



the gate. Thus disappointed Runjeet returned to a little distance and opened a desultory fire of matchlocks on the place from all quarters. This firing, which was promptly answered by Chete Sing with his five hundred men inside, was kept up for about twenty-four hours. However on the next morning Chete Sing finding treachery on every side, surrendered on condition that his life and the lives of his followers should be spared, and that he should have a jaghire sufficient for the maintenance of his family. These terms Runjeet granted, and gave to the fallen chief, whom he treated with much respect, the village of Vennia* and its appurtenances worth about seven thousand rupees a year.

The story of the subsequent career of Runjeet Sing has been too often told to warrant its transcription here. His gradual rise from being the chief of a tribe of roving plunderers to the sovereignty of a nation is a subject of history. Having once tasted the sweets of conquest in the capture of Lahore as related above, he, like the young tiger who has lapped blood for the first time, was eager for further prey. His ambition having once been gratified grew with what it fed upon and nothing less than the mastery of all around would content it. Thus prompted the chief of the Sukerchuckia Misal, and now the Lord of Lahore, began a career of conquest and subjugation that ceased not until it had brought him to a wall of impenetrable mountains on the one hand, and on the other in contact with a foreign power whose frontier was to him as impassable as the Himalayas themselves.

In 1805 Runjeet was recalled from a career of victory in the west by intelligence that a body of fugitive Mahrattas, closely pursued by a British army, was approaching his eastern frontier. This was unwelcome news, as he had no desire to see the

* The village of Vennia is about 24 miles from Lahore, and was lately in the hands of Mulfanee Sing.