

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIRS

OF THE

REIGN OF THE EMPEROR JAHANGUEIR.

To HIM whose name is inscribed at the head of all that has existence ; the characters of whose glory are stamped on the walls and portals of the universe : to the Eternal Designer, who with a word, from the bosom of nothing, brought forth the celestial spheres and the elements of created nature : to the Omnipotent Architect, who spread above us the alternate vaults of the firmament, and arrayed this globe of earth with the splendours of his might : to Him be endless praise and illimitable gratitude ; and on our prophet Mahommed, that most excellent of created beings, who released mankind from the mazes of error, and conducted them to the high road of truth and duty, be countless blessings : to whom was given, from God, authority over all terrestrial power, and over all other prophets the pre-eminence ; the Messiah himself bearing the glad tidings of his approach ; of his approach at whose lamp the great legislator of Israel, the God-spoken prophet, sought to secure a spark of heavenly light.

For a memorial of sundry events incidental to myself, I have undertaken to describe a small portion, in order that some traces thereof may be preserved on the records of time.

On Thursday, then, the eighth of the latter month of Jummaudy, of the year of the Hidjera one thousand and fourteen,* at the metropolis of Agrah, and in the forenoon of the day, being then arrived at the age of thirty-eight, I became Emperor, and under auspices the most felicitous, took my seat on the throne of my wishes. Let it not produce a smile that I should have set my heart on the delusions of this world. Am I greater than Solomon, who placed his pillow

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* Corresponding with the 10th of October, A.D. 1605. According to some authorities, the Emperor Akbar died on Wednesday the 10th of the latter Jummaudy, A.H. 1014, corresponding with the 12th of October, A.D. 1605 ; which would make the accession of Jahangueir to have preceded the death of his father by two days.

upon the winds? As at the very instant that I seated myself on the throne the sun rose from the horizon, I accepted this as the omen of victory, and as indicating a reign of unvarying prosperity. Hence I assumed the titles of Jahangueir Padshah, and Jahangueir Shah: the world-subduing emperor; the world-subduing king. I ordained that the following legend should be stamped on the coinage of the empire: "Stricken at Agrah by that Khossrou, the safeguard of the world; the sovereign splendour of the faith, Jahangueir, son of the imperial Akbar."

On this occasion I made use of the throne prepared by my father, and enriched at an expense without parallel, for the celebration of the festival of the new year, at the entrance of the sun into Aries. In the fabrication of the throne a sum not far short of ten kroures of ashrefies,* of five mithkals the ashrefy, was expended in jewels alone; a kroure being the term for an hundred laks, and a lak being one hundred thousand, independently of three hundred maunns of gold, Hindustanny measure, employed in the workmanship, each maunn of Hind being equal to ten maunns of Irák.† For the convenience of removal from place to place the throne was, moreover, so constructed, that it could be easily taken to pieces, and again put together at pleasure. The legs and body of the throne were at the same time loaded with fifty maunns of ambergris, so that wherever it might be found expedient to put it together, no further perfumes were necessary, for an assemblage of whatever magnitude.

Having thus seated myself on the throne of my expectations and wishes, I caused also the imperial crown, which my father had caused to be made after the manner of that which was worn by the great kings of Persia, to be brought before me, and then, in the presence of the whole assembled Ameirs, having placed it on my brows, as an omen auspicious to the stability and happiness of my reign, kept it there for the space of a full astronomical hour. On each of the twelve points of this crown was a single diamond of the value of one lak of ashrefies of five mithkals, the whole purchased by my father with the resources of his own government, not from any thing accruing to him by inheritance from his

* A kroure of ashrefies is synonymous with gold mohrs, which I have reason to think would be equal to fifteen kroures of rupees; and ten kroures of ashrefies would be one hundred and fifty kroures of rupees, or about one hundred and fifty millions sterling! an incredible sum. Instead therefore of ten, we shall read two kroures of ashrefies, and thirty kroures of rupees, still making thirty millions sterling. We shall here remark that *noble* would be the appropriate English version of ashrefy. Again, the Bombay maunn is estimated at about twenty-eight pounds, or a quarter of a hundred-weight; and three hundred maunns will therefore be about four tons of gold.

† Calculating the ashrefy as before, at fifteen rupees, this would make the value of each diamond £150,000 sterling, which multiplied by twelve will give the enormous sum of £1,800,000.

