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SUSIL GUPTA (India) LIMITED

SHIVAJI AND THE RISE OF THE MAHRATTAS

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED STUDY SIMLA

SIVAJI AND THE RISE OF THE MAHRATTAS

Sivaji

SIVAJI
AND
THE RISE OF THE MAHRATTAS

BY
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With Maps and Illustrations

SUSIL GUPTA (INDIA) LTD
CALCUTTA-12

First Published ...1953

Published by S. Gupta for Susil Gupta (India) Ltd., 35, Central Aveunue, Calcutta-12 and forms No. 1 to 5 printed by H. Augustin at Thacker's Press & Directories Ltd., 6, Bentink Street, Calcutta and the forms 6 to 10 printed by M. K. Mukerjee at Temple Press, 2, Nayaratna Lane, Calcutta-4.

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

This volume comprises a selection of speeches and papers which originally appeared in Sir Richard Temple's "Oriental Experience," Mahadev Govindram Ranade's "The Miscellaneous Writings," G. S. Sardesai's "The Main Currents of Maratha History," James Douglas's "A Book of Bombay" and the "United Services Club Magazine."

Sir R. Temple's "The Mahratta Nationality" first appeared in the *Encyclopædia Britanica,* 1883, "Birthplace and Cradle of Mahratta Power" is the reprint of a speech which was delivered before the Royal Geographical Society, London, February 1882, and "Personal Traits of Mahratta Brahman Princes" was a paper read before the Royal Historical Society, June 1883.

Ranade's Paper "Introduction to the Peshwa's Diaries" was read before the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society in June 1900. "Shavaji's Conception of A Hindu Empire" was originally the third of a course of Patna University Readership Lectures delivered in 1926. "Shivaji—A Great Captain" is reprinted from "A Book of Bombay," Bombay, 1883. The concluding essay from the pen of Major R. M. Betham was contributed to the "United Services Club Magazine."

The speeches and papers have all been revised and, in some cases, slightly abridged. The spelling of names as used by different authors has been retained.

CHAPTER I

THE MAHRATTA NATIONALITY

THE Mahrattas inhabit that portion of India which is known by the ancient name of Maharashtra (Sanskrit for the great kingdom or region). This large tract, extending from the Arabian Sea on the west to the Satpura mountains in the north, comprises a good part of western and central India, including the modern provinces of the Konkan, Khandesh, Berar, part of Nagpur, and about half the Deccan. Its area amounts to about 120,000 square miles, and its population to about twelve millions of souls,* or 100 to the square mile. The population has increased greatly in the nineteenth century; but there had been much decrease during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries owing to war and devastation. Frightful depopulation occurred from the famine which was at its height in 1400 A.D. Much mortality was also caused by famine between 1801 and 1803. There was probably a period of high prosperity during the first centuries of the Christian era, under a number of petty indigenous sovereigns, among whom these wide territories had become parcelled out before the first invasion of the Deccan by the Moslems about 1100.

The etymology of the word Mahratta (or Marhatta, as it is written in the vernacular) is uncertain. The name does not indicate a social caste, or a religious sect; it is not even tribal. It embraces the people of all races who dwell in the region of Maharashtra, both high-caste and low-caste Hindus; it is applied, of course, to Hindus only. Thus there are Mahratta Brahmans, next Mahratta Kumbis or cultivators, and Mahratta Rajputs or warriors, though the latter have but a small infusion of real Rajput blood. The Mahrattas, then, are essentially Hindus in religion and in caste ordinances, not differing in these respects from the Hindus in other parts of India. They have a language of their own, called the Mahratti, a dialect of the Sanskrit, and this Mahratti is a copious, flexible, and sonorous tongue.

But the Mahrattas have always formed a separate nation or people, and still regard themselves as such.

* The population figure for the year 1883.

In general terms the Mahrattas, as above defined, may be described under two main heads, first the Brahmans, and secondly the humble men. The Mahratta Brahmans possess, in an intense degree, the qualities of the famous Brahman caste, physical, intellectual, and moral. They have generally the lofty brow, the regular features, the spare upright figure, the calm aspect, the commanding gait, which might be expected in a race maintained in great purity yet upon a broad basis. In modern times they have proved themselves the most able and ambitious of all the Brahmans. They are notably divided into two sections—the Konkanast, coming from the Konkan or littoral tract of the west coast below the West Ghat mountains, and the Deshast, coming from the upland or Deccan, on the east of the mountains. Though there have been many distinguished Deshasts, yet the most remarkable of all have been Konkanasts. For instance, the peshwas, or heads of the Mahratta confederation which at one time dominated nearly all India, were Konkanast Brahmans. The birthplaces of these persons are still known, and to this day there are sequestered villages, nestling near the western base of the Ghats, which are pointed to as being the ancestral homes of men who two centuries ago had political control over India.

The ordinary Mahrattas, who form the backbone of the nation, have plain features, an uncouth manner, a clownish aspect, short stature, a small but wiry frame. Their eyes, however, are bright and piercing, and under excitement will gleam with passion. Though not powerful physically as compared with the northern races of the Panjab and Oudh, they have much activity and an unsurpassed endurance. Born and bred in or near the Western Ghat mountains and the numerous tributary ranges, they have all the qualities of mountaineers. Among their native hills they have at all times evinced desperate courage. Away from the hills they do not display remarkable valour, except under the discipline which may be supplied by other races. For such organisation they have never, of themselves, shown any aptitude. As husbandmen they are not remarkable; but as graziers, as cartmen, as labourers, they are excellent. As artisans they have seldom signalised themselves, save as armourers and clothweavers.

Those Mahrattas who dwell in the extreme west of Maharashtra, within the main range of the Western Ghats, and in the extreme north of Maharashtra near the Satpura mountains, are blessed with unfailing rainfall and regular seasons. But those who dwell at a distance from these main ranges, or among

the lower or subsidiary ranges, are troubled with variable moisture and uncertain seasons, frequently, too, with alternations of drought and of flood. Periodically they are afflicted by scarcity, and sometimes by severe famine. They have within the last half century largely extended their area of cultivation. Their industry, which is chiefly agricultural, has grown apace. Their tendency is undoubtedly to increase in numbers; and, despite occasional depopulation from disasters of season, they have increased considerably on the whole. But in some districts, owing to the famine in 1877, and the sickness which ensued when excessive rainfall followed the drought, the population is at present stationary, while in others it has actually retrograded because epidemics and plagues of vermin were added to the misfortunes of season.

Among all the Mahrattas the land is usually held on the tenure, technically known as "ryotwari." It practically means peasant proprietorship. The proprietor, or ryot, is a cultivator also. His holding may be on the average twenty or thirty acres, divided into small fields. Of these fields he cultivates some, himself working at the plough, and his family weeding and cleaning the soil. He will also hire labour, and thus the farm-labourers become a considerable class. He pays to the Government direct the land tax, which is assessed on his holding for the long term of thirty years, so that he may have the benefit of his improvements. His property in the land is absolute; it descends according to the Hindu law of inheritance; it can be sold or otherwise transferred by private arrangement; it is pledged or mortgaged for debt, and money is largely borrowed on its security. It is liable to sale for default in regard to land revenue; and the Government as a creditor has the first claim. Thus, as a peasant proprietary, the Mahrattas are in the best possible position. Their only fault is a disposition to live beyond their humble means.

In the Konkan there are some superior proprietors termed Khotes. With this and perhaps some other exceptions, notably that of Nagpur, there are not in the Mahratta country many large landlords, nor many of the superior tenure-holders whose position relatively to that of the peasantry has caused much discussion in other parts of India. There are indeed many Mahratta chiefs still resident in the country, members of the aristocracy, which formerly enjoyed much more wealth and power than at present. They are sometimes in the position of landlords, but often they are the assignees of the land revenue,

which they are entitled under special grants to collect for themselves instead of for Government, paying merely a small sum to Government by way of quit-rent. Under them the cultivators are placed in the position of peasant proprietors. The village community has always existed as the social unit in the Mahratta territories, though with less cohesion among its members than in the village communities of Hindustan and the Panjab. The ancient offices pertaining to the village, as those of the headman (*patel*), and of the village accountant, are in working order throughout the Mahratta country.

The Mahratta peasantry possess manly fortitude under suffering and misfortune. Though patient and good-tempered in the main, they have a latent warmth of temper, and if oppressed beyond a certain endurable limit they would fiercely turn and rend their tormentors. Cruelty also is an element in their character. As a rule they are orderly and law-abiding, but traditions of plunder have been handed down to them from early times, and many of them retain the predatory instincts of their forefathers. The neighbourhood of dense forests, steep hill-sides, and fastnesses hard of access, offers extraordinary facilities to plunderers for screening themselves and their booty. Thus gang-robbery is apt to break out, gains head with rapidity, and is suppressed with difficulty. In time of peace it is kept under, but during war, or whenever the bands of civil order are loosened, it becomes a cause of anxiety and a source of danger. The women have frankness and strength of character; they work hard in the fields, and as a rule evince domestic virtue. Conjugal infidelity, however, is not unknown among them, and here, as elsewhere in India, leads to bloodshed.

The peasantry preserve a grave and quiet demeanour, but they have their humble ideas of gaiety, and hold their gatherings on occasions of births or marriages. They frequently beguile their toil with carols. They like the gossiping and bartering at the rural markets and in the larger fairs, which are sometimes held in strikingly picturesque localities. They are utterly superstitious, and will worship with hearty veneration any being or thing whose destructive agency they fear. They are sincerely devout in religion. There are two principal sects among the modern Hindus—those who follow Vishnu and those who follow Siva. The Mahrattas generally follow Siva and his wife. The Mahratta war-cry, "*Har Har Mahadeo*," which used to be heard above the din of battle urging the soldiers to onset with victorious *elan*, referred to Siva. All classes, high and low, are fond of

the religious festivals, the principal of which, the "*Dasscrah*," occurs in October, when the first harvest of the year has been secured and the second crop sown. This has always been held with the utmost pomp and magnificence at every centre of Mahratta wealth and power. The people frequently assemble in bowers and harbours constructed of leafy boughs to hear "*kathas*" recited. These recitations are partly religious, partly also romantic and quasi-historical. After the hearing of them, national resolves of just resistance or of aggressive ambition have often been formed.

Apart from the Mahratta Brahmans, as already mentioned, the Mahratta nobles and princes are not generally fine-looking men. Their appearance, notwithstanding jewellery and rich apparel, is still that of peasants. There certainly are some exceptions, but there is general truth in what was once said by a high authority to the effect that, while there will be something dignified in the humblest Rajput, there will be something mean in the highest Mahratta. Bluff good-nature, a certain jocoseness, a humour pungent and ready, though somewhat coarse, a hot or even violent disposition, are characteristics of Mahratta chieftains. They usually show little aptitude for business or for sedentary pursuits; but, on the other hand, they are born equestrians and sportsmen. As a rule they are not moderate in living, and are not unfrequently addicted to intemperance. They have generally sprung from a lowly origin, and they have been proud of this fact even after attaining greatness. For instance, three Mahratta chiefs, each of whom established a large kingdom—Sindhia, Holkar, and the Gaekwar—declared the lowliness of their birth. Holkar was the descendant of a shepherd; Sindhia boasted of having begun life by keeping his master's slippers; and by his very title, the Gaekwar perpetuates the memory of his progenitor having tended the cow (*gae*). Mahratta ladies and princesses have often taken a prominent part in public affairs and in dynastic intrigues; in some instances their conduct has been of the highest type, in others their influence has been exerted for evil.

Though they have produced some poetry, the Mahrattas have never done much for Oriental literature. Nor have they been distinguished in industrial art. Their architecture in wood, however, was excellent; and the teak-forests of their country afforded the finest timber for building and for carving. They had also much skill in the construction of works for the supply of drinking-water on a large scale, and for irrigation.

The admirable "History of the Mahrattas," by Grant Duff (1826), may possibly awaken enthusiasm, as written under personal advantages and with a living knowledge which will never again be possessed by a historian of the later Mahratta times. At all events, a strange interest gathers itself around the Mahratta history.

In the first place the Mahratta country is for the most part strategically important as well as highly picturesque. Some parts of the Deccan are indeed almost irretrievably ugly. The stretches of low hill have long been disforested, and even laid bare of lesser vegetation, and the campaign tracts are treeless as far as the eye can reach. Still much of the Mahratta country lies in the bosom or near the skirts of the Ghat. The geological formations may be popularly described as consisting of trap, basalt, and indurated lava in magnificent layers. The black precipices, scarped for thousands of feet, and striped with marks of the layers, are superb. The summits, though generally flat with horizontal outlines, are often broken into towers and cones. The vapours from the Arabian Sea are propelled by the south-west monsoon against these mountain-tops, and produce an excessive rainfall. Hence arise a luxuriant vegetation, and the spectacle (at certain seasons) of numerous cascades tumbling down the perpendicular flanks of the mountains. The forests have suffered during ages from wasteful cutting; but of late years a system of conservancy has been established, and many great forests remain.

The mountains stand in the midst of a fertile and populous country; on both sides of them are rich valleys, cultivated plains, numerous villages, and large towns. Thus insurgents or warriors had here a complete military base, with sources whence supplies could be drawn, and strongholds for organising power or for securing refuge. This hill country has been regarded by strategists as one of the strongest, in a military sense, to be found in India. It extends over nearly 500 miles from north to south, and has at least 20 fortresses, which in uncivilised warfare were virtually impregnable if resolutely defended, and which, though of course unable to resist a scientific attack in these times, would yet prove difficult of approach. Several of these are surrounded with historic traditions. In former times there was no road worthy of the name across these mountains. No means of passage existed save steep rugged pathways for footmen and pack animals. Within the last generation the Government has, in Oriental phrase, lifted up the veil of these mountains, piercing them with well-made roads and with railways.

It is the range of the Western Ghats which enabled the Mahrattas to rise against their Muhammadan conquerors, to reassert their Hindu nationality against the whole power of the Moghul empire, and to establish in its place an empire of their own. It is often held that in India British conquest or annexation succeeded Muhammadan rule; and to a considerable extent this was the case. But, on the other hand, the principal power, the widest sovereignty, which the British overthrew in India, was that of the Mahrattas.

During the earlier Moslem invasions in 1100 A.D. and in subsequent years, the Mahrattas do not seem to have made much resistance. They submitted to several Muhammadan kings under the changing circumstances of those times. They were despised by their conquerors, and were called "mountain rats" in derision. It was against the Muhammadan king of Bijapur in the Deccan that Sivaji, the hero of Mahratta history, first rebelled in 1657. Sivaji and his fighting officers were Mahrattas of humble caste, but his ministers were Mahratta Brahmans. When the Moghul empire absorbed that kingdom he defied the emperor. He imparted a self-reliant enthusiasm to his countrymen, formed them into an army, and organised them as a political community. His mountaineer infantry, though limited in numbers, proved desperately courageous; his cavalry was daring and ubiquitous. Having once overcome the Hindus in almost all parts of India, often after heroic resistance, the Moslems had not for centuries met with any noteworthy uprising. Sivaji, however, planned their expulsion, and before the end of his restless life made much progress in the execution of that design. The new Mahratta state which he founded was maintained under various vicissitudes after his death. Still Mahratta resistance, once aroused by him, was never extinguished, and the imperial resources were worn out by ceaseless though vain efforts to quell it. The great Moghul emperor's impoverished and enfeebled successor was fain to recognise the Mahratta state by a formal instrument. The Mahratta king, a descendant of Sivaji, was a *roi faineant*, and the arrangement was negotiated by his Brahman minister, whose official designation was the peshwa. The office of peshwa then became hereditary in the minister's family, and grew in importance as the Mahratta kingdom rose, while the king sank into the condition of a puppet. Thus the Mahratta power was consolidated throughout nearly the whole of Maharashtra under the Brahman peshwa as virtual sovereign, with his capital at Poona, while the titular Mahratta raja or king had his court at

the neighbouring city of Sattara. Despite his political insignificance, however, the raja was still venerated as the descendant of Sivaji.

Then several chiefs carved out principalities of their own from among the ruins of the Moghul empire. Thus Raghuji Bhonsla established himself in the tracts lying underneath the southern base of the Satpura range (namely Nagpur and Berar), overran Orissa, and entered Bengal. Dammaji Gaekwar descended from the Western Ghats upon the alluvial plains of Gujerat around Baroda. Takaji Holkar subdued the uplands of Malwa beyond the Vindhya range on the north bank of the Nerbadda. Madhaji Sindhia obtained possession of large tracts immediately south of Agra and Delhi, marched into Hindustan, and became virtually the master of the Moghul emperor himself. Princes of Sivaji's own family founded a dominion at Tanjore, in the rich delta of the Kaveri, south of Madras.

But these principalities, though really independent respecting internal administration, and making war or peace with their neighbours according to opportunity, yet owned allegiance to the peshwa at Poona as head of the Mahratta body. On state occasions, heads of principalities would visit Poona by way of acknowledging the superior position of the peshwa. On the other hand, the peshwa was careful to obtain the sanction of his nominal sovereign at Sattara to every important act of state. Thus a confederation was formed, of which the Brahman peshwa, or head, was at Poona, governing the adjacent territories, while the members belonging to the lower castes of Mahrattas were scattered throughout the continent of India. Such was the Mahratta empire which supplanted the Moghul empire. The Mahratta power grew and prospered till it embraced all India, with certain exceptions. Its culminating point was reached about 1750, or about a century after Sivaji first rebelled against his Muhammadan sovereign.

Its armies drew soldiers from all parts of India. The infantry was not of good quality; but its cavalry was really an enormous force, numbering fully a hundred thousand in all. The horsemen were splendidly audacious in riding for long distances into the heart of a hostile country without support, striking some terrific blows, and then returning rapidly beyond reach of pursuit. They could truly boast of having watered their horses in every Indian river from the Kaveri to the Indus. If attacked, however, in a competent manner, they would not stand; and afterwards, in conflict with the British, whole masses of them behaved in a

dastardly manner. As their ambition grew, the chiefs began to organise their troops after the system learnt from the English and French. In this way several Frenchmen—De Boigne, Perron, and others—rose in the Mahratta service to a position dangerous to the British. But the new system was unsuited to the Mahratta genius; it hampered the meteoric movements of the cavalry, which was obliged to manœuvre in combination with the new artillery and the disciplined battalions. Mahratta elders hence uttered predictions of military disaster which were in the end more than fulfilled.

While the Mahrattas collected vast quantities of treasure and valuables, the ordinary revenue of the confederation hardly exceeded ten millions sterling annually. Large amounts, however, were drawn by feudal tenure-holders, which never appeared in the public accounts. The area and population under the dominion or the control of the confederation could hardly have been less than 700,000 square miles and 90,000,000 of souls.

The rapid and amazing success of the Mahratta confederation rendered it the largest Hindu sovereignty that ever existed in India. But it lacked the elements of true greatness. It was founded by plundering expeditions, and its subsequent existence was tainted by the baseness of this predatory origin. With the exception of the peshwas, its chiefs were little more than free-booting warriors, for the most part rude, violent, and unlettered. Their custom was to offer their neighbours or victims the alternative of paying "chouth"—that is, one-fourth of the ordinary revenue, or being plundered and ravaged. Thus the Mahratta chouth came to have an ominous significance in Indian history. Desultory efforts were made to establish a civil government, but in the main there was no administration formed on statesmanlike principles. The peshwas, on the other hand, as Brahmans, were men of the highest education then possible in India. But they were absorbed by the direction of military and political combinations, and by intrigues for the preservation of their own power; and, even allowing for all this, they failed for the most part to evince the civil capacity which might have been anticipated. While several displayed commanding abilities, and some possessed many virtues, one only attempted to conduct an administration in an enlightened manner, and he died prematurely.

There were at the same time powers existing in India to keep the Mahrattas in check, and it has just been mentioned that some parts of India were excepted from their depredations. The British

power was rising at Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay. The nascent Sikh power prevented Mahratta incursions from being permanently successful in the Panjab. As the Moghul empire broke up, some separate Muhammadan powers rose upon its ruins. The Nizam of the Deccan established himself at Hyderabad, comparatively near the headquarters of the peshwa. Hyder Ali was proclaimed Sultan of Mysore in the south. Ahmed Shah Abdali burst upon India from Afghanistan. The Mahrattas bravely encountered him at Panipat, near Delhi, in 1761, and were decisively defeated. The defeat, however, did not essentially shake the Mahratta empire. It was collision with the English that broke that wonderful fabric to pieces.

The first collision with the English occurred in 1780; it arose from a disputed succession to the peshwaship. The English Government at Bombay supported one of the claimants, and the affair became critical for the English as well as for the Mahrattas. It was at this conjuncture that Warren Hastings displayed his political genius and rendered signal service to his country.

The next collision happened in 1803. The peshwa had fallen into grave difficulties with some of the principal members of the Mahratta confederation, namely, Sindhia, Holkar, and the Bhonsla raja of Nagpur. He therefore placed himself under British protection, and this led to the great Mahratta war, in which the Marquis Wellesley displayed those talents for military and political combination which have rendered him illustrious. It was during the campaigns which ensued that General Arthur Wellesley defeated Holkar and the Bhonsla raja at Assaye, and General Lake won the victories of Farokhabad, Dig, and Laswari over Sindhia and Holkar. The three confederates, Sindhia, Holkar, and the Bhonsla, concluded peace with the British Government, after making large sacrifices of territory in favour of the victor, and submitting to British control politically. Thus the Mahratta empire was broken up. It was during these events that the British won the province of Orissa, the old Hindustan now known as the North-Western Provinces, and a part of the western coast, comprising Gujerat.

The third collision came to pass between 1816 and 1818, through the conduct, not only of the confederates, but also of the peshwa himself. During the previous war the peshwa had been the *protege* and ally of the British; and since the war he had fallen more completely than before under British protection

and guidance, British political officers and British troops being stationed at his capital. He apparently felt encouraged by circumstances to rebel. Holkar and the Bhonslas committed hostile acts. The predatory Pindaris offered a formidable resistance to the British troops. So the peshwa ventured to take part in the combination against the British power, which even yet the Mahrattas did not despair of overthrowing. After long-protracted menaces, he attacked the British at Kirki, but failed utterly, and fled a ruined man. Ultimately he surrendered to Sir John Malcolm, and was sent as a state pensioner to Bithur, near Kanpur. Thus the last vestige of the Mahratta empire disappeared. The British, however, released the raja of Sattara from the captivity in which he had been kept during the peshwa's time, and reinstated him on the throne. Owing to these events, the British Government became possessed of the Konkan and of the greater part of the Deccan.

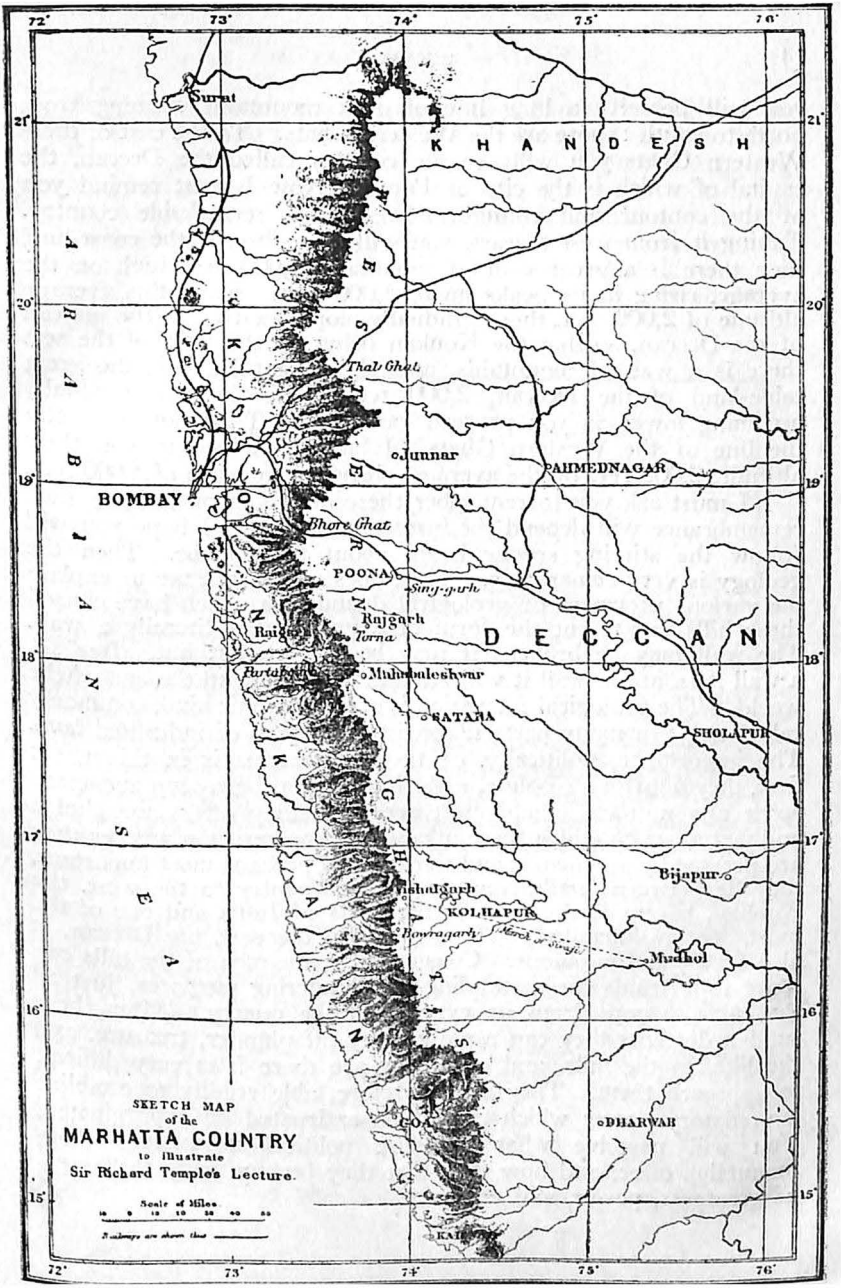
It remains to mention briefly the fortunes of each remaining member of the once imperial confederation. The principality of Sattara was held to have lapsed in 1849 by the death of the raja without lineal heirs, and was annexed by the British Government. The Bhonsla raja of Nagpur and Berar was obliged to surrender Berar to the Nizam, as the ally of the British, in 1803. Berar then remained under the Nizam till 1854, when it came under British administration, though it is still included in the Nizam's dominions. The raja of Nagpur died without lineal heirs in 1853, and his territory, being held to have lapsed, was annexed to the British territories. The house of Holkar has remained faithful to its engagements with the British Government, and its position as a feudatory of the empire is well maintained. In Sindhia's territory, by reason of internal feuds, the British had to undertake measures which were successfully terminated after the battles of Maharajpur and Panniar in 1843. But, on the whole, the house of Sindhia has remained faithful. Sindhia himself was actively loyal during the war of the mutinies. The Gaekwar gradually fell under British control towards the close of last century, and his house has never engaged in hostilities with the British Government. The Gaekwar Khande Rao signalised himself by loyalty during the troubles consequent on the mutinies of 1857. His successor, Malhar Rao, was deposed by the British Government on account of gross maladministration. An adopted son ascended the throne. The ex-peshwa lived to old age at Bithur, and died in 1851. His adopted son grew up to be the Nana Sahib, who took a leading part in the war of the mutinies.

CHAPTER II

BIRTHPLACE AND CRADLE OF MAHRATTA POWER

At the time of which I speak, just over two hundred years ago, about the year 1650—that is, a hundred years before the battle of Plassy, and two hundred years before the war of the Indian Mutiny—the Mahrattas had been subjected for full five hundred years to the Muhammadans. They were thoroughly despised by their Muhammadan conquerors, who called them the mountain rats. But the hour came for them to rise, and with the hour came the man, and the leader. Owing to the extraordinary advantages offered them by the country in which they dwelt, they, in a short time, rose victoriously against their foreign rulers, the Muhammadans. They first dethroned the Great Moghul in his imperial palace at Delhi; they fought the Afghan and Persian invaders of India; they worried the Portuguese at Goa; they threatened even the early British Governors of Bombay : they were visited by European embassies in some of the hill forts depicted in our illustrations; they obtained a dominion from Cape Comorin, near Ceylon, right up to the Himalayas. They truly boasted that their cavalry watered their horses in the river Kaveri, not far from Ceylon, and as far as the Indus opposite Peshawar. They fought the English in many stand-up fights. They even threatened us to such a degree that we had to build a ditch round Calcutta to defend ourselves from them. You have often heard Calcutta called the City of the Ditch : against whom was that ditch constructed? It was against the Mahrattas. Such, then, was the splendid imperial position obtained in the course of one century by this abject, despised race. And what was the cause of this astonishing success? It was, first, the martial quality fostered by the mountains, and in the second place the immense military and political advantages offered by the mountain fastnesses and strongholds. Such is the main topic upon which I shall offer you historical, pictorial, and topographical details.

I must first ask you carefully to consider the map prefixed to this address. You will observe the western coast with the great city of Bombay. That coast district is called the Konkan. Then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Junnar
AHMEDNAGAR
BOMBAY
Bhore Ghat
POONA
Singgurh
Rajgurh
Raigurh
Torna
DECCAN
Partabgurh
Mahabaleshwar
SATARA
SHOLAPUR
Vishalgurh
KOLHAPUR
Bijapur
Bowragarh
Murdhol
DHARWAR
ARABIAN SEA
SKETCH MAP
of the
MARHATTA COUNTRY
to illustrate
Sir Richard Temple's Lecture.
Scale of Miles
Railways are shown thus

you will perceive a long line of dark mountains running from north to south : those are the Western Ghats. To the east of these Western Ghats you will see the country called the Deccan, the capital of which is the city of Poona. Now I must remind you of the contour and configuration of this remarkable country. Taking it from west to east, you will first observe the coast-line, then there is a great wall of mountain, 2,000 feet high on the average, rising in its peaks up to 5,000 feet. From this average altitude of 2,000 feet, there gradually slopes eastwards the plateau of the Deccan, so that the Konkan being on the level of the sea, there is a wall of mountains, and above that there is the great table-land of the Deccan, 2,000 feet above the sea, gradually becoming lower as you proceed eastwards. Then notice exactly the line of the Western Ghats. I have explained to you their altitude, 2,000 feet on the average, rising up to peaks of 5,000 feet.

I must ask you to remember these details, because upon such remembrance will depend the interest with which I hope you will follow the stirring scenes I am about to describe. Then the geology is very remarkable. Time does not permit me to explain the various processes of geological denudation which have caused these hills to present the form of a great wall—literally a wall. The wall may be broken; it may be in sections; but, after all, a wall it is, and a wall it will remain, I suppose, to the end of the world. The geological formation is of the plutonic kind, commonly called trap: in many parts it consists of layers of indurated lava. The importance, politically, of these mountains is in this wise: first, they nourish a resolute, enduring, daring, I may say audacious spirit among their inhabitants; secondly, they offer strongholds and fastnesses to which these inhabitants can resort whenever they are pressed by an enemy; and thirdly, and perhaps most important, they lie between fertile countries. The country to the west, the Konkan, is one of the most fertile parts of India and one of the most densely inhabited. The country to the east, the Deccan, is also fertile and populous. Consequently, the men of the hills can make rapid raids for marauding or plundering purposes, just as the eagle swoops from its eyry upon the quarry. After these sudden descents they can rapidly carry off plunder, treasure, and the like, to the hills, and once they are there it is very difficult to approach them. They are, therefore, able readily to establish a predatory power which cannot be extirpated or exterminated. You will perceive what immense political advantages these mountains offer, and how it is that they become truly the cradle of greatness, power, and empire.

This being the physical, topographical and political character of the hills, I have to remind you that the leader of the Mahrattas and the founder of their empire was Sivaji. I particularly beg you to remember the name in order that you may follow the stories I have to tell. Recollect that Sivaji flourished a little over two hundred years ago, one hundred years before Clive won the battle of Plassy, two hundred years before the Indian Mutiny. I am anxious to impress these facts well upon your minds, in order that you may follow my narrative.

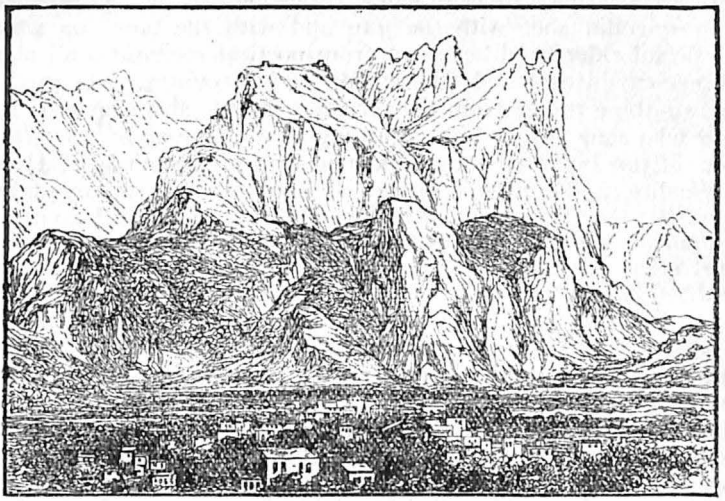

FIG. 1—JUNNAR, THE BIRTHPLACE OF SIVAJI

After this preface, I will ask you to go straight to the pictorial diagrams. The first illustration to which I shall invite your attention (Fig. 1) is the hill fort of Junnar, where Sivaji was born. I should explain that the hill itself is called Sewnar, but nowadays takes the name of Junnar, from the town which lies at its base. You will see the town in the illustration, on a plain, and you will note rising above it precipitous mountains. You will also see Junnar clearly marked upon the map just behind the main crest of the range. It is the first instance which I have to mention of those peaks of 4,000 or 5,000 feet which I have already alluded to. You will see what a rugged precipitous place this

is, and what a fitting spot it was for a hero to be born in. I must ask you to remember Sivaji's father, Shahji, because I shall have to mention that person hereafter. I must ask you also to remember that Sivaji's mother was a Mahratta lady of remarkable spirit and energy. Presently I shall have to say more about her.

Sivaji's education was, in the modern sense of the term, rather neglected by these parents, that is to say, he was never taught to read and write. Though in after years he became the sovereign of a great kingdom, he never could put the sign manual to his decrees. But he had an education of a different kind, in those days a much more practical education, for he was taught to be a splendid shot with the gun and with the bow; he was a wonderful rider; and he learnt from poetical recitations all about the ancient history and the religion of his country. He used to hear of these things from the recitals of bards and people of that kind who sang before him regarding all the heroes of the Hindu race. Thus his mind became imbued with lofty notions of Hindu nationality, and with that spirit of patriotism which urged him to resist the foreign rulers, the Muhammadans. Among his equipments and accoutrements there were three things which I must select for mention. The first was what is called the tiger's claw. This was an iron instrument as near as possible like the claw of a tiger, with very sharp points, which could be fastened inside the palm, so that a man might have the claw inside his hand, and yet show the outside, and nobody would suppose there was anything in it. Another thing was his sword, which was called Bhawani, after the name of a Hindu goddess; it really was a fine Genoa blade. The third article was a coat of mail which he would wear generally under a cotton dress, and in hot weather under a muslin dress; so that he would appear to be a very mild character indeed, though in reality underneath the cotton folds there was this famous sword, which was to the Mahrattas what the sword of King Arthur, "Excalibur," is in Tennyson's poetry, and inside his hand there was the tiger's claw. I beg you particularly to remember these three articles of equipment.

There were two persons among his attendants whom I must mention. One was the tutor named Dadaji, an old Brahman, with whom Sivaji was left, when Shahji, the father, went to the wars, and the mother was carried off into captivity by the Muhammadans. Then Sivaji and his tutor took a certain house in the city of Poona. I must ask you to remember that house particularly, because you will hear more of it presently. Next, among his henchmen and attendants was a man named Tannaji

Malusra. I will only ask you to remember Tannaji, because Malusra is merely the name of the village which gave birth to Tannaji, as brave a man as ever adorned the annals of the Mahratta race. Malusra is just the sort of village to give birth to a hero. Its frowning rocks, its lofty trees, its flowing brooks, in fact everything about it conspired to fill the imagination with heroic ideas.

