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Maḥmūd Gāwān.

By S. WAJAHAT HUSAIN.

EARLY LIFE AND EDUCATION.

Khāja Jahān,¹ better known in history as Khāja 'Imāduddīn Maḥmūd Gāwān², was born in A.D. 1405 at Qāwān in Gilān, a Province of Persia, where his forefathers had held the post of the Wazīr to the Princes of Gilān. One of his ancestors who appears to have been a man of extraordinary ability and uncommon bravery became the ruler of Rasht³ which territory continued in the family till the reign of Shāh Tahmāsp Ṣafavī I. (1524-1576 A.D.).

By the time Maḥmūd Gāwān attained the age of discretion his paternal uncle, Khāja Shamsuddīn, had reached the height of his fame, having been appointed minister of the king of Gilān.

¹ Bibliography: *Tārīkh Firishta*, Bombay lithographed edition of 1832; 'Alī bin 'Azizullāh, *Burhān-i-Ma'āthir* and translation by J. S. King, *History of Bahmanī Dynasty*, London, 1900; E. Denison Ross, *An Arabic History of Gujārāt*, London, 1910; *Sirat al-Maḥmūd*, Hyderabad Deccan, 1314; Muḥammad Zahiruddīn, *Maḥmūd Gāwān*, Maktaba Ibrāhīmīya, Hyderabad Deccan; Sayyid 'Alī Bilgrāmī, *Tārīkh Dakhān*, Part I, pp. 206-218; T. W. Haig, *Encyclopædia of Islām*, number 39, p. 135; Hammer, *Wiener Jahrbücher*, Vol. 62, *Anzeigebblatt*, pp. 16 and 17; *Vienna Cat.* Vol. I, pp. 237-240; Anquetil, *Zendavasta*, p. dxxxi; *the St. Petersburg Cat.*, p. 416; *Krafft's Cat.*, p. 26; Rieu, *Cat. Persian MSS. British Museum*, Vol. II, p. 528, Vol. III, p. 983; Hammer, *Redekünste Persiens*, p. 412; *Hājī Khalīfa*, Vol. V, p. 138; Ethé, *India Office, Cat.* No. 2042; Ethé, *Neupersische Litteratur*, p. 339; *Bodleian Cat.* No. 1348; Brigg's Translation of *Firishta*, Vol. II, pp. 448-511; and *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XXVIII, 1899, pp. 133-135, and 282-292.

² The word 'Gāwān' has called for different interpretations. In *Firishta*, Vol. I, page 695, it is explained as:—Being one day in the King's company sitting on a terrace of the Palace a cow (gāo) happened to low underneath, when one of the assembly jocosely remarked 'The learned Minister will tell your Majesty what the cow says'. On which Khāja Maḥmūd observed 'She says I am one of her species and should not keep company with an ass'. The correct and more cogent interpretation, however, seems to be that as he was born in village Qāwān, situated in the small principality of Gilān, the word Qāwān, was affixed to his name, and this was changed into Gāwān in course of time.

³ Mustawfī is one of the earliest authorities to describe Rasht, now the capital of Gilān, but none of the Arab geographers appear to have known this name. He remarks on its warm damp climate, cotton and silk being both largely produced for export, and further that the place in his time even was of some size and importance. To the westward of Rasht extends, at the present day, the district of Tulim, and Mustawfī records it as the name of an important town in the 8th (13th) century. According to Abū'l Fidā it was the chief city of the Gilān or low lands; its districts were very fertile; corn, cotton, rice, oranges, shaddockes and lemons being grown for export. Le-Strange, *The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate*, pp. 174 and 175.

Maḥmūd Gāwān gave sufficient promise of his extraordinary abilities early in his boyhood and was accordingly allowed by his uncle to help him materially in performing his administrative duties. Unlike boys of his age he interested himself not only in the scholarly pursuit of knowledge, but also studied the minutest details of administration. Not being worried by the anxieties of life, he, under the fostering influence of his uncle, developed his faculties to a remarkable degree. He could not long enjoy his easy and carefree life, for Khāja Shamsuddīn left Gilān a few years later and chose Hijāz as his place of residence. Shamsuddīn's son Khāja Muḥammad, who stepped into the shoes of his father, lacked his abilities, and as a result in the absence of that cementing influence of his father, feuds and factions broke out in the country. Hāji Muḥammad Qandahāri usurped the position of commander-in-chief, and Shaikh 'Alī became Prime Minister. Though they were indebted in many respects to the family of Khāja Muḥammad, they by their intrigues, made it impossible for the simple easy-going Khāja Muḥammad to carry on his work. He consequently left home and repaired to his father, Hāji Shamsuddīn, at Mecca. Thus left alone and unfriended Maḥmūd Gāwān found Gilān too hot for him, and giving up all idea of becoming a State official he took to trade with a sigh of immense relief. This enabled him to travel in different countries. It is stated that the kings of 'Irāq and Khorāsān successively offered him the position of Prime Minister, but his free nature could not be induced to yield to such allurements and he flatly refused these offers.

TRAVELS AND TRADING.

It is not definitely known which countries Maḥmūd Gāwān actually visited in connection with trade; history is lamentably reticent on the matter. This interesting chapter of his life is, therefore, shrouded in complete mystery, but it is generally believed that like all other great merchants he visited almost all the famous cities of his time. As a result of his visits to different places in quest of trade he amassed in a short time immense wealth and gradually rose to be a merchant prince. Unlike the general body of traders, however, he used to meet famous men in the places he visited, and exchanged views with the object of imbibing what was best in others. It was therefore, the prevailing view that trade in his case was only a cloak for his latent object of meeting great men and acquiring knowledge and experience from their society. When he was 43 years old he resolved to travel to India, and this ultimately opened a new chapter in his life.

India at that time was very famous for her wealth. The advent of Gāwān to India on a mission of trade was not peculiar, but it is believed that one of the prime objects

underlying his visit was to meet Shāh Muḥibbullāh Kirmānī¹ who was staying then at Bīdar. Whatever might have been his object he sailed from the Persian Gulf and landing at port Dābhol² proceeded to Bīdar which was then the capital of the Bahmanī Kingdom.

ADVENT TO INDIA AND RISE TO THE POSITION OF PRIME MINISTER.

By the time Maḥmūd Gāwān set his foot in India, insecurity and disorder had begun to reign in the country. The central Government was practically a nullity, shorn of its sovereign influence it existed only in the imagination of the people, and the provincial governors taking advantage of this weakness at the centre had in most cases declared their independence. A bird's eye view of the country can be had from the following account.

