SHER SHAH

A critical study based on original sources

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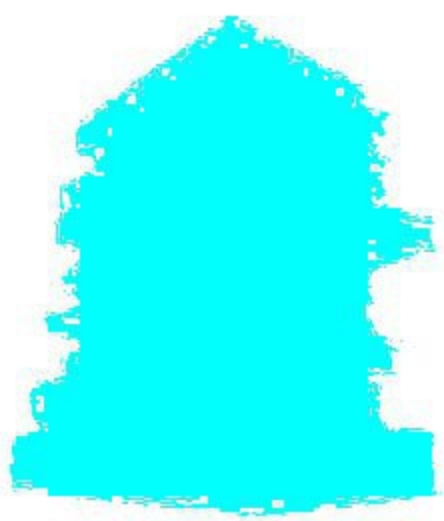

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Respectfully dedicated

TO

PROF. JADUNATH SARKAR, M.A., I.E.S.,

The Master Architect in the domain of Indian History

BY

his humble apprentice

KALIKARANJAN QANUNGO

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FOREWORD

Sher Shah is one of the world's worthies to whom History has not done justice. The reason is that only ten years after his death not only was his dynasty swept away but the rule of India departed altogether from the very race to which he belonged, and an alien race occupied the throne for centuries, who pursued the memory of their Pathan predecessors with unforgiving vindictiveness. It is from the writings of the chroniclers of these enemies that Sher Shah's history has to be reconstructed.

And yet our extant materials are not meagre nor always one-sided. But the study of all the Persian MS. authorities on the subject is a difficult preliminary which historians have hitherto avoided, first because the MSS. are many and not to be found all in one place, and secondly because there are different recensions of some of the more important Persian works on Sher Shah which require much expenditure of time in their collation and the critical examination of their relative evidential value.

Hitherto the world has been content to take Sher Shah as portrayed in the few translated extracts given in Elliot and Dowson Vol. iv. or, worse still, in Ferishta as translated by Lt.-Col. Briggs. After

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Raverty's damaging criticism, Briggs' Ferishta has rightly lost all title to credence. But none has hitherto suspected, what a critical comparison of Elliot's version with the original texts has proved to me, that even Elliot is neither faithful nor complete as regards the sources on Sher Shah translated by him.

My task, therefore, has been to seek *all* the sources on Sher Shah—primary, secondary and third-rate, without any omission, to study them in the original Persian texts (and not in English translations, however well-reputed), and then to reconstruct the life-story of Sher Shah on a fresh, original, and as I fondly hope, exhaustive basis, which only the discovery of hitherto unknown contemporary records will render incomplete.

The result of this original study of Sher Shah has been to place his character in a new light, to fix his fame (which had hitherto been rather a vague and general halo of greatness) on the basis of concrete individual and well-ascertained facts, and to correct innumerable mistakes about his life and times into which my predecessors writing general histories had naturally fallen. A specialized study like this has no excuse for not sifting the evidence in every case and arriving at the truth, hence the mass of details into which the stern need of accuracy has forced me. I have also been compelled to give the reasons and

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evidence for my conclusions, because nobody would accept a new and unknown writer's bare assertion against the older and more famous historians who hold the ground. It is to be hoped that, as the result of these labours, Sher Shah will at last come by his own, and the world will have a biography worthy of the greatest administrative and military genius among the Afghans.

I have much pleasure in acknowledging the heavy debt of my gratitude to my illustrious predecessors in the field, especially to Sir Henry Elliot, Blochmann, Jarrett, Dr. Dorn and Mr. and Mrs. H. Beveridge, whose works I have often laid under contribution.

What a son owes to his father, I owe to my master Prof. Jadunath Sarkar, M.A., I.E.S. He placed at my disposal all the materials of this history collected in his splendid library, rich in rare Persian MSS., books of reference, learned journals, maps and district gazetteers,—in short everything that a researcher may possibly require. He picked me up from the lot of raw university graduates, and trained me in the art of historical research at a considerable sacrifice of his own work. This book was practically complete in MS. at the end of my eighteen months' residence in his house. He has read it in MS. and in proof. In short *Sher Shah* is his veritable grand-

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child, receiving his most zealous care at every stage of its growth.

I remember with a deep sense of gratitude that it was my revered Professor Dr. A. Suhrawardy, M.A., Bar-at-Law, who first impressed me with the greatness of Sher Shah in a learned discourse in his class. His attractive personality drew me towards Islamic studies and inspired me with scholarly ambition. To my saintly uncle Prof. Bibhutibhusan Dutt, M.Sc., P.R.S., who gave a happy turn to my career by rescuing me from law, I owe a debt sacred and unrepayable. He came forward with a generous offer of monetary help at a critical moment when I was about to give up literary pursuits under the stress of pecuniary embarrassment.

I must, before concluding, acknowledge with thankfulness the immense services of Babu Brajendranath Banerji, the well-known author of many scholarly historical works in Bengali, without whose untiring zeal and care in reading the proofs and expediting the book through the press, it would have been impossible for me to bring out this volume within so short a space of time. He has also obliged me by pointing out several slips and omissions in the course of reading the proofs.

KALIKARANJAN QANUNGO

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SHER SHAH

CHAPTER I

His Boyhood, Education and Apprenticeship in Administration.

The original name of Sher Shah was Farid; his father's name was Hassan; and they belonged to the Sur section *(qabilah)* of the Mati clan *(taifa)* *(Makhzan-i-Afaghana, f. 204b.)*

Hassan's father, Ibrahim, was an obscure Afghan of Roh, with no pretensions to the blood of the Sultans of Ghor. Neither Ibrahim, nor any one else of the Sur tribe—indeed no one of the whole Afghan race,—ever prided himself in such an inconvenient distinction of non-Afghan, though royal, descent, as Ferishta wrongly says:—*'Inha khud ra az Salatin-i-Ghor me-danand'*, that is, "they knew themselves to be descended from the Sultans of Ghor" (Persian text, p. 220).

To keep conformity with this false notion, Elphinstone says, "Both he and his son Hassan were married into noble families of their own nation". *(History of India,* 6th edn., p. 444.)

No Persian historian of standard authority, not

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even Ferishta, the author whom Elphinstone generally follows, anywhere makes such a statement. Mian Ibrahim traded in horses; behind the sneer of Abul-Fazl—"Ibrahim was a horse-dealer ; nor had he any distinction among the crowd of tradesmen" (*Akbarnama*, i. 326), lies concealed a historical truth which is confirmed by *Khulasatu-t-Tawarikh*: "*Ibrahim jadd-i-Farid iani Sher Shah Saudagari-e-aspan me-kard*". (Pers. text, edited by M. Zafar Hassan, p. 315.)

His ancestral home stood on the rugged hill-side of Sargari*, a detached ridge of the Takht-i-Sulaiman mountains, on the southern bank of the upper course of the Gumal river. Owing to its proximity to the Gumal Pass, which is one of the oldest and most frequented trade-routes between southern Afghanistan and the Indus valley, Ibrahim had excellent advantages for his profession. But as luck would have it, he did not prosper in trade. During the latter part of Sultan Bahlol Lodi's reign (1451-1488 A.D.) Ibrahim, then in the evening of his life, with his young son Hassan, started for Hindustan in search of employment as a soldier. He came to Bajwarah (in the Jalandhar Doab), where Muhabat Khan Sur of the Daud Shah Khail—the eldest branch of the

* Surgurgai, long. 69°2′, lat. 33°5′, near Ab i-istada, in Afghanistan.

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tribe of Sur—held a jagir. Having resided there for some time, he entered the service of Jamal Khan Sarangkhani at Hissar-Firoza (in the Delhi District).

Farid, the first child of Hassan Sur, was born in this auspicious 'City of Victory', Hissar-Firoza, founded by the good king Firoz Tughlaq. (*Makhzan-i-Afaghana, f.* 204*b.*) The exact date of his birth is not given by any historian. Abbas Sarwani (Elliot, iv. 308) says that he was born during the lifetime of Sultan Bahlol, who died in 1488 A.D. The year 1486 A.D.* may probably have been the date. Ibrahim's family settled finally at Narnol, where he got several villages in jagir to maintain 40 horsemen. Ibrahim died shortly after, and Hassan was confirmed in his father's jagir. Hassan's family seems to have resided for a pretty long time at Narnol, which Abul-Fazl calls "Ibrahim's native country." Our MS. *Makhzan-i-Afaghana* (*f.* 276*b.*) writes after Hassan's name, "*Sakin Qasba-i-Narnol,*" to designate the place of residence of his family.

Farid grew up amidst the indifference and unkindness of his father and the persecution of his step-mother. Hassan had eight sons by four wives; Farid and Nizam were born of his eldest wife, an

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* This hypothetical date, assumed in the absence of any means to arrive at precise accuracy, will be used in calculating the age of Sher Shah in the following reconstruction of his history.

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Afghan lady; the rest were born of slave-girls raised to the status of wives. He was passionately attached to his youngest wife, a slave-girl, who bore him two sons, Sulaiman and Ahmad. These sons were not illegitimate, as Briggs (Vol. ii) makes them out without the warranty of his original, which runs as follows, "*Digar az batan-i-kanizan bawajud amda budand*", that is, 'the others were born of the womb of female slaves'.

Farid's mother, like the saintly Jija Bai, mother of Shivaji, was forsaken by her heartless husband, possibly owing to the loss of her physical charms. Abbas Sarwani says, "*ba-madar-i-Farid o Nizam ilaqah-i-muhabbat o ikhtisas o muwaddat na-dasht,*" that is, "He did not keep any amiable connection with the mother of Farid and Nizam and showed her no kindness." (Abbas Sarwani, MS. p. 16 = Elliot iv. 310.) "Because of this, he showed little affection and kindness to these two brothers in comparison with his other sons." (*Makhzan-i-Afaghana, f.* 204*b*.) Fellow-sufferers in their unhappy boyhood, these two brothers became firmly attached to each other and they grew up into ideal brothers.

Hassan, notwithstanding his weakness and shortcomings in private life, was a capable man of business. His ability won his master's favour and raised him to dignity. When Jamal Khan was

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transferred to the eastern provinces, he conferred Sasaram and Khawaspur in the neighbourhood of Rohtas, upon Hassan, to maintain five hundred troopers. So his family was removed from Narnol to Sasaram. But there was no change in the lot of Farid with the rise of his father in dignity. "When he reached the age of discretion, Farid felt himself aggrieved by his father's unkindness". *(Makhzan, 204 b.)* Abbas Sarwani adds, "Angry words passed between the father and son (over family matters.) At the time of distributing jagir, he showed little favour to Farid's mother and did not give her such jagir as she wished. Farid, annoyed with his father, went to Jaunpur to the presence of Jamal Khan," (Abbas Sarwani, p. 16*). Probably at the age of 15, the age of discretion (1501 A. D.), Farid went to Jaunpur.

When Mian Hassan came to know that Farid had gone to Jaunpur, he wrote to Jamal Khan that Farid, having been displeased with him for nothing *(na-haq)*, had gone to his auspicious presence, and that he should kindly send him back as it was his

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* Elliot's MS. differs, see Vol. iv. p. 311. Nizamuddin (Pers. text, 233.) Ferishta (Pers. text, p. 221) and our MS. *Makhzan* do not say anything about the distribution of jagir. The above reading of Abbas is more probable. Farid on his own account had no claim to a share of jagir; but his mother was entitled to *madad-i-ma'ash* for the support of herself and her sons. It was a custom in

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wish to instruct him in religious and polite learning and in Court etiquette. Farid was pressed hard by Jamal Khan to return home. He firmly refused to do so and said, "If my father wants me back to instruct me in learning, Jaunpur is certainly a better place than Sasaram: I will study here." The Khan was convinced by the boy's logic and put no more pressure upon him. Farid assiduously applied himself to the study of letters at Jaunpur. He learnt Arabic and read the *Kufia* (a book on Arabic Grammar) with the commentary of Qazi Shihabuddin. He committed to memory the *Gulistan*, *Bustan* and *Sikandar-nama*. Subsequently, during the days of his Sultanate, whenever any masters (Mukhadim) came to ask for *madad-i-ma'ash*, he questioned them from the *Hashia-i-Hindia*. He always loved to read books on the virtues of ancient kings. Historians are unanimous in their testimony to Farid's literary acquirements. This literary education diverted him from the usual path of the military career by which men of genius from a humble situation usually rise

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those days to allot certain portions of a jagir for the maintenance of different members of a fief-holder's family. Farid resented his father's injustice towards his mother; so he ran away from his inhospitable roof. Dorn (*History of the Afghans*, p. 81) says that the flight was due to Hassan's partiality to Sulaiman; but this is opposed to all authorities; his MS. was a faulty one. Sulaiman had not been born when Farid fled to Jaunpur.

to sovereignty, such as Shivaji, Haidar Ali and Ranjit Singh, all unlettered warriors. We do not find a second man in the history of India, who without being a soldier in early life became the founder of an empire.

Briggs' statement (ii. 99)—"He quitted his father's roof and enlisted as a common soldier in the service of Jamal Khan,"—is wholly wrong. The original of Ferishta runs thus:—'*Farid az khidmat-i-pidar ranjidah ba-malazimat-i-Jamal Khan*, etc., that is, Farid having been displeased with his father went to the presence of Jamal Khan, and Hassan wrote to Jamal Khan etc.' We are not told by Abbas Sarwani, how long Farid lived at Jaunpur and what other business he attended to in order to maintain himself. As for the duration of his stay at Jaunpur, Abbas vaguely says "some years." *Baad az chand sal chun Mian Hassan dar khidmat-i-Jamal Khan amad etc.*, that is, 'After some years when Mian Hassan came to Jamal Khan' etc., Farid left Jaunpur for the parganas. (Abbas Sarwani, p. 18 = Elliot, iv. 311).

Nizamuddin Ferishta and our MS. *Makhzan* say "After two or three years". The latter is opposed to reason and probability. We find that Farid had acquired first-hand knowledge of revenue affairs, the distress of the cultivators, the oppression

of the Muslim soldiery and the corruption of the Hindu revenue-collectors in the parganas, even before he took up the management of his father's parganas. (See MS. pp. 20-29 = Elliot, iv. 313-316.) It was the reputation of Farid's ability (highly spoken of by all his kinsmen and relatives at Jaunpur) which wore out the dislike of his father and not any spontaneous overflow of paternal affection. How was it possible for a boy, allowed to run wild in early boyhood, to acquire all these high qualifications and sound practical experience within the brief space of two or three years? Farid's extensive study and experience in worldly affairs conclusively show that he lived at Jaunpur pretty long. Abbas Sarwani's "some years" is probably not less than a period of *ten years*. Farid, we may safely conclude, lived at Jaunpur from 1501 to 1511 A. D. up to his twenty-fifth year. We are not enlightened by any historian as to any other occupation of Farid besides study, previous to his return to Sasaram, to take charge of his father's parganas. Probably the literary education of Farid and the peculiar bent of his genius attracted him to peaceful but profitable employment in the revenue department. His father's patron Jamal Khan, impressed by his keen intelligence, probably drafted him to the civil service, for which capable men were exceedingly rare among the Turks

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and Afghans. At Jaunpur Farid, by dint of his own unaided effort, had developed into an able and promising young man. He was loved by all with whom he came in contact, and his kinsmen living at Jaunpur became well inclined towards him. When Hassan came to Jaunpur on a visit to Jamal Khan, his friends and relatives scolded him for putting away so able a son to please a slave-girl. "They remarked that Farid Khan, young as he was, gave promise of future greatness; that he bore marks of excellence on his forehead, and that in all the tribe of Sur there was none who possessed learning, talent, wisdom and prudence like him; and that he qualified himself so well that if Hassan would entrust him with the charge of a pargana, he was sure to discharge the duty excellently well, and perfectly perform his duties." (Abbas Sarwani, p. 18 = Elliot, iv. 311.) With the advance of years, Hassan's infatuation for his beautiful slave-girl seemed to have diminished and her hold upon him become a little relaxed; so he consented to take back Farid into his favour and promised to them to make over the charge of his parganas to his son.

Farid at first declined to take up the charge, as he knew the vacillating character of his father and his dotage on Sulaiman's mother: but he at last gave his consent at the importunity of his well-wishers.

His kinsmen took Farid to his father's presence,

who was very glad to see his son. A happy reconciliation took place; and Hassan kept his son for some months with him. When he wanted Farid to depart for his parganas the young scholar and future reformer gave full expression to the noble ideas that he had learnt from books, and of the experience he had gathered from worldly affairs, in an address to his father asking for full powers and a free hand in the administration of the parganas. The following is a brief summary of the speech put into the mouth of Farid by Abbas Sarwani:—

"Justice alone is the mainstay of Government and source of prosperity to the governed. Injustice is the most pernicious of things; it saps the foundation of Government and brings ruin upon the realm. I know that some of your relatives who hold lands in the parganas and some of your *muqaddams* who collect rent there practise zulm upon the rayats. I shall at first dissuade them by good advice, slowly and politely; but if they disregard my warning, I shall make such an example of them by heavy punishment that others would take warning from them. If you do not give me full powers and abstain from interfering with the arrangements which I shall make for the prosperity of the parganas, I shall not be able to discharge my duty." The old blunt soldier was very much pleased to hear the energetic

and learned words of his wiser son and gladly gave him full powers, saying "I will give you power both to sanction and cancel the soldiers' jagirs." (Abbas Sarwani, pp. 60-65 = Elliot, iv. 312.)

Thus armed with the necessary powers, the young deputy, at the age of 25, about 1511 A.D. when Sultan Sikandar Lodi was on the throne of Delhi, started for the head-quarters of his parganas.

The geographical boundary and area of Hassan Sur's jagir, consisting of the Sasaram and Khawaspur parganas, cannot be exactly defined. They are situated within the present district of Shahabad; but in Rennell's map (1775 A. D.) they fall within the limits of the Rohtas district, which probably coincided with the Sarkar of Rohtas spoken of by Abul-Fazl. It was a frontier march on the southern side of Bihar. To the south lay the outskirts of the Rohtas hills, then inhabited by non-Aryan semi-independent peoples. Further south, were the possessions of the independent Hindu Rajah of Rohtas; on the east was the Sone river. To the west was situated pargana *Chaund**,—called *Jaund* by Abul-Fazl and Nizam-uddin, and mistaken for Jaunpur by Ferishta,—which belonged to Muhammad Khan Sur, the future

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* Rennell writes *Sant* instead of Chaund or Jaund; but there is no mistake about their identity.

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enemy of Farid. On the north, it was probably bounded by a line from Hariharganj on the eastern bank of the Sone (opposite Daudnagar) along Rennell's boundary line of the Rohtas district up to some 15 miles west. It comprises roughly the Baraong, Sasaram and Tilothu thanas of the Shahabad district. (Martin's *Eastern India*, i. 390, based upon the survey of 1807-1814 A. D.)

The hilly portions on the south, a belt of territory from Tilothu westward along the outskirts of the Rohtas hills, were inhabited by the *Cheroes* and the Savars (*Shabara* of early Sanskrit writers, a pig-eating and liquor-drinking filthy non-Aryan race) who were not without some amount of civilization as the archaeological remains ascribed to the Cheroes in the Shahabad district show. During the disorganization that followed the early Muslim conquest, these non-Aryan tribes* encroached upon the plains below

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* The Cheroes were the most civilized and powerful among them. "They were a Dravidian people said to have branched off from the Rajbhant tribe, which once held sway over the country stretching from Gorakhpur to Bundelkhand and which has left many remains of their former power. The growing pressure of Rajput expansion in the Ganges valley dislodged the Cheroes from Shahabad district." (*History of Aurangzib*, iii. 36, by Prof. J. N. Sarkar.)

Martin says that there was a tradition current among the Bhojpur Rajputs in the early decades of the 19th century that their ancestors were expelled from their home Bhojpur by the Cheroes and it was a Muhammadan king who encouraged them to fight with the Cheroes

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and drove away the Hindu occupants, the Paramara Rajputs from whom the Bhojpuris claim their descent, and were in possession of the southern part of the pargana. The northern part was inhabited by Hindu peasantry and middle class. The respectable portion of the Hindu inhabitants consisted of Rajputs, while the lower classes were Ahirs and such other people as are to be found there now-a-days. The face of the country was covered with dense jungles, which sheltered robbers and disobedient zamindars. The character of the people of Shahabad early in the 19th century, as given by Martin, enables us to form a fairly correct notion of the nature and habits of their ancestors three centuries before. Martin says that the people of this district were unruly and always inclined to depredations. Predatory habits were prominent among the low caste of Ahirs; many tribes among the gentry were violent in their disposition and inclined to use force against their neighbours. The people of most ranks had a bear-like incivility; for instance, the lower classes would endeavour to make a stranger go on a wrong road, or refuse to put him on the way he asked for. Three centuries

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and reoccupy their ancestral abode. The king was no other than Sher Shah, as we shall see later on. Martin says that in the early decades of the 19th century there were remnants of the Chero and Savara population in the Shahabad district.

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before, it is most certain that the inhabitants of Hassan Sur's Jagir were thrice as wicked. Farid had to cope with the then-prevailing abuses of the administration. The condition of a military jagir in those days was rendered specially miserable by the violence of the soldiers, who, accustomed to the license of the camp, treated cruelly and observed no faith with the Hindu cultivators who tilled their lands. Any enormity of crime on their part was connived at by the jagirdar, who had neither the power nor the inclination to protect the infidel serfs against the Muslims. That the peasants were entitled to get anything in the form of security of their lives and property, in return for the rents they paid to the State or the jagirdar, occurred to very few persons in those days. The peasantry were a veritable flock of sheep without a shepherd, left to the mercy of wolfish soldiers.

Another class of oppressors of the peasantry were the corrupt and wicked Hindu tax-gatherers, the *muqaddams* and *patwaries*, who stood between the jagirdar and the actual cultivators, and who cheated both by their cunning. The jagirdar, kept in ignorance of the area under cultivation and the produce of his lands, assessed revenue upon each village in the gross. The *muqaddam* added an exorbitant amount to it under various fictitious items, unintelligible to

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the ignorant peasantry and unknown to the superior lord. The peasantry were a miserable lot of helpless beings born to toil and suffer; they were completely at the mercy of the *muqaddam* and the soldiers. They had no protection either of the jagirdar or of the king. The more spirited among them took to plundering and preyed upon their own species; the rest bore their sufferings patiently, or sought relief by deserting their unhappy homes and fields for the protection of some rebel zamindar in the neighbourhood. A small portion of the country was under cultivation, the greater part being covered with dense jungles.

When Farid arrived in the parganas of his father, he found them in a condition not unlike this. He set about working to change completely the existing condition and introduce far-reaching changes and wise regulations. Early in the 16th century Farid conceived a theory of economics well worthy of admiration even in the present century. Like the French Physiocrats, Farid looked upon agriculture as the only source of wealth, and upon the labour of the peasantry as the most productive kind of human effort. He, therefore, found that without improving the lot of the peasantry it was not possible to make the condition of the parganas more flourishing. His theory finds expression in his sayings, such as "The cultivators are the source of property" (Elliot, iv. 314); "I

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know that cultivation depends upon the humble peasants for if they be ill off, they will produce nothing, but if prosperous they will produce much." (Elliot, iv. 313.) His deep sense of duty towards the peasants is happily revealed when he says, "*Paiwastah az ahwal-i-inshan khabar-dar khwaham bud, ta kase bar inshan zulm o ta'addi nakunad, o agar hakim rezah ra'ayt ra az mutamarridan nigah natawanand dasht mahsul giriftan az inshan zulm o haef bashad,*" that is, "I shall always watch over their condition so that no one may oppress or injure them, for if a ruler cannot protect the humble peasantry from the lawless it is tyranny to exact revenue from them." (Abbas Sarwani, p. 29 = Elliot, iv. 314.)

He proceeded to carry his theory into practice and improve the condition of his parganas by extending his protection to the peasants against the violence of the soldiers and the extortion of the *muqaddams*. Abbas Sarwani says that when Farid arrived at the parganas, he summoned the soilders, *muqaddams*, *patwaries* and cultivators to meet him. Thus having gathered the oppressors and the oppressed together, he in a suitable address to each of the three classes explained to them his intention and admonished them about their future conduct. He, first of all, turned to the most powerful offenders, the soldiery, and

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said :—"Be it known to you that Mian Hassan has given me the powers of appointing and dismissing you. I shall exert myself in the improvement of the cultivation and population of the parganas. Therein are concerned your interest as well as my good name. Therefore, no one should put any hindrance upon agriculture by committing Turk-like tyranny and cruelty upon the cultivators. Whatever agreements you have made with the peasantry at the time of sowing, you must not revoke at the time of collection, *(an che qarar mahsul giriftan ba-waqt-i-zara' at ba-ratat dada bashad aj an qarar be-waqt-i-giriftan mahsul dar na-guzrad o az qaul o ahad ke ba-raiat kar-da-bashad bar na-gardad. . . . .)* Let it be known to the soldiers and amils that the oppression and cruelty they have committed before this are forgiven. But if it reaches my ears that any one has taken even a blade of grass forcibly from the rayats, I shall inflict such punishment upon him that others would take a lesson from it. I shall not allow any one to transgress my orders. I shall inflict heavier punishment upon my guilty relatives and soldiers so that others may take a warning from it, and the rayats, thus relieved of oppression, may confidently sow the fields and produce better crops. I shall not take away anything from the soldiers; whatever increased return the fields

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will yield shall remain the soldiers' due. My wish is that, as the effect of my administration, all persons both high and low, may prosper, no trace of oppression or violence may remain, [because] if a little favour is shown to the rayats, the ruler benefits by it." (Abbas MS. pp. 26-27; not translated in Elliot, iv. 313.)

Next he turned to the peasants and told them to make their choice as to whether they should pay rent in cash or kind. He meant to make a settlement direct with the rayat* and not through the *muqaddams*. Abbas says (Abbas Sarwani MS. p. 28), "Some of the *cultivators* agreed to *zarib* (*i.e.*, fixing of rent by measuring the area under cultivation; a money commutation is here meant). Others agreed to an actual division of crops. Farid took written *kabuliyats* signed by the rayats and fixed the rate of payment for measuring, the remuneration of the tax-gatherers and the daily food allowance of the tax-gatherers." (Abbas MS. p. 29.)

By this arrangement the *muqaddams* were badly hit in the belly for ever. Their regime of tyranny

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* The MS. used by Elliot for translation seems to have read otherwise. Therein (see Elliot, iv. 313) we find that the settlement was made with the headmen and *kabuliyat* was taken from them; which is opposed to the very spirit of Farid's reformation. Our MS. clearly says "*ba-dastakhat kabuliyat az ra'at nawisanidah girift.*"

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came to an end. A direct connection between the rayats and the jagirdars having been established, both became free from dependence upon them. Furthermore, they were threatened thus: "I know the oppressions and exactions towards the cultivators of which you have been guilty. For this reason I have fixed the payments for measurement and the tax-gatherers' fees . . . . . Be it known to you that I will take accounts in my presence." He instructed them to show leniency to the cultivators at the time of measurement and no mercy at the time of collection. Again, he said to the peasantry, "Whatever you wish to bring to my notice, come personally to me. I won't allow any one to tyrannise over you." He admonished them to be loyal subjects and dismissed them with the words, "Be engaged heart and soul in sowing and reaping." *

Having put the internal affairs of the parganas on a satisfactory basis, he turned his attention to the task of subjugating the disobedient headmen and rebel zamindars. But the majority of the soldiers of the parganas were away with Mian Hassan; so his father's officers advised him to wait for his father's

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* We find in Elliot, iv. 314, "He dismissed them (the cultivators) with *honorary dresses* to carry on cultivation!" Elliot's MS. must have been a strange one.

return. Farid refused to delay, and with wonderful resourcefulness set about equipping a force. But he had neither men at his service, nor horses in his stable, nor saddles to put on the horses.

He ordered his father's officials to get ready two hundred* saddles and find out how many Afghans and kinsmen without jagir were staying in the two parganas. He called them to his presence and urged them to help him in the enterprise, saying "I shall bear the expenses of your food and clothing till Mian Hassan returns. Whatever booty, cash, goods and gold, falls into your hands is yours; I shall never claim a share of it. I shall procure jagirs for those of you who will show (remarkable) bravery. I myself shall provide you with horses to ride on." (Abbas Sarwani p. 30 = Elliot, iv. 314.)

The prospect of loot whetted their zeal for such a service. They gladly consented to his proposals. He then asked a loan of horses from his tenants, who gladly brought them to him. Farid knew well how to win the affection of his adherents by little courtesies. He pleased those who agreed to serve him with gifts of cloths etc., and gave them a small sum of ready money with the words "This is for

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* Elliot writes, "He ordered his father's nobles to saddle two hundred horses." This is incorrect, as they had no horses to saddle. These saddles were prepared for the loan-horses.

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your toilet expenses", (*'in wajeh sabun-i-shuma ast'* Abbas, p. 31).

There were two classes of disobedient persons to be punished. One class was composed of disobedient *muqaddams* who, taking advantage of the absence of the jagirdar, had withheld payment. They were not habitual rebels like the zamindars, who were practically independent chiefs, living in jungle fastnesses and defying the authority of the Muslim jagirdars. They would pay nothing except with the sword at their throats. Whatever they occasionally paid to powerful masters was like tribute from feudatory chiefs of uncertain fidelity. Their masters, if they obeyed any, had no access to their possessions, which they ruled with absolute authority. When everything was ready, Farid mounted his men and suddenly swooped down upon the villages of disobedient *muqaddams*. The cattle, goods, wives and children of the villagers were seized. He gave away all the booty as promised before, to his soldiers, but kept the families of the villagers in his own custody so that their persons might not be violated by the soldiers. The *muqaddams* made their submission, paid the arrears of revenue, and gave security for their future good behaviour.

But more serious preparations were necessary to subdue the rebel zamindars. He took his measures

with excellent forethought and method. He supplemented his small regular cavalry, by the local militia drawn from his Hindu peasantry. "He issued orders to his rayats that every man who possessed a horse should come riding upon it; and those who did not possess horses should come on foot. He took half of the men with him and left the other half to carry on the work of cultivation and for the protection of their homes." (Abbas, p. 34; Elliot differs a little.)

With this extemporized army he proceeded cautiously towards the villages of the rebel zamindars. At the distance of a *kos* he threw up earthen redoubts (*qila-i-kham*)* and encamped within. He ordered his foot-soldiers to cut down the jungles around the villages. The cavalry were ordered to patrol round the villages, kill every male, and capture the women and children, drive in the cattle, and to destroy the crops. A complete blockade was thus established. When the jungles were cleared he advanced the camp nearer to the village and surrounded his position in the same manner with earthen redoubts. Deprived of the shelter of the jungles, the

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* Herein is to be found the origin of his custom of always surrounding his camp with earthen redoubts, which he observed throughout life.

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zamindars became helpless. They offered submission and agreed to pay a heavy ransom. But Farid was not a man whom the allurement of immediate gain could dissuade from his grim resolution. He wanted nothing short of the complete destruction of these miscreants. He stormed their fastnesses, killed all the rebels and sold their wives and children into slavery. He repeopled the devastated villages by bringing men from all parts of the country to settle there. "When the other rebels heard of the death, imprisonment and ruin of these, they listened to wisdom, repented of their contumacy and abstained from theft and robbery" (Elliot, iv. 317). Farid's attitude towards these zamindars was not of unnecessary cruelty, but one of legitimate executive severity, considering the character of these people. They were a permanent menace to the peace and safety of the parganas. They plundered the submissive peasantry and harboured the defaulting rayats who had fled away from the parganas of the neighbouring Muslim jagirdars. Even in the latter half of the 17th century the descendants of these Chero zamindars, who had retired to Palamau afterwards "were hereditary cattle-lifters and they made life and property insecure on their borders." (*History of Aurangzib*, iii. 37.)

The selling of the wives and children of enemies

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into slavery was a common incident of mediaeval warfare in the east. Forcible seizure of the property and persons of disobedient *muqaddams* and cultivators was the only means of recovering the arrears of revenue, resorted to down to the early days of British rule. Even the humane Abul-Fazl speaks with approbation of such measures in *Ain* 2 (*Ain-i-Akbari*, Jarrett, Vol. II., p. 40), where Akbar's *faujdars* are instructed to blockade the rebel villagers and "inflict loss upon their persons and property in every possible way."

No historian says how long Farid managed his father's parganas. Internal evidence from Abbas Sarwani's book shows that he was deprived of his office on the eve of the outbreak of the Lohani rebellion against Ibrahim Lodi, in the eastern provinces under Daria Khan Lohani, which occurred about 1521 A.D. So Farid governed his father's parganas for seven or eight years from 1511 to 1518 or 1519. During these years, Farid's youthful martial vigour found a fruitful outlet in extending the boundaries of his father's jagir, which being a frontier march had ample scope for expansion, especially toward the south. In civil affairs he went on experimenting on the efficacy of his new revenue regulations in removing the misery of the peasantry and the corruption of the *muqaddams*, till he was satisfied

with the soundness of his system, which was destined to be extended afterwards all over Hindustan. He was indefatigable in dispensing swift and relentless justice to all equally. Abbas Sarwani says, "If any soldier or peasant had a complaint, Farid would examine it in person and carefully investigate the cause, nor did he ever give way to carelessness or sloth." (Abbas, p. 38 = Elliot, iv. 317.)

As for the success of his administration, the same author says, "In a very short time both parganas became prosperous and the soldiery and peasantry were alike contented.....The fame of Farid's wisdom was noised abroad over the country ["king-dom" in Elliot is wrong ; there was as yet no king-dom of Bihar] of Bihar.....He gained a reputation among men and pleased all his friends and others except a few enemies such as Sulaiman's mother." (Abbas, pp. 39-40 = Elliot, iv. 317.)

The news of the growing reputation of Farid pricked like a thorn the malicious heart of his step-mother.

"After some time, Mian Hassan came to his home.....The dislike which he formerly entertained was dispelled and he distinguished both brothers, Farid and Nizam, with all kinds of favours." "I am now old" he said "nor can I bear the labour and trouble and thought of governing the

parganas and the soldiery. While I live, do you manage them."

But Sulaiman's mother pressed her husband to remove Farid and give the charge of the parganas to her son who had come of age, and thereby redeem his pledge to her, made several years before, at the time of appointing Farid the *Sikkdar* of his parganas. The mother and son fabricated various false charges against Farid and always vexed Hassan's ears with complaints against him. One day Hassan gave them an angry rebuff by saying," Except you two, there is not a person among my friends, soldiers, and rayats who complains of Farid." But Hassan had to pay dearly for it.* Sulaiman's mother discontinued complaining to Hassan, but from that day seldom held any intercourse with him.

The situation became intolerable to Hassan, who one day asked her the cause of her grief. "Sulaiman's mother, in a choked up voice, with copious tears and frequent sighs, reminded him of his early pledge and threatened him with her determination to commit suicide, if he did not remove Farid from the charge of the parganas and invest her son Sulaiman with authority therein. Mian Hassan, who was entangled in the noose of her love, swore a solemn oath to her and appeased her." (Abbas, p. 42 = Elliot, 318.)

* See Elliot, iv. 318-20 for details.

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"After this Mian Hassan sought to discover some fault in Farid and to remove him and employed himself in examining his actions." (Abbas, p.43 =Elliot, iv. 319); but he could find no loop-hole anywhere. When Farid discovered that Mian Hassan had promised to Sulaiman's mother to remove him, he at once threw up the management of the parganas. Both brothers left their father's home for the second time and again went into a sort of exile to far-away Agra in search of daily bread, (about 1519 A.D.)

In spite of its unhappy beginning and unhappy end, this was the most important stage of Farid's life. At Sasaram he was unconsciously serving his period of apprenticeship for administering the Empire of Hindustan. The indefatigable worker, far-sighted revenue reformer and cautious general clearly reveals himself during this period. Above all, *the zabardast sikkdar* of pargana Sasaram, in whose dread the ferocious Pathan soldier lived amicably with his humble Hindu peasant without looking askance at him, was the *preliminary role* played by the mighty Emperor "SHER SHAH from dread of whom the tiger and the lamb drank water together*" when he was seated upon the throne of Delhi.

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* First line of Sher Shah's chronogram. (*Makhzan-i-Afaghana*, f. 259 b.)

CHAPTER II

In the School of Adversity (1519-1529 A.D.)

The envy of Sulaiman's mother drove Farid away from his father's house a second time in 1519 A.D. He left Sasaram amidst the regrets of all his kinsmen and the sorrowful despair of the people of the parganas; and started for Agra in search of employment. Agra had become the capital of the Empire since Sultan Sikandar's time. Sultan Ibrahim, who ascended the throne of his father in 1517 A. D., also resided there. On his way he became the guest of the Sarwanis at Cawnpur, where he secured two companions, Shaikh Ismail Sur and his brother-in-law Habib Khan Kakar, who were destined to become famous in Sher Shah's reign under the titles of Shujaat Khan and Sarmast Khan respectively. At Agra he chose Daulat Khan, a powerful noble of Sultan Ibrahim, as his patron. By his services he won his master's favour through whom he tried without success to secure a grant of his father's parganas in his own name while his father was yet alive. However, soon after, Mian Hassan died, and Daulat Khan procured the imperial *farman* in Farid's name. (*Makhzan, f.* 204*b* says in the

name of both the brothers.) He returned to Sasaram (1520 A.D.) amidst the rejoicings of all his relatives and soldiery. Sulaiman, unable to offer any opposition, fled to Muhammad Khan Sur of the Daud Shah Khail, the chieftain of the tribe of Sur, and governor of the pargana of Chaund*, who commanded 1500 horsemen. "He encouraged Sulaiman in his opposition to Farid, and posed as the protector of his interest against Farid's encroachment. Muhammad Khan made offers of arbitration to Farid, who wrote back respectfully to him, "I send my brother Nizam to bring him (Sulaiman) to me, and I will give him such a jagir as will satisfy him; but let him put aside the desire of sharing in the government of my pargana; for while I live, he shall never obtain this; as it has been said 'one scabbard cannot contain two swords'." But Sulaiman wanted his share in complete independence of Farid; so, a compromise was not effected, and Muhammad Khan meditated recovering Sulaiman's share by force of arms.

About this time (1521 A.D.) serious complications arose in the eastern provinces of the Lodi Empire. Sultan Ibrahim, who played the Pharoah

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* Jaund of Abul-Fazl :—Written Sant in Rennell's map; distance from Sasaram is 43 miles west. The pargana Jaund (Chaund, it may be read with two more dots) is in the Sarkar of Rohtas. (*Ain-i-Akbari*, ii. 147.)

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over a race of fierce democrats like the Afghans, by making his nobles, (who had been used to taking their seats in the presence of Sultan Bahlol and Sikandar), stand before him, with their hands crossed over their breasts,* alienated his nobles still further by treacherously murdering some of them. Dariya Khan Lohani, the Governor of Bihar, suspected Ibrahim of a design upon his life, while on his way to Agra after a victory over the Sarwani rebels at Lucknow. So, he without going to Agra, fled back to his province and raised the standard of rebellion in concert with Nasir Khan Lohani of Ghazipur and Ma'aruf Farmuli of Oudh. The rebels combined under the leadership of Dariya Khan, and the country from Bihar to Jaunpur fell off from Ibrahim's authority. Dariya Khan died shortly after and was succeeded by his more ambitious son Bahar Khan (wrongly called Bahadur Khan by some historians). He virtually set himself up as an independent sovereign, though he abstained from coining money and reading the *khutba* in his own name till after the death of Ibrahim at Panipat, (20th April, 1526 A.D.) Farid saw that the mere *farman* of the powerless Emperor Ibrahim would not deter Muhammad Khan from attacking him unless he had some other powerful

* Ferishta, Persian text, p. 188.

men near at hand to protect him. So he went to Bahar Khan and entered his service (1522 A.D.). He "employed himself day and night in his business, nor did he rest one moment from it, and from this good service he gained Bahar Khan's favour; so that he had access to him in public and private and became one of his most intimate friends. In consequence of *his excellent arrangements* he became celebrated throughout the country of Bihar".* One day he went out hunting with Bahar Khan, and a tiger having appeared, Farid slew it. Bahar Khan, on account of this gallant encounter, gave him the title of *Sher Khan* or Tiger Lord.

"Some time afterwards Sultan Muhammad, [Bahar Khan would be the more correct designation, as these events took place before the first battle of Panipat, after which Bahar Khan took that title], finding Farid a man of skill, experience and quick understanding, nominated him the deputy (*Vakil*) and also the tutor (*Ataliq*) of his minor son Jalal Khan, who was of tender years." (*Makhzan*, p. 9; supported by Abbas also, see Elliot, IV. 336. "I was appointed to educate him.") We find that under Bahar Khan, too, Sher Khan was employed in civil affairs as he possessed an excellent knowledge

* Abbas, pp. 61-62=Elliot, iv. 325.

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of revenue affairs and enjoyed a good reputation for administrative ability. His "excellent arrangements," which made his name famous throughout the country of Bihar, were undoubtedly the same beneficent regulations that had been introduced by him in his father's jagir, for the protection of the peasantry, prevention of the corruption of *muqaddams* and the vigorous suppression of military license by dealing out swift and terrible justice to the wrong-doers. His reforming activity found an excellent and larger scope, in the service of Bahar Khan, and his unique system had a natural and happy expansion all over the country of Bihar. Abbas Sarwani says, "He continued to discharge the duties of the *naib* to Jalal Khan, and after a long time he returned to his jagir with the permission of Sultan Muhammad." It is not difficult to fix the approximate time of Sher Khan's departure. The leave was not certainly granted before the first battle of Panipat, (April 1526 A.D.), after which battle our Persian authorities wrongly make Sher Khan enter the service of Bahar Khan. Babur's *Memoirs*, translated by Mrs. Beveridge, p. 523, says, "At the present time (the entry is made under May 12th, 1526 A.D.) they (Nasir Khan Nuhani, Ma'aruf Farmuli and a crowd of other amirs) were lying two or three marches on our side of Qanauj and had made Bahar Khan, the son

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of Dariya Khan Nuhani, their Padshah under the style of Sultan Muhammad". This shows that after the assumption of kingly title Sultan Muhammad advanced as far as Qanauj* to watch the movements of the Mughals, in May, 1526 A.D. He remained in that quarter, probably till the beginning of the rainy season (middle of June) and, thinking that the Mughals would not make any hostile move in that unfavourable season, returned to his capital, Bihar town. It is not improbable that Sher Khan, who was with his master, took leave of him on his way to Bihar town, at Buxar or some such neighbouring place to visit his jagir (in the first or second week of July, 1526), promising to rejoin him shortly after at the end of the rainy season (October). "He delayed for some time. On account of his delaying, Sultan Muhammad expressed his displeasure and made complaints about him in public, and said "Sher Khan promised to return very shortly, but he has remained a long time away". Those were days of confusion, no man put entire confidence in another." (Abbas, 62 = Elliot, iv. 326). No cause has been assigned by any historian for this delay on Sher Khan's part and the extreme anxiety of Sultan Muhammad for him. Our MS. *Makhzan* says,

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* At the head of confederate army of rebellious Afghan chiefs.

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"On account of some urgent affairs, Sher Khan overstayed his promised time and Sultan Muhammad always talked of him." From the altered political situation of the last six months (from July to December) of 1526, we are inclined to suspect that behind these urgent affairs, Sher Khan entertained a motive not very friendly to Sultan Muhammad. Just after the battle of Panipat the ambitious Afghan chiefs, unsuccessful at home against rivals of their own race, resorted to Babur in the hope of overcoming their domestic enemies with the help of the Mughals and gaining high positions for themselves. Shaikh Bayazid Farmuli and Mahmud Khan Nuhani were types of this class; the former had a quarrel with Ma'aruf Farmuli of Oudh who had killed Bayazid's elder brother Shaikh Mustafa ; the latter was a rival of Nasir Khan Nuhani who held Ghazipur. Probably encouraged by these desertions from the ranks of the eastern amirs, the Mughals were emboldened to undertake a campaign in the east in the height of the rains. Humayun was appointed to the command of this expedition. He began the campaign in August, 1526, and within five months overran the whole country from Qanauj up to Kharid (in the Ballia district) on the northern bank of the Ganges; Ma'aruf Farmuli and Nasir Khan Nuhani, the main supporters of Sultan Muhammad, were driven away from their

homes and Bayazid and Mahmud Khan were left Governors of Oudh and Ghazipur respectively by the victorious son of Babur. At Jaunpur Sultan Junaid Barlas, with a body of veteran Mughal troops, was posted as the Governor to defend the dependent Afghan chiefs from the attack of their enemies and to watch over the general interests of the Mughals.*

We do not know whether Sher Khan had been thinking at heart of this easy road to fortune shown by Bayazid and others. At least Sultan Muhammad had very good reasons for suspecting such a move on the part of his powerful subordinate, who might reduce him to the same straits into which his main adherents Ma'aruf and Nasir Khan were thrown. Anyhow Sher Khan remained probably for six months from July to December at Sasaram. His absence from October to December—the season for campaigning—was specially galling to the Lohani king and raised suspicion about the fidelity of Sher Khan in his heart. There may have been another and more honourable motive of Sher Khan's absence. Abbas Sarwani probably gives us a hint of the current belief of those days, when he makes Muhammad Khan Sur

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* Humayun returned from his campaign to his father and waited on him on January, 6th 1527 A.D. at Char-bagh in the suburb of Agra; so Junaid Barlas was possibly left at Jaunpur by the middle of December, 1526.

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say, "He sees some probability of the advent of Sultan Mahmud (Lodi) son of Sultan Sikandar to whom many of the nobles and Afghans have given in their adhesion". But it is not probable that the eastern rebels in any way favoured the advent of a Lodi claimant.* But it appears improbable to us, that a cautious politician like Sher Khan ever thought of taking a step which would make both the Mughals and Sultan Muhammad his enemies. It is more likely that, impressed by the complete success of Mughal arms and the prospect of princely fortune there, he thought of entering the Mughal service and making himself a leader of independent means equal in status with any other Afghan chief. But there is no positive proof of his faithlessness to Sultan Muhammad Lohani, or friendly attitude to the Mughals.

The Lohani king expressed his displeasure at Sher Khan's delay; Muhammad Khan Sur, the arch-

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* After the battle of Panipat Mahmud Lodi, son of Sultan Sikandar, appeared as the claimant to the allegiance of the whole Afghan people and tried to rouse his people against the Mughals. Babur speaks (*Memoirs* translated by Mrs. Beveridge p. 562) of him "Though he possessed neither district nor pargana, 10,000 horse had gathered in the hope of his attaining supremacy." In March, 1527, he fought with the Afghans in the memorable battle of Kanwa, under Rana Sanga with whom he fled to Mewar after the defeat.

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enemy of Sher Khan, took this opportunity of alienating his mind further by artful representation of Sher Khan's evil nature and faithlessness. He suggested that the best remedy would be to deprive him of Sasaram and Khawaspur Tanda and bestow those parganas upon Hassan Sur's worthy son, Sulaiman, who had taken refuge with him from Sher Khan's injustice and violence. Sultan Muhammad refused to confiscate the parganas of Sher Khan, but out of deference to the position of his powerful noble, commissioned him to arbitrate between Sulaiman and Sher Khan upon their respective claims to their father's parganas. Muhammad Khan Sur having got this long-sought-for opportunity arrived in his pargana, and to keep the appearance of arbitration, sent his trusty servant Shadi Ghulam to Sher Khan with the selfsame demands previously rejected by Sher Khan in 1522 A.D. Sher Khan replied; "Do you Shadi, tell the honoured Khan (Muhammad Khan Sur) that this is not the country of Roh that I should share equally with my brothers. The country of Hindustan is completely at the disposal of the king, nor has any one else any share in it, nor is there any regard to the elder and younger or to kindred. Sikandar Lodi thus decided:—'If any noble dies, whatever money or other effects he may leave, should be divided among his heirs according to the law of

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inheritance; but his office and his jagirs and his military retinue, let him confer on whichever of his sons he thinks most able, and in these no one else has a right to share nor is any remedy open to him'. Whatever goods and money my father left, in which all had a share by inheritance, Sulaiman appropriated them and sought your protection. . . . . Sultan Ibrahim granted to me these two paganas in which no brother can claim any share.

But I said to my brothers, 'The jagir which you enjoyed in my father's lifetime I will continue, nay, increase to you ; but no one can participate in my office.' It does not become you to say, 'Give up Tanda and Malhu (our MS. has *Balhu*) to Sulaiman'. I will not willingly yield them. If the powerful Khan takes them by force and gives them to Sulaiman, it is in his power to do so. I have not another word to say''. (Abbas; pp. 55, 56=Elliot p. 327).

When Shadi came back and reported the speech to his master, he flew into a rage and ordered Shadi to march with all the troops of the Khan's establishment against Sher Khan's parganas and put Sulaiman and Ahmad in forcible possession of them. "When Sher Khan heard this news of the coming of Sulaiman and Shadi he wrote to Malik Sukha, his slave, who was in charge of Khawaspur Tanda to show no

remissness* in resistance and defence. When Shadi and Sulaiman appeared before Khawaspur, Malik Sukha came out and offered battle in which he was slain. The troops of Sher Khan having sustained a defeat, retreated in disorder to Sasaram." (Nizamuddin, Persian Text, p. 225.)

Sher Khan finding it impossible to rally his forces, called his full brother (Nizam) and other well-wishers together, to ask their opinion on the present situation. Some persons advised him to go to Sultan Muhammad; but he was too sagacious a man to seek the indirect support of the Lohani king who was really at the back of his intriguing kinsmen, who would not have otherwise dared to attack him. Besides, his intention was not, at the sacrifice of his dignity and interest, to enter into a compromise which Sultan Muhammad would at best effect for him. His brother Nizam suggested the course of going to Sultan Junaid Barlas and entering the Mughal service which

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* The Persian texts of Ferishta (p. 222) and Nizamuddin are literally identical with only the addition of the word *Ahmad* after *Sulaiman* in Ferishta. Briggs (Vol. II. p. 105) gives a most misleading and imaginary version of it. He puts "But on the first alarm he wrote to Malik Sooka (the father of Khawas Khan) his deputy in Khawaspur Tanda to harass the enemy and by all means to avoid an action till he joined him in person. Malik Sooka however desirous of distinguishing himself gave his enemies battle." This has not the slightest connection with the original.

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would perhaps afford an opportunity not only of vengeance on Muhammad Khan Sur but even of driving him out of Chaund. (Abbas, p. 67 =Elliot, iv. 328, our MS. here wrongly reads *Jaunpur*.)

Sher Khan agreed to this and went to Benares* from which place he sent his agent to bring promise of safety from Junaid Barlas at Jaunpur. The Mughal governor, having given his assurances, Sher Khan went to Jaunpur, made large presents to him, and enlisted himself in Mughal service. (About the middle of January, 1527 A. D.)

Abbas Sarwani (MS. p. 130=Elliot, iv. p. 356) says that Churaman, the *naib* of the Rajah of Rohtas, showed kindness to the family of Mian Nizam and procured for them shelter in the fort of Rohtas. But he does not mention on what occasion Mian Nizam was constrained to take shelter in Rohtas.

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* The name of the place is our suggestion. Abbas Sarwani shows awful ignorance of geography here as well as elsewhere, by saying "Patna". Patna is only fourteen miles north of Bihar, the capital of Sultan Muhammad, whose unfriendliness was the cause of Sher's misfortune. The distance between Patna and Benares by land is 155½ miles. (See *India of Aurangzib*, p. 110 by Prof. J. N. Sarkar for various stages and distances.) Rennell says '186 miles'; and the distance from Benares to Jaunpur is 40 miles. Benares is the nearest place on the northern bank of the Ganges, both from Sasaram and Jaunpur and is therefore most likely. Nizamuddin has the good sense to omit the name of the place.

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We think that when Sher Khan decided to go to Jaunpur, Mian Nizam with his family and dependants fled to the hills of Rohtas to save the families from the vengeance of his triumphant step-brother, (in the middle of January, 1527). He had to live in a sort of exile for 18 months (up to June, 1528, when Sher Khan regained his parganas), and possibly these 18 months he passed in the fort of Rohtas as a refugee.

Sher Khan entered the service of Babur as a client of Junaid Barlas, not earlier than December,* 1526, as Sultan Junaid Barlas was left in charge of the eastern provinces not before that date. (See Babur's *Memoirs*, translated by Mrs. Beveridge, p. 544). He was given charge of the parganas in the neighbourhood of Buxar and Chaunsa, when Babur encamped there, probably in June, 1528, during his unrecorded campaign of 934 H., of which many pages are missing from his *Memoirs*, (See *ibid* foot-note, i. 652). The story told by Abbas Sarwani and unsuspectingly repeated by later

* Babur writes :—"Humayun in accordance with my arrangements left Shah Mir Hussain and Sultan Junaid Barlas with a body of effective braves in Jaunpur.....These important matters settled he crossed the Gang near Karrah-Manikpur and took the Kalpi road,..... .....Humayun arrived at Agra waited on Babur on 3rd Rabi II. (January, 6th, 1527) (Babur's *Memoirs*, p. 544). Allowing 20 days for Humayun's journey from Agra to Jaunpur, he must have left the latter place by 17th of December, 1526, on which date Junaid Barlas was invested with authority there.

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historians that the Mughal governor of Jaunpur, lent him, shortly after, a Mughal army with whose help he not only recovered his own parganas but also acquired some others from his enemies, appears to be absolutely baseless and improbable.

Though Mughal service afforded Sher Khan protection against his Afghan enemies, there was no immediate prospect of regaining his parganas, as the Mughals were at this time hotly pressed in the west by the Rajputs and a host of other enemies. All available Mughal troops were concentrated near Fathpur Sikri by Babur, who was in the grip of a life and death struggle with the mighty Rana Sanga of Mewar. February and March 1527 were the most critical months of Babur's life; the Mughal authority was seriously shaken everywhere; Babur seems to have been given up for lost by his Hindustani supporters. There were perfidy, revolt and desertion on all sides. (For the perilous situation of Babur before the battle of Kanwa, March, 17, 1527, see Babur's *Memoirs*, p. 557). Though the victory of Kanwa saved the situation in the west, Mughal ascendancy in the eastern provinces became more precarious by the rebellion of Shaikh Bayazid, a Mughal partisan, entrusted with the governorship of Oudh. So it is not possible that Sultan Junaid Barlas

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could spare Mughals to fight for Sher Khan in his domestic quarrels, at such a critical period.

However, granting that a force was sent by the Governor of Jaunpur what were its chances of success? Before June, 1528, no Mughal army ventured to cross over to the southern bank from Chunar to Patna, which was the stronghold of the Lohani king Sultan Muhammad. How could Sher Khan overthrow Muhammad Khan Sur so easily, when his supporter the Lohani king was yet alive? Why should Muhammad Khan Sur fly to the hills of Rohtas*, and not to the Lohani capital for shelter? The truth seems to be that Sher Khan remained two or three months with Sultan Junaid Barlas at Jaunpur, waiting for an opportunity to be introduced to the emperor by his master. After the victory of Kanwa (March, 1527 A.D.) Sultan Junaid may have gone to Agra for some business and Sher Khan possibly accompanied him. There he was presented to Babur, and recommended by Sultan Junaid Barlas to Mir Khalifa, Sultan Junaid's elder brother, acting as Babur's minister, (Abbas, p. 70=Elliot, iv. 329). Since then he passed into the service of Babur and remained in the Mughal army, waiting in the eager

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* All Persian writers including Abbas are unanimous in saying that Muhammad Khan Sur fled to the hills of Rohtas, when Sher Khan with Mughal auxiliaries attacked him.

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expectation of another Mughal campaign in the eastern provinces, which alone would give him an opportunity to recover his heritage and wreak vengeance upon his enemies.

Sher Khan had been in Babur's camp for about 15 months at most from April* 1527 to June, 1528, when he got back his parganas as a result of Babur's eastern campaign of 934 A. H. His life during this period was marked by no remarkable incidents, at least we have no reliable historical information of them. Abbas and other writers, viewing the earlier days of Sher Shah in the dazzling light of his achievements in after life, have recorded and passed as genuine history a number of curious anecdotes, full of predictions, unconscious prophecies, etc., illustrative of the biographers' favourite theme:— "*The child is father of the man.*"

One of these is the following story which Abbas is said to have heard from his own uncle, Shaikh Muhammad, whose age was nearly eighty years; "I, (Shaikh Muhammad) was at the battle of Chanderi, with the force of the victorious Emperor Babur, the second Faridun, and in attendance on the Khan-i-Khanan Yusuf Khail, (who brought the Emperor Babur from Kabul), and Shaikh Ibrahim

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* Supposing he was introduced to Babur 3 months after his flight to Jaunpur. (January, 1527).

Sarwani said to me, 'Come to Sher Khan's quarters, and hear his impossible boastings, which all men are laughing at.' And accordingly we rode over to Sher Khan's quarters. In the course of conversation, Shaikh Ibrahim said: 'It is impossible that the empire should again fall into the hands of the Afghans, and the Mughals be expelled from this country.' Sher Khan replied: 'Shaikh Muhammad, be you witness now between Shaikh Ibrahim and myself, that if luck and fortune favour me, I will very shortly expel the Mughals from Hind, for the Mughals are not superior (to the Afghans) in battle or in single combat; (*shamshir zadan*, lit., sword-wielding) but the Afghans have let slip the Empire of Hind from their hands on account of their internal dissensions. Since I have been amongst the Mughals and know their mode of fighting (*rawish-i-jang*), I see in battle they have no order or discipline, (*sabat o karar*, lit., firmness and perserverance) and that their king* from pride of birth and station does not personally superintend the government but leaves all the affairs and business of the State to his nobles and ministers, in whose sayings and doings he puts perfect confidence. These grandees act on corrupt motives in every case, whether it be that of a soldier's or a cultivator's or a

* Elliot's translation contains "Kings" and as such uses all pronouns in the plural number.

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rebellious zamindar's. Whoever has money, whether loyal or disloyal can get his business settled as he likes by paying for it; but if a man has no money, although he may have displayed his loyalty on a hundred occasions, or be a veteran soldier, he will never gain his end. From this lust of gold they make no distinction between friend and foe; and if fortune extends a hand to me, the Shaikh will soon see and hear how I shall bring the Afghans under my control and never permit them again to become divided'." (Abbas, pp. 71-73 = Elliot, iv. 330-331).

The above story cannot be believed, on the following grounds :—

(1) Shaikh Muhammad, the informant of Abbas, says that at the siege of Chanderi, he was in attendance upon the Khan-i-Khanan Yusuf Khail* who brought the Emperor Babur from Kabul. This Khan-i-Khanan whom Babur calls Daulat Khan Yusuf Khail died just two years before the siege of Chanderi

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* This was the title of Daulat Khan Lodi, the Afghan traitor whom Babur describes as Daulat Khan Yusuf Khail (see Babur's *Memoirs*, p. 428). Our MS. Abbas omits the words "who brought the Emperor from Kabul". But from passages elsewhere it becomes evident that Abbas meant no other person than Daulat Khan Lodi, by Khan-i-Khanan Yusuf Khail. "Khan-i-Khanan Yusuf Khail who was Governor of the Punjab, etc. has sent his son Dilwar Khan to fetch Babur..." (See Abbas in Elliot, iv. 324). This passage leaves no room for doubt that Abbas means no other person than Daulat Khan Lodi, by "Khan-i-Khanan Yusuf Khail."

(December, 1527 A.D.). Babur's *Memoirs* (Mrs. Beveridge's translation, p. 461) says: "Daulat Khan died when Kitta Beg reached Sultanpur with the prisoners" of whom Daulat Khan was one. The entry is made on the 10th January, 1526 A.D.; so the Khan-i-Khanan must have died about the beginning of January, 1526. This very fact is sufficient to discredit the whole as an old soldier's gossip. But there are greater absurdities in Shaikh Muhammad's story.

(2) Such vain boasting as that he would expel the Mughals from India was opposed to the reticent nature of Sher Khan. We might have believed it, had the remark been made elsewhere than in Babur's camp and had Sher Khan been at that time a boy of tender age with a fiery imagination like Ibn Ali Amir* who is said to have passed sleepless nights, while yet a mere school boy, seriously thinking whom he would make the chief *Qazi* of Cordova, when he would become the ruler of Spain. But Sher Khan was at this time a mature man of forty, having already passed through several vicissitudes of fortune. He knew too well the tale-bearing habit of the Afghans to have confided such dangerous secrets to them when he

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* The famous Almamzor, the great minister of the Omayyid Khalif Hisham II. of Spain. For the story see Dozy's *History of Spain*.

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was a homeless wanderer, looking up to these very Mughals to rescue him from misery. Nor was he known to have been a jovial merry-maker, to pour his heart over the cup in the careless hours of feast and revelry.

(3) A shrewd observer like Sher Khan* could not have formed such hasty and wrong ideas as that "The Mughals have no order and discipline, no firmness and perseverance etc. after the victories of Panipat and Kanwa, while the military arrangements of Babur marked him out as the greatest general of his age. On what battle-field did Sher Khan find occasion to notice the inferiority of the Mughals (to the Afghans), their unsteadiness and lack of discipline? If Sher Khan had been impressed with anything in the Mughal camp it was rather with the superior organization and equipment of Babur's army, and its invincibility in regular battle. Its influence is found in the strategy of Sher Khan, and his adoption of the Mughal system in the organization of the army. As for the idea of driving the Mughals from India, it is very doubtful whether even in 1539 after the victory of Chaunsa, Sher Khan indulged in such a

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* If Sher Khan meant "single combat" and "sword-playing" by the word 'battle', then the Afghans were of course superior and his remark may have some truth.

vision. It was not any pursuit of a definite aim that brought about the expulsion of the Mughals by Sher Khan; rather it was the result of several accidents.

(4) "Their king from pride of birth..... they make no distinction between friend and foe." This is a piece of anachronism pure and simple put by Abbas Sarwani into the mouth of Sher Khan to give vent to his own aggrieved feelings. Here the dramatist—for the book of Abbas is more a drama than a sober history,—prominently reveals himself behind the mask of the historian. Those who know anything of the hard-working Emperor Babur and his vigilance and close attention to details, would at once pronounce Abbas's remarks as wrong. The abuses complained of by Abbas might creep into a settled government enjoying peace for a long time, but they are quite impossible in the state of things which prevailed in Hindustan between the first battle of Panipat and the siege of Chanderi. The key to the above passage lies in the following events of Abbas Sarwani's own life:—"In the reign of Emperor Akbar, I (Abbas) enjoyed these (assignments of lands to my ancestors) until the twenty-fourth Ilahi year (corresponding to 987 A.H.), when the Emperor ordered that I should be advanced to the rank of a Commander of Five Hundred and brought to his presence. But Qazi Ali did not give

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a true account of myself or of my ancestors, but spoke ill of us and said Shaikh Abdu-n-Nabi had given 2,000 bighas of land to two Afghans!" In short my bad fortune so ordained it that my share of assignments (*madad-i-ma'ash*) was resumed." (Abbas, pp. 202-203 = Elliot, iv. 389-390). We further learn that his feelings were so much wounded that he resolved to return to the country of his fathers. Later on he was employed under one Mir Sayyid Hamid on a monthly salary of 200 Rupees; but he lost it after the death of Hamid and remained in grief and distress. (See Abbas in Elliot, iv. 390). Here were ample grounds for complaint about the 'corrupt motives of the Mughal grandees'. The state of affairs revealed through Sher Khan's mouth was really the contemporary state of things in Akbar's Court as seen through the coloured spectacles of the discontented Abbas Sarwani and his brother historian, Mulla Abdul Qadir of Badaon; [for similar complaints, see Badaoni in Elliot, v. 521.*]

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* Badaoni describes in the following words the distress of the rent-free tenure-holders in the presence of Sadar Abdu-n-Nabi and the indifference of Akbar to their distress. "Whoever could not obtain a similar introduction (through powerful courtiers) had to give large bribes to Sayyid Abdu-r-Rashid and all the subordinates of the Shaikh even to the farashes, door-keepers, grooms and sweepers. .....He who could not succeed in procuring either of these persons, was well thrashed and kicked by the attendants, besides

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Shorn of all legends and prophecies the bare fact of Sher Khan's going to Chanderi with the army of Babur is possibly true, as Babur had taken all available troops there; for the objective of his campaign in 934 A.H. was the conquest of Malwa and Mewar. Babur writes, "We had come to Chanderi meaning, after taking it, to move against Raising (Raisin), Bhilsan, and Sarangpur.....(then to move on Rana Sanga in Chitor." (Babur's *Memoirs*, p. 598). Had the course of affairs taken this turn a prolonged period of exile and misery would have been the lot of Sher Khan. But fortune smiled upon him. Scarcely had Chanderi fallen when news reached Babur that Biban, Bayazid and Ma'aruf had risen in revolt and advanced as far as Qanauj. This forced a change of campaign and Babur marched against the rebels in the beginning of February, 1528 A.D. through Kalpi (See *ibid*, p. 598). He gave a vigorous chase to the rebels, driving them before him eastward. On April 2nd 1528, we find Babur shooting games on the bank of the Saru (*Ibid*, p. 602). Hitherto there is no mention of Sher Khan in the *Memoirs* of Babur.

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which, many of the unfortunates perished from the effect of the hot air in that immense crowd. Although the king (Akbar) knew all these particulars yet such was his regard for the Sadr, that he could not be persuaded to interfere with his proceedings." (*Tarikh-i-Badaoni* in Elliot, v. 521).

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But it can be inferred that he had been in his army, though without playing a noticeable part. But soon afterwards Babur crossed over to the southern bank of the Ganges and there carried on operations. There is a break of narrative in the *Memoirs* between 2nd April and 18th September, 1528, (*Ibid*, p. 603, translator's note). Mrs. Beveridge says, "Much can be gleaned however as to Babur's occupations during 5½ months of the lacuna from his chronicle of 935 A.H. which makes several references to *last year* and also allows several inferences to be drawn. From this source it becomes known that the Afghan campaign, the record of which was broken by the gap, was carried on and in its course Babur was at Jaunpur (*f*. 365), Chaunsa (*f*. 365*b*) and Baksara (*f*. 366-366*b*);....." (*Ibid*, p. 603).

The above passage unmistakably shows that this campaign was carried on by Babur not only in Oudh but in South Bihar also. Sher Khan must have accompanied Babur in this campaign and rendered valuable service by his knowledge of the country and local influence when Babur's army was at Chaunsa and Buxar. It is unfortunate that this very portion of the most authentic history, which undoubtedly contained valuable reference to him, is irrecoverably lost. That Sher Khan recovered his parganas and acquired several others as the result of

Babur's campaign of 934 A.H. is proved beyond doubt by the following incidental mention of it in Babur's *Memoirs* :—"While* we were in these parts news came again and again that Sultan Mahmud (Lodi) had collected 10,000 Afghans.....that he himself with Fath Khan Sarwani was on his way along the river for Chunar ; that *Sher Khan Sur whom I had favoured last year* with the gift of several parganas and had left in charge of this neighbourhood, had joined these Afghans, who thereupon had made him and a few other amirs cross the water (the Ganges) ....." (Babur's *Memoirs*, pp. 651-652). Here we find an unmistakable allusion to the fact that in the previous year, 934 A.H., Babur had been in South Bihar and had at that time rewarded Sher Khan with several parganas. Mrs. Beveridge in a foot-note to the above passage adds, "Babur's favours to him (Sher Khan), his son Humayun's future conqueror, will have been done during the Eastern campaign in 934 A.H., of which so much record is missing." (Babur's *Memoirs*, p. 652, foot-note 1). This leaves us in no doubt that Sher Khan recovered his parganas with the help of the Mughal army when Babur was encamped at Chaunsa. Sultan Muhammad Lohani was probably dead at this time, which left the country, south of

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* The entry is made on the 28th February, 1529.

the Ganges without a defender. Sultan Muhammad was succeeded by his minor son Jalaluddin, and the affairs of the Lohanis fell into disorder. Babur's original object was to chase the rebels Bayazid and others and restore the Mughal ascendancy by recovering those portions of North Bihar which Humayun had conquered in the campaign of 932 A.H. Had not exceptional opportunities presented themselves he would not perhaps have ventured to begin a fresh campaign at so late a season as April, in Southern Bihar. The death of the Lohani king probably encouraged him to cross over to the southern bank. However, at the approach of the Mughals the hostile Afghans as usual took to flight everywhere. Muhammad Khan Sur and others who held jagirs near about Buxar fled to the hills of Rohtas. Sher Khan, as probably the only Mughal partisan who had considerable local influence, was left in charge of the territories to the west of the Sone* and east of the Karmanasha etc. (June and July, 1528), as Shaikh Bayazid had been left in charge of Oudh and other districts of Ma'aruf Farmuli by Humayun at the end of the campaign of 932 A.H. As for Sultan Junaid Barlas he remained as before Governor of Jaunpur; at this time probably Sher Khan was given the aid

* In this expedition Babur did not cross the Sone.

of a Mughal contingent by the Governor of Jaunpur to consolidate his possessions after the parganas had been actually recovered as the result of Babur's campaign of 934 A.H. (May and June, 1528).

