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RANA PRATAP SINGHA.

HEROES OF INDIA SERIES.

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RANA PRATAP SINGHA.

BY
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PREFACE.

THE Story of **PRATAP SINGHA** is so rare and remarkable that it did not seem fair that young boys should not learn the whole story.

He is a man to be proud of indeed.

I have written it in the simplest language—plain for young children to understand.

19th Sept. 1931. **Edith E. Cowper.**

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PRATAP SINGHA

CHAPTER I.

THE STORY BEGINS.

NOW this is the story of a very great man and therefore it is fine to write and fine to read.

Every country has its own hero, and it is well that all children should know about the heroes of their own country so that they may try to imitate great qualities.

The story of Rana Pratap Singha is wonderful, it is said, because it tells of many years of hardship such as few men could bear, yet those hardships were borne with such uncomplaining courage, such patience and self-denial, that they cause astonishment as well as admiration in every one.

Just imagine a man born to rule over the greatest province in Central India, fighting for many years against the overwhelming power of invaders and the armies of an emperor who had conquered all the land to the north, east and west.

Just imagine that man deserted by friends and seeing those he trusted go over to the enemy, fight for the enemy and give their beautiful daughters to be wives for the emperor and his generals.

Pratap Singha had to bear all that; he had to see his own brother go over to the enemy and bring men to fight against him, yet he never faltered and no matter what the hardship, he never gave in.

He made all his faithful followers take a holy vow and the vow was hard to keep.

No man would eat good food or drink wine. No man would sleep in an easy bed. No man would live in or build a nice house. And no man would shave his beard until they won back their own lovely country, from which they had been driven by the Moghul Emperor and his great armies.

Not only did they make this hard vow, but they kept it too.

Pratap Singha never wavered. All those long terrible years he slept on the ground, he was nearly starved. If he took shelter under any roof, it was a cottage, probably in ruins, for every poor man was driven from his home by the Mohammedans.

We do not wish to make anything worse than it really was, but when it is remembered that Rana Pratap Singha fought from 1572 to 1597, it makes twenty five years of ceaseless struggle, during which this wonderful warrior never enjoyed a day

of peace and comfort, while he gave all he possessed for his people.

The Moghuls on the contrary were fighting for greed and to get the land and cities of a brave nation. We cannot feel sympathy with their cruelties.

Pratap Singha on his part always kept the rule of Rajputs, never to tell untruths or practise treachery; to be honourable in dealing with all men; never to give way to self indulgence or live for pleasure.

It is a very wonderful principle and we can see that if all men lived like this the world would be a happy place and dreadful wars would cease, because wars so often come from the envy and greed of men who wish to have what belongs to others.

This story is going to be the great warrior Rana Pratap Singha. All his story, from the time he was born, the eldest child of Uday Singha and his Queen, the beautiful daughter of the Chief of Jhalore, till he died at the age of fifty-five in 1597.

But first of all it would be well to tell something about his country and the kingdom he loved so well that he spent all his life fighting for it.

It is called Rajputana or Rajasthan and is situated in the middle of India, with the Punjab on the north, Sindh on the west, and the Central Provinces on the east.

In the days before Uday Singha the great Rajasthan country was much bigger. The cities

were very fine and the forts the strongest in India, but the great armies of the Moghuls took one thing after another till the possession of the Rajputs were weakened.

Down the centre of Rajasthan from north to south runs the line of the Aravalli Mountains, on the east side green and well watered, on the west side rocky and barren, burned by the sun.

These mountains were going to make all the difference in the world to brave Rana Pratap and his faithful men, for in them the Rajputs took refuge and the armies of Akbar, the Moghul Emperor could not follow.

Up on the rocks and peaks were built the strong forts and so year after year these brave men held them and it is quite likely that if all had been true the Mohammedans would not have won what they did win.

It is time now to tell the story of the great man Rana Pratap Singha — to tell who his father was and what race he came from, and how he fought for his country.

CHAPTER II

THE LONG LINE OF HEROES.

AND now to tell about the Rajputs, that splendid race of people that inhabits the middle of India.

They are known to be Kshatriyas by caste. Yet historians who seek knowledge of these things say they are not descended from the ancient Indo-Aryan warrior caste.

A long long time ago between the years one hundred to six hundred A. D. (that means, *Anno Domini* or when Christianity began), a very wild and fierce people invaded India. They were called the Scythians and came from a part of Asia called Scythia.

That country lies to the north of Persia and seems to have been always at war with someone.

However, all that does not come into the story of Pratap Singha. What is interesting seems to be that the four great Indian castes came from Scythia and that Sakas or Scythians was the name for all of them.

Through long years of history they fought against the King of India and it was by defeating the Sakas that King Vikramaditya earned the name of '*Sakari*', which means conqueror of the Sakas.

In these wars the Sakas settled down in different parts of India and became known as Kshatriyas.

History says that the splendid Rajput people were descended from them, so now you can see why they were such a fierce and warlike nation.

Also in very early days the Saka Kings took the title of Rajputra, so it is very likely that Rajputs took their name from that hundreds of years ago.

There were as many as thirty-six clans in the history of Rajasthan and of these the three most important were the Solar, the Lunar, and the Fire.

The Rajputs of the Solar Race trace their descent from Ramachandra, the great King of Ajodhya and his sons. The Gilhotes are the most famous of these families, they were divided again into twenty-four dynasties, of which one is the Sishodiya and in that family were born the Ranas of Mewar, including Pratap Singha.

Now you see why it is important to learn about these people and where the great warriors came from.

It is perhaps a curious thing, but nevertheless true and proved over and over again, that all noble races of mankind are distinguished from others by certain characteristics.

It is so and always has been obvious in the Rajputs. They are taller, finer, and more robust than other nations. They are often fair of complexion

with black hair. They have large brilliant eyes, while their wide shoulders and proud bearing give them an air of distinction.

In courage, strength and endurance they are far above others.

They are fearless in the presence of death and danger, while they bear hunger and want of sleep as though they do not feel them.

They have no love of show or comfort and their power of work is as great as their courage in danger.

Through all life they worshipped three things — their country, their race and their religion. For those three things they would die and consider no sacrifice too great

Another thing is remarkable in the Rajput people. They would never allow cruelty to a woman.

When wars came and they saw they must be defeated, they allowed their ladies to sacrifice themselves on a funeral pyre rather than fall into the hands of the enemy, and then the men rushed out to the field of battle and died sword in hand.

Often in the long years Rajasthan has been devastated, but never once have the women sacrificed their religion or their honour and, of course, this fact has stamped a wonderful record on the glory of the Rajput race.

There is no mean trace in the character of this

people. Once they give their word they never break it; they never cheat, never tell a falsehood and are generous to all in distress.

When they fight and conquer, they never oppress women and their religion will not allow them to use their great strength against the weak.

In fact, there is no doubt that these people have few equals. Wonderful men like the Greeks, did great deeds and these deeds have been written for all the world to read.

In Rajputana just as great deeds have been done, just as wonderful men have died for country and king but there has been no one to write all the story of it, till of late years an Englishman, Colonel Tod has written the history of these people as it deserves.

This gives pleasure to all. It is sad that such a great people should not be praised as they deserve, therefore it is well that an Englishman should tell to the world what has been buried in the dust of ages.

Now we go on to the ancestry of Pratap Singha, that example of Rajput character.

Far, far back in the story of the Solar dynasty was a ruler called Laba; he founded Lahore, some of his family travelled southward and made the Kingdom of Ballabhipur and one of his descendants was Siladitya, who was King of Ballabhipur.

In his reign came the Huns, a very savage tribe from Asia; they fought against Siladitya and killed him, destroying his chief city Ballabhipur.

Now Siladitya had a beautiful Queen, who at that time was on a pilgrimage to the Temple of Bhavani.

On her way back she heard this terrible news and was nearly mad with grief. She took shelter in a cave in the mountain, because she was sick, and there a little baby son was born to her.

And because the baby was born in a cave she called him Guhaditya, *Guha* meaning a cave, you see.

Also as Rajputs claim descent from Guha or Goha they are often called Gohilots.

Guhil is another name for Gohaditya, that baby born in the cave. His descendants sometimes call themselves, ons of Guhil or Govil.

There are all sorts of stories about these people, but we have not time for them now, we must go on with our own story.

When the poor Queen knew that her husband was dead, and the enemy in possession of their home and city, she gave her baby into the hands of a Brahmin lady called Kamalabati and perished herself on the funeral pyre.

Being a Rajput Queen she felt she could not do otherwise

From that time the baby Goha was brought up as a Brahmin boy in the house of the Brahmin and was known as such to all people.

In time he grew up and had a son called Bappa Rao, and from an inscription in the fort of Chitore we know that he was called a Brahmin

Now this boy, Bappa Rao, seemed to have been gifted with strange powers through some magical force. He lived in a mountain district called Idar, but when he was old enough he left the mountain people and came to Chitore, the beautiful city fort which became the capital town of all Mewar and was called 'The Sun of the Hindus'. That was in the year 728 A. D.—a very long time ago.

This great man, Bappa Rao, is worshipped by the Rajputs as being the founder of the kingdom of Mewar. He lived to be one hundred years old and by his great powers and teaching turned his followers into a race of invincible warriors.

He had many sons and the power of the Rajputs grew in strength.

More than four hundred years after that came another hero.

That was Samar Singha. He married Karma Devi, the sister of the King of Delhi, a great man. Then came the day when the King of Delhi, Prithwiraj, was killed in a great battle and Samar Singha fell fighting by his side.

That was in 1192 A. D. The people put Samar's infant child on the throne of Mewar and said they would have him for their king.

Then Kutabuddin, the Pathan Governor of Delhi, thought he could overcome a child, so he invaded Rajputana. In this great danger Karma, the Queen, showed herself to be a true Rajput, for she called the chiefs together and led the whole army against the invaders. Kutabuddin was defeated and driven away, and Karma, the baby son of Samar, grew up and reigned over Rajputana.

It was about this time that the King of beautiful Chitore, who had always been known as the *Rawal* began to be called 'The Rana'.

One after another strange and exciting things happened.

The hero Bheem Singha became the Regent of Chitore for his little nephew. And he was attacked by Alauddin Khilji, Emperor of Delhi.

He was driven away by another brave Rajput lady. That was Padmini, wife of Bheem Singha. She was so quick and clever that she defeatad him and made his armies fly.

Unfortunately this success did not last long, for once again the Emperor attacked Chitore with a large force

This time Rana Lakshman Singha was killed on the field of battle and Chitore could not be saved.

Allaudin was guilty of the most horrible cruelties and only one of the Rana's sons was able to escape the massacre.

Yet the son of the young man who escaped, won back Chitore, for he was the famous hero Hambir and there are wonderful stories about him in the history of Rajasthan.

Nearly one hundred years after Hambir came another hero, the Rana Kumbha. He was such a great man that his deeds were talked of everywhere. In a very great battle he defeated the King of Malwa and Guzerat and in memory of his victory he built a beautiful tower which people admire to this day because of the architecture.

Many other monuments celebrate Kumbha's fame. There are 43 forts in Mewar, and 32 of these were built in the reign of Kumbha.

One of these, the fort of Kamalmir, is very famous and we will speak more of it presently.

Now you can see by the acts of all these heroes how gradually the glory of Rajputana was multiplied. Stronger and stronger grew this fine people.

In the reign of Rana Sanga, the grandson of Kumbha, nearly all the Rajput Chiefs were united under one flag.

This, of course, made them stronger still, because we all know that to be divided makes a country weak.

Yet all the time a great danger was slowly

drawing near, though the Rajputs did not notice it, being busy with their own affairs.

When Rana Sangram Singha followed his father at the beginning of the 16th century, Ibrahim Lodi was King of Delhi, and it was in his reign that the Moghuls again invaded India.

Up till now these hordes of Mohammedans had poured in from Asia every few years just to plunder and destroy, but this time they came in a different way.

The man in command was called Babar and his aim was to establish himself in India. He defeated Ibrahim Lodi at the battle of Panipat and made himself King of Delhi.

As we said before, Rana Sangram, the Rajput, was a great man, also a wise one. He saw in a moment that if this plan were to succeed, the Hindu Empire would be destroyed and Moslem power would rule. So he called his Rajput chiefs together and defeated part of Babar's army in a battle. Babar wanted to make peace, but Rana Sangram refused and again the two armies met in a terrible battle on the banks of the river Beana near Sikri.

And now followed a tragedy.

The Moslems came on with guns in the centre of their line and cavalry on both sides. The Rajputs had never fought against cannon. They had never seen artillery. Cannon balls mowed them down and

terrified their horses. The battle went against them and Sangram was defeated. He vowed he would fight again, but very soon he died, and this was the worst blow to Rajputana, for he had defeated the Moslems eighteen times. He had lost one eye, one leg, and one hand in those battles and bore no less than eighty scars on his breast.

In greatness of mind he was a perfect Rajput, an example to his nation and a shield against enemies.

Moreover, he was the grand-father of Rana Pratap Singha, about whom we shall now hear the story. These two wonderful men were alike. The grandson had the heart and mind of his heroic grandfather, as we shall now see.

CHAPTER III.

PANNA, THE RAJPUT HEROINE.

AND now begins a very exciting story full of strange doings.

The year was 1528, and that great man Rana Sangram, the King of Mewar, had just died, because of the troubles brought on him by Babar, the Moslem Emperor.

Sangram left a son called Bikramjit, who became Rana at once and directly the power was in his hands he made a treaty with Babar.

That might have been a good plan if Bikramjit had been a strong man, but he was not like his great father Rana Sangram; he was a weak and foolish person, and his misrule upset the whole country and started the Rajput chiefs warring against one another, whereupon the Mahommedans turned on them and took Chitore for the second time.

Then the Rajput Chiefs, very angry indeed at this misfortune, asked a nephew of Rana Sangram to be the king until Bikramjit's little son of six years old should be old enough to rule by himself.

Now this nephew of the great Rana was a wicked man; his name was Banabir. He agreed to their proposal, but his intention was to get all the power

for himself, not to help the young child Bikramjit's son.

He did a most horrible thing. He went to find Rana Bikramjit and pierced him to death with his own sword; then, with the sword still dripping with the blood of Bikramjit, he went to look for the little boy of six years who was to be the ruler.

This child was Uday Singha, he was really the Rana, of course, and he was in the care of a noble Rajput lady who acted as his nurse.

Her name was Panna and she had a little son who was the same age as Uday Singha; the two little boys were play-mates.

Panna knew that Banabir was an evil man and all the time she watched for fear harm should come to the little Rana who was in her care.

In the dusk of evening when she was listening for what should happen, she heard dreadful sounds which she knew meant the murder of poor Bikramjit, the father of little Rana.

She was a Rajput, brave and faithful like nearly all her people. She guessed that the boy was in danger, for she understood that wicked Banabir aimed at all the power,

She ran to the room where the little Rana lay asleep in his bed; in her arms she carried her own little son.

Him she put into the bed where Uday was asleep

and Uday Singha she caught up, wrapped him in a shawl and fled from the room.

What pain she felt no one can know, but we all understand the nobleness of an act which offered her own little son to whatever danger might come.

Of course it was the very spirit of Rajasthan. It was just what the Rajput men - chiefs or peasants - were ready to do every day for their lord.

With Uday Singha closely wrapped in a shawl, Panna fled through deserted rooms and passages where none would notice. She thought to herself if any man asked what she carried, she would say it was her own boy, but it could not be told what she felt in her heart in thinking of the little one left behind. She guessed what must happen and she was right, for Banabir went creeping to the nursery and finding the little child, as he expected, in Uday Singha's bed, he killed him at once with the same sword just used to kill his father - as he thought.

Panna escaped from the palace and out into the mountains, carrying the child. With difficulty she got food, because when she whispered who the child really was, men were so terrified of cruel Banabir. He heard a rumour that the little Rana was not dead; he did not know what to believe, but of course he was ready to hunt down and torture any man who could tell him anything or help him to catch the young child.

It is strange to think how God rules the fate of men.

If little Uday Singha had been killed in his bed, or noble Panna had been caught in the wild mountains, the family of the Maharana would have been wiped out, and there would never have been the hero Pratap Singha to fill the pages of history with great deeds.

For the wonderful Rana Pratap Singha was the son of little Uday, whose life was saved by Panna.

After days and weeks of anxious strain and hardship, poor Panna came to the great fort of Kamalmir in the hills.

Here lived Ashva-Shah, the chief of the Kumbhameran country. Brave as he was, he was not quite sure what he ought to do till his mother told him he must protect the child.

The mother of Ashva-Shah was another of these splendid Rajput ladies. *He* was troubled about Banabiar, thinking what the cruel murderer might do to the people of Kamalmir. But she refused to see that side of the question. She said this prince of the famous line must be sheltered, whatever the cost.

Was he not the grandson of Rana Sangram, and the direct descendant of the Solar line — the Shishodiya who are Rajputs of Chitore?

Her son could not stand against her words, he gave protection to Panna and the child, and brought up the little prince as his own nephew.

And so the child who owed his life to one heroic lady grew up in the fortress of Kamalmir in the mountains. We are not told what happened to Panna, but we may be sure she was honoured among these brave people.

Very soon it was plain that the boy came of a noble race. He was very tall of stature and haughty in his bearing, very proud as he was handsome. It is said that he was like his grand-father Rana Sangram Singha and the long line of noble Rajputs that came before him.