The Lodīs ruled at Delhi, but their kingdom did not extend beyond western Punjab. The eastern monarchs united and hoisted their flag of independence at Jaunpūr. The small chieftains of Rājputāna, too, were not indifferent. They began to dream again of independence. The descendants of Muẓaffar became supreme in Gujrāt. In Khāndesh the Fārūqīya dynasty, and in Mālwa the Khaljī dynasty became prominent; and the Deccan was under the suzerainty of the Bahmanī kings. The Hindu kingdom of Vijayanagar extended from the Malabar coast up to the southern bank of the Krishna. The Coromandel coast was under the sway of the Rajas of Orissa, who had long dreamt of bringing the Deccan under their rule. In short India was at the time divided into many small kingdoms amongst which battles and feuds prevailed continuously.

¹ Shāh Muḥibbullāh, son of Shāh Khalilullāh, son of Shāh Ni'matullāh Walī, was much respected in the Deccan both by the court and by the public. As a descendant of the Imām Bāqir, he was revered as a great saint and worker of the miracles. His grandfather, Ni'matullāh Walī, was treated by Shāhrukh with great consideration; and the king of the Deccan, Aḥmad Shāh I Bahmanī (A.D. 1421-1435), obtained as a singular favour the sending of one of the saint's grandchildren to his court. After this saint's death two others of his grandsons Shāh Ḥabibullāh and Shāh Muḥibbullāh came to the Deccan with their father Shāh Khalilullāh, and rose to high ranks in the Bahmanī court. Shāh Muḥibullāh died about A.D. 1448. See *Firishta*, Vol. I, p. 633; and Rieu, *Cat. Persian, MSS. Br. Mus.*, Vol. II, p. 635.

² Dābhol was a famous port in the Deccan. Elliot, Vol. VIII, p. 385, writes 'When the great star of Muhammadanism appeared and the rays of that world-enlightening sun shone from the east to the west, gradually the countries of Hindustan and the Dakhin were also benefited by the light of the Muhammadan law, and intercourse of the Musalmans with that country began. Many of the kings and rulers of that country espoused the Muhammadan faith. The Rajas of the ports of Goa, Dābal, and Chand, etc. allowed all the Musalmans who came there from the different parts of Arabia to settle on the sea-shore and treated them with great honour and respect.'

Even the Bahmani kingdom itself was not immune from the disrupting influence of the time. The powerful Hindū Raja of Vijayanagar whose State lay to the south of Bidar, was always on the look out for an opportunity to pounce upon the Bahmani kingdom. On the east the Rajas of Orissa too thought of emulating their co-religionists of the south by carving out a share of the Bahmani kingdom. On the north the kings of Mālwa and Khāndesh and on the west the kings of Gujrat were ready to fall upon it. If the external relations of the Bahmani kingdom were in such chaotic state, its internal affairs were worse. There were long series of sharp conflicts between the residents and the immigrants. The former were those who had lived continuously in the country for four generations. Such residents used to treat the immigrants as strangers in the Bahmani kingdom. This tension finally resulted in the growth of two parties ready to rush to arms at the slightest provocation. This feeling of bitter acrimony was very strong in the early days of the rule of Aḥmad Shāh I Bahmanī (A.D. 1421-1435), but it was not till the reign of 'Alā'uddīn Humāyūn Shāh (A.D. 1457-1461) that this feverish excitement expressed itself in a very malignant form. The Sultān treated these so-called outsiders with so much cordiality that the resident party became exasperated and their wrath, hitherto dormant, broke out in all its fury.

Just at this critical juncture Bīdar, the Capital of the Bahmani Kings, was blessed with the arrival of Maḥmūd Gāwān. Sultān 'Alā'uddīn Aḥmad Shāh II, Bahmanī (1435-1457) was then the reigning monarch. He showed great respect to Gāwān. How Gāwān got introduced to the court and how he won the king's sympathy and smile of favour is, however, wrapped in mystery. But it is generally surmised that he came as a common merchant and the discerning eyes of the king did not fail to gauge his latent abilities and noble birth. Of his extensive knowledge and ripe scholarship the king was later fully convinced. He was badly in need of officers with wide experience and versatile abilities to help him to tide over the dire crisis that the Deccan was then passing through. Happily the king observed all these traits in Maḥmūd Gāwān, and he did not lose any time to secure his services for himself. Gāwān was not ungrateful. He deeply appreciated the king's generosity, and giving up the idea of returning home he placed his consummate knowledge of people and politics at the disposal of his sovereign.

Shortly after, another incident made Gāwān prominent in the public eye. In A.D. 1455 the king's brother-in-law, Jalāl Khān, raised the standard of rebellion and fell upon the *subah* of Telingāna. He spread a rumour that the king ('Alā'uddīn) had breathed his last and that the court had been wilfully concealing this news. He also managed very cleverly to enlist the sympathy of Maḥmūd Shāh I Khaljī, King of Mālwa (A.D. 1435-1475), whom

he persuaded to join the king of Khāndesh in making a concerted attack on Bidar. When this disquieting news reached Bidar the king summoned Gāwān forthwith and ordered him to march against Jalāl Khān. The selection of Gāwān as the leader of this expedition is a clear indication of the esteem and regard in which he was held by the king. No other man was considered fit to tackle the situation and discharge this onerous responsibility. When Gāwān got the commission he marched to Telingāna with a detachment of soldiers and took by storm the fort at Nalgonda,¹ the stronghold of Jalāl Khān. The latter fought valiantly for some time but had to acknowledge defeat in the long run. He made peace with Gāwān and presented himself before the king to tender his submission to the throne. The king pardoned him and restored him to his *Jāgīr* of Nalgonda.

Sultān 'Alā'uddin was immensely pleased with Gāwān's successful management of the state-affairs and on his death bed two years later (1457 A.D.) he admonished his son and heir Humāyūn, to repose full confidence in Gāwān. Humāyūn Shāh ascended the throne in 1457 A.D. and carried out the wishes of his father in letter and spirit. Soon after his accession he conferred upon Gāwān the title of 'Malik at-Tujjār' (king of merchants) and appointed him Governor of Bijāpur. A year after Gāwān's appointment, Sikandar Khān, son of Jalāl Khān, who was in occupation of the fort of Nalgonda, mutinied. Gāwān went to suppress him and in the battle that ensued Sikandar Khān was killed, and after a siege of seven days the fort was captured. The battle was followed by an outbreak of disturbance in Telingāna which Gāwān most ably brought under control.

Shortly after this battle Sultān Humāyūn breathed his last in 1461 A.D., and his son, Nizām Shāh a child of eight years ascended the throne. Efficient administration of the kingdom could not be expected of him. It was, therefore, entrusted to the care of his mother, Makhdūma Jahān, a lady of clear understanding and foresight, who rose to the occasion and proved her worth. She honoured Gāwān with the title of 'Wazīr-i-Kull' or Minister of all departments. She also did not fail to recognize the worth of Khāja Jahān Turk and conferred upon him the governorship of Telingāna. She made it a rule to invite these two statesmen to the court every morning so that their sound advice might contribute to the better management of the affairs of the State. It is said she had a mīaid, named Māh Bānū, who acted as messenger between her and the two ministers.