As a Mughal partisan, his situation was very weak in South Bihar, which was then the stronghold of the Afghans. As soon as the Mughal protection would be withdrawn he was sure to be driven out again. So, he set about conciliating his enemies just as Bayazid Farmuli in Oudh conciliated Ma'aruf Farmuli—fear of whom had driven Bayazid like Sher Khan into the Mughal service. Abbas Sarwani says, "To many of the Afghans and his kindred who had fled to the mountains, he wrote promising to double their former jagirs; consequent on the acquisition of these parganas, many Afghans came to him. When he perceived that many Afghans were collecting round him he (became at ease, gaining confidence; our MS. omits this), sent away the Mughals, giving them large presents and wrote to Muhammad Khan Sur, 'Let not any uneasiness find its way into the heart of the powerful Khan.....please come and take possession of your pargana Chaund.....I do not covet the possessions of my kindred. This is a sedition-exciting and misfortune-breeding time. Every Afghan who has any force is aspiring after kingship and conquests. In such a time those who have

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means ought to collect, for aid and assistance, soldiers and retainers so as to preserve their own possessions and even gain fresh parganas,.....Let us therefore put away our former envy and hatred.....and this may be the means of our gathering a force of kinsmen, and so of attaining high station and dignity.' On receiving Sher Khan's letter Muhammad Khan came down from the hills and again took possession of his own pargana.....and he and Sher Khan forgave each other, and Muhammad Khan thus came under obligations to Sher Khan."—(Abbas, pp. 69-70=Elliot, iv. 328-329). Sher Khan's political sagacity and magnanimity as shown in these transactions cannot be too highly praised. His letter reflects the mentality of the Afghans during those disturbed years. [After the fall of the Lodis various Afghan tribes, such as the Farmulis (not genuine Afghans according to Niamatuallah, see Dorn 57, Book II) and the Lohanis, were the chief competitors for ascendancy]. Bayazid Farmuli and Ma'aruf Farmuli two bitter enemies became allies and the Farmulis became supreme in Oudh and Bahraich. The Lohanis had established themselves in the eastern part of South Bihar. Sher Khan's intention as revealed in his letter to Muhammad Khan seems to have been to organize a strong Sur power in the western extremity of South Bihar, and he laid its

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foundation by showing politic magnanimity to his bitter enemy Muhammad Khan Sur.

A new complication soon arose in Bihar. Mahmud Lodi, (son of Sultan Sikandar), who had fought in the battle of Kanwa* on the side of Rana Sanga and fled to Mewar after the disastrous defeat, was invited by the eastern rebels such as Biban Lodi, Bayazid Farmuli, Ma'aruf and others† to take their lead as soon as Babur turned his back upon them. Indeed it seems rather to have been a confederacy of the Lodi and Farmuli tribes to seize the rich heritage of the minor Lohani king Jalaluddin. But Abbas Sarwani and all the Persian historians betray ignorance of the fact that this Sultan Mahmud Lodi seized the kingdom of Bihar from Jalal Khan Lohani in 935 A.H. about September, 1528, and not from Sher Khan, as they put it, after the battle of Surajgarh‡—his second battle with the Bengal army and his acquisition of the fortress of Chunar by marriage. The fact is that for some time,** that is, from March 17th,

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* March 17th, 1527.

† Here we do not find the name of any Lohani chief among the supporters of the Lodi pretender.

‡ This battle was fought between Sher and Ibrahim Khan, the general of Mahmud Shah, within a year of his succession, which according to R. D. Banerji, who has tried to fix correct dates by examination of coinage, etc., took place in 939 A.H.

** Abbas Sarwani (p. 108) says, "Sultan Mahmud (then only Mahmud Lodi) remained for a season in that neighbourhood and afterwards came towards Patna."

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1527, up to August, 1528, Mahmud Lodi remained in Rajputana. He joined the eastern rebels about September, 1528. We feel ourselves justified in using only that much of Abbas Sarwani's account of the relation between Mahmud Lodi and Sher Khan, which is consistent with Babur's *Memoirs*. That author combines two adventures of Mahmud Lodi into one, the first in 935 A.H. and the other in 937 A.H., in which he seized the throne of Jalal Khan.* Jalal, with his mother Dudu, fled across to Hajipur and sought the protection of a Bengal army of Nusrat Shah. Abbas Sarwani and other writers make Sher Khan fly from the Mughal camp and again join Sultan Muhammad Lohani. As we have seen already, the story of his flight is baseless and his joining Sultan Muhammad Lohani a second time is also baseless. After Babur had left him in charge of the parganas in the neighbourhood of Chaunsa, he joined not Sultan Muhammad Lohani,† (as Abbas Sarwani,

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* Babur hears the news on January 13th, 1529. "Iskander's son Mahmud Lodi had taken Bihar town. This news decided for getting the army to horse." (Babur's *Memoirs*, translated by Mrs. Beveridge, p. 639). So this event may have happened about October, 1528 A.D.

† Elphinstone is entitled to the credit of removing the huge error by using Erskine's translation of Babur's *Memoirs*. He says "Next year (1529 A.D.) Mahmud Lodi took Bihar and Sher Khan either from necessity, or an inclination to the cause of his nation joined the Lodi standard." (*History of India*, 6th edn., p. 445.) [We slightly differ from him about the date. He took it more probably in October, 1528.]

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Nizamuddin, Ferishta. *Makhzan-i-Afaghana*, *Tarikh-i-Daudi* MS. say), but Sultan Mahmud Lodi.

Abbas Sarwani says,* "When Sultan Mahmud Lodi came with these nobles into Bihar, Sher Khan found it impossible to offer any resistance. .....He was therefore necessitated to present himself before Sultan Mahmud Lodi." Here we find that Sher Khan joined him only out of sheer necessity and for self-preservation. Though he conciliated his enemies and collected soldiers around him, he meditated no treachery and hostility towards Babur. He tried to evade marching with the army of Sultan Mahmud against the Mughals. This will be clear from the following lines of Abbas Sarwani, who says, "On receipt of this order (to join Sultan Mahmud immediately) Sher Khan wrote back in reply that he would come as soon as he could complete the arrangements about the force. When the nobles about the king came to know the contents of Sher Khan's letter, they represented that Sher Khan was in confederacy with the Mughals and would not come to join the king. Deceit and (fox-like) stratagem are his habits (lit. profession.) No trust should be put in his writings and sayings, but he must be compelled to accompany. Azam Humayun Sarwani said, "Sher

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* See page 109 of MS.

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Khan is in his jagir. Let us march towards that direction and follow him wherever he goes....." They proceeded by regular marches to Sasaram. Sher Khan hearing that Sultan Mahmud had come with all his followers and would compel him to join him, was very much vexed, and said to his friends, "The plan I had devised has not succeeded.....the army (of Sultan Mahmud) would do no good, for the nobles who are in it are not at unity among themselves.....But I can no longer excuse myself, I must go along with the army....." Sher Khan wiped out the suspicion from the mind of Sultan Mahmud and his army, by entertaining them with magnificent hospitality. After a few days he marched with Sultan Mahmud for the attack upon Mughal territories. (Abbas pp. 110-112 = Elliot, iv. 348-49). All these events happened towards the end of 1529 A.D. On Feb. 28th* Babur hears. . . . . that "he [Sultan Mahmud Lodi] with Fath Khan Sarwani† was on his way along the river for Chunar ; that Sher Khan.....

* On February 28th, Babur hears that he (Sultan Mahmud) had detached Shaikh Bayazid and Biban with a mass of men towards Sarwar (Gorakhpur).

† The original name of Azam Humayun Sarwani, called Sani or the Second by Abbas Sarwani. This title descended from his father Umar Khan Sarwani. Fath Khan gave one of his daughters in marriage to Sultan Mamud who is called his *damad*. This passage lends authenticity to Abbas' (see Elliot, iv. 347) words just quoted, which described Mahmud's march towards Sasaram.

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had joined these Afghans who thereupon had made him and a few other amirs cross the water ; that Sultan Jalaluddin's man in Benares had not been able to hold that place and had fled and got away." (Babur's *Memoirs* translated by Mrs. Beveridge, p. 652).

Here we find the account of the progress of Sultan Mahmud and the various dispositions of his forces. Sher Khan was perhaps made to cross the Ganges at the Chaunsa ferry, over to Ghazipur; evidently he advanced upstream upon Benares on the northern bank almost in a parallel line with Sultan Mahmud who was advancing towards Chunar on the southern bank. Babur was at this time at Karra. The capture of Benares from Sultan Jalaluddin Sharqi*, a descendant of the old Sharqi dynasty of Jaunpur, (appointed by Babur in charge of Benares in the campaign of 934 A.H.) was the only military

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* Mrs. Beveridge (Babur's *Memoirs* 651, foot-note 5) wrongly remarks, "He (Jalaluddin Sharqi) was one of the three rivals for supremacy in the east...Afghans all three." It is the latest reminiscence of the *Pathan hobby* of European writers. The old Sharqi dynasty was Turkish in its origin. The founder Malik Sarwar was a Turkish slave. The spirit of their sway was Turkish. It was the encroachment of the Afghans under Bahlul Lodi, that brought about the fall of this dynasty. He was not a claimant for supremacy in the Eastern provinces. Babur's policy was to unite all the adherents of the old Sharqi house under this mock-sultan and raise a counterpoise to the Afghans.

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exploit of Sher Khan in this campaign. Sultan Mahmud did not fight a single pitched battle with Babur. He fled eastward at the approach of the Mughal army. On March 5th Sher Khan himself recrossed the Ganges from Benares. Babur writes (5th March, 1529), "The Afghans who had crossed the river from Benares had turned back in like disorder ; that two of their boats had sunk in crossing....." (*Ibid*, p. 654).

The Lohanis, who had reason to resent the overthrow of their power and the expulsion of the minor son of Sultan Muhammad Lohani by Sultan Mahmud Lodi with the aid of his Lodi tribesmen, e.g., Mian Biban Sahu Khail and the Farmulis under Bayazid and Ma'aruf, were the earliest deserters who made submission to the Mughals along with the Surs, who were also unwilling partners in the quarrel with Babur. When Babur was encamped "a *kuroh* below Ghazipur, on March 31st, (Mahmud Khan Lohani, a staunch adherent of the Mughals, waited on him on this same day), "Dutiful letters (of submission) came from Bihar Khan Bihari or Sultan Muhammad Lohani's son Jalal Khan (Nuhani), from Nasir Khan Nuhani's son. Farid Khan, from *Sher Khan Sur*, from Alaul Khan Sur also, and from other Afghan amirs"* (*Ibid*, p. 659).

* All Surs and Lohanis.

This submission to Babur made by Sher Khan ended his unwilling hostility to the Mughals. He remained a faithful vassal till his acquisition of the imperial fortress of Chunar in 937 A.H. which brought him into conflict with Humayun in 938 A.H.

Sultan Mahmud was chased eastwards till he found protection with Nusrat Shah. (Stewart, *History of Bengal*, p. 74).

Jalal Khan, who had taken refuge with the army of Bengal in fear of Sultan Mahmud, came with his chief amirs and waited on Babur (May, 16th 1529,* 935 A.H.) The Mughal Emperor gave the greater portion of his father's possessions back to him on condition of his paying one crore of Rupees as tribute. (See Babur's *Memoirs*, p. 676). Thus the normal state of peace was restored in South Bihar which became a part of the Mughal Empire of Delhi. Jalal Khan got back his father's possessions and Sher Khan as a Mughal vassal after 7 years (1522-1529) of hard struggle entered into the peaceful possession of his father's jagir.

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*Sher Khan had not, up to May 1529, any hand in the affairs of Jalal Khan. He again took service with Jalal's mother Dudu after this date.

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CHAPTER III

SHER KHAN, DEPUTY GOVERNOR OF BIHAR. (1529-1533)

The death of Bahar Khan Lohani, followed almost immediately by the usurpation of Sultan Mahmud, caused great confusion in the affairs of the kingdom of Bihar. The restored king Jalal Khan was a mere boy; his mother Dudu*, who looked after his interests, was no doubt a sensible woman; but the disorganized state of the kingdom needed the strong hand and steady intellect of a man to set it in order. Sher Khan, who had already shown remarkable administrative ability during the lifetime of her husband, was called back by her to service and was made her deputy, probably 3 or 4 months—it may be less—after her son's restoration, that is, about September or October, 1529 A.D. "Dudu kept matters of importance for her own supervision and in co-operation with Sher Khan discharged important duties. A few days after, the mother of Jalal Khan died; whereupon (the task of) the government of

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* Elliot designates her as "a concubine." This is not true. The original runs thus—"*Dudu nam-dasht ke haram-i-sultan bud.*"

Bihar fell upon Sher Khan." (*Makhzan-i-Afaghana* MS. p. 14). Sher Khan's administrative policy as Governor of Bihar, which policy originated during his management of his father's jagir and reached its perfection afterwards when he became Emperor, was one of absolute centralization of all authority in one man's hand. He had begun working along this line in Bihar, eight years before, when he was a servant of Sultan Muhammad Lohani. This policy, which is in its very nature anti-feudal, naturally caused displeasure amongst the aristocratic sections of the Lohanis who held large fiefs. Absolute power, when wielded by Sultan Muhammad or Dudu, who commanded the natural allegiance of their tribesmen, was not so offensive and irritating to them, as it became afterwards when that power was being exercised by Sher Khan, whom they had looked upon as one of their servants. Like the great Richelieu, the regenerator of France and a great apostle of absolutism, Sher Khan became the object of aristocratic envy in his new office. But Sher Khan sat tight over them. He formed a strong party of his own, as a counterpoise, in the kingdom to save the situation. He was highly popular with the peasantry and he also acquired a great influence among the rank and file of the Lohanis themselves. *The History of the Afghans* (MS. translated by Dorn, p. 93), says,

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"Sher Khan during a *space of four years** elevated himself to a state of complete independence and gained the attachment of the greater part of the army by the bounties and honours lavished upon them; so much so that within the frontiers of Bihar no one dared disobey his orders." Besides this, he kept a strong body-guard of his own, which might be utilized as the nucleus of an army if need be. *Tarikh-i-Daudi* (MS. p. 170) says, "He had in his service 800 Afghan cavalry, and he made this rule that 400 horsemen fully armed should always be present at Darbar and the other four hundred go out on raids; when one came the other went away." But these 800 cavalry seemed to have formed only the permanent body-guard of Sher Khan; his actual armed strength was much greater. About this time, besides ruling the kingdom of Bihar as Deputy, he was in ardent pursuit of personal ambition. Two most notable incidents were the acquisition of Chunar and his alliance with Makhdum-i-Alam, the Governor of Hajipur on behalf Nusrat Shah, King of Bengal.

The Acquisition of Chunar (1530 A.D.†)

The fort of Chunar, situated about 28 miles west of Benares, was held by one Taj Khan Sarang Khani

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* From 935 A. H. to 939 A. H. when Jalal Khan fled to Mahmud Shah. It is a very happy coincidence with correct historical evidence.

† Sher Khan acquired the fort three or four months before

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on behalf of Sultan Ibrahim Lodi. Taj Khan was suffered to retain possession of the fort, on his submission to Babur during his unrecorded campaign of 934 A.H.* (as the result of which Sher Khan himself recovered his parganas). During Babur's campaign of 935 A.H. (February—June 1529) Taj Khan played a very loyal part as a partisan, and the Emperor himself visited the fort of Chunar on March 23, 1529. This visit seems to have excited the greed of the

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Babur's death (22nd December, 1530 A. D.) during the confusion caused by the Emperor's illness. Babur removed the tactful and vigilant Sultan Junaid Barlas from Jaunpur in 1529 A. D. and gave it to his favourite son-in-law Muhammad Zaman Mirza, who was a corrupt and negligent man. Besides he was too busy with making preparations to supplant Humayun on the throne of Delhi to notice the aggression of the Afghan chiefs.

* Mrs. Beveridge is not perhaps right in remarking (Babur's *Memoirs*, 656, foot-note 3), that at the end of that campaign Babur returned to Jaunpur from Sayyidpur, *via* the Gumti. There are unmistakable indirect evidences in Babur's *Memoirs* (p. 652) that he visited Benares in 934 A. H. where he left Sultan Jalaluddin Sharqi, who in 935 fled before the Afghans, as has been said before. It is very likely that he advanced a little higher up the Ganges to overawe or at least make a demonstration against the fortress of Chunar. Babur probably received its submission in that year. The conduct of Taj Khan in 935 A. H. was not that of a half-willing vassal who had just submitted, but of a devoted adherent, and no earlier date of Taj Khan's submission is possible.....Humayun in 932 A. H. (August—December, 1526) did not cross over to the south bank of the Ganges and in 933 A. H. the Mughals did not carry on any military operation in those quarters. We think, Babur returned to Jaunpur, by the land route *via* Benares.

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Emperor, for we find that scarcely two months after he determined to replace Taj Khan by Sultan Junaid Barlas, as the commander of that important fortress, and in June 1529, he sent Malik Sharq "to get Taj Khan out of Chunar" (Babur's *Memoirs*, p. 683). But his object was not realized as he had to depart hastily from these parts in hot pursuit of Biban and Bayazid. So Taj Khan remained in possession of the fort till his death.

The story of the acquisition of Chunar by Sher Khan as given by Abbas Sarwani is this:—"Taj Khan was altogether a slave to his love for his wife Lad Malika, who was a woman of great sagacity and wisdom. He had made three Turkoman brothers, Mir Ahmad, Mir Dad, and Mir Ishaq, his lieutenants, ...who promised and swore to Lad Malika that they would not oppose her but be faithful to her. Lad Malika had no sons; but Taj Khan had several sons by other wives. He did not give a fitting maintenance to his sons, and from fear of Lad Malika the other sons could not eat their food at ease. Although the sons complained to him about their circumstances, it was of no avail. One night Taj Khan's eldest son gave her a blow with a sword (Abbas MS. 103). The tumult and noise having reached the ears of Taj Khan he ran at his son with a sword to kill him, who, finding no means of escape, struck Taj Khan

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with his sword, and killed him. The sons of Taj Khan were on bad terms with the greater part of the soldiers who adhered to Lad Malika. A few ill-disposed [our MS. uses no such adjective] persons joined Taj Khan's sons who always quarrelled over the treasure [Elliot's version adds "among themselves." But this is not correct and opposed to the whole tenor of the story. The quarrel was with Lad Malika over the treasure]. Sher Khan, who was in the neighbourhood, carried on a secret negotiation with the three Turkoman brothers, who unanimously agreed that Lad Malika being a woman would not be able to hold the fortress, and therefore it would be to their advantage to surrender the fort to Sher Khan who would come under obligation to them. They made ,proposals of her marriage with Sher Khan, dilating upon the advantages of such a match, and induced her to give her consent. Mir Dad was sent back to bring in Sher Khan quickly and to take possession of the fort *before the sons of Taj Khan should be aware of their designs.*"

Mir Dad came hastily with the grey-bearded bridegroom of forty-four, and the nuptial ceremony was immediately gone through (1530). By this happy matrimonial venture Sher Khan not only acquired an impregnable fortress but also made a princely fortune; Lad Malika gave him a present

consisting of 150 pieces of exceedingly valuable jewels, seven *maunds of* pearls and 150 *maunds* of gold and many other articles and ornaments." (Abbas MS. pp. 102-107 = Elliot, 343-346).

Such is the story told by Abbas Sarwani and believed by Nizamuddin, Ferishta and the author of *Makhzan-i-Afaghana*. But the amount of truth in it seems to be very small.

The first part of the story, namely, the dotage of Taj Khan Sarang Khani on Lad Malika and his death at the hands of his eldest son, is unworthy of credence. Abbas admits that the sons of Taj Khan were but young (Elliot, iv. 344); Babur says, "Taj Khan Sarang Khani came from Chunar to this ground (Nanapur) with his two young sons and waited on me," (March 21st, 1529). (See Babur's *Memoirs*, p. 657). What could induce Taj Khan to introduce to the Emperor these sons whom he, as Abbas says, "did not send even sufficient daily food?" It is too much to believe that one of these young boys within 16 months* from this date grew up into a desperado who killed his father with one blow of his sabre. The rest of the story makes us suspect a quite contrary

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* Gulbadan (Mrs. Beveridge's trans. 113). Jauhar (MS. p. 6), and Abul-Fazl (*Akbarnama*, i. 288) are unanimous in saying that the first siege of Chunar and the submission of Sher Khan to Humayun

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state of affairs. The fear of the match-makers and the bride lest "the sons of Taj Khan should become aware of their designs" is inconsistent with the worthlessness and weakness of the sons of Taj Khan. A fortress is least likely to be betrayed by the stronger party within it. The whole story is unskilfully got up with the object of convincing us that Sher Khan obtained Chunar by legitimate means, from its virtual mistress Lad Malika. The character of the sons of Taj Khan has been blackened in order to alienate from them the sympathy of the reader, who might otherwise condemn the whole action as an unworthy plot to deprive the legitimate heirs of their rightful heritage. In fact the secret message of Sher Khan to Mir Ahmad and the suspicious secrecy of the whole affair confirm the contrary view that the party of Lad Malika was weaker and that the Turkoman brothers were traitors who, having been heavily bribed, admitted Sher Khan into the fort.

The death of Babur was the signal for the outbreak of a formidable Afghan rebellion in the eastern

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took place in the first year (*i.e.*, 1531 A. D.) of his reign. So Sher Khan must have come to its possession at least a year before, which is confirmed by the fact that Sher Khan was in possession of Chunar when he joined the Afghan rebellion in the eastern provinces which broke out immediately after the death of Babur, (Dec., 26th 1530.) Sher Khan may have acquired it in Oct., 1530, and Taj Khan's death probably took place 3 months earlier in July, 1530 A. D.

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provinces. Biban and Bayazid* were its moving spirits, and they were joined by Sultan Mahmud† Lodi, who had taken refuge in Bengal in 1529 A.D. Humayun marched from Agra in June 1531 to crush the rebels. "His Majesty (Humayun) after successive marches reached Dauroh‡ on the bank of the river Mati (the Gumti), when the above-mentioned rebels with a large army, came towards that place. After several days a great battle took place; the rebels were defeated....Biban, Bayazid and Ibrahim Khan Lodi§ and all the chiefs and refractory (*lit*. stiff-necked) ones were slain." (Jauhar, MS. pp. 5-6). It cannot be definitely ascertained what part Sher Khan played in the Afghan rebellion of 1531. Abbas|| says that Sultan Mahmud Lodi forced Sher

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* Gulbadan says :—"Six months after the death of His Majesty Firdaus Makani Biban and Bayazid advanced from the direction of Gaur." (Mrs. Beveridge's translation, p. 112).

† For Nusrat Shah's help to Sultan Mahmud Lodi in this insurrection, see Stewart's *History of Bengal*, p. 75.

‡ Daurah of Jauhar is probably Deruh in modern maps; its position is longitude, 82°20′ latitude 26°30′. It is situated on the Gumti, about 48 miles higher up (North) of Jaunpur.

§ This is the same person as Ibrahim Khan Sahu Khail of Abbas. For a fuller, but less reliable account of this battle, see Abbas in Elliot, iv. 349-350.

|| A cursory glance at Abbas Sarwani's narrative of the adventure of Sultan Mahmud Lodi (see Elliot, iv. 346-350) will convince any one that Abbas has most lamentably confused the two adventures,—one separated from the other by a lapse of three years,—of

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Khan to join him and march towards Jaunpur and Lucknow, that Sher Khan opened treacherous negotiations with Humayun through Hindu Beg, and that at the critical moment of this battle he drew off his forces, which caused the defeat of Sultan Mahmud. (See Abbas in Elliot, iv. 349). That the rebel chiefs could in 1531 force Sher Khan, then lord of Chunar and virtual master of the vast tract of country south of the Ganges from Chunar to Bihar, to join them against his will, is almost an absurdity. Jauhar says that Humayun, after the battle of Dauroh marched against Chunar and besieged it for four months. (MS. p. 6). In Gulbadan's book we find, "He (Humayun) defeated them (Biban and Bayazid) and then went to Chunada (Chunar), took it and thence returned to Agra." (Mrs. Beveridge's translation, p. 112). But they do not mention the name of Sher Khan with the rebel chiefs. It is curious to notice that Nizamuddin (text, p. 194 = Elliot, v. 189), Ferishta (text, p. 213), Badaoni (Ranking's translation, p. 451), in their chapters on Humayun's reign, do not bring the name of Sher Khan in connection with the rebellion or the pitched battle in which Mahmud Lodi was defeated

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Sultan Mahmud and combined them in one improbable whole. The element of truth in his story has been utilized in its proper place. (Chapter II.)

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and Biban and Bayazid were killed. But the same authorities in their chapters on Sher Shah have reproduced in brief the tale of adventure of Mahmud Lodi from the battle of Kanwa (March, 1527) to the battle of Dauroh (July, 1531) in one unbroken narrative with the mention of Sher Khan's alleged treachery in the battle, evidently from Abbas Sarwani's book. This very inconsistency takes away the force of their statements and reveals its untruth. There are not, in fact, so many independent authorities for the treachery of Sher Khan but only one,—Abbas—whose words have been echoed by all.* Thus this eulogist of Sher Shah has unintentionally done the greatest harm to his hero's character and reputation. This may be due to a current tradition among the Afghans imputing the failure of their last great national attempt to treachery, as every nation loves to raise the cry, "We are betrayed," when great disasters happen through other causes. That he was not with the army which was defeated by Humayun at Dauroh (the battle of Lucknow of Abbas)—on the Gumti, is beyond doubt. Sher Khan hated to play a subordinate role in any affair and most of all to be second to a fellow Afghan. And it was sure that

* Elphinstone seems to have rejected this false allegation against Sher Khan after due deliberation. He altogether omits this in his brief notice of Sher Shah's career. (See *History of India*, p. 443).

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though he was the lord of Chunar and practical ruler of South Bihar, he could not as yet claim equality in military fame and popular esteem with Biban and Bayazid, the heroes of a hundred fights against the Mughals. Rather than play a subordinate part, he probably did not play any part at all. There were also political reasons for Sher Khan's not joining those leaders. As we have seen before, the Surs and Lohanis were unwilling members of the Afghan confederacy of 935 A. H. which was chiefly dominated by the Farmulis and Lodis, and they were the earliest deserters from it. Like every other Afghan, Sher Khan too had not, at this period, the conception of national interests and national freedom. He was keenly alive to his own interests and was not the man to act in a manner prejudicial to personal interests by incurring the displeasure of the Mughals. At heart he probably desired the overthrow of the ascendency of the Lodi and Farmuli tribes and their veteran leaders Biban and Bayazid, whose power and military fame in 937 overshadowed his rising fortune and were sure to prove serious obstacles afterwards. On the field of Dauroh fortune cleared the path of her favourite through his great rival Humayun.

Sher Khan's acquisition of Chunar was sufficient provocation to Humayun, though the former did not

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join hands with the avowed rebels. He probably had the design of securing Humayun's confirmation of his illegal gain as the price of his neutrality. He may have kept the Mughal Emperor in humour by professions of loyalty and his willingness to surrender Chunar, while at the same time he made preparations for defending it against him. After the victory over Sultan Mahmud Lodi, Humayun sent Hindu Beg to Sher Khan demanding the surrender of the fort, but the latter ultimately refused to give it up (see Abbas in Elliot, iv. 351). Thereupon Humayun marched against Chunar (Nov. 1531, A.D.). "Sher Khan, leaving Jalal Khan (his second son) and another Jalal Khan the son of Jalu, in Chunar, went with his family and followers to the hills of Bahar Kunda. The army of Humayun besieged Chunar, and daily fighting ensued in which the two Jalal Khans displayed gallantry beyond description and from their gallantry gained great renown." (Abbas MS. p. 116 = Elliot, iv. 350).*

Jauhar says that Humayun marched from Dauroh to Chunar. "When the victorious army

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* Abbas wrongly says that the flight of Muhammad Zaman Mirza from the fort of Biana and the threatening attitude of Bahadur Shah Gujrati forced Humayun to return to Agra from Chunar. (See Elliot, iv. 350-351. Nizamuddin (text, p. 229) and other writers copy the mistake.) The first siege of Chunar took place not later than

reached Chunar, Jalal Khan, son of Sher Khan and several other nobles were within the fortress; the fort was besieged for four months. When Sher Khan saw that the fort would fall to-day or to-morrow, he made his submission and sent his own son Qutb Khan* to the presence of His Majesty and secured peace. His Majesty then ordered a march towards Agra, the seat of sovereignty." (Persian MS., Chapter I, p. 6).

Gulbadan says that Maham Begam, Humayun's mother, gave a great feast in commemoration of the victory and safe return of her son from Chunar; there was illumination and great festivity lasting for several days. She gave special robes of honour to 7,000 persons† (Gulbadan's *Humayun-Nama*, pp. 113-114).

February 1532, whereas the flight of Muhammad Zaman Mirza and the expedition against Bahadur Shah occurred about Oct. 1534 and February, 1535 A.. D. respectively. *vide* Abul-Fazl, *Akbar-nama*, i. 293.

* With Isa Khan who was in place of Sher Khan's Wazir (Nizamuddin, p. 229).

† Mrs. Beveridge in the foot-note adds "The feast here credited to Maham Begam may be that of the first anniversary of Humayun's accession." But this cannot be true. It was not "Accession Feast." Nizamuddin (Persian text, p. 194) uses no such word nor gives any date for it. December, 19th 1531 is a mere guess. On page 112 of the same book she adds another confusing foot-note on Humayun's capture of Chunar, "Taken from Sher Shah *late* in 1532 (939 H)". We do not know upon what authority she makes such a statement. The expedition of Humayun to suppress Afghan

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Indeed it was a fit occasion for such a celebration. Never were the eastern provinces rendered so submissive to the throne of Delhi after the death of Sultan Sikandar (1517 A.D.) as now. The indomitable Afghan leaders, Biban and Bayazid, were killed, the country on the northern bank of the Ganges from the Gumti to the Gandak (boundary of the kingdom of Bengal) was as tranquil as ever. On the southern bank of the Ganges the pretensions of Sher Khan were subdued, and he was forced to yield obedience and send his son to the imperial service. But the serpent was scotched not killed; and this foreboded future trouble. While Humayun was reposing in the bed of fancied security, it recovered from the shock and gathered fresh strength. The seed of lifelong enmity was sown between the two men.

Though Sher Khan was compelled to submit to the Emperor, yet the brilliant defence and ultimate

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rebellion undoubtedly took place in the first month of 938 H., *i.e.*, 6 months after Babur's death. The siege of Chunar which closely followed the suppression of the revolt cannot be placed late in 939 H. Besides Gulbadan says, "When His Majesty returned from the campaign against Biban and Bayazid of which the siege of Chunar was an incident—he was in Agra for about a year." This exactly coincides with our calculation. Humayun remained at Agra from February 1532 to January 1533, after which he visited Gwalior (Gulbadan) Shaban 939 H. (February, 1533). (This date is given by Khondamir, Elliot, iv. 124).

retention of the fort gave his achievement an air of victory over the Mughals. The acquisition of the fort of Chunar was indeed a fortunate event in Sher Khan's life, it was the starting-point of his career of aggression. After the battle of Dauroh, the remnant of Afghan chiefs of old standing did not indeed join Sher Khan; they repaired to the Court of Bahadur Shah Gujrati. The Lodi faction was hopelessly scattered: some of the poorer Afghans took service with Sher Khan, while others followed their chiefs to Gujrat. Sometimes after Bibi Fath Malika, the wife of Shaikh Mustafa Farmuli, elder brother of the famous Afghan hero Bayazid, placed herself under the protection of Sher Khan. The Bibi is said to have inherited 300 *maunds* of gold, besides jewellery from her father, Mian Muhammad, Farmuli (see Abbas in Elliot, iv. 352-354).

During this period of deputy Governorship under the Lohani king, Sher Khan entered into a close bond of friendship with Makhdum-i-Alam, Governor of Hajipur (opposite Patna) on the part of the king of Bengal. He was the general appointed by Nusrat Shah in 1528 A.D. to conquer Tirhoot and extend the western frontier of his kingdom on the northern bank of the Ganges. In his campaign of 935 A.H. (March and April, 1529) in the eastern provinces, Babur found the Bengalis under Makhdum-i-

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Alam posted in twenty-four places on the Gandak and there raising many defences against the Mughals (Babur's *Memoirs*, translated by Mrs. Beveridge, p. 664). His troops suffered some reverses at the hands of Babur in that campaign; but he continued to hold the charge of the frontier districts from that date, *i.e.*, from the middle of 1529. Sher Khan too entered the service of the Lohani king towards the end of that year. These two ambitious men soon entered into a close bond of friendship. Though it at first threatened him with utter ruin, it may be said to have brought him eventually the throne of Bengal. A short sketch of the history of the then reigning Sayyid dynasty of Bengal and the political outlook in the kingdom of Bengal at the time of Nusrat Shah's death (in 939 A.H.) are necessary to enable us to comprehend the full significance and motive of this alliance.

Alauddin Husain Shah (1493-1519) rescued Bengal from the misery of Abyssinian slave (Habshi) misrule and ushered in the most glorious era of the mediaeval history of the province. The kingdom of Bengal reached its greatest extent under the rule of this energetic king. Westward he extended his dominions as far as the borders of Tirhoot on the northern bank and to the town of Barh* on the

* Barh was a place of considerable importance in Rennell's time

southern bank. At the latter place a treaty was concluded with Sultan Sikandar Lodi, by which Husain Shah agreed to abstain from attack on the country of Bihar." (Dorn's *History of the Afghans*, p. 59; not in our MS.). In 1519 he was succeeded by his equally ambitious, though less energetic but more brilliant son Nusrat Shah who had rebelled in South Bengal during the lifetime of his father. Under his rule, the territory of Bengal suffered no diminution in extent. In 1528 and 1529, his generals pushed his western frontier on the northern bank of the Ganges as far as the Ghogra, and occupied Kharid in the Ballia district. But reverses at the hands of Babur in 1529 reduced it to its original limit, the Gandak river. A treaty of peace put an end to the hostilities between Babur and Nusrat Shah, when the Emperor was encamped "at a village named Kundih in the Nirhun pargana of Kharid on the north side of the Saru*" (Babur's *Memoirs*, pp. 674, 676, 677) on May 19th, 1529.

In 937 A.H., after the death of Babur, he made another attempt to extend his territories westward. He helped Sultan Mahmud Lodi, who had taken

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(1774). Its situation is 37 miles below Patna just on southern bank of the Ganges. It is 22 miles n. n. east of Bihar town (Rennell's map). It is now a sub-divisional town.

* Not at Muneer on the Sone as *Riaz-us-Salatin* says.

refuge with him, against Babur in 1529 A.D. to equip army, and possibly instigated the Afghan rebellion of 937 A.H. under Biban and Bayazid. He showed a comprehensive grasp of the political situation and considerable diplomatic skill by sending an ambassador to Bahadur Shah of Gujrat to concert measures for simultaneous aggressions, in the eastern and western frontiers of the Mughal Empire, after the death of Babur.

Bahadur Shah was busy in conquering Malwa in 937 H.; the possibility of a diversion created from the eastern provinces, to draw away Humayun towards that frontier, was welcome to him. The ambassador was granted an interview and a *khilat* at Mandu by that monarch. Though Nusrat Shah was indulging in visions of foreign conquests, at home he could not or did not care to put down his younger brother Mahmud, who was in a state of rebellion and began to issue coins as early as 933 A.H. It was apparent to all that he would make an attempt to seize the throne after the death of the reigning king. So there was the unmistakable forecast of a serious civil war in Bengal. Makhdum-i-Alam foresaw such a conflict, and began to prepare himself for that emergency. His friendship with Sher Khan was dictated by a policy to strengthen his hands for the coming struggle. These

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two ambitious servants easily came to an understanding with each other, and they combined for mutual help in furthering their personal designs. Nusrat Shah died in 939 A.H., probably about December, 1532. He was succeeded by his son Alauddin Firuz Shah,* who after a reign of four months was murdered by Mahmud Shah about May, 1533.

Mahmud Shah ascended the throne; but Makhdum-i-Alam refused allegiance to him. The latter made preparations to contest the throne under the pretence of exacting vengeance for the murder of his late master's son. (Stewart's *History of Bengal*, p. 76). That Sher Khan was the main supporter of Makhdum-i-Alam was apparent to all. Mahmud Shah immediately ordered Qutb Khan, the Governor of Mungir to conquer the country of Bihar and uproot Makhdum-i-Alam (*Tabakat-i-Akbari*, p. 226). Qutb Khan invaded Bihar ; Sher Khan tried to bring about an amicable settlement. But it was of no avail. Qutb Khan pushed on. Sher Khan's situation was peculiarly embarrassing. At home the Lohani nobles held aloof; they wished for nothing less than the total overthrow of Sher Khan, as there was no other

* *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Old Series. Vol. xli. 1872, Pt. 1,p.352). A stone inscription bearing the name of Alauddin Firuz Shah dated Ramzan, 1st 939 A.H. (March, 27, 1533) has been found. So it is pretty certain that Mahmud Shah ascended the throne in May, 1533. The campaign took place probably in June-July, 1533.

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chance of their escape from the dictatorship of an overpowerful servant. Sher Khan collected his own followers and such of the Lohanis as were well disposed towards him, and went out to meet the enemy. This was the first time that Sher Khan was called upon to oppose a regular army in the field; his previous struggle with Humayun was little more than the defence of a fortress. "Sher Khan and his Afghans determined not to meet this powerful and numerous army (of Qutb Khan) in regular order of battle in the open field. They always harassed and made raids by which they caused extreme difficulty to the army of Qutb Khan. In whatever direction the army of Qutb Khan would advance, they found the horsemen of Sher Khan always watchful (standing on the alert *muhtariz*). One day Sher Khan showed himself, and keeping at a distance, marched in sight of Qutb Khan's army. . . . . In this manner several days passed (without fighting). Qutb Khan became convinced that Sher Khan was powerless to meet him in fight, so it was better to expel him from the country of Bihar. So he marched in the track of Sher Khan with confidence. If Sher Khan would retreat one stage, he would advance another." (*Tarikh-i-Daudi*, MS. p. 172). One day Sher Khan arranged his troops secretly, and fell upon the army of Qutb Khan. A sharp action

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took place in which Sher Khan's old companions Shaikh Ismail Sur and Hamid Khan Kakar showed the most conspicuous bravery. Hamid Khan shot down Qutb Khan with an arrow, upon which the Bengalis fled in haste, leaving their artillery, elephants and treasure in the hands of the Afghans. Sher Khan conferred the titles of Shujaat Khan and Sarmast Khan upon Shaikh Ismail and Hamid Khan; and rewarded all his soldiers with proper stores of spoils. The brilliant success of his arms in the first pitched battle with a regular army fired the ambition of Sher Khan, who wanted to push his advantage by giving more effective aid to his ally Makhdum-i-Alam.

Abbas says that after the overthrow of Qutb Khan the king of Bengal sent another army to attack Makhdum-i-Alam. Sher Khan was prevented by the hostility of the Lohanis from assisting in person Makhdum-i-Alam but he sent Mian Hassu Khan to his assistance . . . . . Makhdum was killed in battle; but Mian Hassu returned alive." (Abbas, MS. p. 79=Elliot, iv. 334). This opposition was the earnest and serious struggle of the Lohani chiefs to get rid of Sher Khan. The ambition of Sher Khan and the interests of the Lohanis ran counter. Sher Khan possibly wanted to push his advantages from the victory over Qutb Khan by actively and openly

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taking the side of Makhdum-i-Alam. The Lohanis were justified in preventing Sher Khan from taking such a course, because whereas his success would in no way benefit the kingdom of Bihar, his failure was sure to bring troubles upon it. Besides the successes of Sher Khan served only to throw them into the shade. So, it is no wonder that "The Lohanis", as Abbas says, "did not feel happy at this increase of his power (owing to his triumph over Qutb Khan); enmity sprang up between Sher Khan and the Lohanis", (MS. Abbas, p. 78).

The Lohani chiefs, who resented their own exclusion from the supreme authority in the State by Sher Khan, went almost mad with vexation at this unexpected triumph of the grasping deputy. Their prospect of deliverance vanished with the defeat of the army of Qutb Khan, and thus despair was coupled with envy in their hearts. Jalal Khan, too, who had nearly reached the years of discretion, naturally longed to free himself from the tutelage of Sher Khan. But the power of Sher Khan was too firmly rooted to be easily shaken. So they conspired to murder Sher Khan and thus get rid of him. The plan was this:—"Jalal Khan should pretend that he has received a bruise. Sher Khan who comes every day to the presence of Jalal Khan will certainly go inside the palace to enquire after him, leaving his

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retinue outside. When he will leave the presence of Jalal Khan, he will be put to death, enclosed between the two gates of the inner court of the palace". (Abbas). Some of the Lohanis, who kept friendship and amity with Sher Khan but were taken into their confidence by the plotters, disclosed (the plot) to Sher Khan and warned him to be on his guard against their design. Sher Khan himself was too wary a fox not to scent the snare beforehand. "As he was a wise man he said nothing openly about the matter, but secretly took measures for his own safety. The newly acquired lands, treasure and goods that came into his hand he expended in enlisting fresh retainers: to these new men he gave jagirs to their satisfaction."* He did not stop with this; he had already sown the seeds of dissension among the Lohanis. *Makhzan-i-Afaghana* (Dorn's *History of the Afghans*, p. 95) says, ". . . . . Sher Khan girded himself with the belt of attempting to assuage the Lohanis and won them to his side singly and in numbers. But he went still further; by condescension and flattery, he attached to himself the friends and relatives of those whom he had already gained." When he perceived that he had collected such a large

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* Abbas Sarwani says "to the Lohanis he gave no new jagirs". Perhaps he means thereby only that section of the Lohanis which was hostile to him.

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number of new soldiers together that the Lohanis could not injure him or prevail against him in battle, he disclosed (the fact of) the enmity of the Lohanis to Jalal Khan and wrote, "You know well that the king of Bengal has the design to send an army (against you); I, who am your well-wisher, think fit to entertain fresh men with the money and lands newly acquired; so that when the enemy, that is, the king of Bengal, sees our large force, he may abandon his designs on the kingdom. On this account the Lohanis are dissatisfied with me, and complain of me, and are plotting to do me injury; . . . . . If you believe me loyal, uphold what I have in all loyalty done and dissuade the Lohanis* from hostility to me, nor listen to what they say . . . . For myself I know the Lohanis are plotting my death . . . . . Excuse me from coming inside the palace, or if it be indispensable that I should go within, permit me to enter it with a strong guard."

The pupil of Sher Khan had learnt the tutor's dissimulation without acquiring any one of his noble attributes and tried to put the master off his guard by fair but deceitful words, "Come to me in any manner

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* Nizamuddin and *Makhzan-i-Afaghana* always say "your nobles", which is more appropriate. In fact as we have said before, it was with the Lohani nobles only—not with the rank and file of the tribe, that Sher Khan had a quarrel.

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that may reassure you . . . . . I will agree to whatever you do." But the Lohanis and Sher Khan distrusted each other, and there sprang up two parties. As enmity had arisen amongst them, a considerable number of Lohanis bound themselves by oaths to Sher Khan. All these intrigues and armed preparations were going on during the rainy season (July-September) of 1533 A.D. As the result of the tussle between the two parties, there was a dead-lock in the affairs of the unhappy kingdom. But this state of affairs could not continue after the rains. The king of Bengal was equipping a terrible armament to teach the Afghans to respect the might of Bengal. The revenue for the autumn *kist* had to be realized from the parganas; so some means had to be devised for the smooth working of the administration. Sher Khan like a true leader of a free people flattered his Lohani partisans by calling them together to advise him on the future course of action to be adopted.

First of all he removed the doubt and hesitation of his supporters by his protestation of loyalty; "I cannot but choose to serve Jalal Khan loyally; his father and mother have shown me kindness....."

Sher Khan then suggested to them a scheme for the division of duties between the parties, one party taking the charge of the internal administration and the collection of revenue, and the other taking the

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task of opposing the army of Bengal, and he offered the choice between these to Jalal Khan in a petition to him. But his Lohani allies were so hostile to their kinsmen that they would scarcely think of a compromise. They said, "You have now a large force with you; there is no necessity for retaining men who are seditious and ill-disposed. Say simply to Jalal Khan that he ought to send them away and *give their jagirs to other soldiers.*" Sher Khan replied, "*My object is my own safety.* Out of regard for one's own life it is not good to confirm the hostility of one's own enemies.*"

After a short deliberation, Sher Khan with the approval of all present wrote to Jalal Khan, "You have two important affairs in hand; one to oppose your enemy the king of Bengal; the other to preserve the kingdom from internal enemies and to collect revenue from the rayats. Your army is split into two parties. It is not possible to keep both parties together in one place. Therefore, whichever of the two it pleases you to keep with yourself you should keep and send the other to their jagirs....."

* The speeches and replies of Sher Khan and his Lohani partisans, though worded by Abbas, throw a happy light on Sher Khan's tact as a leader, his moderation, and his steadying influence on the impetuosity of his over-zealous partisans, his statesman-like spirit of compromise and his diplomatic skill in imposing his own will upon his party under the guise of obeying their instructions. Abbas has brought out forcibly and faithfully one phase of Sher Shah's character.

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When Jalal received this representation, he said to Sher Khan's vakil, "Tell Sher Khan that he has right on his side,.....this sedition must be repressed by degrees." But he sent for the Lohanis who sought to kill Sher Khan, and showing them the letter of Sher Khan, asked their advice as to what should be done. The Lohanis said that Sher Khan had gathered a large army and was in union with the Mughals to whom he had been sending large tributes from him (*i.e.*, Jalal Khan)* (Abbas MS. pp. 76-91 = Elliot, iv. 333-338). They further said that the only expedient now was to offer this country (Bihar) as a present to the king of Bengal and to join his standard and then receive it back again (as a fief). Further, that in order to obtain the object of their wishes by a stratagem, he ought to signify to Sher Khan that he was charged with the collection of the revenue, whilst they themselves would carry on the war. After that when their entry into this (the Bengal) army would be effected and the necessary arrangements with the latter made, they would unite with them as auxiliaries and thus annihilate Sher Khan; the final result of which would be the reoccupation of Bihar" (Dorn, *History of the Afghans*, pp. 96-97). The advice of the Lohanis

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* Because Sultan Junaid Barlas was the Governor of Jaunpur, to whom Sher Khan might have sent presents.

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pleased Jalal Khan, who having sent for Sher Khan said to him, "Do you remain to oppose the Mughals* and also to administer the affairs of the kingdom; I will go to attack the king of Bengal." Jalal Khan then dismissed him after the bestowal of a robe of honour and a horse. When Sher Khan departed for the parganas, the boy-king with his Lohani nobles under the pretence of making war upon Mahmud Shah, proceeded towards the frontier of the kingdom of Bengal. But as soon as the frontier was reached Jalal Khan fled away to the king of Bengal to seek the protection of the latter (about December, 1533). With this incident the period of Sher Shah's Deputy Governorship of the Lohani kingdom ends.

Such is the account left to us by Abbas Sarwani of the transactions of Sher Khan, during this period. We have no other independent authority to check his version, particularly of the plot of the Lohanis, Sher Khan's measures to counteract this plot, his motive in these affairs, and especially his attitude toward Jalal Khan. His position as the deputy of Jalal Khan was, to a great extent, like that of Nana Farnavis, the guardian-minister of the young Peshwa Madhav Narayan Rao, with the exception that Sher Khan had not absolute control over the person of

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* The struggle between Sher Khan and Humayun for Chunar took place in 1532 A. D. These things occurred in 1533 A. D.

his royal ward. Jalal Khan enjoyed great liberty, and he might have grown an able young man. Sher Khan did not rear him up in that unnatural seclusion in which Nana Farnavis brought up Madhav Rao, who was kept almost like a State-prisoner. Nor did he, like his great prototype Almanzor, the minister of the Umayyid Khalif Hisham II. of Cordova, set himself systematically to stifle his faculties. However, the nature of the ambition of these three was the same, *viz.*, to wield supreme authority in the State, and rule practically in the name of their nominal masters, but without any idea of open usurpation of the title, *i.e.*, enjoying the substance of kingship themselves, but leaving the shadow to the legitimate heirs. Though Sher Khan gathered an army and made other preparations for war, yet it is absolutely certain that he had no idea of violently usurping Jalal Khan's kingdom. He undoubtedly gave the best advice to him, by suggesting a division of civil and military duties between the two hostile parties and leaving complete freedom of action to Jalal Khan. It is not certain how far he was sincere in offering his resignation if his enemies were not removed from the Court. But there can be no doubt that he put the case in such a way that Jalal Khan could not and durst not accept it. Even if he had done so temporarily, he would have been forced to call Sher Khan back as

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Sultan Nasiruddin was forced to reinstate his minister Balban. Sher Khan's motive was selfish no doubt; because he had no wish to part with his power which he loved ardently, and he was not really willing to restore to the lawful master his trust of the administration like an honest and conscientious man. Herein the conduct of Sher Khan undoubtedly falls far short of the ideal and as such is open to censure. But it is an injustice to judge the conduct of a politician of an unscrupulous age by the lofty ideal of an Epaminondas and a George Washington who are rare among mortals.

The attempt of Jalal Khan to recover his legitimate power by removing the overpowerful Deputy was quite natural. By plotting Sher Khan's death he did but resort to the commonest expedient for removing such servants, followed by kings from time immemorial, and it would have succeeded but for the unusual circumspection of Sher Khan, and treachery among the Lohanis. By keeping the military affairs in his own hands he showed considerable wisdom. Prof. Dowson (Elliot, iv) derides "the whole counsel" (of the Lohani nobles; namely flight to Bengal) as "worthy of the children who suggested and assented to it." But it appears to us that it was the only course open to Jalal Khan in that situation, and that he acted most wisely in adopting

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it. He was already the vassal of the Mughal Emperor; it could make no difference if he meditated transferring that allegiance to the king of Bengal. Moreover, it would have been a distinct gain if he could by doing so have shaken off the galling control of his deputy, which was a heavier chain of bondage. He made a fair calculation of the chances of his desperate throw. The huge preparation of Mahmud Shah to retrieve the loss of prestige and territory,—in the late reverse at the hands of Sher Khan—and the resources and power of the kingdom of Bengal made the prospect of success apparent to everybody. It was not the fault of his judgment if he could not lift the veil of futurity; had the arms of Bengal triumphed and Jalal Khan regained his domains free from the influence of Sher Khan, the historian would have dubbed him as a second Akbar; while if the attempt of young Akbar to overthrow the power of Bairam Khan had failed, and he had been forced to submit to his grasping tutor again, history would have contained a few unimportant lines remarking cursorily on the fickleness and imbecility of Akbar, instead of the fine eulogium penned by Abul-Fazl.

Sher Khan had reason to rejoice over so unexpected an event, because the flight of Jalal Khan relieved him from a delicate situation. Though he had known that Jalal Khan was inimical to him, yet

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he could not declare his hostility to Jalal Khan without seriously injuring his position, because his Lohani adherents had joined him not out of any hostile feeling towards Jalal Khan but for their dislike of his Lohani advisers. They would have deserted Sher Khan if he had shown the slightest violence to Jalal Khan. But by his flight Jalal put himself in the position of a public enemy and betrayer of his country, and it weakened his cause as much as the flight of James II. to France injured the Jacobite cause. Yet the position of Sher Khan was far from being secure. He had already quarrelled with the Mughals on the west, now he was confronted with the difficult task of defending himself against the king of Bengal, whose hands were strengthened by the adhesion of the Lohani fugitives. He was called upon to roll back the tide of a foreign invasion, rendered dangerous by its combination with the internal enemies. The odds were against him and his fate seemed to hang in the balance.

CHAPTER IV

THE BATTLE OF SURAJGARH, MARCH (?) 1534 A.D.

After the flight of Jalal Khan Lohani and his nobles (September 1533) to the Court of Mahmud Shah of Bengal, Sher Khan applied himself most strenuously to recruit his army. Abbas says, "Sher Khan began to strengthen himself and enlist more men. Wherever there were any Afghans he sent for them and gave them whatever pay they asked for. Having collected a large force, and made every preparation, he placed the country of Bihar in his rear and proceeded against the army of the king of Bengal. When he came face to face with the enemy he threw up earthen redoubts."* (Abbas MS. p. 92 =Elliot, iv. 339).

The king of Bengal had appointed Ibrahim Khan, the son of Qutb Khan (who had been slain in the previous war), the general of his

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* This has probably given rise to the error committed by Stewart, now an obsolete authority, who writes, "He (Sher Khan) was obliged to shut himself up in the fort of Bihar the fortifications of which were composed of mud. The Bengal army advanced and surrounded the fort...(*History of Bengal*, p. 77). No Persian historian records this. The walls of the Bihar fort were not of mud but of stone and brick. (See *Ain-i-Akbari*, translated by Jarrett, Vol. ii., p. 153.)

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army and sent him as an auxiliary of Jalal Khan Lohani (*Tabakat-i-Akbari*, p. 227), against Sher Khan. Ibrahim Khan's army was not only superior in number but was formidable on account of the large number of elephants and a park of artillery, infantry and horses. "Sher Khan, keeping under the shelter of his entrenchments, skirmished every day, and in spite of all their endeavours the army of Ibrahim Khan could not inflict any injury on his forces on account of the earthen embankments. The Afghans behaved with great gallantry, and the army of Ibrahim, who attempted to come near the fortifications, had to return unsuccessful and disappointed every time." (Abbas, MS., p. 93 = Elliot, iv. 339).

This campaign of Sher Khan was destined to end in one of the most decisive battles of the medieval history of India. It was a turning-point in the career of Sher Shah, and is a forgotten, though sad, episode of the history of Bengal. Abbas Sarwani (MS. pp. 92-100) gives us a pretty detailed account of it, but his omission to name or inability to fix the place takes away much of our interest in it. The same account is briefly repeated by Nizamuddin, Ferishta and the authors of *Makhzan-i-Afaghana* and *Tarikh-i-Daudi* (MS. pp. 172-173). Several facts and internal evidences help us to find out the place with

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tolerable accuracy. As the object of the expedition sent out from Bengal was the conquest of the kingdom of Bihar and restoration of Jalal Khan Lohani to its throne, the army of Bengal must have advanced up-stream along the southern bank of the Ganges to strike direct at Bihar town, situated on this side of the river. The great military road from Bengal to Bihar in medieval India is represented by the part of the Grand Trunk Road which runs close to the bank of the Ganges; in many cases parallel to the Loop Line of the E. I. Ry.,—from Sikrigali to Chunar. Abbas Sarwani's words, "placing the country of Bihar in his rear," suggest that Sher Khan took his position either just on the frontier of the kingdom of Bengal or a little further into its territories. At the time of the accession of Mahmud Shah the territories of Bengal extended as far as the town of Barh, 22 miles north-west of Bihar town, fixed by the treaty between Husain Shah and Sultan Sikandar Lodi. After his victory over Qutb Khan Sar-i-lashkar (Commander) of Mungir (Stewart's *History of Bengal*, p. 77) in the previous year, Sher Khan deprived Bengal of some of its territories, and the frontier of Bengal seemed to have been pushed back to the Kiul river and the Kharagpur Hills.

So the site of this battle must have been somewhere on the banks of the Kiul river, east of

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Bihar town. Abul-Fazl says, "He (Sher Khan) fought a battle at Surajgarh which is [was?] the boundary between the territories of the ruler of Bengal and won a victory.*" (*Akbarnama*, Eng. trans. by H. Beveridge, Vol. i, p. 328). The fact that Sher Khan held up a numerically superior force furnished with elephants and artillery for a great length of time, and that he could neither be passed by nor forced to fight a pitched battle, suggests that he had caught Ibrahim Khan at a strategic point. Hemmed in between the Ganges on the north and the Kharagpur hills on the south, the narrow plain of Surajgarh,—about 5 miles in breadth at the time of Rennell,—(now it is a little wider owing to the shifting of the Ganges northward)—was indeed the most suitable place for making such a stand. Without crossing the Kiul, an army advancing westward could not recover its freedom of movement. Owing to its strategic situation, it has been the scene of many a decisive battle; Sultan Adeli,† the last of the Surs,

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* This makes our conjecture an unimpeachable fact. The victory can be no other than that over the army of Ibrahim Khan, for as we have seen, in the previous year Qutb Khan had advanced into the territory of the Lohani kingdom with the object of expelling Sher Khan from Bihar, (meaning the town of Bihar.)

† Sultan Adeli went towards Bihar from Chunar, and from the opposite direction Sultan Bahadur (of Bengal) reached Mungir. From Patna Sultan Adeli got his army in readiness and marched towards

lost his crown at Surajgarh where the first Surs had won it.

The position of the armies of Sher Khan and Ibrahim Khan was such that surprise and sudden attack were impossible on both sides. The right flank of the Bengal army was protected by the Ganges, the left by the Kharagpur Hills, and the rear completely closed by the fort of Mungir. Sher Khan also could not be surprised unless the enemy were bold enough to make a wide detour round the Kharagpur hills. Ibrahim Khan had no other way except forcing the fortified position of Sher Khan, which required an overwhelming numerical superiority; so he wrote to his sovereign asking for reinforcements*.

Mungir. The two parties met on the Nullah which is about one *kos* from Surajgarh, and is about 12 *kos* from Mungir towards Patna (*i.e.*, west of Mungir).

This Nullah is the Kiul which at the present time flows immediately past Surajgarh, but flowed at a distance of 7 miles at the time of Rennell, (1775) and one *kos* (two miles) in the reign of Jahangir (1605-1627) when *Tarikh-i-Daudi* was written.

The translation of the above passage given in Elliot, iv. 508 is not correct.

* Ferishta writes (Persian original, p. 223). *Sher Khan dar qilake az gil sakhtabud mutahassin shudah harroz jame ra bajang mi-firistaad o zad khord mi-kard.*" (Translation :—Sher Khan keeping himself under the shelter of fortifications which he constructed of earth, sent his men every day for battle and did fighting." But Briggs

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When Sher Khan heard that Ibrahim Khan had sent for reinforcements, he grew alarmed. For if he were compelled to give up his present position, and the Bengal army, keeping touch with an auxiliary fleet—for which Ibrahim now probably sent to Mahmud Shah, to land troops stealthily behind Sher Khan's position higher up the Ganges—were to march upstream, it was perhaps beyond the power of any cavalry leader to check its progress. There was no other way except crushing it before the arrival of reinforcements by fighting a pitched battle. Sher Khan was conscious of his own disadvantages in attacking the formidable array of the Bengal army in the open field. It would have been folly to fling his cavalry into the artillery fire of the enemy and worse than that upon the pikes of the Bengal infantry. His foot-soldiers* with their match-locks were useful only behind the defences. They could not be led to charge enemy lines fronted by a row of huge

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(109) translates it "The Bengal army besieged Sher Khan in a mud fort for a length of time without success till Ibrahim Khan found it necessary to raise the siege and send for reinforcements!"

* The Portuguese writers have mentioned that in 1536 A. D. when Sher Khan appeared before Gaur by marching through Jharkhanda he had 2,00,000 infantry and 40,000 horsemen with him. (*History of the Portuguese in Bengal*, by Campos). These were the armed peasantry of Bihar whom Sher Khan organized into peasant-militia during his administration of the parganas in the lifetime of his father. These were probably the ancestors of the Baksariyas

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elephants ; so his only chance of victory lay in seeking a decision with his cavalry by engaging with that of the enemy unsupported by the rest of their army.

Sher Khan sent his vakil to Ibrahim Khan, intimating to him his intention to fight on the morrow a pitched battle in the open field. Ibrahim Khan accepted the challenge and gave necessary instructions to his lieutenants. (See Abbas in Elliot, iv. 341). "When one watch of the night was yet remaining, Sher Khan arrayed his forces, and towards the dawn he called a secret council of his chiefs to reveal to them the plan of the battle; he said to them, 'I will draw up the greater part of my forces behind the cover of that height which we see yonder, but will retain for attack a small number of experienced and veteran horsemen who after discharging one flight of arrows shall retreat.' When the army of Ibrahim Khan was descried, the horsemen, according to their instructions, coming up to the Bengal army discharged one volley of arrows and then turned about. The Bengal cavalry, supposing the enemy to be flying, broke their ranks as Sher Khan had anticipated and pursued

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who were renowned as match-lockmen throughout the medieval times down to Sirajuddaullah's attack upon Fort William. Irvine's *Army of the Indian Mughals*, p. 168). Sher Khan probably armed them with match-locks after his return from Babur's service, to remove to some extent his need of field-artillery.

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the Afghans. Accordingly, as soon as Sher Khan perceived that the Bengal cavalry had advanced and left their infantry and artillery in the rear, he appeared at the head of his force which had been lying in ambush. The Bengalis were surprised, ["Panic-struck" as given by Elliot is not a proper translation of "*hairan*" which means "surprised,"] and the Afghans who had been flying turned about, and they all (our MS. p. 99 has *ekbar*, *i.e.*, simultaneously) stirrup to stirrup, after the manner of the Afghans, fell upon the hostile army. The Bengalis, however, rallied and stood their ground, and the two armies became closely engaged. After the warriors of note had fallen in the contest, the sun of victory rose in favour of Sher Khan from the horizon of the East, and the Bengal army was defeated. Ibrahim Khan exerted himself much, but he was killed." (MS. Abbas, pp. 93-100 = Elliot, pp. 441-442). The death of the general sealed the fate of his army. Thus ended the battle of Surajgarh.

Great as it was as a military achievement, it was greater in its far-reaching political result. The defeat at Surajgarh sounded the death-knell of the independent Muslim monarchy of Bengal, which dated from the middle of the 14th century. But for the victory at Surajgarh, the Jagirdar of Sasaram would never have emerged from his obscurity into

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the arena of Hindustan politics to run, in spite of himself, a race for the empire with hereditary crowned heads like Bahadur Shah and Humayun Padshah.

As uncrowned King of Bihar.

The victory of Surajgarh gave an air of legitimacy to Sher Khan's virtual assumption of the sovereignty of Bihar. Jalal Khan had placed himself in the position of a traitor to the country by his injudicious flight and unsuccessful attempt at recovering his heritage with the aid of the army of Mahmud Shah; while Sher Khan was hailed by all classes of people as their deliverer from the calamity of a foreign invasion. He had no reason to experience any opposition either from the peasantry or the soldiery in wielding supreme authority over them. The subject people had already been accustomed to obey him for several years past, as the deputy of Jalal Khan, and they were prosperous and happy under his equitable and vigorous administration. The soldiers to a man were firmly attached to Sher Khan by sentiment as well as by a sense of self-interest. He was the popular and successful general who had twice led them to victory and gratified them by a share of the rich spoils of war. Besides, most of them enjoyed jagirs and other emoluments from Sher Khan; and they were sure to lose them if Jalal Khan

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returned to power or in any other way Sher Khan lost the supreme authority. The Lohani supporters of Sher Khan, who might have resented the subversion of their tribal kingdom, were, under the existing circumstances, vitally interested in keeping him in power. Nobody had greater interests at stake and therefore nobody feared more, the restoration of Jalal Khan and the return of their vindictive kinsmen to power than these Lohanis themselves. They had undoubtedly seized the jagirs and other possessions of their fugitive kinsmen and thereby raised themselves to a high status in the State. They stood to lose everything if Sher Khan were removed from the helm of affairs. Thus Sher Khan found himself, after the battle of Surajgarh, undisputed master of the vast tract of country on the southern bank of the Ganges, from Chunar to Surajgarh, with a contented and victorious army and an obedient and prosperous subject population in it.

After the victory over the army of Bengal under Ibrahim Khan, Sher Khan "employed himself in the improvement of his provinces so that in a short time they surpassed their previous condition and reached perfection :—for this reason that he personally superintended every business ; nor did he show favour to any oppressor even though of his own relatives or dependents ; and if any one entered his service he

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said to him from the first :—'The stipend and the maintenance which I may agree to give you, I will pay you in full, and not diminish them by a single *falus* (copper-coin), but you shall not oppress or quarrel with any one. If you do I shall visit you with such a punishment as shall be an example to others.' In a short season he acquired a good reputation among the people of God, and it was everywhere known that Sher Khan paid his troops regularly and neither oppressed any one himself nor suffered others to do so." (Abbas in Elliot, iv. 343).

Apart from his activity in the reorganization of civil affairs, Sher Khan was busily engaged in collecting the Afghans together ; silently and steadily he was accumulating materials for the realization of a hope which he nursed within himself since the battle of Surajgarh.

His outward garb of humility deceived his neighbours, who were destined to be the future victims of his ambition. He did not attract any notice of them, and was allowed to thrive in indifference and neglect.

Sher Khan's status in Bihar after the battle of Surajgarh was an anomaly and his design a puzzle to his friends and foes alike. Outwardly he was a vassal of the Emperor, holding Chunar and the neighbouring parganas on condition of military

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service. In Bihar he cleverly discarded all pretensions to royalty. This was a pitfall into which a less cautious man than Sher Khan might have fallen. His Afghan supporters would have surely resented such an act and he would have been branded as an usurper. They would have become distrustful of him and a reaction in favour of Jalal Khan would have set in. The throne was seemingly left vacant, the administration being carried on as before by Sher Khan.

Humayun and Mahmud Shah could not understand the full significance of the new complications which arose in the political situation of the eastern provinces after the battle of Surajgarh.

Sher Khan entertained the greatest apprehension from Humayun and rivetted his eyes upon the affairs of Delhi. Similarly another ambitious man, in the south-west of the Mughal dominion, was watching the movements of the Emperor in eager expectancy. This was Bahadur Shah the king of Gujrat. Having taken advantage of the general confusion in Northern India and the absence of Humayun in the eastern provinces for the suppression of the rebellion of Biban and Bayazid, Bahadur Shah had in 937 A.H. conquered Malwa, and was since then rapidly extending his dominion. This roused the suspicion of Humayun, who in Shaban 939 A.H. took up his

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residence at Gwalior,* probably to watch the movements of Bahadur Shah.

Abul-Fazl says, "Sultan Bahadur, the ruler of Gujrat, sent in 940 A.H.† experienced ambassadors bearing valuable presents to him and set in motion the process of friendship." (*Akbarnama*, i. 289). The ultimate object of Bahadur Shah was the subversion of the Rajput States, particularly of Mewar. His plan was hampered by the presence of the Emperor at Agra, who might interfere on their behalf and thus compel him to fight the Mughals and the Rajputs simultaneously. He earnestly wished for some political trouble to entangle the Emperor in the eastern provinces, so that his attention and energy might be diverted to that quarter, and Bahadur might thus be given a free-hand for a time to deal with this State. He scanned the eastern horizon of Hindustan and saw the clouds gathering in south Bihar, which boded ill to the Mughal Empire. He thought of subsidizing Sher Khan and making use of his rising power to keep the Emperor busy in that quarter. Abul-Fazl says, "Sultan Bahadur of Gujrat sent

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* Visit to Gwalior (see Gulbadan p. 116); for Khondamir in Elliot, v. 124.

† Abul-Fazl is not very correct about these early dates. We think the embassy was sent in 939, while Humayun was at Gwalior, with a view to remove the suspicion of the Emperor and make him return to Agra.

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him [Sher Khan] a subsidy by the hands of merchants and summoned him to his side. Farid made the money into capital for sedition and sent excuses for not going." (*Akbarnama*, i. 328). The subsidy was not certainly sent in the hope that Sher Khan with his Afghans would march from South Bihar to Malwa to fight on behalf of Bahadur Shah as Abul-Fazl seems to imply. It was sent to induce him to create a diversion in favour of Bahadur Shah by an attack upon the imperial territories if the Emperor would press hard upon him in the south-west.

Sher Khan strenuously applied himself to collecting and equipping a vast army. He enlisted a large number of foot-soldiers* whose need had been keenly felt by him in his battles with the king of Bengal. He also added a considerable number of elephants to his establishment. But he discarded the immobile field-artillery, which was rising rapidly in importance in the Indian armies, especially after the first battle of Panipat. His resources were strained to the utmost by this huge military expenditure. He was at last driven to seize wrongfully the treasure of Bibi Fath Malika, whom he had induced to take shelter with him in 938 A.H. by a solemn

* Their presence in Sher Khan's army is attested by the testimony of Portuguese historians.

