BOOK VI

The Mughul Empire

CHAPTER 1

The beginnings of the Mughul empire; Babur, Humayun, and the Sūr dynasty, A.D. 1526–56

BABUR, Zahir-ud-din Muhammad, king of Kabul, whose aid Daulat Khān invoked against Sultan Ibrāhīm of Delhi, was the most brilliant Asiatic prince of his age, and worthy of a high place among the sovereigns of any age or country. As a boy he inherited a fragment of that Timurid empire which briefly had stretched into India. This fragment was Farghana, the upper valley of the Syr Darya, whose revenues supported no more than a few thousand cavalry. With this force of helmeted, mail-clad warriors, attached to him only by personal loyalty or temporary interest, Babur began his career of conquest. He joined in the family struggles for power, thrice winning and thrice losing Samarqand, alternately master of a kingdom or a wanderer through the hills.

But in this period two new powers, the Safavis in Persia and the Usbegs in central Asia, were rising. Between these two powers the brilliant but divided Timurid princes were broken and squeezed until Babur was forced through the Kabul bottleneck into India. As he entered Kabul he pushed before him the Arghūn dynasty, and as they were shunted south, so other trāns-Indus tribes were driven into their present homes.

In 1504 Babur made himself master of Kabul and so came into touch with India. The wealth of India tempted him into more than one raid—and the disturbing arrival of the Usbegs suggested the expediency of another. But his real hope was still of Samarqand, and the defeat of Shaibānī Usbeg in 1510 by Shāh Ismā‘īl allowed him to realize his ambition. With Persian aid he mastered Samarqand in 1511, only to find that unhappily ‘in thus gaining the needed ally he lost his subjects’, who hated the Persian Shia. After hovering hopefully north of the Hindu Kush for two years, Babur at last gave up his hopes of central Asia, and turned instead towards India.

Pricked on by the need to provide employment for the many exiled
rulers at his court, Babur swept down in 1517 and 1519 from the Afghan plateau to the plains of India. These were reconnaissances. His entry into the Punjab in 1523, on the invitation of Daulat Khan Lodi, the governor of that province, and 'Alam Khan, an uncle of Sultan Ibrāhīm, was intended to be a serious invasion. Uşbeg pressure upon Balkh, however, compelled Babur to retire, so that his final invasion was not begun until November 1525.

Invasion of India. Even then his total force, including the Badakhshan troops under Humayun, and camp followers, did not exceed 12,000 men, a tiny army with which to attempt the conquest of Sultan Ibrāhīm’s realm, and the vast mass of Hindu India behind the Afghan dominions. The enterprise, indeed, seemed to be rash, and Babur candidly admits that many of his troops were ‘in great tremor and alarm’. Yet the bold attack succeeded.

Battle of Panipat, 1526. The hostile armies came to grips on 21 April 1526, on that plain of Panipat where the prize of India has been so often the reward of the victor. Babur possessed a large park of artillery, the new-fangled weapon then coming into use in Turkey and Europe, but previously unknown in northern India. Its power had already made itself felt at the siege of Bajaur. Carts, 700 in number, drawn by bullocks, were lashed together by chains, so as to form a barrier in front of the enemy,¹ gaps being left sufficient for the cavalry to charge through. On the other side, Sultan Ibrāhīm brought into the field an immense host believed to number at least 100,000 men, supported by nearly 100 elephants. Although the exact numbers drawn up by Babur in battle array are not stated, there is no doubt that they were immeasurably outnumbered by the enemy. But the Afghan sultan, ‘a young inexperienced man, careless in his movements, who marched without order, halted or retired without method, and engaged without foresight’, was no match for Babur, a born general, and a veteran in war although his years were few. The battle, which raged from half-past nine in the morning until evening, again demonstrated the inherent weakness of an ill-compacted Hindu host when attacked by an active small force under competent leadership, and making full use of bold cavalry charges. The decisive movement, the furious cavalry wheel round the flank of the enemy, delivering a charge in his rear, was exactly the same as that employed by Alexander against Pōros at the battle of the Hydaspes, and had the same result. When the sun set Sultan Ibrāhīm lay dead on the field, surrounded by 15,000 of his brave men. ‘By the grace and mercy of Almighty God’, Babur wrote, ‘this difficult affair was made easy to me, and that mighty army, in the space of half a day, was laid in the dust.’

Occupation of Delhi and Agra. Delhi and Agra were promptly occupied, and the immense spoil was divided among all ranks of the victorious army with lavish generosity. But the heat was oppressive,

¹ Mrs. Beveridge rejects the earlier interpretation of 'arāba as meaning guns; but the word may be rendered 'gun-carriages'.
grain and fodder scarce, and 'on these accounts, not a few of my Begs and best men began to lose heart [and] objected to remaining in Hindustan. . . .' Like Alexander, Babur sought to rouse their pride by a stirring address, and, unlike his great predecessor, succeeded in persuading his men to follow the path of glory, and despise the dangers which beset them in a strange land.

**Rana Sanga.** Babur had next to face a power more formidable than that of the sultan—the Hindu power led by Rana Sangrām Singh, head of the premier Rajput state, Mewar. His grandfather, Rana Kumbha, between 1419 and 1469, had broken the Muslim kingdom of Malwa, and defeated the effort of Gujarat to re-establish it. Of Rana Sanga, Shāikh Zain wrote, 'There was not a single ruler of the first rank in all these great countries like Delhi, Gujarat, and Mandu who was able to make head against him.' The rana had hoped that Babur would break the Lodi power for him, and then withdraw as Timur had done. But when Babur settled at Delhi, the rana moved to attack him.

He commanded an enormous host, composed of the contingents of 120 chiefs, and including 80,000 horse with 500 war elephants. The small army of Babur was much dispirited at the prospect of the unequal fight: 'a general consternation and alarm prevailed among great and small'. To counteract this despair, Babur strongly fortified his camp, publicly renounced his drinking of wine, and made another rousing speech. 'The Most High God has been propitious to us, and has now placed us in such a crisis, that if we fall in the field, we die the death of martyrs; if we survive, we rise victorious, the avengers of the cause of God. Let us, then, with one accord, swear on God's holy word, that none of us will ever even think of turning his face from this warfare . . .'.

An advance was ordered, and on 16 March 1527 battle was joined near Khānua, a village almost due west from Agra. The tactics which had won the victory at Panipat were repeated, with the same result. The rout of the Hindu host was complete and final, although the gallant rana escaped from the field and survived until 1529.

**Battle of Ghāgra.** After the rains, Babur moved to attack Chandeli, held for the rana by Medini Rāo, 'a pagan of great consequence'. It was stormed on 29 January 1528, and the garrison annihilated. The Afghan chiefs of Bihar and Bengal were the next enemies to be attacked. They suffered defeat in 1529 on the banks of the Gogra (Ghāgra) near the junction of that river with the Ganges above Patna.

**Death of Babur.** In December 1530 Babur died. He left an empire which included Badakhshan, Afghanistan, the Panjāb, Delhi, the open plain of Bihar and territories stretching southwards to a perimeter marked by the forts of Biyana, Ranthambhor, Gwalior, and Chandeli. Much of the empire lay beyond the Indus, many of the troops were drawn from beyond its boundaries, and the ties which held it together were only those of personal loyalty to Babur. An extract from the

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memoirs suggests how frail those ties were, 'in a country where there are seven or eight chiefs, nothing regular or settled can be looked for'. The seven or eight chiefs referred to prove to be the Begams, each the centre of a family which might try to replace Babur or his sons. The Indian portion of the empire, surrounded by powerful states, was itself honeycombed with the estates of minor chiefs. There was little uniformity of administration, for districts were under the almost absolute control of grantees, the heads of families or tribal leaders. Babur, as leader of a band of foreign adventurers, could only hold the main strong points, and elsewhere rely on the passivity of the Hindu masses.

Character of Babur. Babur the man is revealed to us in his memoirs, which, originally written in Turki, were transcribed by Humayun personally, and were translated into Persian by the Khan Khânân under the direction of Akbar. Good English versions were made by Erskine and Leyden in 1826, and later by Mrs. A. S. Beveridge. Babur emerges as immensely likeable, a very vigorous, artistic personality, as able to 'rough it' over the Hindu Kush in winter as to write most excellent Turki verses. His zest was an inspiration to his followers, with whom he shared both hardships and a convivial appreciation of fine gardens or of wine. To the last India was for Babur 'a country of few charms', pleasant only in having ample wealth. 'They very recently brought me a single musk-melon. While cutting it up I felt myself affected with a strong sense of loneliness, and a sense of my exile from my native country; and I could not help shedding tears while I was eating it.'

Humayun's task. Babur left an empire barely held by force of arms, and lacking any consolidated civil administration. The struggle of his descendants to establish a firmly seated dynasty with a fairly complete control of northern India lasted from his death at the close of 1530 until 1576 when Akbar had been on the throne for twenty years. In 1530 Humayun was twenty-three years old, and had served an apprenticeship as governor of Badakhshan. But, although a cultivated gentleman not lacking in ability, he was deficient in the sustained energy of his versatile father. He could not keep the loyalties of his nobles, who found other centres of power in his three brothers, the eldest of whom, Kamran, was in charge of Kabul and Qandahar at Babur's death and treacherously added the Panjab to his possessions soon after. His addiction to opium partially explains his failure.

Wars with Gujarat and Sher Khan. In 1535 Humayun made a brilliant raid into Gujarat and exhibited his personal valour by forming one of the storming party which escaladed the strong fortress of Champaner (north-east of Baroda). He was unable long to maintain such dash. As his chronicler put it, 'The Emperor Humayun remained for a year at Agra, and took his pleasure.' At the end of that time Malwa and Gujarat had been lost.

Meanwhile Sher Khan Sūr, an Afghan chief, was busily consoli-
dating his power in South Bihar. In 1537 Humayun moved against him, but spent so long in the taking of Chunar, that Sher Khân had time to capture Gaur and its immense treasures and escape with them. Only then did Humayun advance to Gaur where he passed months in idle pleasure 350 miles from his base, Benares. When the emperor’s brother, Hindal, deserted his post on the line of communications, Sher Khân proceeded to close the trap, and utterly defeated Humayun at Chausa on the Ganges. Nearly a year later, in May 1540, Sher Khân again defeated Humayun still more decisively opposite Kanauj; and then pursued the fleeing Mughuls to Lahore. Here Humayun’s brothers again displayed their selfish jealousy, and Humayun became a homeless wanderer, first in Sindh, then in Marwar, and finally in Sindh again. In the midst of his misery his son Akbar was born at Umarkot on 23 November 1542.

Humayun, after narrowly escaping the forces of his brother at Qandahar, reached Persia in 1544, and was granted asylum by Shâh Tahmâsp. He thought it well to declare himself a Shia in the shâh’s presence, but even so it was only after some hesitations, and upon promise that Qandahar, when conquered, should be handed over to Persia, that the shâh provided military aid. With this Qandahar was taken in 1545—and treacherously retained by the Mughul—and thence a successful attack was launched upon Kamran, who had retained control of Kabul. A misplaced and sentimental generosity towards the brutal Kamran led to some years’ further conflict, until in 1553 the nobles forced Humayun to blind his brother.

Second reign and death of Humayun. Humayun, when relieved from his brother’s opposition, was able to invade India where four Sûr claimants were struggling for power. He occupied Delhi and Agra in July 1555, and so regained his father’s capital cities. But he was not permitted to consolidate his conquest or to establish a regular civil government. He was still engaged in making the necessary arrangements when an accidental fall from the staircase of his library at Delhi ended his troubled life in January 1556. His second reign had lasted barely seven months.

Reign of Sher Shâh. It has been convenient to give a rough outline of Humayun’s adventures as a continuous story. Attention must now be directed to the proceedings of his Afghan rivals.

Sher Shâh’s grandfather had been one of those Afghans who, in Sultan Buhlûl’s day, ‘came as is their wont like ants and locusts to enter the king’s service’. His father, improving the family fortunes, served under Jamâl Khân first in the Panjab, then as a jagîrdâr of 500 horse in the pargana of Sasaram in Jaunpur. Sher Shâh received his training as an administrator in the very practical management of his father’s parganas, before entering first Babur’s service, in 1527, and then that of Jalâl Khân Lohâni. By 1533 he had ousted Jalâl Khân from the Lohâni possessions, and by a reputation as a good paymaster had built up a strong army. While Humayun was busy in
Gujarat, Sher Khān was securing land and a great ransom from Bengal, and when the emperor did turn east, he was already too late. After the flight of the Mughuls, Sher Shāh consolidated his kingdom, holding down the Gakhrs by a new fort at Rohtas in the Panjab, pruning the Bengal province and dividing it into several governorships in order to prevent attempts at independence, and making vigorous efforts to subdue Rajputana, Malwa, and Bandelkhand. He disgraced himself by ordering the treacherous massacre of the garrison of Raisin in central India, and was killed in 1545 while directing the siege of Kalanjar in Bandelkhand.

Sher Shāh’s government. Sher Shāh was something more than the capable leader of a horde of fierce, fanatical Afghans. He had a nice taste in architecture, manifested especially in the noble mausoleum at Sahasram in Bihar which he prepared for himself. He built a new city at Delhi and a second Rohtas in the Panjab. He also displayed an aptitude for civil government and instituted reforms, based to some extent on the institutions of ’Alā-ud-din Khilji, which were developed by Akbar.

He maintained his authority by means of a powerful central army, said to have comprised 150,000 horse, 25,000 foot, and 5,000 elephants. He sought to make himself rather than the clan leaders the focus of loyalty, personally inspecting, appointing, and paying the men. He likewise made himself accessible to their appeals against a local governor or commander. He prevented fraudulent musters by branding the horses in government service—a system imitated by Akbar—and ‘munsifs were appointed for examining the brands in the armies on the frontiers’. He also anticipated that monarch in a system of land revenue, assessment based on the measurement of the land, and if he had lived longer might have enjoyed a reputation equal to that of Raja Todar Mal, Akbar’s famous minister. Justice of a rough and ready kind was administered under his strict personal supervision, and the responsibility of village communities for crimes committed within their borders was enforced by tremendous penalties. No man could expect favour by reason of his rank or position, and no injury to cultivation was tolerated. Sher Shāh, like Aśoka and Harsha, accepted the maxim that ‘it behoves the great to be always active’. His time was divided by stringent rules between the duties of religion and those of government. He followed the example of the best Hindu sovereigns by laying out high roads, planting trees, and providing wells and sarais for the accommodation of travellers. He reformed the coinage, issuing an abundance of silver money, excellent in both fineness and execution. That is a good record for a stormy reign of five years.

Islām Shāh; Muhammad ‘Ādil Shāh. When Sher Shāh died the choice of the nobles fell on his second son, Jalāl Khān, who ascended the throne under the style of Islām Shāh, often corruptly written and pronounced as Salīm Shāh. His brief and disturbed reign ended in 1553. He issued many regulations, but did not share his father’s
ability. After an interval of disputed succession the throne was usurped by Muhammad 'Adil Shāh, or 'Adalī, brother of a consort of Islām Shāh. He was inefficient, and left the control of his affairs in the hands of Hēmū, a clever Hindu tradesman. The right to the sovereignty was contested by two nephews of Sher Shāh, whose fate will be related in a later chapter.

CHRONOLOGY

First battle of Panipat .......... 21 April 1526
Babur proclaimed as padshah ...... 27 April 1526
Battle of Khanua (Kanwāha), defeat of Rana Sanga .. March 1527
Battle of the Ghaghra (Gogra) river ...... 1529
Death of Babur; accession of Humayun .......... Dec. 1530
Humayun in Bengal ......... 1538
Defeat of Humayun at Chausa ......... June 1539
Final defeat of Humayun at Kanauj ....... May 1540
Birth of Akbar at Umarkot ...... 23 Nov. 1542
Death of Sher Shāh; accession of Islām Shāh .... 1545
Death of Islām Shāh; Muhammad 'Adil Shāh ('Adalī) acc.; other claimants 1553-4
Restoration of Humayun .......... June 1555
Death of Humayun ........ Jan. 1556

AUTHORITIES

The main original authority for Babur is his book of Memoirs, transl. by LEYDEN and ERSKINE, 1826, and by Mrs. A. BEVERIDGE. Contemporary accounts of Humayun are the Memoirs of Jauhar, transl. by STEWART, 1832; Life and Memoirs of Gulbadan Bīgam, Akbar’s aunt, transl. by Mrs. A. BEVERIDGE, R.A.S., 1902; and Memoirs of Bāyazīd Bīyāt, abstracted in J.A.S.B., part i, for 1898, p. 296. Other leading Persian authorities for the period are the Akbarnāma of Abu-l Fazl, transl. by H. BEVERIDGE, and various authors in E. & D., vols. iv, v; also FIRISHTA, transl. by BRIGGS. ERSKINE’S History of India under Babar and Humāyūn, 2 vols., 1854, is a valuable work on a large scale. LANE-POOLE’S Bābar, in Rulers of India, 1898, is an excellent and well-written little book. FERNAND GRENARD, Baber, first of the Moguls, transl. and adapted by WHITE and R. GLAENZER is also excellent. The skeleton of the Sūr history is presented by E. THOMAS in Chronicles of the Pathān Kings of Delhi (1871). The story of the Sūr kings needs to be worked out critically in detail. A biography of Sher Shāh, by Professor K. QANUNGO, was published at Calcutta in 1921. See also PARAMATMA SARAN, ‘The date and place of Sher Shāh’s birth’, J.B.O.R.S., 1934. The latest work on the period is Dr. ISHWARI PRASAD’S Life and Times of Humayun, 1955.
CHAPTER 2

The early European voyages to and settlements in India; the East India Company from 1600 to 1708

The foreigners and the Mughul empire. Inasmuch as the influence of European settlers on the coasts made itself felt in Indian politics from the beginning of the sixteenth century, it is desirable to take a comprehensive although summary view of the steps by which the western powers acquired a footing in India before we enter upon the detailed history of the Mughul empire, as established by Akbar and maintained for a century after his death.