The Bahmanī kingdom in those days, as has been remarked above, excited the greed of the neighbouring principalities.

¹ Nalgonda was formerly named Nīlgiri by its Rājput rulers, but its present name (Nalgonda) was given after its conquest by Ala-ud-Dīn Bahman Shāh, *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. XVIII, p. 345.

The Raja of Orissa was the first to attack it in 1461 A.D. This naturally caused much anxiety, but Makhdūma Jahān with the help of Maḥmūd Gāwān and Khāja Jahān Turk raised a large force. Accompanied by them and Nizām Shāh she then went to encounter the Rāja, who was defeated and compelled to purchase peace on payment of a heavy indemnity.

The above invasion brought other ones in its train. Shortly after this battle Maḥmūd Shāh I Khaljī, King of Mālwa (A.D. 1435-1475), raised a large army and marched as far as Qandahār.¹ He got trenches excavated around his camp and the skill shown by him in the quartering of troops was splendid. Nizām Shāh's army encountered him at Qandahār and a terrible battle ensued. The right wing of the Bahmanī army consisting of 10,000 horse was led by Maḥmūd Gāwān. He attacked the enemy's left which after some resistance broke and fled. The left wing also becoming victorious advanced four miles in the pursuit of the retreating enemy. But the centre under the boy king, Nizām Shāh, and Khāja Jahān Turk could not withstand the attack of the troops of Mālwa, and as a result the whole Bahmanī army with Nizām Shāh had to fall back upon Bidar, the capital. Soon dissensions arose between Maḥmūd Gāwān and Khāja Jahān Turk over this unexpected reverse. Sultān Maḥmūd Shāh Khaljī on hearing of this dispute and the aversion of the Deccanese to these foreign ministers, advanced to besiege Bidar. Makhdūma Jahān foresaw the unhappy result that would follow. She therefore ordered Gāwān and Turk to retire to Firūzābād with Nizām Shāh and the royal treasure. Their retreat encouraged Maḥmūd Shāh, who after a hard struggle for seventeen days entered Bidar. But Gāwān could ill afford to court this defeat, and by diplomacy he secured the assistance of Maḥmūd Shāh I Begarha (A.D. 1458-1511) king of Gujrāt, who warmly responded and appeared with a large force to help the queen Dowager. The combined forces of the Bahmanī king and of the king of Gujrāt frightened the Mālwan king and he beat a hasty retreat giving up all idea of fighting. Bidar was thus not only recovered, but Gāwān even pursued the flying king to the border of his dominions. After this victory, Gāwān on behalf of Nizām Shāh sent a valuable present to Maḥmūd Shāh I, king of Gujrāt, and also wrote a letter acknowledging the great favour done to Nizām Shāh.

Bent on avenging the defeat sustained by him, the king of Malwa collected an army ninety thousand strong. With this force he made a determined attack on the Bahmanī kingdom in 1462 A.D. and advanced as far as Daulatābād. Now was the time to test Gāwān's nerve. Unruffled by the impending calamity he proceeded calmly and composedly. Trusting

¹ A noted place of the time. It was at a distance of sixty miles to the north of Bidar. See Elliot, Vol. VI, p. 70; and Vol. VII, p. 25.

to his previous experience he again called for the help of the king of Gujrat who marched with a strong army towards the Deccan. The Mālwan king was again defeated and forced to retreat.

Gāwān's tact and skill saved the Bahmanī kingdom twice from the most appalling catastrophe. The ignominious defeat which the king of Mālwa sustained served as a good lesson to other kings who had entertained any idea of measuring their swords with the ruler of the Bahmanī kingdom. The security which this victory ensured enabled Makhdūma Jahān to devote her attention to the internal administration of the State in which sphere also she showed consummate skill. She now arranged the marriage of Nizām Shāh and the marriage ceremony was celebrated with eclat on the 13th Dhu'l Qa'da A.H. 867 (A.D. 1263). But a tragedy was destined to turn this moment of gaiety into one of woe. On the night when the marriage took place the dreadful news spread that Nizām Shāh had breathed his last. History, however, says nothing about the peculiar nature of the king's death. No speculation can lead to a satisfactory clue to this strange incident, and the real cause of his death is still a matter of conjecture.

After the death of Nizām Shāh his younger brother Muḥammad Shāh III Bahmanī ascended the throne in 1463 A.D. at the tender age of nine. His accession did not mark any serious departure from the established policy of administration, which was as before directed by Makhdūma Jahān. She continued to manage affairs with the help of Gāwān and Turk. But Turk began to dominate gradually. He considered Gāwān as a serious obstacle in the realization of his ambition, and he began to devise means for keeping Gāwān away from the court. He employed the latter on the frontiers, so that he could interfere but little in the administration. Makhdūma Jahān did not fail to take notice of this plot. She became jealous of the unlimited power of this minister and foresaw that it would eventually prove disastrous to the kingdom. Thinking that it would be wise to nip it in the bud she instructed her son to do away with the life of Turk. Accordingly one day when Turk entered the palace the minor Sultān turned to Nizāmul-Mulk and exclaimed 'that wretch is a traitor; put him to death.' Nizāmul-Mulk dragged him from his place and beheaded him with his sabre in 1465 A.D.

After the death of Khāja Jahān Turk there was none but Gāwān in the kingdom who could successfully pilot the ship of administration. Soon after Muḥammad Shāh honoured Gāwān with royal robes and conferred upon him the title of 'Khāja Jahān', which had previously been bestowed upon Turk. He was also given the rank of 'Amīr al-Umrā' and invested with the power of dispensing justice and other important functions of the State. This made him still more famous and he had the

exclusive honour of being mentioned in the royal despatches in very high terms.

For a few years more Makhdūma Jahān kept the reins of the administration in her hands. When Muḥammad Shāh III attained majority she celebrated his marriage with great pomp and eclat. She now made over the charge of administration to him and retired from all activities. She spent the rest of her life in devotion to God and died according to *Firishta*, Vol. I, p. 353, in 877 A.H., 1472 A.D.¹

After her death Gāwān reached the pinnacle of his fame and glory. It will not be too much to say that he became the *de facto* ruler of the kingdom. His intelligence and foresight were in a large measure responsible for bringing prosperity and grandeur to the Bahmanī kingdom. He was desirous of extending the bounds of the kingdom and so he did not rest satisfied with the results so far achieved. When he found that internal peace and security had been fully established, he diverted his attention to the conquest of new territories. Accordingly he collected a large army and in 1469 A.D. proceeded to conquer Konkan.² He was successful in the campaign and this gave him an incentive to further conquest. He, therefore, marched onwards and after getting over the fatigue and hardship of the journey, he stormed the forts of Ramkana and Kehlana, the modern Vishālgarh.³ A few days after the fort at Sangisar (modern Ratnagarh) also came under his victorious arms. He next turned his attention to Goa which was then a famous port of Vijayanagar. Here he divided his army into two parts, instructing one to attack the fort along the land route and the other from the sea.⁴ The garrison failed to withstand the concerted attack and fell an easy victim in his hands. His thirst for conquest having been satisfied, he began to consolidate the new territories which occupied a period of three years. He then returned in 1471 A.D. to the capital and received an ovation befitting his victories.

