs

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History of the Rise of the Mahomedan Power in India, till the Year AD 1612

The Persian chronicler Ferishta (1560–1620) composed his great work, published in this four-volume English translation in 1829, at the court of Bijapur – where he spent most of his life – under the patronage of King Ibrahim Adil Shah II. It covers Muslim India from around 975 to 1612 and is notable for its balance, despite Ferishta's close involvement with some of the events and people he records. In the translator's preface, East India Company officer John Briggs (1785–1875) highlights the danger of misconceptions about the people of India and the importance of religious policy in the success or failure of her various governments. Volume 1 includes introductory matter, a chapter on pre-Muslim India, histories of the Ghaznavid kings of Lahore, and information on the rulers of Delhi. Also included is Briggs' valuable comparative chronology of events in Europe and India.

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VOLUME 1

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HISTORY
OF THE
RISE OF THE MAHOMEDAN POWER
IN
INDIA,
TILL THE YEAR A.D. 1612.
TRANSLATED FROM THE
ORIGINAL PERSIAN OF MAHOMED KASIM FERISHTA,
BY
JOHN BRIGGS, M.R.A.S.
LIEUTENANT-COLONEL IN THE MADRAS ARMY.
TO WHICH IS ADDED,
AN ACCOUNT OF THE CONQUEST,
BY THE KINGS OF HYDRABAD,
OF THOSE PARTS OF THE MADRAS PROVINCES DENOMINATED
THE CEDED DISTRICTS AND
NORTHERN CIRCARS.
WITH COPIOUS NOTES.
IN FOUR VOLUMES.
VOL. I.
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TO
THE HONOURABLE
THE CHAIRMAN,
DEPUTY CHAIRMAN,
AND COURT OF DIRECTORS,
OF
THE EAST INDIA COMPANY;

THIS WORK,
THE LABOUR OF NEARLY TWENTY YEARS,
IS,
WITH THEIR PERMISSION,
RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,
BY
THE TRANSLATOR.

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THE
TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

THE causes which led to the publication of this work require some explanation, both because portions of Ferishta have already appeared in English and because the circumstances which gave rise to the present translation did not originate in a desire to supersede the former versions. Several years ago Sir James Mackintosh, then President of the Literary Society of Bombay, with that zeal for the diffusion of knowledge which has ever marked his character, urged me to translate the portion of Ferishta's history which had not yet been touched upon by Europeans. I promised to do so if, on commencing the task, I found myself equal to it; and I trust when this work meets his eye he will think that I have fairly fulfilled my engagement.

My professional duties, for some time, prevented my attending to his suggestion, though it was not lost upon me; for in less than one year a considerable part of one of the minor histories was translated; and in two more the task assigned me was completed. During this interval I had com-

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pared several authors contemporary with Ferishta, both in the languages of Asia and of Europe, and I then first conceived the idea of writing a complete work on the Mahomedan Power in India, compiled from the various materials to which I might hereafter obtain access. Having resolved to take Ferishta as my basis, I found it requisite to study him very closely; but on examining Colonel Dow's translation of the History of the Kings of Dehly, I found it so difficult to follow the narrative, owing to the confusion in the proper names of persons and of places, that I had to consult the original throughout, and my notes and alterations alone made nearly a volume. In these observations, it is by no means my wish to detract from the merit justly due to Colonel Dow. It was impossible that he should correct the geographical errors which existed, perhaps, even in his original manuscript, when there were no maps of the country; and it was difficult for him to attain sufficient proficiency in the language of the text to give full force to the narrative of the author at a period when no elementary works in Persian had yet been published. But to Colonel Dow the world is much indebted for bringing even a portion of Ferishta to light, and for exciting in the mind of every person who reads his translation a wish to become better acquainted with the author. Upon the whole, therefore, great praise is due to Colonel Dow, and his name will be handed down to posterity with respect, as one of the earliest and most indefa-

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tigable of our Oriental scholars. Instead of confining himself, however, to mere translation, he has filled his work with his own observations, which have been so embodied in the text, that Gibbon declares it impossible to distinguish the translator from the original author; and which in some cases so plainly indicated the hand of a modern European writer, that Dr. Johnson and Mr. Burke were justified in doubting it to be the work of a Mahomedan of the sixteenth century, till Mr. Orme procured part of Ferishta's history to be translated in London, and compared it with Colonel Dow's. Having proceeded thus far in my labours, I resolved to examine the translation made by Dr. Jonathan Scott of the History of the Kings of Koolburga, Beejapoor, and Ahmudnuggur. This comparison soon convinced me how much that accomplished Orientalist had surpassed all former translators; and I found little to alter, with the exception of a few proper names, which a more thorough acquaintance with the geography and language of the Deccan enabled me to correct. Dr. Scott's copy of Ferishta appears, however, to have been occasionally defective; though had he translated the whole instead of a small portion of it, the present attempt might have been unnecessary. Before the end of the year 1815 I had thus completed the translation of the whole work, with copious notes. I had besides collated a great part of an original manuscript in my possession, with several other copies, carefully examining it

