

**RULERS OF INDIA:
MĀDHAVA RĀO
SINDHIA, OTHERWISE
CALLED MADHOJI**

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Rulers of India: Mádhava Ráo Sindhia, Otherwise Called Madhoji by H. G. Keene & Sir William Wilson Hunter

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H. G. KEENE & SIR WILLIAM WILSON HUNTER

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Rulers of India

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MÁDHAVA RÁO SINDHIA

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RULERS OF INDIA

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Mádhava Ráo Sindhia

OTHERWISE CALLED MADHOJI

By H. G. KEENE, C.I.E., M.A.

Oxford

AT THE CLARENDON PRESS; 1891

CONTENTS

	PAGES
PREFACE	5-9
PEDIGREE OF SINDHIA	10
CHAP. I. INTRODUCTORY	11-33
II. SINDHIA AT PÁNÍPAT	34-57
III. FROM THE RESTORATION OF THE EMPEROR TO THE PEACE OF SALBÁI	58-86
IV. DELHI POLITICS UNDER THE RESTORED EMPIRE	87-103
V. SINDHIA'S FIRST ADMINISTRATION	104-131
VI. SINDHIA AND GHULÁM KÁDIR	132-144
VII. SINDHIA AND GENERAL DE BOIGNE	145-162
VIII. SINDHIA IN APOGEE	163-181
IX. LAST DAYS, DEATH, AND CHARACTER	182-203
INDEX	205-207

NOTE

The orthography of proper names follows the system adopted by the Indian Government for the *Imperial Gazetteer of India*. That system, while adhering to the popular spelling of very well-known places, such as Punjab, Lucknow, &c., employs in all other cases the vowels with the following uniform sounds:—

a, as in woman: á, as in father: í, as in notice: i, as in intrigue:
o, as in cold: u, as in bull: ú, as in sure: e, as in grey.

PREFACE

IN the following pages an attempt has been made to interest the reader in a remote and, at first sight, unattractive subject. The excuse is hinted on the title-page. The man of whom we treat was an Indian ruler of exceptional capacity in times of exceptional difficulty. Born before the sack of Delhi by Nadir Sháh he lived to the very eve of Lord Lake's occupation of the same imperial city. His life, therefore, exactly corresponds to the hour between the darkness of anarchy and the dawn of order, while his labours helped to make it pass. Himself a lover of order, he did what in him lay to clear away the worst havoc of war and rapine, and the consequent demoralisation: and to prepare the shattered fabric of society for restoration and reform. Hindustán, by which we are to understand the Northern Provinces of the Mughal Empire, had for a time been civilised and prosperous. Tavernier, writing about 1669, speaks of Sháh Jahán, then lately dead, as 'that great king during whose reign there was such a strictness in the civil government, and particularly for the security of the

highways, that there was never any occasion to put any man to death for robbery.' A hundred years later it was observed that 'The country was torn to pieces by civil wars and groaned under every species of domestic confusion. Villainy was practised in every form ; all law and religion were trodden under foot, the bonds of private friendship and connection, as well as of society and government, were broken ; and every individual, as if in the midst of a forest of wild beasts, could rely upon nothing but the strength of his own arm.' (Dow ; quoting native authority.) Such was the moral chaos that had followed the decline of the Empire ; and, if the British rule has obliterated those marks of ruin and brought back civilisation, it is in some degree to Sindhia that the subjects of that rule are indebted for the first preparatory step.

Short as is the narrative, it has been found impossible to avoid the introduction of some extraneous matter. A mere biographical memoir, even if the materials of such were forthcoming, would not convey much instruction or pleasure to the reader. The French historical doctrine of the *milieu* may have been somewhat over-indulged of late years. In Mr. Russell Lowell's *Essay on Milton* we have an amusing account of a learned Professor's biography of that poet ; in which historical pages are rarely diversified by occasional appearances of Milton : and the accomplished critic says that the reader is only reconciled when he calls to mind that this fair-haired stranger

is, in fact, the protagonist. In the drama before us the protagonist is almost identified with the scenes in which he moved and the events in which he bore an influential part. He belongs at once to the faded Court of the Mughals and to the busy camp of the Maráthás: and the whole of his career is visible in the light of such relations. A man like Sindhia has no private life; and to understand what he was we must be shown what he did.

We must therefore endeavour to realise what was the Empire at whose agony our hero assisted and to whose estate he, for a time, administered; and we must seek some samples of the anarchy from which he delivered Hindustán. At the same time, we shall have to remember that Sindhia was not, originally, a native of Hindustán; and we must study, however briefly, the nature of that strange community in Southern India which, taking up the lapsed greatness of the old kingdom of Karnáta, almost succeeded in uniting the entire Indian peninsula in a universal Hindu Empire.

To do all this requires that we should be prepared to find copious and variegated materials digested into a result which may be found undesirably narrow. A small book may be found hard to read—as it, proverbially, is to write.

Our foundations have gone wide and deep. Among the authorities to which those desirous of further information, or extended treatment, may profitably refer, may be named the undermentioned:—