On this occasion, the king condescended to honour Gāwān by residing at his house for a whole week, by conferring upon him the highest titles, and by bestowing on him a suit of his royal robes. The Queen mother gave him the appellation of

¹ According to *Burhān-i-Ma'āthir* she died in A.H. 875 (A.D. 1470), see *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XXVIII.—1899, p. 285.

² Konkan is a tract below Western Ghāt south of the Damangangā river. For further particulars, see *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. XV, p. 394 (1908).

³ Vishālgarh is a historic hill-fort—Kolhāpur State. See *Imp. Gaz. of India*, Vol. XXIV, p. 321 (1908).

⁴ There were at this time three important ports in southern India, *viz.* Goa, Machhlībandar, and Dābhol, all coming under the Bahmanī kingdom. The attack on Goa from the sea side was made with 120 War ships which shows that the Bahmanīs had a considerable sea force. See *Firishta*, Vol. I, p. 350.

' Brother '. His chief slave, Khush Qadam, was at his recommendation promoted to high rank with the title of Kishwar Khān and the forts of Goa, Poondwa, Kundwāl, and Kolhapūr¹ were granted to him as a Jāgīr.

ADMINISTRATIVE SKILL.

Maḥmūd Gāwān was not only a brave soldier, but was also an exceptionally capable administrator. To restore perfect order in the kingdom he devised very effective measures indicating his foresight and statesmanship.

In 1358 A.D. when Sultān 'Alā'uddin Hasan Gāngū Bahmanī died the kingdom consisted only of the Māhārāshtra² territory, the district of Raichūr, Mudkal, and Carnatic, and a part of the province of Telingāna. As soon as Sultān Maḥammad Shāh I (A.D. 1358-1375), son of Sultān 'Alā'uddin, ascended the throne, he divided the Bahmanī kingdom into four provinces and placed each of them under the supervision of a Tarafdār or Governor. His distribution of the provinces were (1) Gulbarga, (2) Daulatābad, (3) Telingāna, and (4) Berār. But during the reigns of the subsequent kings the kingdom had extended so far and wide that its affairs became more complex and difficult, specially in view of the inclusion of Vijayanagar, Konkan and a considerable part of Orissa. In spite of this prolific expansion the distribution of the kingdom for purposes of administration remained the same, and the kings allowed the system to continue undisturbed. This resulted in the accumulation of immense power by the Tarafdārs, and the sovereign found it very difficult to keep them under proper control. Gāwān considered this state of affairs very unsatisfactory and redistributed it into the following eight provinces: (1) Bijāpūr consisting of Raichūr, Mudkal, and a few districts; (2) Hasnabād (including the districts of Gulbarga, Naldarka, and Sholāpūr); (3) Daulatābad; (4) Junnār (including Konkan, Goa, and Belgaon); (5) Rājmahendri; (6) Warangal; (7) Gāwīl; and (8) Māhūr.

Besides this judicious redistribution of provinces Gāwān selected in every province a few villages exclusively for the king's expenses. This afforded the latter a great opportunity of having a direct connection with the people and their country, besides the information he used to obtain through the official channel. Indirectly, too, he kept a close watch upon the movement of the Tarafdārs.

But Gāwān's foresight and judgment did not rest satisfied with the above safeguards. He struck upon another plan to

¹ For Kolhapūr see *Imp. Gaz.*, Vol. XV, p. 380.

² Māhārāshtra is the name given to the country in which Marāṭhi language is spoken, and more specially to the Deccan in its most restricted sense. See *Imp. Gaz.*, Vol. XVI, p. 435.

make the administration more centralized and to keep the Tarafdārs in strict surveillance by the central authority. The custom hitherto was that the Tarafdārs used to appoint their respective officers in the forts. The latter would naturally therefore remain subservient to the former and served as their pliant tools. Whenever the Tarafdārs were overtaken with a desire to mutiny and rebel, they would find in these officers of the forts a perennial source of aid and assistance. The continuance of this state of affairs having appeared to Gāwān ultimately subversive of the kingdom, he transferred the authority to appoint such officers into the hands of the Central Government, while allowing them to remain subordinate to the Tarafdārs as before. This curtailed the powers of the Tarafdārs and served as a check upon their desire for rising in rebellion, as the slightest hint of any conspiracy on their part would at once come to the notice of the king, who could take prompt and effective action against them. Besides, these subordinate officers were now paid directly by the king, and thereby the last vestige of the power of the Tarafdārs was crippled.

MILITARY SKILL.

With administrative skill Maḥmūd Gāwān combined the abilities of a good general. He practically demonstrated the saying 'Necessity is the mother of invention'. He could not possibly have realized that the capacities of a veteran general lay hidden in him, but dire necessity and exigency of the time (because the Bahamanī kingdom had to fight a long series of battles with the neighbouring kingdoms to keep up its existence) roused into activity those high qualities of a great soldier in him which might otherwise have remained dormant and unknown.

During the reign of Sultān 'Alā'uddīn Ḥasan Gāngū one would find two grades of commanders, *viz.* commander of five hundred, and commander of one thousand. The former used to get annually one lakh of '*hūns*'¹ and the latter two lakhs. These amounts were either paid in cash or in kind, *i.e.* a *jāgīr* in lieu of cash. The soldiers were not usually paid in cash directly by the State. But the commanders while raising an army of five hundred or one thousand, as the case may be, would, as they pleased generally, fix up an amount as their pay. That is to say, the amount or grade of pay was not regulated by the State but by the commanders themselves. There was no system again of counting soldiers, *i.e.* their numerical strength could not be readily and definitely ascertained. This resulted in the

¹ *Hūn* is a gold coin. For full description see Smith, *Cat. of the Coins in the Indian Museum*, Vol. I, p. 310, and Hobson-Jobson, London, 1903, p. 425. Some time the word is spelt *hoon*, and *hon*. The word is said to be derived from Canarese *honnu* (gold).

evil that the commanders made their budget according to their discretion, without keeping the requisite number of soldiers they actually budgeted for. In order that a portion of the budgeted amount might be available for their personal use they deliberately raised a small number of soldiers. This unfair and inequitable arrangement led to a great deal of discontent in the army. Gāwān soon grappled with this evil system. He retained the two grades of commanders, but subjected their continuance to a number of strict rules. At first he kept a clear account of the actual strength of the army, and a particular sum was fixed as the pay of the soldiers. The commanders were now compelled to make their budgets according to the actual number and could not budge an inch from the rules framed by the Government. The existing insufficient pay of the commanders, which was the main cause that drove them to take recourse to malpractices, was liberally increased. The commander of five hundred began to receive one lakh and twenty five thousand 'hūns', and the commander of one thousand two lakhs and fifty thousand.