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his predecessors. At the point in the centre of the top part of the crown was a single pearl of four mithkals, of the value of one lak of ashrefies; and on different parts of the same were set altogether two hundred rubies of one mithkal each, and each of the value of six thousand rupees.*

For forty days and forty nights I caused the nuggaurah, or great imperial state drum, to strike up, without ceasing, the strains of joy and triumph; and for an extent of nearly fifty zereibs around my throne, the ground was spread by my directions with the most costly brocades and gold embroidered carpets. Censors of gold and silver were disposed in different directions for the purpose of burning odoriferous drugs, and nearly three thousand camphorated wax lights, three cubits in length, in branches of gold and silver perfumed with ambergris, illuminated the scene from night till morning. Numbers of blooming youths, beautiful as young Joseph in the pavilions of Egypt, clad in dresses of the most costly materials, woven in silk and gold, with zones and amulets sparkling with the lustre of the diamond, the emerald, the sapphire, and the ruby, awaited my commands, rank after rank, and in attitude most respectful. And finally, the Ameirs of the empire, from the captain of five hundred to the commander of five thousand horse, and to the number of nine individuals, covered from head to foot in gold and jewels, and shoulder to shoulder, stood round in brilliant array, also waiting for the commands of their sovereign. For forty days and forty nights did I keep open to the world these scenes of festivity and splendour, furnishing altogether an example of imperial magnificence seldom paralleled in this stage of earthly existence.

Until he had attained to the age of eight and twenty my father had had no child that survived its birth beyond one astronomical hour; and the circumstance was to him the subject of very deep concern. To obtain, therefore, the object of his wishes in this respect, many and anxious were the supplications which he addressed to the throne of Omnipotence. While he languished in this state of anxiety, one of his Ameirs, aware of his unbounded reverence for, and confidence in the influence of the class of derveishes, mentioned to him one day, that at the tomb of the venerated Moyen-ud-dein Tehousty, at Adjmeir, there resided a peir, or holy recluse, distinguished for the purity of his life and manners, in which, as he said, not only in India, but in the whole world, he was that day without his equal. In the ardour of zeal and hope, my father expressed a determination, that should Providence bestow upon him a child that might survive, he would walk all the way on foot from the metropolis of Agra to

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Adjmeir,

* Altogether, then, this superb symbol of supreme power may be valued at two millions and seventy thousand pounds sterling.

Adjmeir, a distance of not less than one hundred and forty kôss,* for the sole purpose of offering his vows at the shrine of the saint. As my father's determination sprung from the sincerity of his heart, just six months after the death of my last departed infant brother, namely, on Wednesday the seventeenth of the former month of Rebbeia, of the year of the Hidjerah 978,† the sun being in the twenty-fourth degree of *Libra*, and when seven guries of the day were passed, the Most High ushered the humble narrator of these events into this stage of existence.

Faithful to his engagement, my father, whose mansion is now on the empyrean, accompanied by several of the most distinguished Ameirs of his court, took his departure from Agrah, and proceeding on foot at the rate of five koss a day, presented himself on his arrival at Adjmeir before the shrine of Moyen-ud-dein, and having performed his devotions, hastened without further delay in quest of the derveish, through the influence of whose piety he had obtained the object of his anxious supplications. The pious recluse bore the name of Sheikh Seleim, and my father, on repairing to the place of his residence, then lodging me in his arms, intreated him to pray to God for the safety of his infant child. This however was not all: during his visit my father ventured to inquire of the derveish if he could undertake to tell him the number of the sons whom the Almighty in his providence had decreed to bestow upon him. Elated at the moment by the presence of his imperial visitor, the derveish did not hesitate to announce to my father that Providence would bless him with three sons. "Of these," cried my father, "I have cast the first-born into thy bosom."—" Blessings upon it," replied the derveish, "since thou hast committed the child to my arms, I have given him the name of Mahommed Seleim." Accepting these testimonies of attention on the part of the derveish as greatly auspicious to his hopes, my father then returned to his capital, where, for the space of fourteen years afterwards, he continued to maintain with this holy recluse an intercourse of the closest intimacy.

[In this place there appears something of an omission in the manuscript, as the imperial memorialist is made to refer rather abruptly to the village of Sikry, to which, in commemoration of the conquest of Gûjerat, he states that his father gave the name of Futtahpour—Nicopolis.]

I must however observe, continues the imperial narrator, that from my father's anointed lips, I never on any occasion heard myself called by the name of Mahommed Seleim; baba (child) being the more paternal and affectionate appellation

* The kôss is an indefinite measurement, from one and a half to two miles and upwards.