Such being Sivaji's education and early surroundings, I must ask you to bear in mind that in those days this part of the Mahratta country was in the Muhammadan kingdom of Bijapur. Now Bijapur was a magnificent city; its ruins are among the finest in the country. It still has a dome which is the marvel of architects, admitted to be the finest dome or cupola ever yet constructed by any nation. Thus Bijapur was then the Muhammadan capital. Well, Sivaji's father had a large grant of land from the Bijapur sovereign. The father having gone to the wars, Sivaji, who was then a young man, and his tutor were left in charge of this property. Then Sivaji began to plunder. He would rob neighbouring villages, and thus get a little money and valuables together, which he would store in the fort of Torna, depicted in our illustration (Fig. 2). Torna is a highly picturesque place, built just upon the crest of the range; in the distant background

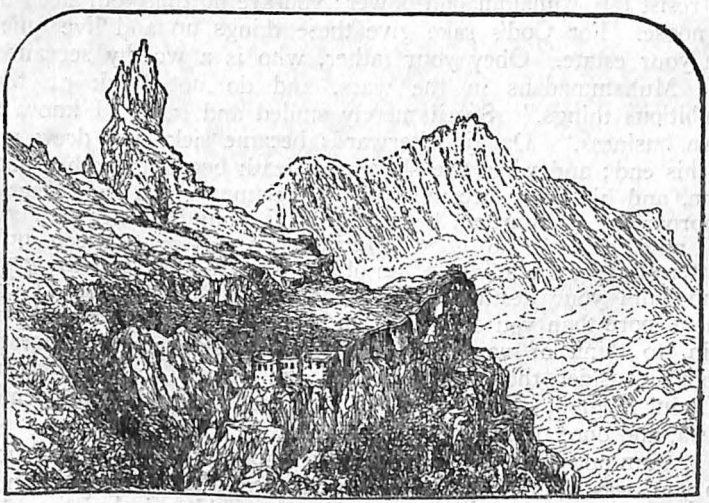

FIG. 2—TORNA, WHERE SIVAJI STORED HIS PLUNDER

of the sketch you will see another hill, to which I shall have to ask your attention immediately; that is the hill of Rajgarh. Sivaji first stored his plunder at Torna; and this really formed the original accumulation of money with which he began his political and military operations. But Torna was a large open hill on the top, steep at the sides no doubt, but it had a very large and flat summit, and therefore was not perfectly defensible against regular troops. So, after a time, when Sivaji became more ambitious, he abandoned Torna and went to the neighbouring hill of Rajgarh, the top of which he thoroughly fortified. Rajgarh forms the subject of our illustration (Fig. 3). The summit of the hill seen in the distance in the preceding illustration (Fig. 2) is this same Rajgarh; you see the strongly fortified site represented in the illustration (Fig. 3). Now, Rajgarh means the Hill of the Kingdom. Torna is a common local name; Sivaji gave no royal name to that, because it was only a place for storing plunder. But as he grew a little bolder and richer, he fortified Rajgarh, and gave it the ominous name of the Hill of the Kingdom. It was then that he conceived the idea of establishing a dominion. It was about the time when he was occupying Rajgarh that Dadaji, the tutor, became rather old and timid, and he said to Sivaji, "You are only knocking your head against a rock by attempting to resist the Muhammadan power; you are putting your neck into a noose. For God's sake give these things up and live quietly on your estate. Obey your father, who is a worthy servant of the Muhammadans in the wars, and do not think of these ambitious things." Sivaji merely smiled and said, "I know my own business." Dadaji afterwards became sick, and drew near to his end; and when the shades of death began to gather about him, and his brow became cold and clammy with the sweat of approaching dissolution, he sent for his young master and said, "I now see it is no good offering you advice to keep quiet. After all, take the advice of an old man on the brink of the grave, and fulfil your destiny! Go in at the Muhammadans; I hate them more than you do; go in and win. Only remember, if you win, to think of your own religion; remember your ancestral gods; consider the Brahmans and the priests, and cherish the Hindu religion. Drive these Muhammadans back into Central Asia, and once more let it be India for the Hindus."

I am not exaggerating; some such speech, as I have described to you, was uttered by Dadaji on his death-bed to Sivaji; and I can hardly imagine a more fit subject for an historical picture than this Dadaji on his death-bed giving advice to the future hero and

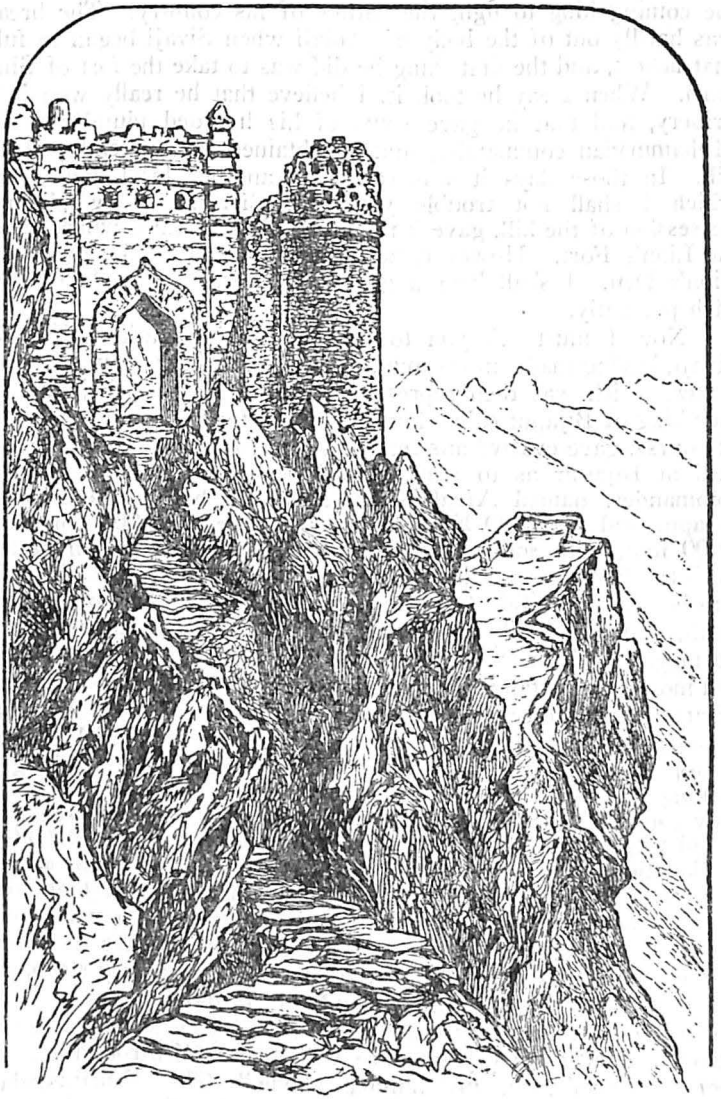

FIG. 3—RAJGARH, THE HILL OF THE KINGDOM

the coming king to fight the battles of his country. The breath was hardly out of the body of Dadaji when Sivaji began to fulfil that behest, and the first thing he did was to take the fort of Sing-garh. When I say he took it, I believe that he really won it by bribery, and that he gave some of his hoarded plunder to the Muhammadan commander, and so obtained the surrender of the hill. In those days it was called by another local name, with which I shall not trouble you; but Sivaji, having obtained possession of the hill, gave it the name of Sing-garh, which means the Lion's Fort. However, he did not mean that: he meant the Lion's Den. I shall have a good deal more to say about Sing-garh presently.

Now I must ask you to turn to the illustration (Fig. 4). Sivaji, having made up his mind to rebel against the Muhammadan power, which was then represented by the kings of Bijapur, the then king of Bijapur called him to account for his conduct. Sivaji, of course, gave evasive answers. A council of war was thereupon held at Bijapur as to what should be done. A Muhammadan commander, named Afzal Khan, stood up before the king of Bijapur and said, "O King, if you will give me 2,000 horse and 5,000 foot, with some artillery, I will go against this mountain rat" (as Sivaji was called), "and within two months I will bring him before your Majesty in an iron cage." Well, the order went forth, and Afzal Khan marched leisurely from Bijapur towards Partabgarh, which at that time was one of Sivaji's forts. Sivaji had moved to Partabgarh from Sing-garh, and was there when this Bijapur expedition was launched against him. When Afzal Khan approached the place (Partabgarh), Sivaji sent some ambassadors in unpretending guise, and said, "I hope you are not thinking of making war against me: I am a very humble person: if you will only come to visit me in my fort any morning, you will see what a quiet creature I am, and I shall be able to give satisfactory explanations, and show that I am, as I ever have been, a loyal subject of the king of Bijapur." Afzal Khan thought that, after all his warlike preparations, he was going to have a walk over; so he said to Sivaji, "Well, the only objection I have to coming to your fort is the character of the hills, which are very steep, and the forest, mark you, is uncommonly thick and impervious; I do not see how I am to get through it." Sivaji said, "Do not trouble yourself about that; I, your slave, will cut a road through it to the foot of Partabgarh, my humble abode." The Muhammadans agreed to this apparently amicable proposal. The rough places over the mountains were made smooth for them, and a very

convenient path was cut for them. When they got to the foot of Partabgarh, a fine broad place was cleared by the Mahratta woodsmen for the encampment of the Muhammadan army. They were made as comfortable as possible; but remember that they were surrounded by rocky hills and thick forests, and inside the thickets Sivaji's marksmen lay hid in ambush. Having got them there, Sivaji formed a plan for murdering the Muhammadan commander and surprising his army. The project was to induce Afzal Khan to come with a single attendant to meet Sivaji just outside the gates of Partabgarh, and then Sivaji would gladly hand over the keys. Sivaji said, "I will come with just one single attendant, and I hope your Highness will honour me by doing the same: you can easily kill me if you like." The Khan said he would be very happy to do as he was requested.

I must ask you to observe the configuration of Partabgarh, as represented in our illustration (Fig. 4). You see that, on the crest of a lofty eminence, there stands a towering fortress. Partabgarh is in the dip of the Western Ghat range. There is a dip, then the great fort, a dip, and then the range goes on again. The fort stands up boldly against the horizon. In the background on the left is a distant view of the Arabian Sea. I ought to mention that from all these high points on the Western Ghats you have a splendid view over the sea. In the morning, the time which our illustration represents, the sea is like a pale sea-green lake; in the afternoon it glitters radiantly towards the declining and setting sun.

I am afraid that the drawing cannot possibly represent fully the beauty of the scene, but you will readily see that it is a place of consummate beauty. There it was, on this autumn morning, in this fair scene of nature, that the desperate and bloody deeds meditated by Sivaji were carried out. Now, in the evening before the meeting, Sivaji's nerve failed him. I do not quite know why, but all men of this kind are a little superstitious, and suffer qualms of conscience, and he felt rather uneasy about the crime he was to commit in the morning. So he went to the little temple at the top of the hill, and asked his mother to meet him there. He laid his misgivings, his forebodings, before her, and asked her in a filial way for her maternal advice. He said, "Shall I really kill this man in the way I have planned; and when I have killed him, shall I really order all my men in the thickets to fire upon the Muhammadan encampment?" And she said, "Yes; I have in this very temple consulted the god Siva, the god of destruction, remember, after whom you are named." She said

she had seen a vision, and the god had commanded her to see that not one Muhammadan, if possible, should escape alive. Then she said to him, " Now, my son, you act worthily according to your mother's advice, and take my maternal blessing." Then she solemnly gave him her benediction. Of course, after that he felt a little more comfortable in his mind, and gave the orders to his men.

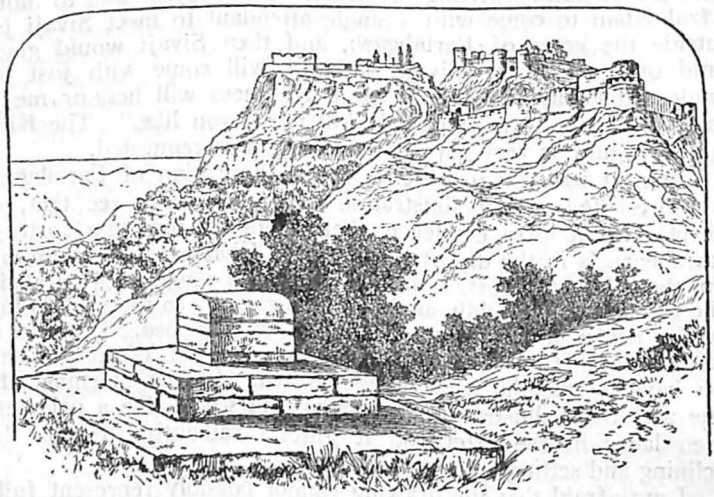

FIG. 4—PARTABGARH

I have explained to you that the Muhammadans had been enticed to go through the thicket. They had had an encamping ground prepared for them in the middle of the forest. In that forest lay concealed all Sivaji's mountaineers, several thousand of these Mahrattas. Their orders were that as soon as a signal gun should be fired from a bastion of the fort—the forest all around being alive with men—the Mahratta troops were to fire upon the Muhammadan army. These orders were delivered with coolness and precision by Sivaji after he had received the maternal blessing, that is, early in the night. In the morning the Muhammadan commander, Afzal Khan, came forth from his encampment, and marched up to the rendezvous, the place marked by a greystone tomb in the foreground of our illustration, where he was murdered, as I shall explain to you. Sivaji also advanced

from the fort. The gateway from which he issued is marked on the illustration as a little dark spot in the wall. As he came, the Muhammadan commander and his followers said, "What a mild, humble-looking person he appears." He advanced with a sort of hesitating step, as if he were a timid man. With him there was only one man, but that one man was the redoubtable Tannaji whom I have already mentioned. As he came on, the Muhammadan commander advanced to meet him with a single attendant as agreed; and in that sort of patronising way which Muhammadans of rank have, held out his arms to embrace him, with, "Hot morning, Sivaji," etc. Then Sivaji bowed his head humbly beneath the Muhammadan's arms, and drawing close up to his body, with the tiger's claw already described, he dug into his victim's bowels: then out came the dagger, followed by one desperate stab: then out flashed the sword, that Excalibur I have previously described. I need not say that the Muhammadan and his single follower were very soon despatched by Sivaji and Tannaji, especially as Sivaji had underneath his muslin garment the coat of mail already mentioned. Thus was the deed done. That very tiger's claw, that very sword, that very coat of mail, that very muslin dress, are to this day religiously preserved from generation to generation by the Mahrattas. I assure you, never were the sword, or the hat, or any of the relics of Napoleon or Frederick the Great of Prussia venerated so much by the French or Germans, as these relics of Sivaji are to this day by the Mahrattas. Thus fell the Muhammadan commander. He was buried where he fell, and the Mahrattas had the grace afterwards to build a tomb over his remains—the tomb which you see sketched in the foreground of the illustration. As the Khan fell, the signal gun was fired from the bastion; then of course the Muhammadan army, who were at breakfast in the encampment, were fired upon from all sides by the Mahrattas concealed in the forest; and you can imagine the destruction, the struggle, the misery, the flight, which ensued. From that moment I need not say that Sivaji became an open rebel against the Muhammadans; and this event has always since been remembered in Indian history as the first blow struck by the Hindu nationality against the Muhammadan conquerors.

The next point in Sivaji's history to which I have to ask your attention is connected with the illustration (Fig. 5), which is that of the fortress of Vishalgarh. The sketch, which served as the original to the illustration, was taken in the height of the rains, just after one of the violent showers that caused the brilliant

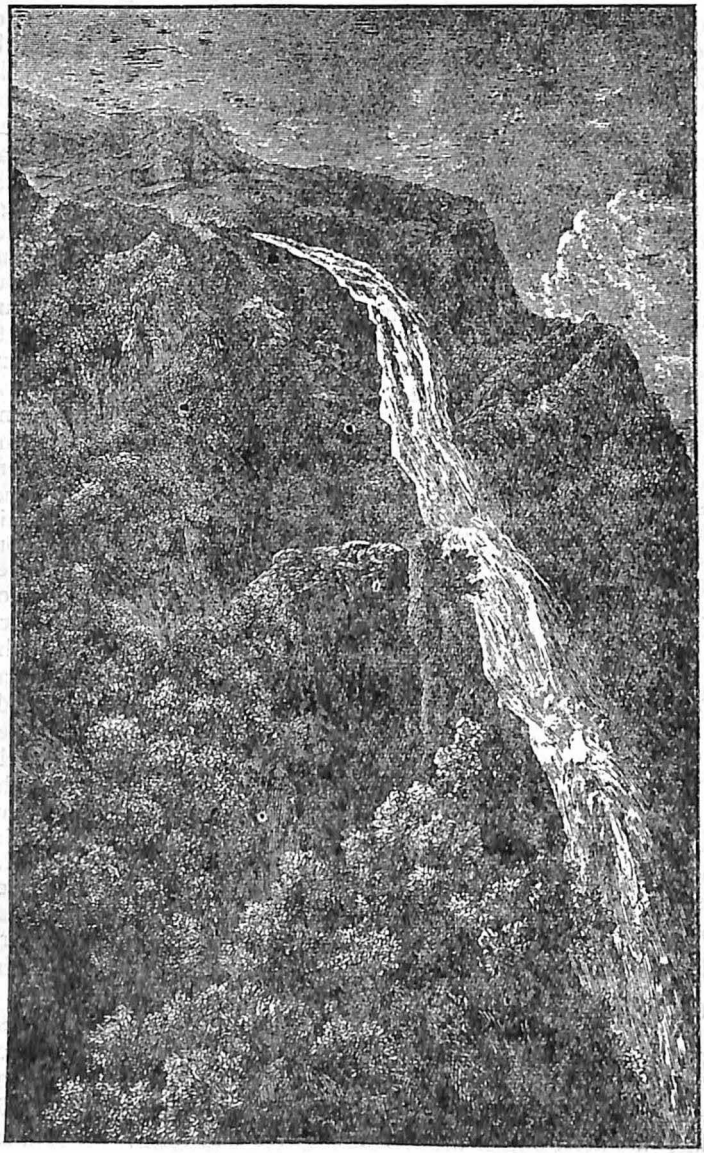

FIG. 5—VISHALGARH

cascades to go tumbling over the precipices. Now, bear in mind that Sivaji had become, by the event I have just described, an open rebel against the Muhammadan power. Well, the first vengeance of the Muhammadans fell upon Sivaji's father, Shahji, already mentioned, who was quite guiltless of the crimes which his son had committed. He greatly regretted all that had happened, and made every possible apology, but the Muhammadans would not listen to such excuses, and ordered him to be seized. It was rather difficult to seize a man of that kind; however, the seizure was arranged through the agency of another Mahratta named Baji, who had an estate at a place called Madhol. Baji showed a friendly demeanour towards Shahji, and asked him to an entertainment at Madhol. Shahji came, suspecting nothing, and was seized, and sent to the Muhammadans at Bijapur. He was confined in a dungeon, and threatened with all manner of dreadful things—that his eyes should be put out, that his tongue should be cut to pieces, and similar inflictions, after the fashion of those days. However, the dutiful son, Sivaji, gave up some of his hoarded plunder, and bribed the Muhammadan gaolers. So Shahji got out of gaol, and fled, but in flying he sent a message to Sivaji, and said, "Sivaji, if you love me, pay that fellow (Baji) out." Sivaji replied, "Never fear, sir; you will visit me some day, and then you shall hear all that I have done to him."

Soon after this the Bijapur king determined to send another expedition, this time against Vishalgarh, where Sivaji then was, hoping that it would be more successful than the last against Partabgarh. The command of this expedition was given to this very Baji. The troops were to move out towards Vishalgarh, and Baji, naturally enough, went on ahead of his army, and thought he would spend two or three pleasant days at home at Madhol. Intimation of this came to Sivaji at Vishalgarh, and he then determined upon one of his daring marches.

Madhol is just 100 miles from Vishalgarh, and although a very uninteresting town, is strongly fortified, with a high wall of black stone all round it, I should say about 60 feet high. You will observe, marked with a dotted line on the map, the road to it from Vishalgarh, which indicates the straight manner in which Sivaji marched to it. For really in these rushes and dashes Sivaji flew very like an arrow from a bow, or a shot from a cannon. One fine morning Sivaji and a picked body of horse and foot appeared before Madhol, quite surprising the Madhol people. How Sivaji got over the 100 miles in so few hours it is difficult to say, but certainly he appeared early in the morning, as I well

ascertained on the spot from the Madhol people, for the tradition of course still survives. He himself started not later than the previous afternoon from Vishalgarh. I suppose the only way in which he could have got there was this, that he ordered men to assemble in the wild country at different points beforehand (on a certain night in the dark half of the moon, as their expression was). They would go unobserved and concentrate at different places on the line of march, Sivaji remaining at Vishalgarh, and all the world supposing that he was up in his mountain fastness. He would then start in the afternoon, ride rapidly say for 50 miles, get to the rendezvous at 8 o'clock, and would accomplish the rest of the march during the night; and so he appeared before Madhol in the grey of the morning. His men were excellently good hands at escalading; they thoroughly understood rope ladders and grappling irons, and so they climbed the wall in no time; and the Muhammadans in Madhol were completely surprised. In a few moments Baji's palace was surrounded; he himself was dragged out, and brought before Sivaji. Out flashed the Excalibur, and down dropped Baji's head upon the ground. There was no more bloodshed, but then began one of the most relentless and ruthless plunderings of which the Mahrattas were ever guilty, and which is remembered vividly by the Madhol people to this very day, as I can personally attest. In about two hours the whole of Madhol was cleaned out absolutely, nothing remained. Sivaji went off with the jewels, the coins, and the fine articles, all fastened on to the saddle-bows of his cavalry; and he returned straight to Vishalgarh.

This was a very unpropitious beginning for the Muhammadan expedition against him, and I need not trouble you with the military particulars of all that followed. However, Vishalgarh was not taken, and Sivaji remained entirely master of the situation.

I have mentioned that Shahji, the father, obtained his liberty, and somehow in a short time managed to make peace with the Bijapur king, and to visit his son at Vishalgarh. He had not seen this redoubtable, this tremendous son of his, since he left him almost an infant in his mother's arms at Junnar, so of course the meeting between the son and the father was rather touching. Sivaji, this truculent fellow, came forward to meet his father. The father was riding upon a fine horse; the son would not ride; far from it. He went forth on foot several miles from the fort to meet his parent. He would not sit down in the paternal presence, and he humbly related to his father how he had fulfilled

his behest, and had with his own hand cut off that treacherous Baji's head, and scrupulously plundered Madhol to the last farthing. He hoped, as he had received his mother's blessing last time, to receive his father's blessing this time, which I need not say was abundantly given him. But the father being of a practical turn of mind, criticised Vishalgarh, and said it was not a very advantageous position; he thought that it might be commanded and taken by the Muhammadans, and suggested to Sivaji that he should establish his fortress in a better situation, indicating Raigarh, which you will see on the map. So Raigarh afterwards became the seat of the Mahratta kingdom. From that place went forth decrees which had validity right over the continent, and the establishment of Raigarh was due to the sagacious father who visited his son at Vishalgarh after this Madhol affair.

I must now call your attention to illustration Fig. 6, which represents Sing-garh, already mentioned. You will see the city of Poona in the middle distance, with the river in the foreground. From this river are drawn many fine canals for irrigation, involving geographical problems with which I have not time to trouble you. In the distance stands up like a rigid square, Sing-garh, or the Lion's Den.

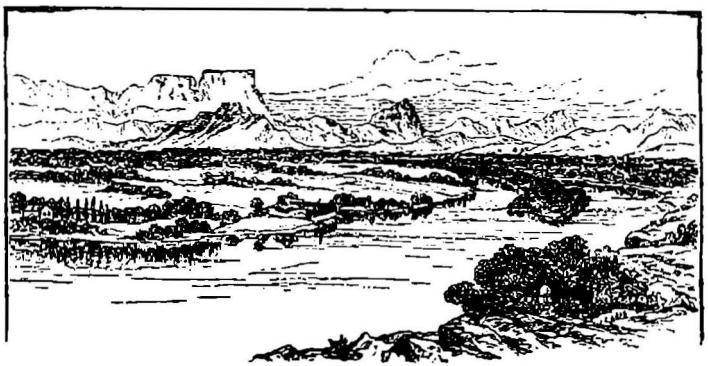

FIG. 6—DISTANT VIEW OF SING-GARH

At the time which the narrative has now reached, the Bijapur kingdom had been subdued by another Muhammadan power, which was no other than the Moghul empire. Therefore to the king of Bijapur had succeeded the Great Moghul, and the

Great Moghul had a viceroy at Poona. The city of Poona was then regarded like Peshawar in our days as an important frontier position. The Western Ghats were to the Moghuls what the North-Western frontier is to the British, and Poona was to them just what Peshawar is to us; so they had a Muhammadan viceroy at Poona supported by a force. Sivaji, on the other hand, was at Sing-garh. The viceroy considered that Sivaji was a very dangerous neighbour, dreaded that something awkward would happen, and took particular precautions that no armed men should be admitted into Poona, which happened to be at that time an open city. Sivaji nevertheless determined to do a daring deed which should flagrantly insult the Muhammadan viceroy. His idea always was to do an audacious thing which should have a great moral effect on the whole of the country round, and in that way to flout the Muhammadan authority. He acted as follows. As he could not get into the city armed, he managed to go apparently unarmed, with some thirty followers. He, and they of course, had arms concealed under their cotton dresses. He joined a marriage procession which was entering the city, and thus contrived in disguise to enter unobserved with the crowd. The bold project was facilitated by the fact that the Muhammadan viceroy had taken up his viceregal quarters in the very house in which Sivaji had been brought up, under his tutor Dadaji. I have already spoken to you about that house; and I told you that a tale would hang on it. In consequence of this, Sivaji thoroughly understood the ins and outs of the dwelling. Mixing with the crowd he and his thirty followers entered the city and remained quiet till the dead of the night. He knew a particular way through the kitchen window, whereby an entrance for armed men could be found; and thus got within the dwelling. The viceroy, of course, according to the Muhammadan fashion, was sleeping with his staff on one side of the house, and the ladies of the family were sleeping on the other side; so, after Sivaji and his men had entered by the window, they had to pass not far from the ladies' apartments, and one of the ladies heard the sound of men moving. She instantly shrieked. The shriek reached the viceroy and his staff; but before they could do much, Sivaji and his men made a rush and were on them. The viceroy was in such a hurry that he was jumping out of the window; and as he had got his right hand on the window-sill letting himself down, Sivaji came up with the Excalibur and just cut off his fore and middle fingers. The viceroy naturally let himself down extremely quick after that; and immediately afterwards there was

a row all over the city. Sivaji and his men had decamped in the darkness and confusion; and, arrived at the outside of the town, gave notice to others of their party, who had planted beacons from point to point on the way to Sing-garh, to pass on the signals for illuminating the peak of that hill-fort. Sing-garh is a very conspicuous object from Poona, and thus the inhabitants learnt at midnight that the redoubtable Sivaji had found his way into the viceregal palace, had cut off the viceroy's fingers, and was illuminating Sing-garh in honour of the event. This was a thoroughly insulting mode of procedure, recounted in after times with glee by the Mahrattas. The next morning the viceroy sent his Afghan cavalry against Sing-garh. You may imagine the sort of swaggering way, the proud, bombastic manner, in which the Muhammadan cavalry would behave, stroking their beards, twirling their moustachios, and saying they would soon bring Sivaji back in chains, and so forth. The cavalry went, and approached Sing-garh. Of course there was a puff of smoke from the top; then a cannon-ball in the middle of a squadron of horse. Presently from behind a rock, or tree, a little spit from a Mahratta musket, and a Muhammadan saddle was emptied. In a very short time the cavalry came back utterly crestfallen, with half their number killed or wounded, and the Muhammadan viceroy the next day sent in his resignation to the emperor. He could not possibly have signed it, because he had lost two fingers of his right hand. This was an insolent exploit, which is to this day freshly remembered by the Mahrattas.

I shall have to revert to Sing-garh directly; meanwhile I ask your attention to Bowragarh, depicted in illustration Fig. 7.

Bowragarh is one of the grand situations on the crest of the Western Ghats, from which you have a distant view of the setting sun over the sea. It was in that neighbourhood that some of Sivaji's piratical exploits by sea were performed. He was great not only on land but at sea. He used to plunder all the rich flourishing seaports on the coast, and carry the plunder, as usual, to the hills. On one of these occasions, while he was sailing with all his plunder from one part of the coast to the other, he was overtaken first by contrary winds, and then by a severe storm, and he became extremely indisposed. It is an extraordinary thing, but after this, for a time, he quite lost his nerve.

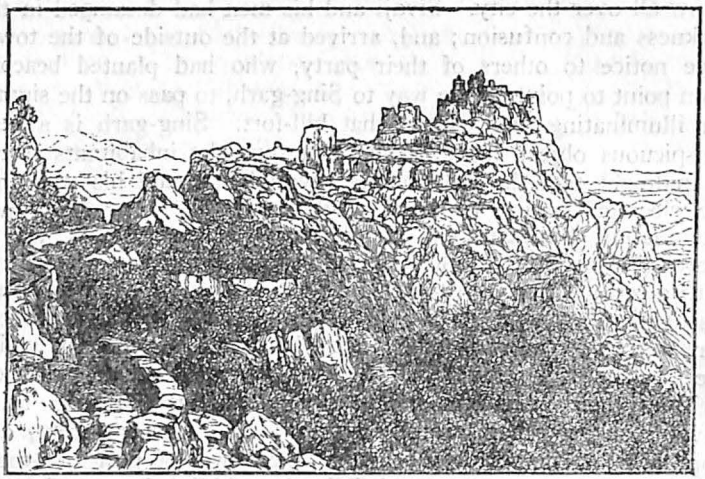

FIG. 7—BOWRAGARH

The Muhammadan Emperor having heard of the manner in which his viceroy had been insulted, sent a large force of Rajput soldiers against Sivaji. There again Sivaji was a little superstitious. He had a kind of fear of these Rajputs as being high-born warriors. He was rather afraid of the redoubtable Rajput soldiery, and was very much indisposed by the storm at sea. So he lost his resolution and determined to surrender a number of his forts. Among others he surrendered this very fort of Sing-garh, after which he went up to pay his respects to the Muhammadan Emperor at Delhi. The Emperor detained him on various excuses, and then subjected him to confinement. However, he soon escaped. He used to have capacious baskets of fruit and flowers sent to and from his place every day, and one fine morning he put himself into a basket and was carried out under the belief that the basket contained nothing but fruit and flowers. Outside the city he met the redoubtable Tannaji. Thence he and Tannaji escaped in disguise, and actually walked all the way, hundreds of miles, from Delhi to Poona. After that they declared that they would rebel openly and for ever against the Great Moghul.

Recollect that Sivaji had just before given up Sing-garh, but he was still at Raigarh, already mentioned. His aim now was to retake Sing-garh, and the retaking of that place was entrusted

to Tannaji. It was planned that Tannaji should escalade Sing-garh with a thousand men. If he succeeded in taking the place, he was to light the thatch of a store-house which was on the top of the fort. This burning thatch making a flame would be seen from Raigarh, and Sivaji would know that Sing-garh was taken.

Tannaji, with his thousand picked men, advanced against Sing-garh. When I say "advanced," I mean that what they really did was this: the men in the different villages got orders to rendezvous at the foot of the Sing-garh precipice. I know that precipice well, and so do many other Englishmen, and it truly is an awful place. For hundreds of feet this black trap rock forms an absolute wall as straight as possible. Well, Tannaji had the ladders of rope and the grappling irons with him, and with these rope ladders up they went. There are many military men present, and I put it to them whether that is not a very daring, dashing thing to do, and whether it could be surpassed by any troops in the world. Alexander and his Macedonians used to do something of the same kind.

In this way Tannaji and 300 out of the thousand ascended the rock. Why he took only 300 men with him I never was able to ascertain; but it was a somewhat unfortunate arrangement. At any rate, he left 700 men under the command of his brother as a reserve, with instructions to move up if they should have an impression that anything was going wrong. So Tannaji and his 300 men reached the top in the dead of the night to surprise the Rajput garrison. When they had climbed to the top they were quite unobserved, but somehow one of the soldiers of the garrison suspected he heard something, so he peered about, and came quite close to them. A deadly arrow answered his inquiry, but as he fell dying he uttered a cry. This cry alarmed the sentinels, and in an instant a blue light was lighted, which displayed Tannaji and his 300 men. Of course there was nothing for it but to go in at the fast-mustering garrison. Tannaji charged them, and was immediately killed. Seeing him killed, the men lost heart, and tried to get back to the ladder and down the precipice again; but the sound of firing had alarmed the reserve, and every one of them had come up also. They met the 300 retreating. Then Tannaji's brother showed himself a worthy brother. He made a speech to the men, which is not a bad specimen of Mahratta military eloquence, and I will endeavour to repeat it to you. He said to them: "Come, men, you must go on, for I tell you I have cut the ladders; there is a precipice behind you, and there is the enemy in front; moreover, there is among the enemy the dead

body of your common father." I should mention that it is usual for Mahratta troops to style their commander their father. He added: "If you do not rescue the body it will be buried by low-caste men."

This was an argument which was irresistible to Mahrattas; they rushed on with their war-cry and overcame the Rajputs. Some of the Rajputs were killed, but the greater part of them jumped over the precipice, and there they lay, mangled bodies, at the bottom. The signal fire was then lighted with the thatch of the store-house, and Sivaji at Raigarh knew that Sing-garh was retaken.

The authentic tradition is that when, next day, Sivaji heard that this fort had been recaptured at the price of the life of Tannaji, he burst into passionate wailing and lamentation. I cannot possibly attempt to reproduce it, but you can imagine the sort of language which a man of that fiery passion and energy would use. He said something of this kind: "The lion's den is taken, but the lion is killed; what have I gained by winning a fort and losing such a man as Tannaji?" Such was the end of the life of the bravest and most faithful of Sivaji's dependants.

This completes the story of the adventures of Sivaji and his followers. I hope I have made it clear how the rugged nature of the country fostered this daring, this gallant spirit both in master and in men.

The next illustration (Fig. 8) represents Raigarh. By the map you will perceive that this place is situated on the western or Konkan side of the mountain range. The enemy of the Mahrattas was on the east; therefore, for a Mahratta fastness it was a great thing to be on the west of the range, for this military reason, that this arrangement placed the crest of the range, the high peaks, and the rugged mountain roads, between the Mahrattas and the enemy. Therefore Raigarh, according to the sagacious suggestion of Sivaji's father, was occupied as the last and the greatest of the Mahratta strongholds. There it was that Sivaji established himself finally as sovereign of Western India. You will observe the way in which the place is arranged. In the foreground there is a little lake or tank on the summit of the mountain. This sort of lake is constructed in this wise. You first try to hit upon some point where there is likely to be a spring, some point on the top of the mountain, but which has some higher peaks near it; consequently the water collecting from the higher ground will form a spring. Then over this spring you make a quarry, whereby you obtain the stone for your palace or your fort, and

with the same operation you excavate an artificial tank to secure your water supply. The ascent of Raigarh is exceedingly steep. Of all the ascents I have ever made in India, the Himalaya included, that of Raigarh is the worst. It is not only that the side is very steep, but the heat is most trying. If you ascend any other peak on the crest of the range, you do so from a tolerably good climate, but in ascending Raigarh you have to start in the heat from the level of the sea.

It was here that Sivaji established his dominion and reigned. Here, too, he died at the early age of fifty-three, after having rebelled, plundered, fought, and ruled for about thirty years. In this fort he collected the wealth and riches of half India; treasures in Spanish dollars, sequins, and the coins from all southern Europe and all Asia. Here, after his early death, he was succeeded by a son, who committed horrible crimes, and who died an equally horrible death.

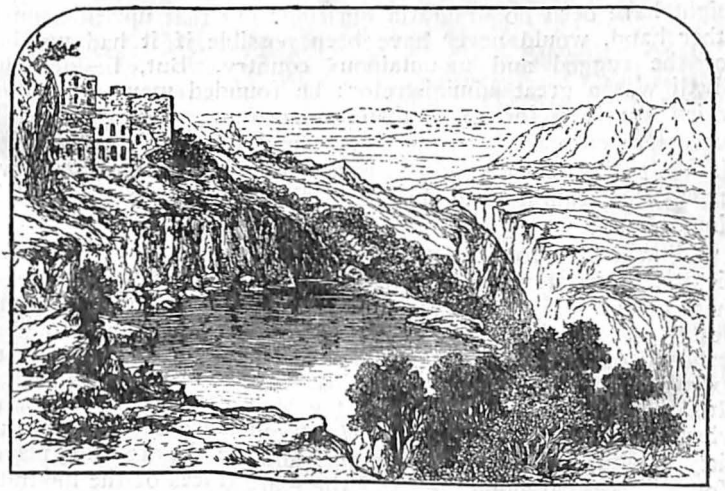

FIG. 8—RAIGARH

On the top of Raigarh is the tomb of Sivaji. You may be aware that the Mahrattas do not bury their dead; no Hindus do; they practise cremation, and the ashes are buried in the tomb. I myself on one November day carefully examined the tomb of Sivaji. You may think I am romancing, but those who know

that part of the Deccan will bear me out when I say that, at that season of the year, there is a particular blue flower—I have forgotten its name—of the most tender and delicate beauty; it grows on all parts of those hills where the soil is rich. I suppose they put rich soil over the tomb of Sivaji, for when I was there it was one mass of these tender blue flowers. A more poetic contrast you can hardly imagine, than that a bloom of such exquisite delicacy should be covering the grave of a man so desperate and violent, yet so great and statesmanlike, as Sivaji. Thus the hero was buried on the summit of his hill, commanding a view of the scenery fraught with associations of his deeds, and within sight of the Torna and Rajgarh, where his dominion was founded, and which he loved so well.

Sivaji was not only a bold man, such as I have described him, but he had peculiarly the power of arousing enthusiasm in others, and he was the man who raised an abject, subject race from nothingness up to empire. If it had not been for him there might have been no Mahratta uprising; but that uprising, on the other hand, would never have been possible if it had not been for the rugged and mountainous country. But, besides that, Sivaji was a great administrator: he founded many institutions which survived for more than one century, during which his successors enjoyed imperial power; and the official titles of all his state departments and departmental officers are preserved among the Mahrattas to this day. So much for Sivaji and his biography.

I will ask your attention now, in conclusion, to the two pictorial illustrations numbered Fig. 9 and Fig. 10. The first of these (Fig. 9) represents the scenery of Mahabaleshwar (Arthur's Seat), the summer residence of the Bombay Government and its principal officers, and of the ladies and gentlemen who form the society of Western India. It is close to Partabgarh, which I have already described, in the midst of the Mahratta country; and now, where all these desperate deeds were committed of old, there are picnics, while badminton, lawn tennis, and the like are being played. You will see that along the rocks there are traces of the indurated lava lying layer upon layer, one over the other. The whole is, as it were, a series of regular horizontal stripes from end to end. In the middle distance there stands up the very Partabgarh which I have been describing to you this evening, and in the distance, as usual, there is the Arabian Sea.

The last illustration (Fig. 10) represents the Bhore Ghat incline, the view being taken at the height of the rainy season.