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oath and covenant promising complete safety and security. "Sher Khan took from the Bibi 300 *mans* of gold to equip his army and gave her two parganas, for her support (*madad-i-ma'ash*) besides leaving her some ready money for her immediate expenses." (Abbas in Elliot, p. 355). This is an indefensible act of spoliation of a helpless woman and deserves unqualified condemnation. Even the plea of necessity, which is so often put forward to whitewash such acts, cannot be pleaded in favour of Sher Khan; because the money was not utilized in self-defence, and the case was not one of saving himself from impending ruin and annihilation. The huge armament was being equipped solely for the purpose of carrying out ambitious designs of aggression upon his neighbours. This act is one of those few which have left indelible blots upon his character.

However his preparations were fast approaching completion, and Sher Khan was anxiously watching the disturbed state of affairs in the imperial capital and the movements of the Emperor, which alone could decide his future course of action. Humayun's repose at Delhi was disturbed by the news of the dangerous rebel Muhammad Zaman Mirza,—his half-sister Masuma Sultan Begam's husband—who had been condemned to be blinded and imprisoned in the fortress of Biana. He fled to the Court of

Bahadur Shah and sought his protection. The Emperor demanded the extradition of the political prisoner; but Bahadur Shah refused to comply with the demand. Though the conflict of interests had already strained the feeling between the two States, this refusal was the immediate cause of the outbreak of hostilities. Humayun started from the "Gold scattering garden" near Agra against Bahadur Shah on 18th February 1535, and thus the eventful struggle between the two sovereigns began.

Here was the opportunity for Sher Khan to give another push to his fortune. He sent secret instructions to his son Qutb Khan, who with his father's contingent of 500 Afghans had been sent to serve the Emperor in 938 A.H. (1532) and had accompanied him to Malwa, to fly away at the earliest convenience from the imperial camp. This recall of his son might have been a part of the secret understanding with Bahadur Shah. But Qutb Khan was in reality a hostage for his father's fidelity to the Emperor, who could make reprisals upon him for any injury done by Sher Khan. (See Abbas in Elliot, iv. 351). Qutb Khan was instructed to fly with the object of depriving the Emperor of a hold upon him.

In the beginning of May 1535, Sher Khan turned upon Mahmud Shah and began a war for the conquest of his territories on the frontier of Bihar. This came

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as a complete surprise to the incapable voluptuary who disgraced the throne of mighty rulers like Husain Shah and Nusrat Shah. Sher Khan's plan of campaign was one of slow, methodical conquest and annexation. His object was to wrest all the territories from Mahmud Shah on this side of Teliagarhi. But the oppressive heat of summer and the lateness of the season,—only 1½ months before the beginning of the rains,—compelled him to leave his work incomplete. No Persian historian gives us a detailed account of this campaign. Abbas Sarwani only says, "Having equipped an army with the money (Bibi Fath Malika's gold) he began to seize the kingdom of Bengal and took possession of all districts as far as Garhi." (Abbas MS. 126=Elliot, iv. 356). But this is nothing more than the net result of the campaign. The Portuguese, who first touched the shore of Bengal in 1533 by landing at Chittagong under Martim Affonso de Mello, have left some valuable notices of the contemporary events. From them we know that Xercansur, (Sher Khan Sur), began a campaign against Mahmud Shah of Bengal in 1535. But they place, Sher Khan's attack upon Teliagarhi in 1536. The trend of events shows that there was a considerable interval between the two incidents. Mahmud Shah had ample time to take his measures and mature his plans. "He sought

advice from Martim Affonso de Mello—whom he had thrown into prison about a year before—as to the plan of defence and decided to send ambassadors to Nuno da Cunha, the Portuguese Governor of Goa. At this critical juncture there happened to arrive at Satgaon, Diogo Rebello, the Portuguese captain and factor of the Coromandel pearl-fisheries.....Rebello sent Diogo de Spindola to the king of Gaur with a message that if he did not liberate the Portuguese prisoners he would seize his ports. He (Mahmud Shah) wrote to the Governor in Satgaon to receive Rebello well and to inform him that he was sending his ambassador to the Portuguese Governor as proof of his friendship. He asked the Portuguese for help and promised in return to grant them land to erect their factories and permission to build fortresses in Chittagong and Satgaon. The king returned twenty-two prisoners to Diogo Rebello....." (*History of the Portuguese in Bengal* by J. J. A. Campos, pp. 36-38).

All these could not have been done in the hurry and bustle of a war. The events show that there was a lull in the storm which enabled Mahmud Shah to proceed so leisurely and negotiate an alliance with the Portuguese Governor of Goa. So, it is very likely that the first attack was made in the middle of 1535 A.D., and Sher Khan had conquered some part of the Mungir district before the rainy season had set in.

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Four-fifths of the district of Mungir are hilly and broken. It contains the Kharagpur Hills and Gidhore hills within its boundary. The only considerable plain is that of the modern Bhagalpur district in the north-eastern corner, where the plain country is something like 40 miles by 15 miles. Even this also is of a broken character, interspersed with small ridges here and there. Being surrounded on three sides by inaccessible hills, and by the Ganges on the north, it is very strongly fortified by nature. The only military read by which an invader could enter this district in the first half of the sixteenth century ran, as it still runs, in a line roughly parallel to and north of the Loop Line of E. I. R. from Sahibganj to the Kiul Junction, close to the river, *via*, Surajgarh, Mungir, Jehangeerah, Bhagalpur, Colgong and Teliagarhi. The distance from the mouth of the Kiul to Surajgarh is 6 miles, Mungir is 18 miles east of Surajgarh, and Teliagarhi is 66 miles east of Mungir. The breadth of the plain country at Surajgarh is about six miles; it narrows down further east, and is the narrowest at Mungir, where the breadth is only 2½ miles. These 18 miles present the greatest difficulty to an invader. This part of the road is completely hemmed on the south and east by the Kharagpur hills, which almost touch the Ganges, near Mungir. At the east end stands the then impregnable fortress of Mungir which

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defied siege by an enemy weak in navy and artillery.

Surajgarh, at the entrance to it, is also a strong position which could not be captured without mastery over the Ganges. No prudent and cautious general would thrust himself into this dangerous position, which is liable to attack on the north by an enemy's fleet from the river; on the east by sallies from Mungir, and most dreaded of all to surprise attacks on the south from the inaccessible recesses of the Kharagpur hills. Mir Jumla in his pursuit of Shuja (February to April, 1659) avoided this dangerous position. He made a long and troublesome but safe detour round the Kharagpur hills, reached Pialapur 40 miles east of Mungir, and compelled Shuja who had taken up a very strong position at Mungir to evacuate it. (See Sarkar's *History of Aurangzib*, ii. 239).

Sher Khan probably acted upon similar strategy in 1535 to compel the enemy to evacuate the tract from Surajgarh to Mungir. He may have employed an army to besiege Surajgarh and keep the enemy in play, while he himself marched some twenty-five miles up the Kiul, *i.e.*, due southwards from its junction with the Ganges, and reached a little south of Mullypur (Rennell, modern *Mulchpur*) where the Kharagpur range (breadthwise) terminates. There is an open undulating plain between Mullypur and Gidhore town some ten miles in length. Sher Khan

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probably traversed this plain, and marched in a north-easterly direction to strike the Ganges several miles below Mungir.

The defenders once dislodged from Mungir and Surajgarh, an invader had no other serious natural obstacle to surmount. Sher Khan did not probably march further east than Bhagalpur before the rainy season of 1535 A.D., as the task before him was not the pursuit of any hostile general or army, of which there seems to have been none. From Bhagalpur he may have turned to the south to establish his authority over the conquered area and consolidate his gains, by punishing the hill-tribes and semi-independent zamindars of the frontier marches. The rainy season, which generally begins in Bihar in the middle of June, stopped further operations.

On the Way to the Throne of Bengal.

At the end of the rains, Sher Khan could not himself take the field against Mahmud Shah. He had now two pieces of business to attend to simultaneously. One was to watch the movements of the Emperor; and the other to finish the work of the conquest of the remaining portion of the Mungir district. The collapse of the power of Bahadur Shah, who was at this time a fugitive at Diu, set the Emperor free from the pressing cares of the Gujrat

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campaign. He might now turn upon Sher Khan, and Mahmud Shah might call in the aid of the Mughals. It was therefore all important for Sher Khan to know the Emperor's views. So he could not move towards the east till authentic news of Humayun's plan reached him. He seems to have waited studying the movements of the Emperor, till January, 1536. But his army under able lieutenants seems to have been sent in autumn (October, 1535) to carry on the war in Mungir.

Mahmud Shah would certainly have profited better by sending an ambassador to Humayun in Gujrat, who was more likely to grant him immediate help, than by clinging to the fond hope of Portuguese aid. The enemies of Sher Khan were endowed with far less political foresight and ability than what his cautious temperament attributed to them. He never under-estimated the ability and resources of his foes, and for this reason he nowhere met with a surprise either in war or in diplomacy.

When Sher Khan fully satisfied himself that there was no immediate likelihood of the Emperor's return to Agra, he set out, about the middle of January 1536, to assume the conduct of the war against Mahmud Shah in person. By this time the occupation of the entire Mungir district except the extreme north-eastern portion, was complete. The

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cowardice of his adversaries made Sher Khan bold. He approached Teliagarhi to force that 'gate of Bengal'. "Meanwhile, Sher Shah was advancing and decided to enter Gaur by the passes of Teliagarhi and Sikrigali leading to the fortress of Gorij (Garhi?). To defend these passes, which were considered to be the gateways of Bengal, troops were sent in two ships, one under the command of Joao de Villalobos and the other of Joao Correa. The Portuguese offered a stubborn resistance and prevented Sher Khan from taking the city of Farranduz* which was 20 leagues from Gaur. The Portuguese historians say that these Portuguese did wonders and captured a particular elephant which king Mahmud Shah especially wanted; but Sher Shah *went by another less protected way* and entered Gaur with 40,000 cavalry, 16,000 elephants and 2,00,000 men with a fleet of 300 boats." (*History of the Portuguese in Bengal*, pp. 35-38; reference to De Barros's *Da Asia*, Dec. iv, Pt. II. p. 500).

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* The city of Farranduz, here spoken of, is most likely the Pointy town of Rennell's map. It is situated on the right bank of the Ganges some 10 miles north of Teliagarhi and 50 miles in a straight line from the city of Gaur. If the Ganges be crossed here over to Caragola, opposite Pointy on the right bank from which a broad and convenient road ran to Gaur, the enemy cannot be checked anywhere in his triumphant march upon Gaur.

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It is interesting as well as important to enquire what this less protected way was, through which Sher Khan penetrated into Bengal proper. The want of accurate geographical information of the early writers, Muslim as well as Portuguese, stood in the way of their giving us any correct notion of it. This discovery of a new route from Bihar to Bengal proved—as we shall see hereafter—the salvation of Sher Khan in 1538 A.D.; when the main army of Humayun sat down before the Pass of Teliagarhi, Sher Khan retreated by another road,—which the Persian authorities call the Jharkhand route,—to Rohtas. Among the Persian histories the *Tarikh-i-Daudi* is the only book where we find a passage which corroborates the statement of the Portuguese historians. It says, (*Tarikh-i-Daudi*, Prof. Sarkar's MS., p. 174), (Sher Khan) "intending to conquer Bengal, (turning away) from the pleasant route by the skirt of the hills, entered the jungles by a path by which nobody had travelled (before), and suddenly appeared before Gaur."

Geography will clear up what history has left shrouded in vagueness. The Ganges after flowing due east from Allahabad to Sikrigali for about 512 miles (computed from Rennell's *Atlas*) takes a sudden turn to the right below Sikrigali and sweeps southward for about 80 miles to Bhagwangola, where it

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again turns to the east. East of this stretch of the river lies the district of Maldah, which contains the ruins of Gaur, the far-famed capital of Bengal. Gaur was situated on the bank of the Mahananda. The shortest and most convenient road, which was also the only known road in the first half of 16th century, after passing through Mungir town, Bhagalpur and Colgong, enters the defile of Garhi (*i.e.*, Teliagarhi) and again emerges into the plain at Sikrigali. From Sikrigali the road also, like the Ganges whose course it follows, turns southwards and runs along the western bank of the Ganges.

The fort of Teliagarhi, whose ruins are still visible, stood at the mouth of this defile, completely blocking it. On one side were the rugged inaccessible cliffs of the Rajmahal range which stretches southwards for nearly 80 miles to the Sonthal Parganas and Birbhum. On the other flowed the Ganges. It is a position which could neither be stormed nor closely invested in an age when artillery was not efficient. It was indeed the Gallipoli of medieval Gaur, whose rulers spent their best energy and resources in fortifying the pass.

Having met with a repulse at Garhi, Sher Khan marched southwards along the outskirts of the Rajmahal Hills—these hills are meant by the author of *Tarikh-i-Daudi*. Then he plunged into the hilly

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country south-east of the Mungir district, which was known by the name of Jharkhand. It was a veritable terra-incognita in those days. There was no road, but jungle tracks only, scarcely passable by men of the plain. Sher Khan had posted his son Jalal Khan with an army before the pass to keep the army and fleet of Mahmud engaged in that quarter. This served the double purpose of concealing the strategic detour of Sher Khan, as well as the defence of the already conquered territories. The Luckeersera pass and Gagar pass, fifty miles south (on the map in a straight line) *via* Pantchwarry, Birkooty, Murshidabad [there was of course no Murshidabad in the days of Sher Khan; these names are used to trace the route in Rennell's map], were narrow and difficult passes, not fit for the passage of a large army like that of Sher Khan. We have two data to guess the possible route from:—First, the *Riaz-us-salatin* says, (Eng. translation by Abdus Salam p. 139), that the nobles of Gaur defended Garhi for one month, after which they were defeated. But the real fact was that after one month, when Sher Khan appeared before Gaur, the defenders deserted the fort, because the Portuguese historians do not mention any defeat; the army of Sher Khan destitute of artillery could not possibly have stormed it even in a year. One month or a little less was

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the time taken by Sher Khan in performing this detour. The second is that in 1538 A.D. Sher Khan instructed his son Jalal Khan to evacuate Garhi, when "he himself had got to *Sherpur* and should make haste to join him." (*Akbarnama*, i. 334). This shows that Sher Khan had previously used the way *via* Sherpur to come from Bihar to Bengal. Now, there was no other probable occasion of his passing through Sherpur except in the course of the detour of 1536. Sherpur is placed by Rennell 18 miles due west of Berhampur. There was a road in Rennell's time from Murshidabad *via* Sherpur through the Birbhum district, Doomka district, Noony (chief city of Hindooa)* Darra (*Darna*, modern map)† to Teliagarhi (48 miles N.E. of Darra.) We have the authentic account of a detour made by Mir Jumla in March 1659, when Shuja took up a very strong position at Sahibganj midway between Teliagarhi and Sikrigali. He took 12 days to perform it, though the zamindar of Birbhum was bought off by him and he had the excellent service of Rajah Bahroz as a guide who also supplied provisions and fodder to his army. He emerged from the jungles at Suri, which shows that he took a more southerly way. (*History of Aurangzib*, ii. 242). Sher Khan most

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* 17 miles north-west of Doomka town.

† 20 miles almost due north of Noony.

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probably marched through the tract across which the road before mentioned runs, but it should not be forgotten that this road was non-existent in his time. He may have followed the track only. There was then no zamindar of Birbhum too. It was during his reign that he established these zamindaries as frontier marches to keep the wild tribes off from eastward aggression. The country was unknown, the people were savages. His detour was an expedition rather for exploration than for conquest. Nearly a century and a quarter before Mir Jumla, his task was a hundredfold difficult. The rivers, rushing torrents in the rains but tiny streams in a bed of sand throughout the rest of the year, probably acted as his highways from Bihar to the plains of Bengal. Following the Cherry Nulla (20 miles west of Teliagarhi) upstream, he may have reached Darra easily ; marching further 20 miles he came across the upper course of the More river; probably he reached Doomka downstream, and from Doomka 10 miles east is the upper course of the Dwarka river on whose bank Sherpur is situated. Sher Khan probably took some 24 days to perform this march, at the rate of about 7 miles in a straight line, or 10 miles of actual route daily. Marching in a north-easterly direction for 30 miles he could reach the Ganges. He may have crossed the Ganges at Godagari, a few miles above

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Bhagwangola. "The fleet of 300 boats" mentioned in the Portuguese account, were certainly "*kosas khaluahs* and *rahwaras*" seized from private owners to cross the river as Mir Jumla did in 1659 for a similar purpose (*History of Aurangzib* ii. 254); for it was impossible for Sher Khan's fleet, if he possessed any at this time, to sail down the Ganges in the face of Mahmud Shah's fleet, commanded by the Portuguese and stationed at Teliagarhi. The passage was effected without great difficulty, as the Bengal fleet was at Pointy or near Teliagarhi, some 80 miles away. By the end of February 1536, Sher Khan was possibly able to appear before Gaur.

The brilliant strategy bore its preconceived issue. The Bengal army hastened from Teliagarhi to save the capital; Jalal Khan after one month, took possession of the evacuated passes. The boldness of the invader took the heart out of Mahmud Shah. His army was already demoralized by two successive defeats at the hands of the Afghans. But he might have easily stood a siege in his strongly fortified capital for 3 or 4 months till the beginning of the rains; Sher Khan had no artillery with him to batter down the walls of Gaur. He must have been forced to retire before the rainy season because the Jharkhand route through which he came would have been impassable in the rains, when the small mountain-

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streams in those regions assume the magnitude and fury of the Ganges. Mahmud's superior fleet if commanded by his Portuguese allies could have also prevented Sher Khan from recrossing the Ganges. Sher Khan could not possibly have stayed there during the rains; if he had committed that mistake he would have fared no better than Humayun in 1539. His case would have been even worse, in an unsubdued country with an impregnable fortified capital in possession of his enemy. His most efficient troops, the Afghan cavalry, would have been at a great disadvantage in a country intersected by innumerable *nullahs* and rapid streams unsuitable for cavalry manœuvres. The heavy downpour of rain over head and the mud and tenacious clay beneath, were sure to render them useless in an engagement. Pestilential air would have told upon the health of the invader's troops and horses. But Mahmud Shah was not made of that heroic stuff. He quailed before the task and made up his mind to buy off the enemy. The bold Portuguese captain Martim Affonso de Mello advised him to continue the resistance, but it was of no avail. Mahmud Shah paid an indemnity or rather a ransom "amounting to 13 lakhs of gold pieces or 525,000 pardaos (4s-6d each) and made peace with him although Martim Affonso advised him

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to the contrary." (*History of the Portuguese in Bengal*, p. 39).

Sher Khan was more than glad to accept so vast a sum of money without waiting for the chance of an uncertain siege. Mahmud Shah sowed the dragon's teeth for his own destruction, and out of every gold piece grew up an armed warrior to be arrayed against him by his enemy, only a year after. He ceded the territory from the Kiul to Sikrigali, some 90 miles in length with a breadth of 30 miles at various places.

Apart from the material gains, the moral prestige gained by this brilliant achievment was of even greater importance to Sher Khan. Hitherto the senior Afghan nobles of Sultans Bahlol and Sikandar, as they are called by Abbas Sarwani, had looked down upon Sher Khan as a "New Man" belonging to a tribe not held in sufficient repute among the Afghans. He had hitherto not only had no support of the Afghan aristocracy but also had to combat their dislikes. His followers consisted of the commonalty of the Afghan people of all tribes, who received his pay and obeyed him more as a captain than as a ruler. The old Afghan nobles flocked to Sultan Bahadur Shah of Gujrat when he conquered Malwa, and his fortune was rising by leaps and bounds in 1533 and 1534.

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But by the beginning of 1536 Bahadur Shah's fortune had sunk to the lowest ebb, and he was a fugitive at Diu, while Humayun was in possession of Malwa and the greater portion of Gujrat. When the sun of Bahadur Shah's fortune sank down in the Arabian Sea, that of Sher Khan arose almost simultaneously out of the Bay of Bengal and shone resplendently in the eastern horizon. The whole Afghan people turned their faces to him and their proud chiefs who had hitherto disdained to serve a Jagirdar of Bihar, at last recognized the man who had the crown of Bengal though not upon his head yet within his firm grasp, as worthy of their homage. Abbas says, "Sultan Bahadur being defeated,.....all Afghans who were in his service whether chiefs or common soldiers, came to Sher Khan. Several powerful chiefs who had at first declined to enter Sher Khan's service now that they saw his fortune increasing day by day, had no other alternative than to accept his service."*

"Accordingly Azam Humayun Sarwani and Masnad Ala Isa Khan Sahu Khail (?) and Mian Biban Sahu Khail, Qutb Khan Mochi Khail, Maruf Farmuli, and Azam Humayun, eldest son of Sultan

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* Elliot iv. 352—"Put aside their pride and volunteered to serve him."

Alam Sahu Khail (?), and in short every Afghan of high rank joined him and he assumed the title of *Hazrat-i-Ala*.*'' [Abbas, p. 120 = Elliot, iv. 352].

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* Many of these persons were probably dead several years before. Jauhar says Biban along with Bayazid was killed in the battle of Daurah in 1531. Ma'aruf Farmuli seems to have been dead before that battle, as we find to mention of him in Jauhar. Isa Khan was not a Lodi of Sahu Khail but a Sarwani, being a son of Hybat Khan Sarwani (See Dorn, p. 104). We nowhere else find any mention of Azam Humayun Lodi, eldest son of Sultan Alam (Alauddin?). His very existence is doubtful. Azam Humayun Sarwani, the son of Umar Khan Sarwani, is mentioned in Babur's *Memoirs*. His name was Fath Khan Sarwani. Babur took off his title of Azam Humayun and conferred the title of Khan-i-Jahan upon him.

CHAPTER V

The Gujrat Campaign of Humayun.

While Sher Khan was aggrandizing himself at the expense of the effete monarchy of Bengal, the Emperor Humayun was too busy in fighting Bahadur Shah of Gujrat to take notice of his aggressions in the east. The Emperor set out against Bahadur Shah from the 'Gold-scattering Garden' near Agra on Shaban 14th 941 A.H.* (February 18th, 1535 A.D.). He took the Kalpi road, and marching by way of Chanderi and Raisin reached Ujjain at the end of February. He refused to attack Bahadur while the latter was involved in the siege of Chitor, as that would have been disturbing a brother Muslim when engaged in subduing infields.† After having captured Chitor, Bahadur Shah marched southwards, and the two monarchs met near Mandasore, a city in Western Malwa. The king of Gujrat though a clever statesman, was no good soldier. Led away by the advice of his commander of artillery, Rumi

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* 941 A.H. begins on 13th July, 1534 A. D. Therefore, in Gulbadan's *Humayun-Nama*, translated by Mrs. Beveridge, p. 131 the year 1534 is a misprint. Abul-Fazl's date "Beginning of Jamada I 941 H" is incorrect.

† See Jauhar, Stewart's translation, p. 4.

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Khan, he entrenched himself in a fortified camp, without attacking the imperial army. This single mistake brought about his utter ruin. The Mughal archers cut off supplies from his camp and made his position untenable. After nearly two months, Bahadur Shah one night fled away from his camp, attended by a small body of troops. His huge army melted away, and his artillery fell into the hands of the Mughals. Bahadur Shah fled successively to Mandu (Southern Malwa), Champanir, Cambay and Diu, closely pursued by Humayun as far as Cambay.

Humayun showed a good deal of personal daring in climbing the wall of Champanir by driving pegs into it, in a noctural surprise of that fortress, (first week of Safar 942 A.H., August, 1535). After the rainy season, Humayun resumed his work of bloodless conquest and took possession of Ahmadabad and Pattan. He would have marched upon Diu, the retreat of Bahadur Shah, but for the arrival of the news that Mallu Khan, Bahadur Shah's Governor of Malwa, had broken into Malwa.

Having appointed his brother Mirza Askari to the viceroyalty of Gujrat, he marched southwards. On his way he took possession of Baroda, Broach, Surat and Burhanpur. Thence, he reached Mandu about the beginning of March, 1536. He sat down there to enjoy himself in the genial climate of Malwa,

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dreaming to make Mandu his capital (*Akbarnama*, i.). Humayun's power and fortune reached their zenith at this time. But a few months afterwards, his brother Mirza Askari rebelled and leaving the new conquests to their fate, hastened towards Agra to seize the vacant capital. At this news Humayun set out for Agra by way of Chitor and overtook the rebels by forced marches. He forgave them and pursued his journey to Agra. No sooner did the Mughals turn their backs upon Malwa and Gujrat than Bahadur Shah and his adherents, Mallu Khan and Miran Muhammad Faruqi, ruler of Khandesh, issued from their retreat and re-occupied those provinces.

The report of Humayun's homeward march probably kept Sher Khan inactive in Bihar in the autumn of 1536 A.D., when some new enterprise ought to have been undertaken. He feared that Humayun might march against him as he was released from the Gujrat campaign. The Emperor arrived at his capital about the middle of December, 1536. Some of his well-wishers represented to him the inadvisability of neglecting Sher Khan any more, who was rebelliously inclined and who had gathered a large force of Afghans under him. The Emperor did not take it very seriously. He contented himself with sending Mir Hindu Beg to Jaunpur, as Governor

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of the eastern provinces, "with directions to write a full and true report about Sher Khan." [Abbas, 126.]

Sher Khan had lost* a great patron in the person of his old master Sultan Junaid Barlas, who had governed Jaunpur from 1532 to 1536 on behalf of the Mughal Emperor. However, he managed to gain the good will of the new Governor (Hindu Beg) also by sending magnificent presents to him and making professions of loyalty to the Emperor as become a dutiful vassal. Hindu Beg sent the following report to the Emperor: "Sher Khan is a loyal servant of your Majesty and strikes coins and reads the *khutba* in your name, and has not transgressed the boundaries of your Majesty's territory or done any thing since your departure which could be a cause of annoyance to you." (Abbas MS. p. 127 = Elliot, iv. 356). Even if Hindu Beg had not been propitiated with magnificent presents, he could not have written a less favourable report about Sher Khan without distorting the truth. Though Sher's enemies represented to the Emperor that he was rebelliously inclined, there was as yet no ostensible sign of it. His assumption of the title of *Hazrat-i-Ala* cannot be

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* Sultan Junaid Barlas died in 943 A. H. (20th June, 1536—9th June, 1537) says Ferishta (see Persian text p. 216-Briggs, II. 83).

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construed as an act of rebellion, as he read the *khutba* and struck coins in the name of the Emperor even in his new conquests from Mahmud Shah. That he had not attacked the imperial dominions or given any other open provocation to the Emperor could not be denied. However, it is curious to notice that the Emperor nowhere complains of the flight of Sher Khan's son Qutb Khan with his contingent from Malwa. It would have been a just cause of Humayun's displeasure, but it was quite forgotten by him, through Sher Khan's good luck.

However, the Emperor seemed to have been quite satisfied with the report of Hindu Beg. Abbas says, "The Emperor on receipt of Hindu Beg's letter, deferred his journey (towards Bihar) that year." (See Elliot, iv. 356). In fact the Emperor's eyes were at this time rivetted upon the affairs of Gujrat. Bahadur Shah rapidly recovered his lost territories, and it appeared as if he would soon regain his former ascendency in Western India. But while returning from a visit to the Portuguese Governor of Goa, he was drowned in the sea (13th February, 1537).* Humayun, encouraged by the defenceless state of Gujrat and Malwa, resolved to conquer them. Sher Khan avoided all outward activity, in order to disarm

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* *Akbarnama*, i. 323. The Muslim historians attribute it to the treachery of the Portuguese, who however deny the charge.

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the suspicion of the Emperor. But affairs in Bengal took an unfavourable turn for him. Mahmud Shah had been carrying on negotiations with the Portuguese Governor of Goa for help against Sher Khan since 1535 A.D., when the district of Mungir was wrested from him.

Some months* after the death of Bahadur Shah "Affonso Vaz de Britto came in a ship to Bengal from Cochin with instructions from Nuno da Cunha to bring back Martim Affonso de Mello and carry his letter in reply to Mahmud Shah's request about the help that the latter had asked for. He, however, hesitated to land at Chittagong as there was temporarily a great commotion against the Portuguese arising from a report to the king about the Portuguese Governor having murdered the king of Cambay (Bahadur Shah of Gujrat) and ransacked his property. But Antonio Menezes de Crasto having, at this juncture, arrived at Chittagong with merchandise and a letter from the Portuguese Governor explaining the Cambay affair, there was no more trouble.

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* Campos (*History of the Portuguese in Bengal*, p. 40) says that Affonso Vaz de Britto came in 1538, This seems to be a misprint for 1537. On p. 42 of the same book he puts the date of the coming of Vasco Peres de Sampayo also with nine ships to help Mahmud Shah, in the winter of 1538, when Mahmud Shah was besieged in Gaur. There was at least six months' interval between the visit to Bengal by the two Captains.

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Affonso Vaz de Britto landed in Chittagong..... Having then gone to the Court of Gaur, he requested the king to liberate Affonso de Mello, and gave him Nuno da Cunha's letter in which it was stated that he could not send him any help because the wars in Cambay had made a demand of all available men and that he would assuredly send it the following year. Mahmud Shah, highly grateful as he was for the valuable assistance they had rendered in defending the passes, permitted Martim Affonso de Mello to leave Bengal with his men. He kept only five Portuguese including Affonso Vaz de Britto as hostages for the promised help." (Campos, *History of the Portuguese in Bengal*, pp. 39-40).

The prospect of Mahmud Shah's getting help from the Portuguese in the coming year (1538 A.D.) was certainly disquieting to Sher Khan's mind. So he meditated an attack upon Mahmud Shah before the Portuguese help should reach him. But the presence of the Emperor at Agra was inconvenient for his design. But delay was impossible for Sher Khan, as the chance of the arrival of the Portuguese fleet to the aid of Mahmud was very imminent.

He led a powerful army against Mahmud Shah about the middle of October, 1537, (while Humayun was yet at Agra). The Portuguese authorities tell us that a curious demand of a large sum of money

by Sher Khan preceded his invasion of Gaur. "News arrived at Gaur that Sher Shah (better "Khan") was advancing with a very powerful force in order to demand another large sum of money which he declared to be his annual tribute and was due to him after the lapse of a year. Mahmud Shah who had never agreed to such a compact refused to pay the tribute, whereupon Sher invaded Gaur." (Campos, *History of the Portuguese in Bengal*, p. 40). This demand of tribute was only a plea for hostilities and is unjustifiable as it stands. If Sher Khan had demanded an indemnity from Mahmud Shah for violating the treaty by his hostile negotiations with the Portuguese for armed assistance against him, it would have been just and legitimate. Indeed, Sher Khan cannot be accused of unscrupulous aggression in the face of the fact that Mahmud Shah had already departed from the spirit of the treaty and that he was only waiting for the arrival of the Portuguese help to take the offensive against him. It was no fault of Sher Khan if he forestalled the design of his enemy. As a matter of unimpeachable historical fact Vasco Peres de Sampayo with nine ships actually arrived at Chittagong to help Mahmud Shah scarcely two months (in the winter of 1538) after Sher Khan's invasion.

Of the actual campaigning of Sher Khan in

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Bengal we know very little from Persian sources. The campaign was no doubt barren of incidents. Mahmud was too weak and cowardly to meet Sher Khan in the open field. He retired to his capital and stood a siege there. Sher Khan himself could not finish the conquest of Bengal, as the hostile attitude of the Emperor demanded his presence in Bihar. We have no information regarding the actual area overrun and occupied by the Afghans. From the Portuguese historians we learn that Sher Khan sent his lieutenants to occupy outlying districts such as Chittagong, which was captured from the Governor of Mahmud Shah by one Nogazil. At this time the Portuguese captain Vasco Peres de Sampayo who was sent by Nuno da Cunha, the Portuguese Governor of Goa, with nine ships as part of his promised aid to Mahmud Shah, was present at that place. But he offered no opposition to Nogazil, probably thinking it prudent to observe neutrality till affairs should take a favourable turn for his ally. The occupation of the surrounding country by Sher Khan prevented the Portuguese aid from reaching Mahmud Shah at Gaur. Sher Khan's chief object now became the reduction of the capital. But Gaur was a strongly fortified city and it could not be taken by storm without a reckless waste of men, which Sher Khan always

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abhorred. So he closely blockaded the city, intending to starve it into surrender.

Sher Khan's invasion of Bengal changed the Emperor's attitude towards him. [Jauhar]. Humayun gave up the scheme of the re-conquest of Gujrat, and determined to march against Sher Khan. Abul Fazl says, "Meanwhile news came of the emergence of Sher Khan and of his commotions in the eastern provinces.....Orders were issued to make preparations for an expedition to Bengal. It was decided that Sher Khan should be put down and the territories of Bengal subdued" (*Akbarnama*, i. 326). Humayun showed great earnestness in the organization of the expedition against Sher Khan. He prepared himself for a long campaign, and put the affairs of his kingdom in such order that his absence might not ruin them. Accompanied by his two brothers Mirza Askari and Mirza Hindal, and a large number of distinguished officers, including the famous Rumi Khan with his terrible artillery, Humayun set out for Chunar. He sailed in a boat down the Jamuna "with his chaste and veiled consorts." The Mughal soldiers proceeded gaily as if they were on a pleasure trip. Many of them took their wives and children with them. With a light heart full of high hopes and ambition, Humayun and his grand army set out from Agra, (second week of December, 1537).

The Emperor indeed formed the design of attacking Chunar* in an opportune moment when Sher Khan was away in Bengal, busy with the siege of Gaur. The distance between Agra and Chunar is about 300 miles, while Gaur is 464 miles (Rennell) away from Chunar. The Emperor had also the advantage of travelling downstream† (down the Jamuna and the Ganges). There was, as it were, a race for Chunar,—which contained the treasure and families of the Afghans—between the two rivals. Sher Khan, learning of the hostile intention of the Emperor, left the conduct of the siege of Gaur in the hands of his son Jalal Khan and another commander named Khawas Khan‡ while he himself returned hurriedly towards Chunar.

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* *Riaz-us-Salatin* says, "Sultan Mahmud (of Bengal) being vanquished in the field (by Sher Khan in 1537) entrenched himself in the citadel (of Gaur), and sent a message to the Emperor Humayun in Delhi (more correctly at Agra) seeking help." But Humayun certainly decided upon the march before Mahmud's message reached him.

† Rennell says that in the winter season the usual rate of going downstream is 40 miles in a day of 12 hours.

‡ Abbas Sarwani, Nizamuddin, Dorn and our MS. *Makhzan* say that Sher Khan himself did not lead the army against Mahmud Shah but sent Jalal Khan and Khawas Khan conquer Gaur. From Jauhar we learn (MS. p. 20-Stewart p. 8) that before Humayun left Agra for Chunar (second time), he was informed by his nobles that Sher Khan had been then engaged in the siege of Gaur. This shows that he must have been present there personally. The

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He was thrown into a critical situation by the sudden declaration of hostilities by the Emperor. His position in Bengal was by no means secure. The Portuguese fleet was still at Chittagong. There was no knowing whether the Emperor would not march into Bengal to the relief of Mahmud Shah and compel Sher Khan to withdraw his armies from that province. If Mahmud Shah succeeded in regaining his mastery over his dominions, the Portuguese were sure to join him. Then Sher Khan would have to cope single-handed with the combined strength of the Emperor, Mahmud Shah and the Portuguese. The Emperor's formidable military strength alone was enough to crush him. Bahadur Shah's fate demonstrated that the Mughals had not lost their military efficiency. The military strength of Humayun had not been impaired in any way in his long Gujrat campaign. On the other hand it was greatly enhanced by the admission of a large number of Bahadur Shah's troops and officers into his service. The terrible artillery of Bahadur Shah with its commander Rumi Khan, the greatest military engineer of his day, had passed into the service of the Emperor.

Portuguese authors (see Campos p. 40) also say that Sher Khan personally invaded Gaur. The truth seems to be that Sher Khan himself marched against Mahmud.

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With such heavy odds against him, Sher Khan was called to the combat unaided. Elphinstone justly remarks, "But Sher Khan was well aware of the danger of his situation and laid his plans for averting it with a foresight and combination of which we have no previous example in the history of India. His plan was to gain time to complete the conquest of Bengal before he was disturbed by a new enemy. For this purpose he threw a strong garrison into Chunar and provided it with all the means of retarding the advance of Humayun by an obstinate defence." (*History of India*, 6th edn., p. 446). "Sher Khan left Ghazi Sur and Sultan Sarwani, who was the commandant of Chunar, in that fortress and removed his family and those of his Afghan followers to the fortress of Bahrkunda."* (Abbas MS. p. 130 =Elliot, iv. 357).

Humayun reached the neighbourhood of Chunar in the first week of January, 1538 A.D. It is said

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* Situation of Bahrkunda in the modern maps is 24° 34′ N. lat. 83° 34′ E. long. Rennell writes *Burcoodah*. Our MS. Abbas always writes *Mahrkunda* in place of *Bahrkunda* of Elliot. This latter is the correct form. This Bahrkunda is not a mistake for *Jharkhand* by which name the jungle tract of Chota Nagpur and Birbhum was known. Our MS. Abbas clearly writes Jharkhand when that region is properly meant. The fort of Bahrkunda is placed 27 miles south of Chunar in Rennell's map which is incorrect. In modern maps its distance from Chunar is not less than 50 miles.

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that he called a council of war and invited the opinion of his nobles as to how operations should begin. The Mughal officers* urged that the campaign should begin with the reduction of Chunar, while the Hindusthani nobles (Abbas says Khan-i-Khanan Yusuf Khail, who is a doubtful personality) urged that the Emperor should march at once upon Gaur and prevent its fall into the hands of Sher Khan. But the Emperor accepted the advice of the Mughal nobles and determined upon the siege of Chunar. Herein he committed a deplorable mistake in strategy, which doomed the campaign to failure. He played into the hands of his artful enemy, who meant Chunar as a pitfall for him. The reduction of Chunar could not in any way have brought Sher Khan down to his knees as he had already removed from this fort the families of the Afghans, whose safety concerned him most. A march upon Gaur was sure to undo his work of conquest and reanimate his prostrate enemy Mahmud Shah. This is the very thing which Sher Khan feared most; but, to his great relief, his fear was not realized. Elphinstone says, "As Humayun marched along the Ganges and made use of that river to convey his guns and stores, it was necessary

* Bengal was an unknown region to them. They naturally dreaded another march of 464 miles, encumbered as they were with their families.

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for him to begin with the siege of Chunar." (P. 476). But as the military situation then stood, the siege of Chunar was not even a remote necessity. The fortress of Chunar no doubt commanded the entrance into south Bihar, by the southern bank of the Ganges. But this could not prove a hindrance to the Emperor who was in firm possession of the territories on the northern bank, through which he could with greater ease march past Chunar and invade Sher Khan's possessions by crossing the Ganges, either at Benares or at Buxar, at his pleasure. Nor can it be contended that Chunar in the hands of the Afghans, could in any way obstruct the safe passage of the Emperor's fleet down the Ganges along the northern coast. It was not a necessity but a tremendous mistake which cost Humayun his empire.

Siege of Chunar.

Jauhar says:—".....His Majesty the Emperor reached within 5 *kos* of Chunar on the *Shab-i-barat* day." The formal siege probably began on the next day, 16th Shaban 944 A.H. (9th January. 1538.)* "Chunar, a fortress of considerable natural

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* Our MS. does not mention the year (see p. 21). Stewart's Jauhar commits a mistake by giving 945 A. H. as the year. (Stewart's translation of Jauhar, p. 9), as has been shown by Elphinstone (*History of India*, 6th edition, p. 446). who proposes

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strength is situated on a low range of hills about 150 feet high on the right bank of the Ganges, which forms (better "formed") a considerable angle at this point at the direct distance of 18 miles from Benares; its greatest length is about 850 feet (yards?) and its breadth varies from 300 to 100 feet (yards?)" (*History of the Rise and Progress of the Bengal Army*, by Captain Arthur Broome, i. 487). The natural strength of this fortress must have been rendered all the more terrible by artificial defences devised by the military genius of Sher Khan, who had been in possession of it for 7 years. The capture of such a place by storm was next to impossible.* The Mughal army comfortably encamped at the foot of Chunar. The majority of the soldiers had little duty as the task of the reduction of the fortress was left to Rumi Khan with his artillery. But Chunar, defended by a brave

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(15th Shaban, date of the festival) of 944 A. H. as the probable year. Dowson (Elliot, iv. 359, foot-note I) supports this date as the most probable one. This date also fits in with our calculation based on data supplied by Gulbadan's book. There cannot be any doubt that Elphinstone's date (January 8th, 1538 A. D.) is the correct one.

* In November, 1764 Major Pemble's storming party consisting of Europeans and Sepoys suffered a repulse with heavy loss at the hands of the garrison of Shuja-ud-daulah of Oudh. "Large masses of stone were rolled down...these, bounding along with great velocity, crushed to pieces all those on whom they fell and thus the assailants were swept down by tens and twenties and hurled bruised and stunned to the bottom". (Captain A. Broome 489).

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garrison, baffled all the skill of the great engineer; so the siege was protracted for months.

Achievements of Sher Khan.

From his mountain retreat at Bahrkunda, Sher Khan did not in any way give trouble to the besiegers. He had no wish to disturb the repose of the Emperor, as he had enough of other work in hand. Besides he was encumbered with a large number of women and children of his own and of his followers whom he found it difficult to accommodate in a small stronghold like Bahrkunda. He had no chance of recovering his freedom and celerity of movement till he could deposit these families,—impediment of success in a campaign,—in a more suitable place. He sent a letter with valuable presents to the Rajah of Rohtas, stating his distressful condition and asking for quarters for the families of the Afghans within his fortress. He also sent secretly a large sum of money to Churaman, the Naib of the Rajah, to use his influence with his master in securing his consent The Rajah at first consented to admit the Afghan families, and when this was communicated to Sher Khan he took them to the neighbourhood of Rohtas, but the Rajah afterwards changed his mind and retracted his promise. Sher Khan next sent a larger sum of money (Abbas says six maunds of gold) to Churaman to

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intercede for him once more. At the same time he threatened to make war upon the Rajah, after having made peace with the Emperor, in case of his persistent refusal. Churaman, if we are to believe Abbas Sarwani, having failed to persuade the Rajah by argument, at last threatened him with committing suicide:—"If you do not admit his families into the fort I will take poison and die at your doors." Churaman was a Brahman; out of the superstitious fear of incurring the sin of a Brahman's death the Rajah yielded at last. (See Abbas MS. pp. 130-132, Elliot, iv. 157-158).

But Sher Khan meditated treachery at heart. When he heard the news, he procured twelve hundred litters. Instead of placing women in them he put young and active Afghans, in some of them; while in the others some old women were placed. The litters containing the old women were started foremost. The sentries at the gate of the fort examined some of these *doolis* and found them containing only old women. "Sher Khan then sent a message to the Rajah to represent that the Rajah having now satisfied himself that there were only women in the litters and as it was highly indecorous to expose them to the gaze of the sentries, the search ought to be discontinued. The Rajah forbade his men to look into the litters. When all

the *doolis* entered the fort, the Afghans seizing their swords, some of them advanced towards the Rajah's house and some of them took their post at the gate. Sher Khan who was ready with his troops outside, entered the fort through the gate. The Rajah after a short resistance fled away through the back door and Sher Khan easily became master of the fortress," (Nizamuddin, Ferishta and the MS. *Makhzan*). Abbas Sarwani says, "The commonly received report that Sher Khan put Afghans into *doolis* and sent them into the fort as women is altogether erroneous and false." (Elliot, iv. 361). But he fails to tell us clearly by what other means the Afghans made their entrance into the fort. He gives the following account : "Sher Khan had given orders to his men that none should go out who once went in. After this Sher Khan himself went in, examined the fort and thanked God for giving this fortress into his possession. And he said to the guards of the fort 'You better go to the Rajah and say that you cannot remain in the same place with the Afghans, or it will be the worse for you'. And he ordered his own men if the guards did not obey the order to leave the fort, to eject them by force." (Abbas MS. p. 135 = Elliot, iv. 360). All this is too incoherent to be believed. This shows that the writer who disbelieved "the commonly received report" fails to give a more credible explanation.

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Abbas says, "I said to Khan-i-azam Muzaffar Khan, the son of Jalal Khan, the son of Haibat Khan, 'It is commonly said that Sher Khan took Rohtas by introducing the Afghans in covered litters, and you contradict this story. I do not know whom to believe.' He replied, 'You know I was with the followers of Masnad-i-ala Isa Khan and my family was in Rohtas, (and) I accompanied Sher Khan to the hills'." (Elliot,* iv. 361-362). On this denial of Muzaffar Khan, Abbas Sarwani disbelieved the current story. But to us it seems to have been rejected on very insufficient ground. Khan-i-azam's evidence cannot be credited as he was possibly one of the persons who participated in the adventure. It was not unlikely that the noble Khan himself shaved his beard and moustaches, exchanged his turban for the veil of his Bibi, and was conveyed in a litter to play the wolf inside the fort. So we are unable to accept Abbas Sarwani's refutation of the *dooli* story.

The rejection of the dooli story does not in any way acquit Sher Khan of the charge of treachery. This historian, without meaning it, portrays the crime rather in a deeper colour though without evincing any feeling of aversion. The hypocritical

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* Our MS. (p. 33) altogether omits this.

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profession of obligations which Abbas puts into the mouth of Sher Khan makes Sher Khan's action more unpleasant. We feel all the more inclined to blame Sher Khan when we remember that he owed a debt of gratitude to the Rajah of Rohtas, for a former act of kindness. When he and his brother Nizam were driven away from Sasaram, by the troops of Muhammad Khan Sur, it was this Rajah of Rohtas who gave shelter to Nizam and his families, within this fortress, and entertained them with kind hospitality for 18 months. Sher Khan's present act was certainly not a fair return for the Rajah's good services. However, Sher Khan was faced with some practical difficulties which drove him to act in this way. It would have been the height of folly to entrust the safety of Afghan families to a weak-minded, vacillating Rajah who was completely under the influence of an unscrupulous, corrupt and greedy Brahman Naib like Churaman. Churaman might have handed over the refugees to Humayun for a higher price, or the Rajah himself might have felt inclined to buy the safety of his fortress and possessions by surrendering them to the Mughals, if they had attacked him. Even if the Rajah had good intentions, he had no power to defend them against the Emperor; nor was he likely to admit the Afghans as his auxiliaries to aid him in the defence.

Rohtasgarh is situated on the upper course of the river Son in an extremely hilly and inaccessible region. Its position in the map is 83° long. and 24° lat. It is possibly the largest and strongest hill-fort in India. Ferishta remarks, "Although the author (Md. Qasim Ferishta) has seen many hill forts in India he has seen none to compare with that of Rohtas." (Pers. text, p. 226.)

It is a monument of great Hindu antiquity. Tradition carries its origin back to the days of Rajah Harish Chandra and his son Rohitashwa; the fort is said to have derived its name from the latter. Its natural strength was such that no enemy however powerful could hope to take it by open force. The following extract from Martin will corroborate the truth of Ferishta's remark :—"(Rohtasgarh) occupies a part of the table-land about four miles from east to west and five miles from north to south ; but among the natives it is usually reckoned 28 miles round, and following the windings of the hill, it may be so. The area is very hilly and much of the surface consists of bare rocks.....A deep and wide recess, called Kariyari Kho, separates it from the table-land to the north and a branch of the recess, called Guluriya Kho, separates it from the table-land on the west, leaving only between its south end and the rock that overhangs the Son, (which flows by the eastern side

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of the fort) a rocky neck of about 200 yards wide. The two sides of this neck are perpendicular and the sides of the whole circumference are not only everywhere exceedingly steep, but in most places have in some part of their height, a perpendicular rock from 50 to 150 feet high.....Rajaghat towards the south, which is the easiest ascent is a very steep and long hill, and even there it has been necessary for a very considerable way to ascend a perpendicular rock by means of a stair. The works even there are numerous and strong; and being scarcely visible from below, in all probability could have been little affected by cannon." (Martin's *Eastern India*, i. 434-435). It was a coveted prize worth securing by treachery. Sher Khan was the first Muslim conqueror of the fort; he not only secured a safe retreat for the Afghan families but also came into possession of the vast treasures which had been accumulated there for ages by the Hindu kings. This place fell into his hands probably in the beginning of March, 1538. "He left there his women and children, with his eldest son Adil Khan, and Qutb Khan and he himself wandered about from place to place." (Abbas = Elliot, iv. p. 362). Ahmad Yadgar, the author of *Tarikh-i-Salatin-i-Afaghana*, says, that during this time, *i.e.*, after the capture of Rohtas, Sher Khan undertook an expedition against the Rajah of Jhar-

khand in order to get possession of a white elephant called Syam Chander (see Elliot, iv. 362, foot-note 1). Though the object of the expedition is unworthy of credence, the fact of his undertaking an expedition may be true. Jharkhand is the mountainous tract of Chota Nagpur extending eastward from the south of Rohtas up to the borders of the Birbhum district. Sher Khan probably occupied himself in leading punitive expeditions against the surrounding hill-tribes, who might have otherwise felt inclined to disturb the new occupant of Rohtas. Possibly he also reconnoitred the hilly regions lying to the east of Rohtas to open another route from this fort to the south of the Mungir district, in order to secure a line of retreat for his army operating in Bengal, through the Jharkhand route to his new base, Rohtas, as the grand road along the southern bank of the Ganges was likely to be blocked by the Mughals.

The Capture of Gaur.

Jalal Khan and Khawas Khan whom Sher Khan had left in Bengal in December 1537, went on maintaining a close blockade of the capital. They seem to have made occasional attempts at storming the fort. Khawas Khan senior was drowned in the ditch of the fort of Gaur. (Elliot, iv. 359.) The accident may have occurred in the course of one of these

attempts. When this news was conveyed to Sher Khan he appointed Khawas Khan's younger brother, Sahib Khan,* to his brother's command and bestowed upon him his elder brother's title of Khawas Khan. At this time Rumi Khan also was making strenuous exertions to take the fort of Chunar. It was feared that the fort would not hold out longer† and there was a likelihood of the Emperor's going to Bengal after its fall. So the new commander was given urgent instructions to press the siege more vigorously and to reduce Gaur without delay.

The new general proved himself worthy of his master's choice. His arrival at Gaur was marked by a determined effort to storm the fort. Gaur had stood a siege ever since from the beginning of November, 1537 if not longer; so about this time (end of March, 1538) the besieged began to feel the pinch of scarcity. Mahmud Shah evacuated the city and retreated towards North Bihar. The Afghans entered the capital of Bengal on the 6th Zilqada 944 A.H.‡ (April 6, 1538 A.D). With it ended the independent monarchy of Medieval Bengal. Mahmud Shah was pursued very closely and com-

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* Elliot MS. has a different reading :—Musahib Khan (Elliot, iv. 359).

† This differs from Abbas; for reasons see, *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi* in the appendix.

‡ See *Riaz-us-Salatin*, English Transl., p. 139.

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pelled to fight a battle in which he was defeated and severely wounded. He, however, made his escape, and sailed in a boat towards Hajipur (opposite Patna) with the intention of going to the presence of the Emperor Humayun. Jalal Khan sent an account of the victory to his father and was noble-hearted enough to attribute it to his colleague Khawas Khan,* though he had a hitch with that general at the beginning.

Fall of Chunar and Peace-Negotiations.

Sher Khan had abundantly stocked the fort of Chunar with food-stuff and ammunition which precluded all chance of its reduction by starvation. But the garrison through their own fault—a weakness of heart—rendered their own situation untenable and caused its fall into the hands of the Mughals. They were not overcome by the valour and skill, but deceived by an artifice of Rumi Khan. The following story of the capture of the fortress, as told by Jauhar, bears the stamp of truth. He says :—"Rumi Khan then debated with himself how he could find out the exact condition of the fortress, what bastion (*burj*) he ought to attack and on which side he should mine. He had a slave named Khalalat (our MS.

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* From this time onward he had a brilliant military career under Sher Shah whose right-hand man and best general he became. There was indeed "none like him for intrepidity and liberality" among the Afghans, as Abbas says. (See Elliot, iv. 360).

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writes Kalanat) whom in furtherence of his plan he so flogged that the weals were visible upon his body. He then directed him to go into the fortress and say that he was the slave of Rumi Khan and that his master had so beaten him without any cause that he had fled and sought protection with them. So, he was to find out the particulars of the fort and return. When the Afghans saw his condition and the marks of chastisement plainly visible on his body, they believed him and strove to heal his wounds. One day the slave proposed to the Afghans, that if they saw no objection they should show him the defences of the fortress and he would advise as to the best means of resisting the guns Rumi Khan had planted, so that the garrison might be safe. The Afghans did so and explained to him confidently the condition of the fort in every place in order to know what steps should be taken for proper defence and remedy. After staying for a few days in the fortress and making observations, the slave made his escape and returned to his master whom he acquainted with the exact condition of the fortress. He advised him to attack the bastion on the river side and construct a mine on that side. Rumi Khan brought his largest gun (*deg kalan*) and planted it against the bastion of the river side and destroyed it, surrounded the fort and placed various officers in charge of other trenches.

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Then Rumi Khan sought His Majesty's permission to construct a lofty tower (on boats) by means of which he proposed to cut the garrison off from the water and prevent them from being able to maintain life. The royal order was given to him to do what he deemed expedient. Under this authority he employed himself for some months* in constructing a battery upon three boats so high that it over-topped the whole fort. When the battery was completed, he sought the royal authority to move his battery and bring it close to the fortress; and to order the soldiers to attack the fort from four quarters and keep up the fight till victory would be gained. Permission being given, the battery was pushed to the side of the fort and a general attack was delivered on all sides; the battle raged till midnight. Although seven hundred Mughals were killed and in spite of their utmost effort, the fort was not captured. The opponents by their fire smashed one portion of the battery. Early in the morning the battery was again put together. The Afghans saw that the assailants were resolute and vigorous, and the Emperor and his nobles would take the fort to-day or to-morrow; so they proposed terms of peace. They consented to surrender the fort if the Emperor gave his word, (promising the safety of

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* Stewart's Jauhar (p. 10).

the garrison). The Emperor gave them assurance of safety and took possession of the fort."* (MS. pp. 21-24; see Elliot, v. 139-140.)

But the sanctity of the Emperor's promise of safety was violated by Rumi Khan who cut off both hands of three hundred gunners. They fell a victim to Rumi Khan's professional jealousy, as Elphinstone (p. 447) says "either to disable them for the future or in revenge for the loss they had occasioned."

Humayun's march upon Bahrkunda.

A few days after the fall of Chunar, the Emperor ordered a march towards Benares, and encamped in the neighbourhood of that city. By this time Sher

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* Elliot's extracts from Jauhar (v. 139), say, that the attack was kept up till *mid-day*, while our MS. says "*Midnight.*" Stewart says, "The floating battery was impelled during *the night* across the river." (P. 10). The night-attack is more probable as our MS. says. All Persian historians including Jauhar are unanimous in saying that Chunar fell after a siege of six months. The siege began as Jauhar himself says on the 8th or 9th of January, 1538. So according to them it should have fallen at the end of June. But this leaves no time for subsequent negotiations with Sher Khan, Humayun's march towards Bengal and *his stay of nine months there* (as Jauhar says), 2½ months' waiting at Chaunsa before the battle of Chaunsa (June 27th 1539). So this round figure of 6 months cannot be true. According to our calculation this event cannot happen later than *the middle of May, 1538.* Abbas Sarwani's statement that Chunar fell before the capture of Gaur by the Afghans is absolutely wrong. So we have rejected it.

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Khan too had returned from Rohtas and Jharkhand to Bahrkunda with the object of studying the intentions of the Emperor. When Humayun heard that Bengal had already been conquered by Sher Khan, he decided upon a march against Bahrkunda and Rohtas. (Jauhar MS. p. 25 = Stewart's trans., p. 11.)

Jauhar says* "When the imperial army reached the neighbourhood of the fort of Bahrkunda, His Majesty sent Fazl Husain Turkoman as an envoy commanding Sher Khan 'to send the *chattar* (royal umbrella), throne and treasure of Bengal to the imperial presence, and to give up the kingdom of Bengal and the fort of Rohtas to the servants of his Imperial Majesty.' Sher Khan was promised in return the fort of Chunar, Jaunpur or any other place he liked. Sher Khan did not agree (to give up Bengal) and said 'I have laboured hard for five or six years to conquer Bengal; many soldiers of mine have been killed there. How can I give up Bengal?' In the meantime a dutiful letter came from the king of Bengal, representing that His Majesty should march stage by stage to Garhi. No sooner did His Majesty

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* Jauhar (MS. pp. 25-26 = Stewart, p. 11) commits a geographical error by saying that the Emperor reached *the river Son*, on his way to Bahrkunda. The river Son is nearly 70 miles east of the river Karmanasha, to the *west* of which Bahrkunda lies. The river Son is here undoubtedly a mistake for the Karmanasha.

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hear (the contents) of the letter than he began his march. Mian Fazl Husain returned and told His Majesty that Sher Khan refused to obey the *farman* and was marching behind the hills towards Bengal."
[Jauhar MS. p. 26 = Stewart's trans., pp. 11-12.]

Abbas Sarwani gives a different version of the negotiations: "Sher Khan said to the envoy..... 'If the Emperor will abandon all designs upon Bengal, I shall surrender Bihar unto him and make it over to whomsoever he will depute and shall agree to the same boundaries of Bengal as existed in Sultan Sikandar's time; and I shall send all the ensigns of royalty, as the umbrella, throne, etc. to the Emperor, and shall yearly send him ten *lakhs* of Rupees from Bengal. But let the Emperor return towards Agra.' The envoy came back to Humayun and reported what Sher Khan had proposed. Humayun gave a horse and a splendid special *khilat* to the envoy for delivery to Sher Khan; and directed him to say that his proposals were accepted and he should not delay in putting them to execution. The *vakil* came back to Sher Khan and gave him the horse and dress and told him what the Emperor had said.

"But three days after this despatch the envoy of Sultan Mahmud, ruler of Bengal, came to the Emperor's presence and made the following communication:—'The Afghans have seized the fort of

Gaur but most of the country is yet in my possession; let not your Majesty trust to Sher Khan's promises, but march towards these parts and before they have established and strengthened themselves, expel them from the country and altogether suppress this revolt. I also shall join you and they are not powerful enough to oppose you.' As soon as he heard this request of Sultan Mahmud, the Emperor ordered his victorious standards to be set in motion towards Bengal, and afterwards he ordered Khan-i-Khanan Yusuf Khail, the Barlas chiefs and some other nobles to go on in advance and with their force in battle array to move towards the hills of Bahrkunda where Sher Khan was. When Sher Khan heard this news he entirely gave up all trust in the promises and faith of Humayun.....he gave the envoy of Humayun a parting present and dismissed him. The force he had with him Sher Khan sent to Rohtas and he himself with a few horsemen, in order that he might not be traced, set off from that place towards Gaur secretly." (Abbas MS. 138-143 = Elliot, iv. 362-364.)

These two passages are in substantial agreement, though Abbas makes the Emperor's act of injustice more glaring. But even Jauhar's statement points out the unfair dealing of Humayun. Accepting Jauhar's version of the affairs, we see that before the

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envoy returned and made known to him the result of the negotiations Humayun began his march towards Bengal, instantly on getting the letter of Mahmud Shah. So, at the time of his march he did not know that Sher Khan had refused his terms. When he actually made this hostile move he left no room for a compromise even if Sher Khan had submitted to his extravagant demands. Sher Khan's refusal had little to do with Humayun's change of mind. So the Emperor was undoubtedly responsible for making a compromise impossible. The essential truth of the statement of Abbas is borne out by the testimony of Gulbadan who says, "His Majesty was considering this (Sher Khan's asking for a place) when the king* of Gaur Bangala came wounded and a fugitive. For this reason he gave no attention (to Sher Khan), but marched towards Gaur Bangala." (*Humayun-Nama*, p. 133.) Here also we find that Humayun refused to come to a reasonable compromise, and at least cancelled an understanding, even if he did not perfidiously act contrary to his plighted word, as Abbas Sarwani represents him to have done.

Its fatal consequence.

Indeed the Emperor acted most unwisely by

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* This is not true. Mahmud Shah met Humayun at Muner on the Son.

recklessly throwing away the chance of ending, by an honourable peace, a quarrel which he himself had provoked.. It was evident that he was unequal to the task of subduing his bold and cunning adversary. No sooner did he threaten to deprive Sher Khan of Chunar than his adversary established himself in a far more impregnable position. Humayun could not force a pitched battle on him to make his military superiority felt. There was no capital or other important base of the enemy, the reduction of which would humiliate him; it appeared as if Sher Khan was ready to retreat to the farthest end of the inaccessible hilly region which stretches as far as Central India. In spite of his loss of Chunar, he had the advantage on the whole.

Sher Khan certainly deserves high praise for his moderation and submissive attitude to the Emperor. We see that he yielded every point except the cession of Bengal. He consented to surrender the umbrella and the throne of the king of Bengal, to give up Bihar —this meant the surrender of his valuable acquisition, Rohtas, as demanded by the Emperor. As regards Bengal, he proposed the fairest possible conditions. He consented to hold it as a vassal of the Emperor and to pay tribute for it. In short, Sher Khan was ready to retire beyond the farthest limit of the Emperor's dominion and had as yet no

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intention of declaring independence of the Emperor. The cause of Sher Khan's submissive attitude was his diffidence in his own power. He naturally entertained an awe for the imperial power and a terror of Mughal armies. He was never willing to come into conflict with the Emperor if he could help it.

With Humayun's march towards Bengal, the struggle between him and Sher Khan assumed a different character. Hitherto the Emperor had some justice on his side and no one could blame him very much for his attempt at the subjugation of an overpowerful vassal, which was necessary in the interests of the safety of his Empire. That object was accomplished as soon as Sher Khan consented to surrender every inch of ground which the Emperor could claim as his own by the utmost stretch of the word "dominion". There cannot be a more perfect submission of a vassal than his willingness to surrender his fief altogether, as Sher Khan proposed to do. If Sher Khan had tried to set himself up as an independent ruler in Bengal, the Emperor might have had some excuse for carrying on further hostilities to dislodge him from that place. But Humayun's determination to expel him from that province in spite of his submission and his uncompromising attitude*

* Humayun's impatience to wait for the result of his embassy

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show that the Emperor aimed at nothing short of the absolute annihilation of Sher Khan. So the fact stands out that Sher Khan continued the war with his liege lord, not for aggression or independence but for self-defence, when driven at bay by his uncompromising sovereign.

But for Humayun's march upon Bengal Sher Khan would never have become the Emperor of Delhi; he would have died, at the most, an independent king of Bengal. When he was once forced to contend with his august suzerain, he found himself the abler man and pushed his advantage to the utmost. This eventful march probably began in the first week of June, 1538.

Race for the capital of Bengal.

"Sher Khan, on receiving the information of this expedition [of Humayun, towards Bengal] sent the greater part of his troops towards Rohtas. He himself with about five hundred cavalry slipped away in the direction of Gaur." (Dorn, p. 112.) Humayun, sent a pursuing column to chase him, but Sher Khan by making a detour evaded pursuit and placed himself behind his pursuers. He remained concealed in the hills of Sasaram, and sent spies to the camp of

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shows that he was reluctant to abide by his own terms even such as giving Chunar, Jaunpur, etc. to Sher Khan.

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the Emperor in order to ascertain the movements of the Emperor. The pursuing column thinking that Sher Khan was still flying before them, dashed forward till they reached Muner on the Son. Here they halted for the arrival of the rest of the army under the Emperor. The Emperor soon reached Muner where the fugitive Bengal king Mahmud Shah met him. The unfortunate monarch was comforted by the princely magnanimity and courtesy of Humayun, who promised to restore him to his kingdom."* (Jauhar MS. p. 27.)

Dispositions of the Mughal army at Muner.

As the regions east of Muner (on the Son) had not been previously traversed by Mughal armies and the whereabouts of Sher Khan were unknown to them, extreme caution was required in further advance. Several distinguished nobles such as Muyyid Beg, Jahangir Beg, etc. were ordered to

*Abbas Sarwani (Elliot, iv. 354) says, "(At Muner) they brought Sultan Mahmud to the Emperor, who did not receive him kindly or pay him the respect he had anticipated, so that Sultan Mahmud repented that he had come and shortly afterwards died from extreme grief." Dorn, (p. 112) echoes the words of Abbas. But they are not just. Humayun though a bad king was undoubtedly a good man. He was incapable of such discourtesy. As a matter of fact Mahmud Shah died of grief after hearing the news of the slaughter of his sons by Jalal Khan.

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march in advance with a division of 3,000 horsemen. They were always to keep themselves seven or eight *kos* ahead of the main body under the Emperor. Mirza Hindal was made to cross the Ganges [at Muner ?]with his division and to move on to Hajipur (opposite Patna) marching along the opposite bank (Elliot, iv. 363). By such dispositions the Emperor probably expected to intercept the retreat of the Afghan army from Bengal. In this manner the Mughal army moved on eastward as far as Patna, without being molested by Sher Khan.

Sher Khan had all along been coming behind the imperial army without showing himself. The careful dispositions of the Mughal army at Muner convinced him of the necessity of his reaching Bengal before the Emperor and extricating his army from its difficult situation. So he marched rapidly through the interior of the country to put himself ahead of the Mughal advanced guard. A few miles east of Patna, the Mughal advanced guard received an alarm by the reported presence of Sher Khan. "When the Emperor reached Patna, and the division which was seven *kos* in advance of him had not yet reached their halting ground, their scouts came to a village where they saw some horsemen in a garden. They asked of one of the villagers whose those horsemen were? He replied, "It is Sher Khan himself." "The

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advanced party, when they heard the name of Sher Khan, became so alarmed that they never examined what amount of force he had with him but returned and told Muyyid Beg that "Sher Khan was encamped at such and such a village." Muyyid was of opinion that Sher Khan was there to offer battle and sent to the Emperor to ask for orders, and encamped where he was, sending out a party of scouts to bring intelligence. But in the meanwhile Sher Khan left the village and rode away towards Mungir. When the scouts returned with their news, "it was nearly evening and on this account they delayed the pursuit of Sher Khan." (Abbas MS. pp. 144-145 = Elliot, iv. 365.)

Sher Khan had indeed a narrow escape on that day. The Mughals emboldened by the discovery of the smallness of his followers, kept up a hot pursuit from the next day. The distance between the pursuer and the pursued diminished daily. At one time he was saved by the heroism and self-sacrifice of an Afghan chief named Saif Khan Acha-Khail Sarwani and his three hundred tribesmen, who are said to have held up the Mughal pursuing column for several hours at a place called Gugarghar.* "Sher Khan,

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*We are unable to identify the place. The context shows that the place is to the west of Mungir.

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taking with him the families of Saif Khan, made his way to Mungir. Here he ordered Shujaat Khan to evacuate Mungir and retire to the fort of *Gidhore* [Elliot's MS. reads *Ghari*], while he himself embarking in a swift sailing boat went down the river towards Gaur." (Abbas MS. p. 149=Elliot, iv. 367.) Niamatullah (Dorn's *History of the Afghans*, p. 113) says that the voyage lasted two nights. The distance between Mungir and Maldah is 148 miles, by inland navigation, according to Rennell. The usual rate of going with the stream (the Ganges) from the beginning of June to the end of October is from 50 to 70 miles in a day of twelve hours." (Rennell.) So it is very likely that in 36 hours—the first night* and the next day and night—he reached Gaur (end of June, 1538), supposing the boat travelled at the rate of 5 miles an hour, for 30 hours—6 hours being added for cooking food, etc. by the boatmen. Having arrived at Gaur, Sher Khan despatched his son Jalal Khan, Haji Khan Batni, and several other nobles at the head of several thousand troops to defend the Pass of Teliagarhi. "Sher Khan gave particular instructions to both commanders, to block up that defile; and to post guns upon a height from whence

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* Sher Khan must have embarked in the darkness of the night, to conceal his movement.

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they might keep Humayun in awe.....He further ordered them by no means to abandon their position or to engage in battle with the Mughals." (Dorn, p. 114.)