When Askva-Shah saw all these things he allowed the secret to be told, and then the great chiefs of Rajwara, overjoyed at what they heard, came flocking to the fortress to see the young man they had believed to be dead.

You see they thought the royal line was blotted out, so when they saw a pure descendant with all the features of the race, they were simply overjoyed.

Before all things Rajputs value the pure line of their Ranas. For that reason they despised the wicked Banabir, for though he was a son of Prithiraj, Sangram's brother, his mother was a slave girl called Shitala, so that he was hated by the proud Rajputs for his low origin.

Moreover, the people were unhappy, for Banabir showed his restless, cruel nature at all times. No one was safe from him.

Therefore the Sardars gathered together at Kamalmir, one and all they placed the mark of loyalty on the forehead of Uday Singha and owned him Rana of Mewar.

They decided to expel Banabir, and after a fierce battle drove him and his followers out into the Deccan. After that they occupied Chitore and set up the flag of young Uday Singha, while the whole land rejoiced in festivities.

Now among the loyal chiefs who fought for Uday Singha was the chief of Jhalore. He belonged to a proud and noble line called the *Soniguru*, which means the 'Golden bodied', no doubt because of their fair complexions.

He proposed to give his daughter in marriage to Uday Singha at once, so the marriage was celebrated with great pomp.

While the preparations were going on, an odd thing happened.

A band of chiefs with their followers came riding to the wedding. On their way they met a thousand Rajput soldiers carrying with them the dowry of a daughter of Banabir from Kaccha to Chitore.

These men did not know all that had happened. It is not easy always to send news across wild

mountainous country. They could not have known that Banabir was driven out of Chitore and had fled to the Deccan with the few followers left to him. Therefore they must have been greatly surprised when the Rajput chiefs attacked them and took from them the treasure that was the dowry of Banabir's daughter.

Very naturally the Rajput chiefs held that Banabir, having seized power, by his terrible murders, had no right to any treasure at all, which was, of course fair.

The chiefs then carried away the treasure to the fortress of Kamalmir and the wedding festivities went on with great rejocing.

CHAPTER IV.

THE STORY OF A HERO BEGINS.

WE now come to the real story of the greatest of Indian heroes.

Up till now it has been necessary to give a short but clear idea of the years before he was born, and the origin of his family, besides that of the character and deeds of his ancestors.

No matter what foolish things people say about these things being of no importance, children must remember that courage and clean honourable lives practised from one generation to another bring brave, healthy and noble men and women into the world, and make the whole world better and greater.

Let every child try to be a hero and he will find that his children will be heroes too.

Aud now we will tell the story of Pratap Singha, great grand-son of the hero Rana Sangram and so like him that he might have been his son.

As we know, young Uday Singha had a splendid wedding, to which all the chiefs came rejoicing, and married the lovely daughter of the Soniguru, Chief of Jhalore.

Not very long after he had been placed on the throne of Chitore a little son was born to him, and

that son was named Pratap Singha and was to be the heir to the kingdom of Mewar.

He was a fine child and everyone saw that he was worthy to lead the Rajput people.

After a time another son was born to Rana Uday. He had twenty-four sons in all, but we do not have much to say about the others, the two that really matter are Pratap Singha and Sakta Singha.

And yet two boys, born brothers, could have hardly been more different from one another.

They were always together. They slept, ate and played together.

Whatever Pratap planned to do, in games or duties, he called Sakta to help him and Sakta came without hesitation. Yet, perhaps, because both boys were proud and fierce, they quarrelled with such violence that their relatives wondered what would happen when they grow to be men.

They were neither of them quiet students; on the contrary they did not wish to work in school. They wanted, armed with spears, to hunt the stag and wild beast through the dark forests and by the mountain lakes of their land.

We must remember that Rajputs taught their sons the use of weapons from childhood.

The sword was a plaything for a Rajput boy, his father was proud when he saw the child show skill

and his mother full of joy when the boy came to her with honourable wounds to be tended.

Therefore we need not say that Uday's sons Pratap and Sakta were carefully trained from childhood and both of them were brave beyond words. Nothing seemed to have terror for them. Yet Pratap was more grave and generous, while Sakta was fierce and reckless. Pratap's love for his country was the motive power of his life. He was quiet and inflexible. His wide forehead and large thoughtful eyes seemed an evidence of his fine nature.

But Sakta seemed to have no definite aim in life. He was brave indeed, but careless and wilful.

When he was born, his horoscope had been taken by wise men, a thing very often done in old days and sametimes even now.

Sakta's horoscope prophesied that he would be a stain on the glory of his country. As a matter of fact that tragic prediction came true in the end.

Even when he was a baby it caused his father anxiety, because a horoscope was always believed, and people shaped their lives by the predictions.

In consequence of the Rana Uday Singha's feelings about little Sakta's horoscope he nearly put an end to his child's life.

It happened in this way. When Sakta was five years old some of the Chiefs were testing the

sharpness of a newly-made sword, while the boys were looking on.

The chiefs were cutting through a bundle of thick thread.

Little Sakta seized the sword in his hand.

"A sword should be tested on human flesh," he said to his father.

With these words he brought down the sword on his own finger and the blood streamed from it, but the little boy gave not the least sign of pain.

The chiefs present were filled with admiration; they thought it showed fine courage in one so young. But the Rana thought otherwise. Perhaps he was reminded of the fatal horoscope, in any case he was shocked—so shocked that he ordered the boy's execution to be carried out at once, and it would have been had not the Chief of Salumbra interceded so urgently for the boy that his life was spared.

And so Sakta was saved to do the evil predicted: it would have been far better for his splendid brother Pratap Singha had he died when Uday Singha commanded, terrible as such a thing might have been.

At every turn the two brothers came against one another.

For instance, at the beginning of spring in each year there was a feast and festival called *Aheria* celebrated in Rajputana in those days.

It was the practice to foretell the fate of wars

and what would happen to the country from the result of this day's hunt. Therefore every Rajput tried his best to do more than he had ever done before.

Pratap, Sakta and others of the king's sons took part in the trials, and, of course, each one tried to do better than anyone else.

To make the warriors do their very best the minstrels, called *Charans*, sang songs of the glorious deeds of Rajput heroes in times of war and danger.

Pratap loved these songs and tales, and the chiefs watching him were astonished at the nobility of his face, even as a child, while as he grew older they looked upon him with something like awe.

Pratap and Sakta were wonderfully brilliant in these displays. In sword exercise and hurling the spear no one could equal them, and then one day when they were out hunting words arose as to whose arrow had hit a certain target.

Pratap was at the time wheeling on horse-back, his spear flashing in his hand.

Then Sakta called out in a jeering tone :

"See that you do not miss your aim," and in a moment the two brothers faced one another with javelines raised to throw.

A priest of the royal family, who was looking on, saw in a moment the terrible danger, and feeling that the Shishodiya line was in danger he threw

himself between the two brothers and begged them to restrain their anger.

But the boys were too angry to listen to him they were blinded with rage.

Then the priest, seeing he could not stop them did a thing that was worthy of a Rajput and also of a Brahmin. He pulled out a dagger from the folds of his robe and plunged it into his own heart, falling from his horse drenched in blood at the feet of the two princes.

Pratap had a religious mind all his life long, he was utterly shocked at this terrible event.

He saw the great sacrifice of the noble Brahmin who killed himself to prevent the death of the king's sons. He repented bitterly of his own passion.

Afterwards he gave every honour to the last rites, and settled property upon the family and descendants of the Brahmin for all time, doing honour to his memory in every way.

Sakta Singha acted very differently. It was at this point that he showed his real heart, and the wild nature hidden heneath his fine appearance.

His anger was in no way quenched. He bade farewell to Pratap with the same fury and rode away to join the Moghuls, who were deadly enemies to his father and the Rajput people.

A little later, when Akbar, the Emperor of the Moghuls, conquered Malwa, and the King of Malwa

took refuge with Uday Singha, Sakta was with the Moghuls and later on he actually fought against his own nation in the great battle of Haldighat, which you shall hear about later.

So far can evil passion carry a man—a terrible thing to think of.

You will remember Baber, who founded the Moghul Empire and was the life-long enemy of Rana Sangram. Well, he died in 1530, very soon after his great enemy, and instead of him reigned his son Humayun, but not for long.

Humayun was driven out by Sher Shah of Bengal who occupied Delhi, and chased the Moghul Emperor from place to place till he took shelter with Malladev, the King of Marwar.

This was a great mistake, because Rai Malla, his eldest son, had been killed in a battle with Moghuls at Sikri, so, of course, Malladev hated him.

As I have said before, all Rajputs thought it a sacred duty to help a man in distress, but Malladev was so bitter against Humayun that not only did he refuse to help him, but he tried to make him prisoner in order to give him up to Sher Shah of Bengal.

Humayun never forgave this act which was really a mean blot on Rajput principles. He fled away across the desert, taking with him his faithful Queen. After terrible hardships they came to

Amarkot, and the King of that place offered them shelter and protection.

Here was born to the Empress Hamida Begum a baby son, who was named Jallal-ud din Mohammed Akbar. And that baby, born the same year as Rana Pratap Singha, was also a great man, but unfortunately a great enemy to the noble Rajput.

The year of his birth Uday Singha accended the throne of Chitore.

Now you see why I have told the story of the Moghuls, of the misfortunes of their Emperor, Humayun and how Akbar came to be born at Amarkot.

All these things come into the life of Pratap Singha, and I want to show how things happened, and how the mean conduct of Malladev, King of Marwar, made an enemy for the Rajputs of Chitore and for Pratap.

CHAPTER V.

THE DARK CLOUD THREATENS.

IT has been told how Akbar, the son of the fugitive Mogul Emperor and Pratap Singha were born at the same time. And now must be told what followed after and how the characters of those two changed the whole history of their countries and the people they ruled over. But first of all we must speak about the city and fortress of Chitore, because that was so very important at this point and also because it is considered by many to be the most wonderful place in all India—even now, when it is chiefly in ruins.

Chitore is not on the Aravalli Mountains actually. It stands on a pinnacle or spur of rocks four miles long and half a mile wide.

The base of it is eight miles round. The plain on which the Chitore rock stands is 1300 feet above sea level. And the hill of rocks 450 feet above that, standing, you see, like an island. The sides of the hill are covered with thick forests and the whole sock surrounded by an impregnable wall ten miles in length.

Now remember that this amazing place was made the capital of the kingdom of Mewar in 728 A. D. and remained unconquered for more than 800 years.

It is a terrible thing to consider that the weakness and love of pleasure that ruined Uday Singha were the cause of its downfall, but it shows children and young people that it is not only wickedness that harms a country and a family, you can also cause the complete ruin of those you love by self-indulgence in foolish pleasures and by weakness.

Remember that this wonderful city and fortress, that had belonged to the great Rajput people for nearly one thousand years, was lost and ruined just because one man gave himself up to luxury and licentious living. He was fearfully punished, for he was driven out and ended his days in shame and infamy.

But think of the sorrow and suffering he brought on others!

And now I must tell a little more about this marvellous city of Chitore; then the trouble that came can be more easily understood

First of all there were three strong gates giving entrance to the Forts. There was the Laksha-pole,—Pole means gate, as we know. This was a narrow pathway giving entrance to the fortress on the north and it was nearly always closed.

On the east was the Surya-pole, a gate that was not entirely impregnable. Though it was narrow and difficult it passed through a dip in the rock plateau and was easier of access. For that reason

the task of guarding it was given to the stoutest warrior, who at the time of this siege was Chandayat Chief of Salumbra.

The third and main entrance to Chitore was a wide and fine road with a gradual rise up the steep hill. This way had *seven* gates to hold it against attack.

The first was the Paidal—or Pedestrian-pole, the second the Bhairab-pole, and the third, most important of all the seven, was the Hanuman-pole. This gate has been the scene of many terrible struggles.

From this great gate the road turns south, and one behind the other come the Ganesh-pole, and the Jharma-pole, then north again by the Laksham-pole and the Ram-pole, which completes the defence of seven gates.

In past years there used to be strong rooms on both sides of each gate for the soldiers to live in whose duty was to guard the barriers.

After passing the last of the seven gates, the Ram-pole, you enter the fortress itself, which is the City of Chitore, for the whole city is a fort.

In the days of her glory Chitore was well stored with food grains, while a few inexhaustible fountains and thirty-two big tanks supplied the whole city with water.

Even though besieged for long periods this

wonderful fortified city had never been distressed for food or water.

Besides that, Chitore was never tormented by a bad climate; no severe cold; no dry and burning heat. The inhabitants of Chitore enjoyed good health and great vitality.

It is painful to think that this amazing city, raised on a natural pinnacle, surrounded by green jungles, is now deserted as a funeral ground. Temples, palaces, monuments that stood for hundreds of years are now broken and destroyed by the hands of ruthless enemies.

The gorgeous beauty of this marvellous place was a thing to wonder at, now the destruction might make men weep.

It is said there was no royal place in all India to compare with Chitore.

Then came the Moghuls, who acted like savages. Allaudin and Bahadur destroyed noble monuments. Aurangzeb had sixty-two beautiful temples torn to pieces, while the vile actions of the Emperor Akbar will be told later in the story of Pratap Singha. He, perhaps, was the most shameful of all, because he was really a fine ruler and should have known better than to act like a Vandal or a Hun.

Yet even after all these cruel attacks Chitore has still, even amongst her ruins, a large number of wonderful monuments. For instance, there is Rana

Kumbha's monument, which is nine stories and 122 feet in height. Inside this tower is a winding staircase, while both the inside and outside of the whole monument are so covered with beautiful sculpture that not one inch of space is left plain.

Besides this, we may see the Temples of Mukalji and Shingar Chauri.

The first was built by Rana Mukul, father of Kumbha and the latter by a Jain treasurer of Rana Kumbha.

Other wonderful buildings may be found among the ruins of Chitore and those that come from different parts of the world to see that wonderful place are overwhelmed by the thought of what Chitore must have been in the past when they see what it is now.

The city was attacked several times and destroyed several times.

Perhaps in no part of the world has been shown such superb self-sacrifice as that offered by the men and women too, who defended Chitore.

Probably there is no smallest space on those rocks that has not been stained with blood, not a house that has not sent out loved ones to die for the city. That insulated rock, crowned by a towering fortress, is indeed a fitting memorial to the Rajputs, noble-hearted descendants of Bappa Rao.

And now in order to tell the story of how Pratap

Singha became a wanderer with his few followers, we have got to tell the complete story of how Akbar the Moghul Emperor drove him out of Chitore and destroyed that city for the last time.

It has been said that the fortress was attacked three times. It would be beside the question of Pratap Singha's story to tell about all these misfortunes, but the first attack was caused by a curious event, so it must be told.

Bheem Singha was Rana of Chitore and his Queen Padmini was said to be the most beautiful woman in all India.

The Moghul Emperor Ala-ud-din wanted to have Padmini; so he captured Bheem Singha by treachery.

The Rana however was rescued by the cleverness of the Queen, and Ala-ud-din was defeated and forced to retreat by the splendid heroism of Gora and his nephew Badal, a lad of but twelve years of age.

This romantic story is told in Rajput history.

Of course Ala-ud-din was furious at this failure, so a few years later he collected an army and attacked Chitore again. This time he was too powerful and won the day. Rana Lakshman and his eleven sons were all killed with the flower of the Rajput people and Chitore was taken.

In 1533, when Bikramjit, the son of the great

Rana Sanga, was ruler, Bahadur Shah of Guzerat attacked Chitore.

That time thirty-two thousand Rajputs died and thirteen thousand Rajput women sacrificed themselves on the funeral pyre rather than fall into the hands of the enemy.

At that time Humayun was Emperor of Delhi. He was the Moghul who fled in distress and ruin into the desert, who was homeless for thirteen years and whose Empress Hamida gave birth in exile to the baby boy Akbar.

The Rajput histories say that Karnavati, wife of Rana Sanga or Sangram, sent Humayun a letter to ask his help. The letter was called a *Rakhi* and by the law of Rajput chivalry if a *Rakhi* is offered by a lady the man who receives it becomes a brother to her.

Humayun responded to the Queen's letter and started to help her but unluckily the destruction of Chitore was completed before he got there, but Bahadur saw him coming and retreated at once, so that time Chitore did not fall into the hands of an enemy.

This was the second destruction of the city.

And now we come to Akbar and the final fall of Chitore, when Uday Singha, the father of Pratap, was Rana and Akbar was Emperor of Delhi and a great part of Northern India.

It has always been considered a bad blot on the name of Akbar that for mere ambition he should destroy the city, his father rescued.

All the more, because in a way Uday Singha was near as a brother to him. Both had been exiles. Both had been rescued by the humanity of friendly powers. Both had been brought up by generous nobles.

Yet Akbar turned his strength and armies against the man he should have befriended, simply because having won Mairata, Ajmere and Jodhpur, having seen rulers and Rajput heroes bow before him, he was greedy of more and more power.

This is a horrible thing to see, because Akbar was really a great man, with military skill, but as he succeeded so he grew more and more greedy and made up his mind to conquer *all* Rajasthan and put the splendid Rajput people under his sway.

His view was that rulers of many states had bowed to his power. The Rana of Chitore was as yet independent, therefore he also must be made to admit Moghul rule. He must be humiliated.