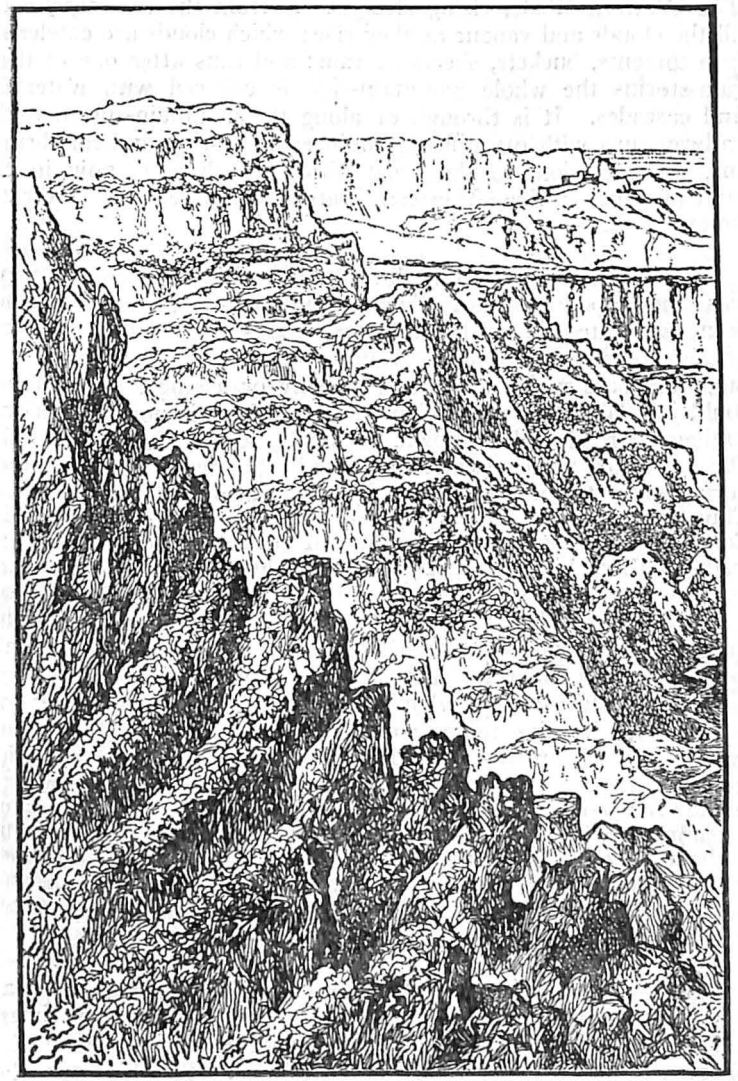

FIG. 9—ARTHUR'S SEAT AT MAHABALESHWAR

The Western Ghats, rising straight up from the sea-coast, catch all the clouds and vapour as they rise; which clouds are condensed into torrents, buckets, sheets of rain; and thus after one of these rain-storms the whole mountain-side is covered with waterfalls and cascades. It is through or along the mountain-side that the railway runs with magnificent engineering works; and this brings me, in conclusion, to the great difference there is now in the state of things in these Western Ghats as compared with Mahratta times.

I have shown you how difficult, in a military point of view, was the topography of these mountains. They have since been penetrated in every direction, roads and railways. First of all, consider the roads. Where before there was a rugged mountain pass which a mule or a pony or a single pack-bullock could just laboriously ascend or descend, there is now a regularly engineered road with complete gradients, levels, zigzags, and the like, up which wheeled carriages pass by hundreds and thousands during every traffic season, and by which also artillery can move. Thus you see what a great political engine one of these roads is. Consider for a moment the number of roads the Government has made in these hills. I will enumerate them to you as they are marked on the map. First, there is the Thall Ghat Road; next the road opposite Junnar; the Bhore Ghat Road; the road opposite Rajgarh; the road opposite Partabgarh; those opposite Vishalgarh, Goa, and Karwar; so that you see we have pierced these mountain fastnesses by what may be called the resources of civilisation. Besides these, we have two lines of railway, one running from Bombay by the Thall Ghat towards northern India, the other from Bombay by the Bhore Ghat towards Poona and the Madras coast; besides which a third, under the auspices of a company, with the assistance of the Portuguese Government, is about to be made from the coast at Goa eastward. In this way the arrangements of the Government are very different from, and I hope vastly superior to, those of its Mahratta or Muhammadan predecessors.

Lastly, the spirit which I have been describing to you, as prevailing among the Mahrattas in the Muhammadan times, survives to this very hour. These qualities depend upon the topography and the physical surroundings. To this day the Mahrattas are within sight of these everlasting hills, and they have the same spirit and courage as their forefathers.

CHAPTER III

PERSONAL TRAITS OF MAHRATTA BRAHMAN PRINCES

THE subject of the speech was in a great degree geographical, and the intention was to show how history is affected by geography. The subject of this essay is an analysis of human character as exhibited in vast spheres of action. Nevertheless, for a due understanding of the men it is necessary to bear the geography in mind, for the significance of the events cannot be apprehended without a general idea of the physical surroundings.

The characters now to be summoned before you in historic order were once the ruling spirits of the Mahratta dominion. The origin of that dominion was in all respects strange, and in some respects romantic. The organisation, thus established, ultimately spread all over India, which then probably comprised, as it certainly now comprises, one-seventh of the human race. The importance of the subject should induce us to observe the men who were the instruments of such national achievements as these.

The life of Sivaji, the founder of Mahratta dominion, has been set forth in the speech. This address refers to those who came after him, inheriting his idea, preserving its power, and extending its effect for weal or woe, but, alas, more for evil than for good.

In the spring of 1680, Sivaji died in his fortress-palace at Raigarh. As already described, he had run the most successful career ever displayed by a Hindu in war and politics within the time of authentic history. The ultimate inheritors of his power were equally successful; but they, though men of his nation, did not belong to his lineage, nor even to his caste. The successors of his line and race mounted his throne only to prove their degeneracy.

Of these lineal successors the first, Sambhaji, began and ended his reign under circumstances indeed awful. Immediately

after being installed in royal authority at Raigarh, he called his widowed stepmother before him, loaded her with insults, and ordered her to death by starvation in a dark dungeon. He caused one of his father's trusty lieutenants to be flung from the precipices of Raigarh, and another to be tied to the feet of an elephant. These horrible executions were even exceeded in horror by the end which befell himself. After leading his troops in the wars then pending with the Moghuls and the Portuguese, after wielding his father's famous sword in battle at one time, and at another time pursuing his foes with cavalry into an estuary till his horse swam in the rising tide—he succumbed to intemperance. One evening, while drunk with ardent liquor, he was surprised and seized by a party of Moghuls in the garden of his summer-house at the foot of the Western Ghat mountains. By the irony of fate he was dragged up the rugged roadways and along the undulating plains, which were the very scenes of his mighty father's exploits, till he reached the camp of the Moghul emperor, Aurangzeb. The enforced sobriety of this melancholy march settled his resolve to die with words on his lips of rage against his captors. When offered mercy by the emperor, he refused in terms of studied insult—as coming from a Hindu captive to a Muhammadan conqueror—and was straightway led forth to have his eyes seared with red-hot iron, and his tongue cut out.

The next or second successor was Raja Ram, also a son of Sivaji. His heritage in Western India was overrun by the Moghuls, and he had to fly to Southern India in disguise, accompanied by a little party of followers, whose names are famed in Mahratta history, and who braved questioning by torture in order to screen him in a hairbreadth escape when suspicion of his rank had been aroused by the fact of his feet being washed by a servant. Arrived in Southern India, he set up a phantom court within a fortress there. Beleaguered by the Moghul troops, he again escaped, passing through their very lines at night, and took the field at the head of a Mahratta army. But he died at an early age from the rupture of a blood vessel, caused by overexertion on horseback during a protracted march—leaving a memory stained by one crime only. For he procured, on the lonely bank of a hill-stream, the assassination of Santoji, one of his staunchest followers, who was the most dashing officer that ever commanded that Mahratta cavalry which next, after the Moghul cavalry, was the most wonderful known in the annals of war.

Thus the immediate successors of Sivaji led lives both rough and short. The third, Shao or Sahu, passed through a long life of pampered idiotcy, having failed to inherit either the genius of his grandfather or the brute courage of his father. As the infant son of Sambhaji, he was after his father's fall, carried off to the

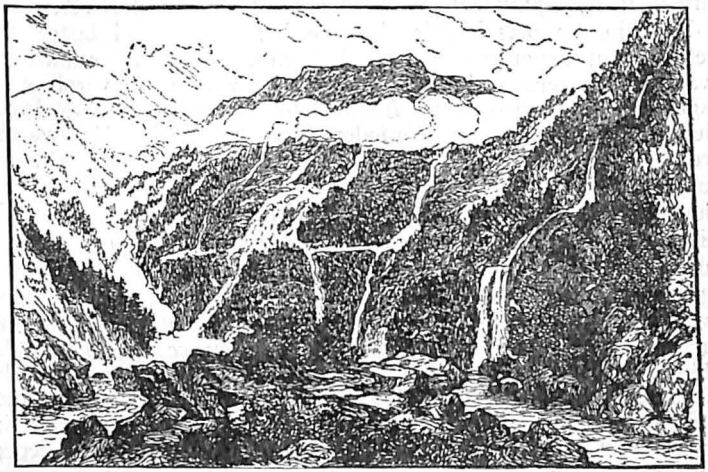

FIG. 10—THE BHORE GHAT INCLINE

Moghul camp. Having tragically executed the father, the Moghul emperor was kind to the child in a peculiar manner, causing him to be nurtured in the companionship of slaves, and under the enervating influences of the seraglio. During the changeful politics of that day Shao was released, and ascended the Mahratta throne as a feudatory of the Moghuls, whom his grandfather had spent a lifetime in defying. He reigned a *faineant*, as a puppet of those about him, and was afflicted by an hallucination respecting a faithful dog that had saved his life in a tiger-hunt. He would seat the animal on the throne beside him, place his own turban on its head, sit bare-headed in its presence, and have it carried with pomp in a sedan-chair. During his lucid intervals, however, he emitted sparks of a strange wit. Among his witticisms there was one which became historic, and bore a marvellous significance. He once said that the Mahrattas had reconquered India from the Muhammadans, and handed it over to the Brahmans. This saying of his is the key to the main portion of the address which I am now delivering.

During Shao's reign, the ministry led the armies, conducted the diplomacy, administered the provinces, distributed the rewards. The head of the ministry was the Peshwa, one of the several functionaries instituted by Sivaji himself. The word peshwa is of Persian origin, and signifies "the foremost": in Mahratta politics it is equivalent to prime minister or premier. The Peshwaship, or premiership, became hereditary, and lasted for five eventful generations. The Mahratta kingdom founded by Sivaji in Western India was not the only one. Several other kingdoms were subsequently founded by Mahratta chiefs. These chiefs combined in one confederation under the Peshwa as hereditary minister of Sivaji's kingdom. Thus the Peshwa administered directly that particular kingdom, and directed the federal affairs of the confederated Mahratta kingdoms, which in their totality bore the general name of the Mahratta empire. During the wars which led to the establishment of the British empire, the negotiations were conducted with the Peshwa. Thus it was the Peshwa, as the representative Mahratta, with whom Warren Hastings or the Marquis Wellesley contended in the Cabinet, and Lake or Arthur Wellesley in the field, while the Mahratta sovereigns of Sivaji's line were guarded in a palace-fortress as the shadows of a great name. But such was the respect paid to hereditary status, even in an age of violence, that each Peshwa on his accession had to receive investiture from the titular king descended from Sivaji.

Now, while the Mahratta chiefs were men of a humble and unlettered caste, the Peshwas were Brahmans of the highest and most cultured caste. The Peshwa family sprang from a little village, which may still be seen nestling near the base of the Western Ghat mountains in the littoral tract known as the Konkan. This family founded and preserved for more than one hundred years a dynasty, which presided over the fitful fortunes of India, and of one among the most populous empires in the globe. This then was a Brahman dynasty, and as such was perhaps unique in the diversified history of India, almost all, if not absolutely all, other dynasties having belonged to lesser castes or races.

Consequently the individuality, the character, the idiosyncrasy of these persons—who were quite different from all other Indian sovereigns—must have a peculiar interest for students. I proceed then to sketch the characteristic traits of the several Peshwas. As there were seven of them in succession, the portraiture of each one must be brief. In Indian history Brahmans appear as men of letters in the council-chamber, as

financiers or administrators; but though potential factors, even arbiters, in politics, they are generally found to be wire-pullers exercising covert authority. In this crucial instance of the Mahratta empire, they are seen to be the ostensible leaders everywhere, whether indoors or out of doors, and to be the possessors of overt responsibility. In this exalted capacity, then, what manner of men did they prove themselves to be? That is the question to be answered in the following review.

Irrespective of early Peshwas, who were only ministers, the founder of the hereditary Peshwaship was Balaji Vishwanath, who was appointed Peshwa in 1714, and whom, to prevent confusion of names, I shall call Vishwanath. He was more like a typical Brahman than any of his successors. He had a calm, comprehensive, and commanding intellect, an imaginative and aspiring disposition, an aptitude for ruling rude natures by moral force, a genius for diplomatic combinations, a mastery of finance. But having an over-refined physique and delicate health, he shrank from contact with the violence of those scenes in which his imperial ambition constrained him to mix. Among other defects, his horsemanship was timid and awkward, and that was a real misfortune in the Mahratta dominions. Nevertheless, his political destiny propelled him into affairs wherein his misery must have been acute. He had a sharp brush with the pirates on the coast near Bombay. Once in the uplands of the Deccan he was captured, and subjected to the Mahratta discipline of a horse's nose-bag, full of glowing ashes or of hot pepper, being fastened over his nose and mouth. Once he eluded capture by hiding for several days in the wilderness. More than once he was threatened with death, for which he doubtless prepared himself with all the stoicism of his race, when a ransom opportunely arrived. At length, in 1720, he was deputed as plenipotentiary to Delhi, to wring by power of menace and argument from the Moghuls a recognition of Mahratta sovereignty. During these complex and far-reaching negotiations his sensitive nerves were shaken by civil broils and street tumults. However, he carried victoriously all his diplomatic points, and brought back to Western India a political instrument which is one of the most noteworthy state documents in Indian history, and constituted the Magna Charta of Mahratta dominion. Regarding this as his political testament, he took leave of his countrymen, simply saying that his health was feeble. With not more dignity did Cardinal Wolsey lay his bones in the monastery, than did this Brahman Peshwa proceed towards his country seat to sink into premature death, with the

consciousness that a Hindu empire had been erected over the ruins of Muhammadan power, and that of this empire the hereditary headship had been secured for his family.

He was succeeded in the Peshwaship by his eldest son, Baji Rao I, to whom he had given that manly training, the want of which he knew to have been a grave drawback in his own career.

Baji Rao I then, as the second Peshwa, entered on his imperial duties in 1721. His position was environed with difficulties; the new-born empire had to be consolidated and developed; the Mahratta confederation, full of discordant elements, had to be held together; the Muhammadans, still retaining many parts of India, had to be kept at arm's length; the Hindu spirit had to be sustained after the shock of a recent invasion from Persia. For such an hour Baji Rao was quite the man. In the first place he possessed all the special qualities of his caste; he had an imposing aspect, an engaging manner, a winning address, a scheming mind, and a fertility in resource. He frequently displayed a commanding eloquence that fired the patriotism of his countrymen during success, and raised their drooping spirits under reverse. In that age there was no such device as *verbatim* reporting, but some of his outbursts are known to have been fine and grand. His correspondence, too, was considerable, and fragments of it remain, enough to show that some of his despatches must have been almost as impressive as his speeches. Though inferior to his father in business and finance, yet he had been a confidant in the negotiations conducted by the first Peshwa. He was thus able to gather up, unravel, and hold together the scattered or complicated threads. With these, which may be called indoor qualifications, he combined perfectly the outdoor qualifications essential to his position. As a rider he was hardly to be surpassed in a country where horsemanship was regarded as the first of accomplishments. His *metier* was perhaps that of a cavalry leader, but in battle he would be with the infantry also, and was ready to supervise siege operations as well. Though far from being foolhardy, he was ever forward in action and eager to expose himself under fire if the affair was arduous. He was inured to fatigue, and prided himself on enduring, while supreme chief in his political or military capacity, the same hardships as his soldiers and sharing their scanty fare. If they had to subsist on parched grain carried in their pouches, and munched as they rode along, he would insist on doing the same. He was moved by an ardour for success in national undertakings, by a patriotic confidence in the Hindu cause as against its old enemies, the Muhammadans, and its new rivals,

the Europeans, then rising above the political horizon. He was distinguished by a toleration the reverse of Brahmanical. Besides his Brahman wife, he married a Muhammadan, whose son he brought up in the mother's religion. He lived to see his Mahrattas spread terror over the Indian continent from the Arabian Ocean to the Bay of Bengal. Entangled incessantly in military and political combinations, he heeded the civil administration but little. He strove in a general way to find administrators who would maintain the institutions of Sivaji, but that was all. If he possessed any constructive ability in these matters, he never allowed himself any opportunities of showing it. His state finances were left in a straitened condition. He died, as he had lived, in camp under canvas among his men; and he is remembered to this day among Mahrattas as the fighting Peshwa, as the incarnation of Hindu energy. His death, like that of his father, was premature, no doubt owing to ceaseless exposure under the vicissitudes of a tropical climate.

His eldest son, Balaji Baji Rao, obtained the succession as third Peshwa in 1740. To prevent confusion, I shall abbreviate his name to Balaji.

The accession of Balaji to power was signalised by financial worry. The disorder of the finances has just been mentioned, and it will be readily understood that the public creditors were legion. Some of them resolved to subject Balaji to the famous process of "Dharna," whereby they sat fasting at his gate, enforcing by rigid Hindu custom a similar abstinence on him. The scandal, as well as the inconvenience, of this procedure being immense, the treasury pledged its credit to raise a loan for liquidation.

Balaji's character was formed on the same lines as that of his father, and his disposition moved in the same direction. But, though a man of skilful address, of influence in council, and of ability in the field, he was inferior to his father both as a soldier and as a politician. He well knew how to utilise the talents of those about him, and some of his greatest successes were won for him by his lieutenants. Still, he was ever to the front, organising or supervising, and he saw the Mahratta power attain its zenith. It was under him that the Mahratta cavalry, fully one hundred thousand strong, could truly boast that they had slaked their thirst in every stream that flowed between Cape Comorin and the Himalayas. But he did not take, perhaps he was not capable of taking, any steps for rendering this widely-extended

dominion advantageous to the people. He allowed Mahratta rule to continue to be what it had been from the first, more an organisation of plunder than a system of administration. It was indeed the most unimproving rule on a gigantic scale that has ever been seen in India—a country which at various epochs can afford many instances of misgovernment. Personally, he was unscrupulous, in this respect morally inferior to his father and grandfather. There is a strange instance of this in the manner whereby he worked with Brahmanical persuasiveness on the superstitious pride of a royal Hindu widow, inducing her to burn herself on her husband's pyre, in order that she might be removed out of his way for a political purpose. In his private life there was a coarse wildness specially unbecoming to a high-caste man. After a career in his estimation brilliant, the end came to him in sadness. When the Afghans advanced from Afghanistan upon Delhi, he sent the flower of the Mahratta army to oppose them. At the head of that army were his trusty cousin and his eldest son. His father, in like emergency, would himself have gone with the troops of the first line, but he remained with the second line encamped in Central India. While in camp in wait for tidings, he intercepted a banker's private messenger, who was the bearer of a letter which indicated, by metaphors relating to jewellery, that something serious had happened to the Mahratta host. Among other enigmatical expressions there were these words: "Two pearls dissolved." The Peshwa must have asked his beating heart what this could mean. But the enigma was soon solved sadly for him. The dissolution of two pearls signified that his son and cousin had been slain in battle. In due course official details reached him, telling how the Mahrattas, having been cooped up in their entrenchment at Panipat, near Delhi, till they were nearly starved, had clamorously rushed forth to fight, and had been ridden down or crushed by the superior weight of the Afghan soldiers and the Turkoman horses. He retired to his tent literally with a broken heart. Unable to withstand his chagrin, he marched homewards to Poona and died in the temple he had previously built on the margin of a lake. The fact that such a man should thus be mortally affected by a not irretrievable disaster, may seem strange to us in hardier climes. It is to be accounted for by the nervous sensitiveness produced in him by tropical conditions, and other instances of the tendency are to be found in the Peshwa dynasty.

He was succeeded in 1761 by his second son, Madhu Rao, as the fourth Peshwa, then only seventeen years old.

Now, in some of the characters just depicted there has been found virtue of the secondary type, energy, courage, enthusiasm, patriotism, and the like; but in none of them is to be seen virtue of the purer, nobler, loftier quality. In the character now to be described there is virtue of the best stamp.

Madhu Rao, then, the young Peshwa, was, it will be remembered, brought up as a Brahman of the bluest blood. In his faith he was sincerely devout, so much so that, when engaged in state affairs, he sometimes caused embarrassment by retiring for the mystic meditation prescribed by his religious rules. While thoroughly realising the responsibilities of his position, he was deferential in his manner towards older men; but still he never let them forget his sovereign rank. His temper, though hot, was generous; if treated with any disrespect, on account of his youth, by rough Mahratta councillors, he was prompt to resent; but when he felt himself to be wrong, he was anxious to make reparation. In such moments he would use the language of friend to friend rather than that of sovereign to subject. For a short time he was under the political tutelage of an uncle, Raghunath, whom he knew to be clever and unprincipled. From such leading-strings he soon emancipated himself, and, by the time he was twenty-one years of age, he had become the real controller of his imperial affairs, whether military, political, or civil. He had already distinguished himself in battle, personally rescuing his uncle from a critical situation. In trying moments he evinced not only presence of mind, but also a proud consciousness that by him an example should be set to all around. He chose ministers with discrimination, some of whom justified his choice by their subsequent achievements. He enforced strictness in the service of the state, and strove to procure honesty so far as that was procurable in a corrupt age. If an instance occurred of bad faith in high places, he would denounce it with a frankness surprising to those who lived in evil times. Though obliged to keep the uncle out of positions which afforded opportunities of doing harm, yet he showed the utmost consideration towards his relative. When two of his officers, during a siege, wanted to fight a duel over a quarrel, he told them instead to scale the deadly breach, promising to decree in favour of the disputant who should first plant the national flag upon the rampart.

He was the first Peshwa who bestowed assiduous care on the civil administration, not attempting innovations, but insisting on time-honoured institutions being made practically efficacious, instead of being treated as good in theory but defective in practice.

His care extended to the fiscal, the judicial, and the general departments. All men in his day knew that the head of the state was personally master of the work, was the friend of the oppressed, and the foe of the oppressor, was anxious to extend a charitable equity to all alike, and was choosing agents who would carry out his beneficent orders. His thoughtfulness and considerateness were untiring, and were often shown in a signal or graceful manner. For instance, he conferred benefits upon the descendants of the cavalry leader Santoji, already mentioned as having been assassinated by Sivaji's successor, in order that such tardy justice as might be possible after the lapse of a generation should be done. All the while he was engaged in war and politics. He had to hold his own against the Nizam of the Deccan; to drive back Hyder Ali, of Mysore, afterwards famous in British annals; and to retrieve that disaster at Delhi which had grieved his father to death. While greatly superior to his predecessors as a civil ruler, he was not inferior to them as a warlike commander. While he was present in the field, the army of Hyder Ali, that had become the scourge of Southern India, was more than held in check. His lieutenants were just retrieving the Delhi disaster, when his own health, always delicate, gave way.

Soon the good officers throughout the empire, who had been appointed by him, were dismayed by the news that he was sinking under incurable consumption. Anticipating death, he adjured his uncle to protect the next Peshwa, who would be a boy, to avert disunion from the reigning family, and save the empire from distraction. What reply he received we know not; at all events, he was allowed to die in hope; we shall soon see how cruelly that hope was belied. True to the habits of his race, he retired to a rural village near Poona, and died quietly in the twenty-eighth year of his age, during the autumn of 1772; and that village is to this day regarded by the Mahrattas as one of the most classic spots in their historic land. His childless widow, to whom he was devotedly attached, burnt herself with his corpse, to satisfy her grief as well as to obey the behests of her religion. This is an instance of those who are virtuous in their joint life, and to whom death brings no separation.

That Madhu Rao, a Hindu prince, should have done so much in so brief a life as his, under such disadvantages and despite such temptations—that before being cut off in the heyday of his career, he should have evinced such capacity as this, not only in affairs susceptible of management by youthful genius, but also in matters ordinarily demanding the experience of riper years—

is truly astonishing. Indeed he is for ever to be revered, as the model prince, the "flos regum," and as one of the finest characters that the Hindu nationality has ever produced.

Dying childless, he was succeeded by his brother, Naraen Rao, as the fifth Peshwa, then only eighteen years old.

But Naraen Rao was, a few months after his investiture and installation, assassinated in broad daylight within his own palace at Poona, vainly clasping his arms round the neck of a faithful servant. The uncle, Raghunath, already mentioned, being present at the murder, might have saved the victim, but would not; and indeed his conduct was so dastardly as to cause suspicion of privity to the design. The murdered youth left a widow, who shortly afterwards gave birth to a son.

This son was, while yet an infant, proclaimed and invested as the sixth Peshwa, under the name of Madhu Rao Naraen. He, like his father, scarcely reached the age of manhood. During his minority the affairs of the Peshwaship were piloted through endless shoals and breakers by a helmsman of wondrous skill and resourcefulness, the famous minister, Nana Farnavis. But the minister's mind was absorbed in a never-ceasing combat with political conjunctures. Though most competent to deal with emergencies and to baffle intrigues, though methodically industrious in business, he did little or nothing for the civil administration which had been so much improved during a recent reign, and which consequently relapsed into its pristine inefficiency.

Meanwhile the boy Peshwa was growing up. During boyhood he showed signs of an ardent and generous disposition, and his fondness for wild sports gave promise of a military capacity like that of his ancestors. He was present at a battle between the Mahrattas and the Muhammadans, wherein both sides behaved feebly. The Mahrattas, however, gained the advantage, and began to boast of victory, but he reproached them for boasting, and lamented that the standard of merit should have fallen so low as to justify exultation over a paltry success. Having attained the age of twenty, he longed to act for himself in his sovereign capacity, and chafed under the strict though necessary control still maintained over him by his constitutional advisers. There is an oil-picture extant, representing him seated on his cushion of state, and gazing with expectant curiosity into the grave, careworn, and lofty countenance of the great minister. He had indeed attained his majority according to Hindu law. But at that moment the Mahratta empire was menaced by perils from without and by factions from within. The minister and his

colleagues justly decided that the handling of a complex mechanism could not be entrusted to a wayward and impetuous youth. But the young Peshwa could see only with the eyes of unsatisfied ambition. He forgot that through weary years this sagacious minister had guarded the throne against foreign and domestic foes, had prevented the powerful members of the Mahratta confederation from reducing the Peshwa to a condition as insignificant as that of Sivaji's descendants, had frustrated the diplomacy of the French, had resisted the rising power of the British. He thought merely of breaking loose from the political tutorship of his minister.

While in this mood he became affected by the super-sensitiveness characteristic of his race. Impatient of his powerless position, and aggrieved by a durance which was but imaginary, he refused to appear at the ceremonies and state functions at which his presence as Peshwa was needed. In seclusion he brooded desperately over his fancied wrongs till he resolved on self-destruction. Yet he thought that before dying he would for once appear in all his glory. So during the autumnal festival at Poona, the greatest of the social and religious occasions of the Mahratta year, he rode in the morning along the line of his troops on parade. In the evening he held a state reception with the utmost splendour. Shortly afterwards he deliberately threw himself from the balcony of his palace. On being lifted up with fractured limbs from the marble floor, he bequeathed with dying breath the succession to his favourite cousin, Baji Rao II.

This event happening in 1795 was the second tragedy which had been enacted within the palace of the Peshwas at Poona. This beautiful structure saw two of its masters, father and son in succession, die a violent death in the flower of their age. It was a noble edifice, built of teak-wood beautifully carved. It thus constituted one of the finest specimens of timbered architecture in India, and around it were gathered the threads of imperial affairs and the associations of history. It survived till the other day, when just four years ago the torch of an incendiary was treacherously applied to it, and the old woodwork burnt like tinder.

Among the troubles, which beset the minority of the late Peshwa, was a disputed succession. The uncle, Raghunath, was actually proclaimed Peshwa, but was never acknowledged as such by the Mahratta nation. He induced the British to interfere in support of his rival claims, and to justify that interference, obtained enough support from some of the members of the

Mahratta confederation. It was this interference on his behalf that led to the extension of British power in Western India, and drove a wedge into the heart of the Mahratta empire. He is the man who figures in those transactions during the time of Warren Hastings, which led to what is known as the first Mahratta war. He possessed military virtue, and the power of inspiring some of his immediate followers with a devotion of which extraordinary instances are recorded; but he was otherwise destitute of merit. Suffering many vicissitudes, he once took refuge with the British, and once was imprisoned by a Mahratta chief. At length forced to live in seclusion on the banks of the Nerbadda, he died from ennui and humiliation while yet in the vigour of his life. He was the instrument of various crimes in which his wife was the prime mover. This princess had remarkable abilities perverted to the pursuit of ambition by criminal means. She affords one of the numerous instances of Mahratta ladies acquiring wonderful influence in public life—of whom some worked eminently for good and others for evil. She was the mother of Baji Rao II, cousin of the late Peshwa, and to this son were transmitted her own evil qualities. He, then, is the Baji Rao II to whom the dying Peshwa bequeathed the succession.

He was the seventh and was also, as will presently be seen, the last in the line of the Peshwas. A brief description of him will conclude the portrait-gallery which I have been exhibiting in this address.

In most of the preceding characters there have been interesting traits; in some there have been elements of greatness; in one there has been absolute virtue. But in the picture now to be drawn of Baji Rao II, the shadows will prevail, scarcely relieved by a ray of brightness.

During the early years of his reign, that is, from 1795 to 1800, the reins remained in the able hands of his minister, the Nana Fadnavis already mentioned. But the administration was engrossed by war and politics, then urgently pressing, and extended to nothing beyond. In all that related to civil affairs or to the progress and contentment of the people, it was feeble when not actually harmful. It lost all vestige of honesty and efficiency after the death of the great minister in 1800.

The Peshwa Baji Rao II, thus left to his own evil devices, took men of the vilest character into his counsels. He personally set the worst example. With some noteworthy exceptions, the private life of his predecessors had been respectable; but his

conduct was scandalously vicious. Under a handsome aspect and a polished manner, he concealed a cruel and revengeful temper. He would sit in the balcony of his palace and watch barbarous sentences executed. It need hardly be added that he was a master hand in deceit, and betrayed his supporters all round. He was innately skilful in ingratiating himself with others before they discovered his real disposition. Manliness had generally been possessed by his race, but he was at heart a coward. He was miserably superstitious, and the neighbourhood of Poona is still shaded by groves which he planted in expiation of his crimes. He was tormented by the ghost of the murdered Peshwa, whose murder he ascribed to his father and mother, the uncle and aunt of the victim. He possessed only one of the attributes of his ancestors, namely, eloquent persuasiveness. When, as a youth, he wished (for some selfish purpose) to stimulate into madness the morbid self-consciousness of his cousin, the late Peshwa; when he essayed to make Mahratta chiefs believe in him, despite untoward appearances; when he tried to cajole Arthur Wellesley or to mislead the British envoy, the famous Mountstuart Elphinstone; when he strove to lull the British force at Poona into a sense of security that might precede swift and treacherous destruction; when he sought favourable terms from his captor, Sir John Malcolm;—his command of touching and impressive language never deserted him.

He was one of those men who, judged by their own conduct, seem to be devoid of conscience, and are found to distinguish between right and wrong only by the language they use regarding the conduct of others. His political position was always critical, and its successive crises could hardly have been surmounted even by virtue and genius. But he infinitely aggravated its inherent difficulties. He contrived to set the great feudatories of the Mahratta empire against himself and his favourites. He threw himself into the arms of the British, and entreated their support. When that support was rendered, he enjoyed its advantages for a time with much satisfaction; but soon he tired of it and intrigued against his allies. Finding that intrigues were unavailing, he compassed the secret destruction of his benefactors, including Mountstuart Elphinstone the envoy and the British force cantoned near Poona according to formal treaty. With this view, he strove to corrupt the Indian soldiers of the British force, and thought he had succeeded; but this project was frustrated by the fidelity of the men. Having laid his train, as he supposed, completely, he sent a private message to two European officers, for whom

he had an old kindness, warning them to secure their own safety, as their countrymen were going to be destroyed to a man. This friendly intention on his part throws just one gleam of light over the blackness of his character. It was an anxious moment for Mountstuart Elphinstone. The terrace in his official residence near Poona may still be seen where he paced during the watches of the night, straining every sense in the direction of the city, and awaiting the attack which at daybreak would be delivered against his little force with what might prove to be overwhelming numbers. The attack, however, failed as utterly as it deserved to fail. This decisive action is known to history as the battle of Kirki, and was fought in October 1818. Standing in the balcony of the temple set on a hill near Poona—the very place where his grandfather Balaji expired, as will be remembered—Baji Rao II, the last of the Peshwas, saw the charges of his half-disciplined multitudes repulsed by a little force under the guidance of British skill and valour. From that moment nought but flight and ruin remained to him. His territory then passed under British rule, and became that Deccan of the Bombay Presidency regarding which so much has been heard in British annals. Ultimately captured, after many arduous adventures, he was sent to reside as a state prisoner, under easy restraint and with a liberal pension, on the banks of the Ganges, at Bithur near Kanpur. He was devoid of the honourable sensitiveness that had characterised his ancestors, and lived to a childless and dishonoured old age, in an obscurity which made people forget the historic associations with which his life had been connected. He died in 1851, and left an adopted son, who became the Nana Sahib so well known during the Indian mutinies in 1857.

Thus seven Peshwas have passed under review between 1714 and 1818, just a century. Of these sovereigns two died before really attaining manhood; three were great; one was both great and good, but he, too, died before his greatness was fully developed; and one was utterly bad. Hence we see that the line of the Peshwas produced four great sovereigns in succession of the Brahman caste, namely, Vishwanath, reigning from 1714 to 1720; Baji Rao I, reigning from 1721 to 1739; Balaji, reigning from 1740 to 1760; and Madhu Rao, reigning from 1761 to 1772. Inasmuch as the Brahmans have preserved purity of descent more than any race on earth except the Jews, as they established several thousand years ago an intellectual superiority over their countrymen which has been transmitted through many generations, it might be expected that Brahmans attaining to sovereignty would

evince a marked capacity in their imperial position. Accordingly these four Peshwas fully realised this expectation. None of the many lines of Hindu sovereigns in India has ever shown a series of sovereigns equal to the Peshwas. The historical student will immediately inquire whether four sovereigns equal to them can be found in any of the Muhammadan dynasties of India. It may be answered that in one only can a parallel be seen, namely the dynasty of the Great Moghul. The four Moghul emperors, Akbar, Jehangir, Shah Jehan and Aurangzeb, were as great as the four Peshwas; and of these Akbar was both great and good.

In India the capacity of a sovereign is to be observed in the four main departments of state, the political or diplomatic, the military, the civil, and the ceremonial. Now, Brahman sovereigns would be sure to be adepts in political combinations and in diplomatic management. The Peshwas were such adepts to a degree hardly to be surpassed in any age or country. The effect of their whole bringing up was to endue them with an ability to contrive or design, and with an insight into the thoughts, sentiments, passions, or foibles of others. Regarding war, whether in military administration, or in strategy, or in the command of troops in the field, it might have been anticipated that they, as Brahmans, would prove deficient. On the contrary, however, in each and all of these respects, they proved themselves to possess the brain to control, the courage to execute, the fortitude to endure. In the civil administration it might have been supposed that they would evince a decided superiority to all other princes. Being essentially educated and lettered men, raised mentally much above the level of their countrymen, and endowed with all the culture known to their age, they ought to have consolidated the institutions of their country, imparted an impulse to administrative business, and promoted the education of the people. On the contrary, however, three out of the four great Peshwas failed to do any of these things with efficiency, partly because they were preoccupied by war and politics, but partly because they wanted the philanthropic and enlightened disposition for the doing. The fourth began to do all these things nobly well, and would have done much more had his pricelessly valuable life been spared. He, too, was immersed in war and politics; and the fact that he nevertheless attended to the civil administration shows that, where the will exists, there is a way for a ruler to attend to all branches of his work alike. In the ceremonial department, which is peculiarly important in an eastern country, it might have been foreseen that Brahmans, being gifted with beauty of appearance,

dignity of mien, excellence of manner, and power of elocution, would hold their courts with becoming grandeur. This the Peshwas certainly did with consummate effect.

On the whole, while unsparingly indicating the misdeeds or shortcomings of these several characters, I have striven to do justice to their merits. It is essential that Englishmen, when judging the Indian character, should be alive to its virtues as well as to its faults.