The Mughal army reached Colgong* (Kahalgram, Jauhar MS., p. 28), in pursuit of Sher Khan. The Emperor pitched his camp at that place and sent forward Jahangir Quli Beg and several other officers to capture Garhi (or Teliagarhi). The Mughal advanced party, found Jalal Khan already occupying Garhi with a strong force. Several days having passed in vain without any impression being made upon this place, the Mughals encamped in front of the pass. "Jalal Khan proposed to attack it (the Van of the Emperor's army), but other chiefs dissuaded him, saying that he had not been sent by Sher Khan to risk an engagement, and that he ought merely to hold the pass. Jalal Khan did not assent to their counsel but leaving 1,000 horse to hold Garhi and advancing himself with 6,000 men attacked the imperialists and after a sharp action defeated them." (Abbas MS. p. 150=Elliot, iv. 167.)

Niamatullah says that this victory was gained by making a sudden sally upon the Mughals. "The

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*Situated on the southern bank of the Ganges. It is 23 miles west of Teliagarhi.

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next morning the Mughals, according to their custom, ran their horses and retreated to their tents where they put off their armour and unsaddled their horses; the privates went out to forage, whilst the officers reposed on the cushion of idleness. Noon had approached when the Afghans, opening the gate in the defile sallied forth.* A few only of the Mughals whose horses were near at hand mounted and put themselves in an attitude of defence; but the greater part being disconcerted in the extreme turned their faces to flight. The action nevertheless proved to be of the most obstinate nature.....The whole camp of the Mughals, luggages, horses and elephants etc. fell into the hands of the victors; and all, with the exception of a very small number (of the Mughals), were slain." (Dorn's *History of the Afghans*, p. 115.)

This first victory over the Mughals was gained in defiance of the command of Sher Khan. But its moral effect was immense. The Afghans were animated with courage and self-confidence, at the

*Jauhar (Stewart's trans. p. 12), says "while they were endeavouring to find a passage through the hills Jalal Khan made a sally, surprised the camp and killed a number of brave officers and men." It is very likely that Jalal Khan fell upon the Mughals while they were searching for another route through the Rajmahal hills. Our MS. does not say so. The passage is confusing (MS. p. 27).

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initial success of their arms. The prestige of the Mughal arms was lowered and the awe of the Emperor's might diminished somewhat in the hearts of the Afghans.

Jauhar says, "When this news reached the Emperor he became sad; several nobles who escaped in safety arrived at Kahalgram before His Majesty, who ordered a march (towards Garhi). By the grace of God, the rain began to pour,* but several hours after it ceased; various kinds of tents (*chadars, khimas and sarapardas*) were laid out (in the new encampment before Garhi). The Emperor appointed Haji Muhammad Beg to procure intelligence about Garhi and Jalal Khan." (Jauhar MS. p. 28.)

Mirza Hindal, who with his division had been marching along the northern bank might have been able to compel Jalal Khan to retire from Garhi and Sher Khan from Gaur by a bold and strategic move upon the capital by the road along that bank. But Humayun had unwisely withdrawn that division and sent away Mirza Hindal to Agra from Mungir. (*Tabakat-i-Akbari*, Elliot, v. 201, Pers. text p. 200.)

Jalal Khan strongly fortified the pass of Garhi and kept back the imperial army. In the meanwhile Sher Khan completed his arrangements for the

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*Abbas also says, "The night after the action it rained hard."

evacuation of Gaur. The Portuguese historians say, "Sher Khan burnt* and pillaged the city of Gaur and took possession of 60 millions in gold." (Campos, *History of the Portuguese*, p. 40.) The burning and pillaging had been probably completed before Sher Khan's arrival at Gaur, by his son, the cruel and savage warrior Jalal Khan, who had been in unrestrained exercise of authority in that city for nearly three months (April to June, 1538). Wanton destruction was opposed to the nature of Sher Khan. However, he set out with his rich spoils on his journey to Rohtas. Having crossed the Ganges, he entered the district of Birbhum through which lay the Jharkhand route to Rohtas. He sent instructions to his son to evacuate Garhi when he should reach Sherpur† and to join him with the rest of the army, at that place. (*Akbarnama*, i. 334.) Jalal Khan acted accordingly. One night he slipped away from Garhi

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*This mistake is due to the fact that the Portuguese historians believed that during the last campaign against Mahmud Shah, Sher Khan had been all along in Bengal. This however, was not the fact.

†It is situated in the modern Birbhum district. This place is about 16 miles due west of Kasimbazar. It was very probably visited by Sher Khan in 1536 in the course of his journey through Jharkhand into Bengal. *Riaz-us-Salatin says* :—"Sher Khan on hearing the approach of the imperial forces fled towards Radh (Western Bengal) and from thence towards the jungles of Jharkhand.....(Eng. trans. p. 112).

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with his forces. The Mughal scouts, Haji Muhammad Qaqshal and Mughal Beg, discovered it at midnight and brought the happy news to the Emperor. Humayun ordered an immediate march to take possession of Garhi, (see Jauhar MS. p. 28). Within four* days, marching proudly through "the gate of Bengal" (Garhi) the Emperor entered triumphantly into its capital, (middle of July, 1538), while almost simultaneously Sher Khan effected his escape from it through the back-door, (Jharkhand route).

Sher Khan threaded his way to Rohtas through the jungles of Jharkhand as best he could. This leading an army encumbered with rich spoils through a pathless wilderness, intersected by innumerable mountain streams swollen by the rains, was no mean achievement of his generalship. He reached Rohtas probably in the middle of September, 1538. With

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*Abbas Sarwani (MS. p. 151). Niamatullah (Dorn, p. 115) Jauhar (MS. p. 28) and several other minor authorities agree in saying that Sher Khan recalled Jalal Khan when he 'reached' Rohtas. This is a great error. The distance between Gaur and Rohtas is about 450 miles by the most moderate calculations. Encumbered as he was with heavy luggage, he would not reach Rohtas within two months through the jungles of Jharkhand in the height of the rains. But Abbas himself says that Jalal Khan was at Garhi for one month only (See Elliot, iv. 367). According to our calculation based on the data supplied by Jauhar, the Mughal army could not be delayed at Garhi more than twenty days; Sherpur, about 120 miles from Garhi, is the most probable place of rendezvous.

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the return of autumn, he began a campaign which shook the Mughal Empire in India to its very foundations. He determined to compensate himself for the loss of Bengal by wresting the province of Jaunpur from Humayun and to draw him off from Bengal by threatening the safety of his imperial capital Agra. He laid his plan with consummate forethought. Khawas Khan was sent towards Bihar and Mungir to re-establish his authority in those regions, but mainly for the purpose of watching the movements of the Emperor in Bengal, fearing that Humayun might come suddenly upon him while engaged abroad.

Sher Khan himself crossed the Ganges and besieged Benares. "He soon took it and put to death Mir Fazli, the governor." (*Akbarnama*, i. 336.) Sher Khan was actuated by the bitterest feelings of enmity towards the Mughals; his conduct towards enemy combatants is marked from this time onwards by merciless fury. He was after all a Pathan who never forgets and forgives an injury. He bore in mind the amputation of the hands of his gunners at Chunar despite the Emperor's promise of safety. He put to the sword the greater part of the Mughals found at Benares* (see Abbas, Elliot, iv. 368).

* Jauhar says Sher Khan killed *seven hundred* Mughals (MS. p. 29) but he does not say where. Probably they were slaughtered at Benares.

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From Benares he went to Jaunpur and laid siege to it. Baba Beg Jalair, the governor of Jaunpur,* strongly fortified the place and bravely held out. He sent messengers to Agra and Gaur asking for relief. "Sher Khan sent Haibat Khan Niazi, Jalal Khan Jalu, Sarmast Khan Sarwani and other chiefs against Bahraich† and they drove out the Mughals from those parts." (Abbas, Elliot iv. 368.) Without waiting for the reduction of Jaunpur, Sher Khan overran the whole country as far as Qanauj. Abbas says, "Every governor on the part of the Emperor Humayun, throughout the whole country, who offered any opposition was killed or was defeated

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* Abbas says that the Governor of Jaunpur was killed. This is not true. Baba Beg Jalair joined Humayun at Chaunsa (See Gulbadan's *Humayun-Nama*, trans. by Mrs. Beveridge, p. 135). Abbas probably confounds "Yusuf Beg son of Ibrahim Beg Cabuq" with Baba Beg; Yusuf Beg another Mughal chief, was killed by Jalal Khan in a fight in the neighbourhood of Jaunpur (see *Akbar-nama*, i. 336).

†Bahraich is an important place in Oudh, 70 miles north of Faizabad, and lies in 82° long., 27° 5′ lat. This detachment was sent to overrun Oudh districts and probably North Bihar also. Abbas says that this detachment reached as far as the city of Sambhal, 80 miles east of Delhi, situated in 78° 8′ lat. But as a matter of fact the Afghans never penetrated so far. The imperialists admit that Sher Khan took possession of the country as far as Qanauj and there is no reason to doubt its truth. Besides it is not also very likely that the same detachment of troops marched eastward as far as Bahraich, and then turning westward, reached Sambhal by making so wide a curve.

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and driven out of the country." (Elliot, iv. 368.) Here and there, a few Mughal commandants held out, but they were in a state of siege and their reduction was only a question of time. The authority of the Emperor on the whole came to an end beyond the Doab. Sher Khan, without carrying on indiscriminate plunder of the whole country, conducted himself like a legitimate sovereign and appointed officers in the country who "collected the revenue of both the autumn and spring harvests of these parts."* (Elliot, iv. 368.) This was undoubtedly a novel and humane way of enriching himself without wasting the country. A few cities may have been plundered by his lieutenants, but the peasantry was spared. The wrath of Sher Khan raged furiously against the Mughals and not against the humble peasantry who had perforce submitted to them; 'For', said he, 'the cultivators are blameless, they submit to those in power." (Elliot, iv. 422 = MS. Abbas, p. 262.) Two important places, Chunar and Jaunpur, only held out against Sher Khan; both these places were besieged closely. The Mughals were panic-struck; those who were at Agra gave the Emperor up for lost, and those who were in Bengal realized that their happy abode of

* Sher Khan was in possession of the whole country from the beginning of October, 1538, to the end of February, 1539. The instalments of revenue-collection usually fall within this period.

pleasure and revelry was turned into a prison from which there was little chance of escape. Sher advanced towards Agra, but the news of Humayun's departure from Gaur held him back.

Humayun having made his entry into Gaur (middle of July, 1538) repaired and cleansed the city, and obliterated the ravages of war. The opium-eating monarch took a special fancy for it and re-named it Jinnatabad (*Tabakat-i-Akbari* in Elliot, v. 201) or the 'Paradise City.' He divided the province of Bengal among his nobles. During his stay of nine months in Bengal he indulged in such repose and idleness that after one month nobody could see him. He always kept himself confined in the harem. (Jauhar MS. p. 29 = Stewart p. 13.) The great officers and the soldiers imitated their royal master, and gathering materials of enjoyment and pleasure set to regale themselves. Valour oozed out of the hardy veterans of Central Asia in the moist plains of Bengal, as Capua sapped the energy of the fiery Africans of the great Hannibal.

About the end of December, 1538 A.D., the news of Sher Khan's victories disturbed the repose of the Emperor. He woke up, but could not believe his ears. "When His Majesty heard this news, he did not believe at all that affairs could take such a turn; (he asked) "how could Sher Khan dare so

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much?" (Jauhar MS. 29.) However, the Emperor showed some inclination to return to his capital. He called a private assembly of his nobles to decide to whom the charge of Bengal should be given. "His Majesty said 'Zahid Beg* often urges me to promote him. It will be better if he be made the governor of Bengal'.....Zahid Beg in that very assembly said: —'What, could you find no other place to kill me in than Bengal?'" (Jauhar MS. pp. 29-30.) Humayun was highly incensed towards him and resolved to punish Zahid Beg severely. But this made the case worse. Zahid Beg seduced Haji Muhammad Koki (?) and Zandar Beg from the path of loyalty, and these three men fled away to Agra. Having reached Agra, they tempted Mirza Hindal to assume royal prerogatives and made him kill Shaikh Bahlul, who had been sent there to urge Mirza Hindal to march to the relief of Jaunpur. Mirza Hindal read the *khutba* in his name, and instead of marching to the relief of Jaunpur, went off towards Delhi and besieged it.

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The husband of a sister of his queen Bega Begam.

CHAPTER VI

Retreat of Humayun and the Victory of Chaunsa.

When the news of Mirza Hindal's rebellion and the murder of Shaikh Bahlul reached Gaur, the Emperor (about the beginning of March, 1539) finally determined to leave Bengal. "His Majesty ordered Khan-i-Khanan Lodi* to go to Mungir and wait there for the arrival of the (main) army, coming behind." (Jauhar MS. p. 31.) Khan-i-Khanan Lodi reached Mungir, but Khawas Khan who was on the watch, surprised the fort one night, set fire to its gates and having captured Khan-i-Khanan Lodi alive, sent him to Sher Khan. (See Jauhar MS. p. 32 and Abbas Sarwani, Elliot, iv. 368). Humayun had scarcely marched out of the city of Gaur, when the news of this disaster reached his ears. Yet the Emperor could not realize the magnitude of his danger. Instead of

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* This man is wrongly identified by Abbas and Niamatullah with Khan-i-Khanan Yusuf Khail (Daulat Khan Lodi, who brought Babur from Kabul). He must have been some other Afghan chief of the Lodi tribe, who received this title either from Babur or Humayun after the death of Daulat Khan Lodi, who died before the first battle of Panipat was fought. (See Babur's *Memoirs* p. 463.)

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taking every available man with him, to enable him to cut his way through the lines of the enemy, he detached 5,000 troops under a brave and faithful officer, Jahangir Quli Beg, to garrison Gaur. He then sent Mirza Askari with a strong force to occupy Kahalgram (Colgong) and procure intelligence of Sher Khan. "News came that the troops of Sher Khan had besieged the fortresses of Chunar and Jaunpur, and taken possession of the whole country as far as Qanauj; and that at present he had recalled all his troops, and having concentrated them in the neighbourhood of Rohtas,* was occupying the head of the road. Mirza Askari sent this news in a dutiful letter to the Emperor." (Jauhar MS. p. 34). Humayun had intended to march along the road on the southern bank of the Ganges, and join Mirza Askari who had been ordered to wait at Kahalgram. Probably this news made the Emperor change his route, for we find that without joining Mirza Askari at Kahalgram he marched by the road along the *northern bank* of the Ganges, and arrived opposite Mungir. "Here Mirza Askari came from the other bank of the river and met the Emperor. His Majesty then, summoned all the Mirzas and amirs and asked their opinion whether the Ganges should

* A very accurate information. Abbas exactly says the same thing. (See Elliot, iv. 369.)

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be crossed or not. Phul Beg and Mullah Muhammad Farkh Ali, who enjoyed the confidence of the king, —and with whom most of the amirs agreed,—said 'The river should not be crossed. We should keep ourselves to the right-hand bank of the river and make our way to Jaunpur, and at Jaunpur we should wait till troops from that province and the region of Delhi come (to our assistance), and arms and armour reach us. Thus gathering our forces, we shall fight after the (coming) rainy season'. Muyyid Beg dissented from this view and became displeased; he said to His Majesty that Sher Khan, thinking that the Emperor out of fear did not cross the river, would become bold; so the river must be crossed. His Majesty assented to the words of Muyyid Beg, and ordered the army to cross the river*.....When the whole army crossed over (to the* southern bank) His Majesty marched stage by stage towards Muner". (Jauhar MS. pp. 23-25).

When Sher Khan heard the news of the Emperor's departure from Bengal, he checked his

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* Gulbadan says, "He was coming by that side of the Ganges (*i.e.*, the left bank) opposite Mungir, when his amirs represented: "You are a great king! Return by the way you came, lest Sher Khan should say: "Forsaking the road of advance he took another of retreat." The Emperor returned to Mungir (*i.e.*, crossed over to that place) and brought many of his people and family by boat up the river as far as Hajipur—Patna". *Humayun-Nama*, p. 135.)

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career of victory and turned back to meet the new situation. Without the least hesitation, he evacuated his new conquests and retired to South Bihar, thus perhaps giving an opportunity to the Emperor to end the quarrel and return to his capital undisturbed by marching along the northern bank. But Muyyid Beg proved the evil genius of Humayun who was, as it were, delivered into the hands of the enemy. Sher Khan's main army was in the neighbourhood of Rohtas; except one division under Khawas Khan left (says Abbas) to act against Maharatha Chero, zemindar of Bihar. But it seems that Sher Khan's intention in posting this division was to place one part of his forces behind the Mughal army. However, the Emperor marched without any interruption as far as Muner on the Son; but as soon as he placed his feet unwisely on the soil of the Shahabad district, the very den of the 'Tiger Lord', misfortune overtook him.

The disorganized state of the Emperor's army tempted an attack from Sher Khan, who had taken up his position on the upper course of the Son (in the neighbourhood of Rohtas). He assembled his chiefs and harangued them, dwelling on the advantage of attacking the Emperor. He asked the opinion of Azam Humayun Sarwani, Qutb Khan, Haibat Khan Niazi, Jalal Khan bin Julu, Shujaat Khan, Sarmast

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Khan and others, who "unanimously declared that it was advisable to fight, for they would never have such an opportunity again. When Sher Khan perceived that the Afghans were united in his favour, and in good heart to fight the Mughals, he quitted the hills of Rohtas and marched out to meet the enemy". (Abbas MS. pp. 153-154 = Elliot iv. 369-70). He put himself in the rear of the Mughals and harassed them during their westward advance from Muner. Jauhar gives us the account of the four days' march of the imperial army, from Muner to the neighbourhood of Chaunsa, and their experiences and alarms from the attack of Sher Khan's army. "One day the men of the rear-guard brought word to His Majesty, 'The Afghans are showing themselves in our rear.' His Majesty ordered it to be proclaimed that the troopers should keep armour on their persons during the march. On the second day news was brought that a skirmish had taken place with the enemy with an exchange of arrows and musketry fire. During the third day's march news came that the mountain-splitting *degs* (heavy siege-guns) which had destroyed the towers of Chunar, and which were (now) being conveyed in boats, had been seized by the Afghans. His Majesty ordered the soldiers to put on their armour and mount. On the fourth day, the soldiers wore their armour and mounted and, resuming the

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march, reached Chaunsa, when one *pas* (prahar) of day was yet left, (say at 4 P.M.). The soldiers had scarcely dismounted when a thick cloud of dust was seen approaching from the "*eastern*" horizon. His Majesty ordered (his men) to find out whose troops they were; (a great deal of) time passed before news came of the arrival of Sher Khan himself in battle array. His Majesty asked his nobles as to what should be done. Qasim Husain Sultan said "Sher Khan has ridden about 18 or 19 kos to-day; the necks of his horses being wearied, the mounts of his troops have become unfit for an action.....We must offer battle this very day; let God give victory to whomsoever He pleases.....His Majesty agreed; but as this plan did not please Muyyid Beg, His Majesty sided with Muyyid Beg; and [changing his mind] said that the battle ought to be postponed (as) there was no necessity for hurry. When the nobles and soldiers heard these words of His Majesty they all became disheartened; the army halted and encamped. Sher Khan alighted in the vicinity and encamped opposite the imperial army. He threw earthen redoubts and sheltered his army within these earthen fortifications....." (Jauhar MS. pp. 35-36.) [Stewart's translation, p. 16, is imperfect and has been rejected by me.]

There seems to be some inaccuracy in Jauhar's

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description of a cloud of dust raised by the hoofs of Sher Khan's horses approaching from "the *east*". Sher Khan was already in touch with his rear-guard. So the appearance of an army in the *east* could have caused no surprise to the Emperor nor any doubt as to whose army it was. The enemy's movements on that side were sure to be promptly reported by the men of the rear-guard. Besides in such a case there was no necessity for 36 or 38 miles' ride for Sher Khan to overtake the Emperor. So *mushriq* (east) seems to be a mistake for *mughrib* (the west). The fact is that up to the third day's march Sher Khan was in the rear of the Emperor. On the fourth day he made a wide detour through the interior of the country lying to the south of the Grand Road, marched past the Emperor's army unperceived by them, and then turning round was galloping rapidly towards the Emperor's army from the west or south-west. So the cloud of dust must have appeared in the west and not in the east. The cause of the surprise of the Emperor was that he was under the impression that Sher Khan was in his rear; so the appearance of an army (in the front) seemed unaccountable to him; probably he imagined it to be a Mughal army marching to join him from Chunar or Jaunpur, which places were still held by his officers.

The original place of the encampment of the

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Emperor and Sher Khan is thus noticed by Niamatullah. "Sher Khan pitched his own opposite the royal camp, at a village called *Shataya* (Dorn p. 118 *Shuya*),* between Jhusa (Chaunsa) and Baksar (Dorn's translation does not contain this name), so that both armies were encamped on the same side of the Ganges. There was also a small stream† flowing between the two camps; the banks of the stream were so steep that it could not be crossed except at the usual ford." (*Makhzan-i-Afaghana*, MS. p. 312; quoted in Elliot, iv. 370, foot-note I).

There is no other stream except the Thora Nuddy (lit. the tiny stream) flowing through the tract between Chaunsa and Buxar. It runs into the Ganges 5 miles east of Chaunsa and 3 miles west of Buxar. It cut the Grand Trunk Road through which Humayun advanced. This little stream possessed, on account of its swampy nature, a military importance disproportionate to its dimensions.‡

It is very likely that the Afghans and the

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* We are unable to identify the village Shataya or Shuya either in Rennell's map or in G. S. map.

† Abbas Sarwani says:—"The breadth of the stream was 25 yards." (Elliot, iv. 370).

‡ Babur in his *Memoirs* speaks of it thus:—"We waited (at Chaunsa) a day for a road to be managed across a smallish swampy rivulet heard to be ahead." (Babur's *Memoirs*, p. 660.) Mrs. Beveridge in the foot-note rightly identifies it with the Thora Nuddy.)

Mughals encamped on its western and eastern banks respectively. This was a position from which the Emperor could neither attack Sher Khan nor continue his retreat by marching past his position without peril. Jauhar says, "Every day (during the two months) the two armies skirmished, and men were killed on both sides. After two and a half months (beginning of June 1539) the rainy season set in with great violence, and the fortified camp of Sher Khan was over-flooded."* (Jauhar MS. p. 36).

Sher Khan abandoning the old site of his encampment moved towards the Karmanasha and encamped on the western bank† of that river. The Emperor followed him and pitched his tents at Chaunsa.

Meanwhile the distress of the Emperor had

* The fact that Sher Khan's camp was overflooded shows that this was situated on a comparatively low ground liable to inundation. Martin says (*Eastern India*, i. 398) that the Gangetic basin of Shahabad district to the north of the Grand Road is regularly flooded three or four times a year. So it is very likely that Sher Khan's original camp was situated very near the bank of the Ganges with the purpose of watching the Emperor, lest he should escape by water.

† The battle is said to have been fought between Chaunsa and Chupa Ghat. We do not find any such place either in Rennell's map or the Indian Survey map. Chupa Ghat was probably the name of some ford of the Karmanasha river. In the Indian Survey map, we find a place named Saer Chupurbund on the western bank of the Karmanasha river 6 miles south-west of Chaunsa. Sher Khan later on probably removed his camp somewhere near it.

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grown acute. There was a scarcity in his camp. (Gulbadan p. 135). It was evident that if he could not extricate himself from his present position he, with his army, must perish by hunger if not by the arms of the enemy. There was no chance of succour from his unnatural brothers; the news from that quarter was all heartening. Mirza Haidar thus describes the situation at Agra, and the attitude of his brothers and other adherents. "Repeated messengers came (from the Emperor at Jhusa).....saying that his brothers should come quickly, as it was necessary to make an end of Sher Khan, (the letters arrived, but) the brothers were engaged in hostilities; so the enemy remained at ease. When the news of these events reached Kamran Mirza, he at once led his army.....His arrival* filled the breasts of the people with fresh courage, so that the veterans exerted themselves in affording assistance to the Emperor in Jhusa. But some perverse advisers offered different counsel saying : 'To go to Jhusa would be to release the Emperor destroy the enemy and ensnare us'. Kamran Mirza in his ignorance and child-like folly mistook this advice for wisdom and delayed in setting forth." (*Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, pp. 470-471). Having

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* Gulbadan says....."There arose in him also a desire of sovereignty. With 12,000 fully equipped horsemen he came to Delhi." (*Humayun-Nama*, p. 137).

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no other remedy the Emperor stooped to sue for peace. Jauhar says, "The battle was postponed every day, till it was found advisable to make peace with Sher Khan". (Jauhar MS. p. 36.) "Shaikh Khalil, a descendant of.....Shaikh Farid Shakkar Ganj, was sent to Sher Khan with the object of bringing about a peace. The Shaikh went to Sher Khan and gave him much advice. Sher Khan consented to make peace on the condition that the fort of Chunar with the territories on this side (*i.e.*, to the east) of that fortress should be given to him. The Shaikh wrote a dutiful letter to His Majesty representing: 'Sher Khan is raising objection on the point of the Chunar fort. If it pleases (Your Majesty) to grant this to Sher Khan he is ready to make peace'. The nobles of His Majesty did not think it advisable to give Chunar to Sher Khan. At length, the agreement to make peace was cancelled."* (Jauhar MS. p. 37.)

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* But negotiations seem to have been going on, as the continued presence of the Shaikh in Sher Khan's camp suggests. Stewart's Jauhar gives a completely different version of the affair. There we find that "Humayun ultimately was obliged to comply with his insolent demands and peace was accordingly concluded". (Stewart's Jauhar, p. 17.) There is some improbability in Stewart's version that the Emperor and his nobles, who disdained even to deviate from the road of advance in the course of retreat, should have submitted to the humility of surrendering a fort in his firm possession to the hated rebel. The fact seems to be that the Shaikh continued to

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In the meanwhile Sher Khan had recalled Khawas Khan's division operating against Maharatha Chero. That general rejoined his master, and "in obedience to a suggestion of Sher Khan, circulated the report among the troops, that Maharatha (Dorn p. 120) had taken up a post which the spies could not ascertain, and that he probably intended to lull the Afghans into security, and to defeat them by surprise. This belief had, by Sher Khan's exertions, pervaded the whole army, and he, under the pretext of putting his troops in motion against Maharatha, moved on every day, a distance of 3 miles (four kos, as Abbas says, is more likely), and then returning told his people that he had been disappointed in the quest of the enemy. This manœuvre he continued for 5 or 6 days (Abbas says 2 days) and succeeded so well in rendering the Mughals secure that they believed all his operations to be directed against another enemy". (Dorn p. 120.)

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reside in the camp of Sher Khan, even after Humayun's refusal to give up his contention about Chunar, which only stood in the way of the conclusion of the treaty. Whether peace was actually concluded or not is a controverted point and a great deal of untruth has gathered about this incident. The weight of authority and evidence points to the fact that the peace was not concluded, though Sher Khan might have continued to play with the offer either to extort better terms or to throw the Mughals off their guard. The story of Sher Khan's perfidy (his swearing upon the Quran, etc., as told by Badaoni), is a myth.

One morning he despatched from his camp Khawas Khan with a choice body of troops and several well-trained elephants. Nobody took much notice of it, thinking that he was going against Maharatha Chero. But this aroused the suspicion of Shaikh Khalil, who wrote a letter to the Emperor saying 'I tried to persuade Sher Khan to come to a peaceful agreement; but in the end could not secure his consent. This day about the time of the second prayer, Khawas Khan with all his troops has been given leave and has marched away from the army (of Sher Khan). Let your Majesty be present (with the imperial troops) so that no movement may be made (against you) [*Hazir bashed ke harkate nashawwad*]. His Majesty did not mind it at all."*

Sher Khan assembled "a little before midnight" all his chiefs in a secret council of war and harangued them, as was his custom, against the Emperor whose faithlessness rendered peace with him impossible. When all his chiefs agreed upon the advisability of war, he explained to them his secret plan. "When he dismissed his chiefs he ordered

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* Stewart's translation, as usual, gives a different version :— "The king would not believe the information or that Sher Khan would be guilty of such a breach of honour or religion, and passed the night without taking any precautions." (*Memoirs of Humayun*, p. 17.)

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them to array their men with all speed as if they were still in alarm as to Maharatha; and when one watch of the night yet remained the whole army, according to Sher Khan's command, marched two and half *kos* in the direction of Maharatha's country." (Elliot, iv. 374.) Sher Khan,* having left his camp at night, must have marched at least 7 or 8 miles southwards before he crossed the Karmanasha, to conceal his movements from the Mughal pickets, posted opposite his camp. As bridges had already been thrown at suitable places, there was no confusion in crossing the stream. From the eastern bank of the Karmanasha the Afghan army could not reach the Ganges without marching at least 25 miles in a north-easterly direction, to preserve the complete secrecy of their movement. Khawas Khan† joined him on the way and led the attack. When the Afghans were actually approaching the imperial encampment, Sher Khan explained the real objec-

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* He took only the cavalry and elephants with him. Abul-Fazl says, "At length he fraudulently and deceitfully left a body of infantry and artillery in face.....The royal army did not understand the craft of this trickster." (*Akbarnama*, i. 343.) Abul-Fazl attributes the disaster to the negligence of Muhammad Zaman Mirza in keeping watch on that night.

† It is curious to notice that Abbas and Niamatullah make no special mention of the name of Khawas Khan. No departure of that general in the morning is mentioned. But according to Jauhar it was Khawas Khan who attacked the imperial camp.

tive of their march and exhorted them to fight bravely. Having drawn up his forces in order of battle, Sher Khan with all haste marched towards the Emperor's camp. In the pleasing coolness of the early dawn of June, 27th, 1539, the Mughals were slumbering carelessly, when the Afghans all of a sudden fell upon them. When they were roused by the uproar, there was no time to put on armour and array themselves in battle order. Every one therefore sought safety in flight. When the kettle-drums were beaten at the command of the Emperor, about 300 men gathered about him. With this small band he kept up a brave fight. But his example failed to rally his cowardly followers. He was wounded in the left arm and the enemy began to close upon him. To save him from capture, his soldiers seized the reins of his horse and drew him off from the field, towards the Ganges. He urged his horse into the river, but on being thrown off its back, was on the verge of drowning. He was rescued by a water-carrier named Nizam, who was crossing the river by supporting himself on his inflated leather bag.

Never was a surprise more complete: the imperial harem with a large number of other Mughal families fell into the hands of the Afghans. Erskine estimates the loss of Humayun as 8,000 in killed. About half of them fell victims to the sword, while the

rest perished in the Ganges. The conduct of Sher Khan to the helpless Mughal women and children who fell into his hands, appears in a very pleasing light. "When the Emperor Humayun's queen* with other noble ladies and a crowd of women came out from behind the *parda*, he alighted off his horse and showed them every respect and consoled them.....He ordered *naqibs* (heralds) to proclaim in the army that no person should make captive of Mughal women and children, but bring every one of them to the *saraparda* (screened tent) of the Begam (the imperial consort). Dread of his authority had taken such possession of the Afghans, that no one dared to resist it, and the *naqibs* before night brought all the wives and families† of the Mughals to the tent of the queen, and rations were assigned to each person". (Abbas MS. 166-167 = Elliot, iv. 375-376.)

The effect of the victory of Chaunsa‡ upon the

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* Called Haji Begam by Abul-Fazl (*Akbarnama*, i. 343). She was most probably Bega Begam, whom Jauhar mentions in his *Memoirs*. (See MS. p. 30—Stewart, p. 14). She was present at Gaur with Humayun. Stewart awkwardly writes her name as "Byke Begum".

† In spite of the laudable efforts of Sher Khan some were found missing; such as "Ayisha Sultan Begam, Aquiqa Begam, Chand Bibi (who was seven months with child), and Shad Bibi and several others." The last three were of Humayun's *harem*. (Gulbadan's *Humayun-Nama*, pp. 136-137.)

‡ The date 9th Safar 946 is given by Abul-Fazl, (Mr. Beveridge's translation of *Akbarnama*, i. 344).

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Mughal Empire was similar to that of Surajgarh upon the monarchy of Bengal. The horizon of Sher Khan's ambition was immensely widened. Twelve months before he would have been glad to hold Bengal as the vassal of the Emperor. Now he won, by this single stroke, Jaunpur in addition to Bengal and Bihar, in independent sovereignty and could legitimately claim equality with the Emperor. After the victory at Chaunsa, Sher Khan sent back Khawas Khan to Bihar to complete the subjugation of Maharatha Chero, despatched Jalal Khan bin Jalu and Haji Khan Batni to Bengal, and himself undertook the task of pursuing the Emperor. (See Dorn, p. 123 and Elliot, iv. 377). Sher Khan crossed the Ganges and marched as far as Qanauj. He seems not to have been very serious about the chase of the Emperor, who could not have escaped if Sher Khan had been really intent on his capture. He mainly occupied himself in consolidating into firm possession the territories on that bank of the Ganges, which four months before had been over-run by his troops. Jaunpur and Chunar, the only Mughal outposts left unconquered before, were evacuated by their commandants who joined Humayun during his flight. We learn from Jauhar that Humayun during his retreat was helped by Rajah Birbhan of Arail (near Allahabad, on the southern bank of the Ganges),

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who undertook to oppose Brahmajit Gaur (the lieutenant of Sher Khan), coming behind the Emperor. Humayun crossed over to the Mirzapur side of the Ganges through this Rajah's help and pursued his journey to Kalpi by fording the Jamuna. (See Jauhar MS. p. 41 = Stewart). Bereft of his family, followers and fortune, he returned to Agra, broken hearted and crest-fallen. (10th July, 1539.)*

Sher Shah the King of Bengal and Jaunpur.

Sher Khan contented himself with occupying the country as far as the modern Hardoi district opposite Qanauj. If he had any mind to advance further west, the Ganges lay in front, and the Ganges in the month of July is a formidable obstacle to any general. Indeed, his abstinence from immediate advance upon Agra was an act of consummate prudence. Mirza Kamran was there with 12,000 well-equipped horsemen, and Mirza Hindal had also an army at Alwar. On the spur of the moment, if they were allowed no time to reflect, they might have combined, and Sher Khan would have had to

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* Haidar Mirza says, "In the middle of the rains the brothers came together. This occurred in Safar of the year 946" (*Tarikh-i-Rashidi* by Ellias and Ross, p. 47). The month of Safar expired on July 17th, 1539. Humayun was defeated at Chaunsa on June 27th, so it is probable that he did not take more than 13 days to reach Agra.)

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encounter a formidable enemy, with the Ganges in flood in his rear. Sher Khan was not a man to be carried away by success or to be depressed under defeat; he would not raise one foot till he was sure of the ground beneath the other. Having consolidated his acquisitions on the eastern bank of the Ganges, where every vestige of Mughal dominion was effaced, Sher Khan returned to Bihar,* (about the middle of September, 1539) and halted there for some time.

His lieutenants Haji Khan Batni and Jalal Khan bin Jalu, besieged Jahangir Quli Beg at Gaur. That brave officer, with his 5000 Mughals, maintained the unequal contest for a time. Seeing that he had no hope of succour from Agra, he evacuated the city and retired to the open country, probably with a bold resolve to cut his way to Agra. But he was ultimately forced to surrender on a promise of safety.†

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* Abul-Fazl says (*Akbarnama*, i. 345) "He came to the extremity of Bihar and then halted there....." But Abul-Fazl makes a mistake by saying that he came there direct from Chaunsa. Sher Khan waited there probably for the cessation of the rains.

† (See *Akbarnama*, i. 345). Abul-Fazl says, "He (Jahangir Quli Beg) came forth thence on a false treaty and engagement". No other writer mentions the fact of surrender. Nevertheles Abul Fazl's statement seems to be correct. That Jahangir Quli Beg was a prisoner is implied by the words "Him he ordered to be put to death" of Abbas. (See Elliot, iv. 378). This was done probably in violation of the promise of his lieutenants.

When Sher Khan came to Bengal (middle of October?, 1539) he refused to abide by the promise of his lieutenants and ordered Jahangir Quli Beg with his troops to be put to death.

Another illustrious prisoner, Khan-i-Khanan Yusuf Khail*,—Jauhar's Khan-i-Khanan Lodi,—who had been captured at Mungir, also received his death sentence (Abbas MS. p. 175 = Elliot, iv. 378). This man was accused of having done many things hostile to Sher Khan and of always inciting the Emperor to enmity with him. Other 'chiefs of Hind' who had been with the Emperor Humayun, were set at liberty (MS. Abbas p. 174). The special severity to the Khan-i-Khanan and the liberation of non-

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* This man figures in Abbas Sarwani's book as an Afghan Bibhishan (treacherous brother of Ravana). Elliot MS. seems to identify him with Daulat Khan Lodi, which is a grievous error. In this passage Elliot's translation contains the following sentence, "The Khan-i-Khanan Yusuf Khail who brought Babur into India from Kabul," and this very man—who died a natural death at Sultanpur a few days before the first battle of Panipat,—is made to be killed again under Sher Khan's orders 13 years later. But for Jauhar's mention of one Khan-i-Khanan Lodi as an adherent of Humayun and a passage of our MS., every incident connected with this man should have been rejected outright. In place of the erroneous passage of Elliot's MS. ours says:

"The Emperor, who had come to Gujrat, was taken by him, out of enmity, to that direction" (the rest the same as in Elliot). It is quite clear that the Emperor meant is Humayun (and not Babur). That direction signifies Bihar and Bengal.

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Mughal prisoners of war were dictated by policy. In spite of his adhesion to the Mughals, the Khan-i-Khanan was held in esteem by all Afghans owing to his high social position*. This he might at any moment turn to political advantage prejudicial to Sher Khan, as among the Afghans in India sovereignty and political pre-eminence were still associated with the name of Lodis. Descended from the royal tribe of Lodi, the Khan-i-Khanan could never compromise his sense of dignity so as to submit peacefully to the son of the Jagirdar of Sasaram, once a dependent of his house.

After the victory of Chaunsa, Sher Khan became the *de facto* ruler of the vast territories bounded on the west† by the bend of the Ganges from Qanauj to Chunar, on the south by the hills of Jharkhand (from Rohtas to Birbhum) and the Bay of Bengal, on the east by the hills of Assam and Chittagong, and on the north by the Himalayas. But he had no legal right to sanctify these acquisitions of his sword. He was still a private man, a rebellious though triumphant vassal of the Emperor Humayun. He had no legal

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* Sher Shah said "Every Afghan whom I have consulted has said, "He is an Afghan of consideration and it is not advisable to kill him....." (Elliot, iv. 379).

† The rest of the western boundary line was probably marked by the course of the Ramganga river, which issuing from the Himalayas falls into the Ganges a few miles above Qanauj.

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status either at home or abroad. The people living under him could not but regard his rule as a temporary military occupation. He could claim no international recognition without the assumption of the kingly title, which alone could qualify him to treat with other potentates of India on a footing of equality. All the disadvantages which a political upstart suddenly raised to power feels, were felt by Sher Khan. The following passage, though meant to describe the peculiar position of Shivaji, is of universal application to the cases of all successful military adventurers without a hereditary claim. Like Shivaji Sher Khan, "so long as he was a mere private subject, could not with all his real power claim the loyalty and devotion of the people over whom he ruled. His promises could not have the sanctity and continuity of the public engagements of the head of a State. He could sign no treaty, grant no land with legal validity and an assurance of permanence. The territories conquered by his sword could not become his lawful property, however undisturbed his possessions over them might be in practice. The people living under his sway or serving under his banners, could not renounce their allegiance to the former sovereign of the lands, nor be sure that they were exempt from the charge of treason for their

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obedience to him....." (*Shivaji and his Times* by Prof. J. N. Sarkar, p. 266).

As the rise of the Bhonslas created jealousy among the other Maratha families, so the rise of the Surs was looked upon with envy by the powerful Lodi and Farmuli tribes. They held themselves aloof from Sher Khan, whom they looked down upon as an upstart. Among the notable chiefs of Sher Khan we do not find the name* of any Lodi or Farmuli noble. Khan-i-Khanan Lodi's faithful adherence to the Emperor and Mubarak Farmuli's death at Garhi fighting for the Mughals (Abbas in Elliot, iv. 367) show that the proud chiefs of these two tribes scorned to enter Sher Khan's service. It became necessary to rectify his position in their eyes by the formal assumption of sovereignty, the magnificence and awe of which compensate for any defect in social status. According to the Islamic conception of sovereignty, he is the lawful sovereign in whose name the *khutba* is read in the mosques of the kingdom. Having broken finally with the Emperor, Sher Khan could not allow the *khutba* to be read, as before, in Humayun's name. Nor could the exercise of this

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* The list of nobles who joined Sher Khan after the fall of Bahadur Shah as given in Abbas Sarwani's book is extremely faulty. Most of the persons (see Elliot, iv. 352) mentioned were already dead, except the two Sarwanis.

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all-important function of Islamic sovereignty be kept in abeyance, as it would have meant the suspension of an important religious rite,—the prayers of the Faithful cannot be complete without the reading of the *khutba*. So Sher Khan, after the victory of Chaunsa, found himself in such a situation that his open assumption of the kingly title could not be delayed.

Sher Khan had to proceed very cautiously in carrying out his new project because his assumption of sovereignty was likely to be resented by many of his aristocratic adherents, who, owing to their proud ancestry, and their own honourable rank in the Court of the Lodis claimed a social superiority to him. The Afghans in general are ardent lovers of democratic equality and look askance at the exaltation of one of their own race above his fellows. The secret of Sher Khan's hold over his followers was that he did not command them like servants but led them as comrades, by mixed persuasion and firmness. He behaved as one of them, sharing the hard labour of his meanest soldier* and exercising his authority

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* Badaoni (Ranking, i. 360) says that when an ambassador from Humayun reached Sher Khan's camp at Chaunsa, he found Sher Khan "with his sleeves rolled up and with a spade in hand, in spite of the heat, was busy preparing the fort and entrenchment.....He sat unceremoniously on the ground to receive the ambassador."

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without any parade. If he were suddenly to exalt himself to kingship, discontent might arise among them. He had no pretension to a higher social status which might have commanded recognition. Besides, after the fall of Bahadur Shah, when some of the old nobles of Sultans Bahlul and Sikandar joined him (Sher), his position became more delicate. These nobles could not forget the pride of their higher social position, especially the two Sarwanis,—Azam Humayun Sarwani and Isa Khan Sarwani,—who remembered that Hassan Sur, the father of Sher Khan, was once a servant of their illustrious ancestor Umar Khan Sarwani. These nobles might feel themselves humiliated by his assumption of sovereignty and sever themselves from him. The alienation of such nobles was sure to be followed by great discontent among the Afghans, which could not but seriously injure his position.

However, the dazzling success against the Mughals had created a new wave of enthusiasm among the Afghans. The victories of Sher Khan were looked upon as a national triumph. In the moment of national rejoicing, an opportune proposal for Sher Khan's sitting on the throne was made in the assembly of the Afghans by Masnad-i-Ala Isa Khan Sarwani, the grandson of Umar Khan Sarwani, and was received with joyful acclamation

by all the Afghans present. The Sarwani chief*—perhaps coached beforehand—thus tactfully saved Sher Khan from an unpleasant situation.

When all the Afghans with one voice urged that there should be no delay in the celebration of the ceremony of accession to the throne, Sher Khan "ordered the astrologers to fix an auspicious moment, for his ascent to the throne". (Abbas, Elliot iv. 377.)

There were no preconceived and elaborate preparations for the inauguration ceremony, because even an hour before the victory of Chaunsa, Sher Khan could not have dreamt of such an event. In the month of December, 1539, the ceremony was performed at Gaur. In an auspicious moment, Sher Khan, then in the evening of his life,† sat on the throne of Bengal, and the "royal umbrella" of the kings of Gaur was spread over his head. Coins were struck and the *khutba* was read in his name, where "*Khan*" was displaced by "*Shah*". He took the additional title of *Al Sultan-ul-Adil*‡ or the *Just*

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* This Afghan chief played a part similar to that of the King of Bavaria, who in 1871 coached by Bismarck, suggested in the assembly of German princes at Versailles that King William of Prussia should be given the title of German Emperor.

† His age about 53 years.

‡ Abbas Sarwani and other writers say that he assumed the title of Shah Alam. But it is more likely that this title was assumed after he became the sole Emperor of Hindustan. At the time of his accession to the throne he must have assumed the title of Sultan-

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Monarch. Letters of victory were sent to the different provinces of the realm. Abbas Sarwani gives the following account of the festivity at Sher Shah's coronation :—"For seven days drums were beaten in token of rejoicing. The Afghan youths came in troops from every tribe, and danced according to the custom of the Afghans. Gifts were made to these musicians, and the servants of Sher Shah sprinkled saffron and musk, mixed with rose-water, and ambergris (a rich perfume and cordial) of various colours upon the heads of the dancing youths. Delicious dishes emitting sweet scent which suggested the perennial flavour of the dinner table of heaven, and drinks, which by their sweetness of taste", reminded one of the purifying wine (*sharab-i-tahaur*)* were distributed among the merry-makers. [MS. Abbas, p. 173; not fully trans. in Elliot.]

APPENDIX

WHERE AND WHEN WAS SHER KHAN CROWNED?

Abbas Sarwani does not say when and where Sher Khan was enthroned. Dorn is also silent upon

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i-Adil as his coins show. See Thomas's *Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Delhi*, p. 394.

In foreign correspondence his seal bore the title of *Padshah-i-Bengal o Jaunpur*.

* A Sufi mystic expression suggesting the intoxicating influence of Divine Love upon man.

these points. According to our MS. *Makhzan*, the coronation took place in Bengal. Nizamuddin (Persian text 230), Ferishta (Persian text p. 226), Badaoni (p. 461) also corroborate this. Our MS. *Tarikh-i-Daudi* (p. 185) says:—"In 946 A.H., Sher Khan after the victory at Chaunsa, with the consent of the Afghans, sat on the throne, spread the royal umbrella over him, read the *khutba* and issued coins in his name. He assumed the title of Sher Shah Alam." Elphinstone (*History of India*, p. 448) makes a sad mistake by saying that Sher Khan assumed the title of Shah before the battle of Chaunsa. (Place of coronation is not mentioned.) We cannot trace the original source of this error. Thomas also writes that Sher Khan assumed the title of Shah or King of Bihar in 945 A.H. before Chaunsa; (*Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Delhi*, p. 393). V. Smith has repeated the mistake of Thomas and Elphinstone. He says, "Sher Khan, who had assumed the title of king (Shah or Sultan) and will henceforth be designated as Sher Shah, intercepted Humayun at Chaunsa in June, 1539". (*The Oxford History of India*, by V. Smith, p. 326.) By this he clearly means that the assumption of the kingly title took place before the victory of Chaunsa. On p. 329, of the same book, he gives January, 1542, as the date of "the enthronement of Sher Shah".

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This date as well as the incident is a pure guess. No Persian history says anywhere that Sher Shah's accession took place after the victory of Qanauj. It stands true beyond doubt that the coronation took place at Gaur in 946 A.H., the year 946 beginning on 19th May, 1539 A.D. and ending on the 7th May, 1540 A.D.

In the *History of the Portuguese in Bengal* we find: "Sher Shah proclaimed himself Emperor of Bengal in 1538 and the following year..... fought the great battle of Qanauj". (Campos, p. 41.) The year 1538 A.D. is either a slip of the author or a misprint for 1539, as the allusion to the battle of Qanauj (1540 A.D.) indicates. Moreover, Campos says that the assumption of the title of the Emperor of Bengal took place, after the battle of Chaunsa (27th June, 1539). This also unmistakably shows that the year 1539 is meant. Thus, we find that the ceremony took place at Gaur about the beginning of December, 1539 A.D.

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CHAPTER VII

Final Victory over Humayun.

Abortive Embassy to Malwa and Gujrat.

About the beginning of January, 1540, Sher Shah sent Isa Khan Hajjab (envoy) on a political mission to Malwa and Gujrat. The object of the mission was to induce the rulers of those countries to create a diversion in favour of Sher Shah by attacking the imperial territories about Agra, in co-operation with an Afghan army under his son Qutb Khan whom he had decided to send to Malwa for that purpose.

After the death of Bahadur Shah in 1537, Gujrat and Malwa fell into a state of confusion and impotence. At this time Mahmud Shah III, the King of Gujrat, was a minor. Two powerful nobles, Imad-ul-mulk and Dariya Khan, had been continually quarrelling for ascendancy at his Court. (Briggs, iv. 145-146). The latter had triumphed for the time and was at the head of affairs, when Isa Khan reached Gujrat. Dariya Khan, who had too many enemies to fight at home, was not in a mood to enter into a war with the Mughals to further the design of Sher Shah. He excused himself, writing

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to Sher Shah that his king was a minor and the nobles of Gujrat were at enmity with one another.

Nor was the mission more successful in Malwa. Three powerful chiefs were ruling in virtual independence over different parts of that kingdom, after the death of Bahadur Shah. The foremost among them was Mallu Khan, who had taken possession of Mandu, Sarangpur, Ujjain and Bhilsa, and in 1538 assumed the title of Qadir Shah, Sultan of Mandu; Puran Mall governed the districts of Chanderi and Raisin,—practically eastern Malwa—in the name of his infant nephew; and Muin Khan, son of Sikandar Khan of Hindia, ruled the territories south of the Narmada. Abbas says that these chiefs of Malwa, except Mallu Khan, agreed to assist the son of Sher Shah. But this seems to be extremely doubtful, as no motive can be found which might have impelled these petty chiefs to provoke the Emperor by which they had nothing to gain. However, the failure of the mission was openly due to an affront given to Mallu Khan, by Sher Shah, who wrote a letter to him in the form of a *farman*, with Sher Shah's seal affixed at the top, asking him to send his forces to ravage the imperial territories around Agra. (See Ferishta, Pers. text, p. 270, Book II). This form of epistle was an insult to a brother-king and an equal in rank.* It cannot be

believed that so shrewd a politician as Sher Shah knowingly offered a gratuitous insult so prejudicial to his self-interest. The fact of Mallu Khan's assumption of the royal title was possibly unknown to Sher Shah, as at that time (1538) Sher Shah was only a private man, not in diplomatic correspondence with kings elsewhere; any how Qadir Shah was highly enraged at this slur upon his dignity, and returned it in kind by ordering his 'munshi' to send a letter to Sher Shah with his own seal fixed at the top.

About a month after the despatch of Isa Khan to Gujrat and Malwa, Sher Shah started from Bengal, in the beginning of February 1540, against Humayun after having made over the charge of Bengal to Khizr Khan. Mirza Haidar says, "Sher Khan came to the bank of the Ganges and sent an army under Qutb Khan across the river to capture Kalpi and Etawah". This shows that both father and son marched together as far as the junction of the Jamuna and the Ganges, opposite Allahabad, and from this place Qutb Khan was detached from the main army to cross the

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* A superior writing to an inferior or dependent should affix the seal at the top, an inferior to a superior at the bottom, and persons of equal rank at the back of an epistle. This was the rule observed in international correspondence in medieval India. (See Briggs, iv 371, foot-note.)

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Jamuna, and pursue his march to Malwa *via* Kalpi, while Sher Shah shortly after crossed the Ganges and marched up stream for Qanauj. The result of Isa Khan's political mission had not become known to Sher Shah, when he sent Qutb Khan towards Malwa about the end of February, 1540. He seems to have been too sanguine about the success of his diplomatic move and thought that the appearance of an Afghan army in Malwa would facilitate the work of Isa Khan and hearten the Malwa princes to join the coalition against the Mughals. But this was not a well-calculated step worthy of a cautious politician like Sher Shah. Herein he committed his first act of political indiscretion. His plan as a general to prevent a complete concentration of the Mughal forces, near Qanauj, by placing one of his divisions in the neighbourhood of Agra, was praiseworthy; but he committed a grievous error by presuming, on very insufficient political grounds, that the princes of Malwa and Gujrat would side with him, and by deciding to send an army before the result of the negotiations was known to him. The idea of the possible failure of Isa Khan's mission did not occur to him; he made no proper arrangement to send reinforcements to his son, in case any mishap befell him, by securing a firm hold over Kalpi and keeping open the line of communication with the main army.

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Qutb Khan marched with his division towards Malwa, *via* Kalpi. After a few marches he became aware of the unfavourable attitude of the rulers of Malwa, and hastily turned back from the neighbourhood of Chanderi. Meanwhile, the news of his advance upon Kalpi was reported to the Emperor at Agra. The Mughals, who were unaware of the design of Sher Shah and the real objective of Qutb Khan's march, thought that the Afghan army was advancing up the Jamuna to conquer Kalpi and Etawah. Humayun sent an army against him, under three Mughal officers, Husain Sultan, Yadgar Nasir Mirza and Iskandar Sultan. Qutb Khan encountered the Mughal army in the course of his retreat,—in the neighbourhood of Kalpi.* Disdaining to fly before the enemy, the brave youth offered a gallant but injudicious fight and met with an honourable death.

Affairs of the Mughals after the Battle of Chaunsa.

Humayun having reached Agra tried his best to unite all his brothers and other Mughal amirs in a

*Abbas says that the battle was fought at Chonda, which we cannot accept in defiance of so valuable an authority as Mirza Haidar. Abul-Fazl (*Akbarnama*, i. 346), Nizamuddin (Pers. text p. 203), Badaoni (Ranking, i. 463), Mirza Haidar (*Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, translated by Elias and Ross p. 472) are unanimous in saying that

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common cause against Sher Shah. He forgave his brother Mirza Hindal and other offenders. "When all the brothers were assembled, they conferred together upon the state of affairs. The discussion was protracted but no profitable decision was arrived at.....Kamran Mirza was very anxious to return, but Humayun conceding all other representations disregarded his request on this point. Seven months were wasted in weary indecision until the opportunity was lost and Sher Khan was on the Ganges ready for war." (*Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, trans. by Elias and Ross, p. 472). Kamran Mirza did not wish that Humayun should triumph. He had come to Agra with 12,000 mail-clad horsemen to seize the throne of Hindustan. But for the accidental survival of Humayun in the rout of Chaunsa and his sudden appearance at Agra, he would have succeeded in his attempt. As he was baffled in his object by the arrival of Humayun at Agra, he wanted to depart with all his troops leaving his brother to his fate. "The Emperor strongly urged him to leave some of his officers and forces as auxiliaries, but Kamran Mirza on the contrary did all he could to induce those

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Qutb Khan was sent against Kalpi and Etawah by Sher Shah and that he was slain in a battle with the three abovementioned Mughal officers. Nizamuddin and Badaoni expressly say that the battle was fought in the vicinity of Kalpi.

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who were at Agra to go away with him, and strenuously rejected the proposal to leave his own army behind". (*Ibid*, p. 472). "Kamran Mirza himself, shamefully leaving only Iskandar Sultan with one thousand men as auxiliaries, went off to Lahore". (*Ibid*, p. 472.)

Nevertheless, Humayun gathered a force larger than that of Sher Shah and a park of artillery far more formidable and efficient. "The imperial army reached the bank of the Ganges in the best way it could. There it encamped and lay for about a month, the Emperor being on one side of the river, Sher Khan on the other, facing each other. The two armies may have amounted to more than 2,00,000 men. Muhammad Sultan Mirza.....(a pardoned rebel) having colluded with Sher Khan, deserted. A new way was thus opened. Everybody began to desert and a most surprising part of it was that many of those who deserted did not go over to Sher Khan and so could expect no favour from him. An excited feeling ran through the whole army and the cry was 'Let us go and rest in our homes'. A number of Kamran's auxiliary forces also abandoned him and fled to Lahore.....As the army had taken to desert, it was judged better to risk a battle, than to see it go to ruin without fighting.....Another consideration was, that if we passed the river, desertion would

no longer be possible. We, therefore, crossed the river.* Both armies entrenched themselves. Every day skirmishes occurred between the swaggering spirits of both sides. These proceedings were put an end to by the monsoon rains, which came on and flooded the ground rendering it unfit for a camp..... It was proposed to move to some rising ground which the inundation could not reach, and which lay in front of the enemy.

"On the 10th Muharram 947 A.H. (17th May, 1540 A. D.) we made our dispositions. As had been determined, the carriages and mortars and small guns were placed in the centre.....They (commanders of the artillery) placed the carriages and mortars in their proper positions, and stretched chains between them.....The Emperor had posted the author of this work (Mirza Haidar) upon his left.....In the same position he had placed a force of chosen troops. .....Between me and the river† (*jui-i-bar*) there was a force of 27 amirs all of whom carried the *tugh* (banner). On the day of battle, when Sher Khan having formed his divisions marched out, of all these twenty seven banners, not one was to be seen, for the great nobles had hidden them, in the apprehen-

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* The Ganges. It was crossed several miles north of Qanauj. The battle was fought in Hardoi district, somewhere near Bilgram.

† Not the Ganges but some other small stream.

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sion that the enemy might advance upon them. The soldier-ship and bravery of these amirs may be conceived from this exhibition of courage.

"Sher Khan came out in five divisions of 1,000 men* each, and in advance of him were 3,000 men. I estimated the whole as being less than 15,000 and I calculated the Chaghatai force at about 40,000, all mounted on tipchaq horses and clad in iron armour. They surged like waves of the sea.....When Sher Khan's army came out of its entrenchments, two divisions (*jauk*), which seemed to be equal to four divisions, drew up in that place, and three divisions advanced against their opponents. On our side I was leading the centre to take up the position which I had selected, but when we reached the ground we were unable to occupy it for every amir and wazir in the Chaghatai army, whether be he rich or poor, has his camp-followers (*ghulam*). An amir of note with his 100 retainers and followers has 500 servants and ghulams, who on the day of battle render no assistance to their masters, and have no control over themselves. So, in whatever place there was a conflict, the ghulams were entirely ungovernable.

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* This seems to be a little inaccurate. Perhaps each division consisted of 2,000 men thus making a total of [(2000 × 5) + 3000 men] 13000 which is a nearer approach to 15000 than [(1000 × 5) + 3000] 8000 men. The latter number is too small.

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When they lost their masters they were seized with panic and blindly rushed about in terror. In short, it was impossible to hold ground. They so pressed us in the rear that they drove the centre upon the chains stretched between the carriages, and they and the soldiers dashed each other upon them. Those who were behind so pressed upon those who were in front that they broke through the chains. The men who were posted by the chains were driven beyond them.

"Such was the state of the centre. On the right, Sher Khan advanced in battle array; but before an arrow was discharged, the camp-followers fled like chaff before the wind, and breaking the line, they all pressed towards the centre. The ghulams whom the commanders sent to the front rushed to the lines of chariots and the whole array was broken; the Mir was separated from his men and the men from the Mir. While the centre was thus thrown into disorder, all the fugitives from the right bore down upon it. So, before the enemy had discharged an arrow, the whole army was scattered and defeated. I had estimated the Chaghatai army as numbering 40,000 men, excluding the camp-followers (ghulams) and workmen (*shagird pesha*). They fled before 10,000 men and Sher Khan gained a victory, while the Chaghatai were defeated on this battle-field, where

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not a man, either friend or foe was wounded. Not a gun was fired and the chariots were useless.

"When the Chaghatai took to flight the distance between their position and the Ganges might be one *farsakh*. All the amirs and braves (*bahaduran*) fled for safety to the river, without a man of them having received a wound. The enemy pursued them,..... When we came out of the river, His Majesty who at midday had a retinue of 17,000 in attendance upon his Court, was mounted upon a horse which had been given by Tardi Beg, and had nothing on his head or feet.....Out of 1,000 retainers eight persons came out of the river; the rest had perished in the water. The total loss may be estimated from this fact....." (*Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, pp. 472-477).* Such is the account of the battle of the Ganges (as it is called by

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* The battle can be designated as the battle of Bilgram. As the geographical situation shows, the battle was fought on the tract between the little stream Garrah and the Ganges, but it is impossible to say at what distance from the modern eastern bank of the Ganges, as that river has considerably shifted westward in the course of 380 years. The fact that Humayun's camp was flooded shows that it was situated on "*the Kachh*" (low land) formed by the gradual westing of the Ganges. See *Gazetteer of the Province of Oudh*, 1877, Vol. i. 315.

The battle took place as Mirza Haidar says about a "*farsakh*" (about 4 miles) from the then eastern bank of the Ganges. The "*Bangar*" or rising ground where Sher Khan evidently entrenched himself, lies to the west of the "*Kachh*". Abbas says, "On the spot where he had gained his victory he built a city and called it

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Mirza Haidar) commonly known as the battle of Qanauj, left to us by a renowned soldier, who took an active part in the battle. It is marked by sincerity and truth ; but it is incomplete and defective in certain respects and as such, requires to be supplemented by the accounts of Jauhar and Abbas.

It is a puzzle to us how the battle could be a bloodless one, as he says "Not a man either friend or foe was wounded." The Afghan cavalry did not gently drive them like a flock of sheep to the Ganges. Even if we are to believe that the Mughals fled without fighting, many must have been killed by the pursuing enemy in the course of the flight to the Ganges, which was four miles off. The fact is that the Mirza could not accurately observe the movements of the enemy as long as he was in his original position. But as soon as he led forward the centre he became too much occupied with the thought of occupying his new position and had no time to observe the

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Sher Sur". Our MS. writes Sher Garh. But this cannot be correct. Sher Garh was the name given to the new city which was built on the western bank of the Ganges, by destroying Qanauj. On his coins we find *Sher Garh urf Qanauj*. We find a place named *Jurowlee Sherpur*, two miles east of Bilgram. Either Sher Sur in Elliot's MS. is an error for Sherpur or the name of Shersur has, in course of centuries acquired the more convenient name of Sherpur. This place would eminently serve as the probable site of the battle of the Ganges, remembering that the river has considerably shifted its course.

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whole field. So he failed to convey a full and true view of the situation to us. A spectator sees more of the game than the players.

Now let us turn to Abbas for the Afghan version of the battle. He says:—

"In the centre of the Afghan army was Sher Shah himself with Haibat Khan Niazi, Isa Khan Sarwani, Qutb Khan Lodi, Haji Khan Jaloi, Sarmast Khan, Saif Khan Sarwani, Bijli Khan and others; in the right were Jalal Khan, son of Sher Shah, Taj Khan (Kirani), Sulaiman Kirani, Jalal Khan Jaloi and others; in the left were Adil Khan, the eldest son of Sher Shah, Qutb Khan Banet, Rai Husain Jalwani and Khawas Khan*. He ordered each chief to return to his own followers and to remain with them and he himself went through (the ranks of) the army and set it in proper array." (MS. Abbas, pp. 179-180 = Elliot, iv).

This was the first pitched battle which Sher Shah fought without employing any stratagem. The victory of Chaunsa was achieved by a clever

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* Abbas does not expressly say in what division Khawas Khan was. He says that Khawas Khan defeated Humayun's division, perhaps implying thereby that he was in the centre. But as we know from Mirza Haidar the centre never came into conflict. It is not likely that Sher Shah entrusted Adil Khan, who was not a good soldier at all, with the command of the left. So we think Khawas Khan commanded the left as Abul-Fazl says.

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night-march and that of Surajgarh by an ambuscade. Both of them undoubtedly speak highly of his generalship. But Bilgram revealed a new phase of his military genius, and Sher Shah showed himself a cool-headed tactician of no mean order. Had there been a Mirza Haidar in the ranks of the Afghan army, we would have been able to form a true estimate of Sher Shah's tactics.

There was no defect in the array of the Mughal army. It was formed on the same principles and tactics which had triumphed gloriously at Kanwa and Panipat. If Sher Shah had been as incapable a general as Ibrahim Lodi or repeated the great mistake of Rana Sanga, namely, delivering furious cavalry charges upon the enemy's centre, protected by artillery, he would have fared no better than his predecessors. He found that the Mughal centre was absolutely unassailable owing to the carriages and guns, and there was also no chance of enveloping the left wing by a clever manœuvre, owing to the stream; so he determined to throw the decisive weight upon the right flank of the enemy. Sher Shah, out of his total of about 13,000 horse, very wisely kept two large divisions, about 6,000 in all, in reserve. His plan was to overthrow the two wings of the Mughal army by delivering a succession of cavalry charges, before their formidable centre could find time to close

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upon him. He sent one division under his own son Jalal Khan to charge the left wing, and another (and a more powerful one) under Khawas Khan to charge the right wing of Humayun's army. He himself stood with the reserve watching the effect of the charges, and ready to follow up an advantage, or succour the hard-pressed as becomes a true general. Both divisions galloped off and fell upon their respective objectives. The charge of Jalal Khan was not successful. Mirza Hindal* who commanded the fore-centre took him at a disadvantage. (According to Abbas, the division of Jalal Khan was repulsed and thrown into confusion). But Khawas Khan completely broke the Emperor's right, and wheeling round drove the camp-followers and ghulams from the rear upon the Mughal centre. The Mughal centre, when they saw the Afghans approaching, moved forward from their original position; but before they could firmly occupy their new position in proper array, the fugitives from the right and the ghulams from the rear, all rushed upon the centre to seek its protection as no enemy was in front of it. The sheer weight of this mass burst the chains of the carriages and threw the centre also in confusion. In the meantime Sher

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* If Mirza Hindal, who was free to succour either wing, had chosen to attack Khawas Khan, the right wing would not have been broken.

Shah personally led a charge against the left wing of the enemy. "As Sher Shah's division moved straight on, they encountered the Mughal force which had routed Sher Shah's right; they defeated it and drove it on the Emperor's centre division. Sher Shah having driven away the Mughal force in front of his son Jalal Khan; and his left, in which were his other son Adil Khan and Qutb Khan Banet (Khawas Khan also), having repulsed the troops opposed to them, fell on the Mughal centre." (Elliot, iv. 382).

The formidable artillery of Humayun fired not a single volley as there was no enemy in the front but only the cowardly fugitives of their own army. The Mughal Centre, where the best troops of the Emperor were posted and which was a veritable tower of strength, was overthrown, not by the Afghans but by his own followers. "When all order was broken, the army became a rabble which fled towards the Ganges about four miles away. The Afghans made a havoc on the back of the flying ranks of the enemy. Many of those who escaped their sword perished in the Ganges. Thus Sher Shah gained a complete victory the price of which was no less than the throne of Delhi.

Pursuit of the Mughal Emperor.

After the victory of Bilgram Sher Shah crossed

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the river, reached Qanauj, and from that place "despatched Barmajid Gaur (Brahmaditya Gaur, a Rajput officer) with a large force in advance, but directed him not to hazard an engagement with the Emperor Humayun, and he also sent another force towards Sambhal."* (Abbas, Elliot, iv. 383). The unhappy Emperor made his way to Agra with his shattered following. Such was the irony of fate that the very peasants of Bhangaon† rose against him, blocked the road, and closed their market against his retinue. Having reached Agra, Humayun ordered Mirza Hindal to bring out his mother (Hindal's mother, Dildar Begam), and his family and their domestics, also the treasures and stores. (Stewart's Jauhar, p. 23). Hastily leaving Agra, he marched through Mewat for Lahore. Barmajid Gaur entered Agra, and kiled a number of Mughals, who were perhaps non-combatant stragglers from the main body of Mughal fugitives. Sher Shah, who mainly occupied himself in settling the conquered territories, reached

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* There run (Rennell's map) two large roads from Qanauj, one leading to Delhi, and another to Agra through Mainpuri district. The Emperor took the road to Agra; Barmajid Gaur followed him there. One branch of the Delhi road reaches Sambhal; Nasir Khan probably marched through it to occupy Delhi, which was a more important position than Sambhal.

† On the Grand Trunk Road, in Mainpuri district. See Stewart's Jauhar, p. 23.

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Agra a few days later. He severely reprimanded Barmajid for his needless cruelty, and, uniting Khawas Khan with him in command, sent them off to continue the chase of the Emperor. The object of the pursuit was not to capture the Emperor, but to scare him out of Hindustan. Humayun marched twenty to twenty-four miles a day during his retreat, and in this way he reached Sarhind *via* Rohtak and Hissar. Mirza Hindal was stationed at Sarhind to cover the passage of the Sutlej. Humayun crossed over to Machiwara, and from that place reached Jalandhar. Mirza Hindal was ordered to fall back from Sarhind to Jalandhar. Here the Mirza made another stand to oppose the enemy. When Humayun reached Lahore (about the middle of Safar 947) Mirza Hindal retired across the Sultanpur river. The Afghans reached the Sultanpur river about the beginning of Rabi I. 947 (July, 1540), when the rainy season put an end to their advance further. Khawas Khan halted at Sultanpur and waited there for about three months.*

Sher Shah, having passed a few days at Agra, proceeded to Delhi. He appointed Haji Khan Batni to the Governorship of Mewat. At Delhi again, the

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* Humayun left Lahor about the end of Jamada II. 947 (3rd October—31st October, 1540) when the Afghans crossed the river.