This was a mean and ignoble way of looking at life. There is room for all in God's world and it is a terrible thing for a man to believe he has the right to trample on others because he is strong.

Strength should make a ruler kind and generous. Yet Akbar, being strong, broke down and crushed all

he saw, determined to snatch from others all they possessed in order to make himself richer.

There was another reason for his fury against the Rajputs.

Uday Singha was lazy and self-indulgent, but he was a kind man. He gave sanctuary to several chiefs driven from their possessions by Akbar.

One of these was Baz Bahadur, King of Malwa He was persecuted by a very bad man called Adam Khan, the son of Akbar's wet nurse. Because the Emperor favoured this man Adam, he thought he could do as he liked, so after he had defeated Baz, he treated his people and even the ladies of his harem with most inhuman cruelty.

Baz Bahadur then took shelter with Uday Singha, who refused nothing he could possibly do, because to help distressed people is a principle law of the Rajput religion.

Another defeated ruler, Ram Shah, who was in charge of the fortress of Gwalior, fled to Chitore after he was driven out and Uday Singha was good to him.

Now all these things happened one after the other and each one led farther along the road of ruin for Uday Singha and his brave son Pratap.

That is what is necessary for us to see. Misfortunes do not really come in an hour. Something

happens day by day that brings trouble nearer. So it was in this case.

Uday Singha was kind and brave, but he was what is called 'easy-going'. He would not look ahead and his wonderful son could not rule for him.

We have to look at all these things to understand clearly all that happened to Pratap Singha and how truly heroic was his character.

CHAPTER VI.

THE EMPEROR COMES TO CHITORE

EVERYONE that reads this story of Pratap Singha will remember the jealousy and evil temper of his brother Sakta Singha. How they quarrelled more and more — not through fault of Pratap, but because Sakta was bitterly jealous.

On that day when the two brothers came to a fight and the noble Brahmin killed himself in order to stop it — as we remember — Pratap was deeply grieved and made amends to the Brahmin's family, but Sakta, burning with anger, fled away to the Emperor Akbar's court and offered to serve the Moghuls.

Of course, Akbar was well pleased. Not only was Sakta a very fine young man, but he was a Rajput of royal blood and to have one of Uday Singha's sons serving under him was pleasant to Akbar's pride.

Therefore he made much of Sakta, gave him honours and a very important thing indeed, told him all his private plans about attacking Rajasthan and conquering Sakta's own people.

Sakta Singha put up with these things for a long while. We do not know whether he was glad to see

one ruler after another broken and driven out when Akbar seized the towns and forts. Probably he did not. After all, he was the son of the Rana and a pure Rajput. Evil temper will make a young man go a long way down a wrong road no doubt, but Sakta was not all bad. So, when Akbar told him he was going to attack Chitore and destroy the great city and everyone in it, Sakta was much troubled.

After considering the matter and thinking of Akbar's words and that his intention was to punish Uday Singha, because the Rajput Rana would not bow down to him, Sakta made up his mind that he could not submit to this.

He mounted his swiftest horse and taking an opportunity to escape when others thought he was on a hunt, he fled away to Chitore.

Hour after hour he rode, hardly stopping for rest or food, till he came to the great rock fortress on the pinnacle, the capital of his native land.

He must have been ashamed when he saw far off the amazing towers and temples against the sky and remembered that he had left it to join the enemy whose aim was to destroy and degrade all this beauty the labour of ages.

He did not stop, but rode on, his horse very weary.

He must have come in by the Laksha-pole, the strong north gate because he came from Delhi and

ridden up that steep narrow way between walls of rock till he entered the city itself.

He did no hesitate, because the sight of his splendid home must have driven the jealous thought from his mind. Then he came into the presence of Uday Singha, his father, and told him that the Emperor Akbar was coming to take Chitore.

Now, when Akbar knew that Sakta had disappeared, he was clever enough to see that the young man had probably gone to warn his own people and therefore it would be wise to hasten his action, giving the Rajputs no time to get ready.

Therefore, instead of starting by an attack on Malwa as he had intended, he made ready to go to Chitore at once.

On the way he conquered one place after another.

First the fort of Ratnambar, which he entered without opposition, because the people in it were so afraid of him that they left it and ran away.

The same thing happened at Kotah. After that he marched on the Fort of Gagrun and camped there.

By that time he was only one hundred miles to the east of Chitore,

While he was getting ready and collecting all the troops he could, he sent two of his generals, Asaf Khan and Uzir Khan, to attack Mandalgarh. This was a splendid fort about thirty miles north of Chitore. It was, of course, owned by the Maharana,

and Rawat Ballabhi Solanki was in charge of it.

This man fought bravely but he was over-powered by the Moghuls and the Fort was taken.

No one must imagine that the Rajputs did not fight bravely, but it is well to keep in mind that the Emperor had a very large army and very powerful weapons of war.

In those days the Moghuls were in the fore-front with guns and powder, while the Rajputs used their swords and spears.

It can easily be understood that men who knew how to make mines under gates and walls and who could blow out fortifications had a great advantage over their enemies.

It is more than probable that if Akbar had attacked Chitore some hundred years earlier he would not have won his aim.

As it was, he knew too much and the Rajputs had not the means to defend their city.

They were perhaps the bravest people alive in those days and because of that they died in thousands, but they could not keep out gunpowder.

By the time his generals had taken the fort of Mandalgarh, the Emperor had come to Chitore and camped his army round the towering citadel.

Afterwards he built a tower thirtyfive feet high on the place where his own tents stood. This tower was twelve feet across at the foot, but only three or

four feet at the top. In the top was set a huge lamp, reached by a spiral staircase, so the tower was known as *Akbar-ka-Dewa*, or Akbar's Lamp. He wished all men, friends and foes, to know where his own camp was.

History says that this tower is as perfect as when it was built in October 1567, which is a wonderful thing to know.

And now we must tell about Chitore and what the Rajputs were doing.

When Uday Singha heard from his son about Akbar's intention, it seems that he threw off his sluggish habits and consulted with all his chiefs as to what could be done at once.

The Rajputs were not the least afraid; naturally they were brave, but also they believed that Chitore *could* not be taken, because the walls, gates and all defences had been so well repaired by the great Rana Sangram, who never left things to chance.

But they thought there might be a long siege and the difficulty would be to feed the whole city.

They actually stored within the walls enough food to keep the whole population for several years, which is a wonderful thing to know.

There was no danger of thirst, for as we mentioned before there were a large number of big tanks or reservoirs.

While they were collecting all this food, the

Rajputs collected Chief after Chief with all his warriors.

Sahidas of Salumbra, right hand of the Rana, was put in charge of the Sun-gate.

Jaymalla, Chief of Bednore, came, also Putto of Kailwara, a mere boy, even then famous for valour.

These two have been renowned through all history for their wonderful deeds.

There came the Chiefs of Jhala, of Promar, of Bedola and Kotario, the great Soniguru Rao of Jhallore, in fact heroes too many to mention; while Ram Shah of Gwalior, who had fled to Chitore for refuge, offered to die in defence of the city.

Of the sixteen chiefs who have the right to sit on seats at the Rana's right hand in Council, all came to help and die for their country.

Six weeks after Sakta Singha rode in with that warning, Akbar came with his army and within that time the Rajputs had devastated all the country round, burning and destroying every village and taking the people on the land to shelter in the city—men, women and children.

This was done in order that Akbar's army should have no food. It was a terrible thing to do, of course, but a wise one.

Then the Moghul army came. The great gates were closed, each one in charge of a special Chief and his own men, and while they waited the besieged set

to work strengthening every weak place and getting ready for every possible danger.

The Emperor Akbar rode round the whole fortress with his engineers, planning the best way to gain his object.

At this point there comes a very strange story, which is also sad. It is said that Uday Singha had a concubine Queen who was very brave and clever as well as beautiful. When the Moghuls began to attack the city this amazing lady came out to the fight instead of the Rana himself.

The story tells that she performed deeds of heroism that were astonishing and that Uday Singha instead of coming out to lead his chiefs applauded *her* actions but hid himself.

He was a coward as well as self-indulgent, it seems.

This was more than these hero chiefs could bear.

They were furious at being led by a woman — they, Rajput warriors and chiefs.

So they killed the women who had — so they thought — brought humiliation on them. Then Uday Singha, the Rana of Mewar, who should have been at their head, left Chitore secretly with his family, that is to say, with his ladies and the young children and took shelter in the mountains.

The story says that Hussain Kuli Khan searched for him in the mountains to the westward, but never

found him. First he took refuge at Rajpippali and then went on to a lovely valley in the Aravalli mountains to a place where he had earlier made a great water tank and built a palace which became known later as Udaipur.

In time, after the destruction of Chitore this place became the capital of Mewar.

It is only fair to the Rana Uday Singha to say that there are two stories in history about his conduct.

One is that he fled in cowardice before the assaults on Chitore began. The other tells that he did not go until the fighting became general and that then the chiefs *made* him go with his young family in order to secure his safety.

Whichever story is the fact, all men must be sorry that Uday Singha could bring himself to desert Chitore at such a time. All men know that Rana Sangram would not have done such a thing; nor, certainly, would Pratap, eldest son of Uday Singha.

He stayed in the city with the chiefs and with them fought to the last man, though he faced death every hour.

What became of Sakta Singha at this crisis we do not know, except that as he was in Chitore when the siege began, yet later fought against his brother Pratap Singha in the battle of Haldighat, it is likely that he fled to Udaipur with his father and afterwards went back to Akbar's Court.

History relates that the Emperor gave him honours, and years afterwards wished to marry a daughter of Sakta. This lady was extremely beautiful, but she was also a Rajput and when Akbar came near to her she drew a dagger from her dress and threatened to kill the Emperor unless he left the room.

The story says that Akbar was abashed and never tried to approach this princess again.

It is a pity to think that Sakta Singha did not remain to fight with the chiefs and help his heroic brother, but there seems little doubt that he was like his father Uday Singha and loved more the comforts of life, money and ease, than the noble ideals of the great chiefs who had come to stand by Pratap and their beautiful city.

For four weeks at last the Moghuls were encamped around Chitore before they began a serious assault. There were petty skirmishes, of course, but nothing really serious.

It was during this period, no doubt, that Uday Singha left Chitore, as he would hardly have been able to do it later.

Therefore the supreme command was given to that peerless hero Jaymalla, the Rathore Chief of Bednore. Everyone chose him as the leader, Pratap Singha being too young.

One thing we must say at this point, the

Moghuls were terribly cruel, both now and later,

Hussain Kuli Khan was sent to hunt for Uday in the mountains and he practised inhuman cruelties on the innocent people he found in the hills. These acts cannot be forgiven and shed disgrace on the army of Akbar.

CHAPTER VII.

HEROES AND HEROINES.

SO at last Chitore was shut in by Akbar's armies and the real siege began.

The unworthy Rana had left his people and his still more unworthy son Sakta had disappeared.

Young Pratap Singha was showing his noble spirit, and Jaymalla, chief of Bednore, who was calle the finest warrior in Rajputana, was in command o all. Food they had in plenty! Water they had, for all.

But the danger lay in the cannon and mines used by the Moghuls, of which the Rajputs had small knowledg-

And yet Akbar made no progress at first. His generals attacked the forts again and again, but were driven off. His armies suffered the most.

The Moghul guns and arrows were useless against the massive walls of the forts, while more and more of their men were killed by the Rajputs throwing down on them all kinds of missiles from the walls and towers. Also history says that the Rajputs knew the use of guns and powder, but these things with them were not nearly so up to date as the inventions used by the Moghuls.

Yet Akbar did not despair; he determined to win in spite of losing so many men. He was well aware that in a battle of swords his men had no chance against Rajput warriors, so he settled to conquer by cannon and gun-powder, feeling sure that was his best plan.

So he set his guns all round the walls, each one hidden from the defenders, so that the men who fired them should be safe from Rajput arrows.

Also he arranged that all his best generals and heaviest guns should be directed on the three important gates.

Akbar himself was mostly before the western gate, though he went to all in turn to watch his generals and to urge his men to the attack.

On the Rajput side the great Jayamalla was in command, but history says that Pratap Singha distinguished himself by invincible courage.

It is said that he was such a fine example that the chiefs followed him with joy.

Pratap and Jaymalla were commanding at the western gate.

At the *Sun-gate* was Sahidas, the chief of Salumbra. He was a very famous man and under him fought Putto, who was but sixteen years of age, but known all through Rajasthan as a hero.

The chief of Jhala defended the northern gate.

All went well at first for the Rajputs, because the

Emperor soon began to see that his guns did not do much harm at a distance.

At that period, you see, cannon strong enough to break down walls like those around Chitore had not been invented.

So Akbar held consultation with his generals and at last they settled to dig mines and blow up the walls, as they could not knock them down.

By that means they believed they could get into the fortress.

The Rajputs, however, saw, through this plan and took care not to allow the Moghuls to come close enough to make the mines. Their guns and their strong arrows were dangerous enough to keep men at bay, though not to drive them away.

History proves that later on the people of India were extremely clever at engineering work on battle-fields. It is said, too, that the Moghuls employed Portugese adventurers in their artillery, men who had learned it all in Europe and were experts.

And now the Emperor Akbar began to be vexed because he did not conquer as fast as he expected.

Especially on the east and west sides of the great fortress he was kept away by the fine arrow shooting of the Rajputs. After considering all this with his generals Akbar made a plan.

This was a clever plan, but unluckily for the Rajputs, the Emperor was really a clever commander.

He ordered his men to dig two deep trenches, one on each side of the fort. These trenches were begun some way from the walls, far enough to be safe from arrows.

Strong banks were built up with stones and soil either side of zig zag passages that came close under the walls of the city.

As they came nearer and nearer the soldiers roofed in these trenches with planks of wood and protected them with raw hides of animals which could not be pierced by cannon balls.

Moreover, these trenches were cut wide enough to allow of ten horsemen riding abreast, a very extraordinary thing when you come to consider, and quite different from our modern idea of trenches, which are very deep, very, very strong to resist shells, but not intended for horses.

Akbar's idea was, not only to allow of horses, but his trenches had to be roofed in high enough to allow an elephant to travel along them with men on his back.

His trenches were called '*Sabat*', and he used 5,000 men to make them. To protect his workmen he had men with huge leather shields, but in spite of all this the Rajputs were so clever with their arrows and cannon that they killed about two hundred men every day in these trenches, and the Emperor had to

pay the men at a very high rate indeed to get anyone to attempt the work.

History says that silver and gold were common as earth, otherwise no man would do it.

One horrible thing is told about it. All the men who were killed daily were left where they fell and their bodies built into the walls to save time. Akbar did not care at all about the dreadful suffering of his own people, he had set his heart on breaking down the city, that was all he thought of.

Thus at the cost of thousands of lives the trench on the west was carried to the great gate.

In the north Kabir Khan, the general on that side, finished the construction of the two great mines. In one he buried a hundred maunds of gunpowder and in the other eighty.

When all was ready the Emperor ordered them to be fired.

One was fired. As luck would have it, the Moghuls thought that both had exploded.

As you can imagine, the noise and destruction of the one explosion was so terrific that no soldier was able to calculate what had happened.

The result was hardly what they expected.

When the fearful crash came and the air was full of sound and dust with flying stones and timber, the Moghuls rushed wildly up their trench, certain they could take the city.

The Rajputs were there to stop them. Then, in that moment, the second mine exploded and the destruction was terrible.

Of course many of the defenders were killed, but far more of the attacking soldiers died, because they had crowded the trench in order to get in at once.

Immense stones and bodies were flung to a great distance. At least five hundred Moghuls were blown to pieces on the spot, amongst them Syed Jamal-ud-din the general and several others of their foremost leaders.

It was a great loss, but Akbar was by this time desperate in his determination to get in. He did not care what it cost—in lives or money. He had a mine exploded the same day at the eastern gate, and from that time for two months he continued to explode mines against the walls where the trenches could reach.

The amazing part of this story is that the Rajputs stood firm through all.

This is very wonderful when you consider that Akbar could call up more and more armies, but the brave Rajauts could only die. They remained steadfast in their resolve not to give in, whatever the cost.

Their courage was so great, that Mohammedan writers have written again and again of their fortitude.

About this time Sahidas, the man who defended

the northern gate, was killed. He was a famous, Chandayat Chief and his death was a great loss.

In his place the Rajputs placed the extraordinary young hero Putto. As has been said before, this youth was but sixteen when the siege began, and history tells that his young wife, his mother and his sister appeared on horseback dressed in armour to fight with him.

Such was the soul of the Rajput ladies. Yet courage could not save them and it is sad to tell that both the mother and the young wife were killed fighting and Putto, the hero, was left with no family all those he loved were gone while he was yet a youth, killed by the inhuman act of these invaders.

On another front the most wonderful defender was Jaymalla.

This general would not allow any man to despair or even to be anxious. If a wall was broken, he found men to build it up. He brought forward guns to defend every gap.

And so this awful battle dragged on day after day.

The Emperor soon saw the difficulty of his task. He found that he *could not* frighten Rajputs or make them despair. Also he realized that he could not starve them out. We know they had food for three years.

He began to understand then that his only chance of success was to win by trickery. As the defenders

died their strength would be weaker; nor could they obtain more men.

The winter passed and spring came on.