The Arab monopoly of Indian trade. We have seen how extensive was the trade, both overland and maritime, maintained between India and the Roman empire during the first three centuries of the Christian era, how that trade almost ceased in the fourth century, and revived to some extent in the fifth and sixth centuries. The Arab conquest of Egypt and Persia in the seventh century definitely closed the direct communication between Europe and India. Thenceforward all Indian wares which reached the West passed through Muslim hands, and so were transmitted from the markets of the Levant to Venice, which acquired enormous wealth and influence by its monopoly of Eastern commerce.

Portuguese exploration of African coast. The Portuguese kings of the fifteenth century looked with envy on the riches of Venice, and eagerly desired to obtain a share in her profitable trade. Prince Henry the Navigator devoted his life to the discovery of a direct sea route from Portugal to India, and, when he died in 1460, his adventurous captains had succeeded in passing the river Senegal on the west coast of Africa. But much further effort was needed before the circumnavigation of Africa could be accomplished. Ultimately the feat was performed by Bartholomeu Diaz de Novaes, who was driven by storms considerably to the south of the Cape, and made land halfway between the Cape of Good Hope and Port Elizabeth. He sailed up the eastern coast sufficiently far to satisfy himself of its north-easterly trend and to be convinced that the long-sought route had been opened. He returned to Lisbon in December 1488.

Vasco da Gama reaches India. This discovery was followed up ten years later by Vasco da Gama who sailed in July 1497 with four tiny ships, and worked his way round Africa. At Malindi, north of Zanzibar, one of the wealthy Arab trading settlements of this coast, he obtained experienced pilots for the run to India. On 20 May 1498 he anchored near Calicut. The Hindu ruler, the zamorin, owed his
prosperity to his port’s position as an entrepôt, and he was prepared to welcome the Portuguese. The Arab traders, however, did what they could to hamper their new competitors. After visiting Cochin and Cannanor, Vasco da Gama turned for home, reaching Lisbon in late August 1499.

The Portuguese were fortunate in the time of their arrival. In Egypt the Mamelukes were soon to be threatened by the Turks, and in Persia a new dynasty was still building its power. North India was much divided, though Gujarat was in the strong hands of Mahmud Begarha, while in the Deccan the Bahmaní kingdom was disintegrating. None of the great powers had a navy, or thought in terms of naval power. In the Far East the navigation of Chinese ships was limited by imperial decree. The Arab shipowners and merchants, who had dominated the commerce of the Indian Ocean, had nothing to oppose to the drive and unity of the Portuguese.

End of trade at Callcut. On da Gama’s triumphant return the king of Portugal sent out a larger fleet under Cabral, the discoverer of Brazil. He brushed with the Arabs at Calicut, but secured his cargo at Cochin and Cannanor. In 1502 Vasco da Gama, when the zamorin refused to exclude the Arab merchants in favour of the Portuguese, turned on such Arab shipping as he could find with a mixture of commercial greed and hostility to all such ‘Moors’, and completed the rupture with the zamorin.

De Almeida. The first viceroy (1505–9) Dom Francisco de Almeida had to face a greater danger than the hostility of the zamorin. The Mameluke sultan of Egypt, urged on by Venice, now attempted to stop Portuguese interference with their lucrative trade by building a fleet in the Red Sea and entering the Indian Ocean. De Almeida, a seasoned crusader against the Moor in North Africa, was sent out with a large fleet in response to this threat. Though in 1507 a Portuguese squadron was surprised by the combined Egyptian and Gujarati fleet off Diu, and the viceroy’s son was killed, de Almeida utterly crushed the enemy next year. He pointed the moral of his victory: ‘As long as you may be powerful at sea you will hold India as yours; and if you do not possess this power, little will avail you a fortress on shore.’

Albuquerque’s strategy. Affonso de Albuquerque, who succeeded Almeida, with the rank of governor, held wider views. His purpose was to found a Portuguese empire in the East. Before he died he had given Portugal the strategic control of the Indian Ocean by securing bases covering all the entrances to that sea—in East Africa, off the Red Sea, atOrmuz, in Malabar, and at Malacca. From these bases the strongly built, ocean-going Portuguese ships overawed the slighter Arab shipping. A system of licences for native shipping and control of the major ship-building centres long upheld Portuguese domination at sea. (Neither the Red Sea nor the Persian Gulf afforded timber for building warships.)

Acquisition of Goa. In 1510 Albuquerque effectively occupied the
island of Goa, the principal port in the dominions of the sultan of Bijapur, the first bit of Indian territory directly governed by Europeans since the time of Alexander the Great. All Muslims were excluded from office.

Malacca. The valuable trade which came from the Spice Islands or Moluccas passed, along with that from China and Japan, through the Straits of Malacca. In those days the town of Malacca on the coast of the Malay peninsula, with its good if shallow harbour, was the principal emporium for this trade. In 1511, therefore, its possession carried with it the control of a vast commerce, for Singapore did not become important until the nineteenth century. Albuquerque, in nine days' fighting, cleared the city. It was held by the Portuguese for 130 years. His hope that 'if we take this trade of Malacca away out of their hands, Cairo and Mecca will be entirely ruined, and to Venice will no spices be conveyed, except what her merchants go to buy in Portugal' were for a time largely fulfilled. From Malacca he explored the Spice Islands, where trading posts were established.

Attempt on Aden. In 1513 Albuquerque sought to muzzle Arab trade through the Red Sea by an attack on Aden. He failed, but raids on shipping—and the preoccupation of the Mamelukes with the advancing Ottoman Turks—allowed the Portuguese to dominate the approaches for some years.

Occupation ofOrmuz. Albuquerque was more successful in the Persian Gulf. Shortly before his death in 1515 he occupied the island of Ormuz and built a fortress there. At that time the port rivalled Malacca in importance as a centre of international trade. The Portuguese held it until 1622 when they were ousted by a Persian force supported by English ships from Surat. From that date Ormuz declined, and its trade passed to the new port of Bandar Abbas, not far distant.

Portuguese administration in India. The Portuguese Crown had been responsible for pushing forward the exploration of the African coast, and had sent out Vasco da Gama in the face of general opposition. When success crowned these efforts, the sole direction, both political and commercial, was naturally assumed by the Crown. This control was hampered by a division of authority, and particularly by the establishment of a special office responsible for the members of the great and wealthy religious orders and other clerics. The union with Spain (1580–1640) increased the number of authorities, though the Conselho da Índia, established in 1604, did good service. In the seventeenth century financial crises further undermined administration.

In India the head of the administration was the viceroy, who served for three years, with his secretary and, in later years, a council. His authority was weakened at times by conflict with the ecclesiastical authorities, by having no say in appointments, and by preoccupation with the lining of his own pockets. Next in importance came the Vedor da Fazenda, responsible for revenue and the cargoes and dispatch of fleets. The fortresses, from Africa to China, were under captains,
assisted by factors, whose power was increased by the difficulties of communication and was too often used for personal ends. Indeed the lack of control from Portugal and Goa when combined with the union of political and commercial control in a single office was a perpetual threat to honest administration.

The larger centres were granted the privileges of towns in Portugal and had municipal councils—some, as in Goa and Macau, of considerable importance. There was a High Court at Goa and a hospital which compelled the admiration of all. Also copied from home institutions was the Santa Casa da Misericordia whose beneficent activities ‘in succouring widows and orphans and in helping the poor and needy should be set against the greed, corruption, and despotism so graphically described by Diogo do Couto and his foreign contemporaries’.1

Military and naval power. At the opening of the sixteenth century, the Portuguese navy led the world in the rig of ships, navigational techniques, and gunnery. The effort put forth—some 800 ships sent east in the century—was remarkable. But the long absence of any serious competition led to poor design and unwieldy ships, and the rate of loss at sea rose alarmingly. Mortality on shipboard was very high, and fresh crews had to be recruited for each voyage, while at a time when the English and Dutch were learning ocean navigation, travellers report declining standards of seamanship on Portuguese vessels.

The national militia of Portugal was no basis for the army in India. And while the population of Portugal was actually declining, and while another great Portuguese empire was being opened up in Brazil, forces for India could only be maintained by recruitment in India. Some troops with officers of noble blood did come out in the annual fleets, but in the main reliance was placed in those who had settled in the Indies and married there. Albuquerque, recognizing the strength which such settlers represented, had encouraged mixed marriage. The stubborn resistance of so many settlements to the Dutch, who early became masters at sea, testifies to the valour of the casados and their slaves.

Religious policy. The Portuguese, crusading against the Moor in North Africa, carried with them to the East something of the same zeal and the same hostility to all Muslims. But their motives had always been mixed, and once in India those of commerce early became dominant. So, though the Portuguese Crown had been made by the Pope patron of all missions and churches in the Indies, it was not until the advent of the Jesuits in 1542 that any great missionary activity was displayed. Their influence at the Mughul court will be examined in subsequent chapters. A like effort was made by the society in China and Japan. The introduction of the Inquisition in Goa after 1560, with its cruel persecution, served only to undo much of the good work done by the Jesuits and the Mendicant Orders.

1 C. R. Boxer in Portugal and Brazil, ed. H. V. Livermore, p. 223.
Portuguese commercial activity. It was the trade in spices which led the Portuguese to India, and in the early years it offered great profits, for the Arab middlemen had taken enormous profits between the Spice Islands and Venice. But ultimately the Portuguese gained most, as individuals certainly, from their participation in the carrying trade of the Indian Ocean and the China Sea. The position has been thus summed up: ‘the Portuguese were able to deprive the Muslim traders of the Indian Ocean of a large share of the trade in Indian textiles and piece-goods, Persian and Arabian horses, gold and ivory from East Africa, as well as from spices from Indonesia, Ceylon, and Malabar. Moreover they extended their carrying trade into the China Sea, where Arab merchants had not penetrated since medieval times, save in insignificant numbers. Voyages between the principal ports in these areas (Macau–Nagasaki; Malacca–Siam; Ormuz–Goa, for example) were much shorter and easier than the long haul round the Cape of Good Hope. Money and goods invested in such “ventures” brought in both quicker and safer returns than did cargoes shipped to Europe. The comparative value of gold and silver in India, China, and Japan varied in a fluctuating ratio which enabled the Portuguese at Goa and Macau to make a handsome profit by acting as bullion-brokers trading in these precious metals.’

The Portuguese decline. The emergence of powerful dynasties in Egypt, Persia, and north India and the appearance as neighbours of the turbulent Maratha power reduced the local advantages of the Portuguese in India. Political fears roused by the activities of Jesuit missionaries, and hatred of persecution such as the Inquisition practised, caused reaction against Portuguese spiritual pressure. Greed, selfishness, and corruption weakened the administration. But the system still worked and produced wealth. It was destroyed by the Dutch and English, two nations with wider resources and greater compulsions to expand than the Portuguese in the Indies felt to resist. The follies of King Sebastian’s North African campaign, the embroilment in Spain’s campaigns in Europe, and after 1624 the heavy drain of men to defend Brazil and Africa against the Dutch—all these successively weakened Portugal’s ability to resist. The leakage of information about the route to the Indies to the Dutch and English, who were learning ocean navigation off Newfoundland or in the White Sea, destroyed an earlier monopoly of knowledge, as the losses in the Arzila expedition and the Armada destroyed an earlier preponderance in shipping. Portugal was too small a nation permanently to sustain the role of ‘Lord of the Conquest, Navigation, and Commerce of Ethiopia, Arabia, Persia, and India’.

Dutch and English rivalry with the Portuguese. The Dutch and English almost simultaneously took measures to contest the claim of Portugal to the monopoly of Oriental commerce, and from the moment they appeared on the scene at the beginning of the seventeenth

1 Ibid., p. 222.
century the Portuguese were unable to resist them effectually. One after another most of the Indian settlements fell into their hands, and, in the first instance, passed into Dutch possession. Goa, it is true, escaped actual capture, although it was often blockaded by Dutch fleets; but its importance in relation to India had dwindled so steadily after the destruction of Vijayanagar in 1565 that in the seventeenth century it did not much matter who held it.

The Dutch settlements. The United East India Company of the Netherlands was founded in 1602 from an earlier group of competing provincial companies. It commanded very large financial resources and was very closely linked with the state. After a brief exploratory period, headquarters were founded in Batavia, whence the policy was actively pursued of securing the trade to the Spice Islands and then of the pepper trade. This involved the exclusion of the English who had also founded factories in Java and the Moluccas. The Massacre of Amboyna was but an incident in this process of exclusion.

In India, whither the Dutch turned in search of the piece goods which were the staple article of trade throughout the Malay Archipelago, the Mughuls and the rulers of Golkanda were too powerful for the Dutch to be able to seek a monopoly by force. They settled at Pulicat, north of Madras, in 1609, and later at Masulipatam, Surat, and in Persia. Their command of the spice trade, the wealth of the company, and the ability of their factors enabled them to secure a major share in the trade of all these areas, but not to exclude their English rivals.

Danish settlements. The Danish settlements demand a passing notice. A Danish East India Company was established in 1616, and four years later (1620) the factory at Tranquebar on the east coast was founded. The principal settlement of the Danes at Serampore near Calcutta dates from 1755. The Danish factories, which were not important at any time, were sold to the British government in 1845.

French settlements. The French appeared late on the scene, their official organization, ‘La Compagnie des Indes Orientales’, having been established in 1664. Their principal settlement, Pondicherry, founded ten years later, still is a moderately prosperous town. The French never succeeded in capturing a large share of the Indian trade, and their settlements never received sufficient steady support from home. The Republic handed over its last possessions to the Indian state in 1954.

The struggle between the English and French for supremacy in the peninsula during the second half of the eighteenth century will be narrated in due course as part of the general history of India.

First Charter of the East India Company. The glorious victory over the Spanish Armada in 1588 stimulated British maritime enterprise, and suggested plans for claiming a share in the lucrative commerce of the Eastern seas. Those plans assumed definite form on the last day of 1600, when Queen Elizabeth granted a charter with rights of
exclusive trading to ‘the Governor and Company of Merchants of London trading into the East Indies’.

The separate voyages. The early ‘Separate Voyages’ organized by the Company were directed chiefly to the Spice Islands rather than to India. They were called Separate Voyages because each venture was financed and fitted out by a group of individuals from within the Company, who wound up the voyage on the return of their ships, and divided the profits among themselves. A ship of the Third Voyage reached Surat in 1608, but Portuguese influence was strong, and it was not until 1612, when Captain Best successfully beat off violent Portuguese attacks, that the Gujarat officials would grant to the English the right to trade at Surat. Early in 1613 this right was confirmed by an imperial farman. Surat thus became the seat of a presidency of the East India Company, which in time developed into the Presidency of Bombay.

English capture of Ormuz. In 1615 the English again defeated the Portuguese at sea, and their capture of Ormuz in 1622, with the aid of a Persian military force, further weakened the Portuguese power, already endangered by Dutch attacks elsewhere. Thenceforward they had little to fear from Portugal.

Embassy of Sir T. Roe. In 1615 James I sent Sir Thomas Roe as his ambassador to the Emperor Jahangir. During his stay of about three years in India, Sir Thomas, although he could not obtain all he asked for, succeeded in securing important privileges for his countrymen. From time to time British adventurers established many factories or trading stations at various points along the western coast, including one at Anjengo in Travancore. But their activity was not confined to that coast, the more easily accessible.

Settlements on Bay of Bengal. In the course of a few years they made their way into the Bay of Bengal and founded factories. The earliest was at Masulipatam, established in 1611, but others followed, such as Armagaon, built about 1625, the first fortified English post in India.