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complaints of the people of Sambhal about the cruelty and oppression of his lieutenant reached his ears. He degraded the tyrannical officer and placed over him Isa Khan Sarwani, a man renowned for his vigour and justice. Then he proceeded towards the frontier of the Punjab to watch the proceedings of Humayun at Lahore.

Humayun got three months' respite at Lahore; but he could not reunite the Mughals even in the face of such a great calamity. Kamran Mirza was mainly responsible for the frustration of his exertions. He feared that if Humayun were allowed to have a permanent footing in the Punjab, he might be deprived of Kabul and Qandahar also by his brother. He thought it safer to hand over the Punjab to Sher Shah, and with this purpose, entered into secret negotiations with him. (See *Akbarnama*, i. 358-359). Gulbadan says, "During the three months that the Emperor was at Lahore, word was brought day after day, 'Sher Khan has advanced four miles', 'six miles', till he was near Sarhind.....The Emperor sent him [a Turkoman named Muzaffar Beg] with Qazi Abdullah* to Sher Khan to say....."I have

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* Abul-Fazl says that this Qazi Abdullah was the sadar of Kamran Mirza, who made the Qazi the channel of his treacherous negotiations. The Qazi informed Sher Khan of the disunion between Humayun and his brothers and induced him to advance upon Lahor (*Akbarnama*, i. 358-359).

left you the whole of Hindustan. Leave Lahore alone, and let Sarhind, where you are, be a boundary between you and me.' But that unjust man, fearless of God, did not consent, and answered 'I have left you Kabul, you should go there.' " (*Humayun-Nama*, p. 144.)

Jauhar says that Sher Shah sent an ambassador to Humayun and that he was received with mock-magnificence at the garden of Mirza Kamran, where all the inhabitants of Lahor from the age of 7 to 70 were assembled under orders of Humayun. But no treaty was entered into, and the ambassador was dismissed on that very day (See Jauhar MS. p. 58 = Stewart p. 26). Mirza Kamran's treachery is confirmed by Jauhar's statement that the envoy* to Sher Shah carried a letter to him. (See Stewart p. 26. Our MS. differs a little). Abul-Fazl (*Akbarnama* i. 358) says that the object of the envoy's visit was to ascertain the real state of affairs, which is not, after all, improbable.

Encouraged by the disunion among their enemies, the Afghans crossed the Sultanpur river about the third week of October, 1540, and advanced upon Lahore. "As soon as this news came (to

* Gulbadan (p. 144) also says that an ambassador came from Sher Khan to Humayun; but she wrongly places the event after the evacuation of Lahor.

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Lahore) His Majesty set off. It was like the Day of Resurrection. People left their decorated places and furniture just as they were, but took with them whatever money they had." (Gulbadan, p. 144). Having crossed the Ravi river, Humayun marched north-westward (at the end of Jamada II. 947, end of October 1540 A.D. *Akbarnama*, i. 359), for the Cheenab, leading the Mughal Exodus, consisting of 2,00,000* souls, out of Hindustan. But he knew not whither to lead them. He had a mind to go to Kashmir as was pre-arranged with Haidar Mirza; but no one would follow him there. Next he wished to go to Badakhshan; but Mirza Kamran refused to allow him even to march through Kabul. At last he made up his mind to go to Tatta and Bhakkar in Sindh, and marched as far as the town of Khushab on the Jheelum. A little west of Khushab Humayun and Kamran parted company after an unseemly quarrel, and there the Mughal caravan split up into two parts. Only a very small number of troops and his wives and family followed the unhappy Emperor. On his way through the Sindhsagar Doab, he suffered innumerable hardships, and again sighted the Jheelum near Uch in Shaban 947 H. (Dec. 1540) (*Akbarnama*, i.

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* See page 481, *Tarikh-i-Rashidi* trans. by Elias and Ross. Mirza Kamran said, "We have now with us *2,00,000 householders* (*Khanavar mardum*).

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361). Bakshu Langah, the chief of Uch, relieved the distress of the Emperor, and through his help Humayun crossed the river. As the Emperor* stepped out of the political boundary of Hindustan, Khawas Khan, who had been pursuing him all along, gave up the pursuit from the western bank of the Jheelum.

Sher Shah was at Sarhind when the peace negotiations with Humayun and the secret correspondence with Kamran Mirza were being carried on. When the Afghans resumed their advance upon Lahore, he quitted Sarhind, and bestowed the district on Khawas Khan, who being away on active service, entrusted its government to his slave Malik Bhagawant, a Hindu eunuch slave as the name shows. On arriving at Lahore, he did not halt there very long, but marched hurriedly westward. When he reached the banks of the Cheenab, he heard the news of the separation of the Mughal forces into two parties, one party under Humayun marching towards Sindh and the other following Kamran Mirza to Kabul. Sher Shah proceeded on to Khushab, and despatched several officers with large armies to pursue the Mughals. "He instructed them not to engage the Emperor, but to drive him beyond the

* Humayun reached Bhakkar on the 28th of Ramzan 947 H. 26th January, 1541.

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borders of the kingdom." (Abbas in Elliot, iv. 387). The Afghan army also divided itself into two parts, one division under Khawas Khan followed the Emperor, and the other party under Qutb Khan* Banet pursued the party of Kamran Mirza. Khawas Khan followed the Emperor as far as the Punjnad river (to the west of Uch, where the waters of the Jheelum, the Sutlej, the Chinab, the Ravi and the Beas are united in one mighty stream and flow into the Indus). Qutb Khan's party probably turned back from the Indus, when Kamran crossed it.

The conquest of the Gakkhar country and Sher Shah's return to Bengal.

Sher Shah stayed at Khushab for some time to reorganize the administration of the conquered territories. Various Baloch chiefs, such as Ismail Khan, Fath Khan Dudai* and Ghazi Khan Baloch,

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* This differs from Abbas, whose statement is inconsistent and contradictory. For the grounds of my deviation, see "Abbas Sarwani" in the Appendix.

* Nizamuddin (Persian text p. 230) MS. Makhzan (p. 40) and Ferishta (Persian text, p. 226) add "Dudai" after Fath Khan. That all the three were Baloch chiefs is not to be doubted; but Dudai has a special significance. It was the title of the powerful Baloch chief of a particular family, and continued to be used down to the days of the *Khulasat*. The following quotation will make it clear :—"Westward of Multan, five *kos* on the further side of the river Cheenab,

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came and waited on him. Fath Khan Dudai, a powerful Baloch chief, probably ruled over the Sindh-sagar Doab, between the Indus and the Chinab. In the earlier half of the 16th century, Baloches were to be found even further north-west: Babur (*Memoirs*, p. 383) speaks of "Beluchis" located in Bhera and Khushab. Sher Shah wisely left these Baloch chiefs undisturbed in their possessions. Next he turned his attention to the reduction of the Gakkhar* country. The mountainous tract between

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is the land of the Beluchis. In that country there are two chieftains; one is Dudai and has 30,000 horse and 50,000 foot-soldiers of his own....." (*India of Aurangzib*, by Prof. J. N. Sarkar, p. 77).

* There should not be any further confusion between Gakkhars and Khokhars as these two tribes have been clearly distinguished and their respective localities correctly ascertained by Major Raverty. He has been ably supported by another distinguished writer, H. A. Rose, I.C.S., in an article in the *Indian Antiquary*. We quote the following from it:—"In an article entitled 'A history of the Gakkars,' contributed to the *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal* in 1871, by Mr. J. G. Delmerick, the Khokhars of the Muhammadan Historians were taken to be the Gakkhars, a tribe which is settled in the Rawalpindi district of the Punjab. The late Major Raverty, however, expressed a strong opinion that the writer of the article had confused the Gakkhars with the Khokkhars, a totally distinct tribe, and a full examination of all the evidences at present readily accessible, has convinced the present writer (H. A. Rose) of the correctness of Major Raverty's position. The Khokhars were settled in the Punjab centuries before the Gakkhars, and were spread all over the central districts of the province before the Gakkhars acquired their seats in the Salt range, to which they are and have always been confined....." (Vol. xxxvi., 1907, p. 1.)

the upper courses of the rivers Indus and Jheelum,—bounded on the west by the Indus from Kalabagh to Attock, on the north by the Hazara district and the Siwalik mountains, on the east by the Jheelum river down to the town of Khushab, and on the south by the Salt-range extending from Khushab to the Indus, (comprising the modern districts of Rawalpindi and Jheelum),—was inhabited by many warlike independent tribes. About 15 years before Sher Shah, when Babur visited the country the southern half, particularly the Salt-range,—"Koh-i-jud" of Babur—was inhabited by two principal tribes, Jud and Janjuha, and the northern half by Gakkhars, (Kakars of Mrs. Beveridge's translation). This tract was never fully conquered by any previous Emperor of Northern India. But the mastery over no other region has proved so essential to the safety of India as over this. It possesses great strategic value; an invader from the north-west can appear suddenly in

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In the foot-note of the English translation of the *Tabakat-i-Nasiri*, Major Raverty gives three spellings Gakkhars, Gakhars and Ghakhars. In foot-note 1, p. 1043 he ridicules Surgeon Major Bellow, C.S.I., for identifying the Kakar Afghans with the Gakkhar tribe of Indians in the north of the Punjab. (*Ibid*, p. 1132.) Raverty writes Gakhar and not Kakar—as we find in Mrs. Beveridge's translation of the *Memoirs of Babur*—as the turbulent people referred to by Babur. For detailed information about Khokhars and Gakkhars see the Eng. trans. of the *Tabakat-i-Nasiri*, p. 455*n*-477*n*.

the very heart of the Punjab by marching stealthily through this region from Attock to Rohtas. Indeed beginning with Alexander the Great, many a mighty conqueror entered India through this route and swept away dynasty after dynasty from the throne of Delhi. Sher Shah, with his soldierly instinct, at once found that the greatest danger to his new-own empire was to be apprehended through this region. Kamran Mirza, whom he had deprived of the Punjab, was at Kabul with his strength enhanced by the adhesion of the greater portion of the army and following of Humayun, and Haidar Mirza was engaged in the conquest of Kashmir. They might at any time join hands and attempt at recovering the Punjab. For such a combination the Gakkhar country was the most advantageous place. Kamran could advance through the Attock-Hassan Abdal route and Haidar Mirza could descend from the mountains of Kashmir through the Baramula pass, and marching through Rawalpindi form a junction with Kamran. Thus the conquest of this region became an urgent military necessity to Sher Shah.

"Sher Shah entered this region with his army and sent a person to the chiefs of Gakkhars summoning them to come to his presence. That body (of Gakkhar chiefs) from the pride of their large following, sent several sheaves of arrows and two tiger cubs

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as their gifts to him, as if to say, 'We are tigers and soldiers. From us you cannot demand anything except tigers and arrows'.—Sher Shah became very angry and replied to the agents, 'Be at your ease. By the grace of God, I will thrust such a wedge in the hearts of you all that till the day of Resurrection no man shall be able to pull it out.' He then marched against the chiefs of Gakkhars and made a tour of the mountains circumadjacent, until a proper place was found, where he caused a fortress to be built called (afterwards) Rohtas." (MS. *Makhzan*, p. 41. Dorn p. 131). Rai Sarang Gakkhar refused allegiance to Sher Shah and kept up a brave struggle till the reign of his son Islam Shah. Sher Shah laid waste the country of Sarang Gakkhar and carried many Gakkhars into captivity.

During this time Sher Shah also tried to oust Haidar Mirza from Kashmir by helping Kachi Chak (called Kazi Chak by Nizamuddin), the dispossessed ruler of Kashmir in his struggle against the Mughals. Haidar Mirza himself wrote, "Kachi Chak, vainly imagining that Sher Khan by force of arms could change the decree of the Most High, appealed to him for aid.....In the beginning of the spring..... having obtained auxiliaries from Sher Khan, he again moved forward with a large force,.....till at length Kachi Chak, having formed a junction with the

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auxiliaries* of Sher Khan, boldly marched out of the hill district....." (*Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, 485). Though Kachi Chak could not regain his throne, yet he kept the Mirza too busy to entertain any hostile projects against Sher Shah. Sher Shah, true to his principle of "Thorough", would have completed the subjugation of the Gakkhar country as far as the Indus and thus secured a scientific and a natural frontier for his Empire. But the arrival of the report of the rebellious designs of his Governor of Bengal, drew him away from his work.

Sher Shah left Haibat Khan Niazi, Khawas Khan and several other able lieutenants with 50,000 troops in the Gakkhar country, and himself marched hurriedly for Bengal about the middle of March†, 1541.

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* "5,000 horsemen under the command of Husain Sarwani and Alawal Khan were sent as auxiliaries" (Nizamuddin, Persian text, p. 616. Kashmir section). Ferishta (Pers. text, p. 355 second book) copies Nizamuddin almost word for word. But Briggs' translation of the same passage (iv. 498-499) is irritating and repulsive by its inaccuracy throughout. He writes "Atchy Chuk" (!) in place of Kachi Chak and adds two elephants to Sher Shah's auxiliary forces.

† Mirza Haidar's statement that Kachi Chak obtained his auxiliaries from Sher Shah in the beginning of spring (middle of February) shows that Sher Shah was there till that season in the Punjab. By his "spring" he must have meant the spring (February-March) *of 1541 A.D.*, because he tells us afterwards that the defeat of this auxiliary force as well as his final conquest of Kashmir was completed on 8th Rabi II. 948 (1st August, 1541). The date of Sher

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Sher Shah in Bengal.

Sher Shah had left Khizr Khan as the Governor of Bengal when he started for Qanauj to fight the Mughals in January, 1540. His continued absence for more than a year, and his busy occupation at the other extremity of India (in the Gakkhar country) encouraged his governor to think of independence. Sher Shah's authority was not firmly established in the outlying territories of Bengal and many of the officials of the fallen dynasty were probably suffered to retain their posts, on submission, in the new regime. Khizr Khan strengthened his hands by marrying the daughter of Sayyid Mahmud Shah, the late king of Bengal, and thereby enlisting the sympathy of the supporters of the fallen dynasty. This marriage also imparted to his ambition a colour of legitimacy in the eyes of the people of Bengal. Though he did not openly assume the kingly title he began "To sit on the *Toki** after the manner of the

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Shah's departure may be a little later but by no means earlier. (See *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, pp. 485-486).

* Abbas says that 'Toki' means the roof of a house. (MS. p. 205) (*Bala-i-tauki ke 'aabarat az bam-i-Khanah ast*). Dowson writes (*Tarikh-i-Khan-i-Jahan Lodi* in Elliot v., p. 115), "Sher Shah..... received the intelligence that Khizr Khan Turk, the governor of Bengal (maintained a princely household) and sat on the roof of the palace after the manner of the kings of Bengal....." But the text in our MS. *Makhzan* (p. 43) simply says "Khizr Khan had married

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kings of Bengal." (Abbas, see Elliot, iv. 390). Khizr Khan's actions had been reported to Sher Shah by his spies. He was much annoyed at this, and wishing to avert the evil ere it could take root, set out for Bengal from the Gakkhar country about the middle of March 1541. Khizr Khan was surprised and his plans disconcerted by the sudden appearance of his master before Garhi* towards the end of May. Having no power to resist, he came to meet Sher Shah and gave him a royal reception. Sher Shah reprimanded him for his taking in marriage the daughter of Mahmud Shah and sitting on the *Toki*; and he further ordered him to undergo a severe punishment and to be put in chains. He went to Gaur and set about reorganizing the administration of the province of Bengal.

To keep the governors of Bengal in allegiance to the throne of Delhi had been a problem of the greatest magnitude since the beginning of Muslim rule in India. Ziauddin Barni commenting upon the chronic rebellion in Bengal, remarks:—"Shrewd and knowing people have given to Lakhnauti the name of *Bulghakpur* (the city of strife), for, since the time when Sultan Muizzu-d-din Muhammad Sam conquered Delhi, every Governor that had been sent

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the daughter of Sultan Mahmud, the (late) king of Bengal, and was behaving towards the people in the manner of sovereigns."

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from thence to Lakhnauti, took advantage of the distance and of difficulties of the road, to rebel. If they did not rebel themselves other rebelled against them, killed them and seized the country" (*Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi* in Elliot, iii. 112).

Bengal was annexed to the Delhi Empire by Altamish, who appointed his son Nasiruddin Mahmud as the Governor of the province in 1226, and it remained attached to the Empire till the declaration of independence by another Nasiruddin Mahmud (commonly known as Bughra Khan) the son of Balban, in 1287. During this period of 61 years, two powerful governors Izzuddin Tughral Khan (1233-1244) and Ikhtiyaruddin or Mughisuddin Uzbak ((1246-1257) ruled Bengal for 11 years each in virtual independence and extended their conquests as far as Jaunpur and Oudh. During the period of confusion which followed the death of Altamish, excluding these twenty-two years of their rule, 13 governors paying some sort of allegiance to the Delhi Emperors, ruled Bengal for 39 years at the average of three years each. The ostensible signs of obedience of these governors were no more than this that they did not assume the title of Shah* or strike

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* Bengal was an independent monarchy with her rulers bearing the title of Shah, from 1287 to 1538 A.D. with only a break of nine years (from 1330 to 1339) preceding the founding of the Elias Shahi

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coins and read the *khutba* in their own names. Anything more than this was very seldom realized from them. No revenue from Bengal found its way to the treasury of Delhi except some occasional gift of elephants, jewels etc., in the form of tribute when it suited the pleasure of the Governor, or was extorted by the dread of the imperial army. There was no territorial limit of their jurisdiction, which they were free to extend by conquests. They carried on wars, made peace and formed alliances with their neighbouring kingdoms in complete independence. They kept as large an army as their resources would permit or their ambition require. In internal administration they were the sole arbiters of the fate of the millions of their subjects, unrestrained by any dread of interference by their suzerains. It was but natural that a soldier with unlimited powers placed at the head of a province so vast, so rich and so distant (more than 800 miles) from the seat of the Empire, should make repeated attempts to throw off the yoke of allegiance. Change of governors was no remedy for the evil which was inherent in the institution itself. Nor was any mode of governing a distant province known to the previous Muslim rulers in India except through a military Governor,

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dynasty by Shamsuddin Elias. For dates etc. see R. D. Banerjee's *History of Bengal* (in Bengali) Vol. ii.

entrusted with a full discretion in the details of the administration, and left undisturbed in his post as long as he remitted regularly the revenue due to the imperial treasury. A governorship was as large as a kingdom, and means of supervision over them were either inadequate or non-existent. Under such a system the sole bond of the union of a vassal province with the mother kingdom was the slender thread of the allegiance of one single individual. The removal of a powerful and popular provincial governor often entailed as much difficulty as the change of a dynasty, and the unhappy people of the province suffered all the horrors and miseries of a foreign invasion, at the hands of the imperial troops sent to help the new Governor in establishing his authority over it.

Sher Shah after the dismissal of his Governor Khizr Khan, changed the military character of the provincial administration and substituted a completely new mechanism, at once original in principle and efficient in working. The following are the brief outlines of his administrative reorganization of Bengal :—

(1) He considerably reduced the unwieldy bulk of Bengal which comprised territories in the west as far as Bahr (a sub-divisional town, north-east of Patna), and the river Gandak,—sometimes even

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pushed to the Ghogra,—on the northern bank of the Ganges. This was the usual boundary of Bengal, whether as a province of the Delhi Empire or an independent monarchy. In 1536 Sher Shah had annexed its territories from Garhi to Bihar. In the new territorial redistribution he probably made the Kushi, which flowed into the Ganges near Pointy (Rennell's map) opposite Garhi, the western boundary of his province of Bengal on the northern, and the Rajmahal hills from Garhi* to Birbhum on the southern bank of the Ganges.

(2) Instead of placing the whole province under one military Governor as had hitherto been the custom, Sher Shah created several smaller governorships.† The Governors placed over these

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* Abul-Fazl gives Garhi as the western limit of Bengal and he includes only the Sarkar of Purniya and not any territories to the west of it in the Subah of Bengal. Abul-Fazl based his account of the Subah of Bengal on the information derived from the revenue settlement of Todar Mall, who in 1582 A.D. "gave in it *what he found to exist with regard to both divisions and revenue*; for Bengal was subjugated during Jahangir's reign and properly assessed by Prince Shuja." (Blochmann's *History and Geography of Bengal*, 1873, pp. 6 and 7).

† The actual words used by Abbas are: "*Bangala-ra muluk-i-tawaef sakht.*" *Muluk-i-tawaef* is a well known phrase in Arabic. Literally it means a number of petty kingdoms each ruled by a distinct king or dynasty. In Elliot iv., the passage is translated by the words "He (Sher Shah) divided the kingdom of Bengal into different provinces." This does not convey the spirit and significance of the original expression.

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divisions were all equal in status, and wholly independent of one another in the administration of their respective areas. They were all directly appointed by him and were responsible to him alone. No historian tells us into how many governorships Bengal was divided. As we learn from Abbas that the largest administrative unit of Sher Shah's Empire was a *sarkar* (MS. p. 249 = Elliot, iv. 414), it would not be very far from the truth to say that about this time, the 19 *sarkars* of Bengal proper enumerated in the *Ain-i-Akbari* were constituted by Sher Shah.

By this single stroke of policy he struck at the very root of the evil of chronic rebellion. It was quite unlikely that 24 men—or about the same number—would suddenly combine against the Emperor to assert their independence. Each of them, vying with his neighbour for the favour of his sovereign, was rather likely to serve as a check upon the others. The limited resources of a *Shikdar* would not permit him to keep so large an army as might become dangerous to the State.

(3) To preserve the administrative unity of the whole province he appointed at the head of it Qazi Fazilat, better known as Qazi Fazihat, "a man celebrated for learning, policy and piety, to superintend the whole, to preserve unanimity among the governors, and to report to him on their conduct".

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(Stewart's *History of Bengal*, p. 91). Though nominally the head of the province, the Qazi had very little executive authority. He was not to interfere with the work of his subordinate governors; his business was to see whether the commands of the Emperor were carried out by them or not. He was to decide any point of difference which might arise among them, and thus facilitate the smooth working of the administrative machinery. The provincial army and finance,—the main incentives and sinews of rebellion—were taken out of the hands of the head of the province, whose title now became *Amin-i-Bangala* (Trustee of Bengal) and not *Hakim-i-Bangala* (Abbas MS. p. 206). The difference between the connotations of the two terms signifies the difference between the old and the new systems. These reforms altogether changed the unmixed military character of the administration of Bengal. The new machinery went on working smoothly and efficiently till the end of Sher Shah's reign, without requiring his serious attention. Sher Shah stayed in Bengal for about 7 months (from June, 1541 to January 1542).

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* Elliot's translation everywhere contains *Amir* in place of *Amin*.

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CHAPTER VIII

The Conquest of Malwa.

Malwa is the rich table-land of Central India, bounded on the south by the Narmada, on the north by the Chambal, on the west by the frontier of Gujrat, Mewar and other Rajput States, and on the east by the hills of Bundelkhand and Garh Mandal. Owing to its important geographical situation it has exerted very great influence upon the course of Indian history from remote ages down to modern times. The essential unity in diversity of ancient and medieval Indian history would have been non-existent, if Malwa had not formed an integral part of the North Indian Empire at every important epoch. The history of the North Indian Empire had ceased to be regarded as the history of India whenever Malwa had fallen off from it. Malwa had been annexed to the Muslim Empire of Delhi by Sultan Altamish in 632 A.H. (1234 A.D.), and since then it had remained in varying degrees of dependence on the sultanate of Delhi down to the time of Timur's invasion of India (1398 A.D.) in the reign of Mahmud Tughlaq.

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*A Short History of the Medieval Independent Monarchy of Malwa.**

In 804 A.H. (1401-1402) one Dilawwar Khan Ghuri, Governor of Malwa, declared himself independent and established the kingdom of Malwa. His more famous son Sultan Hushang Ghuri extended his conquests as far as Gwalior and Kalpi. Sultan Hushang's son, Mahmud was dethroned by his Wazir Mahmud Khan Khilji, who established a new dynasty which ruled Malwa for about a century. Sultan Mahmud Khilji (r. 1435-69) was a just. capable and energetic ruler whose glorious reign of 34 years may be reckoned as the most brilliant epoch in the medieval history of Malwa. His son Sultan Ghiasuddin (r. 1469-1500) was a great debauchee, whose sole passion in life was to procure beautiful women for his harem, where he buried himself in pleasure, oblivious of his duties as a king. Sultan Nasiruddin (r. 1500-1512), who succeeded him, though a great drunkard and a cruel-hearted man, was a vigorous ruler. His death was followed by a civil war among his sons for the possession of the

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* Authorities :—*Tabakat-i-Akbari* (Pers. text, pp. 534-574) Ferishta (Pers. text Book ii., pp. 234-270). The latter commits mistakes wherever he has attempted to improve upon his original, namely, Nizamuddin; Briggs' translation (iii. 167-269) is incomplete and inaccurate.

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throne. One of them, Mahmud, succeeded in establishing himself on the throne with the help of a Rajput chief named Medini Rai, who was a good soldier and a shrewd politician. Sultan Mahmud Khilji II., though possessed of great physical strength and personal daring, was devoid of the tact and political sagacity necessary for a ruler. He suffered the whole of his Muslim nobility—though faithless they were,—to be weeded out one by one by Medini Rai, who became too powerful for a servant. The Sultan, with the aid of an auxiliary force from the king of Gujrat, drove him away from Mandu; but his further attempt to crush him altogether ended in a sad defeat and personal captivity at the hands of Rana Sanga of Mewar, who had marched against him to succour Medini Rai. Rana Sanga set him free, allowing him to reign in his capital Mandu, with a small territory in the neighbourhood. The rest of Malwa passed into the hands of the Rana (1518 A.D.).

This decay of the kingdom of Malwa and the overwhelming growth of the power of Rana Sanga destroyed the balance of power in western Indian politics. Hitherto for nearly a century and a quarter the three kingdoms, Gujrat, Malwa and Mewar, almost of equal extent and power, had preserved a

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balance, a political equilibrium among themselves; and the mutual struggle of these States had been the safety of the weak monarchy of Delhi.

But the victory of Rana Sanga over the united armies of Gujrat and Malwa ushered in an era of aggressive ascendancy which was extremely prejudicial to the safety of the Delhi empire, because, such a dominant power in possession of the greater portion of Malwa, was bound to come into conflict with the rulers of Delhi. Rana Sanga, who thus established the ascendancy of Mewar, proved a standing menace to the Lodi Empire under Sultan Ibrahim Lodi, and afterwards to Babur till he was completely overthrown by the Mughal conqueror at the battle of Kanwa in March 1527. But the subversion of the ascendancy of Mewar did not restore the balance; it only prepared the way for the establishment of the dominance of Gujrat. Bahadur Shah invaded Malwa in 1530, captured its capital Mandu, and took Sultan Mahmud Khilji II, and his sons prisoner. Malwa was annexed to the kingdom of Gujrat and the same attitude of hostility and menace that Rana Sanga had taken up towards Babur, was maintained by Bahadur Shah till he was all but crushed by Humayun during his Gujrat campaign (1535-36).

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Malwa after Bahadur's death.

The death of Bahadur Shah in February 1537, left Malwa without a master, as his successors, who were too weak even to keep themselves steady upon the throne of Gujrat, resigned Malwa to its fate. Taking advantage of this confusion one Mallu Khan, formerly a noble of Sultan Mahmud Khilji II, and afterwards an active partisan of Bahadur Shah, took possession of Mandu, Ujjain and Sarangpur and set himself up as an independent ruler. Nizamuddin says, "When His Majesty Jannat Ashyani, with the intention of rooting out the evil (Sher Khan) marched from Agra towards the country of Bengal, Mallu Khan bin Mallu Khan, having assumed the title of Qadir Shah* took possession of the tract of country

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* This shows that there had been another Mallu Khan in Malwa of which we have also other independent evidence. Ferishta (Pers. text Book ii., p. 270) adds, "These (two Mallu Khans) were originally slaves of the Khiljis and afterwards became their nobles." In another place (Pers. text, Book ii., p. 261 = Briggs, iv. 242), the same author says that one Mallu Khan was sent against a rebellious governor of Chanderi in 1501 A.D. Probably this Mallu Khan excavated the tank near Chanderi where Babur halted in 1528 A.D. (See *Memoirs* p. 597) and this man was the father of the second Mallu Khan. Mrs. Beveridge (see Babur's *Memoirs*, p. 597, foot-note 8) identifies the excavator of the tank with the son who assumed the title of Qadir Shah. But this seems to be wrong; the excavator must have been the father. Her suggestion of 1532 or 1533 as the date of Mallu Khan's assumption of the kingly title is undoubtedly erroneous.

Mirat-i-Sikandari says that Imad-ul-Mulk sent the umbrella, a

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from the town of Bhilsa to the Narmada river and divided it among his nobles. Bhupat* and Puran Mal, the sons of Silhady, came from Chitor and seized Raisin and the territories in its neighbourhood. Day by day the power of Qadir Shah began to increase, and the zamindars of the surrounding country began to send presents to him as the sign of their submission" (*Tabakat-i-Akbari*, Pers. text, p. 591 ; some accounts of Mallu Khan will be found in *Mirat-i-Sikandari* Pers. text, pp. 271-272). Besides Mallu Khan or Qadir Shah there were two other chiefs, Puran Mal of Raisin and Muin Khan of Hindia and Sewas,—(on the southern bank of the Narmada)—who ruled large tracts of country in virtual independence.

The attitude of these chiefs of Malwa, especially that of Mallu Khan, had been openly hostile to Sher Shah even before he got possession of the Empire of Hindustan. As they had now greater reason to fear his aggression and retaliation, it was but natural that they should desire Humayun back

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die for coining (*sikkah*) and the title of Qadir Shah to Mallu Khan on behalf of Sultan Mahmud III of Gujrat (p. 272).

* Nizamuddin commits a mistake here. Bhupat was killed in the battle of Kanwa in 1527 A. D. Babur mentions him among the Hindu chiefs slain in that battle (See *Memoirs*, p. 573). It was Bhupat's minor son Pratap, whom his uncle Puran Mal brought with him.

on the throne of Delhi, and a revival and continuation of the struggle between him and Sher Shah, which was the only safeguard of their liberty and political interests. So, in case of any attempt on the part of Humayun to regain the throne of Delhi, they were likely to range themselves on his side. Humayun had the design of conquering Gujrat and using it as a base for the reconquest of Hindustan. His Governor Abul Qasim Beg till now (1542 A.D.) held the important fort of Gwalior. So the adherence of other chiefs of Malwa was likely to render any such attempt of Humayun extremely dangerous on the exposed southern frontier of Sher Shah's dominions. They might call in Maldev, king of Marwar,—who occupied the dominant position in the anti-Empire politics vacated by the death of Bahadur Shah—to establish his authority in Malwa and form a powerful confederacy against Sher Shah.

The motive of Sher Shah in his contemplated conquest of Malwa is represented by all the Persian authorities as the feeling of personal revenge. Rightly or wrongly Sher Shah believed that his son Qutb Khan's death was due to the perfidy of the rulers of Malwa. He led an army, says Abbas, "to wreak vengeance on the rulers of Mandu against whom he bore an ancient grudge (*kinah-i-derinah*) for their not coming to the assistance of his son Qutb

Khan" (MS. p. 207). Sher Shah's feelings must have been specially bitter against Mallu Khan (Qadir Shah) who had added insult to injury by deliberately sending to Sher Shah an insulting letter (with his own seal at the top) which reached him after he had heard the sorrowful news of his son's death. Nizamuddin and Ferishta, in their chapters on Malwa history, attribute Sher Shah's attack upon Qadir Shah to this insult. "When the eyes of Sher Khan fell upon the *farman* of Qadir Shah, he tore up the seal from the paper and putting it in the sheath of his dagger (Abbas says 'in his turban'), said 'If it please God, in time he will be called upon to explain this incivility'."*

Sher Shah may have been influenced in some degree by these personal feelings, but the real motive which actuated him to march against Mallu Khan was more political than personal. Even if Mallu Khan had not given any personal affront to Sher Shah and had rendered assistance to Qutb Khan, no prudent statesman like Sher Shah would have desisted from depriving him of Malwa. The rulers of Delhi and Malwa, being immediate neighbours, were enemies by nature. A powerful Malwa

* Ferishta Pers. text, p. 270. Briggs, iv. 272 does not strictly follow the original. (Nizamuddin's text, which is almost the same as that of Ferishta, seems to have been injured in print).

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kingdom was a thorn, a constant menace to the Delhi Empire, and a disorganized and powerless Malwa was no less so because its weakness might invite some more powerful neighbour to conquer it. Sher Shah evinced no vindictive disposition to the chiefs of Malwa when he got them in his power. So it seems that he was mainly swayed by political considerations when he determined to conquer Malwa. He had two objects in view :—

(1) To come into direct touch with the kingdoms of Gujrat and Mewar, through which the Mughals might break into Malwa and ward off the evil from afar ;

(2) To forestal the design of Maldev in Malwa and crush Maldev's prospective allies there before they could cause serious trouble.

We learn from Abbas that Sher Shah immediately after his victory at Bilgram, had sent an urgent despatch to Shujaat Khan, *Faujdar* of Bihar and Rohtas, to march upon Gwalior and besiege it. The object of this move was to secure the southern frontier of the Empire by taking possession of imperial territories along the banks of the Jamuna and the Chambal. His division was to watch the movements of the chiefs of Malwa, but by no means to enter into hostility with them. His principal task was,

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however, the reduction of Gwalior. That impregnable fortress stood—if we are to believe Abbas—a siege of nearly two years (July 1540—April 1542).

Abul Qasim Beg, the Mughal commandant at Gwalior, despairing of his master's reappearance in Hindustan, opened negotiations for surrender.

Sher Shah, with his army ready for the march, was anxiously awaiting the news from Shujaat Khan. When he received Shujaat Khan's letter intimating the conclusion of a preliminary truce for the surrender of the fort, he set out on his expedition against Malwa in the beginning of Muharram 949 A.H. (April 17, 1542*) As soon as he reached Gwalior, Abul Qasim Beg came to pay his respects and handed over the keys of the fort. From Gwalior Sher Shah marched in a south-westerly direction to strike at Sarangpur, one of the most important cities in the possession of Mallu Khan. He seems to have encountered no resistance from any quarter during his march through the country—at all events, our Persian authorities are silent about it. None of Mallu Khan's nobles nor any zamindars who are said to

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* Nizamuddin (Persian text p. 231), Ferishta (Persian text Book I, p. 227) MS. *Makhzan-i-Afaghana* (p. 43) agree in placing the expedition of Malwa and Gwalior in 949 A.H. Coins of Sher Shah from Gwalior and Ujjain mint, bearing the date 949 A.H. are extant (See pp. 84-109, *Catalogue of the Coins in the Indian Museum* Calcutta, by H. N. Wright.)

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have been partisans of Mallu Khan, seem to have stood by him in his distress. Abbas says that when Sher Shah reached Gagron,* Puran Mal of Raisin came there in the company of Shujaat Khan with an escort of 6,000 Rajputs, to wait upon him. Sher Shah is said to have bestowed 100 horses and 100 splendid dresses of honour on Puran Mal and allowed him to return, leaving his younger brother, whose name was Chatur Bhuj to serve the king. (Abbas in Elliot, iv. 392†).

Having conciliated the Rajputs, Sher Shah resumed his march and advanced upon Sarangpur. "When Sher Shah arrived near Sarangpur, Qadir Shah became all the more terrified and despondent (at the recollection of) of the indignity (sending of a *farman* with seal at the top), which he had offered before. Saif Khan, one of his trusted servants, said, 'As you have no power to resist him, it is desirable to go quickly to Sarangpur and there meet him in peace.' Qadir Shah thinking his advice to be a good

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* An important Sarkar of Malwa mentioned in *Ain-i-Akbari* (Jarrett, ii. 209). In modern maps it is written Gagroni. It is situated in long. 76° 30′, lat. 24° 5′ and is about 100 miles due north of Sarangpur.

† If there be any truth in this story—which is mixed up with a little romance,—it becomes evident that Shujaat Khan, during his two years' stay on the borders of Malwa, had already won over Puran Mal to his master's interests.

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one, left Ujjain for Sarangpur" (*Tabakat-i-Akbari* p. 591). Sher Shah received Qadir Shah* most graciously, exalted him by the bestowal of princely gifts and honours and soothed him by showing greater and greater kindness. He ordered that the royal guest should be given a scarlet tent and entertained with hospitality befitting his rank. (MS. Abbas, p. 209). Qadir Shah was also given an excellent bedstead, sleeping garments (*jama-i-khwab*) and bedding (*asbab-i-toshak khana*). (Ferishta, Pers. text, Book ii., p. 270 and Nizamuddin, p. 592). Having halted one day at Sarangpur, Sher Shah started for Ujjain (about 50 miles south-west of Sarangpur), the capital of Qadir Shah. "Within a few days (of Sher Shah's arrival at Ujjain) Muin Khan, the adopted son of Sikandar Khan, came of his own accord to pay homage to Sher Shah, who exalted him with the title of Sikandar Khan and the grant of proper fiefs"† (Ferishta, Pers. text, Book ii., p. 271).

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* Our MS. *Makhzan* (p. 44) says that Mallu Khan reached Sarangpur early in the morning. But he seems to have reached Sher Shah's camp in the evening as the necessaries supplied to him show.

† To avoid confusion we shall call Sikandar Khan's son by his original name of Muin Khan as does Erskine, and not by the new title Sikandar Khan conferred by Sher Shah. Muin Khan was originally the son of an oil-man. Abbas calls the ruler of Sewas Sikandar Khan Miana, perhaps confusing the father with the son.

Malwa was apparently subjugated by Sher Shah without shedding a single drop of blood. The chiefs of Malwa voluntarily submitted to him in the hope that the new conqueror, like Bahadur Shah, would not disturb them in their old possessions but be content with receiving their allegiance. But Sher Shah, a few days after his arrival at Ujjain, issued a *farman* to the effect that His Majesty had been pleased to confer the Sarkar of Lakshanawati (Gaur*) in exchange of the kingdom of Malwa upon Qadir Shah, and that he should forthwith send his family and dependents to Lakshanawati while he himself should be in attendance upon the Emperor. (See Nizamuddin, Persian Text, p. 592). Sher Shah, covetous of the kingdom of Mandu, did this, contrary to the expectation of Qadir Shah (Ferishta, Book ii., p. 271).

It was indeed a surprise not only to Mallu Khan but to the other chiefs of Malwa. The real character and motive of the new conqueror were unpleasantly revealed to them. But under the circumstances one could not find a more humane policy consistent

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"Mewati" designating the country of Sikandar Khan as given here by Ferishta is wrong ; elsewhere he does not add Mewati after the name of Sikandar, the father of Muin Khan. [The word is *Satwasi*.]

* Lakshanawati by Ferishta and Nizamuddin, Kalpi by Abbas, and Lucknow by the author of *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, Marhera by our MS. *Makhzan*, has been spoken of as the fief granted to Mallu Khan.

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with self-interest. The submission of Mallu Khan caused some difficulty to Sher Shah in dealing with him; to leave him in possession of his territories in consideration of his unqualified submission would have been a magnanimous act but a great political blunder—a mere sentimental impolicy; but to confiscate the whole and imprison him without any provocation seemed too odious even to the Shah himself. His policy of removing Mallu Khan from Mandu to Bengal (or to Kalpi, as Abbas says) does great credit to his statecraft. Herein he foreshadowed the wise and humane policy of Akbar towards dethroned sovereigns.

But Sher Shah's new policy was not destined to be a success. Mallu Khan could not but regard the assignment of a fief in Bengal, as a sentence of perpetual exile and imprisonment. He brought his family and dependents out of Ujjain and encamped in a garden intervening between the city and the camp of Sher Shah, ostensibly for sending them to his new fief but really for making his escape. When he next visited Sher Shah again, his countenance betrayed the signs of disappointment. Sher Shah warned Shujaat Khan* to watch his movements closely with-

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* Nizamuddin says that he was given a hint before at Sarangpur "to be careful about the dear guest" (*az mehman-i-aziz khabardar bashed*) amidst magnificent and warm hospitality (p. 592).

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out rousing his suspicion. But one night Mallu Khan fled with his family towards Gujrat. Shujaat Khan was sent in pursuit of the fugitive with a large army, but the column returned unsuccessful from the frontiers of Gujrat where Mallu Khan had taken refuge. Becoming suspicious of Muin Khan's sincerity and faith, Sher Shah ordered him to be imprisoned, and confiscated Hindia and Sewas, which were given to Shujaat Khan to maintain 4,000 horse. He appointed Haji Khan and Junaid Khan faujdars of Mandu and stationed them at Dhar on the frontier of Gujrat with 12,000 troops. Abbas says that he gave Ujjain to Dariya Khan Gujrati, and Sarangpur to Alam Khan Lodi,* two fugitive nobles from the Court of Sultan Mahmud† king of Gujrat. Having thus settled the affairs of Malwa, Sher Shah marched towards the fort Rantambhor. "He having

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* That Dariya Khan and Alam Khan Lodi fled to Sher Shah is corroborated by Ferishta (Book ii. p. 226). But they fled at different times ; Dariya probably fled in 948 and Alam Khan in 949 A. D. The story of the flight of that two Gujrati nobles will also be found in *Mirat-i-Sikandari* (Persian text p. 266 and 287). Sher Shah may have shown kindness and liberality to these two men. But it is doubtful whether they were given jagirs in Malwa. No other historian mentions this. Abbas also says later on (see Elliot, iv. 398) that Ujjain and Sarangpur were bestowed upon Shujaat Khan only a few months after.

† *Mirat-i-Sikandari* (Pers. text, p. 264) calls him Sultan Mahmud Sani (the Second); but he seems to have been the third of the name who sat on the throne of Gujrat.

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sent smooth-tongued ambassadors inside the fort, got possession of it by peaceful negotiations from the officers of Sultan Mahmud Khilji." (*Tabakat-i-Akbari*, Pers. text, p. 231.) Abbas says that it was peacefully surrendered by "Usman Khan whose name was previously Abul Farra." Sher Shah made over the fort to his eldest son Adil Khan, and himself returned to Agra about the end of June, 1542.

After Sher Shah's return from Malwa his lieutenants had to fight severe battles with Mallu Khan and Nasir Khan (brother of Muin Khan). Nasir Khan collected an army from Sewas (Ferishta) consisting of 6,000 horse besides 200 elephants (Abbas). Shujaat Khan advanced to give him battle with 2,000 horse. A severe action was fought at Nilgarh;* when the two armies were commingled together, part of Nasir Khan's and part of Shujaat Khan's force were put to flight. Three men had sworn an oath to attack Shujaat Khan with the object of capturing him alive and retaining him as a hostage for Muin Khan (Ferishta, Book II., p. 271). One of these

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* Elliot's MS. has a variant "Mahal karra". Our MS. writes "Nilgarh". We have not been able to identify either of them. *Makhzan-i-Afaghana* places it in the vicinity of Gurra. (Dorn's *History of the Afghans* p. 132.) Perhaps the battle was fought on the border of Gondwana, as we learn from Nizamuddin that Shujaat Khan marched towards Sewas and Hindia to meet Nasir Khan (*Tabakat-i-Akbari*, p. 572).

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gave Shujaat Khan a stab in the neck with a dagger, the second wounded him in the nostril with a spear thrust and broke the front row of his teeth; the third having dealt him a blow with a sabre, caught hold of his hair to take him alive before Nasir Khan. Shujaat Khan struck him with his sabre on the hand and cut it off, and so freed himself. Jujjhar Khan, (Elliot reads Jajhar Khan), who was one of Shujaat Khan's own tribe, slew the second horseman and Mubarak Khan Sirini (? Sarwani) killed the third. Thus rescued, Shujaat Khan again raised up his standard which had fallen down, and his troops who had fled in the first encounter returned, and rallying round him fought till the victory was gained. (Abbas MS. pp. 214-215 = Elliot, iv. 395-396).

A few days after this victory, when Shujaat Khan was still confined to his bed, covered with six wounds on the face and arms, a letter arrived from Haji Khan, the jagirdar of Dhar, with the news that Sultan Qadir Shah was marching against him from Banswara* and that a battle was expected every day. "Shujaat Khan, at once started, borne in a palki, for Dhar. At night he reached the camp of Haji Khan, woke him from sleep, and planned an attack

* North-west of Dhar, on the Gujrat frontier, east of Ahmadabad and south of Dongarpur (long. 74°, lat. 28°).

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upon the enemy at that very hour. The surprise was completely successful; Qadir being defeated fled to Gujrat. (Ferishta, ii. p. 271, Nizamuddin 593).* When Sher Shah heard the news of these victories and the devoted services of Shujaat Khan, he recalled Haji Khan to his presence and rewarded the victorious general with the governorship of the whole country of Mandu, bestowing on him a *mansab* of 12,000 horse.†

In the Persian authorities Muin Khan bin Sikandar Khan's fief is spoken of as *Hindia-Sewas*. Now, Hindia (modern, *Handia*) is a well-known town on the s. bank of the Narmada (77·3 E., 22·30 N.). *Sewas* is evidently a mistake for *Satwas*, a place 20 m. west of Handia, but north of the Narmada. (*Ind. At.* 53 S.W.) Sewas cannot be a copyist's error for *Dewas*, because the larger town of that name is too far north-west of Hindia and too near Ujjain, while another Diwas, some six miles s. of Hindia, is too small a place. Sikandar is described in the Persian MSS. by the epithet *Sewasi*, a mistake for *Satwasi*, and not by *Mewati*. The *Ain* (ii. 207) gives both *Dewas* and *Satwas* as mahals of Sarkar Hindia. Can it be *Seoni*? [J. Sarkar.]

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* The passage in our MS. as well as the translation of Elliot suggests that Haji Khan was made a twelve Hazari. But it seems to be wrong. The honour was certainly bestowed upon Shujaat Khan for his distinguished services. This conjecture is supported by a subsequent passage of Abbas himself. "Certain persons who were envious of Shujaat Khan, said that Shujaat Khan kept no troops, *though he had to maintain* 12,000 horses.....On hearing this news Shujaat Khan came to Kachwara.....75,000 horses he passed under the brand and he said that the rest were in his districts." (Elliot, iv. 406-407).

† Both Nizamuddin and Ferishta say that at this time Shujaat Khan had only 150 horsemen with him. In Nizamuddin we find that he met Haji Khan "in the neighbourhood of *Komly Mirarso*," a place difficult to identify.

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CHAPTER IX

INTRIGUES OF MALDEV.

About a month after his return to Agra from Malwa, Sher Shah found himself in a most critical situation created by Maldev's intrigue with Humayun, and the arrival of the latter in Marwar, (17th Rabi II. 949 A.H., 31st July, 1542, *Akbarnama*, i. 372), with the object of reconquering his lost heritage with the help of the Rajputs. The underlying cause of Maldev's unprovoked hostility towards Sher Shah will be found in the following life-history of the Rajput prince, and the political condition of Hindustan at the date of his sending the invitation to Humayun at Bhakkar twelve months before this time.

Maldev ascended the throne of Marwar in 1532 A.D. At his accession it was a small impoverished State of second-rate importance. Within 5 or 6 years he, by his shrewd policy and incessant military activity, reconquered the whole of Marwar proper from his powerful disobedient vassals, annexed the Bikanir State (ruled by a younger branch of his house) and considerably aggrandized himself at the expense of Jesalmir, Mewar and Amber. Abu, Sanchor and Siwana on the south; Pokaran, Derawal (long. 72°,

lat. 28°) on the west; Bikanir, Nagor, Fatehpur (long. 75°, lat. 28°) and Jhijjar (50 miles due west of Delhi) on the north; Bednore, Ajmir, Jahajpur (east of the Banas river, at the foot of a pass leading from Bundi to Mewar) on the south-east; Tonk (long. 75° 31″, lat. 26° 10″), Chatsu (long. 76°, lat. 26° 36″; only 24 miles south of Jaipur city), Lalsunt (long. 76° 25″, lat. 26° 36″), Toda (Bhim? long. 76° 52″, lat. 26° 55″) and Malrana (long. 76° 32″, lat. 26° 17″; about 17 miles north of Rantambhor), on the east,—marked the boundaries of his huge State. (See Tod's *Rajasthan*, pp. 850-851). He was endowed with greater political foresight, constructive genius and diplomatic ability than the common run of Rajput princes. He transformed a loose feudal monarchy into a compact and centralized State, and established various branches of his clan,—"sowed the Rathor seed", as the national bard sang, throughout his conquered territories. He could muster from his own clan alone an army of 50,000 Rathors, the bravest among the brave peoples of Rajputana. By developing the salt manufacture of the Sambhar and other lakes in his dominion, he amassed a vast wealth which was spent in fortifying numerous towns throughout his kingdom. The great humiliation of Mewar, consequent on the reduction of Chitor by Bahadur Shah in 1535 A.D., exalted Marwar to the

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first place among the Rajput States, and the decline of Gujrat on the deah of Bahadur Shah in 1537 A.D. established her complete ascendancy in western and central India, leaving to her no worthy rival besides the Empire of Delhi. The outbreak of war in 1538 A.D. between Humayun and Sher Shah in Bihar and Bengal opened new avenues of aggression to Maldev. The rich province of Malwa, which became a no man's land after Bahadur Shah's death, naturally attracted him. The conquest of Tonk, Toda and Malrana, which indicated unmistakably his design upon Malwa, seems to have been effected at this time. Naturally he desired nothing more than the continuation of this struggle between the Mughals and Afghans without any decisive advantage to either, and possibly he would not have hesitated to throw his power into the scale against Humayun, had the fortune of Sher Shah sunk too low. But in politics the friend of the days of adversity generally turns into the enemy of the days of prosperity. The victory of Bilgram automatically reversed the relation between them as Panipat had, 14 years before, made Rana Sanga and Babur implacable foes. The occupant of the throne of Delhi, whoever he might be, was bound to be an object of suspicion, envy and dread to the independent rulers of Malwa and Rajputana. Maldev wished Humayun back on the

throne of Delhi and prepared himself to reinstate him there with the Rajput sword. With this object he had sent letters to Bhakkar, declaring his loyalty (to Humayun) and offering assistance in effecting the subjugation of Hindustan. (*Tabakat-i-Akbari*, Persian text p. 205 = Elliot, v. 211).

Humayun had reached the neighbourhood of Bhakkar on 28th Ramzan (26th January, 1541) (*Akbarnama*, i. 362) and resided there till he left it for besieging the castle of Sehwan (further down the Indus, between Tatta and Bhakkar) in the beginning of Jamada II. 948 (last week of September, 1541 A.D.) (*Akbarnama*, i. 366.) So the invitation from Marwar must have in all probability been sent between February and August, 1541 A.D. Maldev was a prudent and cautious politician, who must have had weighed very carefully the chances of success before committing himself to such an enterprise where failure meant his own ruin but little loss to Humayun. He probably opened negotiations with the Mughal Emperor in June 1541, when Sher Shah went to Bengal to counteract the rebellious designs of his Governor. That was indeed the most opportune moment for such a surprise as Maldev meditated. The greater portion of Sher Shah's army, about 50,000 troops under his best generals,

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was locked up in the Ghakkar country, 356 miles* away from Agra. Another army was with him in Bengal about 700 miles† away from it. His southern and south-western frontier was sadly exposed; Gwalior still held out against Shujaat Khan, and the chiefs of Malwa were openly hostile. If Humayun had come to Marwar in the rainy season of 1541, Haji Khan (*Faujdar* of Mewat) and Shujaat Khan, who had not more than 25,000 to 30,000 troops, could by no means have resisted the onset of Maldev's 50,000 Rathors exclusive of Humayun's following of about 3,000 Mughals.

The greatest advantage upon which Maldev could count for success was the absence of Sher Shah at a distance of 700 miles from Agra. Sher Shah's excellent arrangements for procuring news and conveying despatches might have taken to him the news of the Rajput and Mughal offensive within a week from its commencement. But it was physically impossible for him to arrive with the same haste at the scene of action with his army in the height of the

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* Agra to Delhi 84 miles and Delhi to Lahor 208 miles and Lahor to Rohtas 64 miles. (See for stages and distances, *India of Aurangzib* by Prof. J. N. Sarkar, pp. 98, 100 and 102.)

† Agra to Allahabad 286 miles and Allahabad to Benares 74 miles and Benares to Patna 155½ miles and Patna to Gaur 185 miles (?). For distance and stages from Agra to Benares and Benares to Agra, see *ibid*, pp. 111-112 and 110.

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rains through muddy roads and across swollen rivers. However, the folly of Humayun proved the salvation of Sher Shah. Fortunately for him, Humayun took little notice of Maldev's representations, either because he suspected the fidelity of the infidel or doubted his chances of success. He clung to his chimmerical project of effecting the conquest of Gujrat first and then attempting the re-conquest of Hindustan with Gujrat as his base of operations. Having arrived at Bhakkar in the last week of June, 1541, Humayun sent an ambassador to Shah Husain Arghun, ruler of Tatta, with a message that the Emperor had been compelled to come to Bhakkar* and Tatta from necessity, with the object of attempting the recovery of Gujrat, and that he should come and wait upon the Emperor and consult with him about the conquest of Gujrat. Shah Husain temporized for six months by sending complimentary messages (*Tabakat-i-Akbari*, Pers. text p. 203 = Elliot, v. 207). Humayun left Bhakkar in August, 1541, and went to Pat† where he married Hamida Banu, Akbar's mother. This marriage displeased

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* The translation in Elliot, v. 207, omits this more important name. Humayun at that time had not gone to Tatta; the message was sent from Bhakkar. (See *Tabakat-i- Akbari*, Pers. text, p. 203).

† See Mr. Beveridge's *Akbarnama* (i. 363 foot-note 2) and Mrs. Beveridge's translation of Gulbadan's *Humayun-Nama*, p. 149 foot-note 3.

Mirza Hindal, who went off to Qandahar; Yadgar Nasir Mirza was about to follow him, but was induced to stay by Humayun's promise of giving the Mirza one-third of Hindustan after its recovery.

Humayun at last became convinced of the futility of his plan of conquering Gujrat with the aid of Shah Husain Arghun, whose insincere motive had now become manifest. Even at this time (September, 1541) the idea of going to Marwar and trying his lot with the aid of Maldev did not occur to him. The prospect of success in such an enterprise had not yet passed away; all the favourable conditions were almost the same as in July—Sher Shah was still absent in Bengal and Gwalior had not yet surrendered to Shujaat Khan. But instead of going to Marwar, the Emperor marched against Shah Husain to conquer Tatta from him. He wasted seven months in besieging the castle of Sehwan (belonging to Shah Husain) half way between Bhakkar and Tatta, and at last gave up the enterprise without achieving any success. When he returned to Bhakkar he found its gates shut against him by Yadgar Nasir Mirza, who had been seduced by Shah Husain. Nizamuddin thus describes the distressful condition of Humayun at this time:—"The men of Humayun's army being in distress began to desert him by ones and twos to Mirza Yadgar Nasir.....(who) in his infamy

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now prepared to turn his arms against him. It became evident that if he tarried any longer all his men would desert to Mirza Yadgar Nasir and that the worst might be expected from the Mirza's baseness. In this extremity he resolved upon marching to Maldev....." (*Tabakat-i-Akbari* in Elliot v. 210-211).

Humayun determined to reach Marwar by way of Uch (long. 71°, lat. 29°, on the eastern bank of the Chinab, about 85 miles south of Multan.) He started for it on 21st Muharram 949 A.H. (7th May, 1542) and reached that place about the end of May, 1542. Bakshu Langah, the zamindar of Uch, who had, during Humayun's flight to Bhakkar, provided boats and provisions for his party, now assumed a hostile attitude. He not only refused to supply provisions, but also prevented Humayun's men from getting them by purchase. They rambled in the neighbouring jungles (near Uch) for a month and a half (MS. Jauhar p. 76) eating fruits and the seeds of Sankar (?) trees, till they accidentally lighted upon the fort of Dilawar (Derawal of Elphinstone's map long. 71°, lat. 28°) belonging to Rajah Maldev. From Dilawar the royal party seemed to have travelled due south through the Jesalmir State. Jauhar says that Humayun, after suffering great hardships from scarcity of water, sighted a pond and

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a rivulet, where he halted for some time to rest his followers and allow the stragglers to join the camp. This rivulet can be no other than the stream which, issuing from the neighbourhood of Pokaran, flows into the lake Sirr, about 22 miles (in a straight line) north-east of the town of Jesalmir. From this place they reached Pokaran* (?) by an easy march, and after one stage more halted at Fallodi† (long. 72°, lat. 27°), 30 miles north of Pokaran and about 120 miles north-west of Jodhpur. Humayun reached this place probably on August 1st*, and despatched Atka Khan (on the 2nd?) as an envoy to Maldev at Jodhpur. (See Jauhar MS. pp. 76-78 = Stewart pp. 36-38.)

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* Jauhar writes Phulur and Gulbadan (see Mrs. Beveridge's translation, pp. 153-154) Satalmir, which is 2 miles from Pokaran. Maldev dismantled it to fortify Pokaran with its material. (See *Rajputana Gazetteer*, ii. 263 and Tod's *Rajasthan* p. 851). So Jauhar's Phulur is undoubtedly a mistake for Pokaran.

† Stewart's foot-note (p. 37) adds that Fallodi is 60 miles from Jodhpur. He certainly mistakes *kos* for miles as the actual distance is 60 *kos*. In Stewart's translation (p. 37) of Jauhar, we find that Humayun marched one stage more from Fallodi which would bring him to Daitchoo, 30 miles due south of Fallodi and 90 miles west of Jodhpur. This may be true. But I accept Fallodi, on the combined testimony of Gulbadan and our MS. Jauhar.

* Abul-Fazl (*Akbarnama* i. 372) says that Humayun encamped at a place 12 *kos* from Bikanir on 17th Rabi II. 949 (31st July, 1542). But neither Pokaran nor Fallodi answers the description. This is, we think, the date of Humayun's entering the territory of Maldev at Satalmir.

Atka Khan reached Jodhpur probably on the 5th August, bearing Humayun's lofty *farman*, desiring the Rajah to wait upon his imperial Majesty. Maldev owing to far-sighted political considerations did not proceed personally to welcome his procrastinating guest, who had made his appearance 12 months after the date of invitation, without previous intimation. But Rajput hospitality was not dishonoured in him; making excuses for his inability to attend His Majesty in person, he sent to Humayun the customary gift of fruits* and some *ashrafis* (gold coins) and armour with the gratifying message 'You are welcome! I give you Bikanir'†. But the Mughal envoy suspected the good faith of Maldev who showed want of due respect for his master's *farman* by not attending him in person; his excuses appeared to him to be wanting in sincerity, and his suspicion was perhaps greatly enhanced by the absence of any sign of military activity in Jodhpur, where he had

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* See Jauhar's MS. p. 78=Stewart's trans. p. 38.

† See Mrs. Beveridge's translation of Gulbadan's *Humayun-Nama* p. 154. Gulbadan says that *ashrafis* with the message were sent to Fallodi before Humayun's envoy left the camp for Jodhpur. But this would suggest as if Maldev's men were awaiting Humayun's arrival at Fallodi with the presents, which was far from being the case. At Jodhpur about 150 miles away from Pokaran, Maldev scarcely got the news before the appearance of the Mughal envoy at his Court. Gifts were sent in all probability as the respectful response to Humayun's *farman*.

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expected to see a large army fully equipped for his master's service. He communicated his own feelings to Humayun and perhaps gave him a hint to be on his guard. The gifts of Maldev probably reached Humayun on the 9th. But the secret communications of his agent and the fact of Maldev's non-attendance made Humayun suspicious of the Rajah's intentions. Jauhar says, "The above-mentioned (Maldev) made excuses and sent a small gift of fruits. But no sign of loyalty was visible which could comfort His Majesty." (MS. p. 74).*

From his original encampment Humayun retraced his steps westward, becoming suspicious of the attitude of Maldev. Jauhar says, he "encamped at Kul-i-Yogi (?) and anxiously waited for the news of Maldev from all quarters. In short, reliable news reached him that Maldev was bent on mischief and had no intention of seeing him; he marched from that place and halted at the pond of Sambhar."† [*Hauz-i-Sambar*, this seems to be an error in our MS. Jauhar: evidently Satalmir is meant] (Jauhar, MS. p. 79).

From Gulbadan ["There came here an envoy from Sher Khan, etc.", p. 154] and Nizamuddin

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* Stewart's translation (p. 38) runs thus:—"We remained there for three days, without any hospitality being shown to us, or any comfort given to the distressed monarch."

† Jauhar could never mean by this the famous salt lake Sambhar on the border of Jaipur State.

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(see Elliot, v. 211), we know that Sher Shah had sent an ambassador with a threatening message to Maldev and that this ambassador reached Jodhpur while Humayun's envoy was present there.

Nizamuddin says, "When Maldev was informed of the Emperor's weakness he was much alarmed; for he knew that he had not sufficient forces of his own to withstand Sher Khan. Sher Khan had sent an ambassador to Maldev, holding out great expectations; and the latter very ungenerously (*az kamal-i-be-muravvati*) promised to make Humayun a prisoner if possible, and give him over into the hands of his enemy. Nagor and its dependencies had fallen into the power of Sher Khan and consequently he was afraid lest Sher Khan should be annoyed and send a large army to his territory against Humayun."*

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*The above passages unmistakably show that Sher Shah was well aware of Humayun's movements; and his readiness to enter into war with so powerful a prince as Maldev implies a previous course of military preparations. Humayun's envoy was at Jodhpur from 5th to 14th August. The simultaneous presence of Mughal and Afghan envoys suggests that the latter must have arrived at Jodhpur on the 12th August at the latest. Abul-Fazl says that Humayun left Jesalmir on 10th Jamada I. (23rd August, 1542) for Amarkot. From Jauhar and Gulbadan's accounts it appears that Humayun took about 5 days to pass through Jesalmir. So he must have begun his retreat from Marwar not later than 17th August; Humayun's envoy Atka Khan fled on 14th; otherwise it would not have been possible for him to reach Humayun's camp near Pokaran on the morning of 17th August.

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(*Tabakat-i-Akbari* in Elliot, v. 211-12 = Pers. text, p. 206.)

After his return to Agra Sher Shah had one month's time to organize his resources and take precautionary steps. With the possession of Rantambhor and Malwa, Agra became comparatively safe; at least a surprise from the south-west was impossible. He seems to have been mainly occupied in the Mewat and Delhi regions where his frontier came in touch with that of Maldev, and which he had had no previous occasion to visit. An alarming state of things existed there; Maldev possessed Jhujjur (long. 78°, lat. 28°; Tod's Jajawar, see *Rajasthan*, p. 851), a town within 50 miles of Delhi. Anyhow Sher Shah was not taken by surprise when the definite news of Humayun's arrival in Marwar (31st July) reached him on the 4th August (?). He lost no time in a tedious exchange of diplomatic messages, but at once entered Maldev's territories and began to march upon Nagor.* He made three or four marches before despatching his messenger (on the 8th August ?) to Maldev, offering him the alternative of either himself

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* Nizamuddin's statement that Nagor and its dependencies had fallen into the hands of Sher Shah cannot be taken too literally. Before this incident Sher Shah had not conquered it, and at this time in four marches from the frontier of Mewat, he could not reach even Didawana which is 70 miles north of Nagor. We suppose Didawana (salt lake) was the extreme point of Sher Shah's advance.

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expelling Humayun from his territories or suffering it to be done by the Afghans, *i.e.*, in plain words, giving battle.

Maldev did not accord an open welcome to Humayun, because he felt that the vigilant eye of Sher Shah was already upon him; and such a course of action would leave him no line of retreat and no plea to explain away his unfriendly act. At the time of Humayun's arrival he was not prepared for war, as he had no powerful standing army ready for immediate service. His forces consisted of the feudal levies of his clansmen, scattered throughout his wide dominions. Such an army could be mustered only with difficulty and delay. He had, moreover, given up all hope of the coming of Humayun; and with it all idea of an offensive campaign against Sher Shah. But the presence of Humayun, though at an inopportune moment, seemed once more to have roused his slumbering ambition. But to his terror and surprise, he found Sher Shah penetrating into his territories before even the Afghan envoy appeared at his Court to make a formal protest. Thus, Sher Shah forced him to make an immediate decision between peace and war. But war could not but be ruinous to Maldev, who decided to avoid it by all means. Having explained away Humayun's arrival in his dominion as accidental, he

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submitted to Sher Shah's demand to expel him from Marwar. During this time, two Mughals were at Jodhpur; one was Atka Khan whom Humayun had sent there to learn Maldev's intentions, and the other was an ex-librarian of Humayun named Mulla Surkh, who had taken service with the Rana. The arrival of Sher Shah's envoy and Maldev's attentions to him very naturally caused them to suspect these proceedings as part of a treacherous plot of Maldev to entrap Humayun and hand him over to Sher Shah. So Mulla Surkh wrote to Humayun, "March at once from wherever you are, for Maldev intends to make you prisoner. Put no trust in his words. There came here an envoy from Sher Khan who brought a letter to say: 'By whatever means you know and can use, capture that King. If you will do this, I will give you Nagor (?), and Alwar, and whatever place you ask for.'" (*Humayun-Nama*, p. 154). Atka Khan went away without permission, to tell his master of the state of affairs at Jodhpur. (*Tabakat-i-Akbari* in Elliot, v. 212). The departure of Atka Khan without leave, but surely with the connivance of Maldev, was accounted for as flight, and Maldev, to save appearances, had to send troops in pursuit of the Mughal envoy.

Humayun, having been warned by his agents, retreated precipitately for Amarkot through the

Jesalmir territory. The following passage throws light on the fact that Maldev was not serious in arresting Humayun: "One morning three divisions of cavalry, consisting of 500 men each, were seen pursuing us in the rear.....All the baggages were taken off the horses and placed on camels and the foot-soldiers were mounted upon the horses; but they numbered only sixteen troopers.....His Majesty remained behind. Shaikh Ali with *seven troopers* went against the enemy.....When they came near the enemy, they let fly their arrows. By the grace of God victory was obtained; upon that (*i.e.*, the discharge of arrows) two troopers (not *chiefs* as in Stewart) of the enemy were severely wounded; and they fell down from their horses; whereupon the others dispersed and fled away defeated."* (MS. pp. 80-81 = Stewart's—not very correct—p. 39.)

However, without further molestation, the Mughals entered the territory of Jesalmir, and after suffering untold miseries reached Amarkot, where they found a happy asylum.† A glimpse of joy and

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* Maldev's troops fled because, in all likelihood, they were instructed secretly not to press the fugitives hard but turn back after a show of attack which was only meant to deceive the accompanying agent of Sher Shah. So it is not strange that they fled at the first sight of blood.

† The current account of Humayun's retreat from Marwar is wholly inaccurate, owing to the wrong translation of Stewart or his

hope gladdened the heart of the unhappy prince at the birth of Hamida Banu's first child, the future Emperor Akbar.

Sher Shah and Maldev both were glad to avoid a war at that particular moment. The Afghans evacuated the territories of Maldev, who probably flattered himself for his imaginary diplomatic triumph over Sher Shah. Indeed, he deserves credit for his great tact in freeing himself from a truly critical situation without incurring the odium of delivering Humayun into the hands of Sher Shah.

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faulty MS. of Jauhar's book. A correct version of the story, as given in our MS., will be found in the appendix.

CHAPTER X

The Conquest of Raisin (1543.)

Sher Shah withdrew his army from Maldev's territory, about the end of September, 1542 A.D., when the news of Humayun's departure from Jesalmir (for Amarkot, 10th Jamada I. 949, 23rd August, 1542 A.D., *Akbarnama*, i. 375), fully convinced him that there was no possibility of his return to Marwar. Abbas says, "That he went from Agra in the direction of Bihar and Bengal, and when he reached that country (Bihar* or Bengal ?) he was attacked by fever." (MS. Abbas, p. 216). But neither he nor any other Persian authority enlightens us as to the date and object of his departure, the period of his stay and his work there. Sher Shah seems to have started for Bihar about the beginning of December, 1542, with the object of effecting the administrative re-adjustment of that province. Before the days of Sher Shah there were no geographical designations such as South Bihar and North Bihar.†

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* Niamatullah (*History of the Afghans*, Dorn, p. 134) says that Sher Shah was attacked by illness when he reached Bihar and Patna.

† North Bihar or Tirhut was conquered by the Muhammadans two centuries after South Bihar.