As the mountain slopes of the Aravalli hills grew green and fair with flowers, all the country should have been more and more lovely. Yet because of the greedy ambition of one proud man where crops should have grown up and cattle should have fed on young grass, there was nothing but fields burned black and ruined cottages.

All the poor people were in Chitore. Smoke, dust and horror hung over the grand walls of the city and men died every day.

And then one day a terrible thing happened.

The wall by the side of the *Hanuman-pole* was blown down by the Moghuls.

A strong body of Rajputs rushed down to defend the gap. They were collecting explosive to fire at the enemy trying to break in and at their head was a tall, powerful warrior in shining armour. He was directing the men with complete coolness as usual, for he was Jaymalla, the general and head of the whole city.

Outside the wall was a covered platform protected from Rajput fire. On this platform was Akbar himself, directing the firing of a gun.

He saw the splendid figure of the brave defender, took aim at him and killed him.

History writes that he was very proud of himself, for killing this hero, though why he should have been proud we cannot see, as he was protected and Jaymalla was openly in the forefront of the defence.

It can easily be understood that the death of this hero caused a shock of dismay as well as grief through all the tormented city.

Confusion crept into the fortress. The driven men, fewer every day, became desperate.

They all knew what the end must be, yet they were Rajputs and they determined that that end should be in a blaze of glory.

All the chiefs left in the city collected together in council, the heads of the Sishodiyas, the Rathores and the Chauhans, all the great families of Rajputana, in fact, the kingdom of Mewar.

They proclaimed the *Jahar-brata*, which was the death of all their women — that they should not fall into the heads of the Moghuls.

The men would all die fighting, and therefore could not leave their women defenceless.

They lighted the funeral pyres all over the city, and on those pyres died nine queens, five princesses and hundreds of ladies from all the great families.

These wonderful women went to death with smiling faces. It is indeed an amazing story of heroism.

CHAPTER VIII.

AT LAST PRATAP COMES.

AS the smoke of those terrible burnings went up into the sky, we may be sure that a just God judged the Emperor Akbar for his action.

Even in those days long ago, when people were very hard on defeated men, nations were shocked at his wicked cruelty.

When the smoke of those awful fires rose over the city, Bhagwan Das told Akbar that the end was come, because the '*Jahar*' was the signal that the Rajputs had come to the last fight.

Now that the women had killed themselves, the men would not live. All who knew Rajputana were aware of that. It was a national law.

So Akbar ordered his troops to attack and they rushed forward to storm the city. All through the night that terrible struggle went on.

The Rajputs cared not the least for life, it was of no value to them now at all, and history says that not one Rajput soldier survived.

At this point it is necessary to tell what happened to Pratap Singha.

All through those fearful weeks he had fought in the front, leading his men. But when the council

of Chiefs met just before the *Jahar* — the sacrific of the women — all the leaders who were left begged him to leave the city with a very small band of followers, —also no doubt his wife, because she was with him afterwards.

At first he resisted with all his heart. He said he would die with his friends. But the Chiefs reasoned that this would do no good, indeed it would be an injury to his people.

He, Pratap Singha, was the heir to the kingdom. He was ruler after his father. He was the only man left in Rajputana who could lead, for Uday Singha was of no use.

They put before him the idea that presently he would be able to collect an army and defend Rajputana against Akbar. As long as he was living, and leading, the Moghuls could not conquer Mewar.

There were other cities and, of course, the Rajput nation. If Rana was dead, if the hereditary line of rulers was wiped out, Akbar would seize the whole of Rajputana.

This was true enough.

Pratap gave way at last to the prayers of his chiefs. He could see the force of what they said.

If he died, it would be a triumph for the Emperor and complete ruin for his own people.

If he lived, he might some day defeat the

Moghuls and establish the strength of his own beloved people again.

We must remember that there was no doubt at all about the courage of young Pratap Singha.

He had refused to go with his father. He had fought day and night with the hero Jaymalla at the most dangerous places on the walls.

He was a fine leader and risked his life every hour.

Yet now he was asked to give up his wish to die with his chiefs. Because we must all understand that to leave the others to die and to fly from the city was a terrible thing to a man like Pratap.

However, he put his people first as always and with grief unspeakable he said farewell to his chiefs and on the same night before the *Jahar*, when all in Chitore were getting ready for the end, Pratap Singha left the city by a secret way and unnoticed by the Moghuls who were getting ready for the last attacks on the big gates, he fled away to Udaipur,

After that came the sacrifice of the Rajput women and next day the final battle.

Historians say that never before had there been such hideous destruction and yet, though not one Rajput warrior lived afterwards, no one could say that the Rajputs were beaten in war and the Moghuls were victorious.

The defenders of Chitore simply immolated

themselves. They died as their women died. They refused to live and feel defeat.

The Emperor Akbar, who had lost about half his army, took possession of a ruined city.

He did then what was a disgrace to any man who professed to call himself a human being.

He advanced into the city on his elephant and he ordered three hundred trained elephants to be driven through the streets, trampling to death the helpless peasants who had been sheltered by the Rajputs.

It is said that besides eight thousand warriors who died fighting forty thousand Rajput peasants who had taken shelter in Chitore were massacred by Akbar. The Moghuls had driven them from their homes. They took shelter in the temples, thinking the sacred places would be respected, but nothing was sacred to the Moghuls.

Men who have written the story of Chitore for the Emperor, on his side and in his praise, admit that Akbar ordered a universal massacre of innocent helpless peasants. They excuse him by saying that many of these men had been used as sentinels.

Literally that splendid city was washed in blood. Thousands of bodies were piled up in every house and street. When no one was left Chitore was a vast charnel house given over to dogs, jackals and vultures.

Even Akbar's historians who flatter him, do not defend it.

Besides the massacre, the Mogul soldiers behaved like savages in destruction. The wonderful palaces and temples which were the pride of India were razed to the ground and destroyed.

He carried off the great *'nakraas,'* the kettle-d ums and the splendid chandeliers that had beeen the pride of Rajputana and transferred the gaint gates to Agra.

Lastly he appointed a Mohammedan, Asaf Khan, to be governor.

After the former siege of Chitore by the Emperor Ala-ud-din, the city was able to recover, because he was reasonably merciful. He behaved as a general should.

But Akbar's vindictive wickedness went too far. Chitore was destroyed for all time; it never recovered from this awful destruction.

Only one thing did Akbar do that was not a disgrace to his name. He admired the amazing courage of Jaymalla and Putto so much that he had two statues made, of elephants with the two warriors riding on them and placed one each side of the *Hatipole Gate* at Agra.

It is said they were splendid pieces of sculpture admired by all.

Yet years after in 1663, the Emperor Aurangzeb caused them to be destroyed, for no reason except

his hatred of the Hindus. He was that unfortunate being, a fanatic, without reason. Therefore were two very beautiful works of art broken up and the world deprived of works of art that would have been a lesson and a pleasure through hundreds of years to all who saw.

Yet in spite of cruelty and folly the memory of those great men lives still for all to read, while the actions of Akbar and Aurangazeb can also be read for all men to despise.

When Chitore was left ruined and broken to the care of Asaf Khan he found he could not stay there.

The horrors of carnage within the city made it unfit for human habitation.

The conditions caused pestilence of course and Asaf had to live in the Moghul Camps outside.

A few people began to try and live on the outskirts, because Asaf Khan tried to entice them to come, telling them it was safe.

As time went on he began to repair parts of the outer city, and the Moghuls induced people from distant places to come and work for him, carrying heavy loads and so on, but nothing could make Chitore clean. The health of that wonderful city on the rocks had become so bad that the Moghuls could not stay in it.

All the time the ranks of Asaf's army were

thinned by pestilence. There was always death around him The dwellings he tried to build up fell in ruins again for want of inhabitants and gradually the fine country around the city, which had been well populated by busy, healthy people, became a jungle, the dwellers in which are wild beasts.

That was all the advantage Akbar gained by his horrible massacre. Chitore the magnificent was an unwholesome ruin, which he and his people could not use because of constant death.

Asaf died only six years after he became the governor.

And so we leave Chitore and go back to Uday Singha and what happened to him when he ran away from that city and left his people to defend it as best they could

As we know, he went to Udaipur for a time. Then he went to live at Nauchowki, where there was a small palace but no fortress. There he lived for the remaining years of his life with some pomp but no real glory.

One odd thing was that he was not proud of his heroic son Pratap Singha. His favourite was much younger, a youth called Jagmal.

Pratap was a true descendant of the great Rana Sangram and he was used to say that if Sangram had been Rana at the time of Akbar's attack, Chitore would never have been lost.

There seemed to be an evil fate about the name of Uday.

There was another Uday in the family some years later, who was known as the *Mota Raja*—that is to say the 'Fat King'.

Marwar owed her degradation to him. He was the son of Malladev of Jodhpur and he gave his sister to Akbar feeling proud to be brother-in-law to the Emperor

So you see the kind of man he was!

There was no fort at Udaipur. Uday therefore lived chiefly at Gogoonda, a few miles to the west, where there was a fort.

This was a lovely place, three thousand feet up on the Aravalli mountains yet with plenty of water.

And at Gogoonda Uday Singha died in the year 1572. He was only forty-two, but he had destroyed his health by self-indulgence and had done nothing for his people but harm.

He had twenty-four sons of whom Pratap was the eldest.

Yet he did not like Pratap and before he died he chose his youngest son Jagmal to reign over Rajputana.

Now Jagmal was just a weak boy without strength or knowledge and the Soniguru chief of Jhalore was extremely angry at this last act of a bad king.

You remember that chief was the brother of Uday's first wife, the mother of Pratap.

Therefore Pratap was his own nephew and he was quite determined that little Jagmal should not be Rana.

So he went to Krishna Singha, chief of the Chandayats, who were hereditary ministers of the Rana of Mewar and he said to Krishna:

"Sir, how could you dare to put Jagmal on the throne when you know that Pratap is alive?"

Krishna Singha answered:

"Who can deny a man on his death-bed, but do not be anxious, we have chosen Pratap"

Then both of them with their chiefs went to Jagmal and with them went Ram Shad, who had been ruler of Gwalior and had left Chitore with Pratap and was devoted to his chief.

They found Jagmal seated on the throne, as the custom was that as soon as the Rana was dead, the new Rana must occupy the throne.

Jagmal was receiving chiefs, but when these two entered, bringing Pratap Singha, they did not hesitate for a moment.

Krishna Singha and Ram Shad simply lifted Jagmal from the throne and the minister said:

"O Prince, you have made a mistake, this seat belongs to your eldest brother, you must take a lower place."

Then they handed Pratap the sword of State and acclaimed him Maharana of Mewar by touching the earth three times.

Shouts of 'Long live Pratap Singha' rent the air, for after long years of misrule and trouble at last a real ruler, a man of power was made head of Rajputana.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SOLEMN VOW.

AT last we have come to the actual reign of Rana Pratap Singha, one of India's greatest heroes.

It was necessary to tell the story of all that went before, or no one could understand his position, his danger and his poverty.

Rajputs had been rich and powerful, but just consider what had been the losses at Chitore and other cities Akbar had stolen!

Remember the deaths of at least eight thousand warriors in the one fort. Think of the plains and valleys laid waste, the cattle destroyed, the thousands of peasants murdered and villages burned.

The story of Pratap means long years of brave struggle against all these losses, and with a powerful greedy foe working against him with unceasing hate.

No one but a hero could have stood up against the trouble that hung like a black cloud over Rana Pratap Singha. He was indeed a wonderful man and, therefore, having told the story of the forces that drove him into his strange life of exile, it is time to tell how he bore it, and how he came to be an example of courage and endurance to all nations.

The Moghul armies had swept over India like tidal waves from the sea and everywhere Akbar had collected riches. Yet Pratap was not afraid.

All this power and wealth was now directed against him, because the Emperor had conquered nearly all the great states — or they had given in beforehand out of fear.

From Kabul to Arrakan was now under his rule, and all that strength he proceeded to bring against Mewar which he did not rule, though his whole heart was bent on ruling it.

The spirit of the Rajputs would not break. And now they had a leader and king like Pratap Singha, they were united and full of courage once more.

You must remember that this very courage was the only thing Pratap had left.

His money was gone. His lands were over-run. Most of his great chiefs died in Chitore.

Yet still the brave band that was left determined to defy the Emperor.

Unluckily, though, he could not depend on all.

That Uday Singha who was called Mota Rajah or the Fat King and Man Singha both went over to Akbar. They were not conquered in battle, they were won over by bribes and flattery.

And worst of all, Sakta Singha, of whom we have spoken many times, was on the side of the enemy, and was joined by a younger brother, Sagarji Singha. It

seems they believed Pratap had no chance against Akbar, so they wanted to be on the stronger side.

But no grief, no pain, no treachery could make Pratap despair or give in. There is a story about Sagarji Singha which should be told, as very likely it is true, and one likes to think it is, as that would show his heart was not really bad.

The story is this:

To reward him for leaving Pratap the Emperor Akbar made him Governor of Chitore.

No doubt he had been at Udaipur or Gogoonda with his father Uday Singha through all those awful weeks, and so had not seen the great city.

Therefore when he came to the scene of ruin and desolation, when he saw the splendid home of his forefathers over-run by wild beasts, the temples torn down, the bones of thousands filling the streets, he was filled with shame and horror.

It is quite likely that he thought the fortress would be much the same as before. He might even have been rather proud to be made ruler of the chief city in Mewar.

But when he saw what had been done his heart was full of remorse and bitter grief. He made over his command to another, went back to Delhi and told the Emperor he would not take that command.

Akbar was furiously angry. Of course he saw again the heart of a real Rajput; he raged at the

young man, at which Sagarji Singha drew his dagger, plunged it into his own heart and fell dead at the feet of the angry Emperor.

Sagarji was worthy of Pratap after all. He had been led astray by false words, but he proved to Akbar that he was a true Rajput! — unconquerable!

To return to Pratap Singha facing the tremendous difficulties of his position. If some few had gone over to Akbar, the best of all the great men were faithful,— Krishna Singha, Chief of the Salumbra, the chiefs of Chandayat, the Rathores of Bednore too. These were Jaymalla's people, and they did not forget their noble leader. There came also the Jagayats from Kailwara. These were the family of Putto, the youth who had done such great deeds.

From Delwara, from Kotari and Jhalore, from all parts of Rajputana came faithful warriors, till nearly twenty-two thousand soldiers gathered round Pratap at the fort of *Kumbhmeru*.

There were no such soldiers in India as these desperate men.

The Moghuls were a vast army, of course, but only paid soldiers, who fought for money and *loot*. The Rajputs were each one a hero, who gave up all for honour and a great cause.

Then Pratap called together all the leaders and chiefs, he asked them to join with him in a great and solemn vow.

Each man was to swear to keep this vow until Chitore was recovered and won back from the invaders. It was really a terrible vow, most difficult to keep, when you consider what it would mean in a man's life.

And that vow was as follows.

As long as Chitore was in the hands of enemies, every member of the Rana's family, every connection and every branch must swear.

"That they would never dwell in a fine building, but only in thatched huts,

"That they would never eat off gold and silver plates, but only use the broad leaves of trees as dishes for their food,

"That they would never sleep on soft beds, but only on straw,

"That no man would shave his beard or whiskers,

"That no grand ceremony of state should be observed,

"And lastly, that the music and great kettle-drums the *naharas*, must be carried behind the armies and not in front as before."

Now the most extraordinary thing is that at the present time, all these hundreds of years since the fall of Chitore, these vows of Pratap Singha are kept in the royal family of Mewar.

The martial music follows the army. No man shaves his beard.

And when anyone of the family uses a metal plate, he places leaves beneath it, also straws under his bed.

Of course this is not exactly the name as Pratap's strict vow, because he actually ate food on a leaf and slept on the straw: but it is done that the Rajput vow should never be forgotten in the Rana's family.

This will give you some idea of Pratap Singha's force of character, for probably no man in his position has ever made such a vow and kept it all his life.

Then he sent out a royal command that all his people must dwell in the mountains and observe mourning.

Every house was to be burned down and no one must engage in trade and make business an object.

No one must till the soil, no one must keep flocks and herds.

This rule was made in order that there should be nothing at all for the Moghuls to seize when their armies attacked the country.

No villages, no farms, no food. There must be nothing of any kind to attract the envy and greed of the enemy. Not even a house, only the thatched huts that could be built up in a day.

Thus the whole country of Mewar became as it were a jungle and the towns now deserted were infested by tigers.

The roads were overgrown with bush and the

fields became impassable. The whole country was a waste and the people lived in the mountains, in caves, tents, or huts.

No one could tell where to find them or where they might be. No one could attack them, because they could not be found.

Pratap's life was the hardest of all; he and his wife and little children wandered from cave to cave in the hills. The Queen had to cook their food with her own hands. They slept under trees, on straw when they could get it, or perhaps on leaves or dried grass.

If he had made a hard vow for all, he kept it very strictly himself. He never failed.

All this time Akbar watched in hope. You must remember that he was a very clever man. He was what is called an Empire-builder. His idea was to rule over India. He wanted a United India, he wanted his Mohammedans to be friends with the Hindus and he planned to make one great kingdom.

As we know, he had conquered many states, he had won over many leaders by presents, by flattery, by honours. But there, all the time, stood the Rajputs—not moved.

Just a few had come over to him, but the royal family, with Pratap as Rana, would have nothing to do with him or his bribes, and you can see his difficulty, for as they had no homes and no wealth, they melted away before him like clouds.