CHAPTER IV

INTRODUCTION TO THE PESHWA'S DIARIES

DURING the past two or three years, most of my leisure time has been devoted to the perusal of the Selections from the Peshwa's Diaries, commencing with the accession of Raja Sahu, and ending with the close of the reign of Baji Rao II. These Selections have been prepared by Rao Bahadur Wad from the original Marathi record, and they make up in all about 20,000 folio pages, including the English summary prepared in the Daftar office. The Selections cover a period of over a hundred years (1708 to 1816-17) and they furnish most valuable materials for constructing a true history of the people of Maharashtra during the most eventful period of their annals. Our ordinary Bakhars, and works written by English historians like Grant Duff, content themselves chiefly with the narration of political events, and throw little or no light upon the condition of the people, how they lived and thrived, the pleasures which amused them, their superstitions and their beliefs, their morals, their manners and their customs. These histories do not also give a clear account of the way in which the work of Government was carried on under native rule, how the land revenue was assessed and collected, how the forts were guarded, how the Sayer revenues (consisting of Mohturfa, Abkari, Salt, Customs, and tributes, etc.) were administered, how the armies were raised and paid for, how the navy was manned, how the state borrowed its public debt, how civil and criminal justice was dispensed, how the departments of police, post, mint, prisons, charities, pensions, public works, medical relief, and sanitation were regulated and controlled, how trade and commerce was encouraged and learning fostered. To many, it will be a matter of no little surprise to find that only a hundred years ago all these varied activities engrossed the attention of the Indian rulers, and

they grappled with all the problems of Government, to a large extent successfully. They even went, as some might say, out of their way, in undertaking reforms of social economy with a courage which is thought in these days by some to be outside the functions of the state. In all these respects, these State Diaries, kept by responsible officers in the Peshwa's Daftar, are simply invaluable, and, though they have their own defects, in the absence of better materials, they shed a flood of light upon the real movements and the hopes and fears, the strength and weakness of the people for over a century, and for purposes of instruction and guidance, they far outweigh in value the narratives of wars and conquests, dynastic changes, and revolutions, which take up so much space in our ordinary histories.

It is proposed in this paper to introduce this vast record to the attentive student of Maratha history, and with a view to give point to the lessons which it suggests, an attempt will be made to set forth the contrast between the causes, which helped the Maratha Confederacy in the first half of the last century to spread its rule and influence over the whole of India and prevail over every country power, Musalman or Hindu, Sikh or Jat, Rohilla or Rajput, Kathis or Gujars, the Portuguese, the Nizam and Hyder in the Telangana and Dravid countries, and the circumstances which led, in the latter half, to the gradual dismemberment of that power. The dividing line which separates the two periods coincides with the transfer of sovereign power from the descendants of Sivaji and Sahu to the hands of the Brahmin Peshwas, when, on the death of Sahu, the Maratha capital was removed from Sattara to Poona. The deed executed by Raja Sahu empowered the Peshwa to manage the whole government of the empire on the condition of perpetuating the Raja's name, and keeping up the dignity of the house; and this deed was ratified, later on, by Sahu's successor Ram Raja, when he agreed to renounce all power on condition of a small tract near Sattara being assigned to his own management. The battle of Panipat, which closed the flood-tide of Mahratta conquest, may be regarded as a serviceable historical boundary-mark for this period. The next 60 years bring out, one by one, the weak points in the character of the rulers and of the nation generally, and show how the fall was hastened long before the English conquest of the country in 1817. This contrast will illustrate how the later Peshwas' policy departed from the principles laid down by Sivaji and pursued with more or less fidelity by Rajaram and Sahu,

and how their neglect of the true policy and their return to the old Brahminic ideals of exclusiveness and division sowed the seeds of decay, which ultimately hastened the downfall of the Confederacy.

CONSTITUTION

THE changes in the constitution of the Government under Mahratta rule necessarily demand our first attention. In my paper on "Sivaji as a Civil Ruler" read before the Asiatic Society, I have described at some length the principal features of the constitution of the Raj-Mandal, or the Council of the State, consisting of the eight chief ministers, including both civil and military functionaries. In the final arrangements adopted by Sivaji, there were two Sarnobats, or military members, one the Commander-in-Chief of the Cavalry and the other of the Infantry. The Peshwa was the Prime Minister and executive head of the Council. The Pant Amatya had the charge of the revenue and accounts departments, the Pant Sachiva or Soornis had the charge of all correspondence and record, and the Dabir or Sumant was minister in charge of foreign affairs. Another minister, the Mantri, was in charge of the household, and there were two purely civil functionaries, the Nyayadhisha, and Nyayashastri or Panditrao, who represented the judicial and ecclesiastical departments. None of these offices were hereditary, and there were frequent transfers from one office to another. The Peshwa's office, for instance, had been held by four different families before it became hereditary in Balaji Vishvanath's line, after nearly a hundred years from its first creation. The offices of the Pratinidhi and the Sachiva and the Mantri, became hereditary after passing through three different families. The office of the Commander-in-Chief became hereditary in the Dabhade family after it had been held by seven or eight chiefs, including Palkar, Gujar, Mohite, Ghorpade, Jadhav and other leaders. The same remark holds good of the other minor ministers. In the official order of precedence, the Peshwa was a smaller functionary than the Pant Pratinidhi, whose office was created by Rajaram at Jinji, and Pralhad Niraji was made the viceregent of the Raja. The fixed salary of the Pratinidhi was 15,000 Hons, while for the Peshwa the salary was fixed at 13,000 Hons. The Mantri, Sachiva, and Senapati had 10,000 each, and the Nyayadhisha had 1,000 Hons only. The old Pant Amatya went over to Kolhapur, and the Sattara Amatya or Rajadnya occupied a comparatively subordinate place. All these

officers had Saranjams besides, and special establishments. On the permanent establishments of these great departments, there were eight sets of officers, named Diwan, Mujumdar, Fadnis, Subnis, Karkhannis, Chitnis, Jamdar, and Potnis. By extending the principle of this subordination, certain officers, called Darakdar, Diwan, Fadnis, Mujumdar, etc., were attached to every district and every large military command. These subordinate officers were chosen by the central authority, and the commanders were required to have the work done by the hands of these men, whom they could not remove, and who prepared and submitted the final accounts to the central authority. The division of work was so arranged that the officers served as checks on one another, and this feature of inter-dependence and mutual control was reproduced in the arrangements about the garrisons of forts, the Subha Armar or the naval establishment, and all the great offices connected with Customs. In the case of the forts, the three principal officers were selected from three different castes, the Havildar or the head being a Mahratta, the Subnis being a Brahmin, and the Karkhannis a Parbhu. It was this constitution which kept up the Mahratta power throughout the troubled times which followed Sivaji's death. Though Raja Sambhaji did not pay much attention to these internal arrangements, Rajaram followed his father's traditions faithfully, and set up his Ashtapradhan Council even at Jinji. Sahu on his accession to the throne, changed the Councillors, but retained the Council. Though each Councillor had his separate department, he was also a Military Commander, except in the case of the Nyayadhisha and the Panditrao, and as in Sivaji's time, so under Sahu, the Pratinidhi and the Sachiva, the Mantri and the Amatya, assisted the state in its wars, as much as the Senapati and the Peshwa themselves. The Council is frequently mentioned as holding Majlasi or meetings for purposes of consultation, adopting measures of state policy, dispensing justice, and maintaining the dignity of the state, both at home and abroad. The great Council meeting, where Baji Rao advocated the forward policy of marching up to Delhi, and was opposed by the Pratinidhi, is a matter of history. On Sahu's death, a change for the worse took place. The predominance acquired by the Peshwas, by reason of the great services rendered by them, necessarily tended to diminish the importance of the other members of the Council. When the seat of power was removed from Sattara to Poona, these offices became hereditary, but their holders ceased to be of much importance in the Councils of the State. The two successors of Sahu

were not personally fitted to wield the authority exercised in their name by the Peshwas. Though they were honoured as titular heads of the state, their movements were kept under strict control. In fact, after the failure of Damaji Gaikwad's attempt to undo the grants of the sanads transferring the power to the Peshwa, as noted above, the Raja was kept a prisoner in the fort of Sattara, and an establishment of about Rs. 30,000 a year was attached to his Court. It was not till the elder Madhaorao Peshwa showed more liberality towards the Raja that he could claim a garden for his pleasure-house, and attendants, musicians, and singers were attached to his Court, and a decent provision was made for his near relatives by Nana Fadnavis. In the nature of things, there was, however, nothing to prevent the continuance of the old arrangement of associating the great Military and Civil Commanders in the Councils of the State, but the Peshwas apparently contented themselves with ignoring the usefulness of the Raj-Mandal, and substituting in its place the subordinate, purely civil officials, Fadnis, Mujumdar, and others, who under the old arrangements, were attached to departments, and helped the ministers or district commanders. Of the Darakdars, only two, Fadnis and Mujumdar, appear to have been retained by the Brahmin Government at Poona, and the rest, the Dewan, Karkhannis, Potnis and Jamdar, seem to have been dropped, and the Peshwa's Fadnis superseded his superior the Mujumdar, and became virtually what Pant Pratinidhi was under Sahu's rule. This diminution of the power of the Raj-Mandal, while it helped to strengthen the ascendancy of the Peshwas over the whole kingdom, naturally led, in course of time, to the alienation of the great commanders who had helped in Sahu's reign to extend the power of the Marathas over Gujarath, Malwa, Bundelkhand, Rajputana, Delhi, Bengal, Orissa and Nagpur. The Peshwa's own model served as an example to the several commanders who established themselves in power at Baroda, Indore, Gwalior, Dhar, Nagpur, and other places. The common bond of union which, in Sahu's time, held all the chiefs together, ceased to be operative, and in its place, each great commander, like the Peshwa, strove to be chief master in his territories, and only helped the common cause on occasions of great emergencies. Even the Peshwa's favourite commanders, Scindia, Holkar, and the Powars, followed the traditions of independence, which the Gaikwads, the Dabhades, and the Bhosles of Nagpur, who claimed to hold their possessions under Sahu's Sanads, had begun to cherish, as the

equals of the Peshwas, in their own dominions. The later additions of Brahmin Sardars represented by the Patwardhans, the Fadkes and the Rastes in the South, the Vinchurkars and the Raje Bahadars, the Bundeles, the Purandares and the Bhuskutes in the North of the Deccan, naturally followed the same example, and by the time the first period ends with the battle of Panipat, where the whole nation was represented by its leaders, small and great, the bond of union became virtually dissolved; and though they joined together, on great occasions, such as at Kharda, and in the wars with the English, Hyder, and Tippu, the old solidarity of interest became a thing of the past. The constitution, which had served such great purposes under Sivaji, Rajaram and Sahu, in holding the nation together for a hundred years, gave place to a mere government by single chiefs, assisted by subordinates instead of equals, and naturally failed to evoke that spirit of patriotic co-operation which had achieved such wonderful results. In the forty years of rule enjoyed by Sahu, he was not merely a titular head of the Mahratta Government; but he directed all operations, ordered and recalled commanders, and he exercised a great controlling power on the chiefs, though he led no armies in the field. It was due to his efforts that Gujarath was divided between the Peshwa and the Dabhades or Gaikwads in equal halves after the battle of Dabhoi. When Balaji Bajirao wanted to invade Bengal, Raghoji Bhosale protested at Sattara, and Sahu was strong enough to enforce moderation even over the towering ambition of Balaji, and forced him to leave the Eastern provinces of India free for the development of the Bhosale's power. Baji Rao was only a general under Sahu, and the Pratinidhis, Bhosales, Nimbalkars, Dabhades, Gaikwads, Kadam Bandes, Angres, Ghorpades, all respected his orders. When Sahu's great authority was withdrawn, this restraint was removed, and though the Peshwas succeeded in establishing their authority both over Janoji Bhosle and Damaji Gaikwad, their submission was made reluctantly; and when the Peshwas themselves lost the advantage enjoyed by the first four members of the family, and minorities and internal dissensions commenced at Poona, neither the Gaikwads nor the Bhosales would concern themselves with the common weal, and though Scindia and Holkar, the Patwardhans, and the other chiefs showed more fidelity for a longer period, the balance of power was destroyed, and even Nana Fadnavis's genius could not compel these chiefs to subordinate their private interests to the general good, and they began to strengthen themselves by forming treaties of peace with foreign powers. Nana

Fadnavis indeed tried to correct the mistake by setting up the Sattara Raja's power after Sawai Madhaorao's death, but he found that this was impracticable, as the dismemberment had proceeded too far. If the Peshwas had continued true to the ancient Raj-Mandal, and while substituting themselves as the deputies of the hereditary Rajas, had maintained the old constitution intact, and had not tried to rule the empire by a machinery of subordinates, originally intended by Sivaji for particular offices and commands, there was no reason why the great purposes served by the Raj-Mandal under Sivaji, Rajaram, and Sahu, might not have been fulfilled with equal success in the times of their Brahmin ministers. This seems to be the principal point of departure between the old traditions and the new order of things established in their place at Poona, and it was a departure attended with disastrous effects. The change meant the conversion of the organic whole into an inorganic mass, and it reproduced the old Muhammadan methods of single rule, against which Sivaji had successfully struggled when he organised the Raj-Mandal.

CASTE ASCENDANCY

ONE other general feature, which distinguishes the first period under Sivaji and Sahu from the period which followed the establishment of the Peshwa's power at Poona, relates to the fact that while most of the great Military Commanders in the earlier period were Mahrattas, with the notable exception of the Peshwas themselves, the men who rose to distinction in the latter half of the century were, for the most part, Brahmins. In the wars of Independence, Dhanaji Jadhav and Santaji Ghorpade made their mark as leaders, and the Nimbalkars, the Attoles, the Bhosles, the Powars, the Angres, and the Dabhades distinguished themselves in the war, which led to the accession of Sahu to the throne. These were all Mahratta leaders. In Sivaji's own time, the Brahmin leaders, Moropant Pingle, the Hanmantes, Abaji Sonadeo, Datto Annaji, and others played as prominent a part as did the Mahratta Sirdars, Gujars, Mohites, Palkars, Kanks, and Malusares; but in the wars of Independence, the Brahmin element chiefly exerted its influence in the Council, and not on the battle-field. In the time of the second Peshwa, the great leaders were Malharrao Holkar, Pilaji Jadhav, Ranoji Shinde, and his three sons. In Balaji Bajirao's time, this preponderance of the Mahratta element continued and excepting the members of the Peshwa's family, the Brahmins made themselves useful chiefly

as civilians. After the removal of the capital from Sattara to Poona, a change took place in this policy, and we find that all the great commanders, who acquired fame and territory after 1760, were in the Deccan, almost exclusively, Brahmins. Even the Parbhu element ceased to be of any importance at the Poona Court, though it enjoyed considerable power at Baroda and Nagpur. The Shenvis (Goud Saraswat) rose to eminence in the Scindia's territory; the Brahmin element in the great camps at Indore, Baroda, Gwalior and Nagpur occupied a very subordinate position. In the Deccan, however, the men who rose to power were all Brahmins, the Vinchurkars, the Raje Bahadars, the Bhuskutes, the Bundeles, the Khers, the Purandares, the Panses, the Biniwales, the Patwardhans, the Mehendales, the Gokhales, the Ekbotes, the Lagus, the Rastes, the Fadkes, the Pethes, and a host of other smaller names might be mentioned in support of this view. And even among the Brahmins, it so happened that later in the century, many of the Deshastha leaders took sides with Raghoba Dada, while the Konkanastha Sirdars followed the lead of the Poona ministers. Sakharam Bapu, the Raje Bahadars, the Vinchurkars, and the Hinganes took part in these wars on Raghoba's side; while the other Brahmin leaders, mentioned above, sided with the party opposed to Raghoba. When, in course of time Baji Rao II succeeded to the throne, he had no sympathy with the section which had followed Nana Fadnavis, and the Patwardhans, the Rastes, and Nana Fadnavis himself were the objects of bitterest hostility. This infusion of the racial and caste element among the military leaders of the nation was the most distinguishing mark of the latter half of the century. There were parties within parties, with little chance of a common and active sympathy throughout all the classes, who had been held together with such successful results by Sivaji, Rajaram and Sahu. The first half of the century was singularly free from these racial and caste jealousies. In the latter half, they had attained such prominence that concert was impossible, and each great leader naturally cared to pursue his own interest to the sacrifice of the common weal. The Brahmins at this time came to regard themselves as a governing caste with special privileges and exemptions, which were unknown under the system founded by Sivaji. The Konkanastha Brahmin Karkoons, who had the monopoly of all the Secretariat or Daftar offices, and received respectable salaries, obtained the privilege of having their goods exempted from Custom duties and ferry charges when they imported grain and other goods from outside ports and places.

The Brahmin land-holders in the Kalyan Prant, and also in Maval, had their lands assessed at half or lower rates than were levied from other classes. In Criminal Courts, the Brahmins had always enjoyed the exceptional privilege of exemption from the extreme penalty of the law, and even when they were confined in forts, they were more liberally treated than the other classes. Besides these advantages, they had the monopoly of the charities freely bestowed by the state on this class in consideration of their sanctity. The record which relates to the time of Baji Rao II bears ample testimony to the extent of the abuses which followed this indulgence. The Dakshana charity, started with a view to encourage learning, became a grant generally to all Brahmins, and Poona became the centre of a large pauper population. As many as 30 to 40 thousand Brahmins were fed for days together at state expense at the great festivals with the costliest viands. All these distinguishing features of purely sacerdotal or caste ascendancy characterised the close of the century, and introduced a demoralisation of which few people have any correct idea. In the hands of the last Baji Rao, the state ceased to be the ideal protector of all classes, and upholder of equal justice. Ramdasa's high ideal of the religion of Maharashtra was lowered down to one in keeping with the belief that the state had no higher function than to protect the cow and the Brahmin, and the usual consequences followed such a decadence of virtue.

ARMY

THE next point of departure relates to the army, which in fact represented the Mahratta nation more faithfully than any other single section of the population. Sivaji commenced his work of conquest of the forts round about Poona and in the Konkan with the help of the Mavales and the Hetkaries. The army then consisted only of the Hasham Infantry, who were armed generally with swords and matchlocks. When, later on, he descended into the plains, the Cavalry became the chief agency of offensive warfare in the hands of the Marathas. The old Mavales and Hetkaries were retained, but chiefly in commands of the hill-forts. The Cavalry, thus brought into existence, fought with the Moghuls under Aurangzeb, and spread the terror of the Maratha name throughout India. They were not mercenaries in the usual sense of the word. They enlisted in the army either singly, or with their horses and men, for the fair season of the year, and when the rains approached, they returned to their homes, and cultivated

their ancestral lands. The highest families gloried in being Shilledars and Bargirs, and their pride consisted in the number of troops or Pataks that followed them, and the recruiting was done without any difficulty. The summons to arms was accompanied with a payment, called Nalbandi, made in advance for the expenses for joining the field with accoutrement and equipment of horse and man alike, and each trooper had his own favourite commander, whose standard he followed. The strength of the Maratha Cavalry continued to be its most distinguishing feature till about the year 1750, when contact with the French and the British armies discovered the superior advantages, in modern wars, of regularly trained infantry battalions protected by artillery, the third arm in modern warfare. The successes of the English and the French induced the Maratha leaders to have recourse to this new agency, and, for the first time, we find mention made of the Gardis or the trained battalions. The weakness of this new addition to the military force consisted in the fact that unlike the Mavales or the Shilledars, who each owned his plot of land and served the state, not as mercenaries, but as militia, the Gardis were mercenaries, pure and simple, made up of foreign recruits of different nationalities, who had to be paid fixed salaries all the year round, and only owed loyalty to the commanders who paid them their wages. There was no national element in this new force. The first Maratha Gardis, employed by Sadashiva Rao Bhau, were composed of disbanded battalions of the French native army, led by the famous Ibrahimkhan Gardi. So great was Bhau's confidence in him that he, at Panipat, set at nought the wise counsels of the great Maratha leaders, who opposed the plan of entrenching themselves before the enemy and risking a pitched battle with the Afghans. The calamitous result of this over-confidence did not deter the Maratha commanders from valuing highly the superior advantages of trained battalions disciplined in the European ways of war. Within ten years of the defeat at Panipat, the Gardis, strengthened by this time by recruits from Arabs, Siddis or Abyssinians, Sheikhs, and other foreigners, were enlisted in large numbers at rates of pay often nearly equal to what was paid to the Shilledar Cavalry for horse and man. The mercenary character of these men exhibited itself in the cruel death of Narayanrao Peshwa at their hands, and there was, for a time, a reaction against their employment. The advantages were, however, so obvious that the old scruple soon vanished away, and in the new armies, created by Mahadaji Scindia in Hindustan, trained battalions of foreign mercenaries, officered by

Europeans, out-numbered the old Cavalry, which was permitted to occupy only a secondary place. The success, which attended this effort, induced Holkar, Gaikwad, Bhosle, and lastly the Peshwas themselves, to engage foreign mercenaries and to rely chiefly on their support. Arabs, Gosawies, Sheikhs, and Portuguese battalions were thus formed, and Baji Rao II himself engaged two battalions, officered by English adventurers, towards the close of the century. Even the hill-forts, which had been hitherto guarded by Mavales, were placed in charge of these mercenaries. The Infantry and the Cavalry elements in the native armies were thus elbowed out of their importance, and the army, instead of being national, became mercenary in the worst sense of the word. Attached to the regular armies, there was a licensed host of free-booters, called Pendharis, who accompanied them, and made a living by pillage of the enemy, and ultimately of their own people. If the innovation of employing trained battalions had been accompanied by the acquisition of the requisite knowledge of military strategy and the scientific processes necessary to command success in the use and manufacture of superior arms, the helplessness, which, in the absence of such knowledge, generally paralysed the native armies, when their European officers left them, might have been avoided; but no care seems to have been bestowed in this direction, so that, when the actual crisis came and the European officers left them, they were more helpless than ever on the field. In the meanwhile, the martial instincts of the neglected Infantry and Cavalry forces underwent a change for the worse, so that when General Wellesley and Lord Lake broke down the strength of the battalions opposed to them, there was no power left in the country which could resist the conquest that followed as a matter of course. The old Infantry and Cavalry had lost their stamina, and the new mercenaries, without leaders and without any knowledge of military science except the drill, were as ineffective as the Pendharis who accompanied them. It was this change which paralysed the nation towards the end of the last century.

NAVY

A FEW remarks on the Navy may not be out of place here. The sea has always been a more or less strange element to the Marathas, except on the Western Coast. Though Sivaji had the strength of mind to organise a navy and place it under a Muhammadan Commander, who plundered far to the south on the

Malabar coast and fought with the Sidhis, it was not till the Angrias rose to power that the Marathas were able to dominate the sea coast, and hold the Moghul admiral in check. Under the Peshwas, the Subha Armar was a part of the regular establishment, with its headquarters at Vijayadurg and a subordinate establishment at Bassein, which was also called the second Subha Armar. Mention is frequently made of the struggles carried on by the fleet of the Angrias with the English, till at last the Peshwa Balaji Baji Rao co-operated with the English and helped them to crush Angria's power on land and sea in 1756. Balaji Baji Rao had organised a plan by which the mercantile vessels, which traded from port to port, might be utilised for defensive purposes by enlisting the Tandels and Sarangs in private employ on increased pay when their services were wanted by the Government. Nothing came of this proposal. Anandrao Dhulap and his son Janrao continued to be the Peshwa's admirals in charge of the navy at Vijayadurg, but no great use was made of this force, except for the protection of commerce and the occasional overthrow of pirates from the Cutch and Gujarath side. Altogether, in assisting the English to put down Angria's power, the Peshwas diminished the importance of their own navy for defensive and offensive purposes.

FORTS

To turn next to the Forts. In the best times of the Maratha rule, more than 200 forts were garrisoned in all parts of the country. Sivaji understood the duties of a king to include the preservation of the forts as a matter of special concern, and elaborate regulations were made for the garrisons stationed in the forts. The defenders of the forts had lands assigned to them for their maintenance, and room was found for the employment of all classes, Brahmins, Marathas, Ramosis, Mahars, Mangs, etc. These latter performed out-post duties. Besides the garrisons specially attached to the forts, detachments of regular Infantry were stationed in the larger forts for protection. Later on, Portuguese artillery men were employed, and guns were mounted on the battlements of the forts in some places. In the Carnatic, Gardis were employed on similar duties as a check on the Canarese garrisons. The old system was departed from in the employment of these mercenaries, and even the old garrisons were shifted from one place to another for supposed reasons of state. Under the later Peshwas, these forts appear chiefly to have served

the double purpose of state granaries and state prisons. State prisoners were sent to the forts for custody, and the condemned criminals of both sexes were sent there for penal servitude. In the latter half of the century, the forts are chiefly mentioned in this connection. Against the more improved means of warfare, represented by the artillery, these hill-forts ceased to be valuable for purposes of defence, and in many places they were neglected and allowed to go into disrepair. In the wars with the English, the forts offered little or no protection, and submitted without firing a shot. The Army, the Navy and the Forts were thus, by the course of events and the neglect of the state, rendered incapable, for different reasons, of doing any service in the latter half of the last century.

PUBLIC DEBT

WHILE in these higher spheres of statesmanship and the art of Government, the lines of departure pursued by the later Peshwas and their ministers indicated visible signs of decay, it must in justice to them be admitted that in the matter of the revenue and judicial management, the Government at Poona showed great powers of application, careful elaboration of detail, and an honest desire to administer well the charge entrusted to them. The financial condition of the state was decidedly more prosperous than the hand-to-mouth system which characterised the first half of the last century. It is well known that all the great Maratha leaders, including Baji Rao I, always found it difficult to raise the monies required for their great expeditions into Hindustan, and the information given in the Diaries of the debts, contracted by Balaji Baji Rao between 1740 and 1760, shows a total of a crore and a half of public debt. The strain represented by this amount will be better understood when it is mentioned that the Peshwa's Government had to pay from 12 to 18 per cent. interest on these loans. Owing to the great collapse at Panipat, things did not much improve in the elder Madhaorao Peshwa's time. That Prince had a heavy load of debt, amounting to some Rs. 24,00,000, which had to be satisfied by the assurance given at his death-bed by the ministers about him that his bonds would be discharged there and then. Under Nana Fadnavis' careful management, the finances appear to have greatly improved, and the accounts do not show that the debts contracted by him exceeded a few lakhs. The last Peshwa had apparently no debts to pay, but was able to collect a large private treasure of his own.

REVENUE MANAGEMENT

THE system of revenue management under Balaji Baji Rao, Madhaorao, and Nana Fadnavis was, on the whole, careful. New sources of revenue were developed, and the old improved. The land settlements made by the Peshwas during this period show that, while anxious not to oppress the rayats, every care was taken to insist on the rights of the Government. Whenever the country needed that relief, leases varying from three to seven years were granted on the terms of "Istawas", *i.e.*, gradually increasing assessments. The old "Kamal" figures (maximum amounts ever realised) of village and pargana revenues were, of course, seldom collected and were never meant to be realised. These amounts were reduced by the Government, so as to suit the conditions of the population and ensure their general prosperity, in fixing the "Tankha" or realisable revenue, under the Muhammadan rule; and the Peshwas made large reductions in the "Tankha" figures, whenever owing to war or famine, enquiries showed that such reductions had become necessary. Wherever the Batai or system of crop division obtained, the Government, after deducting for seeds and other necessary charges paid by the rayats, left ½ or 1|3 of the crop to the cultivator, and took the rest for the state. In Sivaji's time, the proportions are stated to have been 2|5 and 3|5. The Batai system was not much in favour, but grain and proportionate cash rents prevailed throughout the country. In the South Konkan, the normal assessment appears to have been 10 maunds per bigha of rice land paid in kind. This amount was reduced to 9 and even 8 maunds in certain districts, on complaint being made that it was too exhorbitant. When cash payments were required, or were convenient to the rayats, they were fixed at the low amount of Rs. 15, 20, or 30 per Khandy according to season. The Brahmins had to pay lighter rates of 5 maunds or thereabouts in Northern Konkan. In a settlement of the Neral Taluka, the cash rates were from Rs. 3 to 5 per bigha, according to the quality of the soil; and the sugar-cane rate was Rs. 5 per bigha. In the Nasik District, where the cash rates prevailed, Rs. 2 per bigha for good black soil, Re. 1 for middling soil of Jirait land, and Rs. 5 to 6 for Bagait lands were deemed to be reasonable rates. In the Khed Taluka, Poona District, the rate in the time of Baji Rao II was Rs. 3 per bigha. In the less favoured parts of the Sattara District, the rates are stated to have ranged from 1¼ maunds to 6 maunds per bigha according to the quality of the soil. In Gujarath, the rates were much higher.

REMISSIONS

LARGE remissions were made, whenever the seasons were found to be unfavourable. Under the old revenue system, cultivated lands alone paid revenue, and in bad years the revenues fell, and remissions had to be constantly made in the state accounts.

THE KAMAVISHI SYSTEM

THE revenue management at the commencement of Baji Rao II's rule was conducted on the Kamavishi principle, *i.e.*, the Kamavisdar or Mamalatdar, and his establishment and contingencies were all paid by the state, the general proportion of charges being about 10 per cent. on the collection. The number and pay of the Karkoons and the Shibandi, *i.e.*, the horsemen and sepoys, were carefully fixed in a sort of budget or Beheda statement, and the Kamavisdar had thus little or no motive to practise oppression. The Jamabandi made by him had to be approved by superior officers called Subhas and Sir Subhas, and the complaints of the Jamidars, village authorities, and rayats were listened to and redressed by the removal and punishment of these officers when they misconducted themselves. The Kamavisdar, though appointed for one year, held the office during good behaviour.

IJARA OR FARMING SYSTEM

IN the time of the Second Baji Rao, the Kamavishi system gave place to what was called the Ijara or farming system, the Ijardar undertaking to pay his own establishment and making profit for himself, after paying the state-dues and certain secret payments to the Peshwa himself, which were not brought to the state account, but were credited in his Khasgi or private treasure. If we except these Ijara abuses introduced by the last Peshwa, the Kamavishi management was as carefully looked after under Maratha rule, as in the best times of any Indian or British rule, before or after. Grant Duff has admitted that the weak points of the system told more against the interests of the state than on individuals, and that the Maratha country was more thriving than any other part of India in proportion to its fertility.

REVENUE DIVISIONS

THE whole country was divided into about twelve Subhas, each Subha consisting of Parganas or Mamalat divisions, or Taluka divisions as we now call them. These Subhas were : (1) Khandesh,

30 Parganas, including Baglan, (2) Nemad Prant, Handa-5, (3) Poona and Nagar-18, (4) Konkan-15, (5) Gangathadi, including the Nasik District-25, (6) Gujarath Prant-20, (7) Carnatic, (8) Sattara with Wai and Karad, (9 and 10) the Customs Subhas, Poona and Junnar, and Kalyan and Bhiwandi, and (11 and 12) the two Armar Subhas, Vijayadurg and Bassein.

VILLAGE AUTONOMY

THE village autonomy was not interfered with. The Patil and the Kulkarni were responsible for the collections, and received their dues independently of the Government. Security of the sowkars had to be given for the payment of the year's revenue, and the village rayat had a joint responsibility. The country, on the whole, was prosperous.

WAGES AND PRICES

THE rates of wages were from Rs. 3 to 7 for menials and sepoys, and for higher artisans, very much what they now are outside the great towns, from As. 6 to 10 per day. The Karkoon's wages were generally Rs. 7 to 10 per month. The prices of food-stuffs were generally more unsteady than they are now, but it may be roughly stated that staple grains, Jwari and Bajri, were about three to four times as cheap as they now are. The rates of wages being, on an average, half of what they have been for many years past, while the prices were 3 to 4 times as cheap, the people had ample resources during good seasons, and no great famine is recorded during this period, though partial famines are frequently mentioned. There was no dearth of remunerative employment throughout this period, by reason of the large wealth acquired from the successes of the Marathas in foreign conquest, and there was thus no pressure felt of the land tax and other cesses, except in the Border provinces devastated by wars. Oppression seems to have been rare, as the people had the remedy in their own hands, of either putting down the oppressor, or migrating to other territories for a time.

TAGAI ADVANCES

BESIDES granting remissions for seeds or improvements, the Peshwa's Government encouraged the Kamavisdar to make Tagai grants to the cultivators, as also for rebuilding houses, when destroyed by fire, and supplying cattle.

PUBLIC WORKS

THE Government also undertook public works such as constructing dams, building roads in the ghats, and landing places on river-banks, digging tanks, and securing water supplies to towns; and several such large items are found in these accounts. The advances to the cultivators were made for short periods, one or two years, but the Kamavisdars were lenient, and they were generally not removed till these advances had been repaid. In cases where such removal took place, the successor was required to pay off the previous holder. Owing to the necessities of the state, the Government frequently borrowed of the Kamavisdar the instalments in advance of the time fixed. On such advances, the state agreed to pay 12 per cent. interest to the Kamavisdar, till the debt was paid off.

FORCED LABOUR OR WETHA

UNDER the earlier Peshwas, the system of forced labour or 'Wetha' was extensively in use, and caused great annoyance to the poorer classes and artisans who were subjected to it. In the first Madhaorao's time, these grievances were partially redressed, and money payments were allowed to be substituted, to the convenience of both the parties. The state in this respect was more liberal than private masters. The general impression, left on one's mind by the study of the revenue portion of the record in these Diaries, is on the whole very favourable, and it will be difficult to show that there has been, during the last eighty years, any decided improvement in this respect.

OTHER TAXES

BESIDES the land-tax, a number of other cesses were levied, chief among them being the house-tax, and shop-tax, called the 'Mohturfa.' In the Konkan districts, tobacco imports were taxed at the Revadanda and other ports.

SALT

THE manufacture of salt was made to yield a small income at Nagotna and at Bhyndar near Bassein, the duty being at Nagotna Rs. 2-10-0 per Khandy, and at Bhyndar Re. 1-6-0 per Khandy on salt produced. These rates were 20 to 31 times lighter than what are now charged by Government.

ABKARI

TODDY and Cocoanut trees were taxed, when tapped for drawing liquor, in Bassein and the territories held previously by the Portuguese on the Konkan coast. This last tax had been introduced on the express representation of the Bhandaris and the rayats of those parts, who complained that they could not carry on their trade without the use of some kind of liquor. No revenue was derived from Abkari except in the Konkan, and a little receipt from liquor farms near Poona itself. There were similarly petty taxes on the production of ghee, grazing fees, marriage fees, the buffalo tax and the tax on the right of catching fish in some places.

FERRIES

THE ferries were in general free of all charges, being kept by the state, but in some cases, farms were given for the collection of revenue from the more frequented ferries. These were very late creations, suggested by the greed of petty farmers, and yielded very scanty revenue. When the Ijara system was introduced by the Second Baji Rao, the abuses consequent on the farming system necessarily multiplied, and must have caused considerable annoyance and oppression. Under the Kamavishi system, which prevailed before, the inducements to oppression were, as stated above, not so powerful, and they were checked by the Subhas and Sir Subhas corresponding with our Commissioners. There were 5 such officers in the Konkan, Carnatic, Khandesh, Gujarath and Baglan. On the whole, the Peshwa's Government kept up the reputation of a mild rule.

CUSTOMS : JAKAT OR LAND CUSTOMS

THERE was no separate department of Sea Customs, except the revenues assigned to the Subha Armars, under the Peshwas, but the Land Customs, levied on the transport of goods, yielded a considerable revenue, and the Customs Subhas, as they were called, of Kalyan and Bhivandi, Poona and Junnar, were especially prosperous. The Kalyan and Bhivandi Subhas yielded in Balaji's time a sum of Rs. 55,000, and it developed to Rs. 3,00,000 towards the close of the century, and the income of the Poona Subha increased from Rs. 35,000 to nearly a lakh. The town duties in Poona itself were farmed and yielded a considerable revenue, chiefly from octroi on goods imported and exported and on sales

of cloth, tobacco, and other necessaries of a town population. Similar duties were levied at Ahmedabad, on the scales originally laid down by the Emperors of Delhi. The revenue management thus reflected no little credit on the ingenuity and skill of the Brahmin ministers and their District and Pargana officers, and little fault can be found as regards the way in which these resources were developed and administered.

JUSTICE

THE proper administration of civil and criminal justice may well be regarded as a more decisive test of the efficiency and success of the rulers than the collection of the land revenue, the cesses and the customs. Judged by this test, it must be said to the credit of the Brahmin Peshwas that, while they did not reconstitute any of the other departments of the state included in the Raj-Mandal, they revived the office of the Nyayadhisha at Poona, and entrusted him with the fullest powers in disposing of civil and criminal cases, which, in the last resort, came up before the Poona Court by way of appeal, or original trial, or confirmation, from the Subordinate District officials.

RAMA SHASTRI

THIS creation of the office of the Nyayadhisha appears to have taken place about the year 1760, and the choice of Rama Shastri for the post was a peculiarly happy one, and brought honour and credit to the Government. The office was continued after Rama Shastri's retirement, and seems to have been filled by equally learned men, the last of whom was Balkrishna Shastri Tokekar, who lived in the reign of Baji Rao II. The general arrangement appears to have been that the Kamavisdar, besides his revenue duties, had both civil and criminal powers attached to his office, and the proceeds of civil and criminal fine, up to a certain amount, in petty cases of assault, theft and similar offences, as also the payments made by the civil suitors who gained or lost their cases, formed a regular source of his income, though he had to account to the state for these receipts. All amounts of fine above the prescribed limit were credited to the state account. Besides the new Chief Court started at Poona, it further appears that small Provincial Courts with limited jurisdiction, to help the Kamavisdar or Subhedar, were also established in some of the districts.

CIVIL CASES

In civil cases, the amounts paid by the successful suitor and his defeated antagonist were respectively called "Harki" and "Gunhegari," and the total of civil fines thus recovered seems to have been about 15 per cent. on the value of the matter in dispute, the Gunhegari being about twice the figure for the Harki.

MONEY SUITS

In our modern sense of the word, Small Cause suits for money due from debtors were very rare under the Maratha rule. As the creditors generally enjoyed large powers of enforcing their dues, by detaining debtors, etc., the state-help was only required in the case of powerful persons, and in such cases 25 per cent. of the recoveries so made were claimed by the state as a charge for its help.