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES.

If Gāwān was famous as a prominent soldier and statesman his achievements in the matter of diffusion of knowledge among the masses were even of a higher order. As a pioneer of education he ranks high in the estimation of the literate public. A profound scholar himself, he believed that the greatest service to humanity was one's ability to open the gates of knowledge indiscriminately to all. To achieve this object, he laid the foundation of a central institution in the capital in the year 1471 A.D. Of its perfection and durability suffice it to say that it has bravely withstood the ravages of time and retained to this day its pristine glory and greatness untarnished. But for an unfortunate incident (*vide infra*) it would have been reckoned in the Deccan as a building unsurpassed and unequalled by any of its kind.

The length of the building from east to west is 200 feet and its breadth from north to south 170 feet. Its imposing feature can be gauged from its height which is over 58 feet. Of the two minarets in front the one which still exists is no less than 190 feet in height, and it can be safely inferred that the other was also of the same height. There is a beautiful mosque in its compound and around this mosque there is a row of spacious rooms for teachers and students to live in. It is a three-storied building with the same number of rooms in the three stories. Verses from the Holy Qur'ān inscribed on the walls and minarets, though worn out in most places, are still to be found there.

In the memoirs of his travels from Kashmir to Hyderabad, Sir Richard Temple has remarked in reference to this building (Madrasah) thus: 'Of the ancient buildings of India now extant,

this building is by far the best and unparalleled'. It took two years and nine months to be completed, and it is not unlikely that several lakhs of rupees were spent on it.

Mullā Sāmi'i, a celebrated poet of the time, aptly describes it as follows :—

' Built was the Madrasah to be a centre of learning,
Its foundation : ¹ " O God, accept from us " the chronogram
bearing.'

Firishta tells us that scholars from distant countries were comfortably housed here and provided with food and raiment gratis. Maḥmūd Gāwān went so far as to make *Waqf* of several villages for its upkeep. The Madrasah had attached to it a library which was equipped with a large number of books on different subjects.

Having thus secured its external grandeur and stability Maḥmūd Gāwān set about to develop its internal perfection. With the permission of the Sultān he invited the illustrious scholar and poet, Maulānā Jāmī² and other learned men of the time, of whom Maulānā Muḥammad Jalāluddīn³ Davvānī deserves special mention. His prime object in trying to secure their invaluable services was that the Madrasah might flourish under the fostering influence of their erudition. But it is to be regretted that this lofty aim of Gāwān was not realized, as the aforesaid scholars pleaded inability to accept his invitation on the score of old age, troublesome journey, and other inconveniences of a similar nature. Had Gāwān succeeded in the attempt the literary history of the Deccan would have been different. Foreign scholars having failed him, Gāwān chose Shaikh Ibrāhīm Multānī,⁴ who had fortunately been staying at Bīdar at the time, as the head of the Institution. That the latter was the most learned man of his time is amply borne out by the fact that some Bahmanī kings considered it a great honour if they could become his disciples. In consideration of his

¹ The words recording the date are رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا (A.H. 876=

A.D. 1471).

² Jāmī, whose full name is Nūruddīn 'Abd ar-Raḥmān, was born in the district of Jām in the province of Hirāt, 1414 A.D. He is usually described as the last of the classical poets of Persia, and is the author of many works. He died in 1492 A.D., vide *Dawlat Shāh* (ed. Browne), p. 483.

³ Davvānī's full name is Jalāluddīn Muḥammad bin As'ad aṣ-Ṣiddīq ad-Davvānī. He was born in 1427 A.D. at Davvān, in the district of Kāzarūn where his father was a Qādī. He lived in Shīrāz as Qādī of Fars and as a Professor of the Madrasat al-Aitām. He is the author of many books and died in 1501 or 1502 A.D., vide *Hidayat Husain, Cat. of Buhār Library*, Vol. II, p. 111.

⁴ He is the author of a work called *Ma'ārif al-'Ulūm*.

attainments and piety he was afterwards made the chief Qāḍī of the kingdom. Besides him there were other scholars of equal celebrity working in Gāwān's college. During the reign of Emperor 'Ālamgīr (1659-1707 A.D.) a portion of the building was damaged by a thunderbolt spoiling its beauty considerably. The damage caused was all the more serious for the following reason. Jalāluddīn Khān, who was commander of the fort at Bidar, had some gunpowder kept in a room of the Madrasah, evidently not with any sinister motive, and the thunderbolt resulted in its explosion, causing much loss of life and heavy damage to the building. This tragic incident took place in 1696 A.D.

AS AN AUTHOR AND POET.

In the midst of his multifarious duties he found time to devote to literary pursuits in which field his contributions are not of a mean order.

Gāwān has left two books in prose, named '*Manāẓir al-Inshā*' and '*Riyāḍ al-Inshā*', which clearly testify to his intense thirst for knowledge. The book '*Manāẓir al-Inshā*', is a treatise on the art of literary composition. It is divided into an introduction (muqaddimah), two books (Maqāmah), and a Khātimah, as follows: Muqaddimah: On the nature and object of the science of Inshā', i.e., the art of literary composition, and on the figures of speech, in eight chapters. Maqāmah I. On the different kinds of composition in verse and prose, and on the rules to be observed in the selection of words in writing. Maqāmah II. On the various styles of epistolary composition, and on its rules. Khātimah. On orthography.

'*Riyāḍ al-Inshā*' the other book of Gāwān is in fact a collection of letters he wrote from time to time to his friends and relatives. These letters are not arranged according to any obvious plan. Among the persons to whom they were addressed, and whose names are found in the headings, the most notable are the following: 'Abd ar-Raḥmān Jāmī, three letters; Sulṭān Abū Sa'īd Gūrgān; Sulṭān Muḥammad b. Murād of Turkey; Sulṭān 'Alā'uddīn of Gilān, four letters; Sharafuddīn 'Alī Yazdī; Maḥmūd Shāh, of Gujrat, three letters written in the name of Muḥammad Shāh Bahmanī; Shaikh Dā'ūd, envoy of Maḥmūd Khaljī; Jalāluddīn Davvānī; Maulānā Khalīlullāh. The collection includes a *Qaṣīdah* in praise of Muḥammad Shāh Bahmanī, another in praise of Humāyūn Shāh, and several letters addressed to the author's relatives, viz., to his brother in Gilān, to his son Uluḡh Khān, to another son, Khāja 'Abdullāh (on landing at Dābhol on his journey to India) and to a third son, Malik at-Tujjār. The purity of the style deserves special attention. The different verses impregnated with diverse lessons from the Qur'ān, Ḥadīth, and other kindred sources.

impel one to offer spontaneous praise, and Mullā Jāmi was therefore right in his eulogy of Gāwān.