There was nothing for his armies to conquer or take, not even a village. So now his plan was to be very kind and generous to anyone who would leave the mountains and join him.

More than anything on earth he wanted Pratap Singha.

Akbar knew well what a hero this man was. He had admired Jaymalla and Putto with all his heart.

He wanted such men to join him and let him make one kingdom of all India.

It seems he forgot that his horrible cruelty at Chitore would for ever build a barrier between himself and good men.

Suppose that Akbar had left Chitore in peace, or had to let the people go free, who knows but he might even have won over Mewar.

One way he tried to win them was by marriages.

It is said he even married several ladies who were the wives of Hindu princes. Also he gave women of his own race to them.

As you can imagine this did not make peace. Quite the contrary, it angered the Rajput ladies, for they were honourable and one of them threatened to stab him; she was a daughter of Sakta Singha.

When Pratap heard of these doings he cut off all intercourse with any family of the Rajput race who had so far forgotten honour as to do such things.

He passed an edict that no member of *his*

family, the Shishodiya dynasty, would ever marry into a family that had done such a thing.

Of course these families saw at once that such a rule made them lose position and they begged him to abandon it.

But nothing moved Pratap, once he had made up his mind. He wished to show the men who had given their daughters to Moghuls that they had lost caste with him and could not marry into his family.

To understand the full meaning of this one must realize what an important thing it was to be allowed to marry into the family of the Maharana and what a slur on a name to be regarded as too low for the honour.

And now it is well to speak of Man Singha, and to tell how these things led to anger on the part of that great soldier and to the battle that followed.

It is a strange story and very interesting.

CHAPTER VI.

MAN SINGHA THE TRAITOR.

NOW Man Singha was a great soldier. but his name is for ever darkened by the fact that he was the first and highest Rajput to desert his country and join the Emperor.

Having done this vile thing he was always trying to make others desert also.

There is a funny story which tells of a fox that lost its tail, so it went round to all the other foxes trying to make them bite off their tails and telling them that only foxes with no tails were important!

Now Man Singha was just like that fox. He had disgraced himself and his family, so he spent his time trying to make other Rajputs join the Moghuls and telling them that men who followed Akbar were far greater men than those who held to the Rana.

He knew that the minstrels of Rajputana called him 'the curse of *Kali Yuga*' and sang songs about his disgrace. He did not like this at all, so he made up his mind to go and see Pratap Singha, without being asked, and he thought if he could persuade Pratap himself to join the Emperor he would win great honour from Akbar, and also silence for ever the voice of tongues that called shame on his name.

One day he heard that Pratap was at Kamalmir ; he was returning to Delhi ; so he sent word to Pratap that he was coming to see him and do him honour.

Pratap made no reply, but he ordered a meal to be ready and when Man Singha arrived on the banks of Uday Sagar he was received by Prince Amar Singha, the Rana's eldest son.

The young man told Man Singha that his father begged to be excused, as he had a very severe headache, but that a dinner was ready for him to eat.

Man Singha was quite wise enough to see through the excuse.

He understood that Rana Pratap would not see him, therefore his plan to persuade the Rana to give in to Akbar was of no use.

He said to the young Prince :

"Inform the Rana that I understand the meaning of the headache. Will you ask the Rana who is to place before me the plate of food if the Rana will not?"

To this Pratap Singha sent an answer :

"How can I dine with the man who sold his sister to the Turk and eats with him ?"

There was nothing to be said, but Man Singha realized that he had made a great mistake when he came to visit the Rana without being invited.

He could only blame himself, yet he was very angry and refused all food. As he prepared to go he said to the young Prince :

"We have sacrificed our honour to add to your honour. With that object I have given my daughter and my sister to the Turk. If yau are determined not to heed your dangers, be it so. Not for long will you be able to remain in this kingdom."

With these words he set his foot in the stirrup and then Rana Pratap himself appeared in the doorway.

The anger of Man Singha broke out again

"If I cannot humble your pride, my name is not Man Singha," he cried.

To that Pratap answered with grave dignity :

"I shall always be glad to meet you on the field of battle."

He meant that he would not meet him in a house, only in war.

One of the Rajput chiefs standing near the Rana said :

"And mind you bring your uncle—" meaning, of course, the Emperor who had married several members of Man Singha s family.

Speechless with fury he rode away. He could not answer these taunts because it was all true, but it was pain to him to be scorned by the chiefs of the great Rajput families

After he was gone sacred water was sprinkled over the place where Man Singha's dinner had been set out.

All the men who had seen him bathed themselves and changed their clothes.

This will give you some idea of the bitter hatred that existed between the Rajputs and the Mohammedans.

So Man Singha rode back to Delhi, his heart black with rage.

When he got there he gave the Emperor a bitter description of Pratap's contempt for the Moghuls.

Akbar of course was as angry as might be expected, and he instantly ordered preparations to be made for an attack against Pratap Singha.

Man Singha was full of passionate desire to bring down the pride of the man who was really his king and to whom he had been false, while Akbar was moved by that greedy ambition to be lord of all India which had made him act as he had done.

Before going on to the story of the battle that follows, it is just as well to tell what happened to these two men, so that you may understand how little honour and true nobleness was in their hearts.

Some years afterwards Man Singha, who had a good deal of power by that time, began to try and get the Moghul throne for his nephew Khus-ru. Akbar found it out. No doubt there were plenty of jealous men round the Emperor only too pleased to tell him what Man Singha was doing.

So Akbar asked Man Singha to dine with him,

and he got ready certain balls of sweet-meat, putting poison into one of the balls which he intended his guest to eat.

When the time came for these sweet-meats to be eaten, Akbar made a mistake and took the poisoned ball himself, giving Man Singha a clean ball.

So Akbar died at once — of his own poison, and no one can be sorry for him, because it was a wicked act.

We know that Man Singha did not win the Empire for his nephew, as the next Emperer was Aurangazeb, a deadly enemy of all Hindus.

As for Man Singha himself, we know that he lived to see the Rajputs succeed and the Moghuls driven out of Mewar, which must have been a very terrible punishment to this false Rajput.

However, there was a great deal of trouble in between ghastly defeats, hunger and homeless wandering, so we must continue the amazing story of Pratap and his brave men.

When the Rajputs knew that Akbar was getting ready to attack them again Pratap ordered every person to leave his hut if he had one, and hide in the mountains. The district stretched from *Kamalmir*, the great fortress on the north end of the hills to *Rekabnath* on the south, and from Meerpur in the west down to Santol.

The whole district consisted of lofty mountains

and dense forests, intersected by mountain passes and hill streams.

In this region the people of Mewar took shelter, and you can understand it was their interest to obey Pratap in this matter, because the Moghul armies could not reach them in these wilds. The Imperial armies were collecting from all parts and were only too glad to attack the Rana's people.

The Moghul armies in Chitore and the east destroyed all they could, and Man Singha under the displeasure of Akbar tried to win back his favour by plundering his own people.

Yet all the while the Emperor gave out that if only Pratap would give in to him, and acknowledge him as ruler, he would bestow the highest honours on the Rana and allow him to rule over Mewar *under* the Moghul sovereignity.

The thought that while all the kings of India bowed before him, this one unconquerable man refused, was simply gall to the proud Akbar, and for this reason he could not rest.

The Moghul armies were coming from all sides, but they were badly off, because all villages were deserted and they had neither food nor fodder for their horses.

Also they were afraid to invade the mountain passes.

Pratap too was having an anxious time, the only

advantage he had was that all his people knew the forests and hills. so they made a practice of sweeping down on their enemies when least expected, seizing their food and all they possessed and then hiding again in their caves and woods.

It must be remembered too that the road to Surat, along which merchants brought goods to be shipped to Europe, led along the Aravalli mountains. The Rajputs attacked these convoys. The Maharatta tribes did the same thing, they were fighting the Moghuls but were far more treacherous and savage than Rajputs.

Yet another quarter sent help to Pratap, a tribe called the Bheels, uncivilized and fierce they were people of the hills. They admired the Rajputs and were anxious to fight for them, but were ready to war against Akbar.

They were people who used bows and arrows with great skill, so they showered arrows from their mountain strongholds on the Moghuls, hurled stones and did all kinds of things to stop the enemy. So quick and careful were they that they kept the Rajputs informed of every move of the enemy.

All this time people were trying to keep Akbar's anger alive against the Rana, and at last in April 1576 the Emperor gave Man Singha the command of an army, telling him to go out and bring back Pratap Singha to bow before Akbar.

A long list of important warriors went with him and one man, Badauni, who was a historian and hater of all Hindus, was sent by Akbar to write the story of the expedition.

Man Singha left Ajmere at the head of five thousand men. Yet that was not all, he was joined by others at the places he passed and so presently he had a powerful army, an army gathered together by a man jealous and mean, because he hated one nobler than himself.

Man Singha knew very well that though the Emperor called him *Farzand*, which is to say 'son', and gave him high rewards, yet he cared nothing for him in heart — as we know, he even tried to poison the man he called 'son' in after years.

In spite of all this pretence of honour, then, Man Singha knew he was despised and hated as a traitor who had turned against his own king and country for the sake of gain.

The Moghuls thought that Rana Pratap would come down to fight on the open plain, but of course he did not. So they went along the banks of the river Bonus till they came to the place where the river breaks out from the hills with the open plain.

Now Pratap had an army of twenty thousand men.

Almost all his own people came from the mountains and woods, also came the brave Bheels

with their bows and arrows; lastly a body of Pathans, who came from their mountain borders to fight out of hatred for the Moghuls.

Of course the army of Akbar was larger, but the Rajputs had a good knowledge of its place and camp. Also they knew the country as no other people could.

Rana Pratap left a small army for the defence of Kamalmir at the end of the mountain range, then he marched westward and halted all his forces at the Pass of Haldighat; there he waited for the Moghuls.

This battle is called by some writers the battle of Gogoonda, because it was in that district, but Haldighat is about five miles in direct line to the north of Gogoonda and it was actually there that the battle took place.

The date of it must have been the 20th of June 1576, though it cannot be quite certain as writers differ.

Pratap Singha had shown his cleverness by keeping to the hill country, for you must remember that Man Singha had a very large army, with elephants, guns and all the advantages the Moghuls used to overcome foes.

Therefore the Rana did not allow him to wait and find out the ground or make any preparation that might give him greater advantage.

He attacked the Moghuls at once.

At his back was the Pass of Haldighat and on

both sides, like two arms, came down the mountain steeps.

On these heights Pratap placed all his brave Bheels. It was the sort of fighting they understood, shooting down from among the high rocks.

And now I must tell you what happened.

THE END

CHAPTER XI.

A LOST BATTLE.

IT would take too long and be hard to understand if all the names of generals were given and all the places they had in that battle.

But it must be told that Man Singha with the main body of the false Rajputs — who kept with him — were in the centre.

It is said that Sakta Singha, the traitor brother of Rana Pratap, was there at the right hand of Man Singha. Indeed there is small doubt that had the true Rajputs found only Moghuls against them they would have won the battle, but we must remember that here was a powerful band of Man Singha's men and Sakta's men who had followed their chiefs when they went over to Akbar.

Pratap had set his Pathan army on his left under Hakim Khan Sur. On his right was Ramdas the son of the hero Jaymalla who died at Chitore. Also on his right were Ram Shah, chief of Gwalior and his three fine sons.

Also there were the chiefs of Chandayat, Jagayat and Jhala Manna Singha, all notable Rajput saldiers.

Then Pratap began the battle

The Moghuls did not expect it, and he would not allow them time to think.

The Pathan army began it on the left and on the right side Ram Shah attacked with his three sons.

The Moghuls who fought against Ram Shah were commanded by a general called Lambarkarma. They could not stand against the fury of Ram Shah's attack; they retreated and this caused confusion in the army behind.

Rana Pratap at the same time fell upon the Moghuls in the centre and as Gazi Khan who commanded them was badly wounded in the back, they all began to retreat in confusion.

The men behind them, again, began to run, finally a large part of the army crossed the branch of the Bonus river at the rear and did not stop till they got a long way from the battle.

Indeed Ram Shah was so terrible in the fighting with his three sons that he forced even the Rajputs in the Moghul army to retreat.

It is told in history that the wonderful courage of Pratap's Rajputs was the admiration of everyone. Their enemies were struck with fear and dismay.

And all the while the faithful Bheels kept up a steady fire of long arrows and when the Moghuls pressed closer they stopped the advance by hurling down stones and rocks upon them.

For a time it seemed that Rana Pratap was

conqueror, but mischance came in the death of Ramdas, the wonderful son of Jaymalla of Chitore.

Ramdas was almost too brave. He was borne down and killed, for he had no thought of self; his king and country meant all to him.

And then Ram Shah and his eldest son Salibahan died together, fighting their way forward. This was a terrible loss to Pratap, for they were among the greatest.

And of these two, the historian sent with the army of Akbar says:

"They performed such prodigies of valour against the Rajputs of Man Singha that it is not possible to describe them."

Now when Pratap Singha saw the death of these two heroes he felt that the tide was turning against him and instead of keeping himself more to the rear in a safer position, he forced his way into the very front, fighting with amazing courage.

Now Pratap had a wonderful horse, as brave as his master, the horse's name was *Chaitak* and he carried the Rana into the thick of the battle, fighting as though he knew the whole story and was determined to be a real Rajput horse.

When the Rajputs saw their Rana bursting through the enemy they hoped again, and followed the plunging horse into the thick of the battle.

It was against Man Singha that Pratap's aim was set.

If you remember, he had told him on that day when Man Singha came to visit him unasked, that he would meet him on the field of battle but nowhere else.

During the battle Man Singha was afraid to come near the Rana. He was mounted on a trained elephant with an iron *howdha* to protect him and his hope was that somebody else would either kill Pratap Singha or take him prisoner and then he — Man Singha—would get the credit of that from the Emperor.

The faithful chiefs of Mewar saw the danger of their beloved leader and as he smashed his way through to Man Singha they kept as close as they could.

And Man Singha was forced to come forward, much against his will, it seems, for Jagannath, one of his generals in the front, was killed by the Rajputs in their wild rage at the death of young Ramdas.

So Man Singha had to come forward on his elephant and soon saw Pratap fighting through the Moghul line to get at him.

Pratap hurled a javelin, well aimed at Man Singha, but the javelin hit the howdah and stuck.

Then Pratap urged his horse forward and Chaitak jumped straight at the elephant. Pratap killed the

mahout who was driving but Man Singha got from the howdah into the driver's place and the elephant seized with terror, turned round and fled from the field of battle.

If this had not happened, Pratap would surely have killed Man Singha, for he had his sword raised in the act of striking when the elephant bolted in its wild fear.

When the Moghuls saw their general was in danger they rallied around him again and led by Mehatar Khan they once more attacked the Rajputs.

At this point the elephants belonging to both armies were brought into the fray and these great animals, excited by the noise and fighting, uttered terrible shrieks as they fought one another.

Indeed it was a scene of horror.

Pratap was fighting with desperation, but the Moghuls out-numbered his men and gradually the battle began to turn in their favour.

Then, at this crisis, one man did a deed of heroism such as seemed natural almost to the noble heart of a Rajput.

This man was Manna, the brave chief of Delwar.

He realized that Pratap could not escape, he would die fighting. He determined to save his master, giving his own life.

He rushed forward at the head of his *Jhala*

soldiers and the Rana, looking back, saw his friend bursting through the Moghul army towards him.

Before Pratap could prevent it his *crown* was taken from him and shone on the head of the chief of Delwar.

A handful of the Jhala men seized the Rana's flag and shouting the war cry of the Rana they attacked the Moghuls again.

In the confusion of the fearful struggle no one understood what had been done. The Moghul soldiers left all else to follow the shining crown and the flag.

They mistook the Delwar Chief for the Rana and directed the whole of the attack on the group of fighting *Jhalas*.

The struggle was borne away from Pratap, who could see Manna fighting, knew what his friend had done, yet was helpless to prevent his death.

He saw the death of Manna and his men.

He saw the Moghuls rejoicing that they had killed the Rana Pratap and seized his flag and because he could do no other, he drew off, gave the order for retreat and left the field, a broken-hearted man.

He owed it to his army and to Manna that he should not sacrifice his life for nothing.

Manna had died to save him, so he went.

According to history, fourteen thousand Rajputs

died out of twenty-two thousand and nearly five hundred were Pratap's relations and members of the royal house.

Ramdas was killed, so were Ram Shah and his three splendid sons. The Chief of Jhala wearing the royal crown was killed with his hundred and fifty men. But it is splendid to know that Pratap never forgot that act of sacrifice; from that date the Jhalas became the standard bearers to the royal house and were granted lands in Sadri.

Also they have always the right to be welcomed with the sound of trumpets. And indeed these honours are deserved.

After leaving that terrible field of battle Pratap rode southwards, alone.

He was wounded and exhausted by his great exertions. But for his people he would have much preferred to die, but their hopes were set on him and he knew he must live and struggle on.

His faithful horse Chaitak had carried him all day from morning till sunset. He was badly wounded and worn out, but it seemed as though the noble creature knew his master's need. Chaitak galloped forward with all his speed and leaped a stream where there was temporary shelter, because it was a place the Moghuls could not cross easily.

As Pratap rode on slowly he heard a voice calling:

"Ho neel ghoreka aswar" which means, "O rider of the blue horse."