VATAN SUITS

Civil litigation was chiefly confined to Vatan, Adoption, Partition, Partnership, Boundary disputes, and other cases of a like character. The decision was made to rest chiefly on the evidence of the witnesses on both sides, who were examined under the sanction of the most effective oaths and solemn asseverations on the waters of the sacred rivers. After the parties had stated their respective cases, the witnesses' testimony was first recorded, and then the men were called upon to choose their arbitrators from their own or neighbouring villages, and the decision of the Kamavisdars gave effect to the views of the arbitrators. In very rare cases, where the evidence was conflicting, or no evidence could be secured, recourse was had to ordeal, and the decision depended upon the result. Out of some seventy contested cases, the decisions in which are recorded at length in these Diaries, the test of ordeal was made to regulate the verdict in six cases, and even in these six cases, there were only two occasions when the parties challenged each other to the ordeal of fire. In the other four cases, bathing in the river sufficed to bring out the truth. There was no room for the employment of pleaders. The parties had the right to carry their appeals to the head of the Government, who, if not satisfied with the arbitration, called on the parties to select a new Punch, to whom the case was referred. In all big civil cases, the decision appears to have been brought into force after reporting to the central authorities.

CRIMINAL

In regard to criminal justice, it deserves to be noted that under Sahu Raja and the earlier Peshwas, the only punishments judicially administered were penal servitude, imprisonment in the forts, confiscation of property, fine, and in a few cases, banishment beyond the frontiers. Capital punishment or mutilation appears to have been studiously and religiously avoided, even in cases of murder, treason or dacoity. Mutilation was inflicted in a few cases in the reign of Madhaorao I; but even in the troublous times in which he lived, capital punishment was never inflicted. In Savai Madhaorao's time, under Nana Fadnavis there seems to have been a clear departure from this mild administration of the law, and cruel mutilation and wholesale capital punishments were inflicted on criminals convicted of murder, treason or dacoity. The Brahmins and women of all castes were exempted from capital punishment. In the case of Brahmins, confinement in the fort was the highest punishment and the civil penalties were joined with religious penalties, including excommunication. The cruel punishments, inflicted in Nana Fadnavis' time, seem to have been the result of internal dissensions, which began to disturb the public peace in the time of Madhaorao I and increased in virulence when Raghoba Daba contested the throne. A comparative statement of figures compiled from the Selections will bring out this point more distinctly than any description in words.

MURDER

In Sahu's time, there were 8 trials for murder, in 5 of which the accused were acquitted, and only in three, the accused were convicted and fine and imprisonment were imposed. In the last ten years of Balaji Baji Rao, there were 20 trials for murder, in 3 of which the persons charged were acquitted, in 8, heavy fines were imposed, and in the remaining 9, confiscation of property was the only punishment awarded. When property was confiscated, steps were taken to make compensation to the heirs of the murdered persons by making a grant to them out of the confiscated property. In the time of Madhaorao I, there were 7 cases, in which persons were tried for murder. Fines were levied in 3, and Vatans were confiscated in 3 other cases, and in one, where the murderer was a Brahmin, confinement in the fort was ordered. In Nana Fadnavis' time, capital punishment was awarded in two cases, involving a number of criminals, and other

cases of murder were disposed of by the award of imprisonment, fine and confiscation. In Baji Rao II's time, two cases of murder are mentioned in these Selections, in which Brahmins were the offenders, and they were sent to prison.

TREASON

THE punishment for petty treason, *i.e.*, for creating a rebellion or joining the enemy, was, throughout the whole period, confinement in the forts, or confiscation of property. As regards persons convicted of political treason by way of attempts on the person of the Peshwas, or waging war against the state, the punishment meted out was that the criminal was trampled under the foot of an elephant.

DACOITY

IN dealing with armed dacoities, Madhaorao I and Nana Fadnavis inflicted more cruel punishments than in the case of private murders. Mutilations of hands and feet, which apparently disfigured the annals of criminal administration up to 1760, were first ordered in Madhaorao's reign, and in Nana Fadnavis' time wholesale executions were ordered of the criminals locked in the gaols and convicted of this charge. In one case, 20 men were beheaded, in another, 13 men had their both hands and feet cut off, and in the third case, 18 men had their either hand or foot or ear cut off.

ROBBERY

THESE cruel punishments appear to have been extensively resorted to with a view to strike terror. Later on, these extreme penalties were inflicted even in cases of robberies, which did not come under the head of dacoities, or in which the members of the criminal tribes were not concerned. The punishment for robbery generally was fine or imprisonment in the forts.

ADULTERY

FOR adultery in the case of women, the punishment was imprisonment with penal servitude in the forts or in the Kothis, *i.e.*, state stores, where they were made to grind corn, and in the case of men, imprisonment or fine.

SLAVES

As regards women convicted of adultery, condemned to penal servitude, or service in the Kothis or stores, it may be noted that they lost their status and freedom, and were treated as slaves. Their progeny especially was regarded as the children of no father, but were only known by their mothers' names. The ranks of these condemned slaves had accession made to them of other persons from the lowest classes who lived by prostitution, and children captured in foreign territory by Banjaris or Lamans, who brought them for sale in Peshwa's territory. Slavery so recruited thus became a recognised institution, and men and women slaves were transferable like the dumb cattle from one owner to another for money consideration. When the slaves grew old, some of them were released from prisons, and the private slaves were also set free by their owners from charitable considerations. The slaves, on the whole, appear to have been kindly treated, especially those women slaves who were made to work in the Peshwa's Kothis, or in private houses.

CASTING EVIL SPIRITS

THERE was one kind of criminal offence not known to our modern code, which seems to have been severely punished under the Peshwas. It refers to the charge of casting evil spirits, and offences under this head seem to have been an important feature of criminal administration, especially in the Konkan. In fact, under the last two Peshwas, regular officers with establishments were employed for the discovery and punishments of witches and wizards who were accused of troubling their neighbours by the agency of evil spirits. It formed a part of the police duty of the district officers to exterminate the evil spirits.

PERJURY

FOR perjury and forgery, the usual punishment was fine, and imprisonment where fine could not be levied by reason of poverty.

COW-KILLING AND OTHER OFFENCES

COW-KILLING was punished severely. False coinage, and offences regarding weights and measures were punished with fines and imprisonment. Abduction and seduction, theft and cheating were punished with fines. The brief conspectus of the way in which criminal justice was administered will show that, except under

Nana Fadnavis, the administration of the law was never vindictive or cruel, but was sympathetic and mild to a degree unknown before or since. The punishments were adequate to the offence and not too severe.

STATE PRISONERS

NANA FADNAVIS' administration was exceptional for the reasons stated above, and he appears to have been equally severe in the way in which he treated his political enemies. Sakharampant Bapu, who was at one time a pillar of the state, was imprisoned in the forts for the part he took in siding with Raghoba Dada, and the same fate overtook Raghoba's other friends, chiefly Parbhus, Raghunath Hari, Baburao Hari, and others. Nana Fadnavis' own near relative Moro Baburao was similarly sent to prison, and in Baji Rao II's time, Nana Fadnavis had himself to share the same fate. The strife of the parties seems to have been much more bitter in those days than was the case under the first three Peshwas. State prisoners were treated with leniency in those days. This generosity was not shown to the friends and followers of Raghoba Dada, or the Pretender's followers, who were mostly Brahmins holding high offices.

POLICE

As regards the Police, the Kamavisdar, with his Shibandi force of horse and foot, constituted the regular police defence of the country. In the villages, the Patil and Kulkarni, and the Jaglias or watchmen, consisting of Mahars and Mangs, secured their internal quiet, and in the larger villages or towns, each man had to do watch duty at the Chowdi by turns.

CITY KOTWALS

BESIDES the Shibandis and the village police, in large towns Kotwali establishments were organised for the detection and the punishment of crime, and we find that Kotwals were appointed at Poona, Nasik, Pandharpur, Nagar, Sattara, Wai, Ahmedabad, Burhanpur, Trimbak and other towns.

CONSERVANCY

THIS Kotwali establishment had also the charge of the conservancy of the cities, and scavengers were provided and paid for by cesses levied from the householders. The appointments

of scavengers were made at Poona, Nagar, Pandharpur, Nasik, and other places. The Kotwals at Poona, Nagar, Pandharpur, Junnar, and Nasik had powers of Magistrates in miscellaneous cases, which, in the districts, were disposed of by the Kamavisdars.

MINTS AND POST

In the Miscellaneous Departments, Mints occupied an important place. The Post Office did not occupy any recognised position under the Maratha rule. Special agencies were employed on particular occasions, when the armies went to Hindustan or to the Karnatic. These special agencies consisted of special Jasuds or Kassids, *i.e.*, runners, who apparently took 18 days to go to Delhi from Thalner, and 13 days from Maheshwar, and they were paid handsomely, Rs. 3 a day, the amount being regulated inversely according to the number of days they took for the journey. When the Peshwas had to correspond with Calcutta, they sent their Jasuds to Burhanpur, and thence these runners took on the post to Benares, where an English officer, in charge of postal arrangements, dispatched the Peshwa's post to Calcutta. In the wars in the Karnatic, the Peshwas found it necessary to organise special postal arrangements from Poona to Badami, and sixty men were employed to carry the daily post to and fro while the war lasted. Beyond these stray efforts, no regular State Postal Service for private or official use appears to have been maintained, and the private work was done by the employees of Sawkars, who made these long journeys to carry remittances, at stated intervals, and took the private post of those who cared to correspond with their distant relations.

MEDICINE

As regards Medicine, the function of the state in the distribution of charitable relief was not recognised beyond the fact that well-known Hakims and Vaidyas were honoured with grants of villages, and were often supplied with other necessary help for the preparation of medicines. The Hakims were in requisition for the army, and were valued chiefly as surgeons. There is only one mention made of a Gujarathi doctor, who supplied medicines gratis at Nasik, and was rewarded with a Jahagir, which was continued to his son, as he maintained the dispensary. There was another Vaidya, for whom a sort of botanical garden

at Wai was provided for the cultivation of rare drugs, and he was supplied with other help for the preparation of medicines from them. These scanty notices are all that can be gathered from the Selections as regards the way in which this most important state function of charitable relief was discharged.

MILITARY PENSIONS

THE state was more liberal in the rewards it gave in the case of soldiers who lost their lives on the battlefield. Hundreds of such instances are mentioned in the Selections, where the heirs of the deceased were rewarded with Inams, or maintenance-allowances were made to the widows and children, and in some cases, the office held by the father was conferred on the son. In making these awards, no distinction was made between Brahmins and Marathas, or Hindus and Muhammadans. All those, who had received wounds or had died in the service of the state, were generously treated without distinction.

RELIGIOUS CHARITIES

THE same liberality was shown in the distribution of grants to religious charities. The bulk of the benefactions were conferred upon Brahmins, as might be expected, but the old Muhammadan grants were continued to Dargas and Mosques, and many new grants were made to Muhammadans and even Christians, the last especially in the Konkan. There was a singular absence of any religious prejudice in the distribution of this charity. These Dewasthan and Varshasan allowances, granted by the state under the Maratha rule, make up a very large total, exceeding many lakhs, which attest to the generosity of the state in this respect.

HONORIFIC TITLES

UNDER Raja Sahu, the function of the state of granting honorific titles on deserving officials found considerable scope, and on the model of the Delhi Emperors, high-sounding titles were freely bestowed on Hindu Generals and Commanders. Under the later Peshwas, this function was more sparingly exercised, and the honours conferred took the form chiefly of allowing the officer the dignity of riding in a Palkhi or having the permission to employ a person to hold an Abdagir, for which a separate allowance was made by the state.

ENCOURAGEMENT TO TRADE

In regard to the encouragement of trade, the Selections show that in Balaji Baji Rao's time, the Punna Diamond mines in Bundelkhand were worked to advantage under concessions granted by the Peshwa. Traders from Arabia were encouraged to settle in the Konkan ports. Their trade was chiefly in horses, and they were allowed to enter the territory free of Customs duty. Similar favours were shown to the European traders who sought admission for their goods into the country. Liberal concessions were made for enlarging the limits of the more prosperous towns by grant of land, exemptions, and Vatans to those who undertook to bring foreign settlers and induced them to build new houses, and open new bazaars. The silk and embroidery industry of Poona was entirely due to the encouragement given to the foreign settlers from Burhanpur, Paithan, and other towns to come and live under the Peshwa's protection on house sites which were granted free to them. Individual merchants were encouraged in large towns to open shops with the help of Government advances.

EXTENSION OF POONA

The prosperity of Poona attracted a large number of people to come and settle there of their own accord, so that Poona, which was before 1748 only a small Kasba town, developed into the proportions of a city, which it now exhibits in its 16 suburbs or Peiths, all of them established by private citizens under state patronage, and named after the principal Sardars or of the members of the Peshwa family.

ENCOURAGEMENT OF LEARNING

Reference has already been made to the Dakshina grant paid to Shastris, Pundits and Vaidiks. This Dakshina was instituted in the first instance by the Senapati Khanderao Dabhade, and when, on the death of that officer, the resources were curtailed, the charity was taken over by the state into its own hands. Disbursements increased from year to year, till they rose to Rs. 60,000 in Nana Fadnavis' time. These Dakshina grants redeemed to a certain extent the reprehensible extravagance of Baji Rao II's charities. Learned Sanskrit scholars from all parts of India,—from Bengal, Mithil or Behar and Benares, as also from the South, the Telangan, Dravid and the Karnatic,—flocked to Poona, and were honoured with distinctions and rewards, securing to them position throughout the country which they highly appreciated.

Some four lakhs of rupees were annually disbursed by Baji Rao II in his charities. The ordinary Brahmins were served with food in the Ramana gathering or open enclosures, while the learned people, who refused to take part in the miscellaneous assembly, were invited to the Peshwa's palace, and were honoured with shawls, and money gifts according to their tested merits. The amount thus spent came to a lakh and a quarter. The remaining three lakhs were spent on the Ramana charity. The result of this munificence brought credit to Poona as a city of learning, and this credit it continued to enjoy even after the downfall of the Peshwas, as long as the old Pathashala was maintained out of the Dakshina grant by Elphinstone and his immediate successors. Times have altered since then, and the Dakshina grant has been utilised for similar purposes which have popularised the study of Sanskrit literature and philosophy among all classes of students. No direct encouragement was given to other than the Sanskrit Pandits, but the Puraniks and Haridasas were regarded as being equally entitled to special grants with Vaidiks and Shastris, and these were noted for their command and skill in the exposition of the great Maratha poets. Rich Sardars patronised Marathi learning, as, for instance, the great Maratha poet Moropant had for his patron the Baramatikar Joshis. As regards the lower classes, the national fondness for *Powadas* and *Lavanis,* contributed to the rise of ballad and love poetry, and some of the most noted composers of this kind of literature derived encouragement from Baji Rao II's support. These brief notices of the miscellaneous activities of the state will suffice to recommend the subject to the fuller consideration of those students of our past history, who might be inclined to pursue their researches further into the old record.

SUPERSTITIONS

PERHAPS the most interesting and permanently useful information furnished by these records is that which relates to the social changes attempted by the Maratha Government. It is not to be supposed for a moment that the Brahmin leaders, who were entrusted with the government of the country, had not their full share of the implicit belief in the superstitions of the time. Reference has already been made to the attempted regulations of the practice of exorcising evil spirits, whose agency was, it was believed, utilised by evil-doers to ruin their enemies. Belief in omens and prognostics was common to all classes. It is

recorded that a student cut off his tongue, and another Gujarathi devotee cut off his head by way of offering it to the deity he worshipped, and in both the cases, the events were reported to the Government by the local officials, and large sums were spent to purify the temples and ward off the dangers threatened by these unholy sacrifices. People were filled with alarm, when it was reported that an earthquake had disturbed the Kalyan Taluka. A fortress on the Ghats was believed to have suffered injury from the influence of evil sight, and another fortress, a few years later, was rendered unfit for occupation by the prevalence of an unaccountable disease. In all these three cases, steps were taken to pacify the elements by general purification. The donee of a Jahagir village prayed to Government to resume the grant and exchange it for some other, as the gift became undesirable on account of the prevalence of evil spirits. Partial and local famines gave frequent trouble in those days, and large sums were spent in employing Brahmins to drown the gods, or pour water over them for days and weeks together. Sacrifice of buffaloes to a goddess at Trimbak, which had been stopped for some years, was resumed by the order of the Government at the instance of Brahmin devotees. When a man-eating tiger appeared on the Saptashringi Hill in the Nasik District, the Kamavisdar was ordered to consult the pleasure of the goddess, and if she consented, to employ men to shoot it.

A lizard having fallen on the body of the idol at Pandharpur, a great penance was ordered in which Brahmins took part. The sale of cows to butchers was strictly prohibited throughout the country. Some Muhammadans, who were guilty of breaking the law, were severely punished, and a Brahmin, who cut off the tail of a cow, was sent to prison. The revival of the old Yajnas, or great sacrifices, lasting over many days and weeks, was encouraged as being conducive to the prosperity of the State, and several large sacrifices were so patronised by the Government by the supply of all the necessary articles in cash and kind, costing several thousands of rupees. Shrines and temples multiplied in and about Poona, and there is printed record which gives a list of some 250 temples, which were of sufficient imporance to receive state-

help in 1810-1811. The relative popularity of the several deities will appear from the analysis which shows that there were 52 temples of Maruti, the attendant of Rama, while Rama himself had 18 places of worship. The temples dedicated to Vishnu were 9, to Vithoba 34, to Krishna as Balaji 12. Rama and Krishna incarnations had thus 73 places of worship. The most popular gods with the Brahmins were Mahadeo who had 40 temples, and Ganapati who had 36 temples. Judged by the number of temples, the worshippers of Shiva and Vishnu were thus nearly equal. The old aboriginal gods had in all 32 places of worship; the Devi had 10; Dattatraya had only one temple for his worship, and there were 8 places of Muhammadan Dargas held in veneration.

Too great a stress should not be placed upon the accounts given above of the popular beliefs and superstitions. They were in keeping with the general condition of the country all over India, and no man or body of men should be condemned for simply following the current of the time. The Peshwa's Government deserves credit for the inculcation of better principles and a more liberal social code adopted by them, and to the principal items of reforms attempted by that Government, we may now fitly refer here with advantage. In those times of wars and troubles, there were frequent occasions when men had to forsake their ancestral faith under pressure, force, or fraud, and there are four well-attested instances in which the readmission into their respective castes, both of Brahmins and Marathas, was not merely attempted, but successfully effected, with the consent of the caste, and with the permission of the state authorities. A Maratha, named Putaji Bandgar, who had been made a captive by the Moghuls, and forcibly converted to Muhammadanism, rejoined the forces of Balaji Vishvanath, on their way back to Delhi, after staying with the Muhammadans for a year, and at his request, his readmission, with the consent of the caste, was sanctioned by Raja Sahu. A Konkanastha Brahmin, surnamed Raste, who had been kept a state prisoner by Haider in his armies, and had been suspected to have conformed to Muhammadan ways of living for his safety, was similarly admitted into caste

with the approval of the Brahmins and under sanction from the state. Two Brahmins, one of whom had been induced to become a Gosawee by fraud, and another from a belief that he would be cured of a disease from which he suffered, were readmitted into caste, after repentance and penance. These two cases occurred, one at Puntamba, in the Nagar District, and the other at Paithan, in the Nizam's dominions, and their admission was made with the full concurrence of the Brahmins under the sanction of the authorities. In regard to temperance it may be noted that the Brahmin Government of Poona absolutely prohibited the manufacture and sale of liquors as a general principle of action, but it was practical enough to make exceptions, when local necessities were pleaded by Bhandaris, Kolis and other communities in the territories conquered from the Portuguese in Bassein, Chowl, and other places. Exception was made in favour of these men, and the lower castes generally, but the order provided that Brahmins, Parbhus, and Government officers generally were to be strictly prohibited from the use of drink, and very heavy penalties were exacted from the offender who broke the law. Several Brahmins of Nasik, who were Dharmadhikaris of the place, were suspected of having indulged in drink, and as they proved contumacious, they were sent to forts, and were imprisoned there by way of punishment. A rich Maratha patel in the Khed Taluka was warned once against the danger incurred by reason of his intemperate habits, and when this warning proved ineffective, half of his Inam land, measuring one Chahur, was confiscated by way of punishment.

As regards marriage reforms it may be noted that Baji Rao II passed strict orders specially for the Konkan District and for Wai, prohibiting the sale of girls by the bride's father in consideration of marriage. Very strict regulations were passed imposing fines, equal to the amounts received, upon one or both the parties and the marriage brokers. Apparently with a view to check the practice, Baji Rao further ordered that no girl above 9 should remain unmarried, thereby claiming for the state the right to interfere in what is generally regarded as the province of the Shastras. In a few

cases, where attempts had been made to marry young children by force, and the full rite was not completed, the Peshwas set aside the attempted marriages, and permitted the girls to be given to other more suitable persons. In one case, where a marriage alliance had been formally settled, and the bridegroom was afterwards found to be suffering from leprosy, the Peshwa's Government interfered, the betrothal was set aside, and the bride's father was premitted to give his girl to whomsoever he chose. It is also well known that on Sadashivrao Bhau's disappearance on the battle-field of Panipat, his wife Parwatibai, who survived him, was allowed to retain all the insignia of wifehood, till the day of her death, which took place in 1783, twenty-one years after the disappearance of her husband, and the funeral rites of both the husband and wife were performed together on her death. This exhibition of chivalrous regard for the feelings of the lady in question is to be noted, specially because a Kanoja Pretender had appeared in the meanwhile and claimed to be Sadashivrao Bhau himself, and had to be put down after great exertions by the Peshwa's army. After being once put in prison, he had escaped after some years' confinement, and raised a rebellion in the Konkan which was put down again in 1776, and he was sentenced to be trodden under foot by an elephant. Narayanrao Peshwa's widow was similarly allowed to remain without disfigurement for several years during the time she survived her husband's death. It is well known that the efforts made by Parashuram Bhau Patwardhan, on behalf of his widowed daugter, to secure the consent of the Brahmins for her second marriage, found no opposition from the Peshaw. But Bhau had to give up his idea under pressure of his own female relations.

As between caste and caste, the Peshwas held the balance evenly, even when the interests of the Brahmin priests were affected. The right of the Sonars to employ priests of their own caste was upheld against the opposition of the Poona Joshis. The claim made by the Kumbhars (potters) for the bride and the bridegroom to ride on horse-back was upheld against the carpenters and blacksmiths who opposed it. The Kasars' right to go in processions along the streets, which was

opposed by the Lingayats, was similarly upheld. The right of the Parbhus to use Vedic formulas in worship had indeed been questioned in Narayanrao Peshwa's time, and they were ordered to use only Puranic forms like the Shudras. This prohibition was, however, resented by the Parbhus, and in Baji Rao II's time the old order appears to have been cancelled, and the Parbhus were allowed to have the Munja or thread ceremony performed as before. A Konkani Kalal or publican, who had been put out of his caste, because he had given his daughter in marriage to a Gujarathi Kalal, complained to the Peshwa, and order was given to admit him into caste. In the matter of inter-marriage, Balaji Baji Rao set the example by himself marrying the daughter of a Deshastha Sowkar, named Wakhare, in 1760. The Peshwas in Sahu's time issued orders prohibiting alliances by way of marriages between second cousins, which practice seems then to have been in vogue in Konkan, and is continued to this day in many cases. The point to be regarded in all these instances is not to be estimated by the actual success achieved, but by the fact that these rulers interested themselves in these matters, and showed considerable liberality in the orders issued by them to correct existing social evils. The right of the State to interfere in such matters was broadly claimed in one of these orders, when it was directed that when the Subha had ordered the exclusion of any person from his caste, the members of the caste had no right to take on themselves to set the order aside without reference to the Dewan, that is, to the state or the Central Authorities. In the case of those castes, where ordinary punishments could not be inflicted by reason of their being Brahmins or otherwise, the authorities under the Peshwa showed considerable skill in supplementing the more lenient civil penalty by the employment of religious penances and fines. And it was in this connection that the order noted above was issued.

These brief notices of the social regulations attempted under the Maratha rulers with a view to promote the admission of converts, the practice of inter-marriage, the prohibition of the sale of girls, the enforcement of temperance, their policy in permitting a second gift of girls informally married

or engaged by force or fraud, the claim made by them to control the action of the castes and their independence, and the enforcement of equality in the treatment of different castes, all these afford clear indications that social reform was not a subject about which the Maratha and Brahmin rulers were indifferent. They strengthen the view, which Telang first advocated in his 'Gleanings from the Bakhars' that in this respect these rulers showed greater moral courage and liberality of sentiment than what people are at present disposed to give them credit for, and that the advantages of English education may well be regarded as too dearly purchased, if our people, in this respect, show a more retrograde tendency or greater weakness of the moral fibre than commended itself to our ancestors only a hundred years ago.

The Civil, Criminal and Revenue administration of the Peshwas compares favourably with that of the best Hindu or Muhammadans rulers of the time. It was wanting, certainly, in the higher statesmanship of Akbar or Sivaji, and it had the germs of its own dissolution implanted in it. Its fall was doomed when it lost touch of these higher traditions, and it had to fight the race of life with a stronger power. But for the time it lasted, the Government of the country was wisely and honestly administered on the whole, excluding, of course, the periods when internal dissensions disturbed the public peace. The hidden tendencies of caste exclusiveness and sacerdotal pride soon began to manifest themselves, and to this was joined an utter incapacity to realise the claims of a higher civilisation, and to study the development of arts and sciences, and the advantages of a liberal social polity, and a purer religion. Our failure to realise this higher life brought on the final collapse long before any outside influences were brought to operate upon us.

CHAPTER V

SHIVAJI'S CONCEPTION OF A HINDU EMPIRE

The descent of Shivaji from the solar Sisodia dynasty of Chitor had long been traditionally accepted in Maharastra and has been recently confirmed by the publication in facsimile, of several important Persian sanads held by the present Raja of Mudhol, in the Bijapur district, surnamed Ghorpade. This family of Mudhol and that of the Chhatrapatis of Satara are now proved to have descended from a common ancestor, Sajjansinh, grandson of Rana Lakshmansinh, of Chitor. Sajjansinh migrated to the south about the year 1320 after the terrible havoc wrought upon Chitor by the Pathan Sultan Ala-ud-din Khilji. Sajjansinh, his brother Khemsinh and their successors served the rulers of the Bahamani Kingdom and won from them various jagirs at different times, the original deeds of which are now available for study.[1] About the year 1470, two brothers. Karansinh and Shubhakrishna, descendants of Sajjansinh, effected a partition of their landed property; the former, elder, inheriting the southern portion of Mudhol, and the younger. Shubhakrishna, obtaining the northern portion between Daulatabad and Poona. The Mudhol branch acquired their surname Ghorpade, for having successfully scaled by means of an iguana (*ghorpad*) the walls of Khelna or Vishalgad under the command of Mahmud Gawan, the famous minister of the Bahamani kings. Maloji Bhosle, the grandfather of Shivaji, was about the fifth in descent from he younger branch represented by Shubhakrishna. It would thus seem that there intervened about twelve generations during the three hundred years that elapsed between Sajjansinh and Maloji (1320-1620). The Bhosles and the Ghorpades having been once separated, followed different fortunes in their respective careers and often manifested deadly enmity against each other during historic times. We know how Baji Ghorpade was prominent in arresting Shahji

[1] *Shivaji the Great, Vol. I, pt. I, by Dr. Balkrishana.*

Bhosle near Jinji and how he was later on killed by Shivaji out of revenge. Like the Bhosles and the Ghorpades, it should be noted, several other Maratha families of the Deccan such as the Pawars, the Jadhavs, the Moreys etc., also claim a Rajput origin.

An enormous mass of old Marathi and Persian papers of pre-Shivaji days which have been recently published, throw considerable light on the early activities of Shivaji and his two immediate ancestors Shahji and Maloji. Shahji served with distinction and valour under Malik Ambar, the able minister of the kings of Ahmadnagar. Malik Ambar taking advantage of the guerilla tactics so admirably suited to the hilly regions of western Deccan and so ably employed by the Maratha leaders under Bijapur, Golkonda and Ahmadnagar, successfully resisted for a quarter of a century the persistent efforts of Jahangir for extending his empire into the south.

Several scholars have observed a curious fact in these occurrences, that just as Shivaji and Aurangzeb between them created the history of the latter half of the seventeenth century, so did to some extent before them their fathers also in the earlier part of that century. Shahji (1594-1664) and Shah Jahan (1592-1666), contemporaries in age and activity, played a game which was later continued. by their sons. Their grandfathers Jahangir and Maloji were the first to find themselves in opposition. Lukhji Jadhaorao commanded an influential position under the Nizam Shah then ruling from Daulatabad and deserted to the Mughals in the early part of the struggle, thereby encountering his son-in-law in open fights more than once. In the battle of Bhatavdi towards the end of 1624 Malik Ambar succeeded with the help of Shahji and other Marathas in inflicting a crushing defeat upon the combined Mughal and Bijapuri armies. The next three years (1624-1627) were full of trouble both for Shah Jahan and Shahji; the former rebelled against his father, wandered all over India to find shelter from his father's armies and for nearly a year remained in secret hiding at Junnar, in the vicinity of which Shivaji was born. During the same period (1625-1627) Shahji, disgusted with the treatment he obtained from Malik Ambar, transferred his allegiance to the Adilshah

of Bijapur. Both Ibrahim Adilshah and Jahangir died in 1627, and when in a few months Shah Jahan acquired his father's throne, he made two important incursions into the south (January 1631—June 1632, and February to June 1636), using all his imperial resources in completing the task of reducing the Deccan. To this aggressive march of the Emperor, Shahji who had left the service of Bijapur, offered a bold and intrepid opposition for seven years (1629-1636), which later served a living object lesson, both in warware and diplomacy, to his son in undertaking grand projects for wining independence for his race and religion. The terrible experiences and immeasurable sufferings, which Shivaji's shrewd mother Jijabai had to pass through during that period, left an indelible mark upon the tender mind of Shivaji and inspired him with a spirit hardly equalled in the annals of history. Shivaji made Poona the centre of his activities, erected there gardens and houses for his residence, and turned to full advantage the peculiar situation created by nature in that hilly tract known as the Mavals or the land of the setting sun, which extended along the two ridges of the Sahyadri range roughly from Junnar and Kalyan in the north to Wai and Raigad in the south. This difficult tract was hardly ever fully brought under an organized peaceful rule by the Bahamani kings or their successors of Ahmadnagar and Bijapur, and being inhabited by turbulent Deshmukhs was something like a no-man's land, a wedge so to say sandwiched between the two kingdoms. Shah Jahan realizing the difficulties of the situation, wisely retraced his steps after having extinguished the last vestiges of Ahmadnagar[2] and quietly allowing Shahji to enter the service of Bijapur to carve out for himself a different field of activity in the Karnatak for the rest of his life. It would thus appear that the wonderful career of Shivaji was not a sudden innovation or a wanton eruption like a wild fire of the Sahyadris, as Duff puts it, but a legitimate development of a process first undertaken by Malik Ambar and then ably continued by Shivaji's father whom the contemporary writers have on that account given the appropriate appellation of a kingmaker.

[2]The partition treaty is given in Sarkar's *Aurangzeb*, Vol. I.

Shivaji's achievements viewed in this light would appear to be only a step onward, his mother acting as the connecting link between the father and the son.

MAIN INCIDENTS IN SHIVAJI'S CAREER

It is just as well that I advert here to the main incidents which made Shivaji a remarkable hero of Maharashtra and perhaps of all India. His early life was full of adventure and audacity. Having been, since his birth, practically separated from his father, Shivaji received the necessary training for life at the hands of his mother and his guardian Dadaji Kondadeo and started his unique career among mountain fastnesses, away from the public gaze, by repairing and capturing forts and building new ones and reducing to obedience all who defied his authority in his father's jagir. The first significant incident which made him a personality to be reckoned with, was his victory over the Moreys of Javli in 1656. Three years after, mainly by cautious strategy, he scored a brilliant success against Afzal Khan, the powerful general of Bijapur and thereby not only struck terror into the hearts of all his rivals but established a reputation as a gifted and intrepid soldier. Within the next four years he baffled the efforts of Aurangzeb's generals Jaswantsinh and Shaista Khan to overcome him, made a friendly compromise with the renowned Mirza Raja Javsinh, and upon his advice visited the Emperor's court at Agra in 1666. His open hostility to the all powerful Emperor and his miraculous escape from captivity, at once brought him an all-India reputation as an irresistible opponent of the Mughal Empire, inspired by Providence for the deliverance of the Hindus. Thereafter he continued his career of uninterrupted conquest, and in 1674 had himself formally crowned as an independent king, entitled to all the traditional honours of a Kshtriya. During the next six years of his life he extended his dominions to the mouth of the Kaveri and met with a rather sudden and untimely death in 1680, leaving behind him a splendid legacy to his nation as an unequalled conqueror, the creator and inspiring idol of his nation and the last constructive genius among the Hindus.

INFLUENCE OF RAMDAS AND OTHER SAINTS

As it is necessary for us to understand what the Maratha policy was and how it changed from time to time, we must go back and ascertain from documentary evidence the original aim of Shivaji when he undertook the task of establishing an independent Maratha kingdom. Whether Shivaji contemplated the establishment of a Hindu empire for all the various peoples of India, or whether he confined his attention only to a small kingdom of his own in Maharastra, is a point on which opinions have differed rather sharply. I should, therefore, like to put down what decision I have been able to come to on this question, after taking into account the available evidence. From a small *Jagir* of his father confined almost to some two taluks of the present day, *i.e.*, from Junnar to Supa, Shivaji, before his death in 1680, extended his Raj, as I have said, roughly from the west sea to the river Bhima on the east, and from the Godavari in the north to the Kaveri in the south. I have already shown that Shivaji stood forth as the champion of the Hindu religion: it was to protect his religion that he started his campaigns in antagonism to Muslim aggression. In ascertaining the aim of Shivaji, we must take particular note of the surrounding atmosphere in which he was born and bred, and which has been amply reproduced in the contemporary writings of the Indian saints, who spoke politics in terms of religion. These saints had realized that all north India was levelled to the ground under Muhammadan yoke; and the work of regeneration was undertaken by Shivaji in the south, calling himself a champion of Hinduism. Most of these saints had travelled far and wide throughout India and freely mixed with the peoples of different places, had seen and observed the sufferings of the Hindus, the destruction of the temples, sacred objects and holy places, and, in their own way, freely discussed what measures could possibly be taken to remedy this state of things and defend their religion.

Ramdas, born 20 years before Shivaji and surviving two years after him, started his own independent movement for religious regeneraion by establishing Ramdasi *Maths* or convents in various places, and helping in his own way the efforts

of political leaders as much as possible. It is said that Ramdas established throughout India in all about 800 *Maths*, of which some 72 have been known as more important. His teachings had great influence right up to the southernmost point of India. In the province of Tanjore in the far south, the sect of Ramdas had a great following, and for 200 years after him, there was a considerable addition to the Marathi literature from this Tanjore section of Ramdas's followers. A number of poems, dictionaries, grammars, dramas, ballads and chronicles, came to be written in Marathi in the province of Tanjore, whose kings themselves were great patrons of learning and took a large personal share in the productions. The results are deposited in the Saraswati Mandir at that town. Ananda-Tanaya and Raghunath Pandit are famous among the Marathi poets of Tanjore, and are known as the followers of Ramdas's teachings. There, on the stone walls of the temple of Brihadishwar, was carved, in the early 19th century, a Marathi inscription in bold, beautiful Devanagri characters, narrating the whole history of the Maratha kingdom of Tanjore, which is now reproduced in some 130 pages of a book in small print. Such a large historical inscription is nowhere else to be found in the whole world. At the time of Shivaji's death there were in Maharastra about 1200 followers of the Ramdasi cult. This large number of one particular type, working for the uplift of the country, strikes one as a grand creation of Ramdas, influencing the popular mind in shaping the future destiny of Maharastra.

Ramdas's own writings are acute and penetrating and breathe an intense national spirit in every expression. They are comprehensive, dealing with every phase of practical life and meticulously inculcate the virtues of truth, devotion and self-reliance. Styling himself *samarth* or powerful, Ramdas stood for an all round national regeneration and the conservation of the physical and moral resources of the people. They began to assemble in the *Maths* where they were profoundly impressed by the teaching of Ramdas as expounded in his great work, the *Dasa-Bodha*, which is supposed to have led the people to help the national work of Shivaji. They soon imbibed the underlying principles of Shivaji's moves, as day

after day they began to be crowned with success. What particular work was entrusted to these *Maths* from the point of view of political propaganda is not definitely on record; and it is even questioned how far Ramdas's teaching actually helped the national uplift. Each *Math* had a temple of Rama and Hanuman with, we presume, several gymnasiums or *akhadas* attached to them, so that the main work of these *Maths* must have been to build up and conserve the physical and moral strength of the people. As the *Dasa-Bodha* grew up from day to day, it began to be read and studied in these *Maths*, having far reaching effects upon society in general. Ramdas urged that institutions small and big should be formed in all quarters, in order to increase the strength of the nation in every possible way. Large congregations used to assemble at the *Maths* to hear the sermons, and we know that most of the prominent associates of Shivaji accepted the Ramdasi cult and followed his teachings. Thus, in the movement for Swaraj, Shivaji is supposed to represent the physical and Ramdas the moral force of the nation. Shivaji had appropriated the traditional diplomacy, warfare, philosophy and arts of old Vijayanagar and incorporated them into his own fresh ideal; and Ramdas with his experience and travel, adopted for the acceptance of his nation the important tenets of the teachings of Nanak, Kabir, Chaitanya and Tukaram, the great saints of India. The only difference between the two was that Ramdas was intensely practical, straightforward, outspoken and comprehensive. There is a burning fire and force in every word of his. Shivaji from the beginning mixed very freely with all classes of people, and felt particular reverence for Ramdas and other saints and learned men, who had gained experience of the world. Both doubtless possessed high aims, but one may well doubt how far they pursued their aims in conscious co-operation. Shivaji's father and mother were already chafing under Muslim subjection, and constantly thought of measures for defending their religion and their country.

