JACOB ABBOTT

GENGHIS KHAN, MAKERS OF HISTORY SERIES

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Содержание

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PREFACE

The word khan is not a name, but a title. It means chieftain or king. It is a word used in various forms by the different tribes and nations that from time immemorial have inhabited Central Asia, and has been applied to a great number of potentates and rulers that have from time to time arisen among them. Genghis Khan was the greatest of these princes. He was, in fact, one of the most renowned conquerors whose exploits history records.

As in all other cases occurring in the series of histories to which this work belongs, where the events narrated took place at such a period or in such a part of the world that positively reliable and authentic information in respect to them can now no longer be obtained, the author is not responsible for the actual truth of the narrative which he offers, but only for the honesty and fidelity with which he has compiled it from the best sources of information now within reach.

Chapter I
Pastoral Life in Asia

Four different modes of life enumerated

There are four several methods by which the various communities into which the human race is divided obtain their subsistence from the productions of the earth, each of which leads to its own peculiar system of social organization, distinct in its leading characteristics from those of all the rest. Each tends to its own peculiar form of government, gives rise to its own manners and customs, and forms, in a word, a distinctive and characteristic type of life.

These methods are the following:

1. By hunting wild animals in a state of nature.
2. By rearing tame animals in pasturages.
3. By gathering fruits and vegetables which grow spontaneously in a state of nature.
4. By rearing fruits and grains and other vegetables by artificial tillage in cultivated ground.

By the two former methods man subsists on animal food. By the two latter on vegetable food.

Northern and southern climes

Animal food in arctic regions

As we go north, from the temperate regions toward the poles, man is found to subsist more and more on animal food. This seems to be the intention of Providence. In the arctic regions scarcely any vegetables grow that are fit for human food, but animals whose flesh is nutritious and adapted to the use of man are abundant.

As we go south, from temperate regions toward the equator, man is found to subsist more and more on vegetable food. This, too, seems to be the intention of nature. Within the tropics scarcely any animals live that are fit for human food; while fruits, roots, and other vegetable productions which are nutritious and adapted to the use of man are abundant.

In accordance with this difference in the productions of the different regions of the earth, there seems to be a difference in the constitutions of the races of men formed to inhabit them. The tribes that inhabit Greenland and Kamtschatka can not preserve their accustomed health and vigor on any other than animal food. If put upon a diet of vegetables they soon begin to pine away. The reverse is true of the vegetable-eaters of the tropics. They

preserve their health and strength well on a diet of rice, or bread-fruit, or bananas, and would undoubtedly be made sick by being fed on the flesh of walruses, seals, and white bears.

Tropical regions

Appetite changes with climate

In the temperate regions the productions of the above-mentioned extremes are mingled. Here many animals whose flesh is fit for human food live and thrive, and here grows, too, a vast variety of nutritious fruits, and roots, and seeds. The physical constitution of the various races of men that inhabit these regions is modified accordingly. In the temperate climes men can live on vegetable food, or on animal food, or on both. The constitution differs, too, in different individuals, and it changes at different periods of the year. Some persons require more of animal, and others more of vegetable food, to preserve their bodily and mental powers in the best condition, and each one observes a change in himself in passing from winter to summer. In the summer the desire for a diet of fruits and vegetables seems to come northward with the sun, and in the winter the appetite for flesh comes southward from the arctic regions with the cold.

When we consider the different conditions in which the

different regions of the earth are placed in respect to their capacity of production for animal and vegetable food, we shall see that this adjustment of the constitution of man, both to the differences of climate and to the changes of the seasons, is a very wise and beneficent arrangement of Divine Providence. To confine man absolutely either to animal or vegetable food would be to depopulate a large part of the earth.

