

THE FALL OF THE MOGUL EMPIRE

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The fall of the Mogul Empire by Sidney J. Owen

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SIDNEY J. OWEN

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PREFACE

THIS book is not a regular history of the period over which it extends, but the substance of a course of lectures intended to trace the operation of the causes which, in the course of a century, reduced the mighty and far-famed Empire of the Great Mogul to a political shadow. Accordingly, events of minor importance, or not materially affecting the main issue, are not noticed. And others which are cognate to, and virtually repetitions of, what has been already related, are either omitted, or glanced at very summarily. And throughout an attempt has been made not to tax the memory with too many bald facts, but to bring out the salient features of the story, so as to enlist the imagination by suggesting a series of historical pictures.

A common impression is, that, as is so often the case in the East, the decline and fall of the Mogul Empire were due to the degeneracy of its Sovereigns. But it is the object of this book to show that it was irretrievably ruined in the reign of Aurungzib, a monarch of great ability, energy, and determination, but lacking in political insight, and a bigoted Mussulman.

He struck the first mortal blow by reversing Akbar's wise and generous policy of ignoring distinctions of *race* and religion, and reimposing the *jizya*, or poll-tax, on his Hindoo subjects; whereby he estranged them, and turned the noblest and most warlike of them—the Rajputs, hitherto the staunchest supporters of the throne—into deadly and persistent enemies.

And Sivaji and his followers not only vindicated their independence, but struck a second mortal blow at the integrity of the Empire.

They destroyed its military reputation. They exhausted its accumulated treasure. They spread disorder and devastation over the Dekkan and beyond it. They loosened the ties of allegiance, and led multitudes of the doubly oppressed people to join them. They asserted a claim, by way of blackmail, to a quarter of the Imperial revenue, and exacted it by planting their own chief officers, collectors, and troops in the Imperial Provinces, and levying this tribute at the point of the lance, and thus establishing an *imperium in imperio*. Thus the Empire, though not dissolved, was hopelessly debilitated. How desperate was this situation may be inferred from the fact that Aurungzib's son and successor, Bahadur Shah, in vain sought to arrest the further progress of the Mahrattas by sanctioning this masterful pretension to divided sovereignty in the Dekkan Provinces.

The effective authority of the central govern-

ment was thenceforth in abeyance. And, as usual in the East, the provincial rulers, without repudiating the technical supremacy of the Emperor, became independent, and the Mahrattas more aggressive and dominant in Hindostan as well as in the Dekkan.

Lastly, Nadir Shah, after inflicting the extremity of humiliation on the Emperor and his capital, annexed the Imperial territory west of the Indus. The dissolution of the Empire was complete. But the lack-land Sovereign retained his imposing title and pretensions, which still impressed the native mind, and were turned to practical account by Clive in the grant to the East India Company of the perpetual *Dewani* of the Bengal Provinces.

The following narrative is derived almost entirely from contemporary authorities.

For the nefarious process by which Aurungzib cleared his way to the throne I have followed Manucci, a Venetian in Dara's service, whose *Storia do Mogor* has been lately translated and edited by Mr. William Irvine.

The account of the reigns of Aurungzib and his successors, to the final settlement of Nizam-ul-Mulk in the Dekkan, has been taken from the standard history of Khafi Khan, translated by Professor Dowson, and inserted in the 7th volume of *The History of India from its own Historians*. This author served under Aurungzib in the Dekkan.

For the later history I am most indebted to Grant Duff's *History of the Mahrattas*.

But the sketch of Aliverdi Khan's career is taken from the *Seir Mutaquerin*, a contemporary work, translated by a Frenchman under the auspices of Warren Hastings. This work has also supplied information on matters outside Bengal.

The Paniput Campaign has been fully and lucidly described by Caji Pundit, a Mahratta in the service of the Nawab of Oude, who was much concerned in the negotiations preceding the battle, and was an eye-witness of it. The narrative was translated and published anonymously in the third volume of the *Asiatic Researches*.

In spelling Indian names I have endeavoured to steer an even course between uncouth archaisms and the latest fashion of unfamiliar and accentuated rendering, which perplexes and troubles the general reader. But I have not felt at liberty to alter the spelling in passages which I have quoted.

For the Index I am indebted to my daughter, Mrs. F. Boas, who kindly offered to compile it.

S. J. O.

OXFORD, *January* 1912.

CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER OF CHIEF EVENTS

- 1657.—Shah Jehan falls seriously ill.
Shuja defeated by Solaiman Shukoh.
- 1658.—Dara defeated by Aurungzib and Morad.
Shah Jehan deposed and imprisoned.
Morad arrested ; and Aurungzib becomes Emperor.
Solaiman flies to Sirinagar.
- 1659.—Aurungzib defeats Shuja.
Aurungzib defeats and puts Dara to death.
Sivaji murders Afzal Khan.
- 1660.—Shuja retires to Arakan.
Solaiman betrayed to Aurungzib.
- 1661.—Morad murdered.
- 1662.—Sivaji surprises Shaista Khan at Poona.
- 1664.—Sivaji raids Surat, assumes title of Raja, and coins money.
- 1665.—Sivaji submits, and goes to Delhi.
- 1666.—Shah Jehan dies.
Sivaji returns to Rajgurbh.
Is crowned as Raja with Mogul forms.
- 1677.—Aurungzib reimposes the *jizya*.
- 1679.—The Rajputs revolt.
Prince Akbar joins them.
- 1680.—Sivaji dies.
- 1681.—Prince Akbar joins Sambaji.
- 1682.—Sambaji raids near Burhampur.
- 1683.—Aurungzib undertakes the Dekkan war.
- 1686.—Aurungzib takes Bijapur.
- 1687.—Aurungzib takes Golconda.
- 1689.—Sambaji put to death.
- 1690.—Ram Raja becomes Regent.
- 1694.—Gingee besieged.
- 1698.—Gingee surrendered.
Santaji Ghorepuray murdered.
- 1699.—Aurungzib changes his plan of war.
- 1700.—Ram Raja dies.
- 1707.—Aurungzib dies.
Shao released, and established as Raja, at Satara.
- 1709.—Bahadur Shah marches against the Sikhs.
- 1712.—Bahadur Shah dies.
Farokhsir defeats Jahandar Shah.

x CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER OF CHIEF EVENTS

- 1713.—Husain Ali goes to the Dekkan.
1716.—Daud Khan defeated and killed.
1717.—Husain makes peace with Raja Shao.
1718.—Farokhsir deposed and put to death.
1720.—Nizam-ul-Mulk becomes strong in the Dekkan.
 Defeats the Seiads' armies.
 Husain assassinated.
 Abdullah defeated and captured.
 Baji Rao becomes Peishwa.
1722.—Nizam-ul-Mulk made Vizier.
1723.—Nizam-ul-Mulk resigns, and retires to the Dekkan.
1724.—Mubariz defeated and slain.
1729.—Nizam-ul-Mulk coerced by Baji Rao.
1731.—Baji Rao defeats and kills Trimbuk.
 Nizam-ul-Mulk and Baji Rao make peace.
1732-6.—Baji Rao's success in Malwa, etc.
1737.—Baji Rao threatens Delhi.
 Blockades, and extorts concessions from, Nizam-ul-Mulk.
1738.—Nadir Shah invades India.
1739.—His extortions and massacre at Delhi.
 Aliverdi becomes Viceroy of the Bengal Provinces.
 The Mahrattas take Bassein.
1740.—Baji Rao foiled by Nazir Jung.
 Baji Rao dies.
1742.—Balaji extorts the cession of Malwa.
 First Mahratta invasion under Bhaskir Pundit.
1743.—Aliverdi defeats and expels Rugoji from Bengal.
 Second Mahratta invasion under Rugoji.
1744.—Third Mahratta invasion under Bhaskir.
 Aliverdi murders him and his officers.
1745.—Mustapha defeated and slain.
 Fourth Mahratta invasion by Rugoji.
1748.—Mohammad Shah and Nizam-ul-Mulk die.
 Rebellion of Sirdar Khan and Shumsur Khan.
 Fifth Mahratta invasion.
 Ahmed Shah Abdali's first invasion of India.
1749.—Raja Shao dies.
1751.—Balaji entraps the Guikwar.
 Salabat Jung marches on Poona.
 Aliverdi makes peace with the Bonsla.
 Ahmed Shah's second invasion.
1754.—Ghazi-u-din deposes and blinds the Emperor Ahmed Shah.
1756.—The Abdali's third invasion.
1758.—Rugonath Rao takes Delhi and Lahore.
1759.—The Abdali's fourth invasion.
1760.—The Bhow conquers the Nizam.
 Marches to Hindostan, and takes Delhi.
1761.—The battle of Paniput.
 The Peishwa, Balaji, dies.