THE CORONATION CEREMONY AND ITS PURPOSE

Secondly, Shivaji's wars and campaigns, his plans and movements, and his words and arrangements, throughout his

brillant career of some thirty-five years, when minutely examined, do not in the least show that he had restricted his vision to Maharastra or the Deccan only. He did not know that his life was going to be cut short by an untimely death; it could easily have been lengthened by at least another twenty years, even if we could not vouchsafe him the ripe old age which his opponent Aurangzeb reached. Shivaji's foundations were broad enough to sustain an all-India fabric, to which his measures unmistakably pointed. The coronation ceremony, which he deliberately carried out with unprecedented magnificence under the direction of a scion of the celebrated Bhatta family of Benares, was of the truly ancient Kshatriya type of the *Ashwamedha* days, imitating the rites and splendour of an Ashoka, a Samudragupta, or a Harsha-Vardhana. Shivaji had his ancient pedigree established through the Kshatriya family of Chitor, who claimed their descent from Shri Ramchandra. The titles which Shivaji assumed, *viz., Kshatriya-Kulavatansa, Sinhasanadhishwara, Chhatrapati,*[3] his avowed profession of the protection of cows and Brahmins as his goal, the significant motto on his official seal so thought, fully composed, his deliberate adoption of Sanskrit synonyms for Persian court terms, his acceptance of Marathi as the Court language and his translation into practice of the old *shastric* injunctions about the eight ministers and their duties, as also his avowed acceptance of the system of the four castes in which he claimed for himself the position of a Kshatriya, all these clearly point to a pan-Hindu ideal which would have been out of place for a small Maratha kingdom confined to the Deccan, possessing more or less the type of one of the branches of the Bahamani Empire.

Thirdly, Shivaji's method of establishing and expanding a small independent kingdom, gives in itself a clue to his future aims, *viz.,* his imposition of the two claims of the *Sardeshmukhi* and the *Chauthai,* of which I am going to speak

[3]By the first of these three titles he knocked down the traditional theory that there existed no Kshatriya race in this *Kali* age; by the second, he claimed to deal on equal terms with the Mughal Emperor who occupied the Peacock Throne. The third was the significant name by which the Maratha King was to be addressed. Shivaji also started his own era commencing from the day of his coronation.

a little later. The former he claimed from the Emperor Shahjahan as early as 1648, as hereditary *Watan* due to his position as a Sardeshmukh or head territorial officer among the Maratha nation; while the latter he revived about the year 1660 when he conquered the north Konkan, where the kings of Ramnagar used to exact it from the surrounding districts. From the beginning he skilfully forged these two convenient weapons as a serviceable means to enable his people, in the long run, to establish an all-Hindu empire.

BEFRIENDING HINDU PRINCES

Fourthly, whenever the Emperor or other Muhammadan kings were at war with Shivaji, he took care to differentiate between his various opponents. He never fought, as a rule, Hindu generals of the Emperor. He tried to be friendly to Jashvantsinh and openly won over Jaysinh, both Rajputs of high descent, to whom Shivaji showed great regard. A letter in Persian verse, supposed to have been written by Shivaji to Jaysinh, has been published by Babu Jagannath Das in the *Nagari-Pracharini Patrika*. It purports to mention Shivaji's objects in clear and emphatic terms. Even if the authenticity of the letter be questioned, we may presume it gives us a faithful idea conveyed in poetical vein, of what the general impression prevailing at the time was, as regards the venture undertaken by Shivaji in opposing the Emperor. It also reflects the actual state of things at the time. "O Great King," says Shivaji in the letter, "though you are a great Kshatriya, you have been using your strength to increase the power of the dynasty of Babar. You are shedding the blood of the Hindus, in order to make the red-faced Muslims victorious. Do you not realize that you are thereby blackening your reputation before the whole world? If you have come to conquer me, I am ready to lay down my head in your path; but since you come as the Deputy of the Emperor, I am utterly at a loss to decide how I should behave towards you. If you fight on behalf of the Hindu religion, I am ready to join and help you. You are brave and valiant; it behoves you as a powerful Hindu prince, to take the lead against the Emperor. Let us go and conquer Delhi itself.

Let us shed our costly blood to preserve our ancient religion and give satisfaction to our thirsty ancestors. If two hearts can combine, they will break down any amount of hard resistance. I bear no enmity to you and do not wish to fight with you. I am ready to come and meet you alone. I will then show you the secret letter which I snatched out of the pocket of Shayista Khan. If you do not accept my terms, my sword is ready."

Similarly one Ratnakar Bhatt, almost a contemporary of Shivaji, has composed a Sanskrit poem describing the kings of Jaipur, in which he thus writes about Mirza Raja Jaysinh (1621-1667) whom Aurangzeb had employed to subjugate Shivaji. "Mirza Raja,"[4] says the author, "displayed great valour in conquering Shivaji and other kings who desired to *capture the imperial seat of Delhi.*" Many have taken this as a contemporary impression of Shivaji's aspirations.

I have no time to quote many such letters here: one written by Shivaji to Emperor Aurangzeb on the subject of the Jazia is very eloquent, and can be read in translation in Prof. Sarkar's *Shivaji*. Shivaji's letters to his brother and his letter to Maloji Ghorpade clearly set forth the objects he was trying to attain and must convince all doubters about the sincerity of his purpose. They contain sentiments which eminently establish Shivaji's object of the *Hindu-pad-Padshahi*. His brother Vyankoji held himself to be a subordinate and jagirdar of the Adilshah of Bijapur, which Shivaji would not tolerate. He would not allow Vyankoji to be either independent or subordinate to Bijapur, as his scheme of a Hindu empire would not brook an independent rival. That is why Shivaji had to lead an expedition against Vyankoji, and humble him into obediance. He offered Vyankoji a jagir in the Deccan. Writes he to his brother: "God out of His grace has assigned me a mission. He has entrusted to me an all-India empire (*Sarva-bhauma Rajya*). He has given me the strength to crush the Muslims, whose shelter you have sought. How can you succeed against me, and how can you save the Muslims? If you follow my advice, well and good; if not.

[4] *Yena Sri Jayasimhena Dillindrapadalipsavah*
Siraprabhritibhupala vasam nitah svatejasa—Granthamala, Rajhade Sam. Lekh, Jaipur Ramsabatta

you will surely have to repent." In his letter to Maloji Ghorpade Shivaji says: "I have formed a league of all Maratha chiefs with the object of preserving their estates, in order that we should be masters in our own home: that we should preserve or destroy Muslim kingdoms at our pleasure. My effort is solely directed towards bringing all the Marathas together and making them strong. Why are you so much in love with the foreign Bijapur kingdom? It is already reduced to dust. What can the Bijapur king give you, and why do you parade your loyalty to a Muslim king? That Pathan is not going to benefit you in any way. We Marathas have already swallowed them up. You must remember that you are a Maratha, and that my object is to unite and raise you all into a strong nation."

It is doubtless clear that Shivaji had in his vision the old Kshatriya races and their achievements in northern India. The Bundela king Chhatrasal was his friend, and came to the Deccan to seek his advice. Northern bards and poets specially came to Shivaji's court and received his patronage. All this points to the all-India character of Shivaji's undertaking.

ALL-INDIA TRAVEL AND EXPERIENCE

Fifthly, Shivaji himself visited northern India, when he went to meet the Emperor at Agra. He purposely undertook this visit and had no compulsion for it from the Emperor. He utilized the occasion in studying the situation in the far north and the imperial capital. Before starting he coolly weighed the pros and cons of the understanding with Jaysinh. In his interview with that prince, Shivaji had come to form certain plans which his movements thereafter confirm. Shivaji did strongly wish to see for himself what the Emperor and his court were like, wherein their strength lay, and how he should thereafter deport himself so as to encompass them. To realize this fully, he made up his mind to proceed to the Emperor's court. His marvellous escape from the imperial custody is too well-known to be repeated here. On his return journey from Agra he visited Mathura, Brindavan, Ayodhya, Prayag, Benares and other holy places. Returning home after an absence of eight months, he had utilized the interval in

seeing the whole country, talking to all kinds of people, and gaining valuable experience, of which he made full use afterwards. This shows that Shivaji's plan included an all-India movement. This does not, of course, mean that he wished at once to have himself crowned as the Emperor of Delhi: that was impossible then. But his idea was ultimately to establish a Hindu empire of suzerain power for all India, gradually expanding it from its original base in the Deccan. Had he lived long enough, one feels sure, he would have achieved his object.

MEASURES FOR UNITING MARATHA ELEMENTS

There are many other points of minor importance, contained in the papers of those times, which confirm the view I have taken. His trip to Golconda, his conquest of the Karnatak, and his expedition to Tanjore against his brother,—are simply links in the grand unifying chain of imperial aims, which become clear when the links are properly arranged. Shivaji always took care to win over his own Deccani Marathas such as the Jedhes and the Bandals, with affectionate sympathy and goodwill. He did not hesitate, however, to inflict severe punishments on those who, like the Moreys, dared to oppose his aims. He married eight wives with a set purpose, and not out of mere whim or pleasure. In those days of social inequalities, he contracted these marriage connections in order to link together by matrimonial alliances many Kshatriya families of the Deccan, as the Bhosles were by no means considered at the time high enough in popular estimation. Bajaji Nimbalkar, who had been compelled to accept the Muslim faith by the Adilshah, was re-admitted to Hinduism by Shivaji, who then gave his own daughter in marriage to Bajaji's son. Of all Maratha families the Moreys were the only ones whom he handled rather severely; otherwise, he fought with no Hindu general and made friends with Hindu statesmen at foreign courts, such as Madanna and Akanna of Golconda. It must, however, be clearly understood that although Shivaji's highest aim was to uphold the Hindu religion, he had no ill-feeling towards the Muhammadans as a religious community or towards Muslim kingdoms, if they

would accept his suzerainty. He considered himself a protector of all faiths and sects, and treated all of them equally. He, as we know, gave Inam lands and annuities to Muslim shrines and institutions. He revered the saint Baba Yakut of Kelsi as much as he did Ramdas. He had faithful Muhammadans in his own service, occupying high posts of trust and honour, like Kazi Haidar whom Aurangzeb afterwards appointed as Chief Justice at Delhi. When he was a captive of the Emperor at Agra, his life was saved by a Muhammadan *Faras* (bed-servant) named Madari Mehtar. His principal naval officer was a Mussalman named Sidi Misri. He took the help of all and had places for all in his service, irrespective of religion.

AURANGZEB'S CORRECT ESTIMATE OF THE DANGER

And lastly, the best evidence of Shivaji's aims is supplied by Emperor Aurangzeb himself. Why did such a shrewd and wise Emperor spend the best part of his life and all his imperial resources in the conquest of the Deccan? One cannot say that he was acting thoughtlessly or in a chimercial fashion. Aurangzeb clearly saw the danger to his empire. He well knew Shivaji's aims. He was convinced that Shivaji aimed a blow at the empire itself. That is the reason why, as soon as he learnt that Shivaji was dead, he came down to finish the matter once for all. That it proved futile is a different matter. But that wise Emperor's policy clearly proves the aims which Shivaji had formed, and which his successors persistently tried to accomplish long after his death.

THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

I need not detain you long over the period that elapsed between the deaths of the two great creators of Maratha history, I mean, Shivaji and Aurangzeb. This period, while it has on the one hand shed the brightest lustre on the Maratha name, has also, on the other hand, given rise to that pernicious system known as the *saranjami,* which Shivaji had studiously put down and which in the end destroyed the homogeneity of the Maratha nation. Shivaji's death was both sudden and premature. His son Sambhaji, although brave and spirited, was not equal to the task of facing the several

enemies attacking him at the same time, the principal among whom was Aurangzeb, who came down like an avalanche upon the Maratha Raj. Although Sambhaji waged a most heroic struggle, he was captured and beheaded with cruel indignity. These very misfortunes, however, nerved a band of patriots, Brahmans, Marathas and Prabhus, to unite for the common purpose of defending national liberty. The more famous names among these patriots were Pralhad Niraji, Ramchandra Pant Amatya, Parshuram Trimbak Pratinidhi, Dhanaji Jadhav, Senapati Santaji Ghorpade, Khando Ballal Chitnis, Shankraji Narayan Sachiv and others, presided over by the genial king Rajaram, the younger son of Shivaji. Although working under great disadvantages, these patriots carried on the long war against Aurangzeb to a successful issue. The powerful Emperor was so discomfited that he had to find in death a final release from all his troubles and misfortunes. Writes Ranade: "Without revenues, without armies, without forts and without resources of any kind, the Maratha leaders managed to raise armies, retake forts, and develop a system of conquest by which they regained not only the swarajya but also the right to levy Chauthai and Sardeshmukhi. Many of these patriots who conceived and carried out this plan of operations, died in the midst of the struggle, but their places were taken up by others with equal devotion and success. The credit of all this must be ascribed to Aurangzeb's ambition. He stirred the people of Maharastra to their utmost depths, and it was the hard discipline of his twenty years' war which cemented the national and political instincts of their leaders and during the next three generations carried them as conquerors to the farthest part of India. It was a higher moral force which brought out all the virtues of the best men of the nation, heroism, noble endurance, administrative skill, hope which rose higher with every disappointment, a sense of brotherhood in common danger, a trust in the final success of their cause, because it was the cause of their religion. Hence this war of independence is regarded as constituting the most eventful period of Maratha history."

HOW SHIVAJI'S EXAMPLE INSPIRED OTHERS

We can now easily conceive, how at a time of intense depression, the Marathas were able to fire the imagination of all the martial races of India, to whom the example of Shivaji and his followers imparted not only the Maratha spirit and enthusiasm, but also their hope and patriotism, and a practical lesson in warfare and independence, which soon became so catching that they steeled the hearts of the Sikhs, the Jats, the Rajputs and the Bundelas who all seized the opportunity for a national rising after the death of Aurangzeb. I shall now try to offer a few remarks in order to explain Shivaji's conception of the Maratha constitution.

We know how from small beginnings Shivaji laid the foundation of the Maratha Kingdom, the exact constitution of which has been variously interpreted. Some liken his constitution of the eight ministers to the present-day cabinets; but these eight ministers had no independent powers, and Shivaji cannot be said to have made an arrangement involving on his part the surrender of any bit of his authority in favour of any of his ministers. Shivaji was an autocrat, a benevolent despot, however wisely he may have ruled his kingdom. His will was law, although he directed it to the best interests of his nation. As a rule, we eastern peoples are swayed, in all our concerns, political, social or any other, by entirely individual influences. We have never been amenable to the discipline required for the healthy conduct of constitutional bodies. Even the word 'constitution' is foreign to us. Particularly has this been the case with the Marathas. If we are fortunate enough to have a wise chief to direct our destinies, our affairs look bright and prosperous: if we happen to get a bad ruler or a nonentity at our head, we decline. "If good, so much the better: if evil, tyrannical and oppressive, they must needs submit and wait until the tyranny was overpassed." So long as Shivaji was living, the whole nation supported and obeyed him; the moment he was gone and affairs fell into the hands of his degenerate son, the whole nation was at his mercy for weal and woe. His second son Rajaram, in later days, allowed full scope to his ministers and generals, who, having been trained under

Shivaji, possessed exceptional capacity which enabled the nation to wage a successful war with the most tenacious of the Mughal emperors. Things took an altogether different turn at the return of Sultan after Aurangzeb's death, and constituted what we can call a complete transformation in Maratha policy from its original plan which it is my purpose now to explain.

CHAUTHAI, ITS ORIGIN AND PURPOSE

One very useful instrument of a political character, which Shivaji wisely forged and himself brought into practice, was his system of levying impositions on an enemy country known as *Chauthai* and *Sardeshmukhi*, the former being of the nature of a tribute exacted from hostile or conquered territories, and the latter a kind of revenue ownership, that is, *Watan* as they called it, which the leaders of the Maratha bands claimed as their own in the old Bahamani days, and which they never ceased to exact in later times. The practice of exacting Chauth, *i.e.*, one-fourth of the estimated revenue, is supposed, on fresh evidence recently published, to have existed in the western parts of India long before the days of Shivaji. Prof. Pissurlencar of Goa, and Dr. Surendra Nath Sen of Calcutta, after examining the Portuguese archives there, have published papers dating 1595,1604—1606, and 1634, showing that the Raja of Ramnagar in north Konkan exacted this Chauth from the Portuguese possession of Daman, on the ground that those territories used to pay the Chauth to the kings of Ramnagar, before they passed into the hands of the Portuguese.[5] The practice was quickly taken up by Shivaji and was applied by him to the territories and principalities, which he overran or subjugated, guaranteeing, in return for the payment, immunity from any more exactions on his own part, and security from molestation by any other power. This practice of levying Chauth on foreign territories either fully or partially conquered, or often merely overrun, proved a ready instrument in the hands of Shivaji's successors and enabled them to expand their power to the

[5]See Dr. Sen's *Military History of the Marathas* wherein the subject has been fully treated.

distant quarters of India. During the critical and confused times that followed the capture of Sambhaji by Aurangzeb, this practice of levying Chauth proved a useful measure to the various leaders of roving Maratha bands, and enabled them to resist the Emperor successfully. It is in this measure, coupled with the system of guerilla tactics, that we can trace the subtle influence of Maratha power, which began slowly to eat into the vitals of the Mughal Empire. It will be worth our while to look a little more closely into the subject, and fully grasp the various factors existing in the situation of Maharastra, in order to understand the changes in the Maratha constitution, that took place later on, that is, during the latter days of Aurangzeb's invasion and at the time of his death.

LOVE OF THE MARTHA DESHMUKHS FOR THEIR PATRIMONY

The Marathas have been described as by nature very jealous of their *Watans* or lands inherited from ancestors,, for which they had often paid dearly even with their lives. When during the Bahamani rule or perhaps even earlier, the country of Maharastra was settled and brought under cultivation, the inducement offered to the various Maratha families was the grant of *Watan* lands in perpetuity. The hilly sloping country of the Western Ghats, known in history as the Mavals, or the land of the setting sun, was first cleared of forests and wild animals, and made habitable by several immigrant Kshatriyas now known by the common appellation of the Mavalas, whom later Shivaji subdued and turned into helpmates, mainly by stratagem and occasionally by the sword, but who in the beginning acted as small independent rulers of the tracts which they owned as Deshmukhs, meaning heads of the *Desh*, or feudal landlords, as we can style them. The Moreys, the Shirkes, the Dalvis, the Jedhes, the Jadhavs, the Nimbalkars, the Khopdes and others, who all figure so prominently in the early activities of Shivaji were hereditary Deshmukhs or Watandars, whose duty it was to colonize and settle and populate the country, so as to make it yield revenue to Government. The process was long and troublesome, involved a tremendous cost of life, labour and

money, and naturally created intense love and interest in the owners' mind for the land which they served and improved from generation to generation. The Government of the country granted these Maratha adventurers periodical leases and immunity from taxation. When the lands came to be finally improved and became capable of yielding an annual revenue, the work of collection was entrusted to these same Deshmukhs, who were asked to pay 90 per cent. of the estimated revenue to Government, keeping for themselves the remaining 10 per cent. as a reward for their labours. This share of 10 per cent. came to be called Sardeshmukhi and was, in essence and origin, a constant source of hereditary income, which all Maratha sardars from the Chhatrapati down to the smallest holder claimed as their ancestral patrimony, and which they most jealously guarded and preserved, even at the risk of life. Readers of Maratha history may remember how Chhatrapati Shahu strictly and rigidly reserved for himself this 10 per cent. charge of the Sardeshmukhi dues, when his Peshwa Balaji Vishvanath obtained from the Sayyads, imperial sanads of Chauth and Sardeshmukhi in the year 1718, and how he distributed the proceeds of the latter among his various favourites and the persons who had helped him in his difficulties. The Bhosles themselves were originally Sardeshmukhs on a par with the Jadhavs and Moreys, although they succeeded in establishing an independent Maratha kingdom later on. This nature of Sardeshmukhi deserves to be clearly noted as distinct from that of the Chauth, a different item altogether, which was mainly designed for subjugating foreign territory, and which had the nature of tribute.

The Maratha Deshmukhs had thus vested interests in the lands of the Deccan for centuries before the rise of Shivaji, and were practically independent of the ruling authorities, who could chastise them only if they failed to pay the Government revenue. The precarious and adventurous life which for a long time they led in the Maval lands, has been reflected in the plentiful old papers, which have been lately discovered and published, mainly by Rajwade in those of his volumes, which deal with the Shivaji period, *i.e.*, 15 to 18.

20 and 22. Disputes about rights and possession, about heirs and succession, about thefts and robberies, murder and molestations of various kinds, which were so numerous and acute for about a century before the rise of Shivaji and which have been fully described in those papers, supply a clear idea about the state of the country at the time and the manner in which Shivaji utilized them to his own advantage. Shivaji, shrewed as he was in estimating the inherent capacity of these Mavalas, found in them ready material for his nation-building activities. The strength and energy of these Maval Deshmukhs, were till then being entirely wasted in internecine disputes and family feuds, making murder, arson, waylaying and other crimes, matters of common occurrence, which the distant rulers of Bijapur and Ahmednagar could hardly check or stop, owing to the difficult and impassable nature of the country and the turbulent spirit of the people. In fact, Shivaji's father Shahji had already enlisted the sympathies of some of these Maval Deshmukhs, in his wars against the onrushing Mughals, leaving the completion of his task to his astute son Shivaji. The Jedhes and the Bandals who were in Shahji's employ, continued to help his son Shivaji, when he started his national work in Maharastra, and after his father had transferred his own field of activity to the distant south. Of the Maval Deshmukhs the Moreys happened to be by far the most powerful and influential in the service of Bijapur, and having resisted the early activities of Shivaji, came into direct conflict with him and brought upon themselves severe chastisement at his hands. In accounting for the rapid and phenomenal success of Shivaji, we must take note of this turbulent spirit of Maval Deshmukhs and their intense love for their original patrimony. In the latter days of Maratha rule, we often notice how the Sindias of Gwalior, the Pawars of Dhar, or the Gaikwads of Baroda, jealously guarded their small hereditary Watans or Deshmukhis in the Deccan, even when they had created extensive kingdoms for themselves outside in Malwa and Gujerat. The *Saranjami* system introduced by the Peshwas, it will be seen later, is based on this love of the Marathas for their hereditary lands in the Deccan.

ORIGIN OF SARDESHMUKHI AND SARANJAMI

To understand the real nature of Sardeshmukhi, we must study the structure and practices of the village government obtaining in Maharastra from the profuse materials which have been published in the form of the legal decisions of the disputes of those times. The *Watan* claims have been of various kinds. The *Patel* or *Patil* is the headman of the village, looking after all its concerns and the *Kulkarni* is his writer who keeps the village records. The Patel and the Kulkarni used to have land assignments for their services, *i.e.*, also *Watans* in a certain sense. Patvaris and Pandes, Goudas and Nadgoudas are merely provincial synonyms of the Patel and the Kulkarni, the first two being used in the Central Provinces, and the last two in the Kanarese country in the south. *Desai* is the corruption of the Sanskrit term *Desha-swami*, or possibly *Deshapati*, also styled Desh-mukh. The *Sardeshmukh* stands above several Desais or Deshmukhs, i.e., looking after a group of several villages. *Saranjami* in later times came to mean land assignment given for military service: the word *Saranjam*, which means provision, occurs in the papers of Shivaji's time. When a title or a mark of honour, such as a horse, an elephant, or a palanquin was bestowed by the king upon his deserving servants or subjects, it was supposed to carry with it a provision for its maintenance, *viz.*, the *Saranjam*. In later times, however, this word came to mean provision for military service only, for employing and maintaining troops to fight the battles of Government; those holding landed Saranjams of this nature are styled Saranjamdars, who date their rise particularly from the times of Shivaji's son Rajaram and who were chiefly instrumental in the later expansion of Maratha power at the hands of the Peshwas. In popular language the words Saranjam and Jagir mean nearly the same thing. The present Rajas and Maharajas such as those of Gwalior, Indore, Baroda, Dhar, Dewas in Central India, or of Miraj, Sangli, Jamkhindi and Ramdrug in the south, were all Saranjamdars of a certain type, with definite rules and regulations about their service, which we find amply illustrated in the *Peshwas' Diaries* printed from the Poona Daftar particularly in the

volumes referring to Madhav Rao I. As this system of Saranjamdars with many fresh Maratha capitals from which their rule radiated, has come to be known as the particular creation of the Peshwas and has often been held more or less responsible for the fall of the Marathas, it is necessary to understand its exact origin and nature in the constitution of the Maratha kingdom. As the subject is complicated and not properly grasped by the average student, I am trying to explain it purposely at such length.

Shivaji was deadly against assigning lands in perpetuity for any purpose whatsoever, and stopped the old practice with a firm hand, often confiscating all lands and jagirs which had been made over to generals during preceding regimes, and substituting cash payment for them. Rajwade's volumes dealing with the Shivaji period are full of papers which show how Shivaji laid his hand on all lands which had been given away. He clearly realized the disadvantages of the system of creating feudal lords. In those days of unrest and confusion, it was difficult, particularly on account of the absence of good roads and means of communication, to exercise strict control over military leaders enjoying feudal jagirs. They often rebelled against authority, openly joined the enemy, invariably neglected to keep efficient troops for service, and tried to accumulate money and power at the expense of the State, more or less after the fashion of feudalism in Europe. Although of course the allurement of landed jagirs succeeded for a time in securing conspicuous service and daring from soldiers and their leaders, their successors were not necessarily as brave, willing and faithful, in their service and claimed to enjoy their patrimony without giving an adequate return to the State. One who acquired the jagirs for the first time, must have been a fit person deserving the reward for the service and sacrifice which he had rendered to the State; but his successors usually proved quite unfit: if they were dispossessed of their holdings, they became disaffected and troublesome to the State in a hundred ways. Shivaji very early in his career fully realized the disadvantages of the system, and paid all kinds of service in ready cash, with which he was ever careful to keep himself well supplied. He

even confiscated lands given to various religious institutions or charities, and substituted cash payment for them.

But this wise policy had to be discontinued after Shivaji's death, owing to a combination of adverse circumstances to which I must now refer. The powerful Emperor Aurangzeb descended upon Maharastra in 1683, with a huge and well-equipped army, determined to complete the task of subjugating the Deccan, begun by his three illustrious predecessors, and put into the field the vast resources of his extensive empire to attain his object. The very names of the generals who served under him, would have struck terror into any people he proposed to conquer. In a short time he annexed the two kingdoms of Bijapur and Golconda, captured and killed the Maratha King Sambhaji, taking into captivity his wife and son, and nearly accomplishing his grand purpose with one stroke. It was in the midst of such a depressing situation, that Shivaji's second son Rajaram started his work of saving his nation, by catching at any and every means that came ready to his hand, working also the system of Chauthai for extending the Maratha power. How he obtained adherence to his cause, can be well understood from the following typical letter written by Rajaram in July 1696 to Sadashiv Naik, the ruler of Sunda, a small state to the south-east of Goa. The letter was written from Jinji, when the Emperor was threatening to conquer not only the Marathas, but also other more or less independent states and territories throughout south India. Thus runs the letter: "We are glad to have received your letter and the messages which you sent with your two trusted agents Konherpant and Rayaji Rukhmangad, who have communicated and explained to us all the details of the negotiation in connection with your offer of mutual help and perpetual friendship in our present situation. We have considered the proposal fully in conference with our ministers Shankaraj Pandit Sumant and Nilo Krishna, and are glad, as requested by you, to commit this agreement to writing, and send it on to you with our solemn oath for its observance on our part, and trust you will do the same on yours."

"Your proposal was that the territory of the Panch-Mahals with all its forts and places, should be assigned to you

and your successors in perpetuity in return for a yearly tribute of 22,200 Hons (Rs. 78,000), an amount which you are at present paying to Muhammadan rulers. We accept this proposal, undertake to vanquish the Muhammadans and protect you from them or from any other enemies that will molest you. When your enemies will be so vanquished, you must regularly pay the amount of tribute to us from year to year. Moreover, you must also carry on an aggressive war with the Muhammadans, and we vouchsafe to you the fresh territory you will be able to conquer from the enemy on payment by you to us, of the customary tributes assigned to those territories, in recognition of our suzerain power. Whenever you would be threatened or molested by any outsider, our forces shall at once run to your help and win peace and safety for you. Thus shall we continue ever to remain friendly with your State, and in token of our solemn promise to that effect, we send you separately *bilva* leaves and flower garlands of Mahadeva and bread. We trust you will accept these and continue to increase the solemn friendship ever hereafter—."[6]

When Rajaram retired from Maharastra to Jinji, there was no money in his treasury. Raigad, the capital of the Maratha kingdom, was in the hands of the Emperor. There were no Maratha army and no government. It was only the undaunted brains of a few clever supporters of Rajaram, warriors and statesmen, that rose to the occasion and invented means and appliances in order to save the situation as best they could. The Emperor, on the other hand, kept a full watch over the measures and activities of his opponents and did his best to seduce the Maratha fighters, by offering them all possible inducements to join his army and fight the fugitive Chhatrapati. He granted Inams and jagirs to those Maratha leaders who had been persecuted by Sambhaji and thereby managed to weaken the Maratha cause immensely. In these adverse circumstances Rajaram and his advisers were compelled to offer, on their part also, the same inducements to their helpers, in order to retain their services and allegiance. I might here give a sample of what Rajaram wrote to the Maratha leaders: "We note with pleasure that you have

[6]D. V. Apte's *Itihasa-Manjari*, *p.* 131.

preserved the country and served the king loyally. You are highly brave and serviceable. We know that you hold Inam lands from the Emperor, but that you are *now* ready to forsake him and fight for us and suffer hardships for us and our nation. The Emperor has created a havoc in the land. He has converted Hindus wholesale to his creed. Therefore, you should cautiously conduct measures of safety and retaliation and keep us duly informed of your services. If you do not swerve from loyalty and if you help the State in its present sore extremity, we solemnly bind ourselves to continue your hereditary holdings to you and your heirs and successors." In this way, letters and sanads granting Inams and jagirs began to pour in from the Maratha court in an unbroken current. The main purport of them was, that the Maratha bands should roam anywhere and everywhere, plunder the imperial treasure and territory, and harass the enemy in all possible ways. These sanads were nothing but promises of future reward, assuring the military leaders that they would be considered owners of the territory they would subjugate in any quarter of India. This game became profitable for a time to the roving Maratha bands; they borrowed money, raised troops and carried on expeditions to distant parts. The process gave a sudden impetus to the business of banking and fighting. Let me quote only one instance. Ramchandra Pant, the great Amatya of Rajaram, recommends to his master the services of one Patankar in a letter which runs thus: "These Patankars own hereditary *Watans*. They have undertaken to raise 5,000 troops and will be styled Pancha-sahasri. This kingdom belongs to gods, Marathas and Brahmins; the Patankars have undergone terrible hardships in crushing the armies of the enemy. In this task they have not only spent all they had, but also contracted huge debts. Therefore, their sacrifices deserve to be adequately rewarded, and so we shall allow them the following 12 villages in perpetual *Inam*." Requests for similar Inams and rewards began to pour in thousands before the Maratha administrators of the day. They particularly bring their fivefold service to the notice of the Chhatrapati. They say: (1) "We have not joined the Mughals; (2) we have managed to carry on cultivation; (3) we pay revenue to

Government; (4) we have employed large forces to protect the country from robbers and raiders, and, in addition; (5) we fight the battles of the Chhatrapati at the risk for our lives." This is not all. They also repeat the inducements that the Emperor had offered them, and demand something better from their own kings, saying to the Chhatrapati: "We, your own kith and kin, should not at least fare worse than strangers who come and obtain handsome rewards from the Emperor." We thus clearly see how the system of Jagirs and military *Saranjams*, so sternly put down by Shivaji, came to be revived once more, and how it took deep root during the long and confused period of the Emperor's campaigns in the Deccan. In fact the confusion created by the numerous indiscriminate grants of *Inams* was so great, that Rajaram on his return from Jinji to Satara, found that one and the same district was claimed by several persons at once, and he had therefore to appoint a special court of enquiry to adjust all claims of land *Watans* and revoke or confirm them on certain fixed principles. When Rajaram died in 1700, and his queen Tara Bai managed the Government for the next few years, she tried her best to stop the practice of granting new *Saranjams*, and even to cancel some of those that had been already given. She and her advisers were fully aware how the departure from the healthy regulations of Shivaji was leading the kingdom towards ultimate ruin, but were unable, under the stress of circumstances and for mere self-protection, to stop the practice which by prescription had become hardened for years.

PERVERSION OF THE ORIGINAL OBJECT

It soon became very difficult for the central Government to keep these jagirdars in proper check and exact discipline and service from them. They even alienated their own Inam lands within their sphere, to whomsoever they pleased. I give a sample here of the sanads issued by the Chhatrapati in answer to the clamorous petitions that poured constantly for *Inams*: they run thus:

"At such and such a place you came to His Highness the Chhatrapati with a request that your ancestors had been serv-

ing the State in succession for a long time. That you yourself also wish to serve loyally and faithfully ever hereafter; that you have a large family, and that His Highness should out of kindness provide for its maintenance. Taking this request of yours into kind consideration, His Highness has been pleased to grant such and such a village as *Inam* in perpetuity to you, your heirs and successors. We enjoin on all our successors, on oath, that this *Inam* should not be taken back." Such requests evidently mean that what was granted first for hazardous and faithful service, was claimed by the successors, for the mere maintenance and enjoyment of a large family of idlers. who rendered no service to Government and claimed gratuitous reward. This habit of enjoying land assignments without personal fitness and without giving any labour in return, sapped the very foundations of public service and even the morals of society itself. The Brahmins continued to extract any sum from one rupee to a lac and more from Government, who had assumed the pleasing role of protecting Brahmins and cows, for no other visible service than the questionable one of performing religious rites and showering blessings upon the King and the State for their success and well-being. It was a beggary of the very worst type, giving prominence to birth, heredity and prescriptive rights, leaving no room to Government for the recognition of fresh merit and individual capacity. All the Maratha State came to be alienated in this way. Those who served and sacrificed themselves, and those who did not, came to be put on the same level. This was the greatest defect of the *Saranjami* system, which in no small degree contributed to the ruin of the structure so cleverly created by Shivaji.

It is also interesting to trace how all these defects came to be perpetuated under the conditions that then prevailed. During the confusion and weakness that overtook the Mughal Empire after Aurangzeb's death, many proud and ambitious Maratha leaders roamed about the country, and took possesion of whatever territories they could lay their hands on; but this conquest was by no means homogeneous like the Raj of Shivaji, which he had conquered by means of armies paid by himself and directly controlled by him. The various Maratha

leaders of the later days, were not subject to the control of one single power and were scattered units having no cohesion. The astute Amatya Ramchandra Pant tried to control them to some extent, but they often proved recalcitrant, looking to their own selfish interests and being ever ready to join the enemy, if better prospects were offered them. If Ramchandra Pant had tried to exact stricter discipline from them, they would in all probability have openly accepted the Mughal service. Owing to these difficulties the Marathas could not gradually build up a solid constitution by degrees, as did the British in their own country. It must, however, be borne in mind that such a comparison is often pointless, as we have not before us all the facts of the situation. Many problems of history can be rightly solved, if we have a proper conception of surroundings and circumstances affecting them. We can know very well, why the Government founded by Shivaji did not last long after him and how the system built up by the Peshwas differed entirely from Shivaji's original conception. So, no hard and fast constitution could in those days be thought of, when there were many disturbing elements facing the workers on all sides.

One reason why the system of creating jagirs or military commands at different places all over the country, became absolutely necessary during the Peshwas' days, was that there were no military roads for rapid communication and movement of armies, from the central seat of Government to any threatened point. During Shivaji's days the central Mughal Government was powerful and he dared not cross the Nerbudda for any ambitious project beyond; Shivaji had to remain satisfied with whatever he could acheive in Maharastra proper and in the farthest south. But after Aurangzeb's death, there was a general scramble for conquest and power, in which even the western nations began to take a part. If the Peshwas had confined their efforts to the south only, the Rajputs and provincial governors and local chiefs of the north would, in all probability, have established independent rulerships, which it would have cost the Peshwas more effort and expense to conquer, when they attempted to accomplish the ideal of *Hindu-pad-Padshahi*. So, having realized that the

time was opportune for carrying out that ideal, upon the death of Aurangzeb, the leaders assembled and took counsel together at the court of Shahu, and with his permission, formed plans of conquest, divided the spheres of activity between the various workers and started on their mission, with no clear-cut plan or regulations to guide or bind them together. The idea was to choose a centre for military control, and establish there permanent Maratha settlements, with strong family interests, a method by which the country soon became dotted with small Maratha capitals, each with a wall or castle and having a sufficient establishment for military and revenue purposes. In its original conception and outline, the system had no inherent defects; and had there been provision for sufficient check from the central Government and no tendency to insubordination on the part of the executors, it would have worked well; in fact it did work satisfactorily so long as the controlling authority at the capital was strong, and so long as there was no competition against European powers of superior organization and armament. Thus, the *Saranjami* system supplied the want of good military roads from Satara and Poona to the various centres outside, which it was not possible for the Peshwas to build in a short time and with the scanty resources which they possessed. Even before the leaders started on an expedition, or what is called *muluk-giri* in technical language, they tried to obtain *sanads* for jagirs for the territories which they proposed to invade. The advent of Shahu did not improve matters. The Peshwas did try to reduce to obedience the older ministers and leaders of Shivaji's days; but in order to accomplish this, they had to create new sardars of their own, like the Sindias and the Holkars, who later imitated their predecessors and in their own turn resented control from the weaker Peshwas. If the Peshwas had attempted to enforce stricter discipline, they would not have succeeded in accomplishing even what they did. In fact, the India of the 18th century, with the weakening of the central Mughal Government, afforded a particularly favourable field to very many ambitious and roving spirits. The provincial governors of the Emperors, such as Safdar Jang, Alivardi Khan, Nizam-ul-Mulk, the various Bundela

princes and Sikh generals, Jat and Rohilla chiefs in the north, the Nawabs of Arcot, Savanur, Kadappa, Karnool, and the more or less powerful rulers of Mysore, Bednor and other places in the south,—all these tried, each in his own way, to obtain independent power and submitted to superior strength only for the time when they were compelled. The Maratha armies often reduced them to obedience, but the moment the armies left their frontiers, they once more resumed their previous independence. Year after year, the Peshwa had to send military expeditions all over India to collect tributes: thus it has to be admitted that the *Hindu-pad-Padshahi* which the Peshwas attempted to establish, was more a name than an actually accomplished fact.