First steps toward civilization

It results from these general facts in respect to the distribution of the supplies of animal and vegetable food for man in different latitudes that, in all northern climes in our hemisphere, men living in a savage state must be hunters, while those that live near the equator must depend for their subsistence on fruits and roots growing wild. When, moreover, any tribe or race of men in either of these localities take the first steps toward civilization, they begin, in the one case, by taming animals, and rearing them in flocks and herds; and, in the other case, by saving the seeds of food-producing plants, and cultivating them by artificial tillage in inclosed and private fields. This last is the condition of all the half-civilized tribes of the tropical regions of the earth, whereas the former prevails in all the northern temperate and arctic regions, as far to the northward as domesticated animals can live.

Interior of Asia

Pastoral habits of the people

From time immemorial, the whole interior of the continent of Asia has been inhabited by tribes and nations that have taken this one step in the advance toward civilization, but have gone no farther. They live, not, like the Indians in North America, by hunting wild beasts, but by rearing and pasturing flocks and herds of animals that they have tamed. These animals feed, of course, on grass and herbage; and, as grass and herbage can only grow on open ground, the forests have gradually disappeared, and the country has for ages consisted of great grassy plains, or of smooth hill-sides covered with verdure. Over these plains, or along the river valleys, wander the different tribes of which these pastoral nations are composed, living in tents, or in frail huts almost equally movable, and driving their flocks and herds before them from one pasture-ground to another, according as the condition of the grass, or that of the springs and streams of water, may require.

Picture of pastoral life

We obtain a pretty distinct idea of the nature of this pastoral life, and of the manners and customs, and the domestic constitution to which it gives rise, in the accounts given us in the Old Testament of Abraham and Lot, and of their wanderings with their flocks and herds over the country lying between the Euphrates and the Mediterranean Sea. They lived in tents, in order that they might remove their habitations the more easily from place to place in following their flocks and herds to different pasture-grounds. Their wealth consisted almost wholly in these flocks and herds, the land being almost every where common. Sometimes, when two parties traveling together came to a fertile and well-watered district, their herdsmen and followers were disposed to contend for the privilege of feeding their flocks upon it, and the contention would often lead to a quarrel and combat, if it had not been settled by an amicable agreement on the part of the chieftains.

Large families accumulated

The father of a family was the legislator and ruler of it, and his sons, with their wives, and his son's sons, remained with him, sometimes for many years, sharing his means of subsistence,

submitting to his authority, and going with him from place to place, with all his flocks and herds. They employed, too, so many herdsmen, and other servants and followers, as to form, in many cases, quite an extended community, and sometimes, in case of hostilities with any other wandering tribe, a single patriarch could send forth from his own domestic circle a force of several hundred armed men. Such a company as this, when moving across the country on its way from one region of pasturage to another, appeared like an immense caravan on its march, and when settled at an encampment the tents formed quite a little town.

Rise of patriarchal governments

Whenever the head of one of these wandering families died, the tendency was not for the members of the community to separate, but to keep together, and allow the oldest son to take the father's place as chieftain and ruler. This was necessary for defense, as, of course, such communities as these were in perpetual danger of coming into collision with other communities roaming about like themselves over the same regions. It would necessarily result, too, from the circumstances of the case, that a strong and well-managed party, with an able and sagacious chieftain at the head of it, would attract other and weaker parties to join it; or, on the arising of some pretext for a quarrel, would make war upon it and conquer it. Thus,

in process of time, small nations, as it were, would be formed, which would continue united and strong as long as the able leadership continued; and then they would separate into their original elements, which elements would be formed again into other combinations.

Origin of the towns

Such, substantially, was pastoral life in the beginning. In process of time, of course, the tribes banded together became larger and larger. Some few towns and cities were built as places for the manufacture of implements and arms, or as resting-places for the caravans of merchants in conveying from place to place such articles as were bought and sold. But these places were comparatively few and unimportant. A pastoral and roaming life continued to be the destiny of the great mass of the people. And this state of things, which was commenced on the banks of the Euphrates before the time of Abraham, spread through the whole breadth of Asia, from the Mediterranean Sea to the Pacific Ocean, and has continued with very little change from those early periods to the present time.