The Rana looked round and to his amazement saw a solitary horseman following him and that this horseman was his brother Sakta Singha.

We know that Sakta was fighting with the Moghuls, he and his followers were with Man Singha.

He fought against his courageous brother and his own people, yet when he saw the heroism of Pratap, when he saw the chief of Jhala die to save him, there is no doubt that his heart was filled with grief and horror at his own acts.

He saw his brother leave the field on Chaitak and he saw two Mogul soldiers notice the act and follow the exhausted man on the wounded horse.

Instantly he followed also, caught up with the Moghuls and killed them both and as he came nearer called aloud to the Rana.

Then and there Sakta asked his brother to forgive him. He admitted his disloyalty and the wrong he had done to his own people and humbled himself before the brother who had borne so much and showed such amazing courage and endurance.

We may be sure that Pratap forgave him. Not only that, meeting a brother again who was ashamed and repentant must have been a gleam of happiness in all that black shadow.

And yet the sorrow was not over, for just at that moment, when Pratap once more urged his horse onward, the noble animal fell down dead.

No doubt the heart had been strained by that long day of terrible exertion. After all, a horse, no matter how strong and courageous, can only do certain amount.

Chaitak had served the Rana for many years and on this day of battle he had borne as much as any chief. Pratap was struck to the heart with grief, he knew that he owed his life that day to Chaitak.

Later on he caused a monument to be built on that spot, which to this day is called *'Chaitak-ka-Chabutra'*.

The place of it is Jarul and lies some ten or fifteen miles to the south of Gogoonda.

Sakta stood by, grieving with his brother for the noble horse.

And then he told Pratap that as he was still a servant of Akbar he must go back to the Moghuls.

But he left his horse to Pratap, that he might reach a place of safety and he himself went back on foot. Moreover, he promised that he would return: 'No more,' said he, 'would I serve the Emperor.'

Sakta reached the Moghul camp, but his action had become known and Man Singha told him to leave the army. No doubt there was a very angry quarrel between these two, because as we know Man Singha

was even a worse traitor than Sakta, who had gone to Akbar as a boy, because of jealous temper and had repented several times.

Man Singha, however, as a grown man and a chief had left his people for gain and power, never feeling the least shame, only anger because men pointed scorn at him.

When Sakta was ordered to leave the Moghul army he did not care. He was glad.

He called together his followers, told them he was now absolved from a great sin, but he wished to offer a *Nazar* to his brother to show his repentance.

So he led them away to the fort of *Vinesror*, attacked it and took it. It is a strong and beautiful place and stands where the Brahmani and the Chambal meet.

Then, with great joy he presented the fort to Pratap.

CHAPTER XII.

HUNTING FOR RANA PRATAP.

NOW though Man Singha had won the battle of Haldighat for the Emperor, in reality Akbar lost a great deal and Man Singha had lost also.

They had intended to capture Pratap and destroy his people for ever.

But when Sakta left them and went back to Pratap he doubled the Rana's strength, for all his followers returned with joy and shame was lifted from their hearts.

Pratap was very pleased indeed with the taking of Vinesror fort and he at once made Sakta chief of the fortress and gave it to him and his family for always.

Sakta's men who had fought for it were to be called the *Saktawats* and his descendants for ever to have the title *Khorasani Multani Ka Aggl,* which means 'the opposer of the Khorasani and Multani soldiers'.

This is because the two soldiers who chased Pratap were killed by Sakta and were named *Khorasani* and *Multani.*

After the battle of Haldighat, all that were left

of the Rajput army raturned to their mountain places and no Moghul was foolish enough to follow them.

In spite of defeat the Rajputs were strong and much cheered by the return of Sakta.

Man Singha, on the contrary, was not very happy he had killed a great many men and chiefs, but he had not conquered Pratap and he hated the great Rajput more and more when he saw that Akbar was not satisfied.

Then one day a spy came to him saying he had found a way through the mountains of Gogoonda.

The man could not be sure whether this narrow way was defended or not.

However, Man Singha was quite set on doing something to make himself greater, so he started with soldiers in the morning, reached Gogoonda in the afternoon and found the city deserted except for a few Rajput soldiers guarding the temple.

These men defended their charge till they were killed and Man Singha established himself there.

He caused a wide deep trench to be dug all round the city and a high wall to be built as well.

When he had done this Man Singha sent the historian Babaoni to the Emperor to tell all the things he had done and with him he sent Pratap's elephant *Ramprasad*, which he had captured.

History tells us a thing that is strange considering all that had happened.

Man Singha ordered the party to cry abroad in every town and village how he had defeated Pratap and what a great man he—Man Singha—was.

But no one believed a word of his news.

They loved the Rana with such a faithful love that not a peasant would listen to the words of the Moghuls.

While the Moghuls were doing these things, Pratap's Rajputs were gathering in the south.

They had lost in men certainly, but no loss could shake their confidence.

The people of Mewar, men, women and children, simply took refuge in the mountains.

Pratap chose fresh soldiers and made a new army. Also he made a new plan.

He saw now that a small army could not hope to defeat Akbar in open battles. So he made this new plan to keep up constant attacks by small parties in unexpected places.

He planned to persecute the Moghuls without ceasing in what is called 'guerrilla' warfare.

It was just as though a nest of hornets should keep on attacking a party of men over and over again. Hornets are small, but a few of them can make a great many people run away!

And that was Pratap's plan. He settled to harass the enemy all the time, giving them no peace.

He stopped their paths through the hills; he

plundered their food supplies, and broke down their caravans. He waited till the Moghuls had made a camp, then he attacked it when they thought no one was near; attacked in the night, did as much harm as he possibly could and then disappeared into the secret places of the mountains.

The fall of Gogoonda had not been any surprise to him.

He had foreseen that if the Moghuls won the battle of Haldighat they would take Gogoonda, which was close by, so he had removed his family and followers from the city.

Neither did he think it safe to leave an army at Kamalmir. It would be difficult to escape from, he knew, so he remained in the wild southern parts of his country and nerve let the Moghuls know where he was.

Meanwhile Man Singha, after all his boasting about Gogoonda, found his difficulties always growing.

He could not get food or fodder. You see now that Pratap's rule, that none should grow corn or food, was useful. It was the most difficult thing possible to feed his men.

They went out hunting and got what they could. Also they ate mangoes which grew in plenty, but this presently caused illness.

At this point it is only fair to tell that Man

Singha would not allow the few villages within reach to be plundered by the Moghul soldiers.

These poor peasants were his own people. No doubt they had their gardens in which they grew a few things to eat. And Man Singha ordered that they must be left in peace.

It is only fair to give this man credit for any kind act he did.

He was a mean traitor and false to his people for the sake of gain but he did not allow those poeple to be tormented.

When the Emperor heard about all this and that nothing was being done to crush Pratap Singha, he was very angry.

You see he *could not* get the one thing he wanted which to such a man as Akbar was real torture.

He sent for Man Singha and Asaf Khan. He rated them soundly and even ordered Man Singha to leave his court and not return.

But Man Singha was a fine general and so the only result of this was a great deal of harm to the Moghul army. This all happened at the time when the rains were expected.

When the torrents swept the country it was impossible to stay in the mountains. The roads were impassable, and the waterfalls plunged from heights, breaking down rocks.

The remnant of the Moghul army found it must move to the Plains.

Rana Pratap saw this at once, came down with his own army and made himself master of Udaipur.

The Rajputs were full of joy over this victory, but they did not act unwisely then. They knew that when the rains were over the Moghuls would be stronger again, so they set to work collecting food and fodder, so that when the time came these things would be ready.

Bands of Rajputs with the Rana at their head went from village to village, inspiring the peasants with fresh hope.

They even went beyond the borders of Mewar and met the other Rajput rulers, urging Kotah, Bundi, Idar, Lungarpur, Shirobi, and Jhalore to join together in a Holy War against the Moghuls and to drive out the religion of Islam.

Unfortunately some of the chiefs who joined the cause of Pratap Singha shrank back in fear when Akbar sent a powerful army to crush them.

But the Emperor was wise enough to tell his generals to try and win them over first with generous offers and bribes, yet if that was no good he told them to *massacre* all, they were to keep on killing until all these people were ready to kneel to him.

When the rains ceased, however, the Dewara

chief Rai of Shirobi, a Rajput of the Chauhan race, suddenly rebelled against Akbar.

When he was attacked he took shelter in the hills, as usual, where he had a very strong fortress called Abu.

Then the enemy captured Shirobi and finally the Rajputs surrendered with Fort Abu, a pity as it was very strong. He was sent to the Emperor with a guard of soldiers, while the generals waited and watched for Pratap Singha, hoping to stop him from marching behind the western Aravalli hills.

But at last Akbar decided to come himself, he was impatient, because no one seemed to catch Pratap and he thought he could do it better.

Just at this time a large number of Moslem pilgrims sent a prayer to Akbar that they should be allowed to go on a holy pilgrimage to Mecca. Their journey would lie right through Rajputana and they were sure it would be very unsafe unless the Emperor would protect them.

As everyone knows, Akbar liked people to think he was a very religious man and perhaps he was in his own way.

He sent off two armies, which were going to attack Pratap at Gogoonda and Idar and followed them himself as he thought they would succeed if he were near.

He pretended to go with the pilgrims, really he was going to hunt Pratap.

You see that even the battle of Haldighat which cost so much had gained very little.

Not only had he no more power but Pratap was stronger and had more friends.

Akbar could not understand this. Rana Pratap had but a small army, he had neither shelter, nor money. What chance could he have against the big armies of Moghuls ?

And yet he could not be conquered ! Akbar put that down to the weakness of his own generals. Therefore he came himself, settled that he was going to hem Pratap in with troops from all sides, so that he could not possibly escape.

In fact, he was going to humble the pride of this amazing Rajput, otherwise he felt that all his great conquests in Bengal, Bihar, Malwa and Guzerat counted for nothing.

In fact Akbar believed that his own subjects were laughing at him.

Akbar's writers of history called Pratap Singha 'that wicked strife-monger', which was rather funny when you consider that the brave Rajput was only defending his own land and his own people, while the Moslem Emperor was fighting to take all the countries for himself.

However, they went on trying.

Several of the generals were told off to escort the pilgrims through the Pass of Haldighat, and the rest of them hunted for Rajputs, their aim being to catch Pratap in the mountains.

Solidiers were placed at many points to prevent the Rana from getting away ; in fact the northern path of Mewar was guarded by a chain of regiments.

When Akbar went himself to a place called Banshbara two chiefs came to submit to him. He was rejoiced, because they belonged to the family of the Rana.

Oddly enough the Emperor took this to mean that Pratap Singha was soon coming himself. Little did he understand the iron power and patience of that heroic man. Even the desertion of his own family made no difference to his resolution. Of course it made him sad, but it did not shake his resolve.

The disgrace of one of these chiefs who was called Raol of Dungarpur, was made complete when he offered to send his most beautiful young daughter to be put in the Emperor's harem !

Mewar was not completely besieged ; the armies of Akbar poured over the country like waves of the sea. Yet no one could catch the Rana. It seemed as though he had a charmed life.

Man Singha, who was very anxious indeed to please the Emperor tried every possible trick to find him. All to no purpose.

Very seldom did the Moghul soldiers catch sight of a Rajput. But if they did, Pratap's men were gone again so completely and with such speed that it seemed as though they were spirits. And every time the Moghuls suffered heavy loss.

If any of them fought with the Rana, they sent wonderful accounts of the great things they had done to the Emperor, but the Rajputs always got away leaving destruction behind.

And presently the Moghuls began to feel superstitious terror of this wonderful man.

CHAPTER XIII.

KAMALMIR.

TRULY it was a strange state of things. Here was the whole army of the Emperor hunting that one man, but unable to catch him.

His own Rajputs fought for him at every point, but besides that there were the faithful Bheels, who loved and admired him. These men were more useful than you might suppose, because the long arrows they shot were poisoned and did great harm among the Moghul soldiers.

The plain truth was that the Moghuls were frightened.

They could not understand why the Rana continued to hold his own and began to believe he had a charmed life, or that God was against Akbar. But you must not suppose that Pratap Singha was leading a happy or comfortable life.

The cold gup in the Aravalli mountains was terrible. There was little to eat and no shelter unless a cave was found.

The great wonder is that those noble men bore it all without flinching. Often they must have been very hungry and weary to death as month after month went by.

Yet we know they never gave in and faced the worst without complaint.

Pratap had his family with him, a wife and children, who slept on the ground and ate what they could.

The army that had protected the pilgrims camped at Idar, but it was not left in peace, for Narayan Das, the Rajput Chief of Idar, who loved Pratap Singha, rose against it and made an attack so fierce that Akbar had to send another army to help.

Then Narayan Das retired into the forest, roved about collecting men and when he could, plundered the Moghul armies. In fact he did the same as Pratap, keeping up a constant harassment for the Moghuls.

About the time of Akbar's New Year Festival, which was in March 1577, Narayan Das advanced on Idar—his own city—he had a good force of Bheels as well as Rajputs and he fought so well that he nearly defeated the Moghuls, in fact he scattered their army.

But at a critical moment Asaf Khan, one of Akbar's generals, came up with a new army and fell upon the Rajputs with such force that they were broken and again had to take shelter in the mountains.

It is plain to see how things happened. The Emperor had such a large force that though the

Rajputs conquered an army, another force would come up when they were exhausted and beat them off.

After this Akbar went on with his festivities and when they were finished he thought he would go to Bundi and conquer that.

Now, except Udaipur, there was hardly a place in India to equal Bundi for beauty and magnificance.

About a year before this, Man Singha had persuaded Rai Suryyan, the chief of Bundi, to desert Pratap Singha and come over to Akbar.

He did this base act, but his second son Duda Rao flatly refused to join in the desertion. He declined to join the Mogbuls for any reward and openly gave his faith to the Rana.

Jain Khan was sent by Man Singha to force him to submit, it was no use and ended in the father and son fighting against one another.

By this you may see what a dreadful condition Rajputana had come to; from end to end the country was torn by warfare, all through the greed and ambition of the Emperor.

In this case, Duda Rao was beaten and the Rajputs lost Bundi.

After this trouble it seemed as though all hopes of outside help had fled, and the Rana stood alone as before.

But after the battle of Idar, Narayan Das joined

up with him and then came the rains and peace for a time.

You see the Moghuls could not stand the rains—the generals were obliged to lead them away into places where it was possible to get shelter.

Then the Rana was able to move more freely, so on the advice of his chiefs he went to Kamalmir to collect food and ammunition for the struggle to come, for they all knew the Moghuls would come back and the last thing anyone thought of was giving in to Akbar.

It is well now to tell a few things about Kamalmir, which was, aftor Chitore, perhaps the most wonderful fortress in India.

It stands on the top of a high and rugged mountain at the end of the eastern chain of the Aravallis.

It was very like Chitore and both these grand places became, in turn, the chief city of Mewar.

On the north side of Kamalmir the heights became so high and slippery that no one could approach that way. On the east side an enemy would have to cross so many mountain chains that it was practically inaccessible on that side also, but not quite impossible, because that was the way an enemy always tried to reach the city. The south side being defended by still more mountains was quite closed.

The west side, on the contrary, is very fertile: here are wonderful crops of paddy and sugarcane, grain, mango trees and the whole scenery is beautiful, shut in by ranks of high mountains.

And here stands the city of Koilwara, which is placed on the border of a lovely lake known as Hambir Talao.

Once on a time Koilwara was chief city of Hambir and was also famous as the birthplace of the hero Putto who died at Chitore.

There are passes through the mountains from Koilwara to Gogoonda and Udaipur—it is a very healthy place, as it is higher than both those cities, yet Kamalmir is higher still and crowned by the Maharana's place which is called *Badal Mahal*.

Kamalmir was built chiefly by the Rana Kumbha, but long before his time it was celebrated, for it was the chief centre of the Jains—they built up its temples two thousand years ago. And so in his difficulties Pratap, the hero, came to Kamalmir; he knew the strength of the fortress and granted food and water, in dangers it was a safe retreat.

Here he called together his worn followers, that they might have peace during the bitter cold months.

One mile from the city is the first gate, the *Hulla-Pole*.

Passing through that after a time you reach the *Hanumun-pole*. After that begins the wall of the

fortress, and once within the wall you have to pass through four successive gates.

It is an amazing place, because it is guarded by a series of circuitous walls arranged so cleverly that there is really only one path. In fact it is what is called *a maze*. The few secret ways are known only to certain trusted persons.

For instance, from the outside you see a wall. If you pass that, you see another wall. When you have reached that by zig zag passages and passed through, you are faced by a third wall!

Indeed the defence is such a labyrinth that you cannot tell your position.

By this you can judge that Kamalmir was famous as a fortress, and that was why Pratap took shelter here with his weary followers.

After he reached the place the rains came, directly after a terribly fierce winter hemmed them in with cold and snow. And no Moghuls could venture out.

But no sooner did signs of spring appear than Akbar sent fresh armies against the place under Man Singha and two Moghul Generals.

They decided that Kamalmir must be taken at all costs.

One of the generals Shahabaz Khan, was a friend of the Emperor and a pure Moghul. He was afraid that Man Singha might be included to favour Pratap Singha.

The truth was that Shahabaz was no honourable soldier, he was even then planning in his mind unfair tricks and treacherous ways by which he might win the day.