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with maps ; and I also continued to pursue with ardour my labours for procuring materials for an original history. The ready access afforded by Mr. Russell the resident at Hydrabad, by Mr. Elphinstone the resident at Poona, and by Mr. Wm. Erskine of Bombay, to their European and Oriental libraries, as well as to those of all the learned natives with whom they had any acquaintance or influence, entitles them to my grateful thanks. My researches had enabled me to fill eleven folio volumes of manuscript, partly translations, and partly notes, for my general history, which was in a state of forwardness, when an event occurred that led to the publication of this translation alone.

The war which broke out in India in 1817 rendered it necessary for me to accompany the army that marched to Malwa. I left my library and manuscripts at Poona, with the exception of the translation of Ferishta, which had been sent to Mr. William Erskine at Bombay. On the 5th of November, 1817, the Peshwa attacked the Poona residency, driving before his troops the members of the resident's establishment, among whom were several English ladies and their children ; and after sacking the place, the troops set fire to the houses, and burned them with their contents. My own family had the good fortune to escape with their lives ; but the whole of my property of every description, including my library, together with my manuscripts, the labour of so many years, was lost or destroyed. After an

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absence of fifteen months, I revisited Poona at the end of the war, for a few days only, and I then purchased two of my English manuscripts, which are all that I was ever able to obtain. I also procured one copy of Ferishta in Persian, which contained several valuable annotations and corrections. This copy has since been carefully collated with several others, and a new and correct edition was left by me at Bombay in 1827, in order to be printed. My intention of compiling the Mahomedan history is, therefore, now at an end; but as I was in possession of a correct translation of Ferishta from a very good copy of the original, I felt that it contained sufficiently interesting matter to admit of a separate publication; and thus I offer it to the world, although it is, in truth, only a small part of a mass of historical matter that can never be recovered.

After a rapid and imperfect account of Hindoo history previously to the Mahomedan invasion, Ferishta gives a sketch of the conquests of the early Arabians in Persia, their progress into Chorasnia, and their settlements in the north-eastern parts of Iran. The detailed portion of his history commences in the year 977, with the origin of the dynasty of Ghizny. It was then the Mahomedans first came in contact with the Hindoos; but no permanent establishment east of the Indus took place for half a century, and shortly after the Indians, with the exception of those in the Punjab, shook off the Mahomedan yoke. In the year

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1191 they again became subject to the attacks of the Moslems, who in 1206 founded the kingdom of Dehly. Nearly a century elapsed in rendering this power stable, when in 1294 the first Mahomedan soldier ventured to cross the Nurbudda, and a small army invaded the Deccan. At this period the Dehly kingdom had attained its zenith, under the rule of its first conquerors ; and not only successfully resisted all the efforts of Chungiz Khan to subdue it, but even afforded an honourable retreat to thirteen kings of Eastern Asia, which had been expelled from their thrones. But Dehly was doomed to witness a downfall more sudden than its elevation.

Seven dynasties had passed away in three centuries ; and the last had sunk to a low ebb when Tamerlane invaded India in the year 1400. This warlike chief, however, found so little to induce him to retain the conquest, that after having sacked the country, and committed unheard-of cruelties and ravages, he abandoned it, without leaving one soldier behind to entitle him to consider it as part of his vast dominions. During the ensuing century three more dynasties reigned in Dehly ; and the imbecility of the house of Lody enabled Babur at the head of twelve thousand men to subdue the empire in 1526, and to establish the house of the Great Mogul, a member of which family still occupies the shadow of a throne, that once belonged to one of the most powerful monarchies in the universe.

Previously to the conquest by Babur, several

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Mahomedan governors of provinces had raised themselves into independent kingdoms, which they continued to rule till a few years before Ferishta wrote his work in 1612. Nearly about that period most of them had become gradually subjugated by Akbur to the parent empire; and his descendant Aurungzeeb could make it his boast, that in his reign only one Mahomedan sovereign issued his mandates throughout all India.

Besides the Dehly history, therefore, the author has had occasion to detail the events occurring throughout thirteen independent kingdoms, which existed for the greater portion of two centuries; in so doing he has given their origin, the rise and extent of their power, their internal administration and policy, and, lastly, the dissolution of all those whose end he lived to witness.

