

HISTORY

OF

I N D I A.

BOOK VI.

KINGS OF DELHI, TO THE ACCESSION OF THE
 HOUSE OF TEIMUR, A. D. 1006 TO 1526.

CHAPTER I.

SLAVE KINGS.

Kutb u dīn Aibak.

FROM the death of Shaháb u dīn, India became an independent kingdom; and after the disturbance occasioned by the dissolution of his empire had subsided, it ceased to have any connection with the countries beyond the Indus.

The life of Kutb u dīn, the founder of this new monarchy, affords a specimen of the history of the Túrki slaves, who rose to sovereignty throughout Asia, and who for a long time furnished a succession of rulers to India.

He was brought to Níshapúr in his infancy, and

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Independence of India.

Progress of a Túrki slave.

purchased by a wealthy person, who had him instructed in Persian and Arabic. On his death, Kutb was sold to a merchant, who presented him to Shaháb u dín. He soon acquired his master's favour, and was in command of a body of horse, when, in some border warfare with the Kharizmians, he was taken prisoner on an occasion in which his gallantry had been conspicuous. Being afterwards recaptured, he was received with an increase of favour; and by his subsequent good conduct stood so high in his sovereign's estimation, that, after the defeat of the rája of Ajmír, he was left in charge of all the new conquests.

His master's subsequent successes were greatly promoted, as has been shown, by Kutb u dín's ability in his new station; and in process of time the conduct of affairs in Hindostan was almost entirely confided to his discretion. A natural manliness of character inherent in the Túrks gave to newly raised officers of that nation an estimation among the other great men which seldom falls to the lot of the creatures of princes; and Kutb u dín, instead of being an object of jealousy, seems to have been generally beloved for the frankness and generosity of his disposition.

Besides the friendships formed with the great, he strengthened himself by family connections with persons circumstanced like himself. He married the daughter of Eldóz; he gave his sister in marriage to Násir u dín Kubácha; and he afterwards bestowed his daughter on Altamsh, another rising slave, who afterwards succeeded to his throne.

Násir u dín from the first acknowledged his superiority, and held Sind of him, under the supremacy of Mahmúd of Ghór ; but Eldóz, with whom ambition had more force than family ties, affected to treat India as if it were still a dependency of Ghazni, set out with an army to enforce his claim, and almost immediately gained possession of Láhór. He was soon after driven out by Kutb u dín, who followed up his success by the capture of Ghazni. After being some time in possession, he was expelled in his turn by Eldóz, and spent the rest of his life in the government of his own dominions, where he left a permanent reputation as a just and virtuous ruler. He had only been four years on the throne, but his administration had been known for the twenty years that he officiated as the representative of Shaháb u dín.

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A. D. 1205,
A. H. 603.

A. D. 1210,
A. H. 607.

A'ráam.

A'ráam, his son, succeeded him. He showed no capacity, and was dethroned within a twelvemonth by his brother-in-law, Altamsh.

Shams u dín Altamsh.

It is related of Altamsh, probably after his elevation, that he was of a noble family, but was sold, like Joseph, by his envious brothers. Sultán Shaháb u dín, unwilling to pay the price demanded for him, allowed Kutb u dín as a favour to purchase him for 50,000 pieces of silver. He passed through different stations, and was governor of Behár at the

A. D. 1211,
A. H. 707.

time of his revolt. He was invited to the throne by a party ; but a numerous body of Túrki chiefs were opposed to him, and he did not gain possession without a battle.

Eldóz, in his assumed superiority, gave him investiture unasked ; but being soon after driven out of Ghazni by the king of Khárizm, he made an attempt to establish himself in India. He penetrated to Tanésar, and had even made a party in Altamsh's court, when he was defeated, was taken prisoner, and ended his days in confinement.

A. D. 1215,
 A. H. 612.

Altamsh next marched against his wife's uncle, Násir u dín Kubácha, who had asserted his independence in Sind ; but, although he displayed great activity and personal gallantry, he did not succeed in establishing his sovereignty.*

A. D. 1217,
 A. H. 614.

At this time it seemed far from improbable that the Khárizmians would pursue their conquests into India, and Násir u dín had already been engaged with bodies of their troops which had approached the Indus.