Foundation of Madras. Business at Masulipatam and Armagaon was hampered by the exactions of local officials, and experience showed that the piece goods required for export to Bantam and Persia were to be had at cheaper rates farther south. The chief at Armagaon, Francis Day, therefore secured from a local Hindu chief the grant of a strip of land just north of the friendly, decaying, Portuguese settlement of San Thomé. The grant was afterwards confirmed by the raja of Chandra-giri, the representative of the old sovereigns of Vijayanagar; by it the English were permitted to erect fortifications, and the revenues were divided between them and the Nayak. Thus England acquired her first proprietary holding on Indian soil, and the foundation of the Presidency of Madras was laid. A fort was quickly built (to the dismay of the thrifty directors at home) and named Fort St. George. This gave to Madras its official designation as the Presidency of Fort St. George.
In 1647 the district fell into the hands of Golkonda, but happily the English were on good terms with the general, Mir Jumla, and secured his confirmation of their position.

Foundation of Calcutta. The destruction in the 1660’s of Portuguese and Arakanese pirates, who had infested the head of the Bay of Bengal, by Shayasta Khan opened a new area of trade to the Dutch and the English. Bengal offered new products such as silk and saltpetre, and trade in these rapidly grew. In 1688, however, Sir Josiah Child’s foolish war with Aurangzeb ended in the expulsion of the English. When the Nawab Ibrāhīm Khan invited them back, they chose not Hugli, the Mughul centre of commerce, but a mud-flat with a deep-water anchorage, the site of Calcutta. As at Madras the choice was dictated by the need for security. There the delta of the evil-smelling Cooom, here extensive swamps, provided protection. So Job Charnock, truculent, masterful, but ‘always a faithful man to the Company’, doggedly set to work to build and fortify the settlement of Calcutta. In 1696 was built Fort William—so named after King William III—and the Presidency of Fort William or Bengal was established.

Acquisition of Bombay. Bombay was acquired by the Crown in 1661 as part of the dowry of Catharine of Braganza, queen of Charles II. The cession was made by the Portuguese in order to secure English support against the Dutch. A few years later the king, who had failed to appreciate the value of the acquisition, granted the island to the East India Company in return for the trifling sum of ten pounds a year.

Gerald Aungier. The real founder of the city was the early governor, Gerald Aungier (1669–77), who foresaw the future greatness of his charge, declaring that it was ‘the city which by God’s assistance is intended to be built’. Aungier, although rarely mentioned in the current general histories, was one of the noblest of the founders of the Indian empire. He is described as being ‘a chivalric and intrepid man . . . a gentleman well qualified for governing’, who made it his ‘daily study to advance the Company’s interest and the good and safety of the people under him’. His grave at Surat, to which Bombay was subordinate in his time, is marked by a tablet, affixed in 1916.1

Bombay became the headquarters of the English in western India instead of Surat, when Maratha raids had upset the commercial life of Gujarat. The Bombay territory, however, did not attain much importance until the time of Warren Hastings. The noble harbour could not be fully utilized until the passage of the Western Ghats had become practicable.

The United Company. Towards the close of the seventeenth century the East India Company encountered much opposition in England, which resulted in the formation of a rival body entitled ‘The English Company Trading to the East Indies’. The old company was brought to the brink of ruin. But its directors were full of fight, and

declared that ‘two East India Companies in England could no more subsist without destroying one the other, than two kings, at the same time regnant in one kingdom’.

After much bitter and undignified quarrelling in both England and India an agreement was arranged in 1702. The difficult financial questions at issue were finally set at rest in 1708 by the award of Lord Godolphin, with the result that the rivals were combined in a single body styled ‘The United Company of Merchants of England trading to the East Indies’. The United Company thus formed is the famous corporation which acquired the sovereignty of India during the century extending from 1757 to 1858.

Failure of Portuguese, Dutch, and French. The Portuguese, who had the advantage of the start in the race for the control of the Indian trade, lost everything from causes sufficiently obvious, which have been already indicated. The Dutch, though they carried on a very vigorous trade in India, had their main centre in Java, whence they could gather riches by their monopoly of the trade of the Archipelago and Spice Islands. The French entered the field too late and failed to show sufficient enterprise or to receive adequate backing from their government at home. The English proved their superiority at sea against all combats from an early date. Their commercial affairs in India were looked after by agents often of dubious character, but always daring, persistent, and keen men of business, though often ill supported by the home government.

During the time of the Great Mughuls the British territory in India was of negligible area, comprising only a few square miles in the island of Bombay, Madras city, and three or four other localities. But even then the prowess of their sea captains had made their nation a power in Indian politics. Half a century after the death of Aurangzeb, when rich Bengal was acquired, nothing, not even an Act of Parliament, could stop the masters of the sea and the Gangetic valley from becoming the rulers of India.

**CHRONOLOGY**

<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td>Vasco da Gama arrived at Calicut</td>
<td>May 1498</td>
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<td>Portuguese conquest of Goa</td>
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<td>Death of Albuquerque</td>
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<td>Trade of Goa injured by destruction of Vijayanagar</td>
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<td>Union of crowns of Spain and Portugal</td>
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<td>Defeat of the Spanish Armada</td>
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<td>Charter to E. I. Co. of merchants of London</td>
<td>31 Dec. 1600</td>
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<td>United E. I. Co. of the Netherlands</td>
<td>1602</td>
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<td>Accession of Jahangir</td>
<td>1605</td>
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<td>Third ‘Separate Voyage’; Capt. Hawkins at Surat.</td>
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<td>Joint stock voyages began; English factory established at Surat;</td>
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<td>Portuguese defeated at sea</td>
<td>1612</td>
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<td>Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe</td>
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<td>Danish settlement at Tranquebar</td>
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THE MUGHUL EMPIRE

Capture of Ormuz by English and Persians . . . . . 1622
Massacre of Amboyna . . . . . 1623
Early English factories on eastern coast . . . . . 1625-34
Death of Jahangir; accession of Shahjahan . . . . 1627-8
Grant of site of Madras . . . . . 1 March 1640
Accession of Aurangzeb . . . . . 1658-9
Cession of Bombay; charter of Charles II . . . . . 1661
French 'Compagnie des Indes' established . . . . . 1664
Gerald Angier at Bombay . . . . . 1669-77
Pondicherry founded . . . . . 1674
War of E. I. Co. with Aurangzeb . . . . . 1685-7
Calcutta founded . . . . . 1690
The new 'English Company trading to the East Indies'. . . . . 1698
Union of the new and old companies . . . . . 1702
Lord Godolphin's award; the 'United Company of Merchants of
France trading to the East Indies'. . . . . 1708

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CHAPTER 3

Akbar, 1555–1605

Humayun’s sons. When Humayun died he left two sons, Akbar, the elder, aged thirteen, and Muhammad Hakim, the younger, who was more than two years junior to his half-brother. The Kabul province remained nominally in the charge of the younger prince, and, although regarded officially as a dependency of Hindustan, was ordinarily administered as an independent principality. Akbar, at the time of his father’s death, was in camp with his guardian, Bairām Khān the Turkoman, engaged in the pursuit of Sher Shāh’s nephew, Sikandar Sūr, who had collected a force in the Panjab and sought to win the crown for himself.

Enthronement of Akbar. Arrangements having been made to conceal Humayun’s decease for a time sufficient to allow of the peaceful proclamation of Akbar’s accession, the enthronement of the heir was duly effected at Kalānaur, in the Gurdaspur District, on 14 February 1556. The brick platform and seat used in the ceremony still exist and are now reverently preserved. But the enthronement ceremony merely registered the claim of Humayun’s son to succeed to the throne of Hindustan. The deceased monarch never had had really assured possession of his kingdom, and during his brief second reign of a few months was in the position of an adventurer who had secured a momentary military success. He could not be regarded as an established legitimate sovereign. The representatives of his great rival Sher Shāh had claims quite as strong as those of Akbar to the lordship of Hindustan.

Two Sūr claimants. At that moment the effective claimants representing the Sūr dynasty were two nephews of Sher Shāh. The first of the two, king Muhammad Shāh ‘Ādil or ‘Adalī, had actually succeeded for a time in establishing himself as the successor of Sher Shāh’s son, Islām Shāh, who had died in 1554. But at the time of Humayun’s fatal accident he had retired to the eastern provinces and was residing at Chunar, near Mirzapur. Sher Shāh’s other nephew, Sikandar, as already mentioned, was in the Panjab engaged in operations on his own behalf.

Hēmū, a third claimant. King ‘Adali’s interests in the north were in the charge of his capable Hindu minister and general, Hēmū, a trader or Baniya by birth, who had already won many victories for his master. Hēmū, advancing through Gwalior, occupied both Agra and Delhi, thus gaining a very important advantage. Tardi Beg, who had been entrusted by the protector, Bairām Khān, with the defence of
Delhi, failed in his duty, and allowed the city to fall into the enemy's hands. For that offence he was executed by order of Bairam Khan. The punishment, although inflicted in an irregular fashion without trial, was necessary and substantially just.

Hemû, after his occupation of Delhi, bethought himself that he was in possession of a powerful army, many elephants, and much treasure, while his sovereign was far away in Chunar. He came to the conclusion that he had better claim the throne for himself rather than on behalf of Adalî. Accordingly, he secured the support of the Afghan contingents by liberal donatives, and ventured to assume royal state under the style of Raja Bikramajit or Vikramâditya, a title borne by several renowned Hindu kings in ancient times. He thus became Akbar's most formidable competitor, while both Adalî and Sikandar Sûr dropped into the background for the moment.

Second battle of Panipat. Bairâm Khân, with Akbar, advanced through Thanesar to the historic plain of Panipat, where, thirty years earlier, Babur had routed and slain Sultan Ibrâhîm Lodi. Hemû approached the same goal from the west. The Hindu general, although he had the misfortune to lose his park of artillery in a preliminary engagement, possessed a powerful host of 1,500 war elephants on which he relied, and was in command of troops far superior in number to those of his adversary.

The armies met in battle on 5 November 1556. At first Hemû was successful on both wings. Probably he would have been the victor but for the accident that he was hit in the eye by an arrow and rendered unconscious. His army, when deprived of its leader, the sole reason for its existence, dispersed at once. Bairâm Khân and Akbar, who had left the conduct of the battle to subordinate officers, rode up from the rear. Their helpless dying opponent was brought before them. The Protector desired his royal ward to earn the coveted title of Ghâzî by slaying the infidel with his own hand. The boy, naturally obeying the instruction of his guardian, smote the prisoner on the neck with his scimitar, and the bystanders finished off the victim. The commonly accepted story that young Akbar exhibited a chivalrous unwillingness to strike a wounded prisoner is a later, courtly invention.

Famine, 1555–6. During the years 1555 and 1556 the upper provinces of India, and more especially the Agra and Delhi territories, suffered from an appalling famine due primarily to the failure of rain and much aggravated by the long continued operations of pitiless armies. Hemû had displayed the most brutal indifference to the sufferings of the people, and had pampered his elephants with rice, sugar, and butter, while men and women ate one another. He deserved his fate.

End of the Sûr dynasty. The victors pressed the pursuit of the broken foe and promptly occupied both Agra and Delhi. During the year 1557 the pretensions of the Sûr family to the sovereignty of Hindustan came to an end. Sikandar Sûr, who surrendered, was
generously treated and provided with a fief in the eastern provinces. King 'Adalî made no attempt to dispute the verdict of the sword at Panipat. He remained in the east, and was killed in a conflict with the King of Bengal. Akbar's position as the successor of Humayun was thus unchallenged, although he had still much fighting to do before he attained a position as good as that occupied by his father during his first reign.

Progress of reconquest. In the course of the years 1558–60 the recovery of the Mughul dominion in Hindustan progressed by the occupation of Gwalior, the strong fortress of central India, Ajmer, the key of northern Rajputana, and the Jaunpur province in the east. An attempt on the Rajput castle of Ranthambhor failed for the moment, to be renewed successfully a few years later. Preliminary arrangements for the conquest of Malwa were interrupted by the events connected with Akbar's assumption of personal rule and the dismissal of Bairâm Khân, his guardian and Protector.

Dismissal of Bairâm Khân. Early in 1560 the young sovereign, then in his eighteenth year, began to feel galled by the tutelage of his guardian, who was a masterful man, prone to exert his authority without much regard for other people's feelings. Akbar's natural impatience was encouraged by Hamida Bâno Bêgam, his mother; by Mâham Anaga, chief of the nurses and ranking as a foster-mother of the sovereign; by her son, Adham Khân; and by Shihâb-ud-dîn, her relative, the governor of Delhi. All those personages, who had much influence over Akbar, disliked Bairâm Khân for reasons of their own. In the spring of 1560 Akbar dismissed the Protector from office and announced his intention of taking the reins of government into his own hands. Bairâm Khân, after some hesitation, submitted to the royal commands, and started for Mecca as ordered. But, on second thoughts, being angered because he was hustled on his way by an ungrateful upstart named Pir Muhammad, he rebelled, although in a half-hearted fashion. He was defeated in the Panjab and again compelled to submit. Akbar treated the ex-regent with generosity and allowed him to proceed on his journey towards Mecca with all ceremonial honour. Bairâm Khân reached Pâtan in Gujarât, where he was murdered by a private enemy in January 1561. His little son, Abdurrahîm, was saved, and lived to become the principal nobleman in the empire. The intrigue against the regent was engineered by a court clique who desired his destruction. They were supported by the orthodox, who, ranged against him as a Shia, had also been violently offended by his choice of Shaikh Gadâi as Sadr-us-Sudûr. Akbar at that time was under petticoat government and had little concern with state affairs. His personal conduct in the affair shows a generous temper, so far as appears. The faults of Bairâm Khân certainly deserved indulgence from Akbar, who, like his father, was indebted for his throne to the loyalty of the Turkoman.

Petticoat government, 1560–2. The next two years are the most
discreditable in Akbar’s life. The young monarch, as his biographer repeatedly observes, ‘remained behind the veil’, and seemed to care for nothing but sport. He manifested no interest in the affairs of his kingdom, which he left to be mismanaged by unscrupulous women, aided by Adham Khan, Pir Muhammad, and other men equally devoid of scruple. The conquest of Malwa, entrusted to Adham Khan and Pir Muhammad, was effected with savage cruelty to which Akbar made no objection, though he did angrily demand the spoils they retained. The fortress of Mirtha (Merta) in Rajputana was taken in 1562.

Emancipation of Akbar. The emancipation of Akbar from a degrading tutelage came in May 1562. His appointment in the previous November of Shams-ud-din Atga Khan as prime minister was extremely distasteful to Maimam Anaga and her friends, who feared that their ill-used power might slip from their hands. Adham Khan one day swaggered into the palace where the prime minister was at work and stabbed him to death. Akbar, hearing the noise, came out from an inner apartment and narrowly escaped injury from the ruffian murderer. But a stunning blow from the heavy royal fist felled the traitor, who was then hurled from the battlements, thus suffering in a summary fashion the just penalty of his crime. Pir Muhammad also died this year after rashly invading Khandesh—‘the sighs of the orphans, of the weak, and of the captives did their work with him’. From that time Akbar was a free man, although the final emancipation was deferred until two years later (1564), when his mother’s brother, a half-insane monster named Khwaja Muazzam, was removed. Akbar’s policy for the forty-one remaining years of his reign was his own.

Reforms. In 1555 the ruler of the small state of Amber, Raja Bihār Mal, who earlier had submitted to Babur and Humayun, was presented to Akbar and well received. In 1561, however, the jagirdar of Ajmer attacked him, reduced him to great straits, and took his son as hostage. The raja’s complete destruction was only prevented by an order from court, and to secure his position the raja offered a daughter in marriage to Akbar. At Sambhar he married the princess, who became the mother of the Emperor Jahangir, and received into his service Mān Singh, the grandson, by adoption, of Bihār Mal. In the same year Todar Mal entered the imperial revenue service. The happiness of the marriage and the excellence of the Rajputs’ loyal services led to the adoption by Akbar of the position of ruler over both Hindus and Muslims alike. Marriages with princesses of other Rajput states followed in later years. At this period (1562–4) Akbar effected several important changes. He abolished the taxes on Hindu pilgrims at Muttra; forbade the enslavement of prisoners of war, thereby reversing the policy of Firuz Shah Tughluq; and also remitted the jizya or poll-tax on non-Muslims if Abu-i Fazl can be believed. (Badānī refers to the assessment of jizya in 1575, and puts its abolition in 1579.) The reforms were his own doing, carried out many years before he came under the influence of
Abu-l Fazl and the other persons whose names are associated with his later policy in matters of religion.