† 18th of August, A.D. 1570; this prince at his accession could therefore be no more than thirty-six.

lation by which he invariably addressed me. And, peradventure, I might have been contented to the last with the title of Sultan Seleim: but to place myself on a par with the monarchs of the Turkish empire (Roum), and considering that universal conquest is the peculiar vocation of sovereign princes, I thought it incumbent on me to assume at my accession that of Jahangueir Padshah, as the title which best suited my character: and I trust, with the aid of a gracious Providence, with length of life, and a favouring star, that I shall so acquit myself as to justify the appellation.

The very first ordinance which issued from me, on ascending the throne of my ancestors, was that which related to the chain of justice, one end of which I caused to be fastened to the battlements of the royal tower of the castle of Agrah, and the other to a stone pillar near the bed of the river Jumnah; to the end that, when at any time the dispensers of law under my authority might fail in the administration of justice, the injured party by applying his hand to the chain would find himself in the way of obtaining speedy redress. The chain was of gold, one hundred and forty guzz in length, with eighty small bells attached at different distances, and it was of the weight of sixty maunns of Hindûstaun, equal to six hundred maunns of Irák.*

I instituted twelve special regulations, to be applied by the different functionaries of the empire as rules of conduct, never to be deviated from in their respective stations.

1. I remitted altogether to my subjects three several sources of revenue, the Zekhaut, Sermohary, and Tumgha, which in the whole yielded to my father no less than sixteen hundred Hindustany maunns of gold, equal to sixteen thousand maunns of Irák.†

2. I ordained that wherever the property of God's people entrusted to my charge should be wrested from them, either by highway robbery or any other act of violence, the inhabitants of the district, as best knowing whence it proceeded, should be compelled to produce either the property or the depredator. I directed, when the district lay waste or destitute of inhabitants, that towns should be built, and the population registered, and every method resorted to that might contribute to protect the subject from injury. I charged the Jaguirdaurs, or feudatories of the empire, in such deserted places to erect mosques and substantial serrais, or stations for the accommodation of travellers, in order to render the district once more an inhabited country, and that wayfaring men might again be able to pass and repass in safety. For these purposes I provided

* About fifteen hundred-weight, reckoning the maunn at 28 lbs. or a quarter of an hundred-weight.

† About twenty-two tons and a half.

vided that where the district was immediately dependent on the crown, and the residence of a Kroury,* that officer was authorized to prosecute these works at the expense of the imperial treasury.

3. Merchants travelling through the country were not to have their bales or packages of any kind opened without their consent. But when they were perfectly willing to dispose of any article of merchandize purchasers were permitted to deal with them, without, however, offering any species of molestation.

4. When a person shall die and leave children, the individual not being in the employment of the state, no man whatever was to interfere a pin's point in his property, nor to offer the slightest molestation to the children: but when there were neither children nor direct or unquestionable heirs, the inheritance was to be applied to defray the expenses incurred for mosques and talaub, or water-tanks, so as to secure perpetual blessings on the soul of the departed.

5. No person was permitted either to make or sell either wine or any other kind of intoxicating liquor. I undertook to institute this regulation, although it is sufficiently notorious that I have myself the strongest inclination for wine, in which from the age of sixteen I have liberally indulged. And in very truth, encompassed as I was with youthful associates of congenial minds, breathing the air of a delicious climate—ranging through lofty and splendid saloons, every part of which decorated with all the graces of painting and sculpture, and the floors bespread with the richest carpets of silk and gold, would it not have been a species of folly to have rejected the aid of an exhilarating cordial—and what cordial can surpass the juice of the grape? May it not happen that theriauk, or opiates, or stimulants, have been rendered habitual to the constitution? and heaven forbid that this should deprive a man of the most generous feelings of his nature. With some acknowledged beneficial effects, it must however be confessed, that these indulgences to excess must expose a man's infirmities, prostrate his constitutional vigour, and awaken false desires, such being the most injurious properties belonging to the list of stimulants.† At the same time, we cannot but remember that kelourica is brother's son to theriauk.

For myself, I cannot but acknowledge that such was the excess to which I had carried my indulgence, that my usual daily allowance extended to twenty, and sometimes to more than twenty cups, each cup containing half a seir (about
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* This was an office instituted by Akbar, and the functionary was so called because he had the collection of a krouy, or one hundred lak, of *daums*, of which latter there were forty to the rupee.