Great chieftains

Genghis Khan

Of the various chieftains that have from time to time risen to command among these shepherd nations but little is known, for very few and very scanty records have been kept of the history of any of them. Some of them have been famous as conquerors, and have acquired very extended dominions. The most celebrated of all is perhaps Genghis Khan, the hero of this history. He came upon the stage more than three thousand years after the time of the great prototype of his class, the Patriarch Abraham.

Chapter II
The Monguls

Monguls

Origin of the name

Three thousand years is a period of time long enough to produce great changes, and in the course of that time a great many different nations and congeries of nations were formed in the regions of Central Asia. The term Tartars has been employed generically to denote almost the whole race. The Monguls are a portion of this people, who are said to derive their name from Mongol Khan, one of their earliest and most powerful chieftains. The descendants of this khan called themselves by his name, just as the descendants of the twelve sons of Jacob called themselves Israelites, or children of Israel, from the name Israel, which was one of the designations of the great patriarch from whose twelve sons the twelve tribes of the Jews descended. The country inhabited by the Monguls was called Mongolia.

A Mongul family

To obtain a clear conception of a single Mongul family, you must imagine, first, a rather small, short, thick-set man, with long black hair, a flat face, and a dark olive complexion. His wife, if her face were not so flat and her nose so broad, would be quite a brilliant little beauty, her eyes are so black and sparkling. The children have much the appearance of young Indians as they run shouting among the cattle on the hill-sides, or, if young, playing half-naked about the door of the hut, their long black hair streaming in the wind.

Their occupations

Like all the rest of the inhabitants of Central Asia, these people depended almost entirely for their subsistence on the products of their flocks and herds. Of course, their great occupation consisted in watching their animals while feeding by day, and in putting them in places of security by night, in taking care of and rearing the young, in making butter and cheese from the milk, and clothing from the skins, in driving the cattle to and fro in search of pasturage, and, finally, in making war on the people of other tribes to settle disputes arising out of conflicting claims to territory, or to replenish their stock of sheep and oxen

by seizing and driving off the flocks of their neighbors.

Animals of the Monguls

The animals which the Monguls most prized were camels, oxen and cows, sheep, goats, and horses. They were very proud of their horses, and they rode them with great courage and spirit. They always went mounted in going to war. Their arms were bows and arrows, pikes or spears, and a sort of sword or sabre, which was manufactured in some of the towns toward the west, and supplied to them in the course of trade by great traveling caravans.

Their towns and villages

Although the mass of the people lived in the open country with their flocks and herds, there were, notwithstanding, a great many towns and villages, though such centres of population were much fewer and less important among them than they are in countries the inhabitants of which live by tilling the ground. Some of these towns were the residences of the khans and of the heads of tribes. Others were places of manufacture or centres of commerce, and many of them were fortified with embankments of earth or walls of stone.

Mode of building their tents

The habitations of the common people, even those built in the towns, were rude huts made so as to be easily taken down and removed. The tents were made by means of poles set in a circle in the ground, and brought nearly together at the top, so as to form a frame similar to that of an Indian wigwam. A hoop was placed near the top of these poles, so as to preserve a round opening there for the smoke to go out. The frame was then covered with sheets of a sort of thick gray felt, so placed as to leave the opening within the hoop free. The felt, too, was arranged below in such a manner that the corner of one of the sheets could be raised and let down again to form a sort of door. The edges of the sheets in other places were fastened together very carefully, especially in winter, to keep out the cold air.

Within the tent, on the ground in the centre, the family built their fire, which was made of sticks, leaves, grass, and dried droppings of all sorts, gathered from the ground, for the country produced scarcely any wood. Countries roamed over by herds of animals that gain their living by pasturing on the grass and herbage are almost always destitute of trees. Trees in such a case have no opportunity to grow.