Gāwān was equally well versed in poetry. Abul Qāsim Firishta mentions a *Diwan* of which he is the author. Most of the couplets of the *Diwan* were heard in different places of the Deccan. Sad it is that these verses are now lost. But the author of 'Ḥadā'iq as-Salāṭin' has cited a few of them from which an estimate of his poetical skill can be made. These verses speak of Gāwān's eminence as a poet. He used to follow the beaten tracks of great poets. Two of his poems are on the model of Khāja Kamāluddīn Isfahānī¹ and Ḥakīm Anwarī's² verses. An Arabic poem is also found in the style of Badī' az-Zamān Hamdānī.³

Besides these, his verses reveal his ripe experience. He indulged very little in exaggerations, but his poems were enlivened by a simplicity of style and pungent morality. Verbosity and flagrant circumlocution were not to his taste.

DOMESTIC LIFE.

Maḥmūd Gāwān was a man of sufistic bent of mind and this is fully corroborated by his poems. He was a lover of simplicity; pride and arrogance were foreign to him. He used to take a great interest in all works of public welfare. It is said that he would generally frequent in disguise the nooks and corners of the town on Friday nights, bestowing coins freely to the needy and the penniless, and would solicit benediction for the stability and permanency of the Bahmanī kingdom. The following incident described by Firishta gives a clear indication of his liberality, love for simplicity and sufistic turn of mind. 'On Maḥammad Shāh's leaving the house of the minister, Maḥmūd Gāwān, retiring to his chamber, disrobed himself of his splendid dress, threw himself on the ground and wept plentifully; after which he came out, put on the habit of a Dervish, and calling together all the most deserving holy and

¹ Kamāluddīn was the son of a great poet, Jamāluddīn Muḥammad b. 'Abd ar-Razzāq Isfahānī, who died in 1192 A.D. He was like his father a panegyrist of a noble Šā'id family of Ruknuddīn Šā'id B. Mas'ūd, the Šadr of Isfahān. He perished according to Daulatshāh in a general slaughter of the inhabitants of Isfahān by the Mongul army under Oktāi Qā'ān in 1237 A.D. (See *Rieu*, Vol. II, page 581).

² Aḥaduddīn Anwarī born in Mahanah in the district of Dasht Khāvarān. In early life he applied himself to the pursuit of science in the madrasah Maṣūriyah of Tūs, but later took up the more lucrative profession of court poet and became a great favourite of Sultān Sanjar to whom most of his Qaṣīdas are addressed. He died in 1191 A.D. (See *Rieu*, Vol. II, page 554).

³ Badī' az-Zamān Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusain al-Hamdānī is the first who composed Maqāmāt; subsequent writers imitated him. He died when 40 years old in 1007 A.D. See Brockelmann—*Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur*, Vol. I, page 93.

learned men, and Sayyids of Ahamadabād Bīdar, distributed among them most of his money, jewels, and other wealth, reserving only his elephants, horses, and library; saying, "Praise be to God, I have escaped temptation, and am now free from danger."

'Mullā Shamsuddīn asked him why he had given away everything but his library, his elephants, and horses? He replied, "When the king honoured me with a visit, and the Queen mother called me brother, my evil passions began to prevail against my reason; and the struggle between vice and virtue was so great in my mind, that I became distressed even in the presence of his Majesty, who kindly enquired the cause of my concern. I was obliged to feign illness in excuse for my conduct, on which the king, advising me to take some repose, returned to his palace." "I have, therefore," said the minister, "parted with wealth, the cause of this temptation to evil." His library, he said, he had retained for the use of students, and his elephants and horses he regarded as the king's, lent to him only for a season. After this day, the minister always wore plain apparel; and when at leisure from state affairs, retired to his own mosque and college, where he spent his time in the society of the learned and persons eminent for piety and virtue.'

His office as minister of the kingdom did not in any way interfere with his natural aptitude for trade which he continued regularly even then. The expenses of his family were practically borne out of the income of his trade. One of his peculiar habits was to spend his leisure hours in the Madrasah where he could avail himself of the company of the learned. Frequently these people partook of his unbound hospitality with which he was ever ready to patronize learning and learned men.

Gāwān had three children, the eldest of whom was named 'Alī. He was the most capable of his sons and his ability won for him the title of 'Malik at-Tujjār' or Merchant Prince. It is also known that he was once sent to encounter the king of Vijayanagar in battle. The second son was named 'Abdullāh. He accepted an appointment under the king of Gilān which was not approved by his father—the reason being that he was somewhat ease-loving and this habit of his would receive free indulgence there. Maḥmūd Gāwān wrote several letters to Sulṭān 'Alā'uddīn, king of Gilān, and other nobles of Gilān requesting that they should very kindly endeavour to bring his son to the path of simplicity and rectitude. These facts are amply corroborated by his letters collected in *Riḡād al-Inshā'*. His third and youngest son was Ulugh Khān. It is clear from his letters that he took special pains for the education and upbringing of this son.

Gāwān was very fond of gardening. His mind, ever eager for fresh novelties and changes, wrought mighty deeds towards the exposition of the science of gardening. His interest for it

can be well imagined from the fact that he eagerly took to the cultivation of saffron which he introduced for the first time in Bidar where the soil was happily well suited for its cultivation.

An incident of Maḥmūd Gāwān's life is very interesting and deserves special mention. Once Sultān Ḥusain Mirzā, the ruler of Herāt, sent his adviser Maulana Sayyid Kāẓim to Gāwān instructing him to enquire why Gāwān was living in voluntary exile from home, and that he (Gāwān) could go to his kingdom if he would like, and that he (Ḥusain Mirzā) would most gladly appoint him as his minister. Besides, Ḥusain Mirzā also agreed to grant him the Jāgīr of his (Gāwān's) native place. Maḥmūd Gāwān brought this fact to the notice of Sultān Muḥammad Shāh whose anxiety lest Gāwān should leave him, knew no bounds. He therefore told Gāwān plainly that in the event of his leaving him the wheels of administration would be clogged forthwith. So he requested Gāwān to banish the idea altogether from his mind, and to consider the Bahmanī kingdom as his native place. Gāwān was really moved by this appeal of the king, and sent back Sayyid Kāẓim disappointed in his mission.

THE END.

Having reviewed the glorious triumphs and golden deeds of Maḥmūd Gāwān at length, the story would be incomplete if the incidents relating to his death are ignored. These events give, in fact, true reflections of his mighty mind. The greatness of a man can more palpably be realized at the time of his death because then he appears in his true colours. It is then alone that the scales of time can truly weigh his actions, both good and bad.