He knew he could not overcome the fort by fair means, he was therefore seeking a way to gain his aim by foul, and he felt sure that Man Singha would not join with him in such things.

So he went forward in command alone.

First he took Koilwara, which was an open town and easily overcome.

All the Rajputs fled to Kamalmir and took refuge with Pratap Singha and his men.

They believed that the fortress could not be taken which was true. Yet no fortress can be held against certain evil deeds.

When Shahabaz arrived before the fort he was assailed by showers of cannon balls. At every point Pratap had placed guns. The Moghuls were driven from one place after another and all seemed well with the defenders at first.

Then came a misfortune.

There was an accidental explosion amongst the ammunition and that set fire to the stores.

Then the drinking water fell short. Yet there was one safe well of drinking water and this would have lasted out for any siege with care, but for a

horrible act of treachery that will shame the memory of one man for all time.

Dewara Rao of Shirobi, the Rajput who had gone over to Akbar,—that man knew a secret way to this well, and showed the way to Shahabaz, the Moghul general.

Shahabaz, who had no honour, poisoned the water.

Of course the Rajputs found this out at once and Pratap Singha decided that there was only one thing left to do. That was to leave Kamalmir.

The Shoniguru chose to remain in charge and Pratap with the main body of his army left the fort at night, by the secret passages, which even Dewara Rao knew nothing of.

During the next morning Shahabaz attacked the fort with his whole army. He hoped that Pratap and his men were reduced to utter despair by the poisoned water and by thirst, so he rushed upon the gates with great fury.

The Shoniguru defended the place with amazing courage. They died at their posts, rejoicing in the thought that the Rana and the main army were safe and already at some distance.

Then Shahabaz entered Kamalmir, he was very proud of himself, thinking that at last he would be able to take the Rana to Akbar as a prisoner, and that he himself would be greatly praised and rewarded for

the capture of Kamalmir and the subjection of the whole Rajput force.

He did not triumph long.

Soon he found that though he had taken the fort, he had taken nothing else.

Dead men lay at the gates—and he himself had poisoned the only well, but Pratap Singha and the main body of the Rajput army were gone and the great fort was empty !

He was no nearer catching the Rana than before he began the siege. He had lost a great many men. He had promised the Emperor that he would capture the Rana and he had done a trick so base and low that for ever his name would be a disgrace.

Pratap Singha had gone again.

The very next day Shahabaz went after Pratap.

He left a man called Ghazi Khan in charge of the fort and followed the Rana, or tried to. He was probably afraid to go back to Akbar and confess his failure. He knew very well that the only thing the Emperor cared about was the capture of Pratap himself.

He went to Gogoonda. The city was empty, and of course he walked into it. Then he went on to Udaipur, which was also an open city and though beautiful, not a fort. Here he did a lot of plundering, adding disgrace to his black name.

Then he established outposts in a long line

between Pura Mandal and Udaipur. Then he marched against a rebellion in Haravati.

The Emperor gave him a big reward for the capture of Kamalmir, he made Bhagavan Das Governor of the Punjab and Man Singha had charge of the Hill tracts.

Yet with all this giving of honours and places, no one could gain what he wanted.

No one could catch Pratap Singha and no one could find out where he had gone.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE CHILD AND THE SQUIRREL.

NOW there is a certain district called Chappan to the south-west of Mewar. It is mountainous, and there are about three hundred little villages where the Bheels live, those brave wild people who fought so well for the Rana with their bows and arrows.

In this part is an almost inaccessible hill station called Chaunda.

To this place came Pratap and his men after the loss of Kamalmir.

The Rana was absolutely determined not to yield, whatever his sufferings might be.

Akbar was equally determined to force him to submit, whatever the cost.

Therefore the Emperor sent out armies again to over-run Mewar and hunt down Pratap Singha.

He was hemmed in from all sides, but what was much worse, there were traitors in his camp who sent secret news to the Moghuls as to where he was and what he was doing.

It was difficult to get food too

Once a renegade named Ami Shah prevented his

getting provisions which were being brought to him by two villagers Aguna and Ponora.

It is horrible to think how wicked men can become, just for the sake of gain, but all through history we see these vile actions, and each country could tell stories of treachery — which is very sad.

By this mean act the Moghuls found out his hiding place and Farid Khan, a Moslem general, marched upon Chaunda.

Pratap Singha was compelled to leave, for he had all the foremost Moghuls pursuing him, — Man Singha, Sahabaz, Mahabat and Farid,

It seemed that he *must* be crushed, but he remained steadfast to his intention.

One wonders what Man Singha must have felt in those days. When he thought that this wonderful man was his own chief, his Rana of the great royal line, while he — Man Singha — was hunting him to death, surely he must have felt the degradation of his own conduct, for he could not excuse it and he must have felt shame.

From this time forth Pratap Singha had no place of rest. With his army he wandered in the woods and hills.

But there is one thing all men should remember— that is, that though they risked their lives to do it, the Bheels, who were barbarians, and looked upon as

wild men, never deserted him. Not only that, they supported him and his family.

When we remember that they could have gained riches and presents by treachery we must honour them. They were poor, yet not one of them would sell *him* for gain.

When Pratap had to fight, he gave his wife and children into the case of these barbarians and never once did they betray the trust.

The Bheels watched the movement of the enemy from behind rocks and warned the Rajputs of the Moghul approach. They told Pratap Singha where the generals lay in wait for him and helped him to surprise them in the most unexpected places.

These swift attacks were always a shock to the Moghuls, especially when the Bheels hurled stones and poisoned arrows into their midst just when they thought they were safe from attack.

The Bheels also had a plan which always threw the enemy into confusion. When the Moghuls found the Rajputs and believed they were going to win in a face to face encounter, down would come an army of Bheels on their flank and a dense flight of poisoned arrows !

Instantly the Moghuls would be thrown into confusion trying to defend themselves from two attacks and the fight would end in a wild flight.

These barbarians had yet another way of confusing Akbar's armies.

They would watch, as quiet as forest animals, till the Moghuls gave themselves up to rest and perhaps amusement. The Bheels would haunt a camp for days.

The Moghuls, thinking the Rajputs were miles distant, would lay aside their arms and take rest.

The Bheels would send word to Pratap: Tell him now was the time to attack; the enemy suspected nothing.

Then suddenly the Rajput cavalry would attack with furious courage, while the Bheels would help by firing hundreds of arrows from the brushwood and rocks.

As soon as a new force of Moghuls came to the rescue, Rajput cavalry and Bheels would melt away into the mountain shelters and no one could find them.

Now one day Farid Khan, the Moghul, was clever enough to defeat a small party of Pratap's soldiers. The Rajputs turned and made off into a pass in the hills which was walled at the sides by towering rocks.

Farid Khan was full of triumph; he believed the Rajputs were caught at last, because he thought they had run into a trap and could not get through.

At last, he cried, he had got Pratap Singha as his prisoner.

He poured a strong force into the pass, but it was for his own undoing.

The Rajputs had led him into a trap. On the high walls of rock on both sides of the pass were hundreds of Bheels, while Pratap's men waited until the Mohguls had got right into the narrow defile and then attacked them there.

History says that not one of Farid Khan's men got out alive.

This was a terrible blow and the Moghul generals sat in conclave and tried to think of new plans, but the truth was they were afraid of the wild Bheels and their poisoned arrows.

Again they began to believe there was something of magic in this Rajput king and his strange armies.

There was no heart in them to fight, they only lost men in hundreds and won nothing.

And then the rains set in again. The mountain streams swelled in torrents, the passes were unsafe. Once more the Moghul armies left Mewar and Pratap Singha with his unconquerable men had rest for a time.

Thus year after year went by.

The Moghuls gained nothing at all.

Pratap Singha never faltered in his stern determination to keep on fighting and everyone of his chiefs agreed.

The hardships were terrible in the rains and the winter, yet none complained. They had fruits, roots and grain for food and slept under the trees.

It was wonderful when you remember that nearly all these chiefs had owned lovely cities and lived a life of comfort in palaces.

Yet even in the midst of bitter hardships these men never departed from religious rules.

Led by the Rana, they observed the festivals and days. It was very fine indeed and proved the sort of men they were, that in those terrible times not one forgot his faith.

Meanwhile the Emperor kept himself well-informed as to the doings of Pratap Singha. You see he had many spies in Mewar country and through them he learned the way in which the Rana lived.

He knew that the Rajputs never took from the poor, never plundered, never used force of unkindness to their own people, in fact, that these wonderful men who had lost all but honour and their splendid leader were an example to the Moghuls, who showed no kindness to the poor.

And now there came a curious spirit into the Emperor's mind and also into the generals and courtiers who surrounded him.

Though still bent upon the destruction of the Rana, Akbar began to admire him with all his heart

He listened to stories of Pratap's amazing bravery

and patience with pleasure; he admitted that this man was noble beyond others.

In the same way the Moghuls who had fought against Pratap and said cruel things about him, now began to praise him as a hero. They talked of his heroic deeds they seem to have been carried away by the stories of his fortitude and noble actions, and one man of great name, Mirza Abdur Rahim, son of the famous Bairam Khan, wrote verses about Pratap Singha. Not only wrote them, but *sent* his poem to the Rana to show his respect.

One verse of it shall be written here to show what this poet thought of the hero.

"To free his land from foreign yoke,
To guard his people's weal,
He pledged his life; oh blessed is he,
May heaven reward his zeal!"

That is what the best men of Akbar's court thought of the Rana, yet it is an odd thing that though they recognized and praised his heroism yet they continued to persecute him and war against his country.

They allowed this wonderful man to be starved and driven as no other man had been. Not only that, children were often in danger from wild beasts, so that the faithful Bheels made wicker cradles for them and slung them to the branches of trees, otherwise they could not have slept in safety.

Then came a time when they were so nearly starved, that Pratap and his family had to live upon a sort of bread that his wife and daughters made from the seeds of certain grass.

As you can understand, there was very little of it, as such grass does not grow in great quantities, therefore only one piece of bread could be allowed to each person in the day. From this trouble happened an event of great importance which shall be told.

On a day this bread was divided as usual, one piece to each, to last for the day.

Pratap Singha was lying on the grass in the wood and he watched his very little daughter sit down with her portion near him.

Suddenly a squirrel bounded down from a tree leaped to the child's arm, snatched her piece of bread and raced away into the tree again.

The little girl burst into tears. She hid her face in her hands and cried bitterly. She was very hungry and she knew there was no more bread and could be none until to-morrow, perhaps not then.

The grief and hunger of his child were more than the Rana could bear.

Now consider the heart of this wonderful man.

For long years he had borne homeless wandering, destruction of his lovely homes, deceit, treachery, cold, wounds, the death of his friends, — in fact every sorrow a man could suffer.

On the other hand he had been offered possible advantage *if* he would give in and become the servant of Akbar. He could have had honours like Man Singha, yet nothing could tempt him.

But on that hard day, when he saw his little child weeping bitterly for her piece of bread, his endurance broke down completely. He was heart-broken and in that terrible moment he resolved to give in, he decided to write to the Emperor and offer to submit.

His wife and his chiefs gathered round him and begged him to think again; they implored him not to do this thing, for which he would presently repent and feel the deepest grief.

He would not give way. He said this persecution must cease, it could no longer be borne and in spite of all they could say he wrote that letter.

Some have thought that this sudden break-down in his staunch courage shows a weakness in his character, but surely it is not so.

Pratap Singha was a man of great tenderness, he had a noble heart and great power of love. It is shown again and again in his life story.

Had this not been so, surely he would never have been loved as he was by so many noble men. It was not only his courage and greatness that held them, it was his tenderness for his people and all who came near.

He was relentless, yet he was gentle, a truly splendid nature.

Therefore at this vital moment he said he *could* no longer make a little child suffer, for no purpose could he continue to stand out. He would give up his great aim in life. And so he sent that fateful letter to the Emperor.

CHAPTER XV.

THE TIDE TURNS AT LAST.

WHEN the Emperor Akbar received that letter from the Rana Pratap Singha — that desperate letter written when the hero was broken down with grief — he was so full of joy that he could not contain his feelings.

Akbar was wild with triump and delight. He thought he had conquered, gained his wish, shown to all the world how great he was and that he could even conquer the unconquerable hero.

The mean part of this affair was that he did not really want Mewar, he simply wanted to beat down a great man who refused to be his servant.

In the excess of his delight he ordered all kinds of festivals and public rejoicings.

Then he showed the letter to Prithwiraj.

Now Prithwiraj was the great poet of Rajputana.

He was not a fighting man. He had been compelled to bow to Akbar, because he had no means of defending himself, but he loved his country and before all else he loved and admired Pratap Singha.

He read that letter with horror and dismay. Then, having considered it all very carefully, he said to the Emperor:

"This letter is a forgery. It is written by some traitor to deceive you. This is not the spirit of Pratap Singha. I know Pratap, I am sure he would never give in."

Of course the Emperor was dismayed, but he was forced to believe the poet, because he had been, and was then, a devoted friend of the Rana.

Then Prithwiraj asked leave to write to Pratap.

He said: "I will write to him with my own hand and ask him if this letter is a true one," and Akbar gave him leave to do so at once.

The truth was that Prithwiraj had determined to rouse the Rana from the terrible grief which had made him write that letter.

He knew well enough that the Rana had written it, but he could not bear to think of such a man bowing down to Akbar, so he determined to stop it by using all his power as a poet.

With his heart and soul he would write, he would send a poem to Pratap which should live for ever in Rajput history.

He did it. He sat down and wrote a wonderful appeal to rouse Pratap from unmanly despondency.

This poem is preserved, of course; as written in the language of Mewar it is wonderful, but of course translated it loses a great deal of its fire and force.

It begins—

"The Hindu's hope, the Hindu's strength
On him alone depends;
Why, then, thou leavest him: O Prince!
The last of all his friends.

The Rajput race has lost its name,
And lost its hero's pride:
And alas! alas! has the Rajput flame
Her honour cast aside."

There are twelve verses of this wonderful call to Pratap's honour, a prayer to him not to give in for the sake of his broken country, because that country still depended on him alone. Without him it was crushed under the foot of Akbar's greed.

In one verse he says:

"The world doth ask, 'who helps Pratap
The Hindu's cause to save?"
To them I point her sword unsheathed
And the courage of her brave."

That grand poem of the Rajput poet, that appeal saved the Rana from making a serious mistake.

He received the letter from Prithwiraj. He read it, and no doubt his chiefs read it too.

The power of it spoke to the Rana's noble soul and he changed his mind.

In that critical moment he settled he would not surrender.

He would *not* submit to Akbar.

He saw clearly once again that hard as was this awful struggle, he must carry it on, because *he* was the only hope left for his driven people.

When he had made up his mind, he had to face once again the hard question of how to do this difficult thing. How to keep on.

He had no money now.

Therefore there was a great daily difficulty to support his arm, small as it was. They must eat, they must be clothed. They were so generous and brave that they did not ask for pay, but certain things they must have.

Also there was amunition; and horses had to be fed. It is not possible to keep an army on foot with no money.

He decided to fight again, never to surrender, but how was he to do it?

He gathered his chiefs for council, and after many ideas had been put forward, the Rana suggested that they act again as they had acted in Chitore.

They should leave Mewar. They should cross the Aravalli mountains, all who would come with him, all who cared to follow.

They should cross the hills, even cross the dreary desert that lay on the other side, and establish themselves on the banks of the Indus River in the kingdom of Sagdi.

If you look at the map you will see that this was a very great venture. It was a long way to go across a very desolate land. No doubt if they reached that country it would be a fruitful land, but there would be more than three hundred miles to travel and most of it desert.

Pratap said;

"We will build up a new Mewar, we will endow her with the stories of our people."

Then his chiefs agreed. They saw no other way, and they began to draw up plans for this wonderful journey.

First they sent out messengers with secret letters to all the Rana's faithful people.

The scattered remnants of the Rajput army were told to gather once more, with their people, round the blood-red flag of Pratap Singha.

All sorts of important matters were settled. And at last the fateful moment had come.

All together they went down the western slopes of the Aravalli mountains, and on reaching the plain the Rana pitched his tent, in order that all might gather around him, as many had come from far places in Rajasthan and perhaps all might not wish to go, but only to bid farewell to him and their friends.

And now in this critical moment an extraordinary thing happened, which changed the whole history of the Rana and his beloved country.

Amongst those who came to this farewell gathering was a man named Bheem Singha. Some historians call him Bhama Singha, some say his name was Bhima: he was the descendant of the Chandayat Sardar Krishna Singha, and was a minister, a wise and noble Rajput, he was also a very old man.

We have seen how the letter of Prithwiraj had turned the Rana from his desperate purpose, and changed the history of Rajputana.

Now, something happened that changed that purpose again, something that turned the whole tide of affairs and must have been like the sun breaking through black clouds for all these desperate men.

There is no doubt that Pratap must have been feeling terrible pain at leaving his beloved country.

Even at that moment he suffered and looking round at his chiefs he asked them if there was anything they could think of that might be done instead.

Could any friend suggest a plan by which they could act and remain in their own loved country.

And then old Bheem Singha spoke. He came forward, wise and generous, and made an offer to his beloved Rana.

He said that for generations his family had lived within the favour of the ruling house of Mewar. By care and wisdom they had gathered great wealth. They had saved year after year and had never been wasteful with money.