The ambition of Akbar. Akbar, one of the most ambitious of men, who loved power and wealth, brooking no rival near his throne, now set himself to effect the systematic subjugation of north-western and central India, to be followed later by the conquest of the west, east, and south. His designs were purely aggressive, his intention being to make himself the unquestioned lord paramount of India, and to suppress the independence of every kingdom within the reach of his arm. He carried out that policy with unflinching tenacity until January 1601, when the mighty fortress of Asirgarh, his last acquisition, passed into his hands. Circumstances beyond his control, prevented him from continuing his career of conquest until his death in October 1605.

He began by encouraging a great noble, Asaf Khān I, governor of Kara and the eastern provinces, to destroy the independence of Gondwana, equivalent to the northern portion of the present Madhya Pradesh, then governed by the dowager Rani Dūrgāvati, an excellent princess, with whose administration no fault could be found. She was driven to her death, her country was overrun, and the wealth accumulated in the course of centuries was plundered. Injudicious flatterers of Akbar have printed much canting nonsense about his supposed desire to do good to the conquered peoples by his annexations. He never contended on the subject himself, or made any secret of the fact that he regarded as an offence the independence of a neighbour. 'A monarch', he said, 'should be ever intent on conquest, otherwise his neighbours rise in arms against him. The army should be exercised in warfare, lest from want of training they become self-indulgent.' Throughout his reign he acted consistently on those avowed principles.

Rebellions. The acquisition of the leading fortresses was an essential preliminary for securing the firm grasp of the imperial government on Hindostan or upper India. Gwalior, Chunar, and Mirtha had been acquired early in the reign. The next object of attack was Chitor in the territory of the Śīśōdia rana of Mewar in Rajputana, better known as the Udaipur state. Some delay in the execution of the padshah's ambitious projects was caused by the outbreak of several rebellions in the eastern provinces headed by a family group of Uzbek officers, who disliked Akbar's Persianized ways and would have preferred Kamran's son, his cousin, to occupy the throne. In 1565 Akbar felt bound, as a matter of state necessity, to order the private execution of that cousin in order to prevent him from being used as a pretender. The act was the first of the long series of similar executions which have stained the annals of the Mughul dynasty. The rebellions of Khān Zamān and the other Uzbek chiefs came to an end in 1567, leaving Akbar free to prepare for the siege of Chitor. He deeply resented the independent position assumed by the rana, who was acknowledged universally to be the head of the Rajput clans. His family never
allowed a daughter to enter the Mughul palace. Udai Singh, the reigning rana in 1567, was a coward, unworthy of his noble ancestry, but his personal unworthiness did not prevent his brethren from organizing a gallant defence.

Siege of Chitor. The siege of Chitor, the most famous and dramatic military operation of the reign, lasted from 20 October 1567 to 23 February 1568, and would have lasted much longer had not Akbar by a lucky shot killed Jaï Mal, the chieftain who was the soul of the defence, having assumed the place which the recreant rana should have occupied. The garrison abandoned all hope when deprived of their leader. The women were immolated on funeral pyres to save them from dishonour, a dread rite known as jauhar and usually practised by Rajputs when hard pressed. The clansmen of the regular garrison threw themselves on the Mughul swords and perished fighting. Akbar was so enraged by the fierce resistance that he massacred 30,000 of the country people who had taken part in the defence.

The gates of the fortress were taken off their hinges and removed to Agra. The huge kettledrums which used to proclaim for miles around the exit and entrance of the princes, and the massive candelabra which lighted the shrine of the Great Mother, also were carried away to adorn the halls of the victor. Chitor was left desolate, so that in the eighteenth century it became the haunt of tigers and other wild beasts. In these latter days it has partially recovered, and the lower town is now a prosperous little place with a railway station.

Fate of Rajputana. The fall of Chitor, followed in the next year (1569) by that of Ranthambhor, made Akbar master of Rajputana, although not in full sovereignty. The clans of Mewar never submitted to him, and he had to fight them from time to time during the greater part of his reign. But no doubt remained that the Mughul had become the paramount power over his Rajput neighbours. Most of the princes were content to receive official appointments as salaried dignitaries of the empire, and several gave daughters in marriage to the emperor. Rajputana or Rajasthan was reckoned as a province or Sūba with the headquarters at Ajmer, and the chivalry of the clans for the most part became devoted soldiers of the padshah.

The strong fortress of Kalanjar in Bundelkhand to the south of the Jumna opened its gates in 1569, the year in which Ranthambhor was taken.

Akbar was thus left at liberty to indulge his ambition in other directions, and to extend his conquests as far as the Arabian Sea on the west and the Bay of Bengal on the east.

Akbar's love of art. The activity of Akbar's versatile mind was never limited to the business of war and conquest. As early as his seventh regnal year he had taken pains to requisition the services of Tānsēn, the best singer in India, and he always retained an intelligent interest in music. Every form of art also attracted him, and as a boy he
had learned the elements of drawing and painting under two renowned artists. He commemorated the gallantry of Jai Mal and Pattā, the heroes of Chitor, by causing their effigies to be carved and set on stone elephants placed at the gate of the Agra fort.

**Buildings.** He loved building and possessed excellent taste in architecture. The magnificent stone-faced walls of the Agra Fort were begun in 1565, and hundreds of buildings modelled on the designs of Bengal and Gujarat architects were erected within the precincts. Most of them were pulled down by Shahjahan, whose canons of taste differed. The palace-city of Fatehpur-Sikri, twenty-three miles to the west of Agra, was begun in 1571, and finished about six or seven years later.

**Akbar's sons.** Akbar, having had the misfortune to lose at least two infant children while living at Agra, came to regard that place as unlucky. A famous Muslim holy man, Shaikh Salim Chishti, who dwelt among the rocks at Sikri, promised the emperor three sons who should survive. The prophecy was fulfilled. The eldest, born in August 1569, and named Prince Salim, in honour of the saint, became the Emperor Jahangir in due course. Murad, the second prince, born in 1570, died from the effects of intemperance about six years prior to his father's decease. The third son, Daniyal, met the same fate some four years later than his brother.

**Fatehpur-Sikri.** The emperor, believing that the neighbourhood of Sikri, where the saint dwelt, would be lucky for himself, resolved to build a vast mosque there for the use of the Shaikh, and beside it a palace and royal residence, equipped with all the conveniences thought necessary in that age and adorned with all the resources of art.

After the conquest of Gujarat in 1573 the new city was named Fathābād or Fatehpur, 'Victory town'. In order to distinguish it from many other places of the same name it is usually known as Fatehpur-Sikri. The great mosque is still perfect, and several of the more important palace buildings, now carefully conserved, are almost uninjured. They are constructed of the local red sandstone, a fine durable building material. Artists from all countries accessible to Akbar were collected to decorate the buildings with carving and frescoes. Most of the carving has escaped damage, but few fragments of painting survive.

Fatehpur-Sikri was occupied as the capital of the empire for only about fifteen years, when Akbar went north and quitted his fantastic city for ever, excepting a passing visit in 1601. The latest building of importance is the Buland Darwāza or Lofty Portal of the mosque, erected in 1575–6, probably as a triumphal arch to commemorate the conquest of Gujarat.

**Gujarat.** The rich province known as Gujarat, lying between Malwa and the Arabian Sea, had been held by Humayun for a short time, and long before had been subject to the sultanate of Delhi in the days of the Khiljis and Muhammad bin Tughluq. Akbar, therefore, could advance reasonable claims to the recovery of the province, which, in any
case, invited aggression by its wealth. Just then, too, the government had fallen into disorder and the intervention of Akbar was actually asked for by a local chief.

Conquest of Gujarat. The campaign began in July 1572. Surat was taken after a siege, and Akbar gave brilliant proof of his personal courage and prowess in a hard-fought skirmish at Sarnāl. When the emperor, as he may now be called, started for home in the April following, he believed that the newly conquered province had been securely annexed and might be left safely in the charge of his officers. But he was hardly back in Fathpur-Sikri when he received reports of a formidable insurrection headed by certain disorderly cousins of his known as the Mīrzsās, who already had given much trouble, and by a noble named Ikhtiyār-ul-Mulk. Akbar, who was then in his thirty-first year and in the fullest enjoyment of his exceptional powers, bodily and mental, rose to the occasion. He prepared a fresh expeditionary force with extraordinary rapidity, looking after everything personally, and sparing no expense. He declared that nobody would be ready to start sooner than himself, and made good his promise. Having sent on a small advanced guard, he rode out of his capital on 23 August with some 3,000 horsemen, rushed across Rajputana at hurricane speed and reached the outskirts of Ahmadabad, nearly 600 miles distant, in eleven days all told—nine days of actual travelling—a marvellous feat of endurance. The emperor, with his tiny force fought 20,000 of the enemy near Ahmadabad on 2 September 1573, and gained a decisive victory. He was back again in his capital on 4 October, Gujarat having then become definitely part of the empire. The province was disturbed many times afterwards, but the imperial supremacy was never questioned until 1758 when the Marathas occupied Ahmadabad.

The conquest of Gujarat an epoch. The conquest of Gujarat marks an important epoch in Akbar's history. The annexation gave his government free access to the sea with all the rich commerce passing through Surat and the other western ports. The territory and income of the state were vastly extended, so that the viceroyalty of Gujarat became one of the most important posts in the gift of the sovereign. Akbar now first saw the sea and came into direct contact with the Portuguese, thus introducing new influences operating upon his mind. The province became the practising ground for Raja Todar Mal, the able financier, who made his first revenue 'settlement' on improved principles in Gujarat.⁴

Reforms. The conclusion of the conquest gave Akbar and his advisers an opportunity for introducing several administrative reforms.

The government made a determined effort to check the extensive frauds continually practised by the officials or mansabdārs, who were

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¹ Near Thārā in the Kaira District, Bombay.
² The word 'settlement' in this technical sense is a translation of the Persian term bandobast. It includes all the processes necessary for the assessment of the 'land revenue' or crown rent, that is to say, the state's share of the produce of the cultivated land or its cash equivalent.
bound each to supply a certain number of mounted men. The expedient principally relied on was known as the ‘branding regulation’, based on precedents set by 'Alā-ud-din Khilji and Sher Shāh. Elaborate rules were laid down for branding every horse in the service of the government and thus making fraudulent musters of cavalry more difficult. The measure met with so much covert opposition from influential persons whose interests were affected that the success attained was only partial.

Akbar sought to diminish the power of the jāgīrdārs, or holders of revenue-assignments, and to enhance the authority of the crown by ‘converting jāgīrs into crown-lands (khâlsa)’, that is to say, by dividing the imperial territory into convenient jurisdictions under the direct administration of salaried officials. Firūz Tughluq had favoured the system of paying his officers by assigning to each a district, from which the assignee collected the land revenue and cesses which otherwise would have been paid to the state. Akbar perceived clearly that that system tended to increase the power of local magnates and predisposed them to rebellion, while being also injurious to the fiscal interest of the central government. He was fond of money and always keen to increase his income. He therefore gave up the practice of assigning jāgīrs or fiefs, so far as possible, and preferred to appoint officials remunerated by definite salaries.

The consequent increase of officialdom, if it was to become an efficient instrument of government, involved the establishment of a bureaucracy or graded service of state officials. Akbar accordingly regularized the previously existing system of mansabdārs, or officeholders, and classified them in thirty-three grades. His arrangements will be described more particularly later. Here the fact is to be noted that all the above-mentioned measures of administrative and financial reform were worked out in the interval between the conquest of Gujarat in 1573 and the invasion of Bengal in 1575. The regulations were further perfected in subsequent years.

Conquest of Bengal. Akbar needed no pretext to induce him to undertake the extension of his empire eastward and the subjugation of Bengal which long before had been subject to the sultanate of Delhi. But the adventure was forced upon him by the rashness of Dāūd Khān, the young Afghan king of Bengal, who openly defied Akbar and believed himself to be more than a match for the imperial power. His father, Sulaimān Kararānī, had been careful to give formal recognition of the padshah’s suzerainty, while preserving his practical independence. In 1574 Akbar undertook the chastisement of the presumptuous prince. He voyaged down the rivers, and drove Dāūd from Patna and Hajipur in the height of the rainy season, when Hindu custom forbade active operations. But Akbar cared for weather conditions as little as Alexander of Macedon had done, and insisted on the campaign being pressed, much against the inclination of his officers. He himself returned to Fathpur-Sikri. Dāūd was defeated early in 1575 at Tukarōi
in the Balasore District. The battle would have been decisive and ended the war but for the ill-judged lenity of old Munim Khān, the commander-in-chief, who granted easy terms and allowed Dāūd to recover strength. Another campaign thus became necessary, and Dāūd was not finally defeated and killed until July 1576, in a battle fought near Rajmahal. From that date Bengal lost its independence.

Orissa was not annexed until 1592.

Defeat of Rana Partār Singh. In this year (1576), which saw the annexation of Bengal, Kunwar Mān Singh of Amber, whose sister by adoption was married to the emperor, inflicted a crushing defeat on the brave Rana Partār Singh of Mewar, the son of the craven Udai Singh. The battle was fought at the entrance of the Haldighāt Pass, near the town of Gogūnda, and is spoken of indifferently by either name. The rana was driven to take refuge in remote fastnesses, and the strongholds of his kingdom passed into the hands of the imperialists. But before his death in 1597 he had recovered most of them. Ajmer, Chitor, and Mandalgarh always remained in possession of the padshah's officers.

The empire in 1576. The conquest of Bengal in 1576, twenty years after his accession, made AKBAR master of all Hindustan, including the entire basins of the Indus and Ganges, excepting Sind on the lower course of the Indus, which did not come into his possession until many years later. He had thus become sovereign of the most valuable regions of India, extending from the Arabian Sea to the Bay of Bengal and from the Himalayas to the Narbada; besides the semi-independent Kabul province. The territories under his rule, with their huge population, fertile soil, numerous manufactures, and vast commerce, both internal and sea-borne, constituted even then an empire richer probably than any other in the world. The subsequent additions to his dominions, comprising Kashmir, Orissa, Sind, Kandahar, Khandesh, and a portion of the Deccan, with the complete absorption of the Kabul province, merely rounded off the compact empire which had been gradually acquired and consolidated in the first twenty years of his reign.

The 'House of Worship'. From 1575 AKBAR ordinarily left the command of armies in the field to his trusted officers, Mān Singh, Todar Mal, Abdurrahim, or others. Early in that year, when he returned from Patna, he busied himself with building in the gardens of the palace at Fathpur-Sikri near the mosque a handsome edifice called the House of Worship ('Ibādat Khāna) to be used as a debating-hall for the discussion of questions of religion and theology in which he was deeply interested. During the first three years, until 1578 or 1579, the discussions were limited to the various schools of Muslim theology. Even then they were sometimes embittered. From 1579 to 1582, when the debates came to an end, representatives of other religions were admitted and the disputants met in the private apartments of the palace. The site of the House of Worship has been utterly forgotten
and no trace of the building, which was large and highly decorated, has been discovered. The probability is that Akbar pulled it down when he had no longer any use for it.

More reforms. The emperor during the years 1575 and 1576 also devoted much attention to the development of his administrative reforms, both those already mentioned and others. The record department was organized, and a record room was built at Fathpur-Sikri. The grading of the mansabdārs was made more systematic, and a plan was devised for dividing the older provinces into artificial districts each yielding a quarter of a million of rupees in landi revenue. That plan was a failure and the government soon reverted to the use of the recognized sub-districts called parganas.

The mint was reorganized in 1577–8, and placed in charge of the celebrated artist Abd us-Samad, who had been Akbar's drawing-master twenty years earlier. The mint was a well-managed department, and Akbar's coinage was both abundant in quantity and excellent in quality.

The First Jesuit Mission. Akbar became personally acquainted with European Christians for the first time in 1572, when he met certain Portuguese merchants at Cambay. In the next year, 1573, he extended his intercourse with the foreigners at Surat and adjusted terms of peace with Antonio Cabral, the envoy from the viceroy at Goa. In 1576 and 1577 the emperor obtained some imperfect knowledge of the Christian religion from Father Julian Pereira, vicar-general in Bengal, and from other sources, but only sufficient to make him eager to attain more accurate information. Antonio Cabral, who again visited him at the capital in 1578, not being qualified to answer all the imperial inquiries, Akbar resolved to obtain from Goa theological experts who should be able to resolve his doubt and satisfy his intense curiosity. In September 1579, accordingly, he dispatched to the authorities at Goa a letter begging them to send two learned priests capable of instructing him in the doctrines of the Gospels. He assured his expected guests of the most honourable reception and effectual protection.

The church authorities at Goa eagerly accepted the invitation, which seemed to open up a prospect of converting the emperor to Christianity, and with him his court and people.