Since the occasion of his death was extraordinarily peculiar it is meet that the diverse reasons thereof should be fully ascertained. It is easy to speak roughly that his death was due to his having incurred the displeasure of the king. But it requires a thorough review of history to appreciate the true causes of this displeasure.

In an autocracy, if a man, besides the king, happens to acquire great power, eminence and esteem with the court, his life becomes unsafe; the reason being that the nobility begin to look upon him with jealousy and suspicion and consider his greatness detrimental to their prosperity. History is replete with instances where a man who helped to make one a king was eventually beheaded by the latter as a reward for his labours. Notwithstanding Gāwān's selfless efforts and unbounded influence he met with a similar fate. After the overthrow of Khāja Jahān Turk and the natural death of Queen mother Makhdūma Jahān there was not a single person left in the kingdom, who could stand against Gāwān. This state of affairs, fraught with serious consequences, appeared most disquieting to the nobles.

The enmity of the nobles was due to other reasons as well. The reforms brought in the machinery of administration and also in the army contributing to the welfare of the State, dealt an effective blow to the influence of the nobles who hitherto had exercised a great deal of influence in all affairs of the kingdom. These, therefore, embittered the nobles sorely who now began to intrigue secretly to put an end to his life.

Besides the nobles, the courtiers too could not brook the eminence of Gāwān who was considered an alien to the kingdom. The long prevalence of strained feelings between the residents and the aliens lent special support to this attitude of the courtiers. So when the star of his prosperity was in the meridian these diverse factors, *viz.*, jealousy of the nobles, and enmity of the courtiers, all combined to hasten Gāwān's ruin. But he was a man of sterling foresight and quick decision. He could easily foresee that an unpleasant reaction to his prosperity, culminating in his impending death, was fast approaching. He therefore rightly said to some of his most intimate friends that he would have to pay for the high honour of Khāja Jahān which had been conferred on him one day. In support of this statement he recounted the fate of Khāja Muẓaffar 'Alī Ustarābādī¹ and Khāja Jahān Turk, both of whom were honoured with that title, but were later beheaded on different pleas. Had Gāwān proceeded with scrupulous caution and care from the outset, there would have been a different story of his end. But he was a rigidly upright man and did not allow these forebodings to prey upon his mind. Kindness and compassion for others were ingrained in his nature. He could never think of the king's estrangement of feeling towards him, and threw all his resources of head and heart for the welfare of the kingdom with a supreme indifference to his personal gains. History records the detailed incidents of his death, which may be narrated briefly as follows :—

Malik Hasan Nizāmul Mulk Bahrī was an old acquaintance of Gāwān. He was, before the reforms were introduced by the latter, the Subadār of Telingāna. But as a consequence of the reforms, when Telingāna was divided into two parts, Nizāmul Mulk remained Subadār in only one part with Rājmahendri as his capital, while the other part was placed under the Subadārship of one Aẓam Khān with Warangal as the capital. This was greatly resented by Nizāmul Mulk who, however remained silent at the time. But Gāwān, a veteran judge of men, did not allow this attitude of Nizāmul Mulk to escape his attention, and began to devise means to cripple his power beyond all possibility of danger. He did not consider it safe to let Nizāmul Mulk's son, then an accomplished youngman, remain with his father. With the approval of the king, Gāwān conferred upon the youth

¹ He was given the title 'Khāja Jahān' by Sultān 'Alā'uddin Aḥmad Shāh II (1435–57 A.D.).

the Mansābdarship of 300 and granted him the Jāgīr in Māhūr under Khudāwand Khān Habashī. This filled Nizāmūl Mulk with greater resentment who henceforth remained on the look out for an opportunity to crush Gāwān. He also was a great noble and the king's favour had fallen upon him. Now, finding an opportunity to promote his malicious design, he opened his mind one day to the king with these words, 'My humble request is this that your Majesty may be pleased to place my son, Malik Aḥmad, under me and grant him some Jāgīr at Telingāna'. The king thereupon recalled his son to the camp, promoted him to the rank of the commander of one thousand, and permitted him to proceed as his father's deputy to Rājmahendri. This opportunity led to the growth of his hatred for Gāwān, which in course of time ripened into deep, cut-throat enmity.

Nizāmūl Mulk Bahri was, as would appear from the above, a man of very intriguing nature. He held secret consultations with Zariful Mulk Deccanī and Miftāḥ Habashī. These people had already won over the junior officers of the king and now began to poison his (king's) mind against Gāwān, by magnifying the latter's defects out of all proportion. But so long as Gāwān's well wisher, Yūsūf 'Ādil Khān, was present in the court, these dreadful fictitious stories failed to produce their desired effect. But when the king sent him on an expedition to Vijayanagar there was none left in the court to befriend Gāwān and the blackmailers found an opportunity to carry out their malicious design. They hit upon a novel plan which was as follows: Zariful Mulk Deccanī and Miftāḥ Habashī made themselves intimate with an Abyssinian slave of Gāwān who was the minister's confidential Secretary and Sealkeeper. One day these people invited the slave to dinner where lavish provision for drink was made. He was encouraged in drinking so much that after a few bouts he practically lost all senses. Then they placed a piece of white paper before him, saying most glibly, 'This is an appeal of one of our dear friends. Almost all the courtiers have put their seals on it. Now it would have been very good if Maḥmūd Gāwān's seal also were impressed on it.' The servant, who was then drunk mad, put the seal of Gāwān on it readily without even opening the paper. The unfortunate fellow did not know it was a warrant of death of his master. Wine was responsible for this heinous act. Zariful Mulk and Miftāḥ Habashī were very pleased to find that the arrow had most effectively been shot, and forthwith went to Nizāmūl Mulk Bahri to inform him of their complete success. After much deliberation the three inscribed the following in that paper, purported to be addressed to the Roy of Orissa by Gāwān the minister.

'We are sorely oppressed by drunkenness and ill treatment of Muḥammad Shāh. If you now make any concerted attack, victory is certain. My unbounded influence and command in

the Bahmanī kingdom will be entirely at your disposal. I can also assure you of the assistance of the nobles and the commanders. There is none in Rājmondri to save it from any catastrophe. So you can safely march upon the kingdom, and after the expulsion of the king, Muḥammad Shāh, we shall divide the principalities of the Deccan equally between us.'