Such is the outline of Ferishta's labours. When we reflect on the extensive regions over which the historian passes; the numerous races of Arabs, Persians, Toorks, and Afghans, with their peculiarities of language, religion, and tribes; when to these are added the innumerable subdivisions of the Hindoo races, with their several tongues, habits, and customs, it will be acknowledged that it is no easy task to enter fully into the details, and to become familiar with the several new proper names which occur in every page. If to this be added the difficulty of tracing the movements of numerous armies of many different kingdoms, marching and countermarching over a region as

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extensive as Europe, we shall not be surprised to find errors in the various copies of Ferishta which at present exist.

It could not be expected that in the absence of the art of printing such a work should be correctly transmitted for any length of time. The mere copyist is a person whose principal duty is to write a fair hand; to acquire which forms the whole business of his life. The method and precision that are necessary in this occupation are for the most part obtained by sedentary habits. The transcriber despairs of becoming a scholar, and his avocation prevents his being a traveller; yet who but a traveller and a scholar, in countries where maps are unknown, can be acquainted with the various proper names of persons and tribes pervading a work of this nature, or with the correct titles and positions of places which occur throughout?

Of all the languages in the world, the Persian character is, perhaps, the most difficult to decipher with accuracy, and the most liable to orthographical errors. In writing it, the diacritical points, by which alone any thing like certainty is attainable, are frequently omitted; and in an alphabet, where a dot above a letter is negative, and one below the same letter is positive, who shall venture to decide, in an obscure passage, which is correct? or how is it possible that a person unacquainted with the true orthography of proper names can render a faithful transcript of a

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carelessly written original? These obstacles occur in every page of Ferishta; and unlike a work of fancy or taste, the reader of history is rigidly bound to adhere to the letter of the text. It would be useless and unprofitable to enumerate all the difficulties that arise in attempting to collate a work of this nature, for I am persuaded that such a task can only be properly accomplished by some public institution. Fortunately the person who was my first assistant in 1812 remained with me till I left India in 1827, and his whole life had been devoted to the study of Indian history. At my request, he travelled for several years successively throughout the Deccan, and made copies of every Persian inscription on stone to be found in all the towns of note in that country. These inscriptions have been chiefly useful in determining dates, whether of persons deceased or of buildings erected; and the result of his labours enabled me to add marginal notes to the original. In addition, a glossary of obsolete words found in Ferishta has been formed, and appended to the Persian text. The individual to whom I feel myself bound to say I owe so much is Meer Kheirat Ally Khan, commonly called Mooshtak, a person of good family in Akburabad (Agra), and who is at present the Persian secretary, or moonshy, at the residency at Satara.

It has been observed by Dr. Spelman, in his translation of Xenophon, “that there is not a more
“ difficult, a more discouraging, (but he adds) or a

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“ more useful task than that of a translator ; ” and Pope, in the preface to his *Iliad*, remarks, “ that there have not been more men misled in former times by a servile, dull adherence to the letter, than have been deluded in ours by a chimerical; insolent hope of raising and improving their author.” It has been my wish to avoid both these errors by giving *Ferishta* to the public in the very words he would probably have used, had he, as a native of the East, written in English.

I have ventured to make no alterations, but have endeavoured to render obscure passages clear, by explanatory notes. In some places I have omitted the poetry that occasionally intervenes, as it seems rather to clog than elucidate the subject ; and the chapter on the Saints, which has no relation to the history, has been altogether excluded. In the arrangement of the work I have followed the order of the original, which appears to have been modelled with great good sense and correct taste, and it seems to me preferable to that adopted in the *History of modern Europe* by Russell. Had *Ferishta* preserved in mere chronological succession the events of the several different monarchies, and represented them in the order they occurred, it would have been extremely difficult to follow the thread of the entire history. He has, therefore, given the account of every kingdom separately, and has a chapter for each complete in itself. By way of convenience to those who peruse the translation, I have affixed at the beginning of every dynasty

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a short genealogical table of each royal family, which makes it easy for the reader to refresh his memory, at any period of the history, with the relation the several princes of the blood bear to one another. This idea suggested itself to me many years ago in studying the wars of the houses of York and Lancaster, and I have since usually adopted the plan in the perusal of other histories. In addition to this aid, a chronological synopsis of the events which were simultaneously occurring in Europe and in India is also appended.