† The passage included in this paragraph has been so carelessly copied in the Persian manuscript, that we have had the greatest difficulty in making out the sense.

six ounces), and eight cups being equal to a maunn of Irák.* So far, indeed, was this baneful propensity carried, that if I were but an hour without my beverage, my hands began to shake and I was unable to sit at rest. Convinced by these symptoms, that if the habit gained upon me in this proportion my situation must soon become one of the utmost peril, I felt it full time to devise some expedient to abate the evil: and in six months I accordingly succeeded in reducing my quantity gradually from twenty to five cups a day. At entertainments I continued, however, to indulge in a cup or two more: and on most occasions I made it a rule never to commence my indulgence until about two hours before the close of the day. But now that the affairs of the empire demand my utmost vigilance and attention, my potations do not commence until after the hour of evening prayer, my quantity never exceeding five cups on any occasion; neither would more than that quantity suit the state of my stomach. Once a day I take my regular meal, and once a day seems quite sufficient to assuage my appetite for wine; but as drink seems not less necessary than meat for the sustenance of man, it appears very difficult, if not impossible, for me to discontinue altogether the use of wine. Nevertheless, I bear in mind, and I trust in heaven that, like my grandfather Hodayun, who succeeded in divesting himself of the habit before he attained to the age of forty-five, I also may be supported in my resolution, some time or other to abandon the pernicious practice altogether. “In a point wherein God has pronounced his sure displeasure, let the creature exert himself ever so little towards amendment, and it may prove, in no small degree, the means of eternal salvation.”

6. No person was permitted to take up his abode obtrusively in the dwelling of any subject of my realm. On the contrary, when individuals serving in the armies of the state came to any town, and could without compulsion secure an abode by rent, it were commendable; otherwise they were to pitch their tents without the place, and prepare habitations for themselves. For what grievance could be more irksome to the subject than to see a perfect stranger obtrude into the bosom of his family, and take possession most probably of the most convenient part of his dwelling, leaving to his women and children, peradventure, not space enough to stretch out an arm!

7. No person was to suffer, for any offence, the loss of a *nose* or *ear*. If the crime were theft, the offender was to be scourged with thorns, or deterred from further transgression by an attestation on the Korân.†

8. The Krouries and Jaguirdaurs were prohibited from possessing themselves
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* About three pounds.

† The same defect in the manuscript already complained of, compels us here, as well as in several other places, to rely upon conjecture.

by violence of the lands of the subject, or from cultivating them on their own account; neither was the Jagirdaur or feudatory of any district to exercise any sort of authority beyond the limits of his own, nor to force either man or beast from another district into his own. On the contrary, his attention was to be wholly and exclusively devoted to the cultivation and improvement of the district allotted to himself.

9. [This article is perfectly unintelligible in the manuscript, but seems directed to impose some restraint on the improper use of theriauk or antidotes of any kind, or possibly prescribing the rule by which they shall be administered.]

10. The governors in all the principal cities were directed to establish infirmaries or hospitals, with competent medical aid for the relief of the sick, who were to be conveyed thither; the expense to be defrayed from the imperial exchequer until the final recovery of the patient, who was then to be discharged with a sufficient sum of money for his exigencies.

11. During the month of my birth, which was that of the former Rebbeia, the use of all animal food was prohibited both in town and country; and at equidistant periods throughout the year a day was set apart, on which all slaughtering of animals was strictly forbidden. In every week also, on Thursday, that being the day of my accession, and Sunday, was forbidden the use of animal food, it being considered unjustifiable to deprive any animal of life on that day on which the creation of the world was finished. For a period of more than eleven years was the same abstinence observed by my father, during which on no consideration would he permit himself to taste of animal food on a Sunday. On that day, therefore, I thought it right to prohibit the use of such food in every place throughout my dominions.

12. I issued a decree confirming the dignitaries and feudatories of my father's government in all that they had enjoyed while he was living; and where I found sufficient merit, I conferred an advance of rank in various gradations. Thus a commander of ten horse I advanced to the command of fifteen, and so on in proportion to the highest dignitaries of the realm.

On this point I cannot restrain myself from invoking the judgment of heaven upon those unworthy servants who had not the understanding to appreciate the value of the benefits thus liberally bestowed upon them. Such, I am compelled to observe, is the perverseness of human nature, that there were among them individuals who could not be brought, without the greatest reluctance, to yield to me the ordinary marks of homage and allegiance.* With men thus turbu-

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* Kornesh and tessleim. These remarks refer to the adherents of his eldest son Khossrau, of whom hereafter.