CHAPTER VI

SIVAJI—"A GREAT CAPTAIN"

Some of the kings of the East have had a very humble origin. The first Nawab of Oudh was a petty merchant, the first Peshwa a village accountant, Hyder Ail's father was a belted peon and commenced life as a groom, the ancestors of Holkar were goat herds, and those of Sindhia slaves, the first of this family who became so powerful was slipper bearer to the Peshwa, and nearer our own time Mahomed Ali of Egypt was the son of a tobacconist in Cavallo in Macedonia.

Sivaji's origin was a contrast to all these. He did not rise from the ranks, but came from an ancient line of Rajas, the Bhonslas, men in the position of the great barons of England when they were powerful enough to defy alike sovereign and people. Both by father and mother's side his ancestors had won distinction in the field as vassals of the Kings of Ahmednagar and Bijapore. His mother was a Rajput, and her name of *Jadow* was as old as the first Muhammadan invasion of India in the thirteenth century, when *Devgiri* was the name of Dowlatabad, and ere ditch and scrap had made that renowned fortress unscaleable except to the ant or the lizard. His great grandfather was patel of Verole. Ellora thus becoming:

"The mother of a race of kings,"

an addition to its other wonderful attractions. Both his father and grandfather were two of the most powerful men in the Mahratta dominions, the first in command of 5,000 horse. Sivaji was born in the Fort of Jooneer or Sewneer[1] in 1627. Some one says, "he was born in a fort and died in a fort."

Here is a good etching of him taken by a European.[2] *Scene* Surat, *aetat* 37. Neither Grant Duff nor Elphinstone seem to have been aware of it.

[1] About twenty-four miles from Poona

[2] Escalliot to Sir Thomas Browne, author of *Religious Medici*, 1664.

"His person is described by them who have seen him to be of mean stature, lower somewhat than I am erect, and of excellent proportion. Actual in exercise, and whenever he speaks seemes to smile, a quicke and peercing eye, and whiter than any of his people. He is distrustfull, seacret, subtile, cruell, perfidious, insulting over whomsoever he getts into his power. Absolute in his commands, and in his punishments more than severe, death or dismemberment being the punishment of every offence if necessary require, venturous and desperate in execution of his resolves."

This is by a contemporary on the spot, and there is nothing left to us but a feeble attempt to fill in the blank spaces between the lines. And first of all, he was superstitious to a degree, and we may be sure, that the cry of a hare, the howl of a wolf, or the scream of a sarus distracted him, and schemes of the greatest moment were suspended, if the argurs were against him.

When the English Ahbassador in 1674 went down to Raighar to "assist" at his coronation, he found Sivaji had gone on a pilgrimage to Purtabghar to a temple of the goddess Bhowani and Oxenden and his companions were detained *a month* in the Fort, until his idle ceremonies at Raighar were accomplished. He was mightily imbued with his religious rites and ceremonies and would do anything to carry them through. Witness his landing at Malabar Point, at midnight and at the hazard of his life, to pass through the stone of Regeneration. He was most attached to his mother and exercised filial obedience until death divided them, and he was kind to his dependents and relations. It is said that his manners were remarkably pleasing and his address winning. This refers to men, but it is not so well known that he had a wonderfully fascinating power over women. We do not prove this by the fact that he had three wives and married a fourth two days after his coronation in the 47th year of his age.

But a story which Mackintosh heard at Hyderabad seventy years ago has come down to us. It appears that when a prisoner at Delhi he exercised this *glamourgift* so effectually, that one of the Princesses of the House of Timur.

a daughter of Aurangzeb, was devoured by love for him. No doubt, a glance from behind the *purdah* did it all. However, it lasted her for life. Sivaji was told by "the cruel parient," and *she* also, no doubt, that the marriage could not come off unless he became a Muslim. This could not be, and it is an affecting instance of the power and endurance of youthful affection that *Moti Bowreah*, such was her pet name, never married and in extreme old age long[3] after Sivaji was dead and burned tended his grandson and carefully watched his up-bringing. Some of Aurangzeb's daughters were most accomplished, full of music, poetry and all that sort of thing, which Sivaji loved so well that he would go a long way out of his beat to attend a *kutha* or meeting of bards and singers. A tomb of white marbel was erected to her memory—and she well deserved it—which may still be seen near Bijapore, an oasis in the desert.

He was a good horsemen, swordsman, and marksman. He had sprung from a race of mighty hunters and athletes. His father died an old man from a heavy fall he had from his horse in the hunting field. His spare wiry form and small stature admirably adapted him for climbing and his training from boyhood put him on a par with the best climbers in the Deccan. Every corrie, gulch, and Jacob's ladder was better known to him than the *tulsi* plant at his own door. He not only loved climbing for its own sake, but admired and rewarded it in others. When he had finished the fortifications of Raighar he one day called an assembly of the people and held out a bag of gold and a bracelet worth Rs. 500 as a reward to any man who accomplished the ascent in any way except through the gate he had constructed, and without rope of ladder. A *Mhar* ascended, planted the flag, then quickly descended and made his obeisance to Sivaji. The man received the rewards in presence of the assembly and was set at liberty. We need not add that the way by which he ascended was closed.

His power of endurance is a perfect mystery. Take his flight from Delhi.[4] All the way to Allahabad was his son

[3] *Twenty seven years after.*
[4] *Escaped in a hamper.*

with him, a lad nine years of age, at first mounted "ride and tie" on the same Deccany tattoo, then on foot disguished as a fakir, his face rubbed with ashes, swimming rivers with his *kupra* on his head to keep it dry, outrunning the swiftest trained couriers of the Great Moghul, and this during the monsoon through a thickly wooded country from Allahabad to Banaras, from Banaras to Gaya, from Gaya to Cuttack, from Cuttack to Hyderabad.

Or his night raid into Poona in 1663. He left Singhur *after dark*, entered the gate as part of a marriage procession, attacked the Muhammedan Viceroy's palace, slashed off two of his fingers as he descended from a window, killed his son and most of his attendants. It seemed the work of a moment; and *that same night* he ascended Singhur amid a blaze of torches visible from every part of the Moghul camp.[5]

Sivaji was weighed against gold and turned the scales at 112 lbs. This was good riding weight; though a small man he had infinite pluck. A weasel has been known to fly at the throat of a man on horseback, and Sivaji had a fierce will and intensity of purpose, and was full of resolve.

"Come on Resolve and lead the van
Thou stalk of carlehemp in man."

The most distinguished Mahratta, awkward and sturdy at the best, was ungainly side by side with Sivaji.

He never could sign his own name. He had, however, a Persian writer and a keeper of his seal which was put to all documents. This, however, need not be held as a crime against him.

Though his face was white his *shendee* was as black as the raven's wing. . . .

In size, in physique, in soldier-like qualities, and in powers of endurance, the nearest likeness to him in our day, making allowances for the difference of the times was Sir Charles Napier, and, for a certain impetuosity and ubiquity, Sivaji comes nearer to "the beared vision of Sind" than any other man we know of.

[5] Let the reader take a note of heights and distances, and "the roads before they were made" on his *pinic* to Karackwasla. It was on this road that Colonel lost his life crossing a torrent during the monsoon.

That he had some good qualities is undeniable. His discipline, his practice of the toleration of religion, his respect and treatment of women are vouched for by his most inveterate enemies and are beyond all praise. A Muslim writer of his day says—"His orders were to do no harm to the mosques, the Book of God, or the women of any one." At a well which he built near Raighar, there was a seat. "Here Sivaji would sit down and when the women of the traders and poor people came to draw water he would give the children fruit and talk to the women as to his mother and sisters."

All honour to him for a course of conduct which was entirely reversed by that "unlicked cub," his son and heir Sumbaji.

When the army was on the move Sivaji would not allow a woman in it, and it is said when thus occupied that he would rather hear the neighing of his enemies' horses than the sound of a woman's voice.

He loved diamonds and pearls much, for they are easily carried. On his flight from Delhi, a foujdar recognised him, and a diamond and ruby worth a lakh of rupees saved his life, the foujdar wisely concluding that they were more valuable to him than the head of Sivaji. Even then he had gold mohurs and pagodas in walking-sticks, jewels in old slippers, rubies encased in wax and concealed in the dress, and some jewels in the mouths of his followers. Sivaji's period was the great diamond time when Tavernier found 60,000 people working at a single mine thirty miles from Golconda.

His master passion was the love of money. All other passions were subordinate to this. The power of the sword is great—the power of money, "the sinews of war," is greater. It booted little that Sivaji was a good swordsman, marksman, a fit soldier in his shirt of mail *cap a pie,* if he had no money. He early in life recognised this truth, plundering peaceful *kafilas,* and carrying the proceeds to Torna. The cunning fellow, when he took possession of this fort, dug up the treasure as if by accident—a miracle of the goddess *Bhowani.*

In every step of his onward progress, his necessities

became the greater until he had a mint of his own at Raighar.

"His desire of money is soe great that the spares noe barbours cruelty to extort confessions from his prisoners at least cutts off one hand, sometimes both. . . . There were then about four heads and twenty four hands cut off."[6] It for nothing else than bribery he required money. It was bribery which first opened the gates of Torna and Singhur. More potent than the sword of Bhowani[7] (for when all else failed), it struck down the supple courtiers of Delhi and Bijapore.

He bribed the Viceroy of the Deccan. Without bribery he never could have escaped from Delhi, and without bribery he never had been able to assisinate Jowly or Afzul Khan. But to carry on the business of a great State, to equip, say 30,000 horse and 40,000 infantry as in the expedition to the Carnatic in 1676, required large funds, and the national robbery—we can call it nothing else which he perpetrated on a great scale—supplied him with the means of doing so. Hence the annals of Sivaji are just a long series of burglaries and piracies. There was first the royal convoy at Kallian, then followed the sack of Jooneer, and the plunder of ships to the Red Sea and Mecca, the booty from Rajapur and Dabul: Surat, which he sarcastically called his *"Treasury,"* was twice sacked by him and yielded enormous loot.

Barcelore, 130 miles below Goa, and other rich mercantile towns on the coast, incredible plunder from Hubli and Jaulna, and forced contributions from Karwar to Golconda. Revenue with him meant war and war meant plunder.[8] "No plunder no pay" was his maxim. "I rob you to reward my soldiers" was the salvo he laid to his breast. So early as 1665 at the Treaty of Purandhar, so anxious was he for a settlement with the Moghul that he engaged to pay forty lakhs of pagodas or two crores of rupees, and we do not wonder at it. He was quite good for five times the amount.

He was often gorged with plunder. Of goods, for

[6] *Escalliot to Brown.*

.....[7]The Genoa blade presented to the Prince of Wales in 1875 during his visit to India by the Raja of Kolapore and now in the Indian Museum.

[8]When the Mahrattas proceeded beyond their boundaries, to collect revenue and make war were synonymous."—*Grant Duff.*

example, he had often more than he knew what to do with, and as much perplexed as a merchant whose warehouses are overstocked. He wanted *money,* not goods. An Agra merchant came to him when he was at Surat thinking to propitiate him with 40 oxen loads of cotton goods. Sivaji said, "where is your money?" The man replied, "I have had no time to sell my goods." The man's right hand was immediately cut off, and his goods burned before his face: Yes, that man ought to have had money.

Every year added to the pile at his great robbers' den of Raighar. There is one night during the Dewali when the Hindu brings out all his treasure and worships it. Sivaji's god, *pour l' exposition,* must have been overpowering, gold, silver, diamonds and rubies, with cloth of gold and the richest vestments of Asia, "garments rolled in blood," a heap worthy of Tyre or Babylon. When he died he must have had several millions in specie at Raighar, rupees, Spanish dollars, gold mohurs of Hindusthan and Surat, pagodas of the Karnatic, Venetian sequins, and Sycee silver.

HIS DEATH

In the midst of "these combustions" in 1680 died Sivaji. Returns to Raighar after a long and bloody raid to Jalna, swelled knee joint, spitting of blood and all that sort of warning before death. Goes to "where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest." Here we leave him. Not so his Muslim historian Khafi Khan who pursues him with relentless fury to the other world.

His place in history may be gathered from these words of Aurangzeb, Emperor of Delhi, his greatest enemy who spent twenty years in the Deccan in the vain endeavour to subdue him and those who came after him.

"He was a great captain and the only one who has had the magnanimity to raise a new kingdom while I have been endeavouring to destroy the ancient sovereignties of India.

"My armies have been employed against him for nineteen years and nevertheless his State has always been increasing."

CHAPTER VII

THE MARATHAS AS A MILITARY NATION

. . . .The origin of the Marathas is still in considerable obscurity. Ethnologists have not yet determined whether they are Aryans, Scythians, aborigines or a mixture of the two former and the latter.

The banks of the Oxus are supposed to have been the cradle of humanity, the original birthplace of creeds and nations. This tract was the home of the Aryans, who, bursting their ancient bounds, issued in successive waves to people the earth. Some went north-west towards Europe, others south-east towards Persia and India. As they spread, they either drove the aborigines in front of them into mountains, hills or forests, or conquered them.

In these early days, each man had to attend to his own wants, but, as population increased, the Aryans, who migrated towards India, gradually, by a process of natural selection, resolved themselves into four great classes, *viz.*—(*i*) the Brahman or priestly caste, (*ii*) the Kshatriya or military caste, (*iii*) the Vaishya or trading caste, and (*iv*) the Sudra or servile caste.

At first, the lines dividing the above castes were not sharply defined, but in course of time, occupational distinctions developed into separate castes and hereditary employment.

While these evolutions were developing, the Aryans were gradually advancing towards India. Settling in the Punjab about 2000 B.C., they gradually occupied Hindustan, that is the tract of country between the Himalayas and Vindhyas.

The Brahmans, as a priestly tribe, held great power and, by degrees, elaborated a ritual. This led to a revulsion of feeling and to the rise of Buddhism, which threatened to extinguish Hinduism. The Brahmans however, not to be outdone, designed a code, known as "The Code of Manu" and also as "The Dharma Shastras," which was nothing more

or less than a compilation of the customary law current, among the Aryans, about the 5th Century B.C. But the Brahmans claimed a divine origin for it and ascribed it to "Manu," the first Aryan man. In it the four-fold division of caste is said to have been ordered by Brahma, the Creator of the Universe. The Brahmans are said to have emanated from his head, the Kshatriyas, from his arms, the Vaishiyas from his thighs, and the Sudras from his feet. The first three of these castes are said to be twice-born, while the Sudras, really aborigins, are excluded.

The Aryans appear to have had their wanderings checked for some considerable period by the Vindhyas. In course of time, however, they crossed these and invaded Maharashthra. The derivation of this word is disputed. The country, south of the Vindhyas, is said to have been referred to, by settlers in Upper India, as "Maharashthra," that is, "the great country." Another theory is that it is "Mhar-rashthra," the country of the Mhars," the latter being a large and important aboriginal class living in the Marathi-speaking country, but their depressed state makes it unlikely that the Marathas would adopt it. Again, chieftains of the name of Rattas governed Saundatti, in Belgaum District, in comparatively later times, while a tribe of that name has held political supremacy in the Dekhan from the remotest times. It is surmised that these called themselves "Maha-rattas" or "great Rattas," and that the country they lived in came to be called "Maha-rashthra."

Another point in despute is whether they are Kshatriyas or Sudras. This is a most important one. The Marathi language is undoubtedly of Sanskrit origin; that being so, it must have been introduced by the Aryans: in which case, the people speaking it, could hardly be aboriginals or Sudras. The other languages of Southern India, such as Tamil, Telugu, Kanarese, Malialam, etc., are Dravidian and totally different. The people employing them, I believe, are said to be of aboriginal descent.

There are two distinct classes of Marathas, both in the Konkan and Dekhan. Those in the former tract are divided into Raos and Naiks: the former consider themselves to be

of better stock, but they both claim to be Kshatriyas and not Sudras.

In the Dekhan, the better class and well-to-do Marathas, claim to be Kshatriyas and of Rajput origin. They wear the sacred thread, belong to the four great Vanshas or races, *viz.*, Surya, Som or Chandra Sesh and Yadu, forbid widow marriage, practise infant marriage, and consist of 96 clans. Those, however, who follow agricultural pursuits call themselves Kunbis and say they are Sudras. They are both, however, of the same stock; the distinction would only appear to be social. A Maratha will marry the daughter of a Kunbi but will not, ordinarily, give his daughter in marriage to one. Cases, however, have occurred of a Kunbi, who has prospered and risen in the social scale, obtaining the daughter of a Maratha in marriage by donning the sacred thread, calling himself Kshatriya and compensating his future wife's people. Kunbi recruits invariably start life by styling themselves Sudras, but on joining a crops, they immediately call themselves Kshatriyas. There also exist, to the present day, indications of a classification by "kul-devaks" or "totems," which can scarcely be reconciled with a pure Rajput or even Aryan origin. Be their origin what it may, one cannot get away from the fact that they rose, from comparative insignificance, to be a great people, drove the Musalman invaders out of the Dekhan, broke the Moghal power, over-ran India and would have had an Emperor on the Imperial throne of Delhi had they not suffered defeat, at the hands of the Afghans, on the fatal field of Panipat in 1761. There is no question but that the Marathas take a very prominent part in everything of interest to Hindus, in the present day, and that all Hindus would rally round them.

Maharashthra or that tract of country inhabited by the Marathas and in which Marathi is the prevailing language, is bounded on the north by the Satpura Hills, as far east as the Weinganga river, which to its junction with the Warda river forms its eastern boundary, from thence a wavy line to Goa continues its eastern and gives its southern boundaries: on the west, it is bounded by the sea, as far north as Damaun, whence a line to the western extremities of the Satpura Range

excludes that portion in which Guzerathi is the prevalent language.

Berar and the western portions of the Nizam's dominions are within Maharashthra.

That part of Maharashthra, situated within the limits of the Bombay Presidency, is divided, by more or less natural boundaries, into three divisions. These are (*i*) Konkan, (*ii*) Konkan-Ghat-Mahta and (*iii*) Dekhan.

The Konkan lies between the Western Ghats or Sahyadri Range and the sea. It extends from Siudashivgarh to the Tapti, with a varying breadth of from 25 to 50 miles. The nature of the country is excessively broken, rugged and hilly, right away down to the sea shore. An idea seems to have gained credence that the Konkan is more or less a level expanse. This is quite a fallacy.

The Konkan-Ghat-Mahta lies on top of the Ghats and literally means "Konkan at the head of the Ghats" in contradistinction to "Thal Konkan," which signifies "Konkan at the foot of the Ghats." It extends from Junnar, in the north of Poona District, to Kolhapur in the south, and is sub-divided into the Khoras, Murhas and Mawals. It has an average breadth of from 20 to 25 miles. On the west, it terminates on the edge of the Ghats, while on the east, it sinks into the plains. The portion of Konkan-Ghat-Mahta between Junnar and Bhimashankar is known as the Mawals, which signifies "to set." The Mawals lie to the west, where the sun sinks. Shivaji's famous Mawalis were drawn from these parts. From Bhimashankar southward the country is known as the Murhas, which literally means "mist." This part of Konkan-Ghat-Mahta receives a very heavy rainfall and is enveloped in clouds and mist for a considerable portion of the year, consequently its inhabitants are known as Murhwallahs or "Dwellers in the mist." The Khoras are the valleys formed by the spurs of the Sahyadris, and derived from the word "Khor," which translates into "dingle" or "glen." The Konkan-Ghat-Mahta is entirely a hilly country, covered with jungle and low tangle, most difficult to move through. The views from it are magnificent especially just after the south-west monsoon, when the air is clear and still

and the rivers, streams and rivulets full and waterfalls and cascades are to be seen on every hand.

The Dekhan, officially, commences on the crest of the Sahyadris, and includes Konkan-Ghat-Mahta, but, from a recruiting point of view, it starts where Konkan-Ghat-Mahta ends, on the eastern side of the Ghats. Recruits from this area would be called Konkanis and passed to Konkan Companies. The Dekhan consists of rolling plains, with little or nothing to relieve the monotony except low hills and a few green patches of cultivation near villages, rivers and irrigation. It is uninteresting from a scenic point of view, in contradistinction to the Konkan and Ghat-Mahta, which are possessors of beautiful scenery and landscapes.

There is one marked feature in the scenery of Maharashthra and that is flat-topped hills, either rising abruptly out of the plain or terminating a spur. As these hills reach their summits, they are crowned with scarped, perpendicular sides, culminating in a level top. These, in themselves, were difficult enough to ascend; the Marathas took advantage of them by transforming them into forts. This was effected by building walls, in such places as were necessary, and generally strengthening and improving other weak spots, the result being that these fastnesses became well nigh impregnable. When they fell, it was usually the result of treachery. In many springs the finest water existed and to complete their independence, secret subterranean passages were constructed. After their marauding expeditions, the Marathas returned to these in perfect confidence, knowing full well that the Musalmans would not dare to commit themselves to the intricacies and difficulties of the Western Ghats. It was from these forts that Shivaji earned the title of "The Mountain Rat." Some of the most remarkable are Daulatabad, Satara, Torna, Raigarh, Rajgarh, Pratapgarh, Singarh, Purandhar and Panalla. In addition to these Shivaji built forts on the coast for the defence of his people and his fleet. These are Malwan or Sindidrug, Gheria, Severndrug and Alibag (Kolaba). These are now more or less in ruins.

The first Musalman invasion of the Dekhan took place about 1293 A. D., when Alla-ud-din, a nephew of the kings

of the Khilji dynasty, took Deogarh, the modern Daulatabad, then in possession of the Deogiri Yadhaos. Apparently it changed hands several times, before passing finally into the possession of the Musulman invaders. The Marathas, at this period, did not require much reckoning with; they made little or no stand against the foreigners, who gradually conquered their country, settled in and began to administer it. In the course of time, Muhammadan kingdoms rose in the Dekhan, governed by viceroys but owing allegiance to Delhi. As these gained strength, they became more or less independent, and warred not only amongst themselves, but combined together against Delhi. These kingdoms were the Adil Shahi or Bijapur, the Kutub Shahi, Golconda or Hyderabad, Imad Shahi or Berar, Nizam Shahi or Ahmednagar and Burid Shahi or Ahmedabad Bidar.

War cannot be made without armies, and to maintain these Marathas were enlisted.

About this time, end of sixteenth century, the Portuguese, Dutch, French and English came on the scenes of Western India. They were not of much account at the start, but later on required dealing with.

The first Marathas to bring themselves to notice were the Bhonsle family, in the sixteenth century. They held several patelships under the Ahmednagar government. Their principal residence was at the village of Ellora, near the celebrated caves of that name and the fortress of Daulatabad, in the Nizam's territory. Babji Bhonsle, who was apparently a man of some note, had two sons, Maluji and Vituji. The former married Dipa Bhai, a sister of Jagpal Rao Naik Nimbalkar, Deshmukh of Phaltan, a man of good birth and position. Through the influence of one Lukhji Jadhao Rao, Maluji was entertained in the service of Mortijah Nizam Shah in 1577. For many years he was childless, great misfortune among Hindus. He invoked the aid of all the Hindu gods, but to no purpose. He then sought the assistance of one Shah Sharif, a celebrated Muhammadan saint of Ahmednagar, whom he engaged to offer up prayers on his behalf. Shortly after, a son was born to him. In gratitude to the Pir, for his supposed benediction, the child was named Shah

after him, with the Maratha adjunct of respect "Ji": in the ensuing year, a second son was, in like manner, named Sharifji.

Maluji Bhonsle was a man possessed of considerable ability, industry and perseverance. He was determined to prosper and, with this end in view, he was anxious to contract a marriage between Shahji and the daughter of Lukhji Jadhao Rao, which was not pleasing to the latter, as Maluji was not considered of sufficient rank. The latter, having become possessed of considerable wealth, which it is said the goddess Bhavani assisted him to, employed it in the purchase of horses and in public and charitable works. His brother-in-law, Nimbalkar of Phaltan, espoused his cause and, by his help, Maluji was raised to the command of 5,000 horse, with the title of Maluji Saja Bhonsle. The forts of Shivner and Chakan, with their dependent districts, were placed in his charge and the parganahs of Poona and Supa made over to him in Jagir. Every obstacle being thus removed the marriage of Shahji, with Joji Bhai, daughter of Lukhji Jadhao Rao, was celebrated with great pomp in 1604.

By Jiji Bhai, Shahji had two sons, Sambhaji and Shivaji. The elder was his father's favourite and accompanied him from early infancy, but the younger remained with his mother. Shivaji was born in Shivner Fort near Junnar, in the north of Poona, in May 1627. During the turbulent period in which his childhood was passed, he narrowly escaped, on several occasions, from falling into the hands of the Muhammadans.

Owing to an estrangement between Shahji and Jiji Bhai, Shivaji did not see much of his father during his early childhood. To Dadaji Konedeo, an astute Brahman, Shahji left the care of his family at Poona. In those days Marathas could seldom read or write, as they considered it undignified. Shivaji could never write his name. He was a good archer and marksman, skilled in the use of the spear and the various swords and daggers common in the Dekhan. His countrymen have ever been celebrated for horsemanship, in this he excelled. He was fully instructed in all the ceremonies and observances enjoined by the rules of his caste. The fabulous

exploits detailed in the Mahabharata, the Ramayana, and the Bhagwat were his delight.

The religious and natural feelings of a Hindu were strongly implanted in Shivaji, and he early imbibed a rooted hatred of the Muhammadans. It must be remembered that, at this time, the Dekhan was held by the various Muhammadan dynasties and that the Marathas had little or nothing to say in the government of their own country. This would naturally increase their hate of the Musalmans.

From about his sixteenth year he began to associate with persons of lawless habits and to talk of becoming an independent polygar. To endeavour to wean him from these tastes, Dadaji Konedeo confided the affairs of the Jagir to him. He thus came in contact with the leading Marathas, near Poona, whose goodwill he obtained by his obliging and conciliatory manner. Even then, it was whispered that he was a sharer in the gang robberies committed in the Konkan.

During his visits to the Konkan and Ghat Mahta, he grew familiar with the paths and defiles of that wild tract, a knowledge he made use of later. He also came much into contact with the Mawalis, to whom he was always partial. In spite of their stupid appearance, he observed they were active and intelligent in anything to which they were accustomed and faithful in situations of trust. His most trusted follower, Tanaji Malosre, was one of these.

Shivaji noted the value of the various hill forts and in the time took advantage of them. His first exploit was the capture of Torna, a hill fort some 20 miles west of Poona, in 1648, by the collusion of the Killidar. This was a possession of Bijapur, in whose service his father was entertained. Shivaji informed Bijapur, but took care to improve the defences of the fort. While so employed, hidden treasure was discovered, with which arms and ammunition were purchased and the fort of Rajgarh, three miles south-west of Torna, built. On this coming to the ears of Bijapur, suspicion fell on Shahji, who, however, was blameless. He took the precaution to write to Dadaji Konedeo and asked him to request Shivaji to desist. Shortly after this, Konedeo died. Prior to his death, he sent for Shivaji and advised him to

prosecute his plans for independence; to protect Brahmans, kine and cultivators; to preserve Hindu temples from violation; and to follow the fortune which lay before him.

Dadaji's death was reported to Shahji, but when requests were made for arrears of revenue, evasive replies were sent by Shivaji.

Shortly after this, he acquired Supa by surrounding it with his Mawalis, and also the forts of Singarh and Purandhar. In this manner he was soon in possession of the tract between Chakan and the Nira. He continued to arm and collect his Mawalis and, in 1648, he attacked and looted a large convoy of treasure en route from Kalyan to Bijapur. This completely unmasked his designs, but before the news reached Bijapur, he had obtained possession of several more forts. These acts led to suspicion being cast on Shahji, in consequence of which he was made a prisoner. During his incarceration, Shivaji remained quiet. By appealing to the Moghals, Shivaji obtained Shahji's release, and a mansub of 5,000 horse for himself.

The method employed by Shivaji to obtain possession of hill forts was as follows. It was customary for the villagers residing in the neighbourhood of these to contribute, annually, a supply of leaves and grass for the purpose of thatching houses. These they were permitted to deposit inside the forts. Shivaji noted this and was not slow to take advantage of the slackness of the Muhammadan custodians. He caused his own Mawalis to play the part of villagers and thus gain entrance, taking care to conceal their arms in the bundles of grass and leaves. Admittance once being gained, the garrison was quickly overpowered and possession of the fort with it.

With a view to helping him to extend his possessions in the Konkan and Ghat-Mahta, Shivaji built Pratapgarh upon a high rock near the source of the Krishna. Up to this time he had confined his ravages to Bijapur, but becoming daring by impunity and invited by circumstances, he extended his depredations to the Imperial Districts and, in 1657, raided Junnar.

In 1659, the Bijapur Government became sensible of the necessity of making an effort to subdue him. Accordingly a

force of 5,000 horse and 7,000 choice infantry, with a train of artillery, was despatched against him under one Afzul Khan, who pompously declared that he would bring back the insignificant rebel and cast him in chains under the footstool of the throne.

Shivaji was not going to be drawn. On the arrival of this force at Wai, he withdrew to Pratapgarh, below which he cut down the jungle. He communicated his plans to the faithful Tanaji Malosre and ordered up his troops from the Konkan mostly Mawali infantry. He sent word to Afzal Khan that he would surrender the whole country to him, if by so doing he could assure himself of his friendship.

In spite of his contempt for Shivaji and the Marathas, Afzul Khan was aware of the intricate nature of the country between Wai and Pratapgarh. He, therefore, did not wish to commit his whole force to it. Instead, he sent one Pantoji Gopinath, a Brahman, to interview Shivaji, a fatal mistake of which the latter was not slow to avail himself. During the interview he unfolded to Pantoji his dreams of founding a Hindu nation; that he was called upon by Bhavani to protect Brahmans and kine, to punish the violaters of their temples and gods, and to resist the enemies of their religion; that it became him as a Brahman to assist in what was already decreed by the deity; and that here, amongst his caste and countrymen, he should hereafter live in comfort and affluence. Pantoji was completely won over, and it was arranged that Afzul Khan should be invited to have an interview with Shivaji.

Everything being arranged, Afzul Khan, clad in a thin muslin garment, and armed with a sword, accompanied by some 1,500 men, advanced to within a few hundred yards of Pratapgarh, where he halted. He then proceeded to meet Shivaji, taking Sayyid Bundu with him.

Shivaji made preparations as if resolved on some meritorious, though desparate action. He performed his ablutions and besought his mother's blessing. He then put on his steel chain cap and armour under his turban and cotton gown, concealed a crooked dagger, bichwa or scorpion, in his right sleeve, and, on the fingers of his left hand, he fixed

a waghnakh, or tiger's claws. Thus accoutred, with his tried friend Tanaji Malosre, he set out to meet Afzul Khan.

The two met, were introduced and, in the midst of the customary embraces, Shivaji disembowelled Afzul Khan with the waghnakh, following the blow up with the dagger. Afzul drew his sword, but to no avail, against Shivaji. Sayyid Bundu made a gallant effort, but against two such swordsmen as Shivaji and Tanaji Malosre, he had no chance. Afzul's head was severed and carried in triumph to Pratapgarh. On the recognised signal, the Mawalis fell on and completed the rout of the Bijapur troops.

This act, detestable as it appears in the light of the present day, greatly raised Shivaji's reputation, and from this date the Marathas may be said to have sprung into being as a nation. I have no wish to defend the murder of Afzal Khan, but, in all fairness to the Marathas, it must be remembered that among uncivilised people, such as they were then and such as the wild tribes on our frontier now are, necessity is often considered to justify murder. Outrages constantly occur on our borders, yet from these we do not impute want of a fighting spirit to the frontier tribes. In dealing with the undoubted assassination of Afzul Khan, these points should receive due consideration, as his murder was deemed justified.

Muhammadan rule in the Dekhan rested on very insecure ground. There were no interests in common. On the hand was the Emperor, on the other the kingdoms of the Dekhan. Each of these encouraged the Maratha chieftains under their banner, which brought Shivaji into prominence as a champion of Hindu faith and empire, a power which should finally drive out of the Dekhan its Musalman rulers. They were so blind to the doings of the Marathas that they actually encouraged them to fight against their own nationality. When they discovered their error, it was too late. The only Musalman, who appeared to grasp the idea of fusing India into one nation, was Akbar, who did his best to blend the interests of Hindus and Musalmans into one.

Having defeated Bijapur, Shivaji turned his attention to the Moghals and also plundered Surat, then in possession of the English and Dutch. Seeing the advantage the Sidi of

Janjira enjoyed from the possession of a navy, to protect his shores, he inaugurated one.

Shahji died in 1664, on which Shivaji assumed the title of Raja, and struck coins in his own name.

Aurangzebe now began to realise the danger of the Maratha power and sent an expedition against Shivaji, commanded by a Rajput Prince. Shivaji made no attempt to withstand this but proceeded to conclude a treaty and tender his services to the Moghals. By these means, his territory became greatly circumscribed.

In March 1666, Shivaji proceeded to Delhi; taking umbrage at the manner of his reception, he showed resentment, on which he was practically made a prisoner. He, however, managed to escape and, after extraordinary adventures, returned to the Dekhan. He was not long in repossessing himself of the forts and districts, he had been called upon to cede, prior to proceeding to Delhi.

The years 1668-69 were those of his greatest leisure. These he devoted to affairs of State.

A short description of his military arrangements will now be given, as they are replete with interest.

The foundation of his power was his infantry. His occupation of the hill forts give him a hold on the country and a place of deposit for his plunder. His cavalry had not yet spread the terror of the Maratha name. The infantry was raised in Ghat-Mahta and the Konkan, those of the former were called Mawalis, those of the latter Hedkaris. The word "hed" literally means "down the coast"; the term applied originally, it is believed, to men drawn from the neighbourhood of Malwan, but later to all infantry from the Konkan. These men brought their own arms, for which Government supplied ammunition. Their dress was a pair of short drawers, reaching half-way down the thigh, a strong narrow band tightly girt about the loins, a turban and sometimes a cotton frock. Some wore a cloth round the waist, which could be used as a shawl.

Their arms consisted of a sword, shield and matchlock. Some of the Hedkaris, especially those from Sawantwari, used a species of firelock. Every tenth man, instead of fire arms,

carried a bow and arrows, for use in night attacks and surprises, when the use of firearms was prohibited or kept in reserve. The Hedkaris excelled as marksmen, the Mawalis for desparate attacks, sword in hand. Both possessed an extraordinary facility for climbing precipices and scaling rocks.

To every ten men there was a naik, and to every fifty a havaldar. The commander of one hundred was termed jumladar, and of a thousand ek-hazari. There were also officers of five thousands, between whom and the surnobat, or chief commander, there were no mediums.

The cavalry was of two kinds, *viz.*, Barghirs and Shilahdars. The Barghirs were mounted on horses, the property of the State, and were known as Pagah; in these Shivaji placed great trust and reliance. The Shilahdars brought their own horses. The resemblance of this system to that now prevalent in our Indian cavalry is very noticeable. Possibly it may have been adopted from the Marathas.

The Maratha horsemen wore a pair of tight breeches covering the knee, a turban which many fastened by passing a fold under the chin, a frock of quilted cotton, and a cloth round the waist, with which they generally girt on their swords, in preference to securing them with their belts.

The horseman was armed with a sword and shield; a proportion carried matchlocks. The great national weapon was the spear, in the use of which, and the management of their horses, they evinced both grace and dexterity.

Over every seventy-five horsemen, there was a havaldar. To one hundred and seventy-five, a jumladar, and to every five jumlas or 625, a subhedar. Every subhe had an accountant and auditor of accounts, invariably Brahmans.

To the command of every ten subhes, rated at 5,000, there was a commander styled panch-hazari. Every jumla, subhe and panch-hazari had an establishment of news writers, avowed spies and secret intelligencers.

Shivaji took an immense amount of interest in his retainers and, in the early part of his career, inspected all men offering themselves for entertainment, personally.

Mawalis enlisted merely on condition of getting a subsist-

ence in grain. Infantry received from Rs. 3 to 9 per mensem, Barghirs Rs. 6 to 15 and Shilahdars Rs. 18 to 36. Plunder was the property of the State.

As regards hill forts, each was in charge of a killidar or havaldar under whom there were one or more surnobats, each in command of a force; these must not, however, be confounded with a chief commander of cavalry or infantry. Every fort had a head clerk and a supply officer. Orders in respect to ingress and egress, rounds, watches and patrols, care of water, grain, stores and ammunition were most minute. The garrison consisted of infantry but, independent of them, each had a separate and complete establishment of Brahmans, Marathas, Ramoshis, Mhars and Mangs, the whole termed Garkharis. The Ramoshis, Mhars and Mangs were employed on outpost duty: they brought intelligence, watched all paths, misled enquirers or cut off the enemy's stragglers. They described the fort as their "mother."