In the third volume, instead of a recapitulation of the events of Europe, I have added an abstract of the Portuguese annals in Asia, from Faria-é-Souza, as belonging to the period and the histories of the kingdoms with which the Europeans came in contact in the sixteenth century. To prevent, as much as possible, the confusion which would otherwise have occurred, from princes bearing the same name being engaged in war with each other (as is sometimes the case even in European history), I have been careful to preserve to each family some distinguishing appellation. Thus, for instance, in the first volume, the kings of Ghizny bear the title of Sooltan, which was bestowed on Mahmood the Great by the Caliph of Bagdad. The several other dynasties or families of Ghoory, Eibuk, Altmish, Bulbun, Khiljy, Toghluk, Syud, and Lody, have their fixed designation, and cannot well be confounded. In the second volume, the title of Padshah, assumed by Babur, belongs exclu-

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sively to the whole race of the Great Mogul. The intermediate Afghan family has its peculiar name of Soor, while the first dynasty of the kings of the Deccan is entitled Bahmuny. In the third volume will be found the kings of the minor Deccany monarchies, with their especial affixes of Adil Shah of Beejapoor, Nizam Shah of Ahmudnuggur, Kootb Shah of Golconda or Hyderabad, Imad Shah of Berar, and Be-reed Shah of Bidur. Ferishta laments that he was unable to procure any history of the kings of Golconda or Hyderabad; but begs if such a work should ever appear, that it may be included in his. This deficiency I have been able to supply, and it is added as an appendix in the body of the third volume. In the fourth volume, the title of Shah is affixed to denote the kings of Guzerat, while that of Sooltan is prefixed to distinguish those of Malwa. The Kandeish princes of the race of Farook were content to assume the title of Khan, and may be thus known. The Jam dynasty of Sind, the Lunga family of Mooltan, and the Chuk race of Kashmeer, has each its peculiar denomination; while the titles of Shurky and Poorby serve to mark the kings of Joonpoor and Bengal.

The perusal of this history cannot be otherwise than instructive, if it be merely to show the certain effects of good and bad government among a people whom our ignorance disposes us to consider as devoid of moral energy, and who are prone to submit without resistance to the grossest oppression. It is not my intention to dilate on the origin of this

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misconception of the Indian character, and a volume would not suffice to point out all the instances to the contrary with which the work abounds. The rapid success of Akbur in subjugating the greater portion of India, by a policy which elevated all classes of his subjects, whether newly subdued or otherwise, and of whatever creed or country, to the level to which their rank in society entitled them; and the rapid downfall of the government of Aurungzeeb, who oppressed the Hindoo population by a poll-tax, and by disqualifications from public employ, are the most striking which occur in the Mahomedan history. The early success of the Portuguese under Albuquerque and Nuno de Cunha may be chiefly ascribed to the confidence they reposed in the natives; and the decline of their power may be dated from the time when, under the name of religion, they persecuted them on account of their national tenets. These events form prominent land-marks in history which our own rulers seem prudently to have avoided.

It was the wisdom, or, perhaps, the good fortune, of the ruling administration in England, to select such governors as Clive and Hastings, in the early part of our Eastern career, who formed the groundwork of our gigantic dominion in the East; and it is to the great men who have subsequently ruled those possessions that they owe their present prosperity.

This is not the place to discuss a question of such magnitude. The present form of administration

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has arisen out of circumstances foreign to the objects contemplated in the original institution of the commercial body which now presides over it, but it stands pre-eminent among all the political phenomena in the annals of history. To appreciate this engine of government fully, it is necessary, not only to view it as a whole, but to observe the course of its action; and the more it is examined, the more one is struck with the magnitude of its power, and the energy and efficiency of its operation. It is a subject for deep speculation, how, if it were removed, its place could be supplied; but we may, I think, pronounce with confidence, that whosoever shall venture to do so, either by changing its constitution, or even by violently disturbing its motion, will incur the risk of involving in ruin the British power in India.

No part of the arrangement of the work has given me more perplexity than the adoption of some uniform plan for the orthography of Oriental words. In writing for the English public, I preferred adapting the letters to the familiar pronunciation of our own language rather than to those of the continent of Europe; and my object has been to confine the power of each letter or diphthong to one simple sound, in whatever situation it be placed.

Thus the vowels are pronounced : —

a as in *water, wall, ball.*

e as in *met, bell, level.*

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i as in *bit*, *hill*, *lip*.

o as in *hold*, *bold*.

u as in *but*, *must*.

y as in *truly*. — Where this letter is placed at the beginning or middle of a word it is sounded as in *youth*, *joyous*.

The following diphthongs and double letters are used to supply the varied sounds of some of the vowels : —

ee as in *fleet*, *feel*, *seem*.

oo as in *school*, *tool*.

ou as in *our*, *hour*, *flour*.

ei as in *sleight*, *height*.