Bad fuel

Comfortless homes

The tents of the Monguls thus made were, of course, very comfortless homes. They could not be kept warm, there was so much cold air coming continually in through the crevices, notwithstanding all the people's contrivances to make them tight. The smoke, too, did not all escape through the hoop-hole above. Much of it remained in the tent and mingled with the atmosphere. This evil was aggravated by the kind of fuel which they used, which was of such a nature that it made only a sort of smouldering fire instead of burning, like good dry wood, with a bright and clear flame.

The discomforts of these huts and tents were increased by the custom which prevailed among the people of allowing the animals to come into them, especially those that were young and feeble, and to live there with the family.

Movable houses built at last

The painting

In process of time, as the people increased in riches and in mechanical skill, some of the more wealthy chieftains began to build houses so large and so handsome that they could not be conveniently taken down to be removed, and then they contrived a way of mounting them upon trucks placed at the four corners, and moving them bodily in this way across the plains, as a table is moved across a floor upon its castors. It was necessary, of course, that the houses should be made very light in order to be managed in this way. They were, in fact, still tents rather than houses, being made of the same materials, only they were put together in a more substantial and ornamental manner. The frame was made of very light poles, though these poles were fitted together in permanent joinings. The covering was, like that of the tents, made of felt, but the sheets were joined together by close and strong seams, and the whole was coated with a species of paint, which not only closed all the pores and interstices and made the structure very tight, but also served to ornament it; for they were accustomed, in painting these houses, to adorn the covering with pictures of birds, beasts, and trees, represented in such a manner

as doubtless, in their eyes, produced a very beautiful effect.

Account of a large movable house

These movable houses were sometimes very large. A certain traveler who visited the country not far from the time of Genghis Khan says that he saw one of these structures in motion which was thirty feet in diameter. It was drawn by twenty-two oxen. It was so large that it extended five feet on each side beyond the wheels. The oxen, in drawing it, were not attached, as with us, to the centre of the forward axle-tree, but to the ends of the axle-trees, which projected beyond the wheels on each side. There were eleven oxen on each side drawing upon the axle-trees. There were, of course, many drivers. The one who was chief in command stood in the door of the tent or house which looked forward, and there, with many loud shouts and flourishing gesticulations, issued his orders to the oxen and to the other men.

The traveling chests

The household goods of this traveling chieftain were packed in chests made for the purpose, the house itself, of course, in order to be made as light as possible, having been emptied of all its contents. These chests were large, and were made of wicker or basket-work, covered, like the house, with felt. The covers were

made of a rounded form, so as to throw off the rain, and the felt was painted over with a certain composition which made it impervious to the water. These chests were not intended to be unpacked at the end of the journey, but to remain as they were, as permanent storehouses of utensils, clothing, and provisions. They were placed in rows, each on its own cart, near the tent, where they could be resorted to conveniently from time to time by the servants and attendants, as occasion might require. The tent placed in the centre, with these great chests on their carts near it, formed, as it were, a house with one great room standing by itself, and all the little rooms and closets arranged in rows by the side of it.

Necessity of such an arrangement

Some such arrangement as this is obviously necessary in case of a great deal of furniture or baggage belonging to a man who lives in a tent, and who desires to be at liberty to remove his whole establishment from place to place at short notice; for a tent, from the very principle of its construction, is incapable of being divided into rooms, or of accommodating extensive stores of furniture or goods. Of course, a special contrivance is required for the accommodation of this species of property. This was especially the case with the Monguls, among whom there were many rich and great men who often accumulated a large amount of movable property. There was one rich Mongul, it was said,

who had two hundred such chest-carts, which were arranged in two rows around and behind his tent, so that his establishment, when he was encamped, looked like quite a little village.

Houses in the towns

The style of building adopted among the Monguls for tents and movable houses seemed to set the fashion for all their houses, even for those that were built in the towns, and were meant to stand permanently where they were first set up. These permanent houses were little better than tents. They consisted each of one single room without any subdivisions whatever. They were made round, too, like the tents, only the top, instead of running up to a point, was rounded like a dome. There were no floors above that formed on the ground, and no windows.