The two principal missionaries selected, Father Rodolfo Aquaviva and Father Antonio Monserrate, both Jesuits or members of the Society of Jesus, were remarkable men, highly qualified for their task in different ways. Aquaviva won respect by a life of extreme asceticism. Monserrate, a person of much learning, was directed to prepare a history of the mission; and obeyed the command by writing an excellent Latin treatise, which ranks as one of the principal authorities for the reign of Akbar. The priests travelled from Daman and Surat through Khandesh, the wild Bhil country, Malwa, Narwar, Gwalior, and Dholpur to Fathpur–Sikri, where they arrived on 28 February (o.s.) 1580, and were received with extraordinary honour. The emperor's second
son, Prince Murad, then about ten years of age, was made over to Father Monserrate for instruction in the Portuguese language and Christian morals.

The 'Infallibility Decree'. When Akbar returned triumphant from Gujarat in 1573, a learned, although rather heretical, Muslim theologian named Shaikh Mubarak greeted him by expressing the hope that the padshah might become the spiritual as well as the temporal head of his people—in fact, pope as well as king. In 1579 he felt free to give practical effect to the theologian's hint. Shaikh Mubarak prepared a formal document, which may be conveniently called the Infallibility decree, authorizing the emperor to decide with binding authority any question concerning the Muslim religion, provided that the ruling should be in accordance with some verse of the Quran. The measure professed to be 'for the glory of God and the propagation of Islam'. It had no connexion with any other religion. The decree, which was forced upon the acceptance of the Ulama, or Muslim doctors of divinity, obviously rendered superfluous the inter-Muslim discussions in the House of Worship, which ceased accordingly.

A little earlier in the same year (1579) Akbar had startled and offended religious people by displacing the regular preacher at the mosque, and himself mounting the pulpit, where he recited verses composed by Faizi, the elder son of Shaikh Mubarak. About the same time he began to show many indications that he had lost faith in the creed of the Prophet of Mecca. The Jesuits, when coming up from the coast at the beginning of 1580, were informed that the emperor had even forbidden the use of the name of Muhammad in the public prayers.

Muslim alarm and revolt. The excessive favour shown by the sovereign to his Jesuit visitors, his obvious lack of faith in Islam, and his partial compliance with the ritual of Parsees and Jains, who shared the royal condescension along with the Christian priests, grievously alarmed his Muslim subjects and produced important political effects.

The Bengal rebellion. The Muslim chiefs in Bengal and Bihar, mostly of Afghan origin, were specially alarmed by Akbar's conduct, which was interpreted, and not without reason, as an attack upon the Muslim religion. They were also irritated by his administrative measures, the resumption of grants in Bihar, the reduction of special pay for Bihar and Bengal, and the branding regulations, as carried out with considerable harshness by his officers, and for those reasons determined on rebellion. The Qazi of Jaunpur boldly issued a formal ruling, affirming the lawfulness of rebellion against Akbar as an apostate, an act of high treason for which he paid with his life.

The rebellion broke out in January 1580, and continued for five years. The rebels aimed at replacing Akbar by his orthodox half-brother Muhammad Hakim of Kabul, who supported their movement by an invasion of the Panjab. But the Bengal insurgents were separated from their ally by hundreds of miles, and the emperor rightly judged
that they might be left to his officers, who would dispose of the trouble in time, as they did.

The expedition to Kabul. He resolved to meet in person the graver danger threatened from Kabul. He equipped an overwhelming force with the utmost care, and marched from the capital in February 1581. Muhammad Hakim, a feeble, drunken creature, fled from the Panjub, and offered little resistance to the advance of Akbar, who entered Kabul in August. His brother kept out of the way and never met him. The emperor was back safely in his capital on 1 December. He permitted Muhammad Hakim to remain as ruler of the Kabul territory until his death from drink in 1585, when his territories passed under the direct government of the padshah.

A critical year. The year 1581 was the most critical in the reign of Akbar, if his early struggles be omitted from consideration. When he marched from Fatehpur-Sikri in February, nearly all the influential Muslims were opposed to him, subtle traitors surrounded his person, and the eastern provinces were in the possession of rebels. Defeat by Muhammad Hakim would have involved the loss of everything—life included. Akbar took no chances. He cowed the traitors by one terrible execution, the solemn and deserved hanging of Khwâja Shâh Mansûr, his finance minister, and overawed his brother by a display of irresistible force. We are fortunate enough to possess an accurate detailed narrative of the Kabul campaign, written by Father Monserrate, tutor of Prince Murad, who accompanied his pupil and the emperor.

When Akbar came home his demeanour showed that he had been freed from a great terror, and that he now felt himself thoroughly secure for the first time in his life. From the beginning of 1582 nobody dared to oppose him. He could do literally what he pleased. He enjoyed and used that liberty to the end of his life twenty-three years later.

The Din Ilâhi. He promptly took advantage of his freedom by publicly showing his contempt and dislike for the Muslim religion, and by formally promulgating a new political creed of his own, adherence to which involved the solemn renunciation of Islam. The new religion, dubbed the Divine Monotheism (Tauhid Ilâhi) or Divine Religion (Din Ilâhi), rejected wholly the claims of Muhammad to be an inspired prophet, and practically replaced him by the emperor. Abu-I Fazl, Shaikh Mubârak’s younger son, who had been introduced at court in 1574, became the high priest of the new creed, and the stage manager of the rather ridiculous initiation ceremonies. Many time-serving courtiers professed to become Akbar’s disciples, surrendering to him life, property, honour, and religion, as the vows required, but the so-called religion never enlisted any considerable following, and it may well be doubted if a single person ever honestly believed in it. Abu-I Fazl, a man of immense learning and endowed with a singularly powerful intellect, certainly was far too intelligent to believe. But he was base enough to play the hypocrite’s part and reap no small profit
thereby, as the confidential secretary and adviser of the sovereign. Akbar’s freak in professing to invent a new eclectic religion, compounded out of selections from several of the old religions, has received far more attention from most European historians than it deserves on its merits.

Akbar’s rejection of Islam. From 1582, when the new religion was solemnly promulgated at a council, and indeed from a date considerably earlier, Akbar was not a Muslim, although on occasion he performed acts of conformity from motives of policy. He told Monserrate distinctly early in 1582 that he was not a Muslim, and that he paid no heed to the kalima, or Muslim formula of the faith. In that year and subsequent years he issued a stream of regulations openly hostile to Islam and inculcating practices learned from the Parsi, Hindu, and Jain teachers whom he received with marked favour and to whom he listened with profound attention. His conduct at different times justified Christians, Hindus, Jains, and Parsis in severally claiming him as one of themselves. But his heart was never really touched by any doctrine, and he died as he had lived for many years, a man whose religion nobody could name. The authors who affirm that he formally professed Islam on his death-bed appear to be mistaken.

Fantastic ordinances. Regulations aimed at Islam, and amounting along with others to an irritating persecution of that religion, wholly inconsistent with the principle of universal toleration, included the following: No child was to be given the name of Muhammad, and if he had already received it the name must be changed. The erection of new and the repair of old mosques were prohibited. The sijdah, or prostration, hitherto reserved for divine worship, was declared to be the due of the sovereign. The study of Arabic, Muslim law, or commentaries on the Quran was discouraged.

Hindu prejudices were humoured by the prohibition of beef, garlic, and onions as food.

Stringent restrictions on the use of flesh meat imposed by a series of enactments seem to have been mainly due to Jain influence, though the idea of Hindu asceticism may also have played a part, as Badāūnī suggests.

The worship of the sun, fire, and light, with sundry ritual observances enforced at court, were chiefly the result of Parsi teaching. Akbar’s mode of life, on the whole, ceased to be that of a Muslim, and constantly approached the Hindu ideal of dharma, as modified by a Zoroastrian or Parsi tinge.

Akbar’s audacity. The prestige resulting from the defeat of his brother in 1581, the suppression of the Bengal and Bihar rebellions, and the fate suffered by opponents of his policy enabled Akbar to do all the strange things mentioned above, and yet to escape assassination or even any open display of disaffection. The necessary backing of force, or the threat of force, which stood behind the audacious imperial policy, was supplied by the Rajput contingents under the command of
the rajas of Amber (Jaipur), Marwar (Jodhpur), and other states. But Akbar never was reduced to the necessity of relying wholly on Hindu support. Many Muslim nobles continued to serve him to the end, whether they liked his proceedings or not.

Result of forty years’ war. Whatever might be his religious vagaries, Akbar never forgot his worldly ambitions. He secured the important strategical position at the confluence of the Ganges and Jumna by building the Allahabad fort in 1583. Three years later, in 1586, he made war on Kashmir and by an act of gross treachery annexed the country, simply because the local sultan presumed to withhold complete submission to the master of Hindostan. Southern Sind was similarly absorbed in 1590; Orissa was conquered by Mān Singh in 1592; Baluchistan, with the coast region of Makran, was added to the empire in 1594; and Qandahar was surrendered by its Persian governor a year later.

Thus, in 1596, every part of India to the north of the Narbada, besides the vast territories of Kabul, Ghazni, and Qandahar, with their dependencies, acknowledged the might of Akbar. No man within that enormous area presumed to call himself independent, unless an exception be made in favour of certain tribes on the frontiers and in the hills. In 1586 the Yūsufzī and allied tribes of the north-western frontier succeeded in closing the Khyber for a period and in defeating one of Akbar’s armies and killing Raja Bīrbal, one of his dearest and most intimate friends. The emperor could afford to overlook such minor military mishaps, and might well feel proud of the results gained by forty years of war.

Ambitious projects. The soaring ambition of Akbar was not bounded by the Narbada, or even by the limits of India and Afghanistan. He avowed his hopes both of regaining the ancient dominions of his ancestors in central Asia beyond the Oxus, and of bringing under his control all the sultanates of the Deccan. Moreover, he ardently desired to expel the Portuguese from his province of Gujarat, and vainly supposed that he could do so without the help of a fleet. But he never succeeded even in coming near to an attempt on Transoxiana, and his attacks on the Portuguese settlements were complete failures. His restricted conquests in the Deccan fell far short of his expectation. Before the campaign in the Deccan is described it will be convenient to revert to Akbar’s curious relations with Christianity and more especially with the Jesuit missionaries.

Akbar and the Jesuits. The first Jesuit mission of Aquaviva and Monserrat ended in 1583 with the withdrawal of Aquaviva. The hopes of Akbar’s conversion which had been entertained at Goa were grievously disappointed. A second mission sent in 1590 at the emperor’s urgent request was recalled in 1592, having effected nothing. The third mission, also dispatched in compliance with a pressing invitation, arrived in 1595 at Lahore where the court then resided, and became a more or less permanent institution, not without its effect on secular
politics. The leading members were Fathers Jerome Xavier and Emmanuel Pinheiro. Their letters, of which many have been printed, are first-class authorities for the latter part of Akbar’s reign. The missionaries, although they did not succeed in converting either the sovereign or his nobles, or indeed in making many converts of any kind, won from Akbar the right to make converts if they could, and obtained from him extraordinary privileges. Both he and his son Prince Salim professed veneration for the Virgin Mary and for Christian images. It is clear that the attention lavished on the priests was not the outcome of genuine religious fervour, but was dictated chiefly by the desire to secure Portuguese military help. Akbar in 1600 made special efforts to obtain the loan of the foreigners’ superior ordnance for the siege of Asirgarh, which he could not breach with his own guns; while the prince, meditating rebellion, and in reality indifferent to religion, was equally eager to enlist their aid against his father. In 1601 Akbar sent a final embassy to Goa without any pretence of seeking religious instruction, but got no satisfaction from the wily Goan authorities, who understood the game perfectly. The Jesuits on their part combined patriotic politics with missionary zeal and acted as unofficial agents of the Portuguese government, or rather of the government of Spain, with which Portugal was then united.¹ Their considerable influence is attested by the report of an Englishman, John Mildenhall, who, seeking trading facilities, visited Akbar in the last years of his life.

Famine. A terrible famine, as bad as any recorded in the long list of Indian famines, desolated the whole of Hindostan or northern India and Kashmir for three or four years from 1595 to 1598. The historians barely notice the calamity, the fullest description being that recorded by a minor author in these few words: ‘A kind of plague also added to the horrors of this period, and depopulated whole houses and cities, to say nothing of hamlets and villages. In consequence of the dearth of grain and the necessities of ravenous hunger, men ate their own kind. The streets and roads were blocked up with dead bodies, and no assistance could be rendered for their removal.’ Some slight relief measures were adopted, but even the proverbial good fortune of Akbar could not either prevent or remedy the effects of long continued failure of rain.

The Deccan campaign. Akbar attempted in 1590 by means of diplomatic missions to induce the rulers of Khandesh in the valley of the Tapti, and of the more distant sultanates of Ahmadnagar (including Berar), Golkonda, and Bijapur, to recognize formally his suzerainty and consent to pay tribute. He did not trouble himself about the small principality of Bidar, which continued to exist until some years after his death. The imperial envoys obtained no substantial success except in Khandesh, which promised obedience. The other states politely evaded Akbar’s demands. He therefore determined on war.

Operations, which began in 1593, were impeded by internal dissen-

¹ The union of the crowns of Portugal and Spain was effected in 1580, and lasted until Dec. 1640.
a. Delhi: Quwat-ul-Islam Masjid

b. Delhi: Moth-ki-Masjid
a. Delhi: Qil'a a-i-Kuhna Masjid in the Purana Qila

b. Delhi: Jami Masjid from the courtyard
sions on both sides. The imperialist generals, Prince Murad, and Abdurrahim, the Khān Khānān, could not agree, while the states of the Deccan continued to quarrel among themselves.

A gallant princess, named Chānd Bībi, defended the city of Ahmadnagar with valour equal to that shown by Rāni Durgāvatī in Gondwana thirty years earlier, but in 1596 was constrained to accept a treaty by which the province of Berar was ceded to the emperor. War soon broke out again, which was terminated in August 1600 by the death of Chānd Bībi and the fall of Ahmadnagar.

Akbar goes south. Meantime, the sultan of Khandesh, Mīrān Bahādur Shāh, had repented of his submission and resolved to fight, relying on the strength of his fortress of Asirgarh, which was defended by renegade Portuguese gunners.

Akbar, who had been detained in the Panjab for thirteen years on account of his fear of an invasion by the Uzbegs, was relieved from that anxiety by the death early in 1598 of Abdullah Khān Uzbeg, the able ruler of Transoxiana. He perceived that the effective prosecution of the Deccan campaign was hopeless without his personal supervision. Accordingly, he marched from Lahore to Agra late in 1598, and in July of the following year was able to resume his advance southwards. He placed Prince Salim in charge of the capital and Ajmer with orders to complete the subjugation of the rana of Mewar. But the prince, who already mediated rebellion, ignored his father's commands, so that the rana was left in peace.

Meantime, in May 1599, Prince Murad had died of delirium tremens in the Deccan, and so had removed one competitor from Salim's path. No rival now remained except Daniyal, a drunken sot.

About the middle of 1599 Akbar crossed the Narbada, and occupied Burhanpur, the capital of Khandesh, without opposition. He then proceeded to make arrangements for the investment and siege of Asirgarh, which was only a few miles distant from Burhanpur and could not be left in enemy hands. It was one of the strongest fortresses in the world at that date, and so amply furnished with water, provisions, guns, and munitions that its defenders might reasonably expect to hold out for years.

Siege of Asirgarh. The emperor soon found that the task which he had set himself was beyond his military powers. His artillery was unable to breach the walls and he failed to obtain Portuguese guns. After the siege had gone on for about eight months, from April to December 1600, he resolved to try treachery. He inveigled Bahādur Shāh into his camp for the purpose of negotiation, swearing by his own head that the king would be allowed to return in safety. But Akbar, who was pressed for time, shamelessly violated his oath and detained Bahādur Shāh, hoping that the garrison would surrender after the usual Indian fashion when deprived of their leader. Bahādur had, however, ordered Yaqut, the African commander to ignore all orders to surrender. The siege dragged on until 17 January (O.S.) 1601, when
the gates were opened by golden keys, or, in other words, Akbar corrupted the Khandesh officers by heavy payments. Akbar was unable to wait, because Prince Salim had already begun his rebellion and it was indispensable that his father should return to the capital. Asirgarh, won by perfidy and bribery, was the last conquest of Akbar, whose hitherto unbroken good fortune no longer attended him. The remaining years of his life were rendered miserable by the treachery of his eldest son, the child of so many prayers, by the scandalous death of Prince Daniyal, and other sorrows.

Three new provinces. The emperor made all possible haste in organizing the administration of the newly acquired territories, which were formally constituted as three sūbas or provinces, namely, Ahmadnagar, Berar, and Khandesh. But the Ahmadnagar sūba had little more than a formal existence, because the greater part of the kingdom remained in the hands of a member of the local royal family. Prince Daniyal was appointed viceroy of southern and western India—that is to say, of the three new sūbas, with Malwa and Gujarat. Akbar arrived at Agra on 23 August 1601.