Of the consonants, the letter *c* is never used except in conjunction with *h*, when the two letters have the same sound as in *church*. The Persian letter *خ* is expressed by the letters *kh*, which combined, have the sound of *ch* in the Scotch word *loch*, a lake. The letter *غ* is written with the letters *gh*, representing a guttural *g*, which is foreign to any of the western languages. The rest of the consonants have the same sound as in English. For the use of the Oriental scholar an appendix is added, containing all the proper names in the Persian character, with the meaning, as far as was practicable, to each name. These orthographical rules have been applied to the proper names of persons and things, but not always to those of towns or countries, which are written as

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they are usually to be found in maps ; and a table of latitudes and longitudes for those places whose positions have been ascertained is appended, though I regret it is not more complete.

The notes which have been added are the result either of personal observation or of information obtained for the purpose. In these the name of my friend Colonel Tod frequently appears, and to him I am much indebted for his unreserved communications on all points connected with the history and geography of Rajpoothana and northern India. My thanks are also due to Mr. Henry Ellis, the author of Lord Amherst's Embassy to China ; and to Mr. De Morgan, Mathematical Professor in the University of London, for their uniform kindness in rendering me assistance and advice on all occasions.

In preparing the indices to the last volume, I received much aid from Mr. J. Mitchell, Dr. Rosen, the Professor of Oriental Literature in the University of London, and Dr. Bernard Dorn ; and I take this opportunity to return my thanks to these gentlemen for their assistance.

After what has been said in the early part of this preface, I trust I shall be exculpated from the charge of endeavouring to supersede the former translations from any notion of my superior fitness to undertake the task. I have shown that I originally entertained no such idea ; nor would this work have been brought forward in its present shape had not the circumstances which oc-

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PREFACE.

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curred at Poona deprived me of the labours of many years' study and anxiety, and left this sole wreck behind. The chief merits of a translator seem to me to consist in faithfully rendering the sentiments of the author into the language of the translation free alike from the crudities of foreign idioms, from the verbosity and terseness which belong to some tongues, and from affectation. How far I have succeeded in following these rules, I leave the public to determine.

VOL. I.

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CHAPTER I.

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Nasir-ood-Deen Subooktugeen, ruler of Ghizny, a dependency of the kingdom of Bokhara, governed by the dynasty of Samany. Subooktugeen makes war with Jeipal, Raja of the Punjab. Peace concluded. Jeipal imprisons the Moslem ambassadors. War renewed. Battle of Lumghan, in which the Hindoos are defeated and pursued to the Indus. Death of Abool Munsoor Sumany, King of Bokhara. His son Nooh ascends the throne. Faik, one of his generals, creates a revolt. Subooktugeen unites with the King of Bokhara to oppose him. Faik finds an ally in Boo-Ally-Hussun Bin Sunjur, ruler of Khorassan, and also in Fukhr-ood-Dowla, Delimy of Joorjan. Faik and his allies march against the King of Bokhara and Subooktugeen, but the former are defeated. Mahmood, the son of Subook-

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defeated. The household troops proceed to join the King's elder
brother, Musaood at Nyshapoor. Musaood marches to Ghizny to
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saood marches towards India — attacks the fort of Soorsutty.
Dreadful famine throughout Persia — succeeded by the plague —
40,000 souls die in Isfahan. Suljooks invade Nyshapoor. The King
sends an army against them — they are defeated in the first instance,
but subsequently return and defeat the Ghiznevdes. The King takes
no farther steps against the Suljooks, but proceeds to Ghizny; he
proclaims his son, Modood, his heir and successor, and confers on
him the government of Bulkh. The King marches into India —
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King returns to Ghizny, leaving his son, Modood, at Lahore.
Farther incursions of the Suljooks on Bulkh, under their leader,
Toghrul Beg. The King throws a bridge across the Jeihoon, and
enters Transoxania. Toghrul Beg passes to the rear of his army,
and appears suddenly before Ghizny. The King makes peace with
Mungoo Khan Suljook, and agrees to cede territory to him —
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at Suruksh by them in the following year. Musaood's personal
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SOOLTAN ABOOL HUSSUN ALLY

Ascends the throne, and marries the widow of the late King, Madood, daughter of Jakur Beg Suljooky. Ally Bin Rubeea flies from the capital, after plundering the treasury, accompanied by the household troops — reduces a part of the country of the Afghans for himself. Abool Rusheed, a son of Sooltan Mahmood, raises an army, sets up his pretensions to the throne, and advances to Ghizny — is feebly opposed by Sooltan Abool Hussun Ally, who is defeated and taken prisoner. - - - 129

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