Roads over the plains

Such was the general character of the dwellings of the Monguls in the days of Genghis Khan. They took their character evidently from the wandering and pastoral life that the people led. One would have thought that very excellent roads would have been necessary to have enabled them to draw the ponderous carts containing their dwellings and household goods. But this was less necessary than might have been supposed on account of the

nature of the country, which consisted chiefly of immense grassy plains and smooth river valleys, over which, in many places, wheels would travel tolerably well in any direction without much making of roadway. Then, again, in all such countries, the people who journey from place to place, and the herds of cattle that move to and fro, naturally fall into the same lines of travel, and thus, in time, wear great trails, as cows make paths in a pasture. These, with a little artificial improvement at certain points, make very good summer roads, and in the winter it is not necessary to use them at all.

Tribes and families

The Monguls, like the ancient Jews, were divided into tribes, and these were subdivided into families; a family meaning in this connection not one household, but a large congeries of households, including all those that were of known relationship to each other. These groups of relatives had each its head, and the tribe to which they pertained had also its general head. There were, it is said, three sets of these tribes, forming three grand divisions of the Mongul people, each of which was ruled by its own khan; and then, to complete the system, there was the grand khan, who ruled over all.

Influence of diversity of pursuits

A constitution of society like this almost always prevails in pastoral countries, and we shall see, on a little reflection, that it is natural that it should do so. In a country like ours, where the pursuits of men are so infinitely diversified, the descendants of different families become mingled together in the most promiscuous manner. The son of a farmer in one state goes off, as soon as he is of age, to some other state, to find a place among merchants or manufacturers, because he wishes to be a merchant or a manufacturer himself, while his father supplies his place on the farm perhaps by hiring a man who likes farming, and has come hundreds of miles in search of work. Thus the descendants of one American grandfather and grandmother will be found, after a lapse of a few years, scattered in every direction all over the land, and, indeed, sometimes all over the world.

It is the diversity of pursuits which prevails in such a country as ours, taken in connection with the diversity of capacity and of taste in different individuals, that produces this dispersion.

Tribes and clans

Among a people devoted wholly to pastoral pursuits, all this is different. The young men, as they grow up, can have generally no

inducement to leave their homes. They continue to live with their parents and relatives, sharing the care of the flocks and herds, and making common cause with them in every thing that is of common interest. It is thus that those great family groups are formed which exist in all pastoral countries under the name of tribes or clans, and form the constituent elements of the whole social and political organization of the people.

Mode of making war

Horsemen

The bow and arrow

In case of general war, each tribe of the Monguls furnished, of course, a certain quota of armed men, in proportion to its numbers and strength. These men always went to war, as has already been said, on horseback, and the spectacle which these troops presented in galloping in squadrons over the plains was sometimes very imposing. The shock of the onset when they charged in this way upon the enemy was tremendous. They were armed with bows and arrows, and also with sabres. As they approached the enemy, they discharged first a shower of arrows

upon him, while they were in the act of advancing at the top of their speed. Then, dropping their bows by their side, they would draw their sabres, and be ready, as soon as the horses fell upon the enemy, to cut down all opposed to them with the most furious and deadly blows.

If they were repulsed, and compelled by a superior force to retreat, they would gallop at full speed over the plains, turning at the same time in their saddles, and shooting at their pursuers with their arrows as coolly, and with as correct an aim, almost, as if they were still. While thus retreating the trooper would guide and control his horse by his voice, and by the pressure of his heels upon his sides, so as to have both his arms free for fighting his pursuers.

These arrows were very formidable weapons, it is said. One of the travelers who visited the country in those days says that they could be shot with so much force as to pierce the body of a man entirely through.