Conquests
 of the Mo-
 guls under
 Chengíz
 Khán.

But all these alarms were suspended by an event which changed the whole face of Asia. Chengíz Khán, originally a petty chief among the Moguls, having subdued the three nations of Tartary, and swelled his bands with their united hordes, burst on the Mahometan kingdoms with an army that never was equalled in numbers either before or since.

* Ferishta, in his *History of Sind*, vol. iv. p. 414., makes only one expedition ; in his *General History*, vol. i. p. 208., he makes *two* ; but in the second there is a confusion regarding the Khiljis which throws the whole into doubt.

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This irruption of the Moguls was the greatest calamity that has fallen on mankind since the deluge. They had no religion to teach, and no seeds of improvement to sow, nor did they offer an alternative of conversion or tribute; their only object was to slaughter and destroy; and the only trace they left was in the devastation of every country which they visited. The storm first fell on the Sultan of Khárizm, who had drawn it on himself by the murder of Chengíz's ambassadors. His armies were defeated, his cities demolished, his country laid waste, and a great part of his subjects either massacred or reduced to slavery. He himself died of a broken heart, in an inaccessible retreat on an island in the Caspian, and his son and successor, Jelál u dín, was driven into the eastern extremity of his dominions.

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This prince defended his country gallantly to the last. He gained a victory near Candahár, and another still further to the east; but these successes did not even retard his ruin. His last battle was on the Indus, where, after displaying the most obstinate valour, and witnessing the total destruction of his army, he swam the river with seven followers amidst a shower of arrows from his enemies, whom he left in admiration of his intrepidity.*

A. D. 1221,
A. H. 618.

In the course of the night and next day he was joined by 120 of his soldiers; and, before many days were passed, he had assembled 4000 horse.

King of
Khárizm
pursued
into India.

* De Guignes, vol. iii. pp. 58, 59. D'Herbelot. Ferishta, vol. iv. p. 415.

The Moguls threatening to cross the Indus, he fled towards Delhi, and applied to Altamsh for assistance, or at least for an asylum. Altamsh sent a courteous answer, but was too prudent to draw on himself the resentment of the Moguls; and Jelál u dín, left to his own resources, formed an alliance with the Gakkars, drew together an army by means of plunder, and at length attacked Násir u dín Kubácha, and forced him to take refuge in Multán. After this he kept no measures with any one: he ravaged the country on the Indus; invaded and conquered Sind; and would, perhaps, have maintained himself in the possession of it, if some hopes in Persia had not induced him to pass into Kirmán.

Returns to
 Persia.
 A. D. 1223,
 A. H. 620.

Finding the Mogul armies withdrawn from Persia, he again established his power in that country, opposed them with vigour in a new invasion, and was killed at last in Mesopotamia, ten years after his passage of the Indus.*

During his abode in Sind, Ferishta relates that a Mogul army† came in pursuit of him, laid siege to Multán, and, being repelled by Násir u dín, continued their march to Sind, which Jelál u dín had quitted. They conducted themselves with their usual barbarity throughout; and finding provisions scarce in their camp before they departed, they put to death 10,000 Indian prisoners, when

* D'Herbelot, art. "Gelaleddin."

† Ferishta says, under Chaghatái Khán in person, but probably a detachment.

they would have been equally relieved by setting them free.

After he was delivered from this succession of enemies, Násir u dín was again invaded by Altamsh, who, this time, was more successful than before. Násir u dín was constrained to retreat to Bakkar; and on attempting, afterwards, to continue his course to Sind, he was drowned, with all his family, in a sudden squall on the Indus, and the whole of the territory subject to him submitted to the victor.

A. D. 1225,
A. H. 622.

The country to the south of Tatta seems to have maintained its independence from the time of Mohammed Cásim to that under discussion. It may, perhaps, have acknowledged the superiority of some of the intermediate dynasties during the interval, but the internal government was never out of the hands of the Súmera Rájputs.