Submission of Prince Salim. Prince Salim continued in open rebellion, holding court as a king at Allahabad. In August 1602 he inflicted a terrible blow upon his father's feelings by hiring a robber chief named Bīr Singh Bundēla to murder Akbar's trusted friend and counsellor, Abu-l Fazl, whom the prince hated and feared. A temporary and insincere reconciliation between father and son was patched up by Salima Begam in 1603. But no real peace was possible until after the death of Prince Daniyal, which occurred in April 1604, when he died from the effects of drink, like his brother Murad. Salim being then the only son left, Akbar became really anxious to arrange terms with him. The one other possible successor was Salim's son, Prince Khusrū a popular and amiable youth, whose claims were favoured by Raja Mān Singh and Azīz Kokā.

In November 1604 Salim was persuaded to come to court, probably under threats that, if he refused, Khusrū would be declared heir apparent. His father received him with seeming cordiality. He then drew him suddenly into an inner apartment, slapped him soundly in the face, and confined him in a bathroom under the charge of a physician and two servants, as if he were a lunatic requiring medical treatment. After a short time, the length of which is variously stated, Akbar released his son, restored him to favour, made him viceroy of the provinces to which Daniyal had been appointed, and allowed him to reside at Agra as the acknowledged heir apparent.

The prince was cowed by his father's rough handling and gave no further trouble.

Death of Akbar. In September 1605 Akbar became ill with severe diarrhoea or dysentery, which the physicians failed to cure. While on his death-bed and unable to speak he received Salim and indicated by unmistakable gestures that he desired his succession. The emperor
THE SUBAS
1A KABUL
1B KASHMIR
2 LAHORE (Punjab)
3A MULTAN
3B TATTA
4 DELHI
5 AGRA
6 AWADH
7 ALLAHABAD
8 AJMER (included many
9 AHMADABAD (Gujarat)
10 MALWA
11 BIHAR
12A BENGAL
12B ORISSA
13 KHANDESH
14 BERAR
15 AHMADNAGAR

Miles
0 100 200 300 400 500 600

- Mughul Imperial boundary
- Mughul Provincial

Land over 6000 ft. | Land over 1000 ft.

THE MUGHUL EMPIRE IN 1600
passed away in silence, after midnight, early on Thursday morning, 17 October (o.s. = 27 N.S., and Wednesday night by Muslim reckoning). The symptoms of Akbar’s fatal illness, so far as recorded, are consistent with the administration of a secret irritant poison, but the evidence is not sufficient to permit of a definite judgement on the question whether or not he died a natural death. He was buried at Sikandara near Agra in the mausoleum which he had begun, and which his successor rebuilt to a fresh design. His funeral was hurried and poorly attended. ‘Thus’, observes Du Jarric, the eminent Jesuit historian, ‘does the world treat those from whom it expects no good and fears no evil. That was the end of the life and reign of King Akbar.’

Desecration of Akbar’s grave. Unhappily, he was not allowed to rest in peace. The Jats of the neighbourhood, whose revolt began in 1688 during the absence of Aurangzeb in the Deccan, attacked the mausoleum in 1691, breaking in the massive bronze gates, tearing away the costly ornaments, and destroying everything which they could not carry off. Their wrath against their Mughul oppressors led them to a still more shocking outrage. ‘Dragging out the bones of Akbar, they threw them into the fire and burnt them.’

Succession of Salim. The intrigues of Raja Mān Singh and Azīz Kokā to set aside Prince Salim and raise his son Prince Khusru to the throne having failed, largely owing to Rajput resistance, Prince Salim was allowed to take his father’s place without further opposition.

Akbar’s personal qualities. Akbar was of middle stature, probably about 5 feet 7 inches in height, compactly built, and possessed of immense bodily strength, which he enjoyed using. His complexion was dark rather than fair, and his voice was loud. He looked every inch a king, and observers were specially impressed by his eyes, which have been vividly described by a Jesuit friend as ‘vibrant like the sea in sunshine’. His naturally hot temper, usually kept under strict control, blazed out in wrath at times, as when he felled Adham Khān, or ordered an unlucky lamplighter to be thrown from the battlements because he had fallen asleep when on duty. His storms of passion subsided as suddenly as they arose, leaving no bitterness behind them. His manners were charming, and his sympathetic condescension to humble folk won all hearts. He was, as Bartoli neatly says, ‘great with the great, and lowly with the lowly’. He honestly desired to do justice, and did it to the best of his ability in the stern fashion of his times, taking precautions against the too hasty execution of his sentences. Cruelty for its own sake gave him no pleasure, but he occasionally sanctioned barbarous punishments which shock the modern reader.

Intellectually, he was a man of boundless curiosity, and endowed with extraordinary versatility of mind. People said that there was nothing that he knew not how to do, and he loved doing mechanical work in wood or metal with his own hands. The founding of cannon and the manufacture of matchlocks specially interested him. His mechanical tastes and his habits of minute observation gave him a
singular mastery over the details of departmental administration, which he combined happily with exceptional breadth of view. Every department, whether of his vast household or of the imperial government, came constantly under his watchful eye, and he spared himself no labour. He rarely slept more than three hours at a time and seemed to be almost incapable of fatigue.

Formal illiteracy. Although when a boy he had steadily refused to learn his lessons, and was the despair of successive tutors, so that to the end of his days he could not decipher a written word or sign his own name, he was, nevertheless, well read and well informed in many subjects, after an unsystematic fashion. He loved to have books of history, theology, poetry, and other kinds read to him, and his prodigious memory enabled him to learn through the ear more than an ordinary man could learn through the eye. He was thus able to take an active part in the discussion of literary and abstruse subjects with such skill that the listener could hardly believe him to be illiterate in the formal sense. His special taste was for endless debates on the merits of rival religions, which he examined from a strangely detached point of view.

Religious history. Akbar was brought up as a Sunni Muslim, and, as he himself confessed, gladly persecuted heretics during the early years of his reign. Shaikh Mubarak, father of Faizi and Abu-l Fazl, then narrowly escaped execution. But it is probable that Akbar even in boyhood was never thoroughly orthodox. One of his tutors introduced him to the works of the Persian Sufi mystics, and he evinced at an early age a strong liking for the society of Hindu holy men, whose speculations were much akin to those of the Sufis. Akbar was a mystic all his life, and on several occasions saw visions which seemed to bring him into direct communion with the Unknown God. He suffered from some form of epileptic disease, which may be regarded as the physical explanation of many of his peculiarities, including the melancholy which constantly oppressed him, and constrained him to seek relief in an unceasing round of diversions.

His religious history may be divided into three periods. Until 1575, or possibly until 1578, he was a convinced Muslim of the Sunni sect, regular in his observance of the prescribed ritual, a zealous builder of mosques, and a constant suppliant at the tombs of the saints. His last recorded mosque-building was the noble Buland Darwaza or Lofty Portal at Fatehpur-Sikri erected in 1575-6. He continued to attend public worship regularly until 1578, and made his last pilgrimage to the shrine at Ajmer in 1579. His substantial orthodoxy in the eyes of the world was not compromised by his leaning to Sufi mysticism, which he shared with many learned doctors of the law.

From 1579, the year in which he ascended the pulpit and issued the Infallibility Decree, his belief in Islam was weak and shaky. By the beginning of 1582, after his victorious return from Kabul, that belief had wholly disappeared. He tried then the hopeless experiment of inventing a new religion to suit the whole empire, desiring that Hindus
and Muslims should worship in unison the One God, recognizing the padshah as His vicegerent on earth and the authorized exponent of His will.

The gradual changes in Akbar’s religious views, largely brought about by his own thinking over the Sufi studies of his boyhood and the diversity of creeds among his people, were furthered by the suggestions of Shaikh Mubārak, and the later confidential intercourse with the Shaikh’s sons, Faizi and Abu-1 Fazl, which began about 1575. Other influences co-operated with their teaching. Jains, Parsis, Hindus of various kinds, and Christians all took their share in modifying the opinions of the emperor and determining the lines of his policy.¹

**Toleration in theory and practice.** The avowed principle of both Abu-1 Fazl and Akbar was universal toleration (*sulh-i kul*). During the latter half of the reign that principle was fully applied in favour of Hindus, Christians, Jains, and Parsis, who enjoyed full liberty both of conscience and of public worship. But it was violated in respect of Muslims, who were subjected to irritating persecution. That failure of Akbar to act up to his own boasted principles is the principal blot on his public character to my mind.

**Treatment of Hindus.** Akbar’s new policy in relation to his Hindu subjects was not determined mainly by his personal fancies or beliefs in matters of religion. At an early age he perceived the political necessity that the padshah should be the impartial sovereign of all his subjects, irrespective of creed. His marrying of Hindu princesses, abolition of pilgrim dues, and ready employment of Hindus were all measures taken while he was still a sincere practising Muslim. Marriages between a Muslim king and the daughters of Hindu rajas were not a novelty. Several of the Deccan sultans had formed such alliances, which were not unknown at Delhi; but Akbar contracted his marriages in a different spirit, and accepted his Hindu male connexions as members of the royal family. No pressure was put on the princes of Amber, Marwar, or Bikaner to adopt Islam, and they were freely entrusted with the highest military commands and the most responsible administrative offices. That was an entirely new departure, due to Akbar himself, not to Abu-1 Fazl or another. The policy afforded the strongest support to the throne in the reigns of Akbar and his son, and continued to bear fruit even in the reigne of his grandson, Shahjahan, and his great-grandson, Aurangzeb. But Aurangzeb’s ill-judged policy of worrying Hindus gradually estranged the Rajput chieftains and largely contributed to the rapid dissolution of the empire which occurred after his death.

The Hindu queens, who were given Muslim titles and received Muslim burial, probably adopted Muslim modes of life to some extent, but contemporary pictures prove that they were allowed to practise

¹ Neither Akbar nor Abu-1 Fazl ever enjoyed an opportunity of meeting learned Buddhists. The statements made in several books that Buddhists joined in the debates on religion are erroneous.
their own religious rites inside the palace.¹ No doubt their society must have had some effect upon Akbar’s religious opinions and practice.

Administration. The organization of the government undoubtedly was immensely improved by Akbar, who was the real founder of the Mughul empire. The autocracy or absolute power of the padshah remained unshaken, and the merits of the government depended mainly on the character of the supreme ruler. He broke the power of the wazir and divided his duties between the heads of departments. He chose, transferred, dismissed his great officials without respect for rank, race, or creed. He created regular departments with written regulations within which officials could freely work without dependence upon the royal whim. He developed an improved system for the assessment and collection of the revenue, with the help of Raja Todar Mal, who, I think, was on the whole the ablest and most upright of the great imperial officers.

The administration was framed on military lines. The governor of a province, the subadär, or sipâhsâlâr, maintained a court modelled on that of his sovereign, and possessed practically full powers so long as he retained office. Subject to his liability to recall he was an absolute autocrat. All officials, administrative as well as military—and the roles were often exchanged—were called mansabdârs, as in Persia, the word simply meaning ‘office-holder’. The mansabdârs were divided into thirty-three classes, each member of each class being supposed to furnish a certain number of cavalry to the imperial army. The three highest grades, ‘commanders’ of from 7,000 to 10,000, were ordinarily reserved for the princes. The other mansabs ranged from ten to 5,000. But the numbers used for grading purposes did not agree with the actual facts. In the years before 1580 Akbar attempted to secure contingents from his mansabdârs which should be equal to their nominal rank. But this, like the branding regulations, was partly frustrated by the interested opposition of all his officials. At the end of the reign a double rank was used, one element, the zât, or personal rank, denoting the grade of the official within the imperial service, the other, the suwar, showing what contingent must in fact be produced. Pay scales were so devised as to encourage the official to secure a high suwar rank in relation to his zât rank. The permanent regular army was very small. The greater part of the imperial forces consisted of contingents furnished by the rajas and mansabdârs, each under its own chief.

Every considerable official exercised general administrative and judicial powers, especially in criminal cases. Civil disputes ordinarily were left to the Qazis, to be settled under Quranic law. No regular judicial service existed, except in so far as the Qazis formed such, and each governor or other person in authority did what he pleased, subject to the risk of imperial displeasure. No code existed, and no written judgements were delivered. Officers were instructed to pay little heed

¹ H.F.A., p. 332.
to witnesses or oaths, and to rely rather on their own discernment and
knowledge of human nature. Even capital punishment was inflicted at
discretion, and might assume any form.

Revenue system. Raja Todar Mal, following the precedent set by
Sher Shâh, carried out in many parts of the empire an improved sys-
tem of 'settlement', or assessment of the land revenue, based on fairly
accurate measurement and a classification of the kind of soil, whether
newly broken waste, or old tillage, combined with consideration of the
crop grown and the mean prevailing prices. He thus increased the im-
perial revenue and gave the peasant a certain amount of security. The
revenue was collected directly from the individual cultivator, so far as
possible. In modern technical language the 'settlement was ryotwar'.
Akbar, who preferred cash rents, took the equivalent of one-third of
the gross produce instead of the one-sixth prescribed by the Hindu
scriptures. The cultivators were supposed to be compensated by the
abolition of a crowd of cesses. But we do not know how far the orders
for such abolition were acted on, and have hardly any information
concerning the actual working of Todar Mal's revenue system in the
days of Akbar. The comparative peace which the imperial arms
assured must have tended to create a considerable amount of agri-
cultural prosperity. Trade certainly was brisk, and in ordinary years
food was extraordinarily cheap.

Famines. Famines, however, occurred. We hear of several. The one
of 1555–6 at the beginning of the reign was extremely severe; and that
of 1595–8, when Akbar's career of conquest was almost completed,
seems to have been one of the worst in the long list of Indian famines.
It lasted for three or four years, and must have caused serious effects,
of which there is no record.

Akbar's friends. Akbar, after his early years, chose his friends and
great officers from among both Hindus and Muslims with a leaning in
favour of the former.

His most intimate Muslim friends were the brothers Faizî and Abu-l
Fazl, sons of Shaikh Mubârik. Faizî, who cared little for wealth or
office, devoted himself chiefly to literary pursuits. Abu-l Fazl, a man of
profound learning, untiring industry, and commanding intellect, re-
sembled Francis Bacon, his junior contemporary, in combining the
parts of scholar, author, courtier, and man of affairs. He was a faithful
servant of Akbar, 'the Kirâz's Jonathan', as the Jesuits called him, and
was for many years his confidential secretary and adviser.

Raja Mân Singh, nephew and adopted son of Raja Bhagwân Dâs of
Amber was one of Akbar's best generals and governors. He is said to
have ruled the eastern provinces with 'great prudence and justice'.

Raja Todar Mal, who had no advantages of birth, made his way to
the top of the imperial service by sheer merit and ability. He was a
good commander in the field as well as an unrivalled revenue expert.
He was free from avarice, and was, perhaps, the ablest man, excepting
Abu-l Fazl, in the service.
Many other notable personages adorn the annals of the reign. The Jesuit Fathers, especially Aquaviva, Monserrate, and Jerome Xavier, must be reckoned as among the intimate friends of Akbar, who had a genuine liking for them personally, quite apart from political motives.

Literature and art. A long, prosperous, and victorious reign encouraged literature and art, which were in brisk demand at a magnifi- cent court, where they received intelligent patronage from Akbar. Important histories in Persian were composed by Abu-l Fazl, Nizâm-ud-din, Badāūnī, and other authors. The Āin-i Akbarī, or Institutes of Akbar, compiled by Abu-l Fazl, as the result of seven years' labour, gives a wonderful survey of the empire. Among the poets or versifiers writing in Persian Faizi was considered the best. But the greatest author of the time, Tulsi Dās the Hindi poet, does not seem to have been known to Akbar personally. His noble work, the Hindi Rāmāyana, or Rāmchāritmānas, is familiar to all Hindus in Upper India.

The ancient art of Indian painting, which had always continued to exist, although examples dating between the seventh and the sixteenth centuries are extremely rare, received a new direction from Akbar, who induced the Hindu artists to learn Persian technique and imitate Persian style. The works produced in a spirit of mere imitation were not altogether successful, but an Indo-Persian school developed gradually, and became rich in coloured drawings of high merit. The portraits of the Mughul period, which are especially deserving of commendation, attained their highest degree of perfection in the reign of Shahjahan. The art of Akbar's time is cruder and more conventional. The frontispiece of my work Akbar the Great Mogul reproduces accurately the earliest known Indo-Persian painting, dating from about 1557 or 1558. The next earliest extant specimens are the frag- ments of fresco at Fathpur-Sikri, executed about 1570. Most of the ancient Hindu paintings appear to have been applied to walls in either fresco or tempera, or a combination of both processes, and necessarily were lost when the buildings fell to ruin or were destroyed.