The flying horseman

Nature of the bow and arrow

It must be remembered, however, in respect to all such statements relating to the efficiency of the bow and arrow, that

the force with which an arrow can be thrown depends not upon any independent action of the bow, but altogether upon the strength of the man who draws it. The bow, in straightening itself for the propulsion of the arrow, expends only the force which the man has imparted to it by bending it; so that the real power by which the arrow is propelled is, after all, the muscular strength of the archer. It is true, a great deal depends on the qualities of the bow, and also on the skill of the man in using it, to make all this muscular strength effective. With a poor bow, or with unskillful management, a great deal of it would be wasted. But with the best possible bow, and with the most consummate skill of the archer, it is the strength of the archer's arm which throws the arrow, after all.

Superiority of fire-arms

It is very different in this respect with a bullet thrown by the force of gunpowder from the barrel of a gun. The force in this case is the explosive force of the powder, and the bullet is thrown to the same distance whether it is a very weak man or a very strong man that pulls the trigger.

Gog and Magog

But to return to the Monguls. All the information which we can obtain in respect to the condition of the people before the time of Genghis Khan comes to us from the reports of travelers who, either as merchants, or as embassadors from caliphs or kings, made long journeys into these distant regions, and have left records, more or less complete, of their adventures, and accounts of what they saw, in writings which have been preserved by the learned men of the East. It is very doubtful how far these accounts are to be believed. One of these travelers, a learned man named Salam, who made a journey far into the interior of Asia by order of the Calif Mohammed Amin Billah, some time before the reign of Genghis Khan, says that, among other objects of research and investigation which occupied his mind, he was directed to ascertain the truth in respect to the two famous nations Gog and Magog, or, as they are designated in his account, Yagog and Magog. The story that had been told of these two nations by the Arabian writers, and which was extensively believed, was, that the people of Yagog were of the ordinary size of men, but those of Magog were only about two

feet high. These people had made war upon the neighboring nations, and had destroyed many cities and towns, but had at last been overpowered and shut up in prison.

Salam

Adventures of Salam and his party

Salam, the traveler whom the calif sent to ascertain whether their accounts were true, traveled at the head of a caravan containing fifty men, and with camels bearing stores and provisions for a year. He was gone a long time. When he came back he gave an account of his travels; and in respect to Gog and Magog, he said that he had found that the accounts which had been heard respecting them were true. He traveled on, he said, from the country of one chieftain to another till he reached the Caspian Sea, and then went on beyond that sea for thirty or forty days more. In one place the party came to a tract of low black land, which exhaled an odor so offensive that they were obliged to use perfumes all the way to overpower the noxious smells. They were ten days in crossing this fetid territory. After this they went on a month longer through a desert country, and at length came to a fertile land which was covered with the ruins of cities that the people of Gog and Magog had destroyed.

In six days more they reached the country of the nation by which the people of Gog and Magog had been conquered and shut up in prison. Here they found a great many strong castles. There was a large city here too, containing temples and academies of learning, and also the residence of the king.

The wonderful mountain

Great bolts and bars

The travelers took up their abode in this city for a time, and while they were there they made an excursion of two days' journey into the country to see the place where the people of Gog and Magog were confined. When they arrived at the place they found a lofty mountain. There was a great opening made in the face of this mountain two or three hundred feet wide. The opening was protected on each side by enormous buttresses, between which was placed an immense double gate, the buttresses and the gate being all of iron. The buttresses were surmounted with an iron bulwark, and with lofty towers also of iron, which were carried up as high as to the top of the mountain itself. The gates were of the width of the opening cut in the mountain, and were seventy-five feet high; and the valves, lintels, and threshold, and also the bolts, the lock, and the key, were all

of proportional size.

The prisoners

Salam, on arriving at the place, saw all these wonderful structures with his own eyes, and he was told by the people there that it was the custom of the governor of the castles already mentioned to take horse every Friday with ten others, and, coming to the gate, to strike the great bolt three times with a ponderous hammer weighing five pounds, when there would be heard a murmuring noise within, which were the groans of the Yagog and Magog people confined in the mountain. Indeed, Salam was told that the poor captives often appeared on the battlements above. Thus the real existence of this people was, in his opinion, fully proved; and even the story in respect to the diminutive size of the Magogs was substantiated, for Salam was told that once, in a high wind, three of them were blown off from the battlements to the ground, and that, on being measured, they were found but three spans high.