Therefore he now proposed to present the whole of his wealth to his Rana, and the amount was so large that it would support twenty five thousand soldiers for twelve years !

Pratap Singha could not find words to answer.

One great shout rose from the Rajput chief and from that time Bheem Singha was known as 'the Saviour of Mewar'.

Around that tent at the foot of the mountain, among these brave people preparing to cross the miles of desert to a new country, a spirit of great joy and triumph seemed to wake.

The letter sent by Prithwiraj, the treasure given by old Bheem Singha were new life to the weary chiefs. No longer were they forgotten. Help and sympathy had come ; every man felt the change, and Pratap himself was a new man.

No need now to flee from Mewar.

They could order new horses of a stronger type. Food was collected enough for the army. Ammunition was gathered. Clothes were ordered, a regular supply so that no man should be cold and sick. Soldiers who had been dismissed because there was no money to support them were eagerly called back.

And the Rana worked night and day, with hope and joy in his heart, for he need not leave his beloved land and it seemed as though the tide had turned in earnest.

All life was different.

Yet so swiftly and silently were all these things done that the Moghuls knew nothing about it.

They firmly believed that Pratap Singha had gone out of the country and was done for. It did not seem possible to them that he could ever oppose Akbar's armies again.

What Akbar thought about the Rana's letter saying he would not surrender we do not know, but it must have been a terrible shock. After giving orders for public rejoicings, to have to tell all the people that Pratap Singha was just as far away as ever must have given the Emperor a time of pain indeed.

Well, so it was.

The tide had turned and the whole of the Rajput forces were full of confidence.

As I said, the Moghuls felt sure Pratap was leaving Mewar for ever, and they would never be troubled with him again.

They hailed this belief with pleasure, and openly said they could take possession now of the whole of Mewar with no further fighting or blood-shed.

They were passing their time in ease and amusement, thinking they would have no more trouble.

Of course this proved that the Rajputs who were coming to Pratap from all parts were true. Otherwise news must have reached Shahabaz.

It was easy to get money for news, yet the people of Mewar were so glad that their Rana was coming back that they helped his men in every way.

They hated the Moghuls.

All this time Shahabaz Khan had been forcing the people of the plains on the north-east of the Aravallis to come under Akbar's rule.

He proclaimed martial law. That is to say, he made certain rules which the people had to keep, and if they did not keep them they were hanged.

Everyone was unhappy, therefore the coming of their own Rana was a joy indeed for the tormented people and they hept all they knew a secret.

Shahabaz Khan was encamped with his army at Dewair, situated exactly to the north of Mewar. It was at the mouth of a narrow pass in the mountains, and a place of importance, because from there he could command Mewar, Marwar and the Aravallis. Also it connected with Ajmere, which was strongly placed on the north end of those mountains.

Shahabaz was well content with his position and all else.

He felt that he was ruling over the most troublesome of Akbar's new conquests, and was also able to reach the Emperor's head-quarters without trouble.

No one was anxious about Pratap. The general was sure he had gone away to the distant land and would never come back.

He thought, and all his men thought too, that wars were ended, they could do as they liked and take their ease.

And then, quite suddenly, like a thunderbolt from a clear sky, destruction came upon them.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE RANA WINS.

ALL of a sudden, when Shahabaz Khan was well content with his success and power, down came the army of Pratap Singha and struck his encampment.

Not the Rajputs that he had been fighting for years, but Rajputs who were fed and clothed and full of vigour.

They had fine cavalry, ammunition and a new spirit, which was the most important thing of all perhaps.

They felt sure they could conquer and knew the Moghuls did not expect them. Shahabaz never dreamed there could be a really well-equipped Rajput army. He felt sure that hope was gone for ever, so he was more than surprised — he was shocked!

His troops were completely unready; so when the Rajputs fell upon them with all the power of confidence and the feeling of superiority given them by hope and new strength, they were beaten from the first.

In the battle that followed the Moghuls were utterly defeated and the splendid army of Shahabaz became a wild mob of beaten men.

Those who managed to reach Amait, which was

five miles distant, hoped they would get help from another force of Moghuls stationed there, but it was no use. They too were completely over-powered by the Rajputs.

The victory of Dewair one of the most complete ever won, was the turning point of the Rana's fate.

The effect was amazing.

So terrific had been the attack of the Rajputs, inspired by the knowledge of their new strength, that the Moghuls were reduced to a state of complete confusion. They were plundered and driven from place to place and killed by Pratap and his army.

Nothing could stand against the onrush of the victorious Rajputs.

That sad defeat at Haldighat was made up for many times over.

The Moghuls were not only shattered, they were so dazed that they could not rally again.

Before they could collect their wits, the Rajputs attacked Kamalmir, the great fort on the hills, the fort from which they had been driven by the poisoning of the well.

The place was taken with a rush and the Rajputs simply blotted out the Moghul army of Abdullah that held it.

Pratap Singha had made up his mind to use stern measures.

People have said that if he had been merciful and

forgiven his foes it would have held up the highest standard of Rajput conduct, but we must remember what he had suffered and that he had found out the treachery and cruelty of the Moghuls.

Also he had been betrayed by his own people. They had been bought by Akbar's bribes and he saw that the only way to save his country was to destroy the Moghuls.

The slaughter was terrible.

Mewar was de-populated of her new occupiers.

They had hunted out and killed the poor people of the country, now in their turn they were hunted out and killed by the victorious Rajputs.

There is one thing which gives joy to those who admire these wonderful men.

They were able to put back and reward the friends who had given them food and helped them when there was no money.

We can be sure that the brave Bheels who never deserted them in the bad years were happy now.

It is said that the Rajputs could not forget the tyranny of an enemy that had caused thousands of wives and daughters — Rajput ladies — to sacrifice themselves in terrible fires, rather than surrender to men who had no honour.

It is a most amazing thing, but true, that within a very short time Pratap Singha had won back the

whole of his own country except Chitore and Mandalgar.

Mewar once more lay at his feet.

It is very wonderful when you think that but a short while ago, his little daughter had wept because her one piece of bread was stolen by a squirrel and the Rana had written that desperate letter in his despair.

Then came the appeal from Prithwiraj, begging him to be strong.

Then came the noble gift of Bheem Singha to save him from his flight to the Indus.

And now — completely victorious, he was back again, Rana of his beloved country.

All this story proves one thing at least. No man or woman should ever despair, though they suffer trouble.

Everyone should face difficulty with a brave heart and if it is a good cause, they will surely win.

Pratap now remembered his treacherous enemy, Man Singha, who all this time had been living in comfort and riches, well pleased with the thought that the Rana had been driven from his own country.

Now in his hour of triumph, Pratap determined to teach him a lesson.

So he attacked Ambar and plundered Malpura, the trading centre which was but forty-five miles west of Ajmere.

In fact the victories won by Pratap Singha after the battle of Dewair were so many and so complete, that the writers of that time have not told the stories of them. But if a man travels over the mountains that run through this country he can well understand, first the hardships, and then the victories of the Rana.

Hundreds of stories are told of the glories of Pratap Singha and his men.

The Moghul writers did not speak of all this. No doubt they were ashamed to describe their defeats, but there are many songs and ballads, many stories told of amazing deeds of courage, and these do not die. The people repeat them from one year to another, so that every child can learn the heroism of the Rajputs who won back their land from the cruel armies of Akbar, the Emperor.

It will be remembered that when Uday Singha fled from Chitore he went to Udaipur.

Afterwards Pratap Singha made it his headquarters until driven into the mountains by Akbar's generals.

Now that he was victorious, he went back again there and made it his capital city.

It is indeed extraordinary to think that he who had had no home and had lived in caves and woods, for years, now again possessed every city in Mewar except Chitore — the first of cities.

He would have given much for that place, but to take it by force was not yet possible.

The army that he had furnished with Beem Singha's generous gift was pretty well exhausted by the terrific fighting. Battle after battle, town after town had been won, but now the money was almost spent and as we know Pratap would never allow his people to be pressed for money.

Chitore was a very powerful fort and was still held by a great force of Moghuls ; any attempt to take it with a small force would have been useless and foolish too.

All the troops that Pratap had left were required to defend the cities he had taken, so Pratap dared not try to win Chitore. Yet, that city was the scene of so many glorious deeds of his ancestors that his heart was there. It was humiliation to any Rajput to know it was in the hands of an enemy.

Also, you must remember that as long as Chitore was not his, that vow of the Rana, which he had kept strictly all these long years, could not be lifted from him or his followers.

He would not allow any luxuries nor would he shave his beard No doubt he had enough simple food to prevent hunger, but he refused anything else.

What is more, he would not live in a fine house or allow his palace to be made ready.

He and his family lived in the huts of fishermen

on the shores of the lake Peshola, which was about five miles farther to the west than the city of Udaipur in which his father Uday Singha had taken refuge.

On the shores of this lake, then, which is very beautiful, stood the cottage in which the hero Pratap Singha rested at last.

It must have been peace and joy in a way to rest at all, after the bitter years of cold and hunger in which he had been hunted like a wild beast.

Thirty years later were built the marble palaces in which lived later Maharanas, and the beautiful towers and walls were reflected in the clear water, but while the man who won it all back from the invaders lived, there was nothing to be seen on the shores of that lovely lake but the thatched huts that were his home and the blood-red flag of Mewar floating from a high mound.

Beneath the flag were held the Councils of the Rana and his chiefs—not in stately halls, but within the cottage that stood near.

These men lived in poverty, they would not spend money on themselves, all must be kept for the cause of Rajputana, and the proud chiefs lived like fishermen.

No one complained.

Pratap Singha showed the way. He lived like that himself and his chiefs followed.

After a time the Moghuls retired from the

neighbourhood for good. They were defeated again and again, so that at last they were compelled to go.

For *thirty years* they had fought the Rajputs. For a time they had been victors, but at last they were beaten.

All that time they fought for money and greed, while the Rajputs fought for their country.

When the Moghuls were beaten they were broken up.

The Rajputs had refused to be broken, and when beaten had come back again and again undaunted. But the Moghuls were different. The Moghul soldier did not care, he would not fight unless he was well paid and gained plunder also.

Therefore, when Pratap Singha took Udaipur the Moghuls refused to stand. They retired for ever.

And there was yet another reason.

During those thirty cruel years all the world had come to feel something for the Rana of Mewar that was near to reverance.

The poor people thought he was a God. Rajputs who had gone over to Akbar never lost their great respect for their true chief.

Man Singha and Asaf Khan both fell under the displeasure of the Emperor, because they would not allow their armies to plunder and destroy the poor of Mewar.

It was Akbar who gave orders for massacres in

the forts and towns. It seems that he was so enraged at his constant failure that he did not control his desire for revenge.

A very mean act, when it is remembered that the people were defenceless.

Yet gradually even Akbar began to feel the general respect for his noble foe. It is said that whatever anger he felt in the beginning of this war, that in the end he was fascinated by Pratap's character.

No doubt Akbar had met with many brave men, many clever generals, but never had he known a man who fought for his country under such conditions for thirty years — a man who was content to eat bread made of grass seed, and to sleep in a cave, on the bare hill-side, rather than desert his people, when he could have had a life of luxury and high position had he given way to the Emperor.

Akbar also understood at last that the fierce Rajput tribes *could* not be crushed. There was no gain to him in this eternal fight with Mewar. As fast as he crushed one place another rose up and attacked him. He understood that he would only sacrifice more and more men and money, yet gain no advantage.

He had now Bengal, Kashmir and the Deccan.

It had taken him a long, long time to subdue the Pathans and the small chiefs who owned Bengal. As fast as he conquered the last, they broke out again, drove away the Moghul rulers and took back their

cities. It must have been much like a man trying to conquer a great many nests of wasps and hornets! They were driven away, but came back to sting!

All these wars were very expensive both in men and money, especially when a big war began again in the Deccan.

All these reasons together made Akbar decide to abandon Rajputana. He withdrew his troops and left the Rajputs in peace.

And thus at last the Rana and his chiefs, worn with thirty years of struggle found rest in the cottages at Udaipur.

CHAPTER XII.

REST AND HONOUR.

AND yet Pratap Singha looked upon his life as a failure.

In spite of thirty years of heroic battling against tyranny, he had lost Chitore. And we must remember that Chitore was the very centre of Rajput history.

The sight of the distant fortress which he gained from mountain tops filled him with grief.

With Chitore was bound up the history of Bappa, Samar and Lakshman. All the stories of deeds by heroes like Badal, Hamir, Putto and Jaymalla made him sad and restless.

Rajputana he had won back but not Chitore. He had not the troops or guns to assault that great fortress. Pratap Singha, as we know, had amazing pride of race ; to live day after day and remember that he could not win back the wonderful city of the royal house preyed upon his health and destroyed the peace he should have had.

To live in a fisherman's cottage was small matter to him, but to see Chitore occupied by others was to him an incurable wound.

It sapped his strength. His health gave way and in the fifty-fifth year of his age he died. Such a

man as this should have lived to a great age had his mind been at peace.

Before his death a thing happened which no doubt hastened the end, because to him it carried unlucky meaning.

It was this.

Pratap Singha had seventeen sons. The eldest was Amar Singha a fine, tall, handsome man, and yet a man without the strength of character that marked his heroic father.

One day Amar Singha came to visit the Rana, who was lying on his bed in the cottage room.

Amar was tall and big; as he left the cottage in an unthinking mood, he struck his turban against the top of the door, and it was knocked from his head.

Pratap Singha saw this little accident. Of course it was no matter really, but being weak and ill, his mind saw in it an evil omen.

He said his son would never be able to carry on his work, and this event was to prophecy the failure of Amar.

Constantly his devoted chiefs were with him, always they listened for any message from their beloved leader.

The Chandayat chief asked him what it was that troubled him so.

Pratap answered:

"I could die in peace if I were sure that Mewar would not again be abandoned to the Turks."

Then he told them about Amar's turban and said it was an omen, a bad sign. He said:

"I could not recover Chitore and I know my son Amar will never do it. He will not have the patience to stand against the difficulty of holding this kingdom.

"I foresee that when I die palaces will be built where these humble cottages stand. And all will fall a prey to luxury. All my work and the blood we have spilt will be washed away by a wave of self-indulgence.

"Even you, my chiefs, will follow this evil example."

It is grievous to think that the words of the dying hero came true.

His descendants are given up to luxury and idleness.

Only Raj Singha, who reigned from 1654 to 1681, lived up to the great Rana's ideal. He was a true Rajput, but within a hundred years of his death Udaipur was plunged in the depths of degradation, so that when in 1881 peace was made with the British, the Rana was then spending his whole life in pleasure and the historian who tells the story, tells it with grief.

But it is a pleasure to tell that the present ruler, the Maharana Fateh Singha Bahadur, is all he should be, a true Rajput and a wise and useful administrator.

As Pratap Singha told his chiefs what he saw in the future, he became so agitated that his chiefs made a vow.

They said:

"On the holy memory of Bappa Rawal we swear that till Mewar gains her entire freedom, we will not allow a single building of stone to be built here. We will stand responsible for the conduct of your son."

This vow gave the hero peace and uttering the name of God, he died.

Thus passed away the Rana Pratap, perhaps the greatest hero of all the many great ones of India.

He died in 1597; the hope of the Rajputs, the pride of India, the ideal of courage, patriotism and honour.

His death caused the most widespread grief. Rajputs and Bheels, Hindus and Moslems, friends and foes, nobles and poor, all alike mourned for the loss of one who had been an example of noble life.

The anniversary of his death remains always a black day in the history of India.

Let all children remember that India is a nursery of heroes.

If you go back into the ages of her wonderful past — if you think of the ancient days, when the banks of the great Indus and the land of the five rivers heard the songs of the Vedas, there were heroes.

Among the *Rishis* there were heroes who had given up the world.

In a later age Sanskrit writings tell of the acts of heroes.

Coming to still later times we may read of three great races — the Rajputs, the Maharattas and the Sikhs. It was the efforts of these martial people that destroyed the strength of the Mohammedans who had invaded the land in hordes.

The annals are glorified by the deeds of many great heroes, those that stand out most clearly being, Maharana Pratap Singha, Chatrapati Sivaji and Guru Govind Singha.

Of these three Pratap Singha was perhaps the greatest, because you must remember that he fought against the greatest man.

For Akbar was a more powerful enemy than Aurangzeb, who was opposed to Sivaji, while when Govind Singha and his Sikhs fought, the Moghu[1] power was almost spent.

Pratap Singha had the hardest task and bore the heaviest burden, therefore we may regard him as the greatest hero among many in that age.

Of course the character of Pratap Singha is the most remarkable part of this story. He had such a generous nature. Never once in his hard life was he betrayed into an act of meanness.

Akbar would have given him any honour and any money if he would have submitted to Moghul rule.

He was a self-less man, which is rare at any time. He deserves worship and deep respect from every Indian.

When you remember that he was deserted by many Rajput chiefs and Akbar's armies swept over his country, it is cause for amazement that he never wavered.

He was deeply religious too, with a faithful heart that believed he would enjoy celestial happiness if he were killed in battle. He never wavered in his Faith.

Even to-day Udaipur is regarded as the first state of India and its Rana takes precedence of all other chiefs.

In its history the name of Pratap Singha stands first among great men.

Yet not only in India is that name honoured.

Other countries all over the inhabited world read his story with respect. Therefore let every child of India feel proud that to India belongs this hero unique in history.

THE END.

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