The architecture of Akbar's reign is characterized by a happy blending of Hindu and Muslim styles, which is a reflex or expression in stone of his personal feelings and convictions. Abu-l Fazl truly remarks in an elegant phrase that 'His Majesty plans splendid edifices, and dresses the work of his mind and heart in the garment of stone and clay'. The best collection of his architectural achievements is to be seen at Fathpur-Sikri, but other notable buildings of Akbar's time exist elsewhere.

CHRONOLOGY
Leading dates only

<table>
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<td>Death of Humayun</td>
<td>Jan. 1556</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enthronement of Akbar</td>
<td>Feb. 1556</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second battle of Panipat; famine</td>
<td>Nov. 1556</td>
</tr>
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<td>Dismissal of Bairām Khān</td>
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THE MUGHUL EMPIRE

Execution of Adham Khān ................................................. 1562
Uzbek rebellions .......................................................... 1565–7
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Conquest of Bengal; defeat of Rana Parmāp at Gogūnda or Haldighāt 1576
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Proclamation of Din Ilāhī .................................................... 1582
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Annexation of Orissa .......................................................... 1592
Annexation of Baluchistan and Makran ............................... 1594
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Annexation of Berar ........................................................... 1596
Fall of Ahmadnagar ............................................................ 1600
Surrender of Asirgarh; embassy to Goa ............................... 1601
Prince Salim in rebellion ..................................................... 1601–4
Arrest of Prince Salim ......................................................... Nov. 1604
Death of Akbar ................................................................. Oct. 1605

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CHAPTER 4

Jahangir

Accession of Jahangir. Jahangir’s enthronement at Agra took place on 3 November (N.S.) 1605, a week after his father’s death. He assumed the style of Nur-ud-din Muhammad Jahangir Padshah Ghazi, the first name meaning ‘light of the faith’ and the third ‘world-seizer’. He had secured his succession by making two solemn promises, one that he would protect the Muslim religion, the other that he would not cause any harm to the persons who had supported Khusru’s claims. Both undertakings were honourably kept. The Muslims were gratified by his changed attitude to the Jesuit Fathers, whom he neglected as if he had never seen them, while the active adherents of Khusru, including Raja Man Singh, received honours and dignities. He also issued various orders by way of reforms, the most important being the abolition of many transit and customs duties. But, as Sir Henry Elliot has shown, such orders had little practical effect.

Rebellion of Prince Khusru. Prince Khusru, who was extraordinarily popular, and had many well-wishers, could not bring himself to resign hopes of the crown which at one time had seemed to be within his grasp. According to one account he feared that his father might take the precaution of blinding him. Whether actuated by ambition or by fear or by both motives, he slipped out of the Agra Fort on 6 April 1606 (O.S.), and having collected a considerable force of troopers and obtained funds by capturing a treasure convoy hastened to the Panjab. His father pursued him with the utmost energy, dispensing with all the usual imperial hindrances to rapid movement. The governor of Lahore refused to open his gates to the prince, who, after some fighting, was captured while attempting to cross the Chenab on 27 April, exactly three weeks after his escape from Agra. Jahangir, who never again displayed such energy, then pitched his camp in a garden near Lahore, and proceeded to take deliberate and fearful vengeance.

Two of Khusru’s principal followers were cruelly tortured by being enclosed in raw hides, one in that of an ox and the other in that of an ass; and in that fashion, seated on asses, were paraded through the city. One of the men died; the other, who barely escaped with his life, was afterwards pardoned. On Wednesday 7 May 200 or 300 of the prince’s adherents were either hung from the trees or impaled on the prepared stakes set up along each side of the road. Jahangir, mounted on a splendidly caparisoned elephant, rode between the ranks, followed by his wretched son riding on a small unadorned elephant, with
Mahâbat Khân behind him, to point out the names of the writhing victims.¹

**Guru Arjun.** When Khusru was fleeing before his father, and in dire distress, he had asked the Sikh Guru, Arjun, at Tara-Taran for assistance. The holy man, moved it is said, merely by compassion, gave the fugitive 5,000 rupees. When the report came before the emperor Jahangir summoned the Guru, and after hearing his dignified reply fined him 200,000 rupees. The Guru, having refused to pay a single cowree, was savagely tortured for five days until he died (June 1606). The punishment, it will be observed, was inflicted as a penalty for high treason and contumacy, and was not primarily an act of religious persecution.² A second plot to raise Khusru to the throne led to the blinding of the prince, but not completely; he subsequently re-recovered the sight of one eye to some extent. Sultan Parviz, the emperor's second son, was recognized as heir apparent.

**Popular love of Khusru.** Sir Thomas Roe and his chaplain Terry sometimes met Khusru when his captivity had been relaxed (about 1616) and he used to follow his father on the march under a strong guard.

For that Prince [Terry writes] he was a gentleman of a very lovely presence and fine carriage, so exceedingly beloved of the common people, that as Suetonius writes of Titus, he was *amor et deliciae, &c.*, the very love and delight of them; aged then about thirty-five years.³ He was a man who contented himself with one wife, which with all love and care accompanied him in all his streights, and therefore he would never take any wife but herself, though the liberty of his religion did admit of plurality.

After his death the beloved prince, as we learn from Mundy, was regarded as a martyréd saint. On the way to his final resting-place in the Khusru Garden near Allahabad, each spot where the bearers of his body halted was marked by a shrine, consisting of a cenotaph, surrounded by a little garden, watered and tended by a fakir or two. His figure, shadowy though it be, is one of the most interesting and pathetic in Indian history.

**Sher Afgan.** In 1607 an incident occurred which had important consequences as leading to the marriage of Jahangir with Nurjahan, who became the power behind the throne and practically sovereign of Hindostan. The lady, whose personal name was Mihr-un Nisa, was the daughter of a Persian refugee who had entered Akbar's service. She was given in marriage to 'Ali Quli, surnamed Sher Afgan, the 'tigert-thrower', who received from Jahangir after his accession the *jâgir* of

¹ The date is that given by Mr. H. Beveridge. The detail about Mahâbat Khân (Zamâna Beg) is from de Lact. Authors differ concerning the number of victims. The smallest number, namely 200, is given by Du Jarric.

² For the full story from the Sikh point of view see Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion* (1909), vol. iii, pp. 84-100.

³ He was younger than the chaplain supposed, having been born in August, A.D. 1587 (A.H. 995). Khâfi Khân dates his birth two years later, and may be right.
Bardwan in Bengal. Sher Afgan fell under the suspicion of complicity with the Afghan rebels in Bengal, and the emperor sent his own foster-brother, Qutb-ud-din Koka, to remove Sher Afgan and forward him to court. When Qutb-ud-din attempted to carry out his orders an affray occurred, in the course of which both he and Sher Afgan were killed. The lady was brought to court and became an attendant on Salima Begam. In 1611 she attracted the emperor’s attention and was married to him. She acquired at once unbounded influence over him, and freely made use of it to advance the interests of her family. Her father, who received the title of Itimād-ud-daulah, and her brother, ennobled as Āsaf Khān, became the leading personages in the court, while all her other connexions were well looked after. It is said that at first she desired to unite her daughter by Sher Afgan with Khusru. When that could not be done she married the girl to Jahangir’s youngest son, Shahryar. The power of the family was further increased in 1612 by Prince Khurrum’s marriage to Āsaf Khān’s daughter. Her earlier title of Nurmahall, ‘Light of the Palace’, was soon altered to Nurjahan, ‘Light of the World’, with allusion to the imperial style of Nur-ud din Jahangir. For many years she wielded the imperial power. She even gave audiences at her palace, and her name was placed on the coinage.

Favours to the Jesuits. The temporary alienation of Jahangir from the Jesuit Fathers ceased in 1606 when his favours to the priests were renewed. After some difficulty they were allowed to retain their elegant and commodious (elegans et scitum) church at Lahore, as well as the collegium, or priests’ residence. At Agra about twenty baptisms took place in 1606, and when Jahangir was on his way to Kabul he accepted a Persian version of the Gospels and permitted the Fathers to act publicly with as much liberty as if they were in Europe. When the emperor returned to Agra he took two of the priests with him, leaving one at Lahore to look after the congregation there. Church processions with full Catholic ceremonial were allowed to parade the streets, and cash allowances were paid from the treasury for church expenses and the support of the converts. The zeal for Islam which Jahangir had displayed at the beginning of his reign gradually diminished, and he openly declared that he wished to follow in his father’s footsteps. Of his eighteen wives, seven were Hindus.

Christian pictures. The Jesuits’ exertions were directed principally to the conversion of the emperor himself. Certainly his conduct gave them some reason to hope that he might be brought within the Christian fold. He showed an extraordinary fancy for pictures of religious subjects from the Old and New Testaments, the Apocrypha, and the Lives of the Saints. At Agra his throne was surrounded by paintings of John the Baptist, Saint Anthony, and Saint Bernardin of Siena. Various halls, rooms, and courts in the palace were similarly decorated. It is no wonder that Jahangir was popularly reputed to have become a Christian, and that the Jesuits entertained ‘good hope of his conversion’. They recognized that the practice of polygamy was one of the
principal obstacles to his acceptance of the Christian faith, and tried in vain to persuade him that it was his duty to repudiate all his wives save one.

Embassy to Goa. In 1607 Jahangir expressed a desire, as his father had done, to send a mission to the king of Spain and the pope, but was persuaded to restrict the embassy to visiting the viceroy of Goa. The ambassador selected was Muqarrab Khān, an intimate friend of the emperor, a keen sportsman and skilled surgeon. In accordance with Jahangir's special request Father Pinheiro accompanied the ambassador as a colleague. They started from Lahore, where the court then was, in September 1607, and reached Cambay in the April following, 1608. At that time the envoys could not present their credentials at Goa, because the viceroy designate had not arrived. As a matter of fact he never arrived, and the government of Portuguese India was carried on by Archbishop de Menezes until 27 May 1609, when Don Andreas Hurtados de Mendosa took charge and held office until 5 September of that year.

Captain W. Hawkins. Meantime, Captain William Hawkins, of the ship Hecor, had arrived at Surat in August 1608, bearing a letter from James I, king of Great Britain, to Jahangir, asking for the grant of trade facilities. Hawkins, in spite of strenuous opposition from Father Pinheiro and the Portuguese authorities, succeeded in reaching the court of Jahangir, who accepted his gifts, valued at 25,000 gold pieces, and gave him a most favourable reception. Hawkins was able to converse with the emperor in Turki, without the aid of an interpreter. He was appointed to be a commander (mansabdār) of 400, with a salary of 30,000 rupees (which, it is said, was not paid), and was married to the daughter of an Armenian Christian named Mubarak Shāh (Mubariksha).

Portuguese hostility. When Mendosa, the new Viceroy at Goa, heard that Hawkins and other Englishmen had been granted privileges infringing on the commercial monopoly claimed by the Portuguese, he treated the imperial concession as a hostile act and considered himself to be at war with Jahangir, whose ambassador he refused to receive. That hasty action greatly disturbed the merchants on the coast, and alarmed Jahangir, who revoked his concessions to the English. Father Pinheiro, who had gone on to Goa, was then employed by the viceroy as a plenipotentiary to negotiate with Muqarrab Khān, hostilities were stopped, and English ships were refused admission at Surat.

Hawkins quitted the court in 1611, baffled by the intrigues of the Portuguese and the instability of the imperial policy. He recorded interesting notes of his experience, which have been preserved by the diligence of Purchas, and will be quoted presently in part.

Bengal and the Deccan. In 1612 the rebellion of Usmān Khān in Bengal, which had begun in Akbar's time, and had been complicated by the activities of Hindu rajas and zamindars, was at last ended by the death of the rebel leader from wounds received in a stiff fight. The
success of Islam Khan was made lastingly fruitful by Jahangir’s policy of conciliation. ‘Nuruddin Ghazi pardoning them their former trespasses, attached them to himself by the bonds of bounty . . . so that by their praiseworthy exertions they raised themselves to the rank of Grand Umara, and were deemed worthy to be admitted to the Imperial company.’1 From the beginning of the reign hostilities in the Deccan had never wholly ceased. A feebly conducted war against the forces of the Ahmadnagar sultanate, then administered by an able Abyssinian, named Malik Ambar, went on continually without results worthy of notice. At this period the quarrels among the imperialist generals became so acute that the Khan Khānān (Abdurrahīm), who had been recalled, was again sent to see if he could do anything effectual. But Jahangir never succeeded in obtaining a firm control over any campaign in the Deccan.

English victory at sea. The same year, 1612, was marked by the entrance of British naval forces into Indian politics. At the end of November one English ship, the Dragon, commanded by Captain Best, ‘assisted onely’, as Purchas relates, ‘with the Osiander a little ship (scarcely a ship, I had almost called her a little Pinnasse)’, successfully fought a Portuguese fleet comprising four huge galleons, with five- or six-and-twenty frigates. It is not surprising to read that ‘the great Mogoll, which before thought none comparable to the Portugall at Sea, much wondered at the English resolution, related to him by Sardar Chan’. The Mughul empire was then, as always, powerless at sea.

War with Portuguese. About a year later (1613) the Portuguese used their naval superiority as compared with the weakness of the Mughul government to seize four of the imperial ships, imprisoning many Muslims, and plundering the cargoes. The outrage naturally was ‘very disagreeable’ to Jahangir, who ordered Muqarrab Khan, then in charge of Surat, to obtain compensation. From English sources we learn that the principal ship plundered was called the Remewe, and that it was said to have carried ‘three millions of Treasure, and two women bought for the Great Mogol’. Jahangir’s mother had a large interest in the cargo, and lost heavily.

The Portuguese acts of piracy resulted in war with the imperial government, whose officers attacked Daman. All accessible Portuguese residing in the Mughul dominions were seized, and even Father Jerome Xavier was sent in custody to Muqarrab Khan, ‘to do with him as he shall see good’. The public exercise of the Christian religion was forbidden, and the churches were closed. The Portuguese were still ‘in deep disgrace with the king and people’ early in 1615, when William Edwards from Surat arrived at court bearing a letter from King James I. Although he was not formally accredited as an ambassador, he was at first honourably received by Jahangir, who perceived that the

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1 ‘Makhzan i-Afghānā’ by Ni‘mat-Ullah, tr. B. Dorn in History of the Afghāns.
English could now be used as a counterpoise to the Portuguese. Some years earlier the emperor had questioned Hawkins about the force needed to take Diu, and was told that the place could be reduced by fourteen British ships supported by a land force of 20,000 men.

Submission of Mewar. In 1614 the war against Mewar, pressed ever more vigorously in successive campaigns by Mahábat Kháñ and 'Abdullah Kháñ (Firúz Jang), ended with the submission of Rana Amar Singh and his son Karan to Prince Khurrum (Shahjahan), who had pursued the brave Rajputs until they were reduced to extremity. Jahangir was delighted by a success which Akbar had failed to achieve, and was willing to soften the humiliation of defeat by exceptionally courteous treatment of his gallant adversaries. After some time the emperor did special honour to them by directing artists at Ajmer to fashion full-sized marble statues of the rana and his son. The commission having been executed with all speed, the statues were removed to Agra and erected in the garden below the audience-window (jharokhá). Mewar was required to contribute to the imperial army a contingent of 1,000 horse, and Karan had to accept the dignity of a 'commander of 5,000'. The reigning rana was never compelled to attend court in person, and no Sisódia bride ever graced the imperial harem. With the exception of those concessions to the dignity of the premier chieftain of Rajasthan, the rana became as other rajas, and officially was regarded as a mere zamindar or jágírdár.

In July of the same year, 1614, Raja Mán Singh died in the Deccan. No less than sixty of his women committed suetce by fire.

Plague. Bubonic plague, a disease not previously recorded with certainty in India, appeared in the Panjab early in 1616, at the close of Jahangir's tenth regnal year. The epidemic was marked by the symptoms unhappily familiar since the disease reappeared at Bombay in 1896. Rats and mice were first affected, and the mortality was severe, especially among Hindus. The pestilence, which spread to almost every locality in northern and western India, lasted for eight years. In 1619, while it was raging in Agra, Fathpur-Sikri, twenty-three miles distant, escaped. Another outbreak, apparently of the same disease, occurred in the Deccan in 1703 and 1704.1

Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe. The informal missions of Hawkins and Edwards, sent for the purposes of promoting the nascent trade between England and the East, and abating Portuguese pretensions, were quickly followed by the formal embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, the duly accredited ambassador from James I to Jahangir. The envoy, a gentleman of good education, a polished courtier, and trained diplomatist, was well qualified for the task assigned to him, which was the negotiation of a treaty giving security to English trade. Roe arrived at Surat, or rather Swally Road, in September 1615, and marched up country as soon as practicable to the court of Jahangir, then at Ajmer.