Travelers' tales

Progress of intelligence

This is a specimen of the tales brought home from remote countries by the most learned and accomplished travelers of those times. In comparing these absurd and ridiculous tales with the reports which are brought back from distant regions in our days by such travelers as Humboldt, Livingstone, and Kane, we shall perceive what an immense progress in intelligence and information the human mind has made since those days.

Chapter III
Yezonkai Khan

1163-1175

Yezonkai Behadr

The name of the father of Genghis Khan is a word which can not be pronounced exactly in English. It sounded something like this, *Yezonkai Behadr*, with the accent on the last syllable, Behadr, and the *a* sounded like *a* in *hark*. This is as near as we can come to it; but the name, as it was really pronounced by the Mongul people, can not be written in English letters nor spoken with English sounds.

Orthography of Mongul names

Indeed, in all languages so entirely distinct from each other as the Mongul language was from ours, the sounds are different, and the letters by which the sounds are represented are different too. Some of the sounds are so utterly unlike any sounds that we

have in English that it is as impossible to write them in English characters as it is for us to write in English letters the sound that a man makes when he chirps to his horse or his dog, or when he whistles. Sometimes writers attempt to represent the latter sound by the word *whew*; and when, in reading a dialogue, we come to the word whew, inserted to express a part of what one of the speakers uttered, we understand by it that he whistled; but how different, after all, is the sound of the spoken word *whew* from the whistling sound that it is intended to represent!

Great diversities

Now, in all the languages of Asia, there are many sounds as impossible to be rendered by the European letters as this, and in making the attempt every different writer falls into a different mode. Thus the first name of Genghis Khan's father is spelled by different travelers and historians, Yezonkai, Yesukay, Yessuki, Yesughi, Bissukay, Bisukay, Pisukay, and in several other ways. The real sound was undoubtedly as different from any of these as they were all different from each other. In this narrative I shall adopt the first of these methods, and call him Yezonkai Behadr.

Yezonkai's power

A successful warrior

Yezonkai was a great khan, and he descended in a direct line through ten generations, so it was said, from a deity. Great sovereigns in those countries and times were very fond of tracing back their descent to some divine origin, by way of establishing more fully in the minds of the people their divine right to the throne. Yezonkai's residence was at a great palace in the country, called by a name, the sound of which, as nearly as it can be represented in English letters, was *Diloneldak*. From this, his capital, he used to make warlike excursions at the head of hordes of Monguls into the surrounding countries, in the prosecution of quarrels which he made with them under various pretexts; and as he was a skillful commander, and had great influence in inducing all the inferior khans to bring large troops of men from their various tribes to add to his army, he was usually victorious, and in this way he extended his empire very considerably while he lived, and thus made a very good preparation for the subsequent exploits of his son.

Katay

The northern part of China was at that time entirely separated from the southern part, and was under a different government. It constituted an entirely distinct country, and was called Katay.[1] This country was under the dominion of a chieftain called the Khan of Katay. This khan was very jealous of the increasing power of Yezonkai, and took part against him in all his wars with the tribes around him, and assisted them in their attempts to resist him; but he did not succeed. Yezonkai was too powerful for them, and went on extending his conquests far and wide.

At last, under the pretense of some affront which he had received from them, Yezonkai made war upon a powerful tribe of Tartars that lived in his neighborhood. He invaded their territories at the head of an immense horde of Mongul troops, and began seizing and driving off their cattle.

[1] Spelled variously Kathay, Katay, Kitay, and in other ways.

The Khan of Temujin

Mongol custom

Birth of Genghis Khan

The name of the khan who ruled over these people was