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Bihar meant only the tract of country on the southern bank of the Ganges, bounded on the west by the river Son, on the south by the hills of the Gaya district, on the east by the frontier of the independent monarchy of Bengal (represented by a line some 20 miles east of Bihar town) and on the north by the Ganges;—roughly corresponding to the ancient country of Magadha. Dariya Khan Lohani's fief of Bihar—which he had held from the days of the Sharqi kings of Jaunpur, and the kingdom of Bihar under his son Bahar Khan Lohani (Sultan Muhammad) and grandson Jalal Khan Lohani, did not include a larger area than this. Sher Shah's acquisition of the Bihar kingdom added to it Sasaram and other parganas; (*i.e.*, the Rohtas district), and his annexation of the Mungir district from Mahmud Shah of Bengal pushed the eastern frontier of Bihar to the Rajmahal hills. Those districts on the northern bank of the Ganges, which now form part of the Bihar province, were in those days politically quite separate from Bihar. They were an integral part of the *province*—later on the *kingdom*—of Bengal, ruled by a governor whose head-quarters were at Hajipur. It has been already mentioned that Sher Shah excluded the districts west of the Kushi from his newly created province of Bengal in 1541 A.D. He now constituted one large province by bringing about

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the administrative and political union of the northern districts with those of Bihar proper; and the whole province from that date gradually came to be known as Bihar. Later on, this re-constituted province formed the Subah of Bihar* in Akbar's reign. He found that the town of Bihar, about 16 miles away from the Ganges, was not a suitable place to be the head-quarters of the new province; so the deserted city of Patna (ancient Pataliputra) was rebuilt by him. The *Tarikh-i-Daudi* says, "Patna was then an insignificant town (*kasba-i-muhtakar*) dependent on Bihar, which was the seat of the Governor. Sher Shah came to Patna, and while standing on the bank of the Ganges, after a steady deliberation and excellent reflection said to his attendants, if a fort were built in this place the waters of the Ganges could never flow far from it and Patna would become one of the greatest towns of this country, because the Ganges

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* Abul-Fazl thus defines the Subah of Bihar:—"Its length from Gadhi (Garhi) to Rohtas is 120 *kos*; its breadth from Tirhut (? this is a clear mistake) to the northern mountains, 110 *kos*. On its eastern boundary is Bengal; to the west lie Allahabad and Oudh. On the north and south it is bounded by hills of considerable elevation" (*Ain-i-Akbari*, Jarrett, ii. 149). The hills of Jharkhand lay to the south of Bihar; so its breadth cannot be measured from Tirhut on the northern bank of the Ganges, leaving out the greater half on the southern bank. The Newal Kishore Press edition of the Persian text commits the same mistake. (*Ain-i-Akbari*, third ed. Book II. p. 66).

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flows from the west and the river Gandak coming from the north falls into it, (*lit.*, strikes in the waist) with a strong current. The strength of the stream (the Ganges) is broken; so it cannot advance towards the north. He therefore ordered skilful artificers and great architects to make an estimate for the construction of a fort where he stood. These experienced workmen submitted an estimate of 5 *lakhs* of Rupees, which was immediately [ordered to be] made over to trustworthy persons. The fort was completed within a very short time and became an exceedingly strong one. Bihar from that date was deserted and fell into ruin, while Patna became one of the largest cities of the Province." (MS. *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, p. 225, see also the extract in Elliot, iv. 477-478, which contains some errors.) He probably left Bihar about the middle of March, 1543* for Malwa, to give the finishing touch to his conquest of that province by ousting Puran Mal from Raisin.

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* Abbas (see Elliot, iv. 397). Nizamuddin (Persian text p. 231) and Ferishta (Persian text p. 227) agree in placing the expedition against Puran Mal in 950 A.H. Prof. Dowson conjectures, (Elliot iv. 404, foot-note 1) that Sher Shah might have completed the work of the conquest in the beginning of 950 A.H. His guess is true; there is no other way of adjusting the dates of subsequent events. The Muharram of 950 begins on the 6th April 1543. Badayuni gives the date of the siege of Raisin in the following verse: "*Qiyam-i-bargah bashad mubarak*"—949 A.H. But he places the date of its fall in 950 A.H. (See Ranking, i. 476.)

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The fort of Raisin (long. 77° 50″, lat. 23° 19″) stands on the highest hill of a detached ridge of the Vindhya mountains, stretching north and south for about 7½ miles, along the eastern bank of the upper course of the river Betwa. On the north and south two mountain streams cut off this ridge from contiguous hills, and thus add to the strength of its defence. On the east it presents a formidable front of unbroken rock wall of gradually increasing height from Balna (1722 feet, in the north) to Raisin (1760 feet). The hill upon which the fort stands juts out a little to the east.

Rai Silhady Poorbya,† father of Puran Mal, was a Chohan Rajput who first distinguished himself like Medini Rai as the adherent of Sultan Mahmud Khilji of Malwa in his struggle with his brother Sahib Khan, put forward as a claimant to the throne by his treacherous Muslim nobles. With the aid of the Rajputs, Mahmud made a clean sweep of the rebels, confiscated their fiefs, and conferred them upon the Rajput chiefs for their loyal service. Silhady received from him Bhilsa, Raisin, Ujjain and

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† Our MS. *Makhzan-i-Afaghana* (p. 47) calls Silhady Poorbya a Ghelot Rajput. Tod says that he belonged to the Tuar tribe (see *Rajasthan*, i. 320). But Poorbya by which Silhady was best known is a branch of the Chohan clan as Col. Tod himself says elsewhere. So it is perhaps more accurate to call him a Chohan.

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Sarangpur as fief probably in 1503 A.D. The destruction of old Muhammadan noble families and the sudden rise of the Hindus to supreme importance in the State created much bad blood between the followers of the rival creeds. The Muslims suffered humiliation and oppression at the hands of the Rajput chiefs. Nizamuddin says, "Most of the Muslim servants and nobles (of Malwa) became heart-broken and leading their wives and children by the hand they forsook their houses.....The wives and daughters of the Musalmans were seized by the Rajputs, made concubines and trained as dancing women." (*Tabakat-i-Akbari*, Persian text, 583). Soon afterwards Sultan Mahmud set about destroying the Rajput chiefs with the help of the auxiliaries sent by Sultan Muzaffar Shah II of Gujrat. But the attempt ended sadly in his defeat and captivity in a fight near Gagron, with Rana Sanga of Mewar who had come to aid the Rajputs (1512 A.D.?). Since then Silhady Poorbya, Medini Rai and other Rajput chiefs had transferred their allegiance to the Rana of Mewar. Babur* mentions Silhady as a vassal of Rana Sanga

*It is curious to notice that Babur calls 'Silhady' Salahu-d-din; Abbas Sarwani also calls him by the Islamic name (see Elliot, iv. 378). It cannot be said that Babur could not write the Hindu name, as we find more abstruse names spelt correctly in the *Memoirs*; so Silhady must have been known by his Muslim title at that time. His change of faith must therefore have taken place at a time before

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who held a territory 'yielding 30,000 horse'. (*Memoirs*, p. 562.) Bhupat, son of Silhady fought in the battle of Kanwa, and fell on that woeful field of carnage with 6,000 horse. But the annals of Mewar brand Silhady as "the thief of Raisin" who brought about the defeat of Rana Sanga at Kanwa by deserting to Babur at a critical moment of the battle. (Tod's *Rajasthan*, i. 320.) Such a tradition opposed to authentic history cannot be accepted as true. Popular legend is everywhere prone to attribute great national disasters to some fictitious treachery. Bahadur Shah of Gujrat, who had overthrown Sultan Mahmud Khilji II and annexed Malwa to his kingdom, attacked the possessions of Silhady and besieged Raisin in 1532 A.D. When the guns of Rumi Khan hurled destruction against the

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Babur's invasion of India. (1526 A.D.) This is important as it disproves the story of Silhady's conversion in the camp of Bahadur Shah as told by Nizamuddin, Ferishta and *Mirat-i-Sikandari*. Beveridge (see foot-note 3 p. 305 *Akbarnama*) seems to countenance this error by quoting the story from *Mirat-i-Sikandari*. One still more glaring error is to be found in that foot-note; Bhupat, who died in the battle of Kanwa, 1527 A. D. (see Babur's *Memoirs* p. 573) is made to betray Mandu to Humayun in *1535* A.D. in revenge for the death of his father in *1532* A.D. (!)

† The accusation of keeping Muslim women in his harem is made against Silhady as Abbas later on accuses Puran Mal of the same crime. The same pious effort for the deliverance of Muslim women is credited to Bahadur Shah as Abbas claims for Sher Shah.

walls of the fort, the Rajputs, finding the position untenable, are said to have burnt the Muslim women along with their own families and fallen upon the foe 'to kill and die'. (For the campaign of Bahadur Shah against Raisin, see *Mirat-i-Sikandari*, Persian text, pp. 225-230.)

During the sack of Raisin Puran Mal, and the widow and son of Bhupat—who had married the daughter of Rana Sanga—were in Mewar. Bahadur was not satisfied with exterminating the Rajput influence in Malwa; the sack of Chitor by him in 1535 marks the climax of vindictive Muslim hatred towards the Rajputs which had originated in the early years of the reign of Sultan Mahmud Khilji of Malwa. After the death of Bahadur Shah (February, 1537 A.D.) Puran Mal was invited to Malwa by Mallu Khan, who wished to strengthen his hands by securing the adherence of the Rajputs against his Muslim rivals. He wrested Raisin and the neighbouring territories from the Muslims, of course with no gentle hand. He soon pushed his conquest to the neighbourhood of Chanderi, invested his nephew Pratap with the title of Rajah and laid the foundation of a powerful Rajput principality. The Muslims who had rejoiced over the fall of the infidels five years before, were now doubly aggrieved at the re-establishment of Hindu influence on the

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destruction of many Muslim families. It is not strange that they should pray for the coming of another Avenger of Islam.

But Sher Shah's campaign against Puran Mal towards the end of 949 A.H. (beginning of 1543 A.D.) in spite of his submission in the previous year was not undertaken out of a religious motive to punish Puran Mal for enslaving the families of the Muslims of Chanderi, as the bigoted Muslim historians fondly believed. Its real cause is to be found in Sher Shah's wise though stern policy of consolidation of his conquests in Malwa by transplanting the native chiefs from their original seats of power to some remote province if they would consent to be thus removed or by destroying them outright in case of refusal. No incentive of fanaticism was necessary, as the political object was a sufficient stimulant to move Sher Shah against Raisin. Puran Mal had been spared in the previous year because Sher Shah thought it more politic and convenient under the circumstances,— wishing to destroy his enemies piecemeal and avoid an united opposition at the first stage of the conquest. Puran Mal's extraordinary escort of 6,000 Rajputs and Sher Shah's princely gifts to him implied mutual suspicion and insincerity. The intrigue of Maldev made Sher Shah distrustful of the Rajputs who, next to the Mughals, were his

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most formidable opponents. The possessions of Puran Mal were skirted on the east by the hills of Bundelkhand, Garrah, and Gondwana, where many Rajput chiefs held sway. The majority of the native population of Malwa were Rajputs and Maldev, whose territories fringed a portion of Malwa, was a prince ambitious, powerful and diplomatic. One single fort unsubdued might overturn an Empire as Sher Shah could realize by contemplating the fate of Humayun. So he determined to safeguard himself against unknown dangers by rooting out Rajput influence in Malwa.

Sher Shah had formed the plan of campaign against Puran Mal before he left Agra for Bihar and Bengal, *i.e.*, about December, 1542. His son Jalal Khan was ordered to take the field about January, 1543 A.D. It is not definitely known under what pretext this unprovoked attack was made. We learn from Abbas that in the course of the final negotiations for the surrender of Raisin, Sher Shah offered the governorship of Benares to Puran Mal. Such an offer, or something like it for the peaceful surrender of his possessions, may have been made to Puran Mal before striking the blow.

The fate of Mallu Khan had been a sufficient warning to Puran Mal, who seems to have been well prepared for a sturdy resistance. Before Sher Shah

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joined his son, the latter had conquered Puran Mal's territories as far as the town of Bhilsa, 14 miles north of Raisin. Upon his arrival, the Rajput chief retired behind the ridge of the hills on which Raisin stands and defended his new position with great bravery and obstinacy. Abbas says that Sher Shah besieged Raisin for six months, which seems too long a period to be probable; the siege may have lasted for four months, from April to July 1543. Sher Shah's operation against Raisin was not really the siege of one fort, but rather a blockade of the fortified chain of hills on one of which Raisin stands. It should not be supposed that the Rajputs were driven into the fortress and all ingress and egress of it stopped. Raisin was too small a fort to accommodate ten thousand souls, male and female, within its four walls.

No remarkable incident is mentioned in connection with the blockade except a *mélee* fought between 1,500 Afghans and the same number of Rajputs, in which the Afghans are said to have been victorious. (Abbas in Elliot, iv. 399-400.) But this is a mere camp-tale, as its origin shows, having no claim to authenticity. The Afghans seem to have fared ill in their surprise encounter with the Rajputs who possibly used to lure small parties of their rash enemies into the hills, as Sher Shah's strict order that

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no Afghan should approach the fort shows. (Abbas MS. p. 221.) "Sher Shah then drew the artillery of other citadels to his camp; and planting it upon high scaffolds so hard pressed the fort that the garrison had scarcely time enough to breathe" (*Makhzan-i-Afaghana*, trans. by Dorn, p. 136). Another incident, thoroughly characteristic of Sher Shah, is mentioned by Abbas. Several heavy cannon had to be cast in the siege-camp for which Sher Shah issued an "order that copper (*mas*; translated in Elliot as "Brass") of every description, what they (the Afghans) possessed or on which hands could be laid, should be brought and melted into large mortars (*deghs*). All copper vessels such as large cooking-pots (*deghs*) and dishes from the bazar and tents of the soldiers were procured and mortars were cast. Order was given to bombard the fort from all sides (?) simultaneously. When the balls struck the fort and holes were made, Puran Mal, alarmed at this, opened negotiations for surrender. (Abbas MS. p. 224 = Elliot, iv. 401.)

Though Puran Mal is said to have opened the negotiations, we find Sher Shah accepting with manifest eagerness and alacrity the very terms proposed by the vanquished party, *viz.*, (1) The Rajputs with their families and belongings should be allowed to march away unmolested beyond the frontier of

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Malwa; (2) Sher Shah should march back two marches from the fort before the Rajputs would come down, (3) Adil Khan (the eldest son of Sher Shah), and Qutb Khan Banet should bind themselves by promises and oaths that Puran Mal's party should suffer no injury in property and person (Abbas in Elliot, iv. 401). These terms were ratified by Sher Shah without raising the slightest objection or pressing for any new condition of his own. This very compliant attitude of Sher Shah, made conspicuous by contrast with his subsequent breach of faith, is apt to make one suspect that he meditated treachery from the beginning. But on closer examination the original intention of Sher Shah is found sincere and humane. The main objects of Sher Shah's expedition were the acquisition of the fort of Raisin and the removal of Puran Mal from Malwa; these he meant to achieve with the smallest sacrifice of the lives* of his soldiers. Puran Mal's offer to evacuate the fort satisfied all these conditions; so it is no wonder that Sher Shah accepted it readily.

The second and third points urged by Puran Mal, *viz.*, the removal of the Afghan camp to a

* Sher Shah's proverbial economy of his troops and tender regard for their lives, led the historian Badayuni to describe it in rather exaggerated terms, "Sher Shah would not give the head of one of his soldiers for a kingdom and to whom Afghans were far dearer than can be expressed." (Ranking's translation. Vol. I., p. 477.)

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distance and pledge of faith by two nobles, were but necessary safeguards which were in no way either derogatory to the honour or prejudicial to the interests of Sher Shah. The Rajput and the Afghan encamped on the same ground were as sure to rush at each other as two rival bulls let loose in the same field. Sher Shah who knew the desperate character of both peoples, could realize the necessity of such a withdrawal in the interests of peace. The pledge of honour of powerful nobles, was quite in the nature of things in medieval India down to the latest days of Muslim rule, to reassure those who had reason to be distrustful of the sovereign. So there is nothing to warrant the conclusion that Sher Shah accepted the extravagant terms of Puran Mal without meaning to observe them. As an alternative to peaceful evacuation, Sher Shah had in his mind's eye the horrible scene of slaughter of his soldiers at the hands of the Rajputs, who would fall upon them with mad fury to find death, after the performance of *Johar* by their families. Four thousand Chohans were not likely to die before killing an equal number of Afghans, which meant more than double the casualties he had suffered in the battles of Chaunsa and Bilgram combined. Such a gloomy prospect was enough to deter him from driving his enemies to despair.

However, Sher Shah sent Adil Khan and Qutb Khan Banet (or Munib as in MS. Abbas p. 225) into the fort to ratify the convention upon these terms and take the necessary oath to satisfy Puran Mal. Four thousand Rajputs with their families and possessions came down from the fort and encamped at a distance of one march from the camp of Sher Shah.*

What Sher Shah sincerely wished to avert was forced upon him by a sudden outburst of feeling in his camp. The Afghan troops had breathed for several months the anti-Rajput atmosphere in the society of their co-religionists in Malwa, who had undoubtedly suffered wrongs at the hands of these Rajputs. The minds of the Afghans were inflamed by exaggerated tales of oppression and they were hailed as the avenging host of the Lord. Sher Shah may have also heard these accusations before; but

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* Puran Mal had insisted that Sher Shah would march away two stages from the fort. A passage in our MS. Abbas p. 225, suggests that Puran Mal encamped on the spot where Sher Shah had encamped on "the previous day."

Abul-Fazl (*Akbarnama*, i. 399) calls it "a dishonest treaty" and many others are inclined to concur with him, looking upon the affair as a whole. But what followed later on might not have been intended by Sher Shah in the beginning, especially when we find that he had no other end in view to be gained by perfidy. If he had determined on the annihilation of the Rajputs beforehand and been prepared to pay a heavy price in the blood of his soldiers for it, he could by pressing the siege as well have accomplished it without incurring the odium.

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he was not the man to suffer his political aim to be obscured by such passions and prejudices. His order forbidding the Afghans to seek battle with the soldiers of Puran Mal, and the great difficulty of access to the hills, had restrained the zeal of the Afghans. But the pent-up fury broke out with an accumulated impetus when they saw the hated infidels within their easy reach, encamped in the plain below. The clamour was probably raised on the very night the Rajputs evacuated the fort. Next morning the Rajputs seem to have begun their march unmolested. But the murmur against Sher Shah for letting the enemies of Islam,—for in no other light did the Rajputs appear to the excited fanatics,—escape with impunity grew louder. To prevail upon the Shah for allowing them to attack Puran Mal, the Afghans and the expelled Muslim lords* of the neighbouring districts appealed to the venerable Shaikh Rafiuddin Safavi (whose great reputation for sanctity had won for him the title of *Al Muqaddasa*, or the Sacred from Sultan Sikandar Lodi†), to use his influence with the king. The Shaikh, who had seen the golden age of Islam, when the Hindus could not

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* Some of these had been probably in the camp of Sher Shah from the beginning of the campaign, aiding him in his operations against Raisin by their local knowledge, in the hope of getting back their possession and retaliating their wrongs.

† See Badayuni translated by Ranking, p. 476.

get barbars to shave their beards, their bathing in the Ganges was forbidden, and their temples and idols broken by Sultan Sikandar's order,—was not the man to refuse his assistance in such a highly meritorious work. Nizamuddin says: "The *ulemas*, specially Amir [Mir?] Shaikh Sayyid Rafiuddin Safavi, issued a *fatwa* for the death of Puran Mal" (*Tabakat-i-Akbari*, text p. 231). There is no reason to think, that the religious code was unnecessarily twisted in the case of Puran Mal; for, we find 150 years after the Muhammadan theologians in the reign of Aurangzib issuing a similar decree against Shambhuji, (the son of Shivaji), for his "having slain, captured and dishonoured Muslims and plundered the cities of Islam." (Prof. Sarkar's *History of Aurangzib*, iv. 403).

That Puran Mal had killed Muslims and deprived them of their possessions cannot be gainsaid, though his alleged dishonouring of their women is doubtful. The *Makhzan-i-Afaghana* says, "Shaikh Khalil Mir Sayyid Rafiuddin and others unanimously agreed in the point, that it was the duty of a monarch addicted to the true faith, in defiance of any treaty and oath, to extirpate and annihilate the infidels and impious." (Dorn's translation p. 137.) Sher Shah could not refuse to respect the *fatwa* of so eminent and holy a person without incurring the danger of a

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serious discontent, verging on rebellion among the Afghans. In that frame of mind the Afghans armed with the sanction of religion, could not be restrained by any earthly terror. It appears that he was constrained to break his faith to avert a grave situation.

A division of the Afghan army with a large number of elephants marched under the command of Isa Khan Hajjab against Puran Mal. The Afghan army made a forced march in the night to overtake the Rajputs who had some twelve hours' start. At dawn they approached the camp of the Rajputs, who having been apprised of the situation, prepared for the last awful self-destruction characteristic of their race. With fire and sword the Rajputs destroyed their wives and children. With their minds thus relieved of all earthly concerns, they charged the enemy with all the fury of despair and died fighting to a man.

This act of Sher Shah has been severely condemned by all modern writers. It is regarded as the greatest blot on his character. That Sher Shah broke his word is apparent. But the act is less condemnable than the dangerous principle avowed—*viz.*, "No faith need be kept with the infidels," which was advanced by the venerable theologian to remove the moral scruples of Sher Shah. If any one is to be blamed for this, it is Rafiuddin and not Sher Shah. It was in the power of the venerable Shaikh

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to cool down the fury of the Afghans, by pointing out the immorality of such an act. Sher Shah deserves our unstinted sympathy when we consider what overwhelming moral influence and pressure of fanaticism were brought to bear upon him. The personal magnetism of a saintly scholar in oriental countries, over both the Hindu and Muslim communities, is well known; and the eagerness displayed in the 20th century by the frontier Pathans to become Ghazis and Shahids by making an attempt upon the life of a non-Muslim under most desperate circumstances, will give an idea of the fervour of their ancestors in the race for martyrdom four centuries before. To stand between Puran Mal and these fanatics crying for blood, was to stand between an infuriated tiger and its prey.

Elphinstone has stigmatized this act of Sher Shah with undue severity. He says, "No motive can be discovered for this act of treachery and cruelty. There was no example to make or injury to revenge, and the days of religious fury were long since gone by, yet there is no action so atrocious in the history of any Muhammadan prince in India except Tamerlane" (*History of India*, p. 456). That no motive can be discovered is sufficient to acquit Sher Shah of the accusation of treachery, unless we think that he indulged in wickedness for wickedness's sake.

Prof. Dowson brands this act as "The cold-blooded massacre of the prisoners of Raisin." (Preface Elliot's History, Vol. IV., p. viii.) But a more unjust and misleading remark than this is rarely met with in history.

The Rajputs who evacuated Raisin were not 'prisoners'. They surrendered the fort but not their persons to Sher Shah. They carried their arms, and no restraint was put upon their liberty. They were like a hostile garrison in arms allowed to march out with all honours of war. They did not die in 'cold-blood' and their death was not 'a massacre'. They died in a hotly contested battle amidst heaps of their slaughtered enemies. Sher Shah's breach of faith made no alteration in the traditional mode of a Rajput's death, though it shortened the span of their earthly existence by a few days.

However, no historian will maintain that Sher Shah was incapable of treachery and perfidy—which are clearly brought to light in the case of Bibi Fath Malika and the capture of Rohtas. But the imputation of the same charge in the affair of Raisin is not historically true. Even if Sher Shah's act were one of barefaced treachery, the historian, in all fairness and justice, can only say that he was not above the morals of his age.

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The Conquest of Multan and Sindh by Haibat Khan Niazi, Governor of the Punjab (949-950 H.)

The generals of Sher Shah such as Haibat Khan Niazi, Isa Khan Niazi, Habib Khan, Khawas Khan etc., who were left in the North-western frontier with 50,000 troops (MS. *Makhzan-i-Afaghana*, p. 41) at the time of Sher Shah's departure for Bengal in March 1541, did not get on well together and the misunderstanding between Haibat Khan Niazi and Khawas Khan had grown so serious that the latter wrote a letter to Sher Shah urging that one of them should be recalled* to his presence. (Abbas MS. p. 217).

Haibat Khan Niazi was a good soldier and had a large tribal following. Khawas Khan though of a humble origin (a household slave of Sher Shah), proved himself the best general and was most respected by his contemporaries. He had conquered Gaur, extirpated Maharath Chero, and taken a distinguished part in the battles of Chaunsa and Bilgram. In the Punjab these two able soldiers were left with co-ordinate authority; so it is no wonder that they should quarrel. The letter of

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* MS. used by Elliot (Dowson ?) seems to differ a little. In Elliot, iv. 397 we find "And requesting him to send a representative for each of them." Our MS. reads *az do kas eke-ra dar takht aqdam-i-khud talbid.*

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Khawas Khan reached Sher Shah's camp at Ujjain* during his first campaign in Malwa, 949 H. (April, 1542). He nominated Haibat Khan Niazi Governor of the Punjab with the command of 30,000 horse and recalled to his side Khawas Khan, Habib Khan and Isa Khan Niazi with the remaining troops. Khawas Khan was recalled in May, 1542, and he probably took part in the military demonstration against Maldev in August, 1542. The appointment of Haibat Khan Niazi to the governorship of the Punjab was judicious, because he carried greater weight with the frontier Afghan tribes owing to his position as the chieftain of a powerful local clan. The Punjab had ever been the home of turbulent and warlike peoples who required vigorous handling. Khawas Khan, though most enterprising and valiant as a soldier, was essentially a sentimental, kind-hearted man. None but an Afghan of noble descent like Haibat Khan with all the fierceness and energy of his race could keep that province well in hand. At this time the southern districts of the Punjab

* Elliot's translation (see Elliot, iv. 397) says that he received it during the siege of Raisin, 950 H. (April, 1543). The text in our MS. Abbas p. 217 is ambiguous. It says, "Sher Shah besieged Raisin; at Ujjain the letter of Khawas Khan reached him." Nizam-uddin (see text, p. 231) seems to imply (by the sequence of events) that Multan was conquered by Haibat Khan Niazi in 949 H., before the expedition against Puran Mal. The incongruity of the sentence in our MS. shows that it has been misplaced.

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demanded serious attention. The tract of country between the rivers Ravi and the Sutlej, from Kasur westward up to the borders of Multan, was for the most part covered with impassable jungles which were the haunts of thieves and highway robbers. This tract nearly coincides with Sarkar Dipalpur* of the Subah of Multan (*Ain-i-Akbari*, ii.113, translated by Jarrett). Fath Khan Jat, a robber chief of Kabulah† after the destruction of the Lodi Empire, "had devastated the entire tract of Lakhi‡ jungle and caused such a confusion from Lahor to Delhi that complaints of his violent behaviour were without intermission brought to Court." (Dorn, pp. 134-135; see Abbas, Elliot iv. 398 and foot-note I).

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* Identical with the modern Montgomery district of the Punjab. (*India of Aurangzib* by Prof. J. N. Sarkar, foot-note p. 76).

† Elliot's (iv. 398) Kayula is wrong. Dorn (p. 137) correctly says *Kot Kabula*. In the modern map it is written "Kuboolah" long. 73° 6′, lat. 30° 11′ about 7 miles north of the Sutlej. This is "Kabulah" in the Sarkar Dipalpur of Abul-Fazl (*Ain-i-Akbari*, ii. 113). Dowson suggests Kapura (Elliot, iv. foot-note, p. 398). Kot Kapura is a town on the southern bank of the Sutlej, near Firozpur, mentioned by J. D. Cunningham (*History of the Sikhs*, p. 280). However we are not justified in altering the unanimous reading (*i.e.*, Kabulah) of all the authorities.

‡ The word Lakhi seems to have also some other significance than "A hundred thousand," for in *Ain-i-Akbari* (ii. 113) we find the name of many places in the Sarkar of Dipalpur preceded by the word Lakhi, such as Lakhi-Rahimabad, Lakhi Alampur, etc.

The anarchical state of the province of Multan* after the extinction of the Langah dynasty attracted also at this time the attention of Sher Shah. He ordered Haibat Khan to destroy the robber chief Fath Khan Jat of Kabulah and expel† the Baloches from Multan and restore its prosperity. (See Abbas MS. p. 218=Elliot, iv. 398.)

Khulasatu-t-Tawarikh contains some interesting information about Lakhi-jungle of Dipalpur. "The Wattu, Dogar, Gujar, and other tribes live here (at Dipalpur) and are notorious for their refractory and rebellious character..... When the water (of rainy season) subsides so many jungles spring all over this land, owing to the great moisture and dampness, that a pedestrian has great difficulty in travelling. How then can a rider? For this reason the country is called Lakhi-jungle (a hundred thousand forests). The wicked men of this plain, owing to the assistance of the river.....and shelter afforded by the impassable jungle (which is leagues in length and breadth) become ambuscaders, highway-men and thieves. The hand of the imperial commander cannot reach the chastisement and destruction to these people..." (*India of Aurangzib*, p. 77.) "Lakhi Jangli" is one of the Mahals of the Sarkar of Dipalpur in *Ain-i-Akbari*.

* For the history of Multan, see Ferishta (Pers. text, pp. 324-332. Book II.) and Nizamuddin (Pers. text, pp. 638-647).

† The Dudai were expelled from Multan, (perhaps beyond the Indus) as Sher Shah commanded. They were a powerful tribe down to the reign of Aurangzib if not later. *Khulasat-ut-Tawarikh* says, "Westwards of Multan five *kos* on the further side of the river Chinab, is the land of the Baloches. In that country there are two chieftains: one is Dudai and has 30 thousand horse and 50,000 foot-soldiers of his own; the other Hut and commands 20,000 cavalry and 30,000 foot-soldiers. The two are always quarrelling and fighting about their boundaries" : p. 77-78, *India of Aurangzib* by Prof.

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Multan, like other provinces of the Delhi Empire, had fallen away from it after the invasion of Timur (1398 A.D.) The people of Multan elected one Shaikh Yusuf a man of learning and high character as their king (1443 A.D). Shaikh Yusuf ruled Multan for two years; after which he was treacherously deprived of his kingdom by his father-in-law, Rai Sihar Langah the zamindar of Siwi. He ascended the throne of Multan under the title of Qutbuddin Langah, 1443 A.D. The Langahs* who are wrongly designated as Afghans by the Decanni historian (Ferishta) and by Elphinstone who borrows from him, (*History of India*, p. 771), were probably an Indo-Scythian tribe converted to Islam. The Langah dynasty reigned in Multan till Babur's invasion of

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J. N. Sarkar). "Rajah Toda? Mal", the same history says a few lines below, "made over this country absolutely to the Baloches." They re-crossed the Indus probably during the confusion that befell the Sur Empire after the death of Salim Shah.

*For some interesting details about the Langahs, see Tod's *Rajasthan*, ii. 1075. He remarks that they were originally Rajputs. "They are in fact a sub-division of the Solanki or Chalook race, one of the four Agnikulas". "Abul-Fazl says that the inhabitants of Seevee (Siwi) were of the Noomrie (fox) (Lumri?) tribe which is assuredly one of the Jit or Gete race, though they have all since their conversion adopted the distinctive term Baloch". This view is corroborated by other writers, such as Masson (*Journey to Kalat*). But the title Rai cannot make one a Hindu, as Tod conjectures. In that case Rai Husain Khan Jalwani comes under the category of a Hindu.

India. During the reign of Mahmud Langah, Shah Husain Arghun defeated the Multan army in 1524 A.D. and devastated many parts of the province. He again invaded Multan in 1526 A.D., captured the fort and the town, massacred all natives above 17 years of age, and reduced to slavery those below, along with the females. "Shah Husain sent some envoys with letters to king Babur offering Multan as a present to him. Babur accepted it and gave it over to his son Mirza Kamran." (Kalich Beg's *History of Sindh*, Book ii, p. 79).

During the ten years of Mirza Kamran's rule in the Punjab, this province was nominally under him. Different parts of it were in the hands of Baloch chiefs who ruled their estates in virtual independence. The rivalry among the various Baloch tribes, Dudai, Rind etc., brought ruin upon that fair province. Internal dissension was aggravated by the enmity between the Baloches and the Langahs, who resented the usurpation of their rights by the intruders.

The Langahs seem to have been driven from Multan to Uch* by their enemies. After the sub-

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* Bakhshu Langah the chief of Uch was a bitter enemy of the Baloches as well as of Shah Husain. He showed friendliness to Humayun during his retreat, probably with the hope of wreaking vengeance upon his enemies. But as Humayun proved a broken reed, he changed sides and amply gratified his revenge with the aid of the Afghans upon Baloches as well as Shah Husain.

version of the Langahs the Baloches acquired supreme power in Multan under Fath Khan Dudai* and Ismail Khan Dudai, who offered allegiance to the Mughals. The Baloches were not an indigenous people of Multan and the Punjab. The first migration of the Baloch tribe to the east of the Indus took place in the latter part of the reign of Sultan Husain Langah of Multan (1469-1502).

"Malik Sohrab Dudai, who was the father of Ismail Khan and Fath Khan, came with his tribe† and family from the neighbourhood of Kutch and Mikran, to Sultan Husain who granted to Malik Sohrab and his tribe in jagir the whole country from the fort Kot Kuhror (long. 72°, lat. 29° 38″) to Dhan Kot. Hearing this news Baloches in great number came to Sultan Husain who gave them the delightful and cultivated portion of the country near the Indus (*bar kinar-i-Sindh*). In course of time the whole country from Seenwar to Dhan Kot (Ferishta says "from Setpur" text p. 326, Book II) was occupied by the Baloches" (*Tabakat-i-Akbari*, text p. 641). When Sher Shah occupied

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* Dudai was a tribal designation borne by one of the Baloch tribes. This tribe, written "Dodai" fought under Mahmud Langah against Husain Mirza (see Kalich Beg's *History of Sindh*, p. 77).

† Ferishta (Book II, p. 326) who borrows the account from Nizamuddin wrongly deviates from his original by saying "With the tribe of *Rohilla*, from the neighbourhood of Mikran."

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it no local Afghan chief is mentioned as having welcomed him, though several chiefs from the Roh country are said to have come to congratulate him at Khushab. The three powerful chiefs Fath Khan Dudai, Ismail Khan Dudai and Ghazi Khan, who offered their submission to Sher Shah (to preserve what they had gained under the Langahs and the Mughals) were Baloches, and the people from whom he experienced sturdy resistance were the Gakkhars. He temporized with the Baloches by confirming them in their estates, and turned his arms against the Gakkhars. When his authority was firmly established in the interior of the province and the mountaineers were well in hand, he took to his favourite plan of transplantation of dependent chiefs of doubtful fidelity. The Baloch chiefs were a constant source of anxiety in Multan—lest they should by conjunction with the Mughals and Rajputs cause trouble.

It cannot be definitely said when Haibat Khan took the field against Fath Khan Jat and the Baloch chiefs. The campaign undoubtedly ended before the fall of Raisin (July, 1543 A.D.). It was probably begun during the winter of 1543, when the swampy region between the Sutlej and the Ravi (the Lakhi jungle) where the operations had to be carried on, was sufficiently dry for the passage of armies.

The campaign was well planned. Haibat Khan

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was to advance from the east and Bakhshu Langah, the zamindar of Uch, was to cut off the retreat of the fugitives towards Sindh. On the north and west of Multan lay the territories of Sher Shah through which the enemy could not fly without being intercepted.

Haibat Khan sent the vakil of Chakkar Rind the vassal chief of Satgarh (long. 73°, lat. 31°, about ten miles off from the southern bank of the Ravi) to his master with the message, "Tell Chakkar Rind that I shall halt within his confines, and he must have his forces ready, for I will take muster of his troops."* Chakkar Rind was reluctant to receive him hospitably. On the second day news came that Haibat Khan had reached within 12 *kos* of Satgarh; Chakkar Rind got afraid at this, thinking that he had neither collected troops nor made any arrangements for entertaining him. Early in the morning news came that Haibat Khan had arrived. Chakkar Rind went out to welcome him, but was in a state of great alarm. As soon as Haibat Khan saw him he said, "I shall take your new muster at Dipalpur, lest in the

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* Elliot's translation (see iv. 398) "I am going to seize Mahla" is wrong (*man mahalla khwaham giraft*); mahalla is not a proper name here. Abbas uses it in the sense of "muster" review of troops, as it is used several lines below where the correct equivalent "muster" is found in Elliot too—"I shall take your muster at Dipalpur". The context also brings out the mistake.

delay Fath Khan should escape". (Abbas MS. pp. 218-219 = Elliot, iv. 398.)

Haibat Khan probably started from his head-quarters, Lahor, and marched along the southern bank of the Ravi for Satgarh,* about 65 miles south-west. His object was to take Chakkar Rind† with him under a pretext so that he might not give trouble in the rear while he should push on to Multan against the Baloches or against the Jat robber chief of Kabulah.

Abbas says "Within two days (from his arrival at Satgarh) Haibat Khan arrived at Pattan of Qutb Alam Shaikh Farid Ganj-i-Shakkar‡. Fath Khan

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* Masson places Satgarh (written Satgarrah) about 65 miles south-west of Lahor on the way to Multan. (See the map in Mr. Charles Masson's *Narrative of a Journey to Kalat*, published in 1843).

† Masson says, "The great Rind tribes.....are included under the general denomination Baloch. They are sub-divided into so many as forty-four branches. There are numerous Baloches in the countries east of the Indus, and they are all I believe Rinds as in Bahawalpur and the Punjab" (see *Narrative of a journey to Kalat*, i. 346-347). As the name Chakkar (from Sanskrit Chakra) suggests they were perhaps till then Hindus. The Baloch is a very loose term which now-a-days includes Rajput Jats and other tribes converted to Islam.

‡ Pattan long. 73°, lat. 31° in the Sarkar of Dipalpur is situated 44 miles due south of Satgarh. Here lies the tomb of Shaikh Farid Ganj-i-Shakkar so often mentioned with reverence by Abbas and other Muslim writers. This Shaikh was probably an Afghan, being a descendant of Farrukh Shah Kabuli, born in Kotwal in Multan. "Inasmuch as heaps of earth were turned into sugar (*shakkar*) at his

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fled and Haibat Khan pursued him. As Fath Khan had his family and women with him, he perceived he was unable to escape from Haibat Khan. There was near Karor and Fathpur* a mud-fort; he took shelter in it and Haibat Khan coming in pursuit besieged the fort." (See Abbas MS. p. 219=Elliot, iv. 398.)

Fath Khan employing Shaikh Ibrahim, son of Shaikh Farid, as intermediary between them, came to the presence of Haibat Khan, who imprisoned him urging the plea to Shaikh Ibrahim, "I am a servant of Sher Shah; whatever he orders I must obey". However, when the news of the imprisonment of Fath Khan reached the garrison they destroyed their families; and three hundred resolute men, under Hindu Baloch (Our MS. Abbas says Mando Baloch, *Makhzan-i-Afaghana*, see Dorn p. 135, says Meedo)

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blessed glance which had the effect of Alchemy—he became surnamed Ganj-i-Shakkar (the storehouse of sugar)." (*India of Aurangzib*, p. 76, by Prof. J. N. Sarkar).

* Karor is written in modern maps Kuhror, its situation being long. 72°, lat. 29° 38′. Fathpur, written as Futtuhpoor 72° 10′ long. and 29° 40′ lat. The two places are 7½ miles and 5¼ miles north of the Sutlej river. Fathpur is 17 miles north-east of Kuhror. The mud-fort in which Fath Khan Jat took shelter is very probably *Mussa Kotha* of modern maps which is 5 miles south-east of Karor and 9½ miles south-west of Fathpur. Mussa Kotha seems to have been a place of some importance; it may have possessed a mud-fort in the 16th century.

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cut their way at night through the besieging lines after heavy fighting. But Hindu Baloch fell into the hands of Bakhshu Langah who delivered him to Haibat Khan.*

The Afghan army then advanced upon Multan, taking a northernly route. It is strange that Abbas who dwells at some length upon the capture of the robber-chief, cursorily passes over the conquest of Multan. No fight with the powerful Baloch chiefs Ismail Khan Dudai, Fath Khan and Ghazi Khan Baloch, is mentioned. Dorn's copy of Niamatullah is also silent upon this point. Our MS. *Makhzan-i-Afaghana* says (p. 46),* "Haibat Khan marched against Fath Khan according to the order of (Sher Shah). A great battle ensued in which Fath Khan was defeated. Multan came into the possession of Sher Shah." He restored Multan to its former state and the inhabitants who were scattered abroad, were again collected together. "He wrote letters to Sher Shah reporting the true condition of the country, and the capture of Fath Khan [Jat] and Hindu Baloch†.

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* *Tarikh-i-Daudi* (Ms. p. 222) and Ferishta (text p. 227) say the same thing in similar language. All these three writers have mainly copied from Nizamuddin, who notices it briefly (*Tabakat-i-Akbari*, p. 235).

† The MS. used by Elliot seems to be faulty here. He says, "Bakhshu Langah and Hindu Baluch were taken prisoners by the Afghans." This is not true. Our MS. Abbas (p. 220) says the

Sher Shah was exceedingly glad and made him a *Masnad-i-Ala* and gave him the title of Azam Humayun. He also gave him a scarlet tent and wrote to him to re-people Multan and to observe the customs of the Langahs and not to measure the land but only take a share of the produce*. He ordered him to put Fath Khan (Jat) and Hindu Baloch to death, to keep Bakhshu Langah or his son always with him, but to confirm his districts on him. As soon as "Azam Humayun received this order he left Fath Jang Khan (the Deputy Governor of the Punjab) in Multan and came to Lahor and put Fath Khan and Hindu Baloch to death. Fath Jang Khan so re-peopled Multan, and showed such benevolence to the people that Multan flourished more than it had done even in the days of the Langahs, and in the country of Multan he founded a city which he called

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Afghans only captured the mud-fort and that it was Bakhshu Langah who arrested Hindu Baloch. It is corroborated by the following passage: "Medoo (Hindu Baloch) himself was seized by Bukhshoo Langah and delivered alive to Haibat Khan." (Dorn, *History of the Afghans*, p. 135). Elliot's version (iv. 399) is contradictory; in one line he says Hindu Baloch cut his way through at night and in the next he says Hindu Baloch was made prisoner in the morning. Whence did Bakhshu Langah come into the mud-fort at night to be made captive in the morning?

* One-fourth of the produce says *Makhzan-i-Afaghana* (see Dorn p. 135).

Sher Garh*." (Abbas MS. pp. 220-221 = Elliot iv. 390).

It is strange that all historians have omitted to mention the Afghan conquest of Sindh, which was also in all probability achieved by Haibat Khan. Two coins of Sher Shah are extant (in the Indian Museum Calcutta), issued respectively in 950 H., 951 H. from the mint-town, "*Sher Gadh urf Sakkar-Bakkar*" (See pp. 84-109, *Catalogue of Coins in the Indian Museum* by H. N. Wright). The importance of this numismatic discovery cannot be exaggerated. The most minute research in old MSS. could have perhaps never given us this piece of information. Abbas, Nizamuddin, Badayuni and Abul-Fazl are silent upon it. Neither Nizamuddin (text, p. 638) nor Ferishta (text pp. 321-322, Book II) in their account of the reign of Shah Husain Arghun (from whom Sindh was conquered) mentions this incident. We miss it in the *Tarikh-i-Masumi* a professed history of Sindh. The following passage of that history translated by Mirza Kalich Beg in his *History of Sindh*

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* There is one Shah Garh, ten miles west of the Chinab and 27 miles south-west of Multan. (lat. is 29° 59′ and long. 71° 8′) Ancther town "Sher Shah" lies 1½ miles east (there is a railway station of that name close by) of the Chinab and 7½ miles south-west of Multan; long. 71° 25′, lat. 30° 8′. Abbas may unknowingly allude to *Sher gadh urf Sakkar-i-Bakkar in Sindh*.

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(pp. 87-88) throws some side-light upon this Afghan conquest of Sakkar and Bakkar :—

"Two months after this (Humayun's departure for Qandahar) Bakhsho[u]Langah collected people of the tribes of Langah, Baloch, and Nahir [Ahir?] in a fort near Multan on the bank opposite Junpur, to march against the fort of Bakhar as he was informed that Shah Husain had gone to Tatta and all his governors and chiefs had assembled there under him. With that object in view he put his troops in 50 boats and sent them ahead to fall suddenly on the island at night.....The assailants were at length repulsed and driven back to their boats..... The next day about noon, Bakhsho[u]Langah came on beating drums hoping to see the fort already in the possession of his men. But as soon as he approached, guns and muskets were fired at him from ramparts of the fort and he was obliged to go to Lohri where he spent about 3 days and then went back to Multan, after plundering some of the villages in the country". This event is said to have taken place on the Friday night of 14th Jumada II. 950 A.H. (14th September, 1543 A.D.); Humayun having started for Qandahar from Siwi on 8 Rabi II. (11th July, 1543; *Akbarnama*, i. 389).

Now, it is impossible that a petty chief like Bakhshu Langah without powerful support dared to

provoke a quarrel with Shah Husain Arghun, who had razed to the ground the fort of Uch, conquered Multan and taken the fort of Dilawar in Bahawalpur. (For a detailed account of the reign of Shah Husain Arghun, see M. Kalich Beg's *History of Sindh** Book II, pp. 71-80). This expedition was no doubt a precursor of the more effective Afghan expedition.

The conquest of Sindh was an even greater political and military necessity than that of Multan. It gave Sher Shah a firm hold over the Indian desert where no more hostile project could be hatched without his knowledge. In the case of any hostile combination by the Rajput States with the ambitious Mughal ruler of Tatta, Sher Shah was in a position to interfere effectively. The primary motive of Sher Shah was to close the Qandahar route *via* Siwi, against Humayun by strengthening Sakkar and Bakkar, to which he gave the name of Sher Garh. The conquest was complete probably in October-November of 1543 A.D.

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* The author says the chapters on Shah Husain's reign are taken from *Tarikh-i-Masumi*, see *ibid* foot-note p. 71.

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CHAPTER XI

Campaigns in Rajputana and Bundelkhand. Death.

The *Tarikh-i-Daudi* (MS. p. 232 = Elliot, iv. 477) says Sher Shah went to Delhi after* the conquest of Multan and began building New Delhi, two or three *kos* from the old city, and a small palace, afterwards known as Sher Mandal within the new city. It places this visit in 947 A.H., which is a clear error. Sher Shah probably spent seven or eight months at Delhi (July, 1543 A.D. to the end of February, 1544) after his return from the expedition against Raisin, occupied partly in building projects and partly in extending his revenue and administrative reforms to the Punjab and the districts around Delhi. His instructions to Haibat Khan, not to measure land in Multan (*jarib*) but receive revenue there in kind, suggest that the works of measurement of land and money-commutation of revenue were going on in other parts of the territories in charge of that chief.

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* "After," *i.e.*, sequence of events in *Tarikh-i-Daudi* is extremely irregular and surprisingly erroneous; *e.g.*, in the next page it says that from Delhi, Sher Shah led a punitive expedition against Gujar tribes such as Pali and Pakal (Elliot reads Pali and Pahal); at this time news reached that Sher Shah's Governor of Bengal —Khizr Khan—was scheming a rebellion and Sher Shah went there (!). In this case, however, it appears to be true.

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Whatever may have been the other activities of Sher Shah at Delhi, military preparation on a grand scale was the chief of them, as he contemplated leading an expedition against Maldev at the end of the year (950 A.H.). No new cause of provocation was necessary to justify the offensive. Peace was impossible between them. No monarch of Delhi could tolerate foreign dominion within 50 miles of the imperial city. Had Maldev's ambition been confined to Rajputana, he might like his predecessors have escaped the notice of Delhi sovereigns. Mutual suspicion and hostile feelings had been seeking an outlet in open conflict from Sher Shah's acquisition of the Empire. The war had well nigh broken out in August, 1542, over the question of the arrival of Humayun in Marwar. But the extraordinary pliancy and conciliatory attitude of Maldev averted it. Sher Shah wisely abstained from attacking him till he was cut off from possible Mughal aid and well nigh enclosed within the iron chain of imperial territories.

Plan of the campaign in Rajputana.

The territories of Maldev were penetrable on two points (without the violation of neutrality of any other Rajput State),—the Ajmir district from the east by way of Rantambhor, and the Nagor district

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from the north-east through Jhajjar and Sekhawati. Rajputana had been entered by previous conquerors through Ajmir. Maldev had fortified his eastern frontier with special care long before Sher Shah conquered the Delhi Empire. It formed a rough triangular line of defence with Ajmir as the apex of the triangle, a line from Jahajpur to Lalsunt, about 100 miles in length (the southern half represented by the river Banas) as its base, and its two sides flanked by the territories of the Mewar and Jaipur States respectively. This tract was sprinkled with a good number of strong forts; "Maldev not only acquired but determined to retain his conquests, and erected numerous fortifications* throughout the country. He enclosed the city of Jodhpur with a strong wall besides erecting a palace and adding other works to the fortress.....He also erected that bastion in *Garh Beetli* (the citadel of Ajmir) called the *Kote Boorj*," (Tod's *Rajasthan*, p. 851). His territories to the west of the Aravalli range were sandy tracts sparsely populated and difficult of access to an enemy owing to the scanty supply of forage.

Sher Shah had to choose what portion of his enemy's territory he should attack first. Herein he was confronted by political and military problems of

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* "Chatsu not twenty miles away from the capital of the Kachwahas" was taken and fortified by Maldev.

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a serious nature. His first object was to avoid at the outset offending or alarming the other Rajput States, so that they might not be driven into the arms of Maldev; secondly to strike a swift and decisive blow at his enemy either by capturing Jodhpur or over-throwing the Rajput army by forcing it into a general action. A loosely-knit feudal State,—such as that of Maldev was in spite of his attempt at centralization, —becomes stronger instead of being weakened, at the end of a protracted struggle and generally puts forth its full strength at the final stage*. Slow and repeated blows of foreign invasion harden such a State into a strong compact body unless its component parts are scattered by a single blow dealt effectively at its vital point. The easiest route from Agra to Ajmir —which opens the way to Jodhpur—lay through the territory of the Kachwahas. If Sher Shah should try to force his way through it, Maldev might appear there to dispute his passage, and the presence of the Rathors might hearten even the "timid Kachwahas" to gird up their loins against a common enemy. He might of course attack Ajmir from Malwa *via* Rantambhor. But that was sure to cause greater consternation among other Rajput States, seeing in it a design of the invader upon their liberties also.

* Austria in the 17th and 18th centuries in European history is an example in point.

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Besides, his army would be exposed to surprise attack from both flanks by parties of Rathors concealed in Mewar and Kachwara. But any attempt on the part of the Afghans at dislodging the Rathors from their territories was sure to lead to the very thing which it was Sher Shah's wish to avoid. Secondly, it would open the campaign with the tedious siege of a strong fortress (Ajmir). This was opposed to the tactics of Sher Shah, who never tarried to capture a fort while there were armies to be overthrown in the open field. He had grown wiser by the fate of Humayun, who lost the throne of Delhi by opening his campaign with the siege of Chunar. With an active enemy hovering around, such a siege might end in disaster. He apprehended Ajmir might prove Chunar in his case. Thirdly, while the main Afghan army would be held back from Marwar by Ajmir and the Aravalli, the bold Rathor horsemen might break into the Delhi and Mewat districts and spread consternation by their raids. To prevent this another Afghan army had to be locked up there, from which Sher Shah would derive no other service. So, avoiding Ajmir where Maldev might be expecting him, he seemed to have formed the plan of marching upon Jodhpur by way of Nagor and Mairta.

The organization of the commissariat which was necessary to feed his army in the desert was not so

great a difficulty, as the grappling with military and political disadvantages. His rapid advance into the Nagor district in August, 1542 had also convinced him of the vulnerability of Maldev's dominions on that side. The forts were few, and they could not in any way retard the advance of the invaders who might easily march past them through the wide desert. His army in Malwa with a small reinforcement would not only be able to defend that province but also keep the enemy in play and create a diversion by feigning attack upon the trans-Aravalli regions of the enemy.

About the beginning of January, 1544 A.D.* (middle of Shawwal, 950 A.H.) Sher Shah marched against Maldev at the head of the largest and most magnificent army that he ever commanded. The exact number of his troops is not recorded by any Persian historian.†

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* Elphinstone says 951 H. Prof. Dowson suggests the latter half of 950 H. Badayuni, Nizamuddin and Ferishta do not mention any date; they seem to imply that it took place in the same year with the capture of Raisin. The expedition started undoubtedly in 950 H. as Abbas says.

† On this expedition Col. Tod says, "Whether he (Sher Shah) deemed his (Maldev's) exertions insufficient to secure the royal fugitive (Humayun) or felt his own power insecure with so potent a neighbour, he led 80,000 men into Marwar". (*Rajasthan*, p. 852). This is larger than that he led against Humayun at Bilgram, where he had only 50,000 troops (Ferishta).

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Abbas is said to have heard from Khan-i-Muzaffar Khan that "In this campaign Sher Shah had so great an army with him, that the best calculators, in spite of all reflection and thought and calculation, were at a loss to number and reckon them" (Abbas in Elliot, iv. 405). Col. Tod reduces this to the modest but highly probable number of eighty thousand.

In the absence of any authentic information it is idle to guess the probable route of Sher Shah's advance. So far we can gather from the authorities, (all are unanimous on this point) part of his route lay through sandy tracts where neither trench could be dug nor redoubts thrown up. Nagor was the first district that fell into his hands* (Abbas MS. p. 234 = Elliot, iv. 406). But Abbas with his lax notion of geography, unhesitatingly says that Sher Shah started on his campaign from Agra and reached Fathpur Sikri (about 15 miles south of Agra) from which he moved forward with the utmost caution. The absurdity of this is apparent to all. It is most likely that he started from Delhi and by way of Narnol arrived at Fathpur (long. 75°, lat. 28°) a district of Maldev about 70 miles west of Narnol. This is on the eastern border of Bikanir, and from this place a road runs south-

* After the victory over Jaya and Goha, "He left Khawas Khan, Isa Khan Niazi, and other nobles in the country of Nagor" (Abbas MS. p. 234=Elliot, iv. 406).

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wards to Didwana and Nagor, and from the latter town to Mairta, Ajmir and Jodhpur.

From this Fathpur, Sher Shah might have been under the necessity of moving with extreme caution. "Wherever he halted, he dug trenches (*khandaq*) and threw up redoubts around his encampment. When he reached sandy tracts (*zamin-i-registan*) and found it impossible to throw up redoubts, he ordered that the halting ground should be fortified by surrounding it with piles of sand-bags. (In this way) he reached the neighbourhood of Ajmir and remained there one month facing Maldev." (*Tabakat-i-Akbari*, text pp. 231-232.) Maldev may have formed the design of luring his enemy far from his base and thus making it difficult for him to procure supplies and keep open his line of communication with Delhi. Sher Shah had advanced as far as he could with safety. The sudden check shows that he was caught at a strategic point on the road to Jodhpur. In the neighbourhood (to the west) of Ajmir there is no place of greater strategic importance than Mairta, where the fate of Marwar has been decided more than once. It is 70 miles n. n. east of Jodhpur and 42 miles west of Ajmir town. If Mairta was once passed, the enemy could turn either against Ajmir or Jodhpur at his pleasure. Col. Tod says, "Instead of an easy conquest, he

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(Sher Shah) soon repented of his rashness when the admirable dispositions of the Rajputs made him dread an action, and from a position whence he found it impossible to retreat. For a month the armies lay in the sight of each other, every day the king's situation becoming more and more critical from which he saw not the slightest chance of extrication." (*Rajasthan* p. 853.) This picture is overdrawn by the biassed chronicler of the Rajputs; the real difficulties of Sher Shah were to feed his army and induce the enemy to attack him. He had advanced about 260 miles (from Narnol to Mairta) into the very heart of the enemy country, destitute of cultivation and means of subsistence of an army which had to be maintained by supplies drawn from Delhi and Mewat. In this struggle Maldev had the same advantages over Sher Shah that the latter had in 1538-40 over Humayun;* and the Rajput meant to turn the very tactics of the Afghan against him. He was, in spite of the partial loss of his territories, the master of the situation, because he could refuse or give battle to the enemy at his pleasure, and the choice of the ground and the time of the decisive action rested with him.

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* If Sher Shah had begun the campaign with the siege of Ajmir which his enemy expected, the parallel would have been complete and the end also as sorrowful.

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The change in Sher Shah's army organization had something to do with it. In his wars against Mahmud Shah and Humayun, his army was essentially a cavalry force and he scored his success by cavalry dashes alone. Though he had artillery and elephants at Chaunsa and Bilgram, he never relied upon them; not a volley was fired from his guns in either of the two battles. But after the overthrow of the Mughals, he copied their military organization. He improved his field-artillery, raised brigades of infantry and armed them with muskets and added a large number of fighting elephants to his establishment, though the cavalry still retained its larger proportion and superior importance. As the inevitable consequence of this imitation, Sher Shah's army came to possess all the excellence and defects of the Mughal army. It could make its terrible strength felt by standing on the defensive only; it could not be led to charge an enemy with order and steadiness. By shifting tactics, a prudent general fighting with pure cavalry could render useless his opponent's elephants artillery and infantry upon which Sher Shah relied for victory over the invincible Rathor cavalry. If Maldev had committed the same error of judgment as Rana Sanga had done in the battle of Kanwa, the same woeful self-destruction would have been the consequence. (The rushing waves of Rathor horse

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would have been stemmed by the rampart of sacks* and the huge wall of the enemy's elephants.) Maldev was too strongly posted under the shelter of a fortified town, to be attacked by Sher Shah with any hope of success. The brilliant cavalry dash which won him the day at Surajgarh, Chaunsa and Bilgram could ensure him no success in this campaign, because he had no longer the decisive superiority in that arm over his enemies. In man and mount, the Bengalee trooper was distinctly inferior to the Afghan; the "tipchaq horses" upon which the Mughal archers were mounted were no doubt superior animals, but the nimble Central Asian archer was no match for the heavy-built, stalwart Afghan in a close combat with the sword. But the Rajput trooper and his charger were not a whit inferior to the Afghan in bravery, strength and hardiness. As regards the number of horsemen Sher Shah had perhaps no superiority, as Maldev's cavalry numbered 50,000. No surprise attack was possible upon an equal and vigilant foe, and Sher Shah would not give open battle where he was not sure of complete success. He had had a fore-taste of Rajput valour in Malwa, which made him reluctant "to involve his army in calamity with the ignorant, boar-natured and currish

* It was to serve the purpose of Babur's "Carts."

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Hindus" as Badayuni says. (Badayuni, translated by Ranking, i. 369.) However, he had more than one string to his bow; it is not true that "He saw not the slightest chance of extrication" as Tod says. His simplest stratagem succeeded in scaring away Maldev who fled terrified at his own shadow.

Sher Shah having written forged letters in the name of Maldev's nobles, gave them to a certain person and directed him to go near to the tent of the vakil of Maldev and remain there; and when he went out, to drop the bundle of letters on his way and conceal himself. Sher Shah's agent did as he was ordered; and when the vakil of Maldev saw it lying he picked it up and sent the letters* to Maldev. When the latter learnt from their contents that his nobles were plotting to betray him on the day of battle, he was much alarmed and ordered a retreat. When the cause of it became known, his nobles tried to remove his suspicion by taking solemn oaths of fidelity; but this had probably the contrary effect. Maldev fled at night towards Jodhpur. Some of his chieftains, Jaya Chandel (?) and Goha (some writers

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* At Ajmir Aurangzib extricated himself from a more critical situation, arising out of the rebellion of his son Prince Akbar, who had joined Durgadas Rathor, by employing this very same stratagem, two hundred years after. This brings out one of the inherent defects in the Rajput character.

say Kumbha) and others separated from him with 12,000 troops, resolved upon washing the false stain upon their honour with blood. In the morning these cavaliers "intent upon slaying or being slain," attacked the camp of Sher Shah and carried everything before them by their impetuous charge.* But owing to "their own stupidity† or of the superior good fortune of Islam, the infidels in a body dismounted from their horses.....and attacked the enemy with their short (?) spears (which they call *barccha*) and swords.

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* No wonder for they were the ancestors of those who three hundred years after, on the same field of Mairta, cut down the gunners of Sindhia's artillery at their posts and furrowed through and through the ranks of the infantry trained by De Boigne.

† This reproach was flung at the Rajputs by Aurangzib also. His eighth instruction is after all not an unjust estimate of the Turani people and Rajputs as soldiers. "They [the Turani people] are very expert in making charges, raids, night-attacks and arrests. They feel no suspicion, despair or shame when commanded to make a retreat in the very midst of a fight, which means, in other words, 'when the arrow is drawn back'; and they are a hundred stages remote from the *crass stupidity of the Hindustanis*, who would part with their heads but not leave their positions [in battle]; these men [Turani people] can do the necessary service, when no other race can." (Prof. J. N. Sarkar's *Anecdotes of Aurangzib* pp. 53-54). The Afghans being a Turko-Iranian people (see *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, i. 149) posses all these qualities of the Turani people in addition to cunning, promptitude and clear head in danger, characteristics of the Iranian people. The Afghan, in short, makes an ideal modern soldier. Rajput heroism is of the type of the epic period—the days of Mahabharat. It is an anachronism in Kali Yuga; inopportune bravery is regraded as stupidity.

Sher Shah had given orders saying that if any man ventured to fight with the sword with this swinish horde his blood would be upon his own head; he accordingly ordered the elephant troops to advance and trample them down. In the rear of the elephants, the artillery [thundered] and archers gave them a taste of the bow-string" (Badayuni, Ranking, i. 479). In short, every individual of that gallant band, fell dead amidst the heaps of their slaughtered foes. Nizamuddin, Ferishta and the *Tarikh-i-Daudi* (MS. p. 238) unanimously say that a large number of Afghans attained martyrdom in this fight. The valour of the Rathors, the sterility of their country and his own risk and loss made Sher Shah utter the memorable words, "I had nearly destroyed the Empire of Hindustan for a handful of *bajra*,—*barae ek musht-i-bajra badshahi Hindustan-ra barbad dadah budem*." This event took place about the beginning of March, 1544 A.D.

Before the news of this heroic self-sacrifice and most awful demonstration of the innocence of his devoted followers could reach Maldev to reassure him and give him a chance of rectifying his mistake, Sher Shah pushed his advantage to the utmost, and by a clever manœuvre made the Rajah's position untenable even in Jodhpur. At Mairta, the Afghan army was divided into two parts; one division under

Khawas Khan, Isa Khan Niazi and some other chiefs, moved towards Jodhpur* and the other division under Sher Shah pushed straight for Ajmir, (42 miles due east), which seemed to have been evacuated during the panic created by the flight of Maldev; because we hear of no siege, no *johar* and no desperate sally in connection with the fall of Ajmir. Sher Shah could not tarry long at Ajmir; the danger was not yet passed. The hilly tract from Ajmir to Mount Abu was in the possession of the enemy; the Deorahs of Sirohi were devoted to Maldev, whose mother was of the royal house of Sirohi.

When 'the gate of Rajputana' (Ajmir) was flung open to Sher Shah, streams of soldiers flowed in from Rantambhor and Delhi. From Ajmir Sher Shah led his troops against Mount Abu, probably by the route of Rohat and Pali. The wealth of Pali, one of the richest emporia of trade in western India, paid well for the troubles of the Shah, who had a week ago repented of his folly in hazarding the Empire of Hindustan for a handful of millet.

Sher Shah captured Mount Abu,† and owing to

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* Jodhpur is about 70 miles south of Mairta (see *Rajputana Gazetteer*, ii. 254-257).

† This is to be found in no written history. Numismatic evidence alone reveals this. A copper coin of Sher Shah issued from the mint of Abu in 951 A.H. is extant. See *Catalogue of Coins in the Indian Museum, Calcutta*, by H. N. Wright, pp. 84-109.

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its great strategic value he seemed to have established a strong military post there. The occupation of the tract from Ajmir to Abu by the Afghans threatened the safety of Maldev's possessions in the Looni valley. The Afghan army was now in a position to close upon Jodhpur by three separate roads from Mairta, Ajmir and Rohat (14 miles west of Pali and only 27 miles from Jodhpur). There was no serious fight and Maldev was cleverly manœuvred out of Jodhpur by Sher Shah, who possibly began marching down the Looni valley, to cut off his retreat southward. Had Sher Shah succeeded in interposing himself between Maldev and the fort of Siwana, a terrible blow would have been struck at him. The Rathor army would have been killed by sheer famine; because they mainly depended for supplies on that region and through it on Gujrat also. In the case of such a move on the part of Sher Shah, the only road left open for Maldev would have been towards Fallodi and Pokaran on the Jesalmir border, where subsistence for an army was altogether lacking. Maldev saw through his enemy's design and prudently retreated in time from Jodhpur* to Siwana, where he was left

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* Abbas says Khawas Khan conquered Jodhpur (see Abbas in Elliot, iv. 406). This means no more than that he had been the first to enter the town with his division, as Maldev was compelled to evacuate it by the clever move of Sher Shah.

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undisturbed by the conqueror. Sher Shah then went to visit the shrine of Khawajah Muinuddin Chishti at Ajmir, distributed sums of money to the poor of the monastery and performed all the proper ceremonies of pilgrimage. (MS. *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, p. 238).

Having left his troops in Rajputana, Sher Shah paid a short visit to Agra for political reasons. Various wild stories about his fate in the desert of Rajputana were not unlikely to have circulated among the credulous people. It was necessary to remove the doubt from the minds of the people by his presence. He spent a few months at Agra and rejoined his camp at Ajmir about the middle of June, 1544. From Ajmir he marched towards Chitor, which he easily acquired. Mewar was utterly prostrate; she had no more blood to shed in defence of her capital. It was one of the darkest periods in the history of Mewar. The bastard Banabir, whom the disaffected nobles of Mewar had raised to the throne, murdered the dethroned king Bikramjit and would have killed the little boy Udai Singh also, but for the noble sacrifice of his nurse Panna. Mewar had not yet recovered from the evil effects of the civil dissensions which ended with the installation of the boy king Udai Singh in 1542 A.D. (see Tod's *Rajasthan*, pp. 330-333).

Chitor was placed in charge of Shams Khan, a

brother of Khawas Khan, (Dorn's *History of the Afghans*, p. 140), Mian Ahmad Sarwani, and Husain Khan Khilji (Abbas MS. p. 235). Sher Shah secured Jahajpur, a place of considerable military importance —which had been wrested from Mewar by Maldev —and from this place he marched down the banks of the Banas river. When he reached Rantambhor, his eldest son Adil Khan was given leave to stay in his fief. Sher Shah marched on to Kachwara where the Rathors possessed many strongholds. No battle was fought and no capture of fortresses is mentioned during this campaign, which was in fact a triumphant march through the Rajput States to impress them with the resistless might of the rejuvenated Empire of Delhi. Sher Shah presented Shujaat Khan with an elephant, a horse and a dress of honour and permitted him to return to his province, Malwa. (*Makhzan-i-Afaghana*, Dorn p. 140.)

In Rajputana Sher Shah made no attempt to uproot the local chiefs or to reduce them to thorough subjection, as he had done in other parts of Hindustan. He found the task dangerous as well as fruitless. He did not aim at the complete subversion of their independence; but their political and geographical isolation from one another, so as to make any general upheaval against the empire impossible. In

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short it was something like the British occupation in the north-western frontier tribal territories, which is meant less for gain than for the safety of the Indian Empire. Sher Shah was content with holding all the important stations and lines of communication in that country, which would make his authority felt in the various States and enable him to concentrate his troops against any of them in case of emergency. His unscrupulous attack upon Chitor and Kachwara can be justified on the score of military necessity. The possession of Chitor was essential to the formation of the quadrilateral (formed by the fortresses of Ajmir, Jodhpur, Mount Abu and Chitor) designed for isolating the principal Rajput States from one another, and especially for preventing the irruption of the Rathors from their retreat at Siwana. The shortest route from Agra to Ajmir lay through the territories of Jaipur, which, owing to its proximity, was never allowed to be independent of Delhi.

Bundelkhand, (950-951 A.H.)