The chaplain whom he had brought out with him having died almost immediately, the ambassador summoned from Surat to take his place a young English clergyman named Edward Terry, a ship’s chaplain in the fleet of 1616. The world is indebted to Terry for an account of his experiences, which is far superior to that of Roe as a description of the country and government. The chaplain was a good observer and extraordinarily sympathetic in his attitude towards the people of India, whether Hindu or Muslim. Roe’s Journal is chiefly useful as a faithful record of the manner in which business was done at a court saturated with intrigue, treachery, and corruption. Jahangir, half quaffed with strong drink and opium, had not the strength of will to resist the wiles of his designing queen, her equally unscrupulous brother, Āsaf Khân, and the subtlety of Prince Khurram (Shahjahan). The ambassador’s pen-picture of that prince is memorable. ‘I never saw’, he writes, ‘so settled a countenance, nor any man keep so constant a gravity, never smiling, nor in face showing any respect or difference of men; but mingled with extreme pride and contempt of all. . . .'\(^1\)

Princes Khusru and Khurram. Roe confirms his chaplain’s testimony to the virtues and popularity of Prince Khusru, whose life even then was unceasingly threatened by his brother, Prince Khurram, with the privy of Nurjahan and Āsaf Khân. The ambassador, who was in a good position for learning the facts, records that

Sultan Khusru, the eldest brother, is both extremely beloved, and honoured of all men (almost adored) and very justly for his noble parts.

In another passage he amplifies his judgement by saying:

If Sultan Khusru prevail in his right, this kingdom will be a sanctuary for Christians, whom he loves and honours, favouring learning, valour, the discipline of war, and abhorring all covetousness, and discerning the base customs of taking, used by his ancestors and the nobility. If the other win, we shall be losers; for he is most earnest in his superstition, a hater of all Christians, proud, subtle, false, and barbarously tyrannous.

The event proved the correctness of the shrewd ambassador’s prediction, as well as the soundness of his estimate of Shahjahan’s character, which has been so grievously misunderstood by modern historians.

Roe went home in 1619. Although he had failed to obtain the formal treaty desired, he secured considerable concessions to his countrymen and laid a solid foundation for the East India Company’s trade.

The Deccan war. The aggressive war in the Deccan, where the principal opponent of the imperialists was Malik Ambar, the able Abyssinian minister at Ahmadnagar, dragged on throughout the reign. No decisive result ever was obtained, and good reason existed for believing that Abdurrahim, the Khan Khanan, was in collusion with Malik Ambar. In 1616 the fort at Ahmadnagar was surrendered, and Prince Khurram was allowed to obtain a show of success. He was

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\(^1\) The spelling has been modernized, but the old punctuation retained.
extravagantly rewarded with the title of Shahjahan, and the enormous emoluments attached to the command (mansab) of '30,000 personal, with 20,000 horse'. Malik Ambar lived until 1626, when he died at an advanced age.

**Surrender of Kangra.** The most notable military achievement of Jahangir's reign was the surrender to his authority in November 1620 of the strong fortress of Kangra, which had defied even Akbar. Jahangir was extremely proud because an officer of his had been able to reduce a stronghold which had baffled his father. A little later the emperor visited the conquest, and gratified the sentiment of the Muslims, while outraging that of the Hindus, by erecting a mosque and slaughtering a bullock within the precincts of the fort. Other minor conquests of this period included the diamond area of Khokhara Khurda—which carried the Orissa border to that of Golconda, and Kishhtwar, on the borders of Kashmir.

**Murder of Prince Khusru.** The 'tragic end' of the 'troublesome life' of Prince Khusru came in January 1622. Nearly six years earlier, in 1616, Jahangir, for reasons not stated, had transferred his son from the custody of a faithful Hindu named Ani Rāi to that of Āsfāf Khān, the mortal enemy of the prince. Later, in or about 1620, the prisoner was made over to his brother, Prince Khurram, at the instigation of Āsfāf Khān and Nurjahan. The inevitable result followed in the beginning of 1622. Jahangir records his son's death without comment or expression of regret, merely stating that 'a report came from Khurram that Khusru, on the 8th (? 20th) of the month, had died of the disease of colic pains (kūlanj) and gone to the mercy of God'.

**Loss of Qandahar.** In June of the same year, 1622, Shāh Abbās, the energetic king of Persia, retook Qandahar. He had tried without success to induce Jahangir to give up the place voluntarily. When diplomacy failed he took it by force without much trouble. Jahangir, who was grievously perturbed by the loss, planned a great expedition for the recovery of the town, and desired his son Shahjahan to take the command. But at the time, the emperor was in bad health, and Shahjahan was determined not to . . . peril his succession to the throne by absence on the Persian frontier.

**Rebellion of Shahjahan.** Instead of obeying his father's orders he went into open rebellion. Prince Shahryar was then appointed to take charge of the Qandahar expedition, but nothing came of the appointment, all the energies of the government being devoted to the suppression of the rebellion. A plan to bring from Agra to Lahore the whole of the immense treasure in gold and silver coin accumulated from the beginning of Akbar's reign was dropped when Shahjahan gave indications that he intended to intercept the convoy. It is impossible to refuse some sympathy to the outraged father when he laments the ingratitude of the once best-beloved son, and moans: 'What shall I say of my own sufferings? In pain and weakness, in a warm atmosphere that is extremely unsuited to my health, I must still ride and be active, and in
this state must proceed against such an undutiful son.’ But he thanks
‘God that has given me such capacity to bear my burdens’. He lamented
more especially that the rebel had compelled the postponement of the
recovery of Qandahar, and thus had ‘struck with an axe the foot of his
own dominion, and become a stumbling-block in the path of the enter-
prise’. Several nobles were executed for high treason, and Sultan
Parviz, Shahjahan’s elder brother, was summoned to take his proper
place at his father’s side as heir apparent. Jahangir was justly disgusted
because Abdurrahim, the Khan Khânân, an old man of seventy, and
loaded with marks of imperial favour, had joined the traitors.

In 1623 a battle fought at Balochpur, to the south of Delhi, resulted
in the death of the Brahman, Raja Bikramjit, on whom Shahjahan
chiefly relied, and in the consequent defeat of the rebel army at the
hands of the imperialists under Mahâbat Khân. Shahjahan was driven
through Malwa into the Deccan, and thence across Telengana into
Bengal, which province, with Bihar, he occupied. Another defeat by
Mahâbat Khân sent the rebel back to the Deccan, where he tried to
make friends with his old enemy Malik Ambar and the other rulers of
the south. In 1625 a sort of peace was patched up between the prince
and his father. Shahjahan surrendered Rohtas and Asirgarh, and sent
his eldest son Dara Shikoh and Aurangzeb his third to court as hostages.
But he never appeared there in person, remaining absent in Rajpur-
tana or the Deccan.

Mahâbat Khân. In the year following, 1626, strange events
occurred. Mahâbat Khân, who had become one of the principal
personages in the empire, and had taken so active a part in the pursuit
of Shahjahan, found himself in danger of destruction owing to the
hostility of Nurjahan. He therefore marched north with 5,000 Rajput
troops towards the imperial camp. Jahangir and his consort were en-
camped on the Jhelum on their way to Kabul, and were about to cross
the river with the rearguard when Mahâbat Khân surrounded their
tents with his Rajput horsemen, and captured the emperor. Nurjahan
was not detained, and escaped over the river. Her attempts to recover
her husband by force having failed, she managed by stratagem to
effect her purpose at Kabul. Mahâbat Khân was then obliged to fly
and join Shahjahan, who was hard pressed, and thinking of escape to
Persia. But he was encouraged by the death in October at Burhanpur
of his drunken brother, Parviz, the only serious rival for the succe-
sion to the throne.1 Hardly anything is on record concerning the
personal qualities of Parviz beyond the fact that he drank too much.

Death of Jahangir. Jahangir, who had been ailing for several
years, died after a short illness while encamped at Chingiz Hatli, a
village near Bhimbhar at the foot of the hills on the road to Kashmir,

1 Long afterwards Aurangzeb in a letter accused his father of the murder of both
his brothers: ‘How do you still regard the memory of [your brothers] Khusrau and
Parviz, whom you did to death before your accession and who had threatened no
injury to you?’ (Sarkar, Hist., vol. iii, p. 155).
from which he was returning. His death occurred in November 1627, but his successor Shahjahan was not able to take his seat on the throne until the following February, for the reasons which will be explained in the next chapter.

His personality. As appears from the foregoing narrative, the prominent public events of Jahangir's reign were few. The loss of Qandahar was not balanced by any substantial increase of territory elsewhere, and there can be no doubt that the empire was weaker as a military power in 1627 than it was when Akbar died in 1605. The administration generally was conducted on the lines laid down by Akbar, and the reign of Jahangir may be regarded as a continuation of that of his father, marked by a certain amount of deterioration due to Jahangir's personal inferiority when compared with his illustrious parent. His considerable natural abilities were marred by habitual and excessive intemperance, which added artificial ferocity to his innate violent temper. When angry, and especially if the security of his throne was threatened, he was capable of the most fiendish cruelty, having men flayed alive, impaled, torn to pieces by elephants, or otherwise tortured to death. Hawkins and Roe were much disgusted by such savagery. Mere passionate caprice, even when no question of treason arose, sometimes induced him to commit shocking barbarities. For instance, he relates without shame the following anecdote:

On the 22nd, when I had got within shot of a nilgaw, suddenly a groom and two bearers appeared, and the nilgaw escaped. In a great rage I ordered them to kill the groom on the spot, and to hamstring the bearers and mount them on asses and parade them through the camp, so that no one should again have the boldness to do such a thing.

After this I mounted a horse and continued hunting with hawks and falcons, and came to the halting place.

Jahangir's authentic Memoirs, either written by his own hand or dictated to a scribe, cover nineteen years of his reign and offer a wonderfully life-like picture, a strange compound of tenderness and cruelty, justice and caprice, refinement and brutality, good sense and childishness. Terry truly observes: 'Now for the disposition of that king, it ever seemed unto me to be composed of extremes: for sometimes he was barbarously cruel, and at other times he would seem to be exceeding fair and gentle.' He was capable of feeling the most poignant grief for the loss of a grandchild, and often showed pleasure in doing little acts of kindly charity. His writings are full of keen observations on natural objects. He went to Kashmir nearly every hot season, and recorded a capital description of the country, carefully drawing up a list of the Indian birds and beasts not to be found in the Happy Valley. He loved fine scenery, and would go into ecstasies over a waterfall. He thought the scarlet blossom of the dhāk or palās tree 'so beautiful that one cannot take one's eyes off it', and was in raptures over the wild flowers of Kashmir.

He was a skilled connoisseur in the arts of drawing and painting,
and a generous patron of artists. He had himself some skill with the brush, and drew parts of the decorative designs on the walls of the palace at Agra. He appreciated music and song, and had nice taste in architecture. The unique design of Akbar’s tomb was prepared in accordance with his ideas.

Jahangir prided himself especially on his love of justice, and his reputation for that quality still endures in India. When recording the capital sentence passed by himself on an influential murderer, he remarks: ‘God forbid that in such affairs I should consider princes, and far less that I should consider Amirs.’

The fearful penalties which he inflicted were imposed without respect of persons.

Religion. His religion is not easy to define. Grave Sir Thomas Roe roundly denounced him as an atheist, but this verdict, like that of Mullâ Ahmad, may express no more than the reaction of men accustomed to religious intolerance and therefore suspicious of tolerance. He sincerely believed in God, although he did not frankly accept any particular revelation or subscribe to any definite creed. The strange partiality which he showed for Christian images and ritual, and his intimacy with the Jesuit priests, did not induce him to accept the doctrines of the Church. Probably his favour to the priests was accorded chiefly from political motives, in order to secure Portuguese support and trade. The moment hostilities with Goa began the Christian churches were closed. He had not the slightest desire to persecute anybody on account of his religion. It is true that he passed severe orders against the Jains of Gujarat, whom his father had so greatly admired, but that was because for some reason or other he considered them to be seditious.

While he loved talking to philosophical ascetics, whether Hindu or Muslim, he did not imitate his father in adopting Hindu practices, nor did he follow Zoroastrian rites. His personal religion seems to have been a vague deism, either that taught by heretical Muslim Sufis, or the very similar doctrine of certain Hindu sages. Ordinary Hinduism he spoke of as a ‘worthless religion’. Jahangir, like his contemporaries, James I of England and Shah Abbâs of Persia, believed tobacco to be a noxious drug and forbade its use.

The material for discourse on Jahangir’s interesting personality is so abundant that it would be easy to write at large on the subject. The reader perhaps will find what has been said more than enough.

The court. The court ceremonial was much the same as in the days of Akbar. Jahangir showed himself publicly three times a day. At sunrise he appeared on a balcony facing east, at noon on one facing south, and a little before sunset at a third facing west. On each occasion he received petitions and dispensed justice as he conceived it. Other state business was transacted chiefly between seven and nine o’clock in the evening in the private audience-hall, known as the Ghusl-khâna or ‘bath room’, to which only privileged persons were admitted. Roe and
Terry frequently attended such audiences. Before the evening had passed Jahangir often was dead drunk. Many anecdotes about his intemperance are on record.

The New Year festivities after the Persian manner, and the formal weighings of the sovereign against gold and other precious things on his birthday, calculated according to both the solar and lunar calendars, were duly observed.

The selfish luxury and ostentation of the court and nobles had increased since Akbar’s time, and constituted a terrible drain on the resources of the country. The pay of the higher officials was scandalously extravagant, even if allowance be made for certain deductions. Hawkins, who received the comparatively small post of a ‘commander of 400’, had a nominal salary of 30,000 rupees a year, then worth more than £3,000 sterling. It must be noted, however, that there was often a great disparity between the realizable and the nominal value of the revenue assignments. Of this Hawkins had bitter experience. Even so the rewards were sufficient to attract able men from far beyond the empire’s borders. Moreover, by the escheat of a noble’s property at death to the crown, considerable sums were regularly recovered. The salary of a modern viceroy was a mere pittance when compared with the sums paid to the greater nobles. No money to speak of was spent on useful public works or on education. All considerable expenditure was designed for the glory of the sovereign or his chief courtiers.

The central control of administration was slacker under Jahangir than it had been under his father, and in the revenue department the system of payment by jāgīr gained ground. English records suggest that imperial control did not always extend far from the towns and main lines of communication. The great distances involved made it difficult to check tyranny by provincial officials, though, as Hawkins points out, and the records confirm, such misbehaviour was firmly dealt with when discovered.

Literature and art. Literature, chiefly in the Persian language, was encouraged. Jahangir himself could write sufficiently well. In addition to his Memoirs several historical works of some merit were composed, and he gave his patronage to the completion of a valuable dictionary entitled the Farhang-i Jahāngīrī. Art, as already mentioned, really interested Jahangir. His book is full of references to the subject, which it would be desirable to collect and discuss. The two most eminent painters of the reign were Abu-l Hasan, honoured with the title of Nādir-uz-zamān, ‘Wonder of the Age’, and Ustād, or Master, Mansūr, who bore a synonymous title. The extant works of both those artists justify the enthusiastic praise bestowed upon them by their employer. The tomb of Itimād-ud daulah at Agra, the mausoleum of Akbar at Sikandara, and Jahangir’s own sepulchre at Lahore testify to the good taste of the emperor and the skill of his architects.
JAHANGIR

CHRONOLOGY (o.s.)

Death of Akbar .......................... 17 Oct. 1605
Enthronement of Jahangir .................. 24 Oct. 1605
Rebellion of Khusru ........................ Sunday, 6 April 1606
Capture of Khusru ........................ Sunday, 27 April 1606
Embassy to Goa ........................... 1607-9
Hawkins at court .......................... 1608-11
Marriage with Nurjahan .................... May 1611
End of Usmān Khān’s rebellion in Bengal ................................................................. 1612
Capture of four ships by Portugese of Goa ............................................................... 1613
Submission of Rana Amar Singh and Karan ............................................................... 1614
Sir Thomas Roe’s embassy ................... 1615-18
Bubonic plague began (lasted eight years) ............................................................... 1616
Conquest of Kangra ........................ 1620
Death of Khusru ................................ Jan. 1622
Loss of Qandahar to the Persians ........... June 1622
Rebellion of Prince Khurram (Shahjahan) .......................................................... 1622
Shahjahan defeated and put to flight ......................... 1623, 1624
Submission of Shahjahan .................... 1625
Mahābat Khan seized Jahangir .......... 1626
Death of Sultan Parviz ...................... Oct. 1626
Death of Jahangir .......................... 28 Oct. 1627

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