

CHAPTER V.

A SOLDIER OF FORTUNE AMONG THE AFGHANS.

THE KINGDOM OF AFGHANISTAN—HABIB-ULLA KHAN AND HIS HISTORY—GARDNER JOINS HIS STANDARD AND BECOMES A SOLDIER OF FORTUNE—AFGHAN TOLLS—THE ROMANCE OF WAR—GARDNER'S MARRIAGE—THE CASTELLO—TRIUMPH OF AMIR DOST MUHAMMAD KHAN—TRAGIC END OF GARDNER'S MARRIED LIFE—HABIB-ULLA KHAN'S RESOLUTION.

THE kingdom of Afghanistan dates only from the year 1747, when Ahmad Khan, hereditary chief of the Sadozai tribe, was crowned King of the Afghans at Kandahar. Ahmad Khan changed the name of his tribe to Durani, and assumed the title of Shah Duri Duran. After a glorious career of conquest he died in June 1773.

Ahmad Shah Durani was succeeded by his son Taimur, who reigned twenty years, and was succeeded by his son Shah Zaman, who was blinded and deposed in the year 1799. Shah Zaman's brother and successor, Mahmud Shah, had no