All Persian historians unanimously assert that from Kachwara Sher Shah marched direct for Kalinjar, without returning to Agra. The cause of Sher Shah's sudden attack upon Kalinjar is not definitely given by Abbas who simply says, "The Rajah of

Kalinjar,* Kirat Singh, did not come out to meet him. So he ordered the fort to be invested". (MS. Abbas, p. 237 = Elliot, iv. 407.) Nor does any other Persian writer throw additional light upon it. Ahmad Yadgar, the author of *Salatin-i-Afaghana*, only says that the reason for his march against Kalinjar was, that Birsingh Dev Bundela, who had been summoned to Court, had fled and taken refuge with the Rajah of Kalinjar who refused to give him up." (MS. p. 313, quoted by Prof. Dowson in Elliot, iv. 407.) Indeed Sher Shah's march against their country was more like a hasty punitive expedition, than a methodical campaign for conquest. But there is great difficulty in identifying this Birsingh Dev. This man cannot be the same as the murderer of Abul-Fazl on 12th August, 1602, because he is mentioned to have risen to great favour in the reign of Jahangir and afterwards revolted in the time of Shah Jahan (who ascended the throne in 1627 A.D.). In the legendary chronicle of Bundelkhand we hear of another Birsingh Dev who about the time of Timur's invasion of India (1398 A.D.) is said to have settled in Bundelkhand with his tribe (Franklin, *Journal of Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. I., quoted in p. 20 *Bundelkhand Gazet-*

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*Ferishta [text p. 228] says that "the Rajah of Kalinjar who had witnessed the faithlessness (of Sher Shah) towards Puran Mal, did not offer submission but assumed an attitude of hostility."

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teer, 1878). Both these persons are too remote from the time of Sher Shah. If there be any truth in the statement of Ahmad Yadgar the person meant may have been Narsing Dev, a bold robber-chief who at this time, obtained the appropriate appellation of "*dang*" (equivalent to *dacoit*)—from which arose the name *dangaya*, applied to Eastern Bundelkhand." (See Elliot's *Memoirs of the Races of the North-Western Provinces*, Vol. I., p. 46.) The Bundelas* were admittedly a race of freebooters and the forts of Bundelkhand were no better than dens of robbers who preyed upon the Muslim territories on their border. Once forced to move against them, Sher Shah, with his characteristic thoroughness, planned the systematic conquest of the country. He himself undertook the siege of Kalinjar, while Jalal Khan was despatched to reduce the country to the east of it.

The fortress of Kalinjar was besieged about the beginning of November, 1544 A.D. The natural strength of the fort was such as to baffle any sane attempt to storm it. "The hill on which the fort is built.....has an elevation of 1230 feet above the sea, and is isolated from the adjacent range by a chasm or ravine about 1,200 yards wide. The sides

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* "One native of Bundelkhand commits as much fraud as one hundred weighmen." (Elliot's *Memoirs of the Races of the North-Western Provinces*, i. 46).

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rise rather steeply from the plain, and in the upper part have a nearly perpendicular face of 150 or 180 feet in height and in most places inaccessible." (*Bundel. Gazetteer*, p. 447.) The following description of the fort in the 19th century may give us a fairly accurate idea of its condition in the 16th century, "The summit of the rock (upon which Kalinjar stands) is in structure a kind of table-land slightly undulated and between four and five miles in circuit. Throughout its whole extent it is fortified by a rampart rising from the very edge in continuation of the scarp of the rock; and at places where the difficulties of the ascent in its natural state might be overcome, access has been guarded against by a facing of masonry. The fortifications are massively constructed of large blocks of stone laid generally without cement and about 25 feet thick.....Access to the vast circumvallation of this hill is by a pathway sloping up the face of the rock in an oblique manner at the south-eastern side. It is a rough and narrow track through brushwood, and in some places almost perpendicular up to the first or lowest gateway, which leads into the fortified part and is situated at about a fourth of the ascent." (*Bundelkhand Gazetteer*, p. 459.)

Never were the superhuman energy and grim determination of Sher Shah displayed more splendidly

than in the reduction of Kalinjar. With pardonable exaggeration the author of the *Tarikh-i-Daudi* thus describes his efforts, "Sher Shah encircled the fort and began to construct mines and a lofty tower for mounting a battery (*sarkob*) and covered lanes* (*sabat*). The covered ways reached the fort and the tower was made so high that the land within the fort could be overlooked from its top. For the space of seven months the soldiers and camp-followers laboured day and night. Day and night two thousand workmen were engaged in the work [of casting cannon], and four thousand mortars (*degs*) capable of discharging balls four *maunds* heavy were cast. *Two lakhs* [? doubtful] of *tankas* daily were assigned for the (food and wages) of the labourers. All these works were not suffered to stop for a single day during this time." (*Tarikh-i-Daudi* MS. p. 239.)

When the preparations were complete, 10th Rabi I. 952 A.H. (Saturday, 22nd May, 1545 A.D.) was appointed for the assault. Sher Shah himself advanced to the attack. The scaling of the wall was considered dangerous, as the heavy stones rolled down from the top were sure to crush the storming party. To drive the defenders from the parapet, the action was begun by a discharge of arrows. Sher

* To protect the miners from heavy stones rolled down from the fort.

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Shah then ordered his men to bring bombs (*huqqa*.) "When Dariya Khan brought the bombs, Sher Shah descended (from the raised platform from which he had been shooting arrows), and taking his stand where the *huqqas* were kept,* issued an order to light [the fuse of] the *huqqas* and throw them inside the fort. While the soldiers were busily engaged in throwing these hand-grenades, by the will of the Almighty, one *huqqa* struck the wall (*diwar*, not *gate* as in Elliot) of the fort, *exploded* and *rebounding* from it fell into the heap of other *huqqas* and fireworks which also caught fire, and there was a great explosion. Shaikh Khalil and Shaikh Nizam and other wise men, (*danishmandan*) and the soldiers escaped partially burnt, but Sher Shah came out half-burnt .....When in that condition he was taken to the interior of the camp, all his nobles assembled in *darbar*. He sent for Isa Khan (Hajjab) and ordered him to capture the fort while he was yet alive. Isa Khan carried to the nobles the order of Sher Shah that they should attack the fort on every side and capture it. On hearing this, the soldiers like ants and locusts rushed upon the fort" (MS. Abbas

* Probably to inspect the regular and prompt supply of *huqqa* to the men above. For *huqqa* see appendix (end of the Chapter).

Badayuni says that he was sheltered in a tent pitched for him in front of a bastion (Ranking i. 482) from which he probably wished to see how his men fought.

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pp. 238-239 = Elliot, iv. 408-409). "Whenever he recovered his consciousness a little, he shouted to his men encouraging them to seize the fort, and if any one came to see him he signed to him to go and fight, so that in his absence the amirs in command worked harder than if he had been present and behaved with the utmost gallantry, and coming to close quarters with the garrison, brought matters to a fight with knife and dagger and did full justice to the demands of endeavour and manliness. And Sher Shah, suffering and distressed as he was, from time to time enquired for tidings of victory. The air was terribly hot, (it was the month of May) and although they sprinkled his body constantly with sandal [paste] and rose-water it was utterly useless to relieve the scorching heat whose intensity increased hour by hour." (Badayuni, Ranking, i. 482-483.)*

By the time of the afternoon prayer the Afghans entered the fort. Rajah Kirat Singh with seventy followers shut himself up in a house which the Afghans closely blockaded. When the tidings of victory were conveyed to Sher Shah, "Marks of joy and satisfaction" (Abbas MS. p. 239) appeared on

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* In Nizamuddin (text p. 232), *Tarikh-i-Daudi* (Ms. 240), *Makhzan-i-Afaghana*, (p. 53) and Ferishta (text p. 238) an almost identical account is found. *Tarikh-i-Daudi* adds "from a high place he stimulated his soldiers to fight."

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his countenance and uttering his last words "Praise be to God! This was my very desire", (MS. *Makhzan-i-Afaghana*, p. 53) he calmly yielded his life to the Giver of Life on Saturday evening, 10th Rabi I. 952 A.H. (22nd May, 1545).

Thus passed away in the mid-career of victory and beneficent activity the great soldier and statesman, with whom there appeared for the persecuted Hindus the dawn of that era of toleration, justice and equality of political rights, which broadened into dazzling noon on the accession of Akbar. God in His discernment of true piety, vouchsafed him the most coveted death of a good Musalman (*i.e.*, death on the battlefield, fighting against infidels), which was denied, though most sought after, even to the tireless counter of beads and uprooter of heresy, Aurangzib, the living saint of his age (*Alamgir zinda Pir*).

At the time of Sher Shah's death neither of his two surviving sons Adil Khan and Jalal Khan was present in the camp. Adil Khan, who, being the eldest, was destined to succeed him, was at Rantambhor, and Jalal Khan was at this time near the town of Rewa* (about 85 miles south-east of Kalinjar).

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* *Tarikh-i-Daudi* (in Elliot iv. 478) writes "Rewan in the country of Bhatta." The town Rewa is undoubtedly meant. Ferishta (text p. 229) writes "Rewan in the country of Patna." Badayuni writes

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Sher Shah is said to have often remarked that none of his sons was worthy of the throne (*Makhzan-i-Afaghana*, translated by Dorn Book I., pp. 141-142). Indeed both of them fell far short of his high ideal. The eldest sadly lacked the sterner qualities and commanding personality of a ruler; while the younger was all thunder and lightning untamed by humane virtues. Adil Khan was luxurious, indolent and indifferent; Jalal Khan was an active and enterprising soldier and had given repeated proofs of his decision of character and capacity. Though dreaded on account of his fierce and vindictive disposition, his headlong courage and soldierly habits earned him popularity in the army. Like other free and democratic peoples, the Afghans were not worshippers of the Divine Right of Kings and paid the least regard to the rule of primogeniture. After the expiry of Sher Shah, his nobles held a consultation about the succession to his throne. The relative virtues and failings of both princes were weighed in long debate and the scale turned in favour of Jalal Khan. The scruples of the few legitimists were removed by citing

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"Patna" with the variant Bhatta (Ranking p. 485). Amidst these bewildering variants we have the unanimous testimony of all these writers, that Jalal Khan arrived at Kalinjar on the 5th day after Sher Shah's death. So the place can be neither patna nor Thata. Bhata may be the name of the tract. (For similar confusion, see Elliot iv. 462 foot-note 2).

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the precedent of Sultan Sikandar who, though younger and born of a goldsmith's daughter, succeeded Bahlul Lodi, in supersession of the claims of Barbak Shah—born of an Afghan mother. Accordingly, an invitation was sent to Jalal Khan at Rewa, to come hastily to Kalinjar and assume the crown.

On the 5th day, Jalal Khan, by forced marches reached Kalinjar, and was hastily crowned on that very day, Thursday, 15 Rabi I., 952 A.H. (Dorn p. 146). Till then the royal corpse lay unburied. "There is a place near Kalinjar named Ladgarh, where it is said Sher Shah was buried." (*Bundelkhand Gazetteer*, p. 454.) The local tradition may be true; because after Jalal Khan's return the body may have been given a hasty burial in the neighbourhood of Kalinjar. Abbas does not take care to mention where Sher Shah was buried; nor do we find any mention of it in Nizamuddin, Niamatullah, Ferishta and the author of the *Tarikh-i-Daudi*. Badayuni is the only historian who says that "His corpse was taken to Sahsaram (Sasaram), where was the burial place of his father, and there buried." (Ranking, i. 484.) If the magnificent mausoleum at Sasaram enshrines the remains of Sher Shah, either they were removed there at a subsequent date from Lad-garh, or his coffin was sent to Sasaram, according

to the desire of the late monarch, who had built the mausoleum for the very purpose.

Sher Shah reigned for 6 months (1540 A.D.) as King of Bengal and Jaunpur and for five years as the Emperor of Hindustan. His age at the time of his death cannot be definitely stated. We only know that his beard was white and he was in the evening of life when he ascended the throne. He may have passed sixty winters before he went into the grave.

APPENDIX

The *huqqa* has greatly perplexed Prof. Dowson (see Elliot iv. 408, foot-note) who guesses it to be the rocket or *ban* and that too without certainty. Elphinstone, seemingly puzzled at the meaning of *huqqa*, has given a completely wrong version of the accident. He says, "As Shir (Shah) was superintending the batteries, he was involved in the explosion of magazine, *which had been struck by the enemy's shot (!) (History of India*, p. 457.) Nothing is farther from the truth. Not a single Persian author says this. It is a modern version of oriental warfare in the 16th century.

"Shell", "bomb" or "grenade" cannot be an equivalent for the *huqqa* because it is not, like

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shells, fired through mortars, nor does it like bombs and grenades burst automatically by coming into violent contact with a hard substance, though Irvine translates *huqqa* by the word "hand grenade" (*The Army of the Indian Mughals*, p. 282). We learn from him that as late as 1753, at the siege of Ghasahri fort it was used by Suraj Mal Jat. It still survives as a favourite fire-work exploded for amusement on marriage ceremonies; its tremendous boom is heard even at a distance of two miles. Though it is called *huqqa* it has nothing resembling the *naicha* or long tube fixed on the cocoanut shell; the tube at the mouth through which the wick passes is about two inches long. The shell, divided into two halves, is filled with gun-powder and is wrapped up tightly in several folds of hemp or jute twine. At the time of exploding them a match is applied to the wick and men retire to a distance of 10 to 15 yards. The explosion generally occurs between 30 to 50 seconds. Sher Shah's order "Ignite the *huqqas* and throw them inside the fort", clearly brings out the nature of such explosives. If the *huqqa* had been prepared like the grenade, with iron or annealed glass shells, it would not have rebounded unexploded. Abbas Sarwani's words (*an huqqa shikastah baz gardidah*) "the broken or exploded *huqqa* rebounded" conflict with fact. Had it burst it would not have returned, but sparks

and splinters would have fallen just below. As a matter of fact, it rebounded unexploded, fell in the heap of other *huqqas* and then exploded which caused the fatal accident. There is no reason to go out of the way to suppose with Elphinstone that the magazine caught fire by explosion of a shell shot by the enemy. Not only is this unsupported by any authority, but it is opposed to the fact that early in the 16th century few hill-forts in India had mounted artillery manned by such accurate gunners as could hit an enemy's magazine.

CHAPTER XII

SHER SHAH'S INSTITUTIONS.

Administration.

Half a century back Edward Thomas remarked, "The history of Sher Shah has yet to be written, and it is to be feared that those who undertake the task will find much difficulty in doing justice to his masterly administrative abilities, or in restoring to him that meed of honour for his systematization of the revenue and fiscal departments of Indian policy [polity?] which Akbar's eulogists have appropriated to their own master."* Though modern writers have fully recognized the fact that the revenue and currency systems which prevailed in India with very little modification down to the middle of the 19th century were not the achievements of Akbar but of Sher Shah, no attempt has yet been made to trace the hand of that great Afghan constructive genius in the imperial edifice itself which the stupendous literary activity of Abul-Fazl has misled the world into regarding as the sole creation of his royal patron.

At the moment of Sher Shah's accession to the

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* *Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Delhi*, p. 392.

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throne of Delhi, confusion almost to the extent of anarchy reigned throughout Hindustan. The activity of his two Mughal predecessors was purely destructive. They no doubt prepared the ground for building a magnificent Empire by levelling down the old monarchies, but the genius of a master-architect, capable of achieving such a task was lacking in both of them. Sher Shah not only restored the Empire of Hindustan to its natural limits—the Indus on the west and the hills of Assam on the east, the Himalayas on the north and the Satpura range on the south; but he also consolidated it by establishing a highly efficient administrative system on bureaucratic lines quite unknown to his predecessors. The Empire of Alauddin Khilji or Muhammad Tughlaq was an ill-cemented mass of provinces held together by the slender tie of the allegiance of provincial governors to the throne. The Turks began the unnatural process of building an administrative system from the top downwards, just as their architects transformed Hindu temples into mosques by breaking down the upper portion and constructing domes and arches. The central Government at the capital was a copy of the Abbaside Court. We hear of two well-organized departments, the *Diwan-i-Wazarat* (Exchequer) and the *Diwan-i-Ariz* (Army). An Intelligence department, established by Sultan

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Balban, was developed to its frightful perfection by Alauddin Khilji. Under Firuz Tughlaq we come across the departments of Shate-industries, Public Works, and royal mint, controlled by the *wazir* (see Elliot, iii. 355, 357-359). The chief administrator of justice during the early Turkish sultanates of Delhi bore the title of *Dad-bak** (Lord of Justice), while he was called *Mir-i-Adal* (the Arabic equivalent of the title) in the reign of Sultan Sikandar Lodi.† But these departments, unlike those in Mughal India, were not the supreme centre or apex of subordinate establishments in the provincial chief towns and had no claim to bureaucratic compactness.

Neither well-defined administrative units nor any machinery of administration for the provinces existed at all. The country wore the appearance of feudal Europe; yet there was no feudalism in India; because sub-infeudation was lacking here. The crownlands in the Doab, the income of which was the mainstay of the Government, were under the direct management of the *Diwan-i-Wazarat*; and the rest of the country was granted away in fiefs (*iqtaa*) to powerful nobles bearing the title of *Maliks* and *Amirs*. Distant provinces

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* See Elliot, iii. 126.

† Mian Bhua was the *Mir-i-Adal* of Sultan Sikandar (see *Tabakat-i-Akbari*, Pers. text p. 173).

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like Bengal and Gujrat were placed under governors bearing the title of *Wali* or *Naib*. The *walis*, *iqtaadars* and *naibs* were all commanders of large armies and absolute rulers of the territories in their own charge. All subordinate staff were generally selected by the provincial head who alone was responsible for any oppressive act in the province. There was certainly a provincial *diwan* and perhaps too a provincial *qazi*, without whom the revenue and judiciary could not be managed; but they were not bound by any official ties with the central Government. The result was that the provincial governorship very often proved a stepping-stone to the imperial throne; Altamish, Jalaluddin Khilji, Alauddin Khilji, Ghazi Khan Tughlaq and Bahlul Lodi—all of whom founded new dynasties, had been provincial governors before their accession to the throne of Delhi. But none of these had the genius and skill to kick away the ladder beneath them. The country, in spite of its subjection to one ruler, was cut up into innumerable mutually repellent semi-feudal States held by arrogant soldiers, without any civil authority to check their ambition and misdeeds. The official hierarchy served not as links connecting the ruler and the ruled, but as a formidable wall concealing the personality of the occupant of the imperial throne from the simple villager, who habitually

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resigned himself to the mercy of every wielder of authority on the spot, regarding him as the *Ma bap* or omnipotent ruler of his destiny—a traditional way of thinking which continues with us even in the 20th century.

Unlike his predecessors, Sher Shah gradually built up from below a solid structure of Government, whose base was coextensive with the area of his empire. He wished to organize the whole of Hindustan as one vast royal fisc which would give him entire control over the financial resources of the whole empire and draw the remotest village into closer connection with the imperial authority. He took up the pargana as its administrative unit—the smallest he could find without destroying the autonomous village communities. He appointed one *shiqdar*, one *amin*,* one treasurer (*fotahdar*) and two *karkuns* (writers),—one to write Hindi and another to write Persian—to every pargana. (Abbas MS. p. 249 = Elliot, iv. 413). We have no means of ascertaining the exact number of parganas included in the Empire of Sher Shah. Abbas (MS. p. 265 = Elliot, iv. 424) gives the number as 1,13,000† which is confirmed by the author of

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* Elliot's translation reads *amir* and *amil* indiscriminately; *amil* is correct.

† The original of Abbas has "1,13,000 parganas, *i.e.*, villages." The mistake is evident. Some inconsistency is to be noticed in the

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Wakiat-i-Mushtaki (quoted in Elliot, iv. 424). But this represents the number of villages (*dihi*) and not of parganas, the mistake being due to the erroneous identification of the two. According to the *Ain-i-Akbari* the Subah of Bengal (minus Orissa) contained 19 *sarkars* sub-divided into 688 *mahals* or parganas; the *subah* of Delhi 8 *sarkars* 237 parganas; the *subah* of Agra 13 *sarkars* 262 parganas; the *subah* of Allahabad 9 *sarkars* (excluding the *sarkar* of Kalinjar, which was not settled at the time of Sher Shah's death) 166 parganas; Oudh 5 *sarkars* 133 *mahals* (parganas); 5 *sarkars* of Rajputana (Ajmir, Rantambhor, Jodhpur, Nagor and Sirohi) contained 160; the five Doabs of the Punjab 232, the twelve *sarkars* of Malwa 301; the 3 *sarkars* of Multan, Dipalpur and Bhakkar, 88 parganas. By adding up these figures we get 86 *sarkars* sub-divided into 2,467 parganas. Even if we concede that Sher Shah made the parganas smaller for better administration, thrice this number (2,467 × 3) would represent the maximum number, considering that each contained on the average 15 townships.

The *shiqdar* with his armed retinue was

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foot-notes of Elliot. In iv. 413 (foot-note 1) he gives 1,16,000, as the number of parganas mentioned by the author of *Wakiat-i-Mushtaki*; in p. 424 (foot-note 1) he writes *1,13,000*, while in the extracts from that author (iv. 551) we find *13,000*.

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entrusted with police duties, while the *amin's* function was the assessment and collection of revenue. The *shiqdar* was a soldier, the *amin* a civilian; their relative status cannot be definitely ascertained; but it is likely that the *shiqdar* enjoyed a higher status but no superior authority. The duty of the *shiqdar* was to execute royal *farmans*, to preserve peace within his jurisdiction and give a certain amount of armed help to the *amin* where necessary. He was not given much latitude of action for he was not empowered to attack and punish the people for rebellious spirit and disturbance in the collection of revenue, on his own initiative. In order to take away the military character of the administration, Sher Shah took care that in the normal times of peace the military should remain in the background only as the support of the civil authority. The *amin* was the head of the civil establishment ; the *karkuns*, and the treasurer were his subordinates; but to prevent corruption and embezzlement they were made collectively and separately responsible to the central Government for their acts. The *amin* was to act as "an impartial umpire between the State demanding revenue and the individual rayats paying it." (Prof. J. N. Sarkar's *Mughal Administration*, p. 116). Though no historian of the reign of Sher Shah has enlightened us as to the duties of these officials, we can form a

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pretty accurate notion of their office from the *Ain-i-Akbari** where the *ain-i-amalguzar*, *ain-i-bitikchi* (Turkish name for writers) and *ain-i-khazanadar* are nothing but the official guides of the pargana officials of the Sur rulers.

The next higher and larger administrative unit was the *sarkar* over which Sher Shah appointed two officials, one military and the other civilian, who respectively bore the titles of *Shiqdar-i-Shiqdaran* (the Chief *Shiqdar*)† and *Munsif-i-Munsifan* (Chief *Munsif*), to supervise the conduct of their subordinates. This was borrowed by Sher Shah from the system possibly introduced by Sultan Sikandar Lodi,‡ for the government of crownlands divided into *shiqs*,

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* For the reasons justifying this bold claim, see Appendix on *Administrative System of Akbar*.

† The word *shiq*— which means a fissure, a crack—was used to designate a fiscal sub-division with some important town as its *sadar* or chief town; *cf.* shiq of Hansi, shiq of Delhi, as found in *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*. Sultan Muhammad Tughlaq divided the Maratha country into four shiqs (see Elliot, iii. 251). The word *sarkar* is not mentioned by any early Persian writer of the 15th century; I think shiq was replaced by *sarkar* to denote a territorial sub-division by Sher Shah, because the word *sarkar* is not to be found even in Babur's *Memoirs*.

‡ Krishnadas Kaviraj, who completed his Bengali epic *Chaitanya-Charitamrita* in 1582 A.D. (before Abbas began his history) mentions one incident of the life of that great Vaishnava reformer, which proves the existence of *shiqdar* as a district magistrate in the reign of Sultan Sikandar Lodi. Chaitanya visited Mathura and Brindaban during his pilgrimage (1509-1515). One day at Mathura he fell into

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over each of which were appointed one *shiqdar* and one *diwan*.* The chief *shiqdar* was generally a grandee of considerable influence, with a contingent of police force varying from 2,000 to 5,000 troopers, according to the character of the peasantry and the geographical situation of the *sarkar*. His task was to hold the people in due subjection to authority, to provide for the safeguarding of the highways and punish the peasantry for turbulence and wilful non-payment of revenue. "If the people from any lawlessness or rebellious spirit created any disturbance in the collection of revenue they were to inflict heavy and exemplary punishment that their wickedness should not spread to others." (MS. Abbas pp. 249-250=Elliot, iv. 414.) The duties of the chief *shiqdar* resembled those of the *faujdar* posted in provincial sub-divisions under the Mughal system. (For the *faujdar's* duties, see *Ain*, ii. 40-41; a more

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a trance on hearing a cow-boy play on his flute. Owing to great emotional excitement he began to foam at the mouth. Just then, ten Pathan troopers came upon the scene and arrested his attendants on suspicion of drugging him; whereupon one of his followers, Krishnadas, cried out "Pathan! I appeal to your Padshah. Take me with you to *the shiqdar*." (Prof. J. N. Sarkar's *Chaitanya's Pilgrimages*, p. 224).

* In Babur's *Memoirs* (p. 476) we find that he "bestowed the military collectorate (*shiqdarlighi*) of Delhi on Red Wali" and made Dost *diwan* in the Delhi district. This illustrates the system which Babur found prevailing in the country at the time of his conquest.

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exhaustive account in Prof. J. N. Sarkar's *Administration*, pp. 89-93). We hear of no *kotwals* (prefects of police) in the reign of Sher Shah. It appears that the chief *shiqdar* discharged that function, as in the days of Sikandar Lodi. It should be remembered that, though the chief *shiqdar* was a military noble and often carried on raids and small expeditions, he was essentially a civil officer, like a modern magistrate.

The chief *munsif* was a supervising officer over the civil officials of the *sarkar*. He had to discharge some of the *diwan's* functions, but the revenue affairs of the parganas were not concentrated in his office, there being the most direct relation between the pargana-office and the Imperial Secretariat. His chief duty was to watch over the conduct of the officials of the parganas so that they might not "oppress or injure the people or embezzle the king's revenue; and if any dispute should arise regarding the boundaries of the parganas of the empire they were to settle it, so that no confusion might arise amongst the king's affairs." (Elliot, iv. 414.) The word *munsif** actually means 'a 'doer of justice';

* Abbas nowhere mentions *munsifs* in the pargana. Badayuni uses the expression *munsif* that is *amin* (see Ranking's translation p. 497). So, it is evident that *munsif* and *amin* are synonymous. In the *Ain-i-Akbari* also they are used to denote the same officer.

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the chief *munsif* seems to have also acted as a circuit judge for trying civil suits and redressing the grievances of the peasants and *muqaddams* at the hands of pargana officials. The chief *munsif* could not dismiss or transfer the pargana officials for misconduct; he could only report it to the Emperor who took the necessary step. The administrative system in the *sarkar* was based on the principle of minimum interference from the higher officials in the work of their subordinates, without reference to the sovereign. The officials both in the pargana and *sarkar* were transferred every two or three years.

We hear of no larger administrative unit than the *sarkar*; the *subahs* and *subahdars* were the creation of Akbar. Sher Shah wanted to abolish big governorships especially of the military type, if he could. His ideal of provincial organization was that of Bengal, where he appointed Qazi Fazihat governor of the whole province. But this office carried no military command and no great administrative duties except that of supervision and prevention of quarrels which were sure to arise among a number of officials of equal status and independent of one another. He would have placed such harmless civilians at the head of other provinces if he could have done so with safety. But military necessity compelled him to keep Haibat Khan Niazi as the governor of the

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Punjab* with 30,000 troops; Shujaat Khan ruled over southern Malwa and had under him 12,000 troops, and Khawas Khan held sway over Ajmir, Jodhpur and Nagor. But in these parts too the central Government controlled finance and justice as in the rest of the empire. Sher Shah was well aware of the danger of such military governorships and foreshadowed the trouble which broke out after his death. "He intended to remove 'Azam Humayun [Haibat Khan] from his Government of the Punjab, but had no time before he was glorified in martyrdom." (Abbas, Elliot, iv. 432.)

Sher Shah's Government was pre-eminently one man's rule. Abbas says that he "attended to every business of the kingdom and the revenue, whether great or small, in his own person..... He heard every day [after the fourth watch] the accounts of various offices (*karkhanas*), and the ministers (*arkan-i-daulat*) made reports of the work to be done in their respective departments (*karkhanas*),† and the orders

* Not so extensive as the *subah* of the Punjab or the modern province of that name.

† The use of the word *karkhana* for a ministerial department by Abbas is not happy. Its real meaning is a factory for State-manufactures as used by Shams-i-Afif (*Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, text pp. 337-339) and Abul-Fazl (*Ain*, i. 14). In the above passage *karkhana* cannot be taken to mean a factory. The context and references show that Abbas means a department of State by it. Elliot is undoubtedly right in construing the word in this sense.

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which Sher Shah gave they recorded for their future guidance [*an che hukm me-shud dastur-ul-'amal-i-khud sakhtah bar an 'amal me-namudand, baz ihtiaz--i-pursidan na-bud*], that there might be no necessity for inquiry in future." (MS. Abbas, p. 241 = Elliot, iv. 410.) Here we catch a glimpse of the departments in the embryo developing within the Imperial Secretariat of Sher Shah. We cannot expect highly organized departments of central Government in the brief space of his five years' rule, especially when we consider the difficulties he encountered. The magnificent superstructure of the early Turkish Sultans had crumbled down with their Empire after the death of Firuz Tughlaq. Sultan Sikandar Lodi restored the machinery of civil administration to some extent, which also broke down during the weak rule of his successor. After that followed a period of twenty years' confusion and foreign conquest, during which the older generation of officials almost entirely disappeared. Sher Shah had to begin his work with raw officials, train them and organize the departments. There could be very few men to take charge of these departments and run them. Sher Shah's ministers were mere secretaries, who only attended to the routine work. He kept all the strings of policy in his own hands, and himself despatched a large amount of business. The

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duties of *sadar* he took upon himself; he [illegible] the *farmans* which the *munshis* (clerks) took down, and he despatched—of course with the assistance of clerks—the vast amount of correspondence with foreign Courts and his own nobles. He was his own Chancellor of the Exchequer, and every day inspected and took account of the treasure which came from all parts of the kingdom. The regular and smooth working of the administrative system during the reign of Islam Shah, busy as he was with wars and rebellions, shows that at the time of Sher Shah's death it had acquired some mechanical efficiency of the bureaucratic type. The work of Sher Shah's administrative genius did not perish with his dynasty but lasted throughout the Mughal period,* with some inevitable changes due to the greater expansion of the empire. It forms the substructure of our present administrative system. The modern magistrate and collector of British India is the official successor of the *shiqdar-i-shiqdaran* of Sher Shah, and the *tahasildar* that of the *amil* or *amin*.

Army.

In the early days of the Delhi sultanate, the semblance of imperial unity was preserved only by

* See Appendix *Administrative System of Akbar*.

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the terror of the army of the Sultan. But the army in those days was not a well-knit body, being an assemblage of the retainers of different *amirs* (bold free-lance captains). The allegiance of the individual soldier to the State depended upon that of his chief. The result was that the units were not amenable to discipline and the officers enjoyed too much independence and indulgence to be compatible with the efficiency of an army. In cases of emergency the monarch summoned the levies of the provincial governors for the formation of armies. To Sultan Alauddin Khilji belongs the credit of organizing the Indian army on a new model. He created an army recruited directly by the central Government—through the *Ariz-i-Mamalik*—, paid in cash from the State treasury, officered by nobles of the Sultan's own choice, while corruption was checked by the *dagh* (branding of horses) system. After his death abuses crept in it, but nevertheless it lingered till the death of Sultan Firuz. (See *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi* in Elliot, iii. 197 and 348.) The armies of the Lodi Sultans were of the clannish feudal type, consisting of the quotas of various tribal chiefs enjoying *jagirs* for service.

Sher Shah revived the system of Alauddin Khilji and transformed the army into a truly imperial institution. As the chief object of his administrative and

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revenue reforms was to establish a direct relation between the ruler and the rayat, so in his military reforms we find a persistent effort to bring every common soldier into the closest touch with the Emperor, who combined in himself the functions of the Commander-in-chief and the Paymaster-General. The relation between the common soldier and the nobles was changed, as the result of his reforms, from one of personal attachment into something like an official tie. The soldier obeyed his immediate commanding officer not as his *personal chief* but as the Emperor's servant. Service and promotion of the individual soldier were not left to the capricious favour of the noble under whom he was placed. The Emperor was attentive to his interest and ever ready to grant him justice against the most powerful grandee of the Empire.* His principal aim was to prevent military revolt which had its root in the attachment of the common soldiers to their immediate superiors.

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* Abbas tells us an anecdote which breathes the true spirit of Sher Shah's administration: "Sher Shah had ordered Shujaat Khan to distribute some lands in his province (Malwa) to the common soldiers serving under him. But he was induced by his corrupt officials to appropriate a portion of them to himself, whereupon 2,000 men, determined to represent the case to the Shah, marched away in body from Shujaat Khan's army, and halted one stage off from it. They took counsel together and resolved: 'It is not

The system of Alauddin Khilji was improved in important details by Sher Shah. He added the practice of taking down the descriptive rolls (*chehra* ; see Irvine's *Army of the Indian Mughals*, pp. 46-56) in addition to the branding of horses (*dagh*). The soldiers as a rule were recruited directly by himself and we very seldom come across permission given to the provincial governors to recruit their contingents. "He himself fixed the *monthly salary* by looking at the man, and in his presence he had the descriptive rolls taken down and the horse branded [*ba-hazur-i khud dagh o chehra me-namud*]. (Abbas MS. p. 238). "As he fixed the pay of each man, so

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proper to go ourselves to Sher Shah. *He has posted us* with Shujaat Khan in this country of Dakhin, and it is not right for us *to move out* of these parts *without his order*. Let us send a *vakil* to Sher Shah....Whatever he orders let us act up to it. And *if any business of the king should in the meanwhile occur, it behoves us to exert ourselves in its settlement more than all others*.' But before the *vakil* of the soldiers reached the imperial presence, Sher Shah's spies reported everything to him. Shujaat Khan was reprimanded in severe terms and ordered to appease the remonstrants, on pain of the forfeiture of his *jagir* and imprisonment. Shujaat Khan felt the earth fast sliding off beneath his feet. He himself went to the encampment of the seceders and, appeasing them with promises and oaths that he would do no harm, and encouraging them with gifts and presents, brought them back to his own camp. For having escaped the king's wrath Shujaat Khan offered sweetmeats (*shukrana*) in *dargahs* [of Pirs] and mosques and distributed alms to the poor" (MS. Abbas, pp. 266-271=Elliot, iv. 425-427).

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he paid each man separately.*' (Abbas ... iv. 413). This he did lest the chiefs should appro-priate the rightful dues of the soldiers [*haq-i-farrahi dakhal na-kunand*]. (Abbas MS. p. 247). We are not in possession of sufficient materials to make out how the army of Sher Shah was officered. There was certainly no grade like Akbar's *mansab*. As the Afghans were lovers of equality, the creation of *mansab* was sure to breed discontent among them. As a mark of distinction the title of *Masnad-i-Ala* was given to particular nobles (such as Haibat Khan Niazi), but that implied no higher rank but only a personal distinction. Portions of the imperial army

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* Herein lay one of the excellences of Sher Shah's innovation. The abuses and corruption in Akbar's army, so graphically described by Badayuni, were due to the pernicious custom of allowing the *mansabdar* to draw the salaries of his men. It was no wonder that grooms and servants were brought to the muster dressed as soldiers and mounted on branded horses by his *mansabdars* in the muster. In other respects also Akbar's military system was faulty—inferior to that of Sher Shah. Akbar had the old Turkish passion for building from the top downwards. He would first appoint the officer and make him find men to command. The lowest grade of *mansab* was 10. The result of this recruitment through *mansabdars* was to weaken the hold of the Emperor over them. The officer became a personal chief of his soldiers (see V. A. Smith's *Akbar*, p. 363) who was inclined to follow him even against the Emperor. The evil effects of this system became prominent in later reigns, resulting in the rebellions and defiant attitude of the high grandees of the Empire. A Mahabat Khan (who imprisoned Jahangir) was the natural product of Akbar's system.

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were distributed among various strategic points of the empire. One such division was known as a *fauj*, which was commanded by a *faujdar* whose duties were purely military, having nothing to do with civil affairs,* like the commanding officers of the Army Cantonments in British India. To this however there were several exceptions in the case of renowned soldiers posted on the frontier provinces where the soldier's rule prevailed. There the commanders of forces exercised the combined functions of a *faujdar* and a chief *shiqdar*. Among these were Haibat Khan Niazi in command of 30,000 troops governing the Gakkhar country and guarding the Kabul road; Fath Jang Khan at Dipalpur and Multan, who ruled Upper Sindh and kept watch over the Qandahar road; Hamid Khan Kakar posted at the fort of Milwat (on the upper course of the Beas, 30° 50′ N. and 76° E.) ruling Nagarkot, Jwalamukhi, Dihdawal and Jammu hills with an iron hand; Khawas Khan and Isa Khan Niazi in Jodhpur, Ajmir and Nagor holding the Rajput country in subjection; and Shujaat Khan in Hindia and Satwas, with 12,000 troops watching the south. The following were the important army

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* At Delhi Mian Ahmad Sarwani was *amin* and Adil Khan and Hatim Khan were [respectively] *faujdar* and *shiqdar*. (MS. Abbas, p. 241). In Elliot, iv. 415, the fullstop should be placed after Malik Bhagwant; on the 18th line read "At Delhi etc."

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stations in the empire under the *faujdars*: Gwalior one *fauj* of cavalry besides 1,000 (one thousand) *banduqchis* (matchlockmen);* Biana, one *fauj* and 500 matchlockmen; Mandu [no *fauj*] 7,000 matchlockmen; Rantambhor, one *fauj* besides 1,600 matchlockmen, Chitor 3,000 matchlockmen [no *fauj*], Raisin one *fauj* and 1,000 artillerymen (*topchi*); [this is puzzling: why are the men of Raisin called *topchi* (MS. Abbas, p. 253) while in every other case they are designated as *banduqchis*?], Chunar, one *fauj* and one thousand matchlockmen; Rohtas† in Bihar [no *fauj*, perhaps owing to the hilly nature of the country], 10,000 matchlockmen under Ikhtyar Khan Panni; one *fauj* in Bengal; but no mention of the particular place. [From Blochmann's notes (*Ain*, i. 340) we know that it was Sher Shah who

* This means that "the *banduqchis*" formed the garrison of Gwalior fort while the cavalry were stationed outside. The *faujdar* was the commander of cavalry; the commandant of the fort being independent of his authority, as he was perhaps appointed directly by the king. We find that during the reign of the Lodis also, some forts called imperial, *e.g.*, Chunar, were commanded by officers appointed by the Sultan.

† In Elliot's (iv. 417) translation of Abbas, Ikhtyar Khan Panni is mentioned in command there, and this is corroborated by *Wakiat-i-Mushtaki* (Elliot, iv. 551). Our MS. Abbas (p.253) makes him the *faujdar* of Kalpi (omitted altogether in Elliot). Blochmann's notes appended to the *Ain-i-Akbari* (i. 422) add that *Fath Khan Batni* was the commander of Rohtas. Ikhtyar Khan Panni was the *faujdar* of Kalpi, as our MS. Abbas says.

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first selected Rajmahal as the site for building a new capital of Bengal; so it is reasonable to surmise that the Bengal army was posted there.] One *fauj* with 12,000 (? too large) matchlockmen (*banduqchi*) was stationed in the *sarkar of Kalpi** (MS. Abbas, p. 253); one *fauj* in Lucknow; one *fauj* in the country of Dhunderah,† one in Bajwara (Jallandar Doab). [*Tarikh-i-Daudi*, *Wakiat-i-Mushtaki* in Elliot, iv. and Abbas MS. pp. 250-254 = Elliot, iv. 416-417.] Spies (*khabardaran*) were sent with the force of every noble and through them the sovereign was kept informed of every occurrence in the army. The *Wakiat-i-Mushtaki* (Elliot, iv. 551) says, "*Munsifs* were appointed for examining the brands in the armies on the frontiers."

The equilibrium was well kept by a large army under the direct command of the king. He had 1,50,000 cavalry and twenty-five thousand infantry, a choice body armed with muskets and bow, always in readiness for service (*hamesha dar rikab hazir me-bud*). Five thousand war-elephants in the royal

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* Elliot's MS. has *Bhadauria*. We accept the reading of our MS. Bhadaur is the home of a Rajput clan. Dhunderah is *Dhundur*, an old name of the Kachwaha country. It is quite likely that one force was kept there. *Wakiat-i-Mushtaki* also mentions one army at *Khajwara* (Kachwara?)

† Omitted in Elliot, iv. 417.

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stall and a grand park of artillery* added made his power irresistible. The absence as was the case with armies in the east impair the efficiency of his army. At the campaign he sent back those who had undergo fatigue of it to the provincial cantonments and called the contingents of those places to the royal presence which meant active service. As will become evident afterwards, the severe discipline of Sher Shah's camp in one campaign was sufficient to turn a raw recruit into a seasoned veteran.

The infantry and matchlockmen (*banduqchis*) of Sher Shah's army seem to have been exclusively

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* Abbas does not give us any account of his *topkhana*. That he had a large and efficient park of artillery as early as the battle of Bilgram is attested by no less an authority than Mirza Haidar. At Lahor, after their defeat of Bilgram, Mirza Haidar, in support of his plan of making a stand against Sher Shah near the Gakkhar country, speaks thus :—"The mortars (*degh*) and swivels (*zarb-zan*) of Sher Khan are the mainstay of his fighting power. It is impossible to bring gun-carriages into the hills, and he will not hazard a battle without them." (*Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, Elias & Ross, p.480). This is perhaps the best testimony to the formidable strength of Sher Shah's artillery. Badayuni and other writers repeatedly speak of artillery being employed by Sher Shah against the Rajputs. Abbas himself mentions the casting of big mortars by Sher Shah at Raisin. The *Tarikh-i-Daudi* says that during the siege of Kalinjar he cast 4,000 *deghs*, capable of discharging balls weighing 4 maunds each. That Sher Shah had a very large park of artillery cannot therefore be doubted.

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Hindu. They were, if my surmise be correct, probably the ancestors of the Baksariyas (matchlockmen of Buxar) (see Irvine's *Army of the Indian Mughals*, p. 168) who served as matchlockmen throughout the Mughal period, and whose descendants are known as Bhojpuris,* serving the Bengal zamindars as *barqandazes*. It is not perhaps too much to conjecture that these men, who were Sher Shah's hereditary tenants and the partners of his fortune in every enterprise, were more trusted by him than men of the northern provinces among whom he was almost a stranger.

Hindus were allowed to hold positions of some importance in his army. This policy he followed from the very beginning of his career. In his father's parganas, he had organized the peasant militia† as the support of his regular troops. One of Sher Shah's best generals was Brahmajit Gaur, mentioned by both Jauhar (MS. p. 41) and Abbas Sarwani. He was sent in pursuit of Humayun after each of the battles of Chaunsa and Bilgram. (Abbas

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* These men also served in the native regiments of the East India Company as matchlockmen; (see Irvine's *Army of the Indian Maghals*.) Early in the 18th century they served the Rajahs of Bengal as *sawars*, too, as the Bengali poet Bharatchandra's *Annadamangal* bears evidence.

†Similarly, he perhaps organized the Bhumi militia in the Empire.

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MS. p. 188=Elliot, iv. 383) and cengu[illegible] occasion for needless cruelty. Rajah Ra[illegible] of Gwalior is said to have been in the service of Sher Shah (Abbas in Elliot, iv. 392). Nizamuddin and Ferishta extol his valour in rescuing Shujaat Khan at the battle of Nilgarh (fought with Nasir Khan, *see ante*). The *Tarikh-i-Daudi* speaks of a contingent of Rajputs passing under review before Sher Shah: *Jamait-i-Rajputan ba-nazar me guzashtand* (MS. p. 203). However, there may not be found anything particular about Sher Shah's policy of admitting the Hindus in his army, when considered by itself, because we know that as early as the days of Mahmud of Ghazni the Hindus were welcome to the ranks of the Muslim army. But when viewed in the light of his general scheme of nation-building—of which it was only a part—it has a great significance.

Revenue.

The earlier Muslim monarchs of Delhi considered themselves as proprietors of the soil, and as such, entitled to the whole produce of the land, leaving just enough for the maintenance of the peasant. There was no fixity of the State's demand; the revenue was generally assessed in the gross by guess or computation. Alauddin Khilji first devised

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the scheme of *jarib** (survey and assessment); but the system was neither extended far nor did it take sufficient root to survive the death of the inventor, as is evident from Ghaziuddin Tughlaq's instructions to his officers of the Exchequer to assess revenue "either by guess or by computation upon the reports of informers." (Zia Barani, text, p. 329 = Elliot, iii. 230). Alauddin demanded "half of the produce of land without any diminution" (Elliot, iii. 182) from the rayats, besides duties on buffaloes, goats and milch-cows. The climax was reached in the reign of Muhammad Tughlaq who, by one stroke of his pen, increased the revenue tenfold without troubling himself about the productive capacity of the land and the expenses of cultivation. The peasants, giving themselves up to despair, fled to the jungles where they were mercilessly hunted down like wild beasts. The avowed principle of taxation was to keep down the Hindus by sheer economic pressure. A happy change came upon the policy of the Muslim rulers with the accession of Firuz Tughlaq, under whose

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* The following passages of Zia Barani support this: "[Sultan Alauddin ordered that] all cultivation, whether on a small or large scale, was to be carried on at a rate for every *biswa* [one-twentieth part of a *bigha*]" (*Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi* in Elliot, iii. 182). "The tribute of the New City [Alauddin's Delhi] was assessed *by measurement* at a certain rate per *biswa*, as in the environs of the capital." (*Ibid*, p 188.)

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fostering care the country revived from the desolation of the preceding reign. But owing to the absence of a direct relation between the State and the actual tiller of the soil, even the good intentions and generous policy of the sovereign could not benefit the people of the provinces much. The license of the Muslim soldiery and the exactions of the Hindu *muqaddams* were the bane of the peasant's life. The pernicious custom of granting military *jagirs* and assignment of revenue in lieu of pay to soldiers continued down to the days of Humayun with a temporary break in the reign of Alauddin Khilji. The fief-holders and soldier-lords wielded almost absolute political authority over their tenants. The *muqaddams* and *chaudhuries* also as hereditary collectors of revenue, exercised some political authority over the cultivators; and under weaker rulers they arrogated to themselves the position of landlords. As they were the only class of persons in possession of revenue secrets, both the ruler and rayat were helpless in their hands. Hitherto no great Sultan or *wazir* had appeared with a strong head for figures and insight into revenue affairs to carry light into this department, honey-combed as it was with corruption. The real cure of the evil was not "the rack and pincers" of Alauddin Khilji, but a direct relation

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between the State and the rayat, simplification of items of demand and an equitable basis for it.

Sher Shah came to the throne with his scheme of revenue settlement ready-made and successfully tested by experiment. This was but an extension of the system introduced by him at Sasaram. Lands were surveyed under an uniform system of mensuration. He ordered the use of the *gaz* of Sultan Sikandar Lodi (32 digits)* in measurement; the land was measured by rope,—for which Akbar later on substituted bamboo—into *bighas*. The terms *bigha* and *jarib* were interchangeable; one *jarib* or *bigha* consisted of 3,600 square *gaz*. (*Ain*, ii. 62.) The holding of every rayat was separately measured and one-fourth† of the expected produce was assessed as

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* Abul-Fazl says :—"Sultan Sikandar Lodi in Hindustan introduced another *gaz*..... [whose] length was 32 digits. But some authors anterior to his time mention of a similar measure. Sher Khan and Salim Khan, *under whom Hindustan was released from the custom of dividing the grain and its apportionment*, in measuring land used this *gaz*. Till the thirty-first year of the Divine era.....the Iskandari *gaz* was used for cultivated lands and buildings." (*Ain*, ii. 61).

† That the State did not take more than one-fourth is corroborated by the following facts : (i) The *Makhzan-i-Afaghana* says that Sher Shah wrote to Haibat Khan *to take one-fourth of the produce of the land* as Government revenue from the people of Multan without measuring the land (quoted in Elliot iv. 399 foot-note 1) (ii) Abul-Fazl writes, "The revenue levied by Sher Khan, which at the present day is represented *in all provinces*

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the Government revenue. As was the custom under previous Sultans, the cultivator was given the choice of payment either in kind or cash, preference being given to the latter mode.

The work of survey and assessment of every village within a pargana was done under the direct supervision of the *amin*. A *kabuliyat* (agreement) which contained a short account of the rayat's holding, and the amount he agreed to pay to the Government, was taken by him from every individual rayat, duly signed and attested; and he, in return, gave a *patta* (title-deed) to the rayat stating the demand of the State.

The collection was usually made by the *muqaddam*, but the rayats were perhaps encouraged to pay direct* to the pargana treasury, with the object of diminishing the importance of the headmen and drawing the rayat into closer relation with the State officials. Complexity in the State demand was avoided by forbidding all illegal exactions, which he had already abolished in his father's estate. But there he recognized the validity of two more additional

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as the lowest rate of assessment." (*Ain*, ii. 63). From the same writer we learn elsewhere that Akbar later on *raised it to one-third* (*ibid*, p. 66). So, it is evident that Sher Shah's demand must have been lower than that.

* By the time of Akbar, the custom had taken root. The cultivators got receipts on payment.

charges *jaribana* (expenses of survey) and *mahasilana* (tax-gatherer's fee), to be levied from the rayat at rates fixed by him, as we find in his warning to the *muqaddams* "*jaribana o mahasilana o khurak-i-mahasilan muain sakhtam*" (Abbas MS. p. 28), *i.e.*, 'I fix the rates of the fees of surveyors and tax-gatherers, and the rations* of tax-gatherers.' It cannot be definitely asserted whether the expenses of assessment and collection continued to be levied in the Empire also, over and above the demand of one-fourth. It appears that they were abolished as separate charges, all being merged in the land revenue. The outdoor allowance of the officials and the commission on collection were perhaps given from the State treasury, if we are allowed to infer it from the conditions prevailing in Akbar's time. The instructions to Akbar's collectors of revenue run thus:—"When through the exertions of the village headmen the full rental is received *he should allow him half a biswa* (meaning 2½ p.c.†) *on each bigha*

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*This is not to be found in Elliot's translation (see iv. 313).

†Sher Shah may have been somewhat more liberal to them in order to secure the smooth working of the new system. He may have allowed, at most 5 p.c. as remuneration. At present in the United Provinces, the *muqaddam* or (the *lambardar* as he is best known) is allowed 5 p.c. by the Indian Government. One erroneous passage in Elliot's translation of Abbas suggests as if the *muqaddam* was made an equal sharer with the State—"He ordered his governors

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or otherwise reward him according to the measure of his service." (*Ain*, ii. 44). As regards the other item, *viz.*, the expenses of assessment, we catch glimpses of the custom* in the days of Sher Shah. "Officials were given outdoor allowance both in money and ration by the State, according to a fixed rate.

Sher Shah regarded the interests of the ruler and the rayat as identical: "if a little favour is shown to the rayat, the ruler benefits by it", (see *ante* chap. I). His general instruction to his revenue officers was, "Be lenient at the time of assessment, but show no mercy at the time of collection." As the officials knew well that the approbation of the master was to be earned not by showing a large revenue on paper

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[to give] *one share to the cultivator and half a share to the muqaddam.*" (Elliot, iv. 413.) Our MS. Abbas omits this. Cent per cent commission is an absurdity. Not to speak of Sher Shah, who only tolerated the *muqaddam* as a necessary evil, even a bankrupt landlord would not consent to this.

*Akbar's collector was instructed to supply the officials engaged in the land measurement on which they were employed, 16 *dams* and a fixed ration (for details, see *Ain*, ii. 45). Another passage further strengthens the surmise: "It *was* the rule [*ain chunan bud*] that the commissaries (*gumashtagan*) of the *shiqdar*, *karkun* and *amin* should receive daily 58 *dams* as a perquisite, provided that in spring they did not measure less than 200 nor in autumn less than 250 *bighas*. His Majesty whose heart is capacious as the ocean, abolished [altered?] this custom and allowed only one *dam* for each *bigha*." (Jarrett, *Ain*, ii. 66.) Here we get unmistakable evidence of the custom prevailing before Akbar's time.

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but by the full realization of a moderate one without a hitch, the assessment was less likely to be burdensome to the rayat. Wholesome severity at the time of collection was very necessary to prevent arrears from accumulating. Except in the case of absolute failure of crops the cultivator had no excuse to be in arrears; because if he regarded the assessment as high and unjust, he could demand an actual division of the harvest. The yearly assessment may be considered as a hardship and a drawback of the system in modern times, but it was really beneficial to the rayat in those days, because both the State and the rayat shared equally the risks which were many and frequent. Scarcity of specie at the beginning of Sher Shah's reign and decay of commerce—which made it difficult for a rayat to find a market for at least ¼ of the produce to pay the revenue in cash—would have made a settlement for a longer term a tyranny. Sher Shah further increased the resources of the State by abolishing* the custom of granting

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* Blochmann says that the Mughal historians blame Sher Shah for his bounty in giving lands to soldiers (*Ain*, i. 256 foot-note) and religious personages (*Ain*, i. 271). But his reference to authorities is partly wrong. He refers to *Ain* 10, Third Book, *i.e.*, *Ain* on *Bigha*. In Jarrett's translation (*Ain*, ii. 62), no such statement is to be found. Sher Shah's fiscal policy was anti-*jagir*, and he paid his soldiers in cash. Small *jagirs* were no doubt given to them on the frontier and waste lands for settling with their families. This

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jagirs to the soldiers in lieu of pay, [illegible] lands from mortmain. The piety of the [illegible] found expression in the erection of numer[illegible] and in endowing them; besides, the imm[illegible]bing the officials of Sultan Ibrahim "got [illegible] their possession more lands than they were entitled [illegible]; he therefore resumed their holdings, and investigating the cases himself, gave to each his right, and did not entirely deprive any man of his possessions. He *then gave them money* for their road expenses*, and dismissed them." On account of the fraudulent practices of these men he did not give the *farman* to the grantees, lest they should tamper with it on the way, but sent them under his own seal to the *shiqdar* of the *sarkar* where the lands were assigned." (Abbas in Elliot, iv. 423).

Sher Shah's revenue system, popularly known as Todar Mal's *bandobast*, obtained in Northern India throughout the Mughal period, and in all its essential features has survived in British India under the name of the *rayatwari settlement* admired so enthusiastically

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was scarcely prejudicial to the State revenue. As regards the charge of giving lands for pious purposes, he curtailed such grants (as Abbas says).

*These *imams* were more fortunate than their successors in Akbar's reign standing as suppliants before Sadr Abdun-Nabi for similar business. (See Badayuni in Elliot, v. 519-520).

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by the Anglo-Indian administrators. His policy was to enforce it throughout his empire, but practical difficulties and political considerations counselled statesman-like compromise with the local custom in some parts of it. In Multan he ordered Haibat Khan Niazi to respect the custom of the Langahs and accept one-fourth of the produce without measurement.*

The activity of the chief *shiqdars* shows that the Government was in right earnest in carrying out the work of settlement with justifiable severity. Hamid Khan Kakar held firm possession of Nagarkot, Jwalamukhi, Dihdawal and Jammu and exacted revenue from the hill-people by *measurement* of fields. Isa Khan Sarwani in Sarkar Sambhal reduced the rebellious zamindars to such subjection that they meekly destroyed their jungle fastnesses with their own hands,† and paid revenue at the city according to measurement. Bairak Niazi, *shiqdar* of Qanauj, disarmed the turbulent people of Qanauj and forced them to pay revenue to the treasurers, assessed after measurement. (Abbas in Elliot, iv. 415-416.) The

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* This was the case, I think, in Sindh too, which formed a part of Sher Shah's dominion. There in Akbar's reign the assessment of the *sarkar* of Tattah was made on the system of division of crops. (*Ain*, ii. 338).

†No less painful than digging one's own grave before being shot. These jungles, especially of bamboo, were Samson's locks to these zamindars.

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yoke of a strong and orderly Government proved galling to the habitually lawless section of the people, who had relished the joys of defying all constituted authority and thriven well on brigandage for about 20 years when the empire was in the melting pot owing to internal weakness and foreign invasion. The zamindars and cultivators on the banks of the rivers Jamuna and Chambal actually showed fight. Sher Shah brought there 12,000 troops from Sarhind sarkar, who made a clean sweep of the rebels (Elliot, iv. 416).

Had Sher Shah been spared for a decade or two more, the zamindars as a class would have disappeared with their jungle fastnesses, and Hindustan would have become one vast expanse of arable land without a bush or bramble, cultivated under the zealous care of an indefatigable Farmer ever ready with the hoe to dig out weeds to the very root. As his life was short, the remoter regions possibly remained sprinkled with old zamindaris. He himself created new ones on the borders of his empire, where they were less dangerous and more useful by serving as barriers of defence.

Coinage.

On his accession to the throne Sher Shah found the currency of the Empire in no less deplorable a

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condition than agriculture. It had practically broken down owing to the scarcity of specie, the debasement of the metal, and the absence of any fixed standard of relative value between the lower metals and gold. He quickly reconstructed the currency upon the most comprehensive basis, making a clean sweep of the old mixed metal currency and other anomalies.* He issued in very large numbers a new copper coin, known later as *dam*, with its subdivisions of halves, quarters eighths and sixteenths, —to satisfy the immediate need of the Empire, *viz.*, cash to pay the revenue.

"Sher Shah's reign constitutes an important test point in the annals of Indian coinage, not only in its specific mint reforms, but also as correcting the progressive deteriorations of the previous kings, and as introducing many of those reforms which the succeeding Mughals claimed as their own." (Thomas, *Chronicles of the Pathan Kings*, p. 403.) Vincent A. Smith, one of the latest authorities on Indian coinage, says, "Sher Shah.....is entitled to the honour of establishing the reformed system of currency, which lasted throughout the Mughal period, was maintained by the East India Company down

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* See Thomas' *Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Delhi*, pp. 403-409; H. N. Wright's *Catalogue of Coins in the Indian Museum, Calcutta*, ii. 11-12, 84-109.

to 1835, and *is the basis of the existing British currency*. He finally abolished the inconvenient billon coinage of mixed metal, and struck well-executed pieces in gold, silver, and copper, to a fixed standard of both weight and fineness. His silver rupees, which weigh 180 grains, and contain 175 grains of pure silver, being thus practically equal in value to the modern rupee, often have the king's name in Nagari characters in addition to the usual Arabic inscriptions." (*Imperial Gazetteer of India*, ii. 145-146.)

But for the extant coins of Sher Shah, many important points of his reign would have remained obscure. The contributions of numismatic discovery to the political history of Sher Shah are invaluable, and to that source alone we look for further light in future. The Persian chronicles are hopelessly imperfect. Such important facts as his conquest of Sindh have escaped the notice of all professed historians. The historical value of his coinage is due to the presence of the names of numerous mints on his coins. "The method of establishing mints at more important centres, though not unknown to his predecessors, was largely developed by Sher Shah and adopted by Akbar and the succeeding Mughal emperors. From this time, therefore, Delhi coinage acquires an added interest for the students of

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political geography as marking with some degree of precision the extent and influence of the Delhi Empire." (Wright, p. 13.) That Sher Shah's empire extended as far as Mount Abu and Sakkar-Bakkar (in Sindh), is known only from his coins. The puzzling inconsistencies of Abbas and the conflicting dates found in other histories would have, in the absence of these coins, baffled the utmost exertion and ingenuity of scholars to construct the chronology of this reign. His coins also illustrate the rapidity with which the conquered countries settled under his rule. The land survey, construction of roads and establishment of mint towns seem to follow almost in the wake of his conquering armies. The issue of coins from Ujjain in 949 A.H., from Sakkar-Bakkar (Sindh) in 950 A. H., from Mount Abu in 951,—scarcely six months after his conquest of these places,—confirms this view. Another interesting fact which the study of Sher Shah's coinage reveals, is the founding of a number of towns after his own name, and renaming the old ones, to immortalize his own name, *e.g.*, Sher-garh urf Delhi, Sher-garh urf Qanauj, Sher-garh urf Sakkar-Bakkar. But for the fortunate insertion of *urf*, we should have been at a loss to know what particular town was meant by 'Sher-garh'. The error might have arisen of confounding all mint-towns bearing that name with the

fort of Sher-garh* near Sasaram, which he built perhaps before his conquest of Bengal. The numismatic experts have not been able to identify Rasulpur from which mint a coin of 950 is extant (*Rasulpur urf* ?). Badayuni tells us that Sher Shah "destroyed the fortress of Shamsabad, and removed it to another place, calling it by the name of Rasulpur. Now, however, at the date of writing [of Badayuni's history] it has been repopulated in its old position." (Ranking, p. 472). This leaves no room for doubt that the complete reading of the mint-name should be *Rasulpur urf Shamsabad*. (For the list of coins of Sher Shah, see pp. 84-109 of Wright's book).

Sher Shah's coins were both square and circular in shape, the latter being an improvement upon the cruder designs of old. Gold coins of pure metal weighing 167 grs., 168.5 grs., and 166.4 grs., half-rupees of 88 grs., and copper *dams* varying in weight between 311 grs. and 322 grs. have been found. Thomas† says that the *dam* had "originally an

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*20 miles south-west of Sasaram, now in ruins (see V. A. Smith's *Akbar*, foot-note 1, p. 155). Martin's *Eastern India* also contains a description of it.

† I quote the authority of Thomas on his coinage with some diffidence. Since his time the study of numismatics has been carried on much further and some of his views have become antiquated. The above remains substantially accurate, though specialists may have occasion to differ in details.

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intentional standard of 323.5 grs. The rate of exchange between copper and silver was 64 to 1. (*Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Delhi.*) A few coins of fancy design are extant illustrating "the artistic model upon which the best specimens were based," (*ibid*, p. 398). The inscription of the coins is bi-lingual, the king's name being written both in Persian and Nagari.* His orthodox Sunni faith finds expression in the presence of the names of the first four *Khalifs* of Islam, *viz.*, Abu Bakr, Umar, Ali and Usman. One square-shaped coin with dotted margin (struck at Sharifabad in 946 A.H.) bears on the obverse the name of Abu Bakr on the top, Usman at the bottom, Umar on the right and Ali on the left. The king's titles run thus: *Al Sultan al-Adal al muaid-al-rahamat al-duniya wa al-din Abul-Muzaffar Sher Shah Sultan Khald-Allah mulkuhu wa sultanatuhu* (*ibid*, p. 395). His coins issued from the following mint-towns† have been found: Agra, *Bhanpur*, Fathabad, Gwalior, Kalpi, Rasulpur *urf* [illegible: Shamsabad is my suggestion, on the

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*The name of the king was variously spelt, *cf.*, *Sri Ser Sahi* (Agra); *Sri Sar Sah* (Gwalior); *Sri Siri Sah*.

† There may be some fault of omission. Any suggestion on the identification of *Bhanpur* will be welcome. *Malot* is mentioned by Babur. It stands on the Salt-range in 32°42′ N. and 72° 50 E. (See Mrs. Beveridge's translation of Babur's *Memoirs*, p. 461, footnote 2).

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authority of Badayuni], Satgaon, Sharifabad, Sher-garh (Sasaram) Chunar, Sambhal, Ujjain, Abu, Alwar, Biana, Hissar, Narnol, Lucknow, Sher-garh *urf* Qanauj, Sher-garh *urf* Hazrat Delhi, Sher-garh *urf* Sakkar-Bakkar, Malot. (*Catalogue of Coins in the Indian Museum, Calcutta*, ii.)

Commerce.

Sher Shah's reconstruction of the tariff system revived the dwindling commerce of Northern India. His enlightened tariff policy is an eloquent proof of farsighted statesmanship. As in Medieval Europe, the inland trade of Hindustan was hampered by numerous imposts levied in different places by different authorities. There had been no freedom of trade between the different provinces of the Empire—except perhaps the corn-trade in the days of Alauddin Khilji—and even within a province persons in authority exacted whatever they could from the merchants at every ferry and on the highway. Commerce, thus shackled down within narrow and uncertain markets, inevitably declined, and with it the material development and prosperity of the Empire. Sher Shah made a clean sweep of all internal customs and allowed the levy of duties* only on the frontier and at the place of sale within the

* Rate not known. In Akbar's time 2½ per cent was levied.

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Empire. The merchants and travellers enjoyed special consideration and perfect safety on the highway. He issued commands to "his governors and *amils* to compel the people to treat merchants and travellers well in every way, and not to injure them at all; and if a merchant should die by the way, not to stretch out the hand of oppression on his goods as if they were unowned. . . . . Throughout his whole kingdom Sher Shah only levied customs on merchandize in two places, *viz.*, when it came from Bengal, customs were levied at Garhi (Sikri-gali); when it came from the direction of Khurasan, the customs were levied on the borders of the kingdom; and again, a second duty was levied at the place of sale. No one dared to levy other customs, either on the road or at the ferries, in town or village. Sher Shah, moreover, forbade his officials to purchase anything in the bazars except at the usual bazar rates and prices." (Abbas MS. p. 260 = Elliot, iv. 421).

Foreign goods were allowed to enter Bengal free of import duty, possibly owing to the difficulties of collection. There was no convenient frontier on the east (such as the Indus was on the west), where customs could be collected with ease. The mountain passes on the north and east, and the sea-coast towns on the south were too many to be effectually guarded against smuggling. But it is doubtful

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whether Sher Shah abolished custom-houses in such busy ports as Chittagong and Satgaon, the importance of which had enormously increased owing to the opening of commerce with the Portuguese. Had there been any such remission, the Portuguese chroniclers must have recorded it. Similarly, Abbas fails to mention the places where commodities from the Deccan and Gujrat (coming through Malwa and Marwar respectively), were taxed.

Roads and Sarais.

The most permanent among the monuments of Sher Shah's glory are his great roads which have kept his memory still green in the minds of his countrymen. They were the visible symbol of imperial unity, built for a variety of purposes, of which the defence of the Empire was the primary one. The imperial capital (Agra) became the centre of these great military roads running in various directions. The longest as well as the best-known among them is the road running from Sonargaon (near Dacca) to the Indus, 1,500 *kos** in

* See Nizamuddin, Pers. text, p. 232; Ferishta, Pers. text p. 225. Abbas (MS. pp. 254-255=Elliot, iv. 417) and Badayuni (Ranking, p. 472) say that it ran up to the fort of Rohtas in the Gakkhar country. *Maasir-i-Rahimi* of Mullah Abdul Baqi (p. 630) computes the distance at 750 *farsakhs*. Popular tradition carries it to Peshawar, which is doubtful. The Grand Trunk Road is identified with Sher Shah's road as *Sharak-i-Azam* by the countryfolk. Badayuni saw this road 50 years after in a very good condition.

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length. He built another road from the city of Agra to Burhanpur* which is on the borders of the kingdom of Dakhin; and a third road he made from the city of Agra to Jodhpur and the fort of Chitor; and a fourth from Lahor to Multan. (MS. Abbas, p. 225 = Elliot, iv. 417). The roads were admirably planned, connecting together all the strategic frontier cities; on any threatened point the armies of the Empire could be concentrated rapidly. For the comfort of travellers, shady trees were planted on both sides: *sarais* (rest-houses) established at the interval of every *two koses*.† (Abbas MS. p. 254 = Elliot, iv. 417).

The old Hindu kings regarded the building of roads with rest-houses as a pious duty, and the country was no doubt covered with roads. But the early Muslim Sultans showed little care for such useful public works; treasure and energy were spent mainly on such unproductive work as building mosques or destroying old cities to build new ones to perpetuate their own names. Though portions of

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* Nizamuddin (text p. 232) and other writers hold that this road ran as far as Mandu.

† Some writers, such as Nizamuddin, say that *sarais* were built at the interval of one *kos*. But the balance of authority inclines to two *koses*; Abbas is supported by Badayuni and the author of *Khulasat-ut-Tawarikh* (Pers. text, p. 328).

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Sher Shah's roads might have been remnants of the work of his predecessors, we have no reason to doubt the testimony of the historians, both sympathetic and hostile, that the general plan was Sher Shah's. Shaikh Nur-ul-Haqq, writing in the reign of Jahangir, says "Sher Khan made the road which now runs from Delhi to Agra, by cutting through jungles, removing obstacles and building *sarais*. Before that time, people had to travel through the Doab [the tract between the Jamuna and the Ganges] between these two places." (*Zubdat-ut-Tawarikh* in Elliot, vi. 188).