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lently disposed, we ought not, I say, to negotiate on any terms, because their views invariably tend towards convulsions on the state, and their increasing prayers are for dissention and civil broil, as offering the only means of advancing their own base and sordid plans of ambition, *forgetting that they are themselves the very description of men to be first swept away by the storm.*

So just was the observation ascribed to Shah Tahmasp of Persia, now in Paradise, that I cannot forbear to introduce it in this place. Having just finished a tank or reservoir near one of his palaces, it occurred to him to ask his courtiers what they thought the best substance with which to fill it, independently of water. One of them gave his opinion in favour of gold. "Thou hast well said," replied the monarch, "for thy prevailing propensity is avarice." Another said he should like to see it brimful of sherbet, sugar, and rose-water, intermingled with pieces of ice. "Apparently," observed the king, "thou art an opium-eater, and hast very correctly indicated thine appetite." Others described one thing, and others different sorts of things, according to their several ideas : but Shah Tahmasp concluded by a declaration, that neither of these opinions coincided with the sentiments of his own mind ; for that, in his judgment, the reservoir could not be better filled than with the blood of turbulent and disaffected men, the agents of tumult and commotion.* And most truly, do I say, was it spoken ; for since the death of my father, I have had abundant experience that the number of loyal and faithful men is deplorably small, and, if indeed at all to be met with, not more than one in a hundred thousand.

Of Shah Abbas, while I was yet prince royal, I remember hearing it related, that his attachment to Ferhaád Khaun, one of his ministers, was so powerful, that once, when the minister lay sick of his wounds, his sovereign, during his frequent visits in the morning, was accustomed with his own tongue to lick the wounds ; and he had been raised by his master to the very highest dignities in the Persian empire. Yet after all, was the monarch compelled to take off the head of the man so singularly cherished. I cannot entertain a doubt but that the Shah had too many reasons in justification : for long have I been convinced, that to tie up the hand against punishing the ingratitude of the traitor, is of all follies the most egregious. And yet, when thoroughly tried, the good and faithful servant cannot be too highly and liberally cherished. It cannot, however, be too often repeated, that the wretch who traffics for an advance of stipend at the moment his services are required, needs no further trial. He can be no other than a disloyal profligate.

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* If the word in the manuscript be *keliktchee*, it would signify agents of commotion.

To the individual stipendiaries of the government I assigned, at the same time, an increased allowance, in the proportion of fifteen to ten (that is, to him that had only ten, I assigned fifteen rupees), and to novices in trade, artisans possibly employed in the different arsenals, from ten to twelve in the aggregate. I augmented the allowance to the inmates of my father's harram, consisting of nearly seven thousand individuals, from two to four ashrefies of five methkals a day each respectively,* and independently of the royal presents which I conveyed to them on the usual annual festivals and days of rejoicing. During the reign of my father, the ministers of religion and students in law and literature, to the number of two and three thousand, in the principal cities of the empire, were already allowed pensions from the state; and to these, in conformity with the regulations established by my father, I directed Meiran Sudder Jahzan, one of the noblest among the Seyeds of Herât, to allot a subsistence corresponding with their situation; and this not only to the subjects of my own realms, but to foreigners—to natives of Persia, Roum, Bokhára, and Azerbaijan, with strict charge that this class of men should not be permitted either want or inconvenience in any shape: "Wealth is from God—all power is from him—and these are his servants:"—and since it hath pleased him, from among so many hundred thousand laks of the human race, to chuse me for the monarch of a mighty empire, of which the reins have thus been placed in my hands, I could not be justified in permitting distress to lay hold of those devoted to his service, or in neglecting to make myself acquainted with all their wants, and to adopt them as the objects of my peculiar care. For how fearful my responsibility on the great and awful day of account, were my conduct to be the reverse of what is here stated.

In the next place I decreed a general pardon and enlargement of prisoners throughout the empire, so that from the fortress of Gualiar alone there were set at liberty not less than seven thousand individuals, some of whom had been in confinement for forty years. Of the number discharged altogether on this occasion, some conception may be formed when it is mentioned, that within the limits of Hindustan there are not less than two thousand four hundred fortresses of name and competent strength, exclusively of those in the kingdom of Bengal, which surpass all reckoning: for Rajah Maun Sing had not less than two hundred and eighty sons, all of whom, at one time or another, were in rebellion

* Calculating the ashrefy at fifteen rupees, this would make a daily expenditure, on this head alone, of £42,000, or £1,260,000 a month, and £15,120,000 per annum: a sum rather beyond credibility.