Shivaji's civil administration was equally good. On it he expended much care and forethought. No branch of it escaped his attention, either religious, revenue or judicial.

The standard of Shivaji, the national flag of the Marathas, was called the Bhagwa Jhenda. It was swallow-tailed, of a deep orange colour, and particularly emblematic of the followers of Mahadeo.

After a spell of peace, Shivaji once more resumed activity. His first steps were the recovery of Singarh and Purandhar. An account of the taking of the former will be given here, as it shows the daring possessed by the Marathas at that time, a spirit still latent in them.

Singarh is situated on the eastern side of the great Sahyadri range, near the point where the Purandhar Hills branch off into the Dekhan. It communicates with these hills, both on the east and west by high narrow ridges, while on the north and south, it presents a high and rugged mountain, with an ascent of half a mile, in many parts, nearly perpendicular. On arriving at this height, there is an immense craggy precipice, some 40 feet high, while surmounting the whole, there is a strong stone wall with towers. This was occupied by Rajputs, who, fancying it impregnable, were correspond-

ingly negligent. Shivaji laid a plan for surprising it, confinding it to the faithful Tanaji Malosre, who offered to take it accompanied by his brother Suryaji and 1,000 Mawalis. This party set out on a dark February night, from Raigarh by different paths, known only to themselves and uniting below the fortress, directed by Malosre. The men were divided into two parts, one remaining behind, with orders to advance, if necessary, while the rest lodged themselves unseen at the foot of the rock. Selecting a part most difficult of access, one man mounted the rock, made fast a ladder, by which the remainder followed, lying down as they arrived. Three hundred had scarce obtained a footing, when the garrison became alarmed. One man advanced to discover what was occurring. A deadly arrow answered his enquiries. The noise of running to arms caused Tanaji to push forward without delay. A desparate conflict ensued. The Mawalis though outnumbered were gaining ground, when Tanaji fell. They then lost confidence, when Suryaji rallied them by saying the ropes were destroyed and now was the time to prove themselves Shivaji's Mawalis. Thus encouraged they returned with a resolution nothing could withstand, and with their usual war cry "Har! Har! Mahadeo!" they soon became masters of the fort, with a loss of some 300 to themselves and 500 Rajputs. On receiving the intimation of the success, Shivaji exclaimed: "The den is taken but the lion is slain! We have gained a fort, but alas! I have lost Tanaji Malosre."

In June 1674, Shivaji was enthroned at Raigarh after many solemn rites and every observance of the Shastras, which could make the ceremony reverenced by Hindus. He assumed many lofty titles and, thereafter, on all public occasions, he imitated the grandeur and dignity of royalty.

The remaining years of his life were spent in raiding Moghal territory, war with the Sidi and the consolidation of the Maratha power. He died at Raigarh, on the 5th April 1680, in his 53rd year. The immediate cause of his death being a painful swelling in his knee-joint, causing high fever, to which he succumbed.

At the time of his death, he had large possessions both of wealth and territory.

Shivaji was undoubtedly a wonderful man. If he had not altogether realised the dreams of his mother, or literally fulfilled the bidding of Bhawani, he had risen from a small landholder to be the monarch of a mighty nation, which he had called into being. His followers had been taught how they were to subdue the Moghals finally. Should fortune not smile, they were to return to their forts, baffling their pursuers. When opportunity offered they were to rush like a whirlwind on to the plains. So when the hand that framed the plans was dust and ashes, the design could be accomplished. Shivaji was a born leader of men. All can recognise his wonderful genius and admire his undaunted perseverance, but the world can hardly endorse the verdict of his nation, who speak of him as an incarnation of the deity, setting an example of wisdom, fortitude and piety.

Sambhaji succeeded Shivaji; though possessed of his courage, he lacked discretion, with the result that the whole country was in a state of anarchy. By executing the Peshwa, he estranged himself from the Marathas.

Aurangzebe determined to reduce the Marathas and the Muhammadan kingdoms of Bijapur and Golconda in one final effort. He left Delhi, to which he never returned, when 63 years of age, for this purpose, spending the remaining 27 years of his life on the march in a hopeless struggle to bring the Dekhan under control. So bent was he on its conquest that he paid scant heed to the doings of the English merchants, into whose hands his Empire was eventually to fall.

Aurangzebe took up his position at Ahmednagar in 1683. His camp was inconceivably luxurious and magnificent, in marked contrast to his own simple ways. This unnecessary display hindered the movement of his army. His main idea was, in the first place, to subjugate the Muhammadan States. Against the turbulent Marathas, he neglected the most ordinary precautions, owing to his senseless contempt of them, of which they took every advantage.

With this end in view, he besieged Bijapur which, after a brave defence, fell in 1686. So ended the brilliant Adil Shahi Dynasty. Golconda fell within a year. Thus the last of the

dynasties that had risen on the ruins of the Bahmani kingdom came to an end.

To destroy two kingdoms, for Aurangzeb, was quite a different matter to building up his own power. Rebellions sprang up in every direction. Had Sambhaji possessed his father's genius, he might have swept the Maghal forces away, but he spent his time in debauchery. In fact, the Maratha power appeared to be coming to an end. This was not so. Though the form was changing the power still grew. Their military organisation might lessen, yet their predatory habits, their pride in Shivaji's memory, their belief in the impregnability of their forts was as strong as ever. Their strength absolutely increased as Shivaji's system crumbled. Guerilla warfare arose and was carried on on the Moghal hosts, from every quarter, a warfare in which their unwieldy army was of little avail.

In 1689, Sambhaji fell a prisoner into Aurangzebe's hands. He was offered life on the condition of embracing Islam. To this he gave a grossly insulting reply, on which he was executed, after suffering terrible torture. Though the Marathas were estranged from Sambhaji, they were infuriated at this cruel outrage on the son of their great leader.

Rajaram, Sambhaji's half brother, was declared regent on behalf of his son, Shivaji, better known as Shahu, a boy only six years old. He carried on his preparations and resisted the Moghals as before. In these operations the Maratha fleet participated.

In 1700, Rajaram died, but his death was of no more advantage to the Emperor than that of Sambhaji. Shivaji, his eldest son, succeeded him under the regency of his mother, Tarabhai, and the struggle was continued as keenly as ever. The national spirit was roused. The Marathas had sometimes to bow before the storm, but they were never broken. They multiplied and overran the whole country. The Emperor's strength was broken: he had exhausted the revenues of the Dekhan, while the Marathas intercepted his treasure from Hindustan. His empire was unwieldy and his army got no rest. It was constantly harried, defeated in the open, supplies cut off and forts re-taken. After a quarter of a century of strife, Aurangzebe died in 1707, at Ahmednagar, hemmed in on all

sides by the very Marathas for whom he at one time showed such contempt.

So ended Aurangzebe. There is little interest in the history of his successors. The last of them was sent across the seas in 1858. Their story is a record of swift ruin. Hindu martial races closed in upon their Empire. Musalman Viceroys became independent Kings. Hosts swept in from the north, till the final conquest by the British drove them aside.

The Maratha power had a strange habit of constantly shifting its local position and character. But in all its changes, it never, while it lasted, ceased to be formidable. For a time, after Aurangzebe's death, the form which the strength assumed was that of two great rival parties.

When Sambhaji was taken prisoner by Aurangzebe, his little son, Shivaji, was also taken. He was brought up at the Imperial Court, being known as Shahu. On obtaining his liberty, he threw in his lot with the Emperor, vowing allegiance to Delhi, and gathered around him a large number of adherents, who were discontented with Tarabhai's rule.

Shahu regained possession of Satara and was formally enthroned there in 1708. Tarabhai continued a fruitless struggle with Kolhapur and Panalla as a base of operations, till 1712, when, on the death of her idiot son Shivaji, she was placed under restraint. Rajaram's younger son, Sambhaji, revived the party, but was finally defeated by Shahu and gave up his pretensions to the Maratha throne in 1729. He was, however, allowed to retain the title of Raja of Kolhapur.

At this period Balaji Bishvanath, a Brahman, was Shahu's Peshwa or Prime Minister. On his advice, Shahu demanded a recognition of his claims to all the territory that belonged to Shivaji, together with other rights, from the Moghal Viceroy of the Dekhan. In spite of the magnitude of the demands, they were conceded. The Viceroy, by these means, hoped to build up the Imperial power, instead of which he consolidated that of the Marathas. The astuteness of the Peshwa placed the Marathas in a very favourable position.

Shahu, the legitimate head of the Marathas, styled himself "King of the Hindus," though he acknowledged himself a vassal of Delhi. The importance of the Marathas was in-

creased by the consideration shown them by the Moghals, and by the fatuity of the Emperor, who plotted with them against his own victory. He would not ratify the latter's treaty with Shahu. On this the Viceroy promised further concessions, if Shahu would assist him against Delhi. These were granted and the Peshwa, in 1720, marched on Delhi at the head of an army. The Emperor was deposed and murdered. His successor sent back the Marathas to the Dekhan, confirming the agreements between the Viceroy and Shahu. The Maratha claims were thus recognised by the Imperial Government.

Owing to the illiteracy of the Marathas, the presence of Brahmans was necessary. The Peshwa took full advantage of this to increase the subjugation of Shahu to his master mind. He also caused a common interest to spring up between the various Maratha chiefs and encouraged a common encroachment on the Moghal power. Though paving the way for the supremacy of the Peshwa, the Marathas undoubtedly formed a nation in a manner that no other body of people in India, except perhaps the Sikhs, ever did, and for a time they had their way.

In the interim, the English merchants at Bombay, by a policy of discreet neutrality, flourished.

While the Empire of Delhi was being shaken by revolts in the Punjab and Kashmir, Nizam-ul-Mulk, the Viceroy of the Dekhan, was conspiring against it. He took possession of Golconda and Hyderabad and founded the dynasty of the Nizams of Hyderabad. Aurangzebe had destroyed two great Muhammadan kingdoms in the Dekhan, but, within twenty years of his death, another had sprung into existence.

Nizam-ul Mulk hoped to secure his position by sowing dissensions amongst the Marathas. But a considerable change had come over the Hindu power. Baji Rao had succeeded Balaji Vishvanath. With the rise of the Peshwas there arose to power the four great Maratha families of Sindia, Holkar, the Gaekwar of Baroda and the Raja of Berar.

Baji Rao perceived it was time to bring into better order the possessions acquired by the Marathas. He pointed out the imbecility of the Moghal authorities and degeneracy of the empire, to Shahu, urging him to spread his power. The

Nizam lost no opportunity of creating dissension among the Marathas, but took care to preserve the integrity of his own dominions. He was quite ready to aid the Peshwa in pulling down the dominions of their common lord. He received assurances of the Pehwa's goodwill, so long as he refained from interfering with the Maratha invasion of Hindustan. Accordingly, Holkar ravaged Bengal and Oude, while Baji Rao marched against Delhi. The Emperor, seeing himself menaced, induced the Nizam to assist him. The latter marched against the Peshwa, was defeated and had to cede all the country between the Narbada and Chambal, as well as to purchase exemption against further action.

The Marathas, at this time, attacked the Portuguese, at Salsette and Bassein, whom they crushed. Thus the only rival European power to England came to an end.

Nadir Shah, King of Persia, now invaded India, defeated the Imperial army, plundered Delhi and laid it in ashes. This event caused a temporary truce between the various factions in India, who understood, for the time, that they had but one common enemy. Perceiving this Nadir Shah retreated with his loot.

Baji Rao died in 1740, being succeeded by his eldest son, Balaji Baji Rao. Under his auspices, the Marathas had become the most powerful people in India. A century earlier they had not been heard of, now their name was a terror as far as Delhi and Orissa, Madras and Trichinopoli. The Moghal Empire was at their mercy, the Portuguese humbled. The English and French, unaware of their own strength, were as yet afraid to try conclusions with them.

Shahu died in 1749, being succeeded by his adopted heir, Rama, grandson of Tarabhai. Before his death he practically handed over the government of the Maratha Empire to the Peshwa, on condition of his perpetuating the Raja's name and keeping up the dignity of the house of Shivaji through the grandson of Tarabhai and his descendants. Kolhapur was to remain a separate estate.

Thus the dominions that Shivaji had created passed from the hands of his family to the Brahman Minister, who now became hereditary ruler of the nation, but in defence to

popular tradition, it was expedient to maintain one of his lineage as a nominal King.

About this period two men of mark, largely connected with Indian history, appeared on the scene. They were Dupleix and Clive. The English had no idea of creating an Empire and conquering the land. Dupleix, a Frenchman, on the other side of India, grasped the possibility of forming a powerful European Empire in India. He also perceived the magnificent material the natives of India were for becoming soldiers and raised the first sepoy regiment. But Robert Clive was greater than Dupleix. He was a young English merchant, who exchanged the ledger for the sword, and by working out the Frenchman's idea, added a continent to the British Empire.

The original capital of Shivaji's Empire had been Raigarh. Under Sambhaji, it was, if anywhere, at Sangameshwar, south of Raigarh. Under Shahu, it had been moved to Santara, Kolhapur being the rival seat of Maratha power. Upon the death of Shahu and the access to power of the Peshwas, it was transferred to Poona, which remained, to the last, the capital of the Marathas.

In 1751, the English had to protect themselves against the depredation of the Marathas in Calcutta, and forts at Katak and Saharanpur attest to the power to which they attained. Under Balaji Baji Rao the Maratha power reached its zenith and seemed likely to spread over the whole of the Indian Peninsula.

The invasion of Nadir Shah was followed by one by the Afghan, Ahmad Shah Abdali, which was driven back. A second invasion, by the same person, was more successful, the Punjab being ceded to him. Civil war followed and the streets of Dehli were deluged with blood. The aid of the Marathas was again sought in 1754. Dissensions arose between the Emperor and his Minister, and the latter called on the Marathas, whom Raghunath Rao led against the Emperor. In 1758 he entered Lahore in triumph and Shivaji's prophecy was accomplished, which said that the Marathas should water their horse in the Indus and Hughli.

In 1759, Abdali advanced to recover the Punjab. The

Empire being, to all intents and purposes, at an end, the struggle lay between the Marathas and Afghans. Had the latter been driven out, the Emperor of India would have been Mahadaji Sindia, the famous son of Ranoji and the only surviving son of Jyapa.

In the meantime, affairs had been prospering in the Dekhan. After a short struggle with the Nizam, the Peshwa obtained possession, in perpetuity, of the forts of Ahmednagar and Asirgarh, the entire province of Bijapur and much of Aurangabad, with a large revenue. The Moghal possessions in the Dekhan were thus reduced to a minimum, and the Peshwa's army was free to march on the Punjab.

The flower of the Maratha army accordingly marched, under the command of Sidashiva Rao and Vishvas Rao, to Hindustan. It rivalled in splendour and magnificence the gorgeous camp of Aurangzebe. The cause appearing to be the national one of all Hindus, Rajputs, Pindharis and irregulars of all descriptions flocked to the Maratha standard. The army arrived before Delhi in the hot weather of 1760, and went into quarters. After the monsoon, Ahmad Abdali moved towards Delhi, and the contending forces entrenced themselves opposite each other at Panipat, where they lay inactive for three months. In January 1761, provisions running scarce in the Maratha camp, their generals gave the signal for battle. It was a struggle between religions. The fierce shouts of the Muhammadans "Allah! Allah! and Din! Din!" were met by the Hindu "Har! Har! Mahadev!" The battle was furiously contested, but the Afghans prevailed. Vast numbers of Marathas were killed and made prisoners.

The question of Hindu supremacy over India was decided once for all. Ten years later, when Mahadaji Sindia interfered to place Shah Alam on the throne, it was to benefit the English merchants of Calcutta.

The grief in Maharashthra was terrible after the battle of Panipat. Both Sidashiva Rao and Visvas Rao had been killed. The Peshwa never recovered the shock and died shortly after at Parvati. Although the possibility of Hindu supremacy over India had vanished, the Marathas still remained, for a time, the most powerful people in the country.

The empire of Delhi had passed away. All that remained were a few small districts in the neighbourhood of the capital. The Punjab was Ahmad Abdali's possession. The Rohillas were powerful in Rohilkund. Oude, nominally a viceroyalty, was really an independent kingdom and a close ally of the British. In the name of Mir Jafar, the Company was supreme in Bengal, Behar and Orissa. The Rajputs had long separated from the Emperor. The territories of the Nizam were considerably reduced. The French power was broken, the Dutch destroyed and the Portuguese reduced to insignificance. This had been brought about by the English in the short space of time between 1755 and 1761. In Bengal, they were on the high road to the conquest of India. In the west, as yet, they possessed only the Island of Bombay, and Fort Victoria, with a few villages at Bankote and Surat. The Marathas held the Konkan, Dekhan and Guzerat, with claims on Kathiawar, Malwa, Khandeish, Berar, Bijapur and most of Aurangabad, and the old Hindu kingdom of Tanjore. Besides this, their demands for chauth extended over the greater part of India and they held Katak and Orissa. Sindia, Holkar, the Gaekwar of Baroda and the Raja of Berar were, however, serious rivals to the power of the Peshwa. The most important of the late political changes was the fact that it was to be the English and not the French, who were to rule India. Many years of fighting, however, had to be passed through before the turbulent Marathas bowed to England's might, during which many anxious periods were experienced.

At this period, a new power arose in Mysore, where one Haidar Naik threw in his lot with the Hindu Raja. Later on this State proved a powerful antagonist to the English.

Between the years 1761—81, what was known as the First Maratha War took place. During this period, a desultory but constant state of warfare was carried on between the English, Marathas and Mysore, in which the Nizam was more or less mixed up. No particularly striking events occurred to mark it. Victory inclined, at varying intervals, to one side and then to the other. Much fighting took place, on and about the Ghats, between Bombay and Poona.

Pledges were made and broken, as convenient to the contracting parties.

During the conflict, a marked change had been coming over the Maratha Empire. The great houses of Sindhia, Holkar, the Gaekwar of Baroda, and Bhonsle of Berar were rapidly growing into independent States, little, if at all, less powerful than the Peshwa himself. Instead of a single Empire the English had to do with a more or less lax confederacy, each of whose members was actuated by his own interest rather than by any spirit of national patriotism. This, of course, favoured the English; had the Marathas shown an united front, their conquest would have proved a still longer task.

Desultory warfare continued till about 1800. In the meanwhile Sindhia became most powerful. His idea was to found a great Maratha State between the Ganges and Jumna, which, however, was never completed. Mysore continued troublesome and some difficulty was experienced, owing to the interference of the French. Nothing of particular note occurred. The English continued consolidating their possessions. British power had advanced so far that it must either perish or be supreme in India.

Lord Mornington, afterwards Marquis of Wellesley, arrived in India in May 1798. His first efforts were directed to the renewal of the alliance with the Nizam and Peshwa, against Tipu of Mysore, and to the driving of the French out of India.

An army, under General Harris, advanced against Tipu and defeated him. Mysore was handed over to its rightful owner, and portions being retained by the English and Nizam. The Peshwa Sindhia had still to be reckoned with.

On the death of Nana Farnavis *alias* Balaji Janardin, the Peshwa, in March 1800, supreme disorder reigned in the Dekhan.

Holkar and Sindhia were at enmity, which led to the defeat of the latter in October 1802. Holkar declared he would protect the Peshwa from the usurpation of Daolat Rao Sindhia. Although Baji Rao was delighted at the idea of getting rid of Sindhia, he was not prepared to accept Holkar and

the terms he offered. A battle ensued, in which Holkar defeated the combined forces of Sindhia and the Peshwa. The latter fled and appealed to the English. A treaty was entered into by which he gave up his authority over the great Maratha houses in order to be secured in the semblance of his ancient dignity.

Sindhia proved recalcitrant and an expedition moved against him under General Wellesley, afterwards Duke of Wellington. In August 1803, Ahmednagar was taken and, on the 21st September, Assaye was fought. In the meanwhile, Lake had been pursuing a victorious course in Hindusthan and driving Sindhia's forces before him. He defeated the Marathas under the walls of Delhi and entered the city of the great Moghal in triumph. Shah Alam, the aged Emperor, who had been sightless for fifteen years, received the conqueror in the faded remnants of Imperial State, for the second time, under the protection of the Company. Laswari was won on the 18th October and the British were supreme over Delhi and Agra, and all Sindhia's possessions north of the Chambal.

Wellesley next turned his attention to Raghoji Bhonsle of Berar and crushed him.

After these events, treaties were entered into with Sindhia and Berar to the advantage of the British, Sindhia being restricted, more or less, to Gwalior, while the Berars were handed over to the Nizam.

Holkar stood aloof, but in 1808 he determined to take Sindhia's place in Hindusthan and fight Lake, which he did with the usual luck.

Although the supremacy of the British was being gradually established during these years, the Peshwa, Baji Rao, was occupied in plotting against them. This led to the Third Maratha War, and the final overthrow of the Maratha power.

A short resume of this will now be given.

Through the advice of one Trimbakji Danglia, a man who had risen to a high official position, Baji Rao prepared his way for rebellion against the English, by greatly increasing his army and consolidating his position, as head of all the Marathas. His object was two-fold, *viz.*, to revive the

Maratha policy, which would make him lord over Sindhia, Holkar and other chiefs and to shake off the British yoke. With this end in view, he negotiated a secret treaty of general confederacy and support with Sindhia, Holkar, Bhonsle of Berar and the Pindharis.

After this, the Peshwa turned his eyes to Guzerat. In order to settle matters, an envoy was despatched from Baroda to the Peshwa's court at Poona. The envoy, Gangadhar Shastri, was murdered, on the 14th July, 1815, while accompanying the Peshwa on a journey to Pandharpur, by the agents of Trimbakji Danglia. As Baroda was under the protection of the British the Peshwa was informed that unless Trimbakji was surrendered, Poona City would be attacked. This led to his surrender in September. Although the Peshwa simulated friendship, it was evident that his plans for a Maratha confederacy against British rule steadily assumed a more definite form. Gatherings of armed men took place in spite of the remonstrances of Government. Finally, the Peshwa replied that if the absurd report of an insurrection was believed, the British might suppress it themselves. Trimbakji, who had effected his escape, was at the head of these gangs and his surrender was insisted on, as well as the instant delivery of the forts of Singarh, Purandhar and Raigarh. These terms were enforced by the British Resident and accepted. The other alternative was a declaration of war, at the expiration of twenty-four hours. Three days later, orders were received from the Governor-General exacting greater punishment. The terms were hard and humiliating. They reduced Baji Rao's position to so low a degree that he could have continued as the head of his State in name only. With great reluctance, he accepted these terms, though he only meant to abide by them, so long as it suited his convenience.

The Peshwa, not satisfied with the terms of his treaty, worked on Sir John Malcolm, the agent, and more or less argued him over, and obtained possession of the forts, etc., he had already forfeited. Sir John also suggested that he should recruit his army with a view to assisting the English against the Pindharis, who were giving trouble. This was

an excellent cloak to disguise his real intentions. He confided his plans to Bapu Gokla who had succeeded Trimbakji Danglia.

The Peshwa's scheme was to assassinate the Resident by corruption of the Indian troops, and, even, of their British officers. One Yeshwant Rao Ghorpare was commissioned to carry out the design, but, instead of so doing, he informed the Resident. The last interview between the Peshwa and the Resident, Mountstuart Elphinstone, took place on the 14th October 1817.

On the 19th October, in honour of the Dasehra, a large gathering of troops took place. The Resident was treated with marked discourtesy and the manners of the Marathas were most overbearing and insolent. It was a time of much anxiety for the English, who were not very numerous. During the few days that followed, the tension increased. The Peshwa hesitated in attacking the British. On the 30th October, the British force was augmented by the arrival of a British Regiment from Bombay. The position occupied in Poona being bad, on the 1st November, the English moved out to Kirkee. On the 5th November, the Peshwa finally made up his mind to attack, watching the battle from the Temple of Parvati. The Marathas lay between the Residency and the position of the English at Kirkee, consequently, Elphinstone moved out to join them.

It was the afternoon of a sultry Dekhan day. The heat was almost stifling: there was not a breath of wind to blow aside the clouds of dust. The Maratha army poured out from Poona, in the direction of Kirkee, through fields ready to harvest—an imposing spectacle. The low hills that edged the plateau were covered with infantry. Endless streams of horsemen issued from the city and covered the plain. The air was filled with the trampling of horses and rumbling of cannon. The mighty wave of horsemen moved onward in all the pomp of war, with apparently irresistible force. But the battle was not to be to the strong. Nothing daunted at his vast array, the English force of 2,800, of whom 800 alone were Europeans, was eager for the fray. By the advice of the Resident, they dashed at the advancing enemy. The Marathas were astounded by this act of daring. Their spirits were already damped by an evil omen,

for the staff of their Jaripatka, or national standard, had broken in twain ere they left the city. Gokla did all that was possible for a brave soldier to do by leading a brilliant cavalry charge. The battle was won. They Maratha army was utterly disconcerted by the unexpected onslaught of the British forces.

While the battle raged, the Residency was plundered and burnt by Baji Rao's orders, and two British officers, brothers, named Vaughan, who had previously been taken prisoner at Talegaon, were barbarously hanged.

Bitter was the despair of the Peshwa as he witnessed the Battle of Kirkee from Parvati. He poured out terrible upbraidings on those who had urged him to defy the British power. The Maratha Empire was at an end. . . .

The Peshwa, at first, fled to Satara, his army evacuating Poona. He then continued his flight into the Western Ghats. Several columns were despatched through the Dekhan and Konkan in pursuit of him, which eventually culminated in the Battle of Koregaon, fought on the 1st January 1818.

The British force consisted of 500 men, supported by two 6 pounders, manned by 24 Europeans of the Madras Infantry. Also 300 newly raised Irregular Horse, the whole under the command of Captain Francis Staunton. This force was marching from Sirur to Poona. On the morning of the 1st January 1818, it arrived at Koregaon, on the banks of the Bhima, some 17 miles north-east of Poona. On arrival, it found the whole of the Peshwa's army, and a large number of Arabs, under Baji Rao, encamped before it. Staunton took up a position in the village and awaited the assault of the Marathas, prepared to sell his life dearly. A terrible battle raged all day, and it was entirely due to the heroic valour of Staunton and his officers that the Marathas were repulsed. But for them, the men would have surrendered. As night fell, the attack became less fierce, and by 9 o'clock the artillery ceased, when the village was evacuated by the Peshwa's troops. The Regiment that composed the greater part of this force is now the 102nd King Edward's Own Grenadiers. . . .

This event practically closes the History of the Marathas as a more or less independent people. The task of settling

the country remained. Columns marched through it, when several small actions were fought, fortresses captured, etc., and the work of pacification carried on. The Governor-General conciliated the Maratha nation by a graceful concession. The imprisoned Raja of Satara, the descendant of Shivaji, was given the nominal sovereignty of the district of Satara, which, on his death, lapsed to the British Government. The descendant of Shivaji continues to reside at Satara, on his own property, with the rank of a First Class Sirdar of the Dekhan. He is known locally as the Raja of Satara, but the rank is not officially recognized.

Shivaji's sword Bhavani, named after the goddess, is still preserved by his descendants at Satara with the utmost veneration, and has all the honour of an idol paid to it. The wagnakh, bichwa and chain armour, which he wore when he murdered Afzul Khan, are similarly preserved.

Endeavour has been made, in the above short description of the Marathas, to give some idea of what they have done in the past. From a perusal of this, it can hardly be said that they need have any cause to be ashamed of themselves. . . . It has been shown that they rose from comparative insignificance to be a nation, and that they succeeded in driving the Muslaman invaders out of the Dekhan, and, in their turn, inflicting themselves on Imperial Delhi. They watered their horses in the Indus and Hughli and spread to Madras and Trichinopoli. Their further advance received a check at Panipat, in 1761, at the hands of the Afghans, whom they had already once defeated. The English now came on the scenes and commenced their hold on India, but for this, it is quite possible that the Marathas might have had their revenge on the Afghans.

The methods they employed appear to have been very similar to those adopted, in the present day, by frontier tribes. The Western Ghats are not unlike the hills on the North-West Frontier. They are equally steep and stand as high above the level of the surrounding plains. They differ in one respect, in that they are covered with dense jungle in contrast to bare slopes; which is the more difficult country from a military view, is, of course, a matter of opinion.

Their tactics were to decoy the enemy into the fastnesses and intricacies of the Ghats and then to fall on and harass them; this was nothing more than guerilla warfare and rear guard actions, of which so much is now heard of in all our small frontier wars. Doubtless the Marathas picked off their enemies from behind rocks and concealed places and even murdered them, if opportunity offered, as is now the custom on the frontier : and probably everybody went about armed for self-protection. . . .

It has been suggested that the Marathas were wanting in pluck because they were overcome by inferior numbers of British. In the above narrative, it has been shown that they offered us a stubborn resistance from 1761 to 1818 and probably longer. A people doing this can hardly be said to lack pluck. There was a small percentage only of British troops among the forces which fought against the Marathas. These leavened the lump. . . .

Marathas must not be confounded with the erroneously named "Maratha-Brahmans." They are of different castes. Brahmans are respected by Marathas, as is only natural, but, in the present day, they are getting themselves disliked by stating that Marathas are Sudras and not Kshatriyas. There is no blood relationship or intermarrying between them and little social intercourse. Brahmans from Bombay should be styled "Maharashthra-Brahmans," that is, those residing in the Maratha country.

The Marathas have been and still are a great people.

CHRONOLOGY*

B.C. 73—A.D. 218		Maharashtra ruled over by Satavahanas
A.C. 634		The Maharashtra country officially defined
C. 1600	...	Bhonsles rise to prominence

The above dates are merely approximate

1552	Birth of Maloji Bhonsle
1592	Birth of Shahjahan
1594	15 March. Birth of Shahji Bhonsle, son of Maloji Bhonsle, a silahdar, or armoured soldier, in the Ahmadnagar service, and father of Sivaji
1597	Babaji Bhonsle dies
1605	Shahji married to Jija Bai
1620	Death of Maloji Bhonsle
1627	April 10. Sivaji, son of Shahji Bhonsle born at Sivaner, Junnar†
1640	Sivaji married to Sai Bai

*In preparing this Chronology the publishers have received material help from "Shivaji" by Sir Jadunath Sarkar, 4th Ed., 1948, "The Chronology of Modern India" by Dr. James Burgess, 1st Ed., 1913, "New History of the Marathas," Vol. I.—Shivaji and His Lines (1600-1707) by G. S. Sardesai, 1st Ed., 1946, and "The Main Currents of Maratha History" by G. S. Sardesai, 2nd. Ed., 1933.

†Kashoji Jedhe gives his birth-dates as 19th February, 1630, James Burgess in "The chronology of Modern India, A.D. 1494—1894," as May 6, and G. S. Sardesai in "New History of the Marathas, Vol. I. Shivaji and His Line, A.D. 1600—1707," as 6th April.

"Of the exact date of his birth there is no reliable contemporary record. . . .The question of the true date of Shivaji's birth has been fully and fairly discussed by V. S. Wakaskar in his edition of the 91 *Qualmi Bakhar*, pp. 27-28, *n*, and V. K. Rajwade and B. G. Talak in *Shiva-charitrapradip* (reprint). The accept the month and the year April, 1627, while those who pin their faith to the mutually inconsistent *Jedhe Shakvali* and *Suryavamshan* hold it to be 19th March, 1630. —"Shivaji and His Times" by Sir Jadunath Sarkar, p. 18.

1646 ... Sivaji obtains possession of the strong fort of Torna, pretending to hold it for Bijapur, but fortifies in his own interest the neighbouring hill of Mhorbadh

1647 ... Sivaji usurps his father's *jagir,* and begins predatory expeditions by which he obtains possession of several forts

1648 Sivaji's open revolt against the Bijapur government. He takes possession of the northern Konkan, making Kalyan his capital

1649 The Bijapur government seizes Shahji Bhonsle as a hostage for Sivaji, who appeals to Shahjahan. Shahji is released but his son renews his policy of aggression

1657 ... Sivaji commits his first acts of hostility on the Mughals, plundering Junnar and partially looting Ahmadnagar

1659 A Bijapur army under Afzal Khan sent to Wai. Sivaji temporises, and murders Afzal Khan. Panhala is surrendered and thence Sivaji captures the neighbouring forts

1660 ... Shaista Khan merches from Aurangabad against Sivaji, who had plundered Rajpur and Dabhol. The imperial army occupies Seoganw, where Shivaji loots their baggage

Sivaji, after four months' seize of Panhala fort by the Bijapur army under Siddi Johar, escapes to Rangna by a pretended surrender

1662 Sivaji conquers Sawantwadi, the Sawants, after seeking protection at Goa, are restored to Shivaji whose tributaries they become

1663 Shaista Khan occupies Poona, which is, however, secretly entered by Sivaji at night (April 9), when Shaista Khan is wounded and one of his sons cut to pieces

1664 Shahji Bhonsle, father of Sivaji, is killed by a fall in hunting

Sivaji assumes the title of Raja. With his reign begins the *Raj-Abhishek* era of the Marathas

Sivaji's fleet captures Mughal ships bound for Mokha, he plunders the pettah of Ahmadnagar. Oct, he defeats the Bijapur army, which had broken the truce of 1663

1665 ... Sivaji attacks the English factory of Karwar, and exacts a contribution of £112

Raja Jaysingh, Kachhwaha, sent to the Dekhan with Diler Khan, invests Rajgarh and Kondana forts, held by Sivaji, who is induced to offer submission and is promised a *mansab*, or military rank, in the Imperial army, he surrenders in June 22

July, Sivaji enters the camp of Diler Khan and in December co-operates with the Mughals against Bijapur

1666 ... Bijapur invested by Raja Joy Singh and Diler Khan with the help of Sivaji. Several forts are captured

Sivaji and his son, Sambhaji, are called to the Mughal Court, ungraciously received by Aurangzeb and kept in restraint. On August 31, Safar 29, H. 1077 Sivaji escapes, arriving at Rajgarh in December

1668 ... H. 1078. Sivaji obtains an army from 'Abdullah Qutb Shah for the recapture of certain forts now in the hands of the Bijapur king. He takes Satara, Panhala and other forts, and occupies Rajgarh

1669 Aurangzeb concludes an agreement with 'Alī 'Adil Shah of Bijapur. Sivaji, who has established a military government, compels Bijapur and Golkonda to pay tribute

1670 ... Sivaji takes Purandhar

Sivaji, with 15,000 men, plunders Surat, where the English factory was successfully held by Streynsham Master, Sivaji levies tribute and returns to the Dekhan, passing through a Mughal army with his booty

1672 H. 1082 Diler Khan and his army lay siege to

Sater, but are defeated in the field by Sivaji. Many Mughals join the Maratha standard. Sivaji's attack on Salasette repulsed by the Portuguese

1673 Sivaji assembles a force at Vishalgarh, a detachment of which, under Anaji Dattu, recovers Panhala, the main body plundering Hubli. The English are solicited for help both by Sivaji and the Siddi, but preserve strict neutrality. May, Nichols, on behalf of the English, endeavours to obtain compensation from Sivaji for losses sustained at Rajapur and Hubli but Sivaji denies liability

Sivaji reduces Satara fort, other forts capitulate. Abdul Karim, a Bijapur general, is intercepted by Pratap Rao Gujar, who grants him leave to return to Bijapur

1674 Feb. Pratap Rao, Sivaji's general, is killed by the Bijapur army in an attack on Panhala; but the Maratha horse, under Hasaji Mohita, Hambir Rao defeat the Bijapuris immediately after

April, 6. Sivaji concludes a treaty with the English at Rairi, agreeing to pay 10,000 pagodas (Rs. 35,000) for losses inflicted at Rajapur, other clauses refer to the planting of factories, and restoration of the Company's vessels wrecked on the Malabar coast

June 6. Sivaji is crowned Maharaja, Henry Oxinden from Bombay being present. June 12, Sivaji grants privileges of trade to the English Company. He sends Moro Pant Pingla to Kalyan to exact *chauth* from the Portuguese at Bassein

1676 Sivaji sets out for the conquest of the Karnatik and forms an alliance with Qutb Shah at Haidarabad against the Mughuls

1677 Sivaji crosses the Krishna at Karnal, and takes Jinji fort. His army lays siege at Velor, which

surrenders. Sivaji recovers his father's *jagir* in Maisur and levies *chauth* and *sardes mukhi*

1678 ... Sivaji comes to terms with his half-brother, Venkaji, who promises to pay a sum of money, to divide their father's jewels, and to share the revenue of the territory: on these conditions Sivaji allows him to retain Tanjor, and restores the *jagir* districts

1679 Diler Khan is ordered to besiege Bijapur. Sivaji to divert this army, plunders the Mughal provinces. September. Sivaji, defeated by the Mughals, retires to Rairi but, nov.-Dec., resumes his devastations in Berar and Aurangabad

Oct. 18. Sivaji's admiral Daulat Khan, takes possession of Khanderi island. The English with the Siddi of Janjira, after attempting to dislodge them, occupy Underis

1680 April 14. Rabi 'I. 14, H. 1091. Sivaji dies at Rajgarh.* May, Raja Ram, his second son, is placed on the throne, but a faction in favour of Sambhaji, the elder son, prevails, and Raja Ram is imprisoned at Rajgarh. June, Sambhaji makes his entry into Rajgarh and is acknowledged Raja, with Moso Pant as Peshwa

*G. S. Sardesai puts it as April 3, and according to Sir J. N. Sarkar 4th April, Vide: "Shivaji" by Sir J. N. Sarkar, 4th Ed., p. 317 and G. S. Sardesai's "New History of the Marathas," 1st Ed., Vol. I.
[a]Escalliot to Brown.

THE END