In every *sarai* he built separate quarters both for Hindus and Musalmans, and at the gate of every *sarai* he had placed pots full of water, that any one might drink; and in *every sarai he settled Brahmans for the entertainment of Hindus*, to provide hot and cold water, and beds and food, and grain for their horses; and it was his rule that whoever entered them received provision according to his rank, and food and litter for his cattle, from Government. Villages were established all round the *sarais*. In every *sarai* was a well and a *masjid* of burnt brick; and he placed an *imam*, a *muazzin* and *several watchmen*; all these [*sarai* establishment] were maintained from the *land near the sarai*. In every *sarai* two horses were kept, so that news from a great distance might

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reach him in one day." (Abbas p. 255 = Elliot, iv. 418). This is not the unmeaning eulogy of a biased historian, but the succint account of the actual state of things, to which every Persian historian* has borne eloquent testimony. No one ignores the noblest feature of this great ruler's policy, *i.e.*, equal provision made for Hindus and Musalmans. The *Wakiat-i-Mushtaki* says that there was a royal chamber (*khanah-i-badshahi*) and a *shiqdar* was appointed for the management of every *sarai*, for the maintenance of which lands were allotted.

These roads and *sarais* were essential to the success of Sher Shah's administration, characterized as it was by frequent transfer of officials, prompt despatch of business, and constant marching and remarching of troops. They served as halting stations of State officials and of the king himself, for whom a special room was reserved. This

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* See Nizamuddin (Pers. text p. 232), Ferishta (Pers. text p. 228), Badayuni (Ranking's trans. p. 473), *Maasir-i-Rahimi* (p. 630). *Khulasat-ut-Tawarikh* (Pers. text edited by M. Zafar Hasan, p. 323) says "in every *sarai* food [cooked] was supplied to Musalman travellers, and *flour and ghee* to the Hindus by the Government." The tradition was strong down to the days of Khafi Khan, who writes, "There were arrangements for giving cooked food or raw victuals to *every wayfarer, Musalman or Hindu*. Servants were employed for cooking food;...those employed for the Hindus were [known as] *Bhatiara* and *Phatiari* (?)." (Pers. text, i. 102).

was a great relief to the villagers, who would have otherwise constantly felt the burden of supplying the unwelcome visitors with provisions, for which they were loth to pay. These *sarais* were the veritable arteries of the empire, diffusing a new life among its hitherto benumbed limbs. Security drew commerce to these highways, and some of the *sarais* became the centres of busy market-towns where the peasant could profitably sell his agricultural produce and get in return little commodities of comfort. The humble villager was dragged into the mighty vortex of imperial activity, becoming gradually familiarized with the blessings of the empire and the personality of the Emperor.

The *sarais* of Sher Shah were also the stations of *dak-chauki* (*i.e.*, conveyance of news by relays of horses). He kept his finger on the pulse of the empire by means of this institution, and through this his vast administrative machine,—of which he was the motive force—was worked. Two Government horses were kept in each *sarai* for the carrying of persons and despatches. The rapidity and regularity with which this system worked is attested by all historians. "By *dak-chauki*, news reached him [Sher Shah] every day from the Nilab and the extremity of Bengal." (*Tabakat-i-Akbari*, Pers. text, p. 232; Ferishta, Pers. text, p. 228.) News

reached him from two sources, official and secret. Spies, posted all over the country, used to send reports to the king through *dak-chauki*. This was the origin of the news department under the *Darogha-i-Dak-Chauki* appointed by the Mughals. The net of Sher Shah's espionage spread beyond the confines of his dominion and to this he owed his salvation many a time.

Sher Shah owed these institutions to his predecessors. Espionage is an adjunct of every monarchy, and is as old in India as the dawn of recorded history. Under Sultan Alauddin Khilji it had attained its frightful perfection. The institution of *dak-chauki* is also attributed to him. "It was the practice of the Sultan [Alauddin Khilji], when he sent an army on an expedition, to establish *posts on the road*, wherever posts could be maintained, beginning from Tilpat, which is the first stage. At every post *relays of horses* were stationed, and at every half or quarter *kos* runners were posted, officers and *report-writers* were appointed. Every day or every two or three days, news used to come to the Sultan reporting the progress of the army, and intelligence of the health of the sovereign was carried to the army. False news was thus prevented from being circulated in the city or in the army. The securing of accurate intelligence from the Court on one side, and the army on the

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other was a great public benefit." (*Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi* in Elliot, iii. 203.) This is perhaps the earliest record of a *Publicity Bureau* in history. This department seems to have been wholly non-existent under his unworthy successors. Two hundred years after, the gifted Afghan ruler Sultan Sikandar Lodi revived this *dak-chauki* with a far less rigorous espionage. The institution of Alauddin was of a military character, but Sultan Sikandar greatly improved it, and extended its operation to all parts of his dominions. Under him it became a more permanent institution, used for both military and civil purposes. The following passage from Nizamuddin will give us an idea of how Sultan Sikandar Lodi controlled the movements of his armies on a distant expedition like a game of chess, from his capital by an efficient system of *dak-chauki*: "Whenever he sent his army in any direction, two *farmans* daily reached it; one in the early morning, giving instruction at what place it should halt after the day's march; and one at the time of afternoon prayer or in the evening, giving direction 'Do this and that'. This was never allowed to be disturbed. The horses of the *dak-chauki* were always kept in readiness." (*Tabakat-i-Akbari*, text, p. 171; Ferishta, p. 187, copies it verbatim.) "After the custom of the days of Sultan Alauddin Khilji, it was necessary for daily reports of the prices of

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things, occurrences in the [heaven-] protected kingdom, and the condition of the army [through *dak-chauki*] to reach the king [Sultan Sikandar Lodi]. If anything went wrong by a hair's breadth, he made an instant inquiry into it." (Ferishta, Pers. text p. 187.) "Daily report of prices and occurrences in the parganas of his dominion reached him every day." (*Tabakat-i-Akbari*, Pers. text, p. 171.)

Police.

The police system of Sher Shah was simple but terribly efficient. The chief *shiqdar* in the *sarkar* was the guardian of peace and his subordinates in the parganas exercised the same functions. "For the protection of the roads from thieves and highway robbers, he [Sher Shah] made regulations (*qanun*) as follows: He strictly impressed on his *amils* and governors that if a theft or robbery occurred within their limits, and the perpetrators were not discovered, then they should arrest the *muqaddams* of the surrounding villages, and compel them to make it good; but if the *muqaddams* produced the offenders or pointed out their haunts, the *muqaddams* of the village where the offenders were sheltered were to be compelled to give to those of the village where the crime occurred the amount of restitution they had paid; the thieves and highway robbers themselves

were punished with the penalties laid down in the holy law. And if murders should occur, and the murderers were not discovered, the *amils* were enjoined to seize the *muqaddams*, as detailed above, and imprison them, and give them a period within which to declare the murderers. If they produced the murderer, or pointed out where he lived, they were to let the *muqaddam* go, and to put the murderer to death; but if the *muqaddams* of a village where the murder had occurred could not do this, they were themselves put to death; for it has been generally ascertained that theft and highway robberies can take place only by the connivance of these head-men. And if in some rare case a theft or highway robbery does occur within the limits of a village without the cognizance of the *muqaddam*, he will shortly make inquiry that he may ascertain the circumstances of it; for *muqaddams* and cultivators are alike thieves, and they bear to each other the intimate relations of kinsmen: hence either the *muqaddams* are implicated in thefts and highway robberies, or can ascertain who perpetrated them. If a *muqaddam* harbours thieves and robbers unknown to the governor, it is fit he should be punished, or even be put to death, that it may be a warning to others to abstain from similar acts. In the days of Sher Shah and Islam Shah, the *muqaddams* used to

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protect the limits of their own villages, lest any thief or robber, or enemy of their enemies, might injure a traveller, and so be the means of their destruction and death." (Abbas MS. pp. 258-259 = Elliot, iv. 420-421).

The system was one best suited to the age in which it was instituted. Nizamuddin, who has no reason to be overlaudatory in recounting the achievements of the enemy of his patron's house, says: "Such was the state of safety of highways that if any one carried a purse full of gold [pieces] and slept in the desert (*i.e.*, deserted places) for nights, there was no need for keeping watch." (*Tabakat-i-Akbari*, text, pp. 232-233).

The efficiency of the police in Sher Shah's reign is attested by all Persian writers. Abbas says: "Travellers and wayfarers, during the time of Sher Shah's reign, were relieved from the trouble of keeping watch; nor did they fear to halt even in the midst of a desert. They encamped at night at every place, desert or inhabited, without fear; they placed their goods and property on the plain, and turned out their mules to graze, and themselves slept with minds at ease and free from care, as if in their own house; and the *zamindars*, for fear any mischief should occur to the travellers, and that they should suffer or be arrested

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on account of it, kept watch over them. And in the time of Sher Shah's rule, a decrepit old woman might place a basket full of gold ornaments on her head and go on a journey, and no thief or robber would come near her, for fear of punishments which Sher Shah inflicted." (Abbas in Elliot, iv. 432-433). It is possible for an oriental despot only to establish such order and safety in a kingdom.

The modern mind may shrink back in hatred and terror from Sher Shah's police administration,—a mixture of barbarism and Prussian frightfulness; but it was eminently suitable for a world that was medieval. He did not make a punitive police out of *gentlemen*, but turned *robbers and thieves* into guardians of peace; and this was the secret of its success, of which modern civilized Governments may well despair. His presumption of the *muqaddams'* complicity or connivance in the crimes committed within their jurisdiction and the plundering disposition of the peasants is not the ungenerous view of a tyrant, but the correct reading of the rural psychology by a self-made man who moved intimately among the populace. The minimum interference of the police is a blessing to such a country, and Sher Shah aimed at giving this to his people. Heavy responsibility and onerous duties were the necessary price exacted for this. His system was a severe

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school of moral discipline which taught the lawless to respect the law and made useful citizens out of them.

Justice.

Criminal justice was administered by the *chief shiqdar* and revenue disputes settled by the *chief munsif*. No historian tells us anything about the appointment of *Mir-i-Adals* and *Qazis* for trying civil cases requiring the knowledge of Muslim Canon law. In an anecdote of the *Tarikh-i-Daudi* (MS. p. 204) we find the only allusion to *Mir-i-Adal* and *Qazi*. This was undoubtedly a continuation of an old institution, developed by Sultan Sikandar Lodi.

Sher Shah's Buildings.

Sher Shah left the indelible impress of his personality not only upon the useful but also on the ornamental side of the imperial edifice. His noble tomb at Sasaram still brings home to the mind of the beholder the grandeur of his empire—severe yet graceful; externally Muslim but Hindu inside. V. A. Smith thus speaks of it : "The short-lived and unstable Sur dynasty, of which Sher Shah was the most distinguished member, had such a hard fight for existence that it could not have been expected to pay much attention to architecture. Nevertheless,

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several meritorious buildings are due to the Sur Sultans, and the mausoleum of Sher Shah at Sahasram (Sasseram), built on a lofty plinth in the midst of a lake, is one of the best designed and most beautiful buildings in India, unequalled among the earlier buildings in the northern provinces for grandeur and dignity. Cunningham (*A. S. Rep.*, xi. 133, 137) was half inclined to prefer it even to the Taj. The dome, although not equal in size to the Gol Gumbaz of Bijapur, is 13 feet wider than that of the Agra monument. Externally, the architecture is wholly Muhammadan, but Hindu corbelling and horizontal architraves are used in all the inner doorways, as at Jaunpur. The style may be described as intermediate between the austerity of the Tughlaq buildings and the feminine grace of Shah Jahan's masterpiece." (*A History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon*, pp. 405-406.)* Havell saw in

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* Fergusson, an earlier authority, is equally enthusiastic in his praise of Sher Shah: "The revenue system, the police, the army administration, all the great reforms in fact, which Akbar so successfully carried out, were commenced and to some extent perfected, by this usurper as the Mughals call him. *In architecture*, too, which most concerns us here, *he certainly pointed out the path* by which his successor *reached such eminence.*" (*History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, p. 572). The style of his tomb is considered by him "as the last expiring effort of the Pathans, or *the first dawn of that of the great Mughals, and it was well worthy of either.*" (*Ibid*, p. 518).

it the portrait of Sher Shah's personality and character : "Though forbidden by his creed to make himself a graven image, the Musalman monarch took so much interest in the planning of his last resting place that unconsciously he gave it the impress of his own character, and the builders formed it after his own image with as much care as the Court painter drew [never actually] his portrait." (E. B. Havell's *Hist. of Aryan Rule in India*, p. 444.) In his eyes there stands Sher Shah* "the stern, strong man, egotist and empire-builder, who trampled all his enemies under foot, and ruled Hindustan with a rod of iron." (*Ibid*, p. 449). This is true enough, but he saw only the frowning exterior not the beautiful inside, which speaks of a heart overflowing with kindness. We have indisputable historical evidence that the *Purana-qila*† (in Delhi) with the city around

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* The building activity at Sasaram gave birth to a subsidiary industry which survives to this day in Sasaram pottery. Sir George Watt writes : "This would seem to be the sole remnant of a school of art that most probably was focussed around the first great Muhammadan administrator of India—Sher Shah. It is Pathan in feeling....In art design...it is floral and consists of rosettes assorted on a distinctly geometric plan;...there is Hindu-like exuberance and profusion of colour out of all keeping with the solemnity and dignity of Sher Shah's tomb." (*Indian Art at Delhi*, p. 88).

† On one gate there is a picture of two men thrusting a spear into the mouths of two lions; and the other and more striking one *is the symbolical picture of the sun.* I have satisfied myself as to the

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it was built by Sher Shah. Though some historians identify it with the *Dinpana* of Humayun, he seems to have had very little to do with it. Abbas says Sher Shah rebuilt the city "by the bank of the Jamuna, and ordered two forts to be built in that city, ...the smaller fort for the governor's residence; the other, the wall round the entire city, to protect it; and in the governor's fort he built a *Jama masjid* of stone, in the ornamenting of which much gold, *lapis lazuli*, and other precious articles were expended. But the fortifications round the city were not completed when Sher Shah died." (Abbas in Elliot, iv. 419). The *Tarikh-i-Daudi* writes: "He destroyed the fort of Alauddin, which stood in Siri, conspicuous for its strength and loftiness, and built on the bank of the Jun, *between Firozabad and Kilu Khari, in the village of Indrapat*, a new city, about two or three *kos* distant from the old one. He filled it with inhabitants, as it remains to this day [Jahangir's reign]. He also laid the foundations of a magnificent *masjid*, which was very quickly completed. The name of this fort he called *Sher-garh*.* .....Within the fort was a small palace, also left incomplete, which he called *Sher-Mandal*."

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figures by visiting it thrice. The only plausible explanation that can be offered is to attribute the images to Akbar's reign.

* This is the *Sher-garh urf Hazrat Delhi* of his coins.

(Elliot, iv. 477). Shaikh Nur-ul-Haqq, a professed suppliant of the House of Timur flourishing in the reign of Jahangir, writes, "Sher Khan founded *many cities after his own name, as Sher-garh, Sher-kot** .....a new city [of Delhi] which exists to this day." (*Zubdat-ut-Tawarikh* in Elliot, vi. 189). The *Jama masjid* alluded to by the Persian writers still stands within the Purana-qila, and is known to the people as the *Qila-kuhna* mosque. Archaeologists are lavish in praising it. V. A. Smith says: "The Mughal phase of Indian Saracenic architecture began under Babur, but we have no important work of his left, nor of his son Humayun. The first examples of the style belong to the time of Sher Shah, one of the most characteristic of which is the *Kila-kohna* or *Sher Shah Masjid* (1541) at *Purana-Kila*, near Delhi." (*Imperial Gazetteer*, ii. 198).

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* This is very useful information, pointing to us the way to collect traditions regarding Sher Shah by enquiring about them in places which bear such names to this day. In Bengal also he founded many towns to perpetuate his name. In Blochmann's notes to the *Ain-i-Akbari* we find "*Sher Shah built the fort of Sherpur Murchah*—Mymensingh." (*Ain*, i. 340). I scarcely expected the survival of any tradition about Sher Shah in Bengal; but was surprised during a tour in Mymensingh to hear of a local tradition about the foundation of a Sherpur near Mymensingh by Sher Shah from a well-informed Deputy Magistrate and Collector, Mr. H. R. Roy, M.A., B.L. of Mymensingh. Babu Rajanikanta Chakravarti's *Hist. of Bengal* (in Bengali) also contains some traditions about Sher Shah.

Fergusson* calls it "the most perfect of his buildings" and admits that "the Pathans built like giants and finished like goldsmiths," (pp. 572-573).

Badayuni and other writers accuse Sher Shah of wanton callousness in destroying old cities to found new ones after his own name. But if we carefully follow the sites of his new cities, we find that he did so only to remove the old cities—which had lost their importance as well as healthiness by the shifting of the rivers on whose banks they were situated—to more suitable places and nearer to water. The choice of Rajmahal and Patna to be the capitals of Bengal and Bihar respectively shows his excellent judgment.

Sher Shah was very much impressed with the importance of building fortresses. He contemplated building one fort in every *sarkar* and turning all earthen *sarais* into brick-built ones, so that they might serve as block-houses for the protection of the high-way. The choice of the site of Rohtas (in the Jheelum district) and the pyramidical solidity of its construction show the military engineership of the great soldier. This was constructed under the supervision of Todar Mal Khatri who was destined to play a

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* Fergusson makes the following remark in another place: "So *little difference is there between the architecture of Sher Shah and of Akbar that they must be treated as one style.*" (P. 571). This view is not perhaps tenable at present.

greater part in the reign of Akbar. The *Makhzan-i-Afaghana* gives us an anecdote which brings out a phase of Sher Shah's character and accounts for the most marvellous success of his reign. The construction of the fort began in the imperfectly subdued country of the Gakkhars.* "The Gakkhars made a vow among themselves that no one should serve as day-labourer in the construction of the fort. If any one acts to the contrary he must be destroyed..... Todar Mal† complained of it to Sher Shah who wrote in reply, 'I knew you for a man of business (*kar-dan*) and of understanding and intelligence. I see now

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* They offered the same sort of opposition as the English officers meet with in constructing roads through tribal territories on the frontier.

† Abbas also narrates the same story *without mentioning the name of Todar Mal*. (See Elliot iv. 419). Objection may be taken to connecting Todar Mal with Sher Shah's history on the testimony of a writer who wrote his book *after the death of Akbar*. We are inclined to accept the story of the *Makhzan* as substantially true on the following grounds: (1) *Todar Mal was not a product of Akbar's reign*. The *Maasir-ul-Umara* (Pers. text, ii. 132) does not record any service of Todar Mal before the 11th year of Akbar's reign and he died "on the 11th day [of Muharram] of the year 998 A.H.," *i.e.*, Nov. 11, 1589 (*Ain*, i. 352). (2) His life shows that he was very old and wished to die on the banks of the Ganges. Taking the longevity of the temperate and abstemious Hindu as 90 years, Todar Mal was certainly born about the year 1499 or 1500 A.D. He was a native of Lahor, where Sher Shah perhaps picked him up. The construction of Rohtas began in 1541 A.D. So Todar Mal must have been at that time about 40, an age quite sufficient to make him well-known to the ruler of the country.

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no work can be expected from you, because you consider money as your friend (*zar-ra dost mi-dari*). When I have commanded you to do a thing, *you ought not to have cared for money in fixing the rate. Whatever be the expenses, shall be borne by my Government.'* When Todar Mal received the royal order, he fixed on the first day one red *ashrafi* for each slab.....The rate was lowered *to one Bahluli* at last." (MS. pp. 42-43). The fort reached completion, though the expenses were very heavy. He knew well the secret that "shafts of silver pierce adamant."

[There is a large massive mosque at Patna (old city), which was built by Sher Shah.]

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CHAPTER XIII

CHARACTER

Sher Shah was not "all blood and iron" as his stormy career may suggest to our mind. He was a veritable father to his people; stern to the unruly, but all kindness and love to the weak, the disabled and the destitute. The *Wakiat-i-Mushtaki* says, "He fixed a daily payment of *500 tolchas* of gold upon the poor-house (*langar-i-fuqara*) and night and day he was considerate to the needy. *He settled allowances upon the blind and helpless of every place*, village and city." (Elliot, iv. 549). He made it a rule that no one should go without food and starve in any place where he chanced to be. There was a general order that every one who came to the royal kitchen must be fed; several thousand people used to take their food there every day. In his camp also there were places for distributing food to the hungry and poor. It would be unjust to the memory of the great ruler to imagine that he cared for only the Muslim poor—of whom there were comparatively few in those days. We can safely hold that there were separate arrangements for the two creeds in his relief-kitchens as in his *sarais*, because he knew that

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a Hindu would rather perish of hunger than eat a morsel out of a Muslim's hand.*

The names of few men in history are so expressive of their character as that of Sher Shah—the Tiger Lord. The Royal Bengal Tiger is no unworthy prototype of his in the animal creation. To use the phrase of Mommsen, there was a mixture of the lion and the fox in him. With enemies of equal strength he was prone to play rather the fox than the lion, and to this he owed his triumph over Humayun and Maldev. But in his dealings with his subjects and nobles, he was the terrible Lion of Justice, which was indeed the most characteristic feature of his character: he named his eldest son *Adil Khan* (the Just Lord) and chose for himself the title of *Sultan-ul-Adal* or the Just Monarch. And throughout his short reign of 5 years and six months, we do not find a single instance of his deviation from this principle. "He always ascertained the exact truth regarding the oppressed, and the suitors for justice; and he never favoured the oppressors, although they might be his near relations, *his dear sons*, his renowned nobles, or of his own tribe; and he never showed any delay or lenity in punishing oppressors." (Abbas in Elliot, iv. 411). The *Khulasat-ut-Tawarikh* tells the following

* See the *Tarikh-i-Daudi* (MS. p. 204) for a beautiful anecdote of Sher Shah's kindness to a Brahman villager.

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story: Prince Adil Khan made some amorous advances (throwing a *bira* of *pan*) to the wife of a townsman of Agra, while she was taking her bath. The woman resented it, and her husband complained of it to Sher Shah, who at once summoned the prince and pronounced judgment that the law of retaliation was to be enforced, *i.e.*, the citizen must throw a *bira* of *pan* to the prince's wife when undressed and preparing for the bath. Every one was staggered to hear it and vainly solicited him to relent. He remained obdurate saying he knew no difference between a prince and a peasant; and it should not be said that a man, because he was the king's son, *could injure a subject whom he was bound to protect.*" (Quoted in Erskine's *History of India*, ii. 443-444.) Though the above story may not be literally true, yet it undoubtedly reflects the popular tradition of the great ruler's justice preserved for a century and a half after his death. Such ruthlessness in punishing great offenders was one of the causes of his success in administration.

Sher Shah's indefatigable industry and minute attention to details are well worthy of a Peter the Great or a Frederick II. He had no able minister to influence his policy or to aid him in the work of administration. His constant attention was necessary to the details of every department ; his oral instruc-

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tions were taken down by his officials, and thus an official code (*Dastur-ul-amal*) grew up according to which they could act without seeking further orders from the king. He himself became the most active part of the machine which he set to work for the administration of the Empire. The routine of his daily life can be seen in the account left—though in a haphazard manner—by Abbas and the author of the *Wakiat-i-Mushtaki*, who are in substantial agreement. He divided both night and day into portions for each separate business. His servants woke him *after two-thirds of the night* were passed. He took his bath and said his prayer. After that "various officers and managers"—rather secretaries of departments,—came and made reports of all the occurrences of the day in their respective departments. "For *four hours* he listened to the reading of reports on the affairs of the country or on the business of the Government establishments. The orders which he gave were reduced to writing, and were *issued* and acted upon; there was no need of further discussion. Thus he remained engaged *till morning* (*fajar*) arrived." (*Wakiat* in Elliot, iv. 550). He went out and *made a personal inspection of his forces*. He mustered his old troops and spoke to the newly enlisted men himself; horses were branded, descriptive rolls taken down, monthly pay was fixed; and

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payments were made to every man separately, [*i.e.*, the works of the *ariz* and imperial *Bakhshi* of later days were done]. Then after reading the second prayer he retired to take his breakfast. Breakfast over, he returned to the *darbar* and remained engaged till midday. During this time *he audited the accounts* (*Wakiat* in Elliot, iv. 551), inspected the treasures which came from every part of the kingdom, granted interviews to his nobles (or their *vakils*), zamindars and the *envoys* of foreign Courts, heard reports *from his amils* (*i.e.*, provincial officers) and gave them answers according to his own judgment which the *munshis* wrote down. At midday he said an extra prayer and took a short repose. The evening was spent in reading the *Quran* and attending the public prayer. Whether on a *march or at home* there was no violation of these rules. (MS. Abbas, pp. 242-249; see Elliot, iv. 410-413, 550-551).*

The activity of Sher Shah was not the industry of Philip II. or Aurangzib, who laboured only to destroy what their predecessors had left, but more akin to that of Julius Caesar and Napoleon.

Originality and boldness of plan, rapidity of

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* I have kept the items of business as they are given, but have taken the liberty to make some rearrangement in order to make the whole more intelligible. The information is given by the authorities in a diffused manner.

movement, and an eye for strategic situations characterize Sher Shah's campaigns. He was averse to unnecessary bloodshed and cruelty, and had no passion for fight. He had, above all, *a heart* which soldiers and statesmen often lack. He could feel for the misfortune of his enemy: we are told that tears burst out of his eyes when the Mughal queen with a multitude of ladies [*fauz-i-janan*] came out of the camp and stood suppliant before him. (MS. Abbas, pp. 166-167). His chivalry and kindness to them were not unworthy of an Alexander. He was one of the most humane conquerors.* No smoke of conflagration marked the track of his army; no shrieks of the oppressed in the invaded country filled the sky: women with dishevelled hair were not seen flying before his licentious soldiery—as the great Indian poet (Kalidas) loves to depict the advance of the army of the victorious Raghu in the Kerala country. The nearness of the king [Sanskrit, *Raja-sannidhya*] was considered by the people of Ancient India as a

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* Of course, it may be said that he was moved less by sentiment than by self-interest. He regarded conquest as useless if the country were desolated, because he could get no revenue out of it. Abbas says: "He did not *enslave, commit rapine* or plunder (*band o gharat*) the peasantry of that country and destroy their cultivation...On account of his justice the people remained and brought supplies to his camp, and he became known by the fame of his benevolence and generosity." (Abbas MS. pp. 261-262=Elliot, iv. 422).

calamity to be classed with *locusts rats* and *parrots*—the pests of agriculture. Sher Shah demonstrated that the royal presence was not necessarily an occasion for mourning,* but of festivity [distribution of food] to the people. This he achieved by the rigour of his discipline, by his terrible barbarity, as we moderns would like to say. He was a tamer of wild nature, born to ride upon the whirlwind and guide the thunder. Dread of him made the wolf forget his nature and guard the lamb, as will be apparent from the following quotation from Abbas:—"One of the regulations Sher Shah made was this: That his victorious standards should cause no injury to the cultivation of the people; and when he marched he personally examined into the state of the cultivation, and stationed horsemen round it to prevent people from trespassing on any one's field...he used to look out right and left, and if he saw any man injuring a field, he would cut off his ears with his own hand, and hanging the corn† (which he had plucked off)

* In feudal Europe, too, the royal progress through a country was not an occasion of joy to the villeins, owing to the rapacity of the royal purveyors.

† "The *Wakiat-i-Mushtaki* (MS. p. 101) the *Tarikh-i-Daudi* (MS. p. 252) record a barbarous punishment inflicted on a camel-driver during a march in Malwa, for plucking some green chick-pea. Sher Shah had a hole bored in his nose, and with his feet bound together he was suspended during a whole march with his head downward. 'After that no one stretched out his hand upon corn'."

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round his neck, would have him to be paraded through the camp. And if from the narrowness of the road any cultivation was unavoidably destroyed, he would send *amirs*, with a surveyor, to measure the cultivation so destroyed, and give compensation in money to the cultivators. If unavoidably the tents of his soldiery were pitched near cultivation, the *soldiers themselves watched it, lest any one else should injure it*, and they should be blamed and be punished by Sher Shah." (Abbas MS. p. 261 = Elliot, iv. 422). In spite of his severity, no general was more beloved of his soldiers. His personal magnetism was great, which animated his soldiers and made them cheerfully perform their onerous duties. After a hard day's march the soldiers were not allowed to rest before throwing up redoubts round their encampment. They implicitly submitted to all hardships,* not as the slaves of an Oriental despot but as the comrades of an adored commander.

(Foot-note in Elliot, iv. 422). In our copy of MS. *Tarikh-i-Daudi* (p. 211) this is said to have happened in 949 A. H. during the campaign against Mallu Khan.

* The following anecdote breathes the atmosphere of Sher Shah's camp. In Malwa, Mallu Khan is said to have once remarked to the Afghans on seeing them digging earth 'You submit yourselves to wonderful labours and exertions, night and day you have no rest; ease and comfort are things forbidden to you.' The soldiers retorted—'Such is our master's custom.....Ease is for women, it is shameful to honourable men.' (Abbas in Elliot, iv. 393). This is quite in

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Sher Shah was a monarch but he never played the king. He never hesitated to handle the spade* like his meanest soldier.

Sher Shah as a Statesman.

The accession of Sher Shah marked the beginning of that era of liberal Islam which lasted till the reaction of Auranzib's reign. He was not the product of the age in which he was born. He grew up in the rank atmosphere of intolerance, image-breaking, and temple destruction which was engendered in Sultan Sikandar's† reign.

Though the Muslims had become thoroughly naturalized in India by continued residence in this

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keeping with Sher Shah's saying—"It behoves the great to be always active." (*Ibid*, p. 411).

* At Chaunsa, when Humayun's envoy reached the Afghan camp, he found Sher Khan with his sleeves rolled up cutting a trench with a spade in the hot sun. He sat down unceremoniously on the ground to hear the message. (Badayuni, Ranking i. 460).

† "He was so zealous a Musalman that he utterly destroyed diverse places of worship of the infidels, and left not a vestige of them. He entirely destroyed *the shrines of Mathura*, the mine of heathenism, and turned the principal Hindu places of worship into caravansarais and colleges. Their *stone images were given to the butchers to serve as meat-weights*, and all Hindus in Mathura were strictly prohibited from shaving their heads and beards, and performing their ablutions. He thus put an end to all the idolatrous rites of the infidels there..... Every city thus conformed to the customs of Islam." (*Tarikh-i-Daudi* in Elliot, iv. 447; corroborated by Ahmad Yadgar and *Wakiat-i-Mushtaki*, see *ibid* foot-note 1).

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country for three centuries, their "angle of vision" —to use a modern phrase—suffered little modification. Islam as interpreted by narrow-minded zealots became incompatible with liberal statesmanship. Sher Shah was born to reconcile religion and politics, and create a bracing atmosphere in which the Indian nationality might thrive like an organic growth. No one can possibly dissent from Mr. W. Crooke's* assertion that "Sher Shah was the first who attempted to found an Indian Empire broadly based upon the people's will." (*Memoirs of the Races of the N. W. Provinces of India*, ii. 97.) He accomplished this by making a departure from the dominating political maxim of his age that political unity was impossible without religious uniformity

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* His estimate of Sher Shah deserves careful notice. He says: "To the extraordinary man who had driven Humayun from the throne, it can hardly be said that the ordinary histories do sufficient justice..... He was the first Musalman ruler who studied the good of his people. He had the genius to see that the Government must be popularized, that the king must govern for the benefit of his subjects, that the Hindus must be conciliated by a policy of justice and toleration, that the land-revenue must be settled on an equitable basis, that material development of the country must be encouraged. All this and more Akbar strove to do later on..... *He relaxed the oppressive Muhammadan law code* and provided for the administration of justice. That he introduced such extensive reforms in his short reign of five years is a wonderful proof of his executive ability. *'No Government not even the British has shown so much wisdom as this Pathan'* as Keene says." (*Memoirs of the Races of the N. W. Provinces*, ii. 97).

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in a State. He saw the folly of the attempt at converting the whole Hindu population to Islam by putting their religion under a ban and degrading them to a race of Helots. His predecessors had fruitlessly laboured at it for three centuries inflicting great misery upon them. He healed the wound by following a liberal religious policy. Neither the zeal of his bigoted admirers nor the envy of the unsympathetic detractor could set the destruction of a single temple or image against the name of Sher Shah. It is scanty justice to say that Sher Shah's policy was one of toleration ; it may be called a policy of religious neutrality if the *withdrawal of direct pressure of the State to propagate Islam* be called enough neutrality according to the standard of his age. If *jaziya* was not abolished for political reasons, it was at least not levied in the spirit commended by Qazi Mughisuddin of Sultan Alauddin Khilji's reign. Sher Shah's attitude towards Hinduism was not contemptuous sufferance but respectful deference; it received due recognition in the State. No stronger proof of it can be adduced than his arrangements at *sarais* for Hindus.

Sher Shah's aim was to create a secular spirit in the State and keep religion in the background, which he considered as the private concern of the individual, having nothing to do with public life. He held out

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this ideal to his co-religionists and contemporaries to elevate them to a higher plane of thought. No Muslim could excel him in sincere devotion* to his religion, yet his orthodoxy did not colour his State policy. He could be severe to the *imams* and *ulamas* who defrauded the State; he had the boldness to tamper with the sacred law of Islam which he believed to be unjust and harsh to his Hindu subjects. Like Henry II. of England he wanted to introduce the Reign of Law in the land. He made certain laws (*qanun*) which he himself scrupulously obeyed and also made others obey them implicitly with terrible severity. Abbas and the author of *Wakiat-i-Mushtaki* (see Elliot, iv. 409, 549) make frequent references to these *qanuns*. Abbas says that he posted spies throughout the country to satisfy himself that his regulations were obeyed. We are also informed by the same author that the Afghans, the habitual breakers of law and disturbers of public peace, felt the weight of his hand most, suffered corporal punishment, dismissal from office and even the death sentence. They are said to have been forced to give

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* Sher Shah often used to say that if his life were spared, he "would have so contrived that even a poor and helpless woman might perform her pilgrimage to Mecca." The author of *Zubdat-ut-Tawarikh* writes: "To this day [reign of Jahangir] there exists a caravansarai of his building at Mecca, in which Afghan *fakirs* reside." (Elliot, vi. 189).

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up "fighting and quarrelling, which were the habits of the Afghans" (*ibid*, p. 413).

Erskine remarks, "Sher Shah had *more of the spirit of a legislator* and guardian of his people than any prince before Akbar." *(History of India,* ii. 443). The laws of Sher Shah were made "*both from his own ideas and by extracting them* from the books of the learned." (MS. Abbas pp. 220-221 = Elliot, iv. 409). Abbas includes police and army regulations, appointment of officers and their duties etc. within these *qanuns*. From this it appears that he promulgated only *the administrative laws* of his empire, on the model of which some of the *Ains* of Akbar were undoubtedly framed. He also seems to have provided for the common sense administration of justice, by making certain substantive laws with the object of dispensing with the interference of the *Qazi* and the *Mufti*.*

In rearing up his Empire Sher Shah utilized all the extant working forces in the State. Not a single section of the Indian people was allowed to keep aloof from the Government in sullen discontent or provoked sensitiveness. He made no racial discrimination in

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* This phase of the legislative activity of the Sur Empire becomes more prominent in the reign of Islam Shah. Badayuni expressly says that such laws always did not conform to Islam. (Badayuni, Ranking, vol. i).

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extending his patronage and bore no ill-will to the former ruling castes, the Turks and Khiljis, who were freely admitted into his service. He hated the narrow sympathies of his own people* and tried to liberalize their mind. He was careful not to exalt them into a ruling aristocracy. His was the noble idea of making all classes forget their political past, and prepare the way for the evolution of an Indian nationality strong in common interests and sentiments.

Sher Shah as a Nation-builder.

Sher Shah may justly dispute with Akbar the claim of being the first who attempted to build up an Indian nation by reconciling the followers of rival creeds. To the superficial observer this claim may appear extravagant, as there was no abolition of *jaziya*, no edict against cow-slaughter, no patronage of Sanskrit literature for bringing about a cultural union and the growth of intellectual sympathy.

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* Our MS. *Makhzan-i-Afaghana* says : "Sher Shah made no such distinction of clans as, this man is a *Batni*; he is a *Sarwani*; yonder is a *Ghurghusti*. He looked upon all with the same eye [*hama-ra eknazar me-did*]." He used to rebuke any Afghan who enquired about the tribe of another. This is a happy contrast with the tradition of Sultan Sikandar's reign during which the genealogical tables of the Afghans were made; those who could not point out their ancestors in the genealogical table were rejected as non-Afghans.

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between the two races, and no encouragement to intermarriages, which are associated with the name of Akbar. But a true statesman does not build fairy palaces in a single night like the genii of Aladin's Wonderful Lamp. He gave the country an intelligent Government, vigorous and just, worked for the political regeneration and economic prosperity of the Hindus, compelled both communities to preserve outward amity, and work harmoniously together, knowing full well that "antagonisms lose their keenness" to use the expression of Mommsen "when brought into such outward union, and that only in this way can the statesman anticipate the work of time, which alone can heal such a strife by laying the old generation in the grave." The primary conditions of the growth of an infant nationality were fulfilled by him; he had prepared the ground and sowed the seed; it was no fault of his if he did not live long enough to see the plant bear fruit or make it do so instantaneously by magic. He wisely abstained from striving after the "*impossible better*" which might injure the "*possible good.*" If he had attempted more he would have been doomed to failure. The experiment of the abolition of *jaziya* and cow-slaughter would have been extremely injudicious in an age which still breathed the atmosphere of Sultan Sikandar's reign and would possibly

have resulted in a disaster to his throne. In spite of this, the relation between the Hindus and Indian Muhammadans was not less cordial *at the accession of Akbar than at his death*. Had not Akbar's genius and idealism miscarried, Indian nationality would have been an accomplished fact in the 17th century. If Akbar had stopped with the remission of *jaziya*, the prohibition of cow-slaughter, the partial Hinduization of administration and the patronage to Sanskrit literature without coquetting with Hindu philosophy and religions, History would have exalted him to the rank of the greatest statesmen and nation-builders of the world. His fancy to be the prophet of a new religion, and become the religious as well as temporal head of his subjects proved the ruin of his noble scheme. He created no united nation, but a few Muhammadan hypocrites and a class of slavish Hindu enthusiasts—who could write the *Allah-Upanishad* (Upanishad of Allah) to please their *royal guru* and whose descendants would not drink water without having the *darshan* of the occupant of the throne of Delhi, even if he were Aurangzib. He did injustice to Islam and unnecessarily humiliated her, for which history cannot forgive him, because this was done not in the interests of the State, but in pursuit of a personal hobby, however pious it might be. The imperial throne could no longer be the symbol of

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unity and centre of equal attraction to both peoples. While it attracted the Hindus, it repelled the Muslims. Open apostacy from Islam was the pitfall of Akbar's genius. Of all rulers, Akbar ought to have been the most orthodox Musalman in private life, if he wanted to make the union of Hindus and Musalmans real and permanent. The more difficult part of his task was to induce his co-religionists to make concessions to the feelings of the Hindus; this could not be done by a decree of a temporal despot but of one who could inspire the highest veneration and appeal to the imagination of the Muslims by his religious life and devotion to Islam, as the true Khalif of his age. As the case then stood, the Muslims in their suspicious mood doubted the purity of Akbar's motive in his pro-Hindu legislation and looked upon his acts as those of a betrayer of Islam. They identified their religion with cow-eating and hatred towards everything Hindu. The hope of an Indian nationality ended there. If Akbar had not combined the sterner virtues with his idealism, he would have been dubbed as the veritable *Akhenaten* of Indian*

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* Akhenaten was an Egyptian king who is regarded as the first doctrinaire in history. Many interesting points of resemblance will be found between him and Akbar. He was an apostate from the religion of his ancestors and became a worshipper of the Sun as the "Lord of the Disk." The conception of both about the

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history. Had Dara succeeded Akbar, the house of Babur would have suffered another expulsion from India. The reaction which set in as soon as he was laid in the grave reached its culmination in the days of Aurangzib, who reverted to the policy of repression, undid the work of a full century, and left Hindustan an unhappy land of racial and religious strife.

The inception of the Indian nationality of the present day dates from the English conquest of this country. The unity of common civilization and identity of interests and sentiments were first brought home to the minds of Hindus and Musalmans under their common subjection to an alien Government which aimed at the Westernization of their land. The Sepoy Mutiny was partly a national upheaval against this in Upper India, which fortunately failed; because the salvation of India lies not in relapse into the 'splendid isolation' of the ancient and medieval times but in cautiously moving with the world along modern lines.

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sun was half-mystery, half-reason. There was the same reaction of the people against this in both countries. The influence of the reign of both upon the painting, sculpture and architecture of their respective countries was exactly the same—*viz.*, the revival of naturalism. (See Breasted's *History of Egypt*, Hall's *Ancient History of the Near East*, pp. 298-306).

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Place of Sher Shah in History.

In spite of the paucity of materials enough remains to show that the ideas on which the Empire of Akbar and his successors rested mostly originated with Sher Shah. He stands in the same political relation to Akbar as does Chandra Gupta to Asoka, Julius Caesar to Augustus, Henry II. (of England) to Edward I. and Henry IV. (of France) to Louis XIV. But Akbar was a more gifted ruler than Augustus, Edward I. or Louis XIV. Considering all phases of activity and actual achievements, Akbar is justly entitled to a higher place in history than Sher Shah. But in constructive statesmanship, executive ability, attention to the details of Government, indefatigable industry and *thoroughness*, unwearied vigilance, *sense of justice*, *purity of personal character*, and as a disciplinarian and a strategist, Sher Shah undoubtedly stands above Akbar. Akbar's genius was more versatile and more sublime; the very grandeur of Akbar's conception of national unity in spite of its impracticable character, raises him head and shoulders above other Indian rulers. His genius is akin to that of Alexander the Great who dreamt of uniting the East and the West. To his patronage we owe the medieval school of Indian Art and a considerable portion of historical literature. Akbar was the embodiment of the true spirit of Hindu India, a lineal

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successor of Asoka and Harshavardhan. His greatness lies in his idealism.*

Of all rulers of medieval times, Sher Shah stands as the ideal of the new India—the India of Hindus and Musalmans united in heart and spirit. Akbar and Aurangzib, the idols of popular reverence to the two communities respectively, cannot claim the homage of the present generation because one did gross injustice to Islam, the other to Hinduism. Their failure is a warning to the future politicians of India. It is only the reign of Sher Shah—also of his descendants—which both Hindus and Musalmans can read without a blush,—a period during which Islam was honoured yet Hinduism was not slighted. His age could not appreciate him fully; he sacrificed the favour of his contemporaries for the blessings of posterity.

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* This phase of Akbar's character remains yet to be studied. European writers impressed with the brilliant success of his reign have tried to bring out only the practical side of his genius, wherein he is at a disadvantage in comparison with his great Pathan predecessor. V. A. Smith's *Akbar* is by no means a final study of that great monarch from all possible standpoints.

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The medieval historians who have left accounts of Sher Shah's reign may be divided into two classes according to the nationality of the writers; *viz.*, (A) the Afghan and (B) the non-Afghan. This division is important because the former, owing to national sympathy and natural bias, are supposed to be friendly and even eulogistic to Sher Shah, while the latter are either hostile, indifferent or neutral according to the circumstances under which their works were composed.

A.—Afghan Sources

The *Tufah-i-Akbar Shahi* (more commonly known as *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*), the *Makhzan-i-Afaghana* and the *Tarikh-i-Daudi* are the standard Afghan chronicles. But these have no better title to be called histories of Sher Shah than the Maratha *bakhars* have to be regarded as histories of the great Maratha hero Shivaji. Among these, the *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi* of Abbas Sarwani, being the earliest and least tainted with incredible stories, occupies the place of the *Sabhasad Bakhar*. A comparative study of the works of the Afghan and Maratha chronicles will bring out the striking coincidence of

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the mentality and moral outlook of both peoples. The materials supplied by these authors, especially by Abbas Sarwani, are of great value. But the test of severe but fair-minded criticism is necessary before they can be properly utilized so as to form the basis of a sober and scientific history.

1. The *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi* of Abbas Sarwani is the earliest extant and most detailed history of the reign of Sher Shah written at the command of Akbar, about 40 years after Sher Shah's death. The date of its composition cannot be exactly ascertained; it was written probably in the ninth decade of the 16th century. The author, who was an Afghan of noble descent and whose family was connected by marriage with that of Sher Shah, had the advantage of obtaining information from many of his relatives who had served under Sher Shah. But his informants being old soldiers, his book is full of idle camp gossip, which has been uncritically accepted as true history. Wherever the current traditions differed on certain topics Abbas has believed the Afghan version, *e.g.*, "the capture of Rohtas." Prof. Dowson calls it "a biography" not a history (Elliot, iv. 302); but we are inclined to call it rather a political drama, based, to a great extent, upon authentic history. Abbas has often introduced inaccurate details only to heighten the effect of the scenes. He has given

expression to his own feelings and sentiments through the mouths of historical personages. He being a Sarwani, a persistent effort to exalt the Sarwanis is noticeable in his book. Fortunately for us, Abbas had not the skill to firmly knit together the unhistorical and inaccurate embellishments of his work, with the historical portion; so in most cases our common sense can detect his inconsistencies and contradictions.

But whatever be the defects of Abbas Sarwani, no writer has a greater claim to our gratitude than Abbas. His work alone has "preserved the means of forming a judgment of his (Sher Shah's) character and talents." (Elliot, iv. 302.) The concluding portion of the book, containing an account of Sher Shah as a person, too, is simply invaluable. We cannot agree with Sir Henry Elliot, who while admitting its great value calls it "over-laudatory." (See Elliot, iv. 302.) If any part of the work is free from exaggeration, it is the concluding portion. Abbas seems to have been in awe of his royal patron in writing this portion and enumerating the regulations of Sher Shah lest he should offend his patron by ascribing to Sher Shah the institutions some of which in his days passed for those of Akbar. Abbas Sarwani's work is the grand original from which his contemporary writers, *e.g.*, Nizamuddin and

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Badayuni, and later historians down to Khafi Khan, have directly or indirectly drawn their information regarding Sher Shah's reign. Leaving aside the translation of the work in Elliot, iv. 305-433, I have been so fortunate as to have a good manuscript of the Persian text (belonging to Prof. J. N. Sarkar) to work upon. It has enabled me to correct some grave errors committed in the English translation in Elliot. But it must be admitted that where the MS. used by the translator has not been defective, the translation in Elliot is quite faithful. I have in every case compared the translation in Elliot with the MS., and I have felt myself bound in fairness to quote long passages verbatim from Elliot where I have found the translation satisfactory, giving at the same time exact references to the Persian texts corresponding to them. It would have been a kind of plagiarism to clothe the ideas in a slightly different garb of language under the plea of literal translation and to pass them off as my own. But my own labour has been not less than if I had presented a translation of my own. I have here and there altered some words of his translation, which do not convey the right meaning of the original. The MS. used by me is defective in some passages, and here I have unhesitatingly accepted the version in Elliot. I have been as sparing as possible in quoting Persian. I think it sheer pedantry to quote

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simple Persian sentences about the meaning of which there cannot be the slightest ambiguity. Where I have given the translation of some passages omitted by Elliot I have of course given the Persian original. Here and there I have given a few quotations to lend authenticity and vigour to the passages about which doubt may arise in the mind of the reader.

I have rejected many statements made by Abbas and I wish to give my reasons for such rejections, in another place. It is necessary because the purging of Abbas Sarwani's book means the removal of three-fourths of the errors and misconceptions and the purification of the very fountain head of Sher Shah's history.

2. The *Makhzan-i-Afaghana* of Niamatullah, translated by Dorn in his *History of the Afghans* (see Book II., pp. 80-142) (published in 1829 A.D.) was composed in the reign of Jahangir. The distinctive feature of this book is the genealogical account of the various Afghan tribes and their descent from the famous Khalid, who broke four teeth of Muhammad in the battle of Ohod, and who after his conversion became the greatest champion of Islam. There is another work entitled *Tarikh-i-Khan-i-Jahan Lodi wa-Makhzan-i-Afaghana* also admitted to be written by Niamatullah. I have consulted Prof. Sarkar's MS. of this work. Some extracts from it are also to

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be found in Elliot, v. Dorn says "Another edition or perhaps the original work itself is preserved in the East India House, and entitled *Tareekh Khanjehan Lodi Wa Makhzen Afghani* and was also composed between 1018-1020 A.H. and upwards. The coincidence of the first part of this with ours is perfect; and they correspond almost word for word; but afterwards it frequently does not enter into such details as our work does; and mostly leaves out the speeches which so frequently occur in the translated copy." *(Ibid*, Preface p. x). The truth is that in the second book of the *Makhzan-i-Afaghana*, Niamatullah has borrowed the language of Abbas Sarwani, while in the *Tarikh-i-Khan-i-Jahan Lodi* he has copied Nizamuddin's *Tabakat-i-Akbari** verbatim. Dr. Dorn gives *Tabakat-i-Akbari* (MS. No. 22, Preface xiii as one of the MSS. from which he intended to give extracts in his book. But nowhere in the appendices has he actually given any extracts from it, and I dare-say, he did not even glance at the contents of his MS. *Tabakat-i-Akbari.* Had he done so he would not have failed to identify the common source utilized by Ferishta and Niamatullah. He says

* I have compared Prof. J. N. Sarkar's MS. *Tarikh-i-Khan-i-Jahan Lodi* with the Persian text of *Tabakat-i-Akbari* and found in the former the very language of Nizamuddin wherever both authors have narrated the same events of Sher Shah's life.

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"Neamatullah (Niamat) was contemporary with Ferishta; and commenced the history of the Afghans in the same year when Ferishta finished his work; but he is nowhere mentioned. The identity of the sources they used in compiling their respective works is evident from the extreme, often verbal coincidence of the style and thread of the history of the reigns of the Lodi race and the family of Sher Shah." (*Ibid*, Preface p. x.) Nizamuddin wrote his book at the Court of Akbar at least 15 years before Ferishta and Niamatullah. Lithographed copies of both Nizamuddin and Ferishta are available now. Any one with a little knowledge of Persian can satisfy himself about the fact that Nizamuddin's book has been copied verbatim by Ferishta. Dr. Lee's MS. of the *Makhzan*, from which Dr. Dorn has given many quotations in the second part of his translation, is nothing but the narrative of Nizamuddin interwoven with grotesque stories, dreams and prophecies, which are of course Niamatullah's own. I have compared Prof. Sarkar's MS. *Tarikh-i-Khan-Jahan Lodi-wa-Makhzan-i-Afaghana*, with the extracts given by Dorn from Lee's MS. and become fully convinced that both MSS. are copies of the same work. Elliot has expressed the same opinion,—"Almost all the additions given by Dorn from Dr. Lee's copy are to be found in my copy" (of *Tarikh-i-Khan-Jahan Lodi*)

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(Elliot, v. 70). Had Dr. Dorn looked at the contents of the *Tabakat-i-Akbari*, he would have been able to estimate the real nature of Lee's MS.

However, the second part of the MS. i.e., that dealing with the reign of Sher Shah and his successors,—translated by Dorn, is very valuable. Therein alone has been preserved a faithful summary of Abbas Sarwani's work, with the exception of its concluding chapter. Dorn's translation gives us some valuable hints here and there, but the book as a whole is marred by numerous errors. The queen of Humayun who was captured at Chaunsa by Sher Shah and who was afterwards sent back to Kabul, was the Haji Begam, but in Dorn's translation (page 123) she is confounded with *Miriam Makani*, the mother of Akbar, who was married to Humayun two *years after* the battle of Chaunsa. Great caution should be exercised in using this book. Idle dreams and fancies and wild stories can have no place in a modern history.

3. The *Tarikh-i-Daudi* of Abdullah was written in the reign of Jahangir. Some extracts from it are given in Elliot, iv. 434-513. The general character of this work has been given by Prof. Dowson in the following words, "Like all historians Abdullah is very deficient in dates and is fond of recording stories and anecdotes many of them

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not a little marvellous." (Elliot, iv. 435.) In Elliot iv. there are only two extracts from the reign of Sher Shah; but I have very profitably used a good MS. of *Tarikh-i-Daudi* belonging to Prof. Sarkar, copied from a MS. which once belonged to Mr. H. Blochmann. Abdullah has in many cases borrowed the very words of Nizamuddin. Here and there he gives valuable pieces of information. No chronological order has been preserved in the sequence of events in the narrative, *e.g.*, the chastisement of Khizr Khan, the Governor of Bengal, is placed after Sher Shah's return from the first expedition in Malwa against Mallu Khan (MS. Daudi, pp. 222-223). Statements made in *Tarikh-i-Daudi* should not be rejected by reading the translation in Elliot iv. alone, without consulting the original. Either through defects in the MSS. used by the translator, or his inadvertence, some errors are to be found in the translation;* *e.g.*, in Elliot iv. 508, we find, "The action was fought at the stream of Surajgarh about one *kos* or less from Mungir and about 12 *kos* from Patna." Here is a great geographical error. Our MS. p. 311 gives the correct version (*vide ante.*)

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* There is often great divergence between the lithographed and printed texts of Persian works and their English translations in the volumes of Elliot. In the translation of Zia Barani's *Tarikh-i-Firuz-Shahi* one Malik Yak is mentioned as having been appointed the

B.—Non-Afghan Sources

Among the non-Afghan sources the *Memoirs of Babur*, the *Tarikh-i-Rashidi* of Mirza Haidar, Gulbadan's *Humayun-nama*, and Jauhar's *Tazkirat-ul-Waqiat* occupy the first place. Errors committed by Abbas have been removed through the help of these histories. Next in importance are the histories of Nizamuddin Ahmad, Badayuni, and Abul-Fazl's *Akbarnama* and *Ain-i-Akbari*. The history of Ferishta, the *Tarikh-i-Rahimi*, the *Khulasat-ut-Tawarikh*, and Khafi Khan's being mere compilations from earlier authorities with very little or no addition of their own, are of third-rate importance.

4. *Memoirs of Babur* translated by Mrs. Beveridge. Though the name of Sher Shah is but twice mentioned in the *Memoirs*, their importance cannot be too exaggerated. From this time onward we tread upon the firm ground of true history; the *Memoirs* have been extremely helpful to me in many indirect ways. In short, we emerge from darkness in-

---

Governor of Deogir by Sultan Qutbuddin Khilji son of Alauddin Khilji (Elliot, iii. 215.) Curiosity led me to turn the pages of the original text (edited by Sayyid Ahmad Khan for the Asiatic Society of Bengal) which I had at hand. To my great surprise I found the very reverse of the thing. The text runs thus: "the Sultan inflicted examplary punishment upon Yak Lakhi and had his nose and ears cut off." This may not be a solitary instance.

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to light when these contemporary and authentic histories come to our aid.

5. *Tarikh-i-Rashidi* of Mirza Muhammad Haidar Dughlat, translated by N. Elias and E. D. Ross. The author came to Hindustan in the retinue of Mirza Kamran only a few months before the defeat of Humayun at Chaunsa. He afterwards became one of the most intimate friends of Humayun, whom he accompanied in the next expedition against Sher Shah. He took part in the battle of Bilgram, called by him the battle of the Ganges, and fled with Humayun to Lahor, whence he parted company to lead an expedition to conquer Kashmir. Mirza Haidar wrote the records of his life, which form the second part of his history, in 1541-42 A.D. Thus he is the best authority for this period of our history. I have quoted his description of the battle of the Ganges (or Bilgram); but I found it difficult to reject the account given by Jauhar who also seems to have been an eye-witness of this battle and who attributes the discomfiture of Humayun to the bad advice of Mirza Haidar to loosen the chains of the gun-carriages, to allow the fugitives to pass through. (See p. 476 of *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, with foot-note 1). We are indebted to Mirza Haidar for the information about Sher Shah's sending troops to Kashmir to reinstate Kachi Chak on the throne. (See p. 485.)

6. *Humayun-nama* of Gulbadan Begam translated into English by Mrs. Beveridge. Gulbadan, daughter of Babur, wrote her book at the request of Akbar, between the years 1580 and 1590 A.D. She was sufficiently grown up at the time of the death of her father, to retain the memory of those events till her old age. I have found this book very useful, especially as regards dates and the events of Humayun's life. She is generally trustworthy with the exception of a few cases. The foot-notes given by Mrs. Beveridge here as well as in her translation of Babur's *Memoirs* should not be as readily accepted as her translation of the text. I have in some cases pointed out her errors.

7. *Tazkirat-ul-Waqiat* of Jauhar. Jauhar was a personal attendant (*aftabchi*, ewer-bearer) of Humayun. He wrote down his reminiscences about 40 years later, in the reign of Akbar. I hold this work to be a highly authoritative history of the reign of Humayun, and having greater weight than that of Gulbadan even. At least I have found it to be so down to the time of Humayun's departure from Tatta to Qandahar. I have almost exclusively followed it in my chapters on the struggle of Humayun and Sher Shah, in preference to Abbas. Jauhar is an honest narrator of events, without any rancorous feeling towards the great enemy of his master.

Stewart's translation of the *Memoirs* of Jauhar is not satisfactory owing probably to the faulty MSS. used by him. But he himself has in certain places marred the value of the original by inserting words and changing the sense for what was meant by Jauhar; *e.g.*, "In consequence of which His Majesty led his army (from Callinger) towards Jaunpur." (Stewart's translation p. 3). Now the words "from Callinger" within the brackets are inserted by Stewart. Though Abul-Fazl and some other historians say that Humayun led his army from Callinger towards Jaunpur, Gulbadan and Abbas hold that he started from Agra. Gulbadan expressly mentions that Humayun went to Callinger before the death of Babur (Mrs. Beveridge's translation, p. 165) and she is, I think, quite right; for it is least likely that within six months of Babur's death when Kamran Mirza had seized the Punjab, Mahdi Khwajah plotted to deprive Humayun of his heritage, and Muhammad Zaman Mirza rebelled in Jaunpur,—an indolent man like Humayun found time to undertake an expedition to Callinger. But any one incautiously using Stewart's translation is liable to commit the mistake of holding that Jauhar also corroborates the statement of this writer that Humayun started for Jaunpur from Callinger. I have used a MS. of Jauhar in the possession of Prof. Sarkar, which is to a great extent

free from many of the defects to be found in Stewart's translation. In page 11, line 15, though his original correctly writes Bherkund (or Bahrkunda as in Prof. Sarkar's MS.), Stewart inserts Jharkhand within brackets; this is due to his ignorance of the existence of Bahrkunda, a hill-fort, to the south of Chunar. He confounds it with the jungle-tract of Chota Nagpur, which lies about 100 miles east.

In page 15, line 14 Stewart's translation runs thus:—"He (Humayun) then ordered the Prince (Askery Mirza).....to send all the information he could obtain respecting the movements of Shyr Khan, *who had now taken the title of Shah (King.)*" Prof. Sarkar's MS. Jauhar does not contain any Persian equivalent of the italicised words. This has misled many historians; even Elphinstone, possibly on the strength of this passage, affirms that Sher Khan assumed the kingly title before the battle of Chaunsa. (*History of India*, 448.)

Stewart's proper names are invariably wrong: on p. 18, he writes the name of the Rajput General Barhmajid (t) Gaur (which is correctly and clearly written in Prof. Sarkar's MS.), as *Myr Feryd Gaur*: in the same passage Kitta Beg is written as Tetta Beg, and Rajah Birbhan of Arail, as Rajah Perbehan. Other instances may be multiplied.

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8. *Tabakat-i-Akbari* of Nizamuddin Ahmad.* (Lithographed edition, published by Newal Kishore Press.) This is a stupendous work containing 651 pages of a big-sized volume.. This is a general history of all Muslim sultanates of India. At the beginning he gives an account of the rulers of Ghazni, and then passes to the rulers of Delhi and narrates the events down to the 39th year of Akbar's reign A.D. 1593-4 (A. H. 1002). Then he gives the history of the Deccan sultanates, of Bengal, Jaunpur, Malwa, Kashmir, Sindh and Multan. Nizamuddin is undoubtedly the best historian of medieval India. He is sober, impartial and judicious. Unlike Abu'l-Fazl he does not deify his royal master (Akbar) and is not rancorous towards the enemies of his master's house. His style has a simple elegance, natural flow and charm of its own unrivalled for many generations. The reigns of Humayun and Akbar which form the most valuable portion of the book, are translated in Elliot v. The wholesale plagiarism of Nizamuddin by Ferishta whose work is available in an English garb, has rendered a translation of Nizamuddin unnecessary to the reader and unprofitable to the translator. Nizamuddin's very language has been

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* B. De, I.C.S. has begun translating it for the Asiatic Society of Bengal.

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copied by the *Tarikh-i-Daudi* and *Tarikh-i-Khan-i-Jahan Lodi*. At least such has been the case with their accounts of the reign of Sher Shah, which I have carefully compared. From the wide scope of the work it will be apparent that the *Tabakat-i-Akbari* is a masterly compilation from earlier histories of particular countries or from the works of eminent writers on particular sovereigns or dynasties. It is too much to expect scientific research or minute investigation of the details of every reign from a Persian author of the 16th century. The account of Sher Shah's reign in his book occupies 11 pages (from 222 to 232 of the Newal Kishore Press edn.). This is generally speaking summarized from Abbas Sarwani's book; the same mistakes have often been committed by both writers. But Nizamuddin has some independent value. He was a contemporary of Abbas and some fresh sources of information were available to him. The testimony of Nizamuddin in favour of Sher Shah has certainly greater weight than that of Abbas.

9. *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh* of Abdul Qadir of Badayun; Vol. i. translated into English by Ranking. Badayuni was also a contemporary of Abbas. He was born, as he himself says, in the reign of Sher Shah: "I was born in the reign of the just king on the 17th Rabi-us-sani in the year 947 H. (1540 A. D.)" (Ranking, p. 473). He often writes

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from personal knowledge and his account of the Sur dynasty especially of the reign of Islam Shah, is of great importance. There is a freshness and originality in his work which we miss elsewhere. His work in point of importance ranks just below that of Abbas Sarwani, as regards rare information. Having been disgusted with the policy and Court of Akbar he has thrown himself with some warmth and sympathy into the narration of the achievements of Sher Shah and Islam Shah. Badayuni was out and out a Hindu-hater. He, like the Afghan chroniclers, loves to portray Sher Shah as the Avenger of Islam and the Destroyer of Infidels. Though one of the most orthodox and sincere Musalmans in private life, Sher Shah was never swayed by bigotry in public life. So the dealings of Sher Shah with the Hindus should not be viewed in the same light in which Badayuni has treated them.

10. *Akbarnama* of Abul-Fazl, translated into English by Mr. H. Beveridge. Abul-Fazl paints Sher Shah and Islam Shah in the same colour as the Court historians of Aurangzib, two centuries afterwards, painted the great Maratha hero Shivaji and his son. His account of the early life of Sher Shah differs from that of all other Persian writers and is wholly devoid of truth. As regards the reign of Humayun even and his struggle with Sher Shah,

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Abul-Fazl is not correct. His statements should be rejected where they conflict with the assertions of Gulbadan and Jauhar. Abul-Fazl has here and there stumbled upon some truths.

In all fairness to him, it must be said that he has recognized the ability and merits of his enemies, though his tone in such passages is something like that of a good Christian in acknowledging the valour and lofty spirit of Satan. Abul-Fazl admits "In fact both father and son (that is Sher Khan and Salim) behaved properly in the management of affairs. Alas, that they should have spent their days in disloyalty and ingratitude. If these two had been servants of the sublime threshhold of His Majesty the Shahin-Shah and *if the home administration had been entrusted to the father*, and the guardianship of the marches to the son, they would have been encompassed with royal favours." (*Akbarnama*, i. 618). This testimony of Abul-Fazl in favour of Sher Shah is certainly more valuable than the most fulsome eulogy of Abbas.

11. *Ain-i-Akbari* of Abul-Fazl, translated into English by Blochmann and Jarrett, in three volumes. There are some valuable references to Sher Shah's land settlement and revenue system. *Ains* v, vi, and vii, in which minute instructions are given to the

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revenue officials, are based on the regulations (*qanun*) of Sher Shah and Islam Shah.

12. *Tarikh-i-Ferishta*. This history, written after the model of Nizamuddin, enjoys the widest fame in Europe through the translation of Lt. Col. Briggs. But Ferishta is by no means entitled to such a recognition. Lithographed copies of both Nizamuddin and Ferishta's works have been published by the Newal Kishore Press. Even a cursory glance over the pages of both histories startles the reader with the plagiarism of Ferishta. I was led by curiosity to compare not only the chapter on Sher Shah but also that on Humayun and the accounts of the Muslim rulers of Malwa, Sind, Multan and Kashmir, in both the histories, and I have found a strange coincidence everywhere.

In the chapter on Sher Shah (Persian text, Newal Kishore Press, pp. 220-227), Ferishta has practically nothing new to say. The tradition of the descent of the Surs from the royal house of Ghor, which is perhaps his only original contribution, is baseless. I have in almost every case used the Persian text and not Briggs' translation, which has been shown to be faulty by many competent authorities. Major Raverty, in his translation of *Tabakat-i-Nasiri*, has repeatedly drawn notice to the inaccuracies in Briggs' translation.

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13. *Khulasat-ut-Tawarikh*, by Sujan Lal Bhandari, edited by Mr. Zafar Hassan, B.A. This work was written late in the reign of Aurangzib; it contains a chapter on Sher Shah based on the works of Abul-Fazl and Nizamuddin. It affords no new information, but it is interesting to notice that the memory of Sher Shah was green in the minds of the people even two centuries after. This is shown by the accumulation round his personality of new legends about the strict justice of that monarch, *e.g.*, the story that the Prince Adil Khan threw a *bira* of *pan* (betel-leaf) at the wife of a shop-keeper while she was undressed and bathing herself; the shop-keeper lodged a complaint with the king who ordered the insult to be returned in kind (*i.e.*, the shop-keeper was to throw a *bira* of *pan*, while the wife of the prince was undressed) if the prince failed to satisfy the complainant by any other means.

14. History written by Khafi Khan (Persian text, 2 volumes). Completed about 1734. There is a chapter on Sher Shah in the first volume of this book. He has not anything new to tell us.

Besides the general histories of the Delhi Emperors, I have searched for information in the histories of the particular countries with which Sher Shah came into contact.

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(A) Bengal :—

(1) *Riaz-us-Salatin*, translated into English by Maulavi Abdus-Salam, M.A.

(2) Stewart's *History of Bengal*, an obsolete authority compiled from *Riaz-us-Salatin*.

(B) Malwa :—(Chapters from Nizamuddin and Ferishta).

(C) Kashmir :—(*Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, Ferishta, Nizamuddin).

(D) Multan :—(Ferishta and Nizamuddin).

(E) Sindh :—(History of Kalich Beg, continuation of the translation of *Chachnama*).

(F) Rajputana :—Tod's *Rajasthan*, too legendary for historical purposes.

European Writers

The Portuguese under Martim Affonso De Mello first landed at Chittagong in 1533 A.D. The Portuguese Captain visited Gaur in that year when war broke out between Mahmud Shah and Sher Khan. In this war the Portuguese rendered great help to Mahmud Shah. The Portuguese historians Castanheda and others have left good accounts of the war between Mahmud Shah and Sher Khan and of the struggle of Humayun with Sher Khan. This important source of Indian history has not yet been

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utilized. Prof. Sarkar has made an excellent collection of these rare Portuguese historians. I have given references to the English summary in J. J. A. Campos's *History of the Portuguese in Bengal.*

1. Erskine's *History of India,* Vol. II. Within a small compass, this book contains a masterly sketch of the career of Sher Shah. His estimate of the administrative genius of Sher Shah (pp. 441-444) deserves credit.

2. *History of India,* by Elphinstone. Several persistent errors of Persian writers have been removed by him.

3. Thomas's *Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Delhi. (For the coinage of Sher Shah).* Now obsolete.

4. *Catalogue of the Coins in the Indian Museum, Calcutta,* by H. N. Wright, Numismatics have enabled us to fix some dates with certainty. They have revealed much new information.

Besides I have consulted district gazetteers, books on travel, survey, etc., for geographical information. I have used the invaluable Rennell's *Bengal Atlas* (1781) and the detailed Survey of India maps drawn on a scale of 4 miles to the inch. The distances given by me are only approximate, as I have measured them in a straight line with a pair of compasses.

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ADDITIONS & CORRECTIONS

Page	7	Line	17	*for*	*baad*	*read* *bad*
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N. B. The appendices promised on pp. 231, 279, 354 have not been printed here, but will be sent to a learned journal.

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