Having hatched this plot against Gāwān they began to watch its effect very closely. One day when Nizāmūl Mulk was present before the king, Zarīfūl Mulk Deccanī and Miftāḥ Ḥabashī produced the forged letter. The king after perusing the contents and seeing the seal of Gāwān became awfully incensed. Nizāmūl Mulk who was on the look out for an opportunity began to paint a distorted picture of the minister's alleged misdeeds. Sad it is that there was none in the kingdom who could unweave the threads of these machinations and allay the King's wrath by establishing the falsehood of such baseless charges. The intriguers were therefore able to gain their object with the king who now sent for Gāwān. Meanwhile some of his intimate friends had become aware of real facts. They hastened to warn him not to attend the court. But he was brave and upright and was not afraid of answering these charges which were absurd and entirely without foundation. He, moreover, thought that his absence from the court at this juncture would naturally convince the people of his guilt. So he was prepared to go. Now, failing to dissuade him, his friends entreated him to postpone going that day on some pretext. At this overture of his friends he recited a verse¹ and then addressed them in the following strain:—

'My hair has grown grey on account of the unsparing service I rendered to the Bahmanī kingdom. And now if these hairs are even dyed red (with blood) I shall fall unmoved. But obey I must the king's order, whatever is in store for me.'

Having uttered these remarkable words he came out of the house and left for the court. At this time some nobles advised him to escape to Gujrāt and even promised to escort him safely with a large retinue of soldiers. But Gāwān considered this a disgrace and a breach of trust. Undaunted he attended the court. As soon as the king saw him, he almost burst in rage, but with great difficulty he composed himself and said, 'Maḥmūd Gāwān! if any one is guilty of treachery with his master, what punishment does he deserve?' Gāwān was innocent, so he replied most boldly, 'Your Majesty, nothing short of death is

¹ چون شهید عشق در دنیا و عقبی سرخ رو ست
خوش دی باشد که ما را کشته زین میدان برد

'As martyr to Love becomes red-faced (glorious) in this world and the next: Happy should I be to be carried died from this field.'

his proper reward'. The king then shewed him the letter, most cunningly forged by the conspirators. Gāwān went through it, top to bottom, and uttered the following words with great equanimity, 'O God, verily this a great forgery'. He further added, 'I have doubtless fallen in the estimation of your Majesty. But I must still say I am not the author of this letter.' But these words fell flat. The king who was reported to be madly drunk, beckoned Jauhar, an Abyssinian slave, to kill him. The Khāja said, 'The death of an old man like me is, indeed, of little moment, but to your Majesty it will be the destruction of your empire and the ruin of your character'. The king without attending to him forthwith proceeded to the *haram* (women's apartments). Gāwān realized that the end of his life was imminent. Brave and pious as he was, he sat down on his knees and uttered, 'There is no one fit to be worshipped but God, and Muḥammad is His Prophet'. As soon as he finished these words Jauhar severed his head from the body. It is said that with the following words on his lips Gāwān breathed his last. 'Praise be to God that He has blessed me with Martyrdom.'

This heart-rending tragedy occurred on the 5th of April, 1481. Maḥmūd Gāwān was then 76 years of age, and had just completed a poem in praise of the king, Muḥammad Shāh.

Gāwān's statesmanship and unselfish devotion had raised the Bahamani kingdom to its highest glory, and his death was the main cause of the fall of the Dynasty which he had served so faithfully. Soon after the kingdom was torn into small portions and the king had to pay for the blood of Gāwān with his kingdom. The *Imād Shāhs* of Berar, the *Nizām Shāhs* of Aḥmadnagar, the *Barīd Shāhs* of Bīdar, the *Ādil Shāhs* of Bijāpur, and the *Quṭb Shāhs* of Golkonda divided the kingdom of the Bahmanids amongst them.

After Gāwān's death the king ordered his entire property to be confiscated. He had heard reports of the vast wealth of the minister, and now sent for the treasurer, Nizāmuddīn Ḥasan Gilānī, and demanded where the money, jewels, and plates of the Khāja were deposited. The treasurer in apparent alarm told the king that if he would spare his life he would discover all. The king expecting a great booty, assured him of a handsome reward if he concealed nothing. The treasurer then said, 'O Sire, my master had two treasuries, one of which he called the King's, from which were issued the expenses of his troops, stables, and household: in this there are now ten thousand *larees*¹ and three thousand *hūns*; the other he called the treasury of the poor, and in this there is a sealed bag containing three hundred *larees*'. The king said, 'How comes it that the Khāja whose revenues

¹ A silver coin worth two shillings.

equalled that of many kings, should only have so small a sum?' The treasurer said, 'Whenever money came from his *jāgīr*, having taken for the king's treasury the pay of his troops and stables, he gave the remainder, in your Majesty's name, to the poor, not reserving a *cowrie*¹ for his own use. A sum of forty thousand *larees* which he brought with him from Persia to the Deccan, he employed in trade, and preserving always that capital, he expended twelve *larees* daily for his own kitchen and apparel out of the profit, the remainder of which was carried into the treasury for the poor, and issued from thence in sums remitted to his mother, his relatives, and worthy persons with whom he had made acquaintance in his travels, and who would not come to Hindustan.'

The enemies of the minister were confounded at this account; but enviously remarked, that the Khāja was a prudent man and suspecting his expenses might betray his riches had left them hidden somewhere in the capital. To which the treasurer replied, that if one *laree* belonging to him should be found there, or anywhere, besides the sums he had mentioned, he would submit to the severest punishment. The king then assembled all the late minister's servants, and first questioned the Chief Farrāsh,² who said, that all the tents and carpets his master had were now in the camp, except some matting on the floors of his mosque and college; he observed that the Khāja always slept himself upon a bare mat. The Overseer of the kitchen was then called, who declared that all the utensils and vessels were with him, but that the victuals for his master's own eating were always prepared in earthen pots. The Librarian lastly stood forth, and acknowledged that there were in the library three thousand volumes, but all designed for the students of the college. The king then became melancholy; and the treasurer took courage to say, 'O King, may many thousands such as Maḥmūd Gāwān be a sacrifice for thy safety; but why didst thou not regard the claims of that minister, and ascertain who was the bearer of the letter to the Roy of Orissa, that his treason might appear manifest to us, and to all mankind?' Muḥammad Shāh was struck with the observation, and awaking as if from a trance of stupefaction called to the accusers of the unfortunate minister to bring the bearer of the letter before him. None could be produced; and the real truth now flashed on the king's mind: he trembled with horror at his own act, and retired into his *haram* (women's apartments) full of remorse and sorrow at his rash credulity, and for the unjust sentence passed against his faithful servant and friend.

But this bitter repentance of the king was too late. Under his orders however, the body of the deceased was sent off in

¹ A small shell thirty of which make a penny.

² The controller of the camp equipage.

melancholy pomp from the camp to Ahamadābād Bīdar where in a small suburban village, called Gournali, it was interred with great honour.

Gāwān was by persuasion a rigid Sunnī. The sincerity of his loyalty to the Bahmanī Dynasty has already been vindicated. The fame of his liberality spread all over Asia, there being scarcely a town or city the learned men of which had not derived advantage from his bounty. His behaviour was affable to all, and his justice unimpeachable. Gāwān is dead, no doubt, but his name will remain ever green in the annals of the world.

بنا کردند خوش رسمی بخون و خاک غلظیدن

خدا رحمت کند این کشتگان پاک طینت را