In the same year with this expedition to Sind, Altamsh marched against Bakhtiár Khilji, who looked on Behár and Bengal as his own conquest; and, though he professed obedience to Kutb u dín (to whose daughter he was married), openly disclaimed all dependence on his successor. Altamsh was successful in this undertaking; he deprived Bakhtiár of Behár (the government of which he conferred on his own son), and obliged him to hold Bengal under the crown of Delhi. Bakhtiár made a subsequent attempt to retrieve his losses, was defeated by the prince who governed Behár, and lost his life in the conflict.

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A. D. 1226,
 A. H. 623,
 to
 A. D. 1232,
 A. H. 630.

Altamsh was now occupied for upwards of six years in reducing the part of Hindostan which had remained independent. He began by taking Rintambór, which, though so much in the line of former conquests, had been protected by its mountainous situation. He next took Mándu, a town of great extent and natural strength in Málwa; Gwáliór, which had revolted, was next recovered; Bilsa was likewise taken; and the occupation of the ancient capital Ujén, with the destruction of its celebrated temple, completed the conquest of Málwa.

State of
Hindostan.

All Hindostan, except some insulated portions, now acknowledged the government of Delhi; but the obedience of the different portions was in different degrees, from entire subjection to very imperfect dependence: and in this state, with various fluctuations, it remained till the end of the Mogul empire. In a succession of strong reigns, the subject country would greatly exceed the rest; and the princes who retained the internal government of their territories would be quite submissive and obedient in general politics: but two or three weak rulers would again throw all into confusion; new princes would start up, and the old ones would become unruly, till the next vigorous monarch had almost to begin the conquest anew.

Death of
Altamsh.
 A. D. 1236,
 A. H. 633,
 Shaban 20.

After these victories Altamsh returned to Delhi, and died in April, 1236, as he was about to set out on a journey to Multán.

During the course of his reign he received in-

vestiture from the calif of Bagdad ; the most authoritative recognition of a new government that could take place among Mussulmans.

His vizír was a man of great eminence, and had been long in one of the highest employments under the calif. The author of the “*Jámá ul Hikáyát*,” a very popular collection of historical anecdotes in Persian, resided at his court.

The beautiful column called the Kutb, or Cútab Mínár, near Delhi, was completed in the reign of Altamsh. It is in the form of a minaret, with galleries ; the shaft is fluted in a manner peculiar to itself, and ornamented with the richest effect. It is 242 feet high, although injured by an earthquake ; and is still, I believe, the highest column in the world. Near it is an unfinished mosque, which for grandeur of design and elegance of execution is equal to any thing in India. It is ascribed in an inscription to Shaháb u dín Ghóri.

Rukn u dín.

At the death of Altamsh the contest with the Hindús was at an end ; and the period which followed was occupied by a succession of plots, mutinies, and revolutions, equally destitute of present interest and permanent effects.

Rukn u dín, who succeeded his father, lavished his treasures on dancing-women, buffoons, and musicians, and left the government to his mother ; and her tyranny and cruelty soon drove all ranks

BOOK VI. into rebellion. He was deposed after a reign of seven months, and his sister Rezia was raised to the throne in his place.

Sultána Rezia.

A. D. 1236,
 A. H. 634.
 Her vir-
 tues,

“Rezia Bégum,” says Ferishta, “was endowed with every princely virtue, and those who scrutinise her actions most severely will find in her no fault but that she was a woman.”* If not distinguished for literature, she read the Koran correctly; and such was her talent for business, that Altamsh, when absent on his southern campaigns, left her in charge of his government in preference to his sons. Her conduct on the throne did not disappoint the expectations entertained of her. Of two separate factions which had concurred in dethroning her brother, one was opposed to the elevation of the Sultána. The vizír of the two last kings was at the head of the latter faction, and they were strong enough to appear before Delhi, and to defeat an army that was coming to its relief. But the queen’s arts were more effectual than her arms. She succeeded so well in sowing dissensions among her enemies, that the whole confederacy dissolved, and left the individuals composing it at her mercy. Some were put to death, and others conciliated; and in a short time quiet was perfectly restored.

The internal administration of Rezia did not fall

* Briggs’s Ferishta, vol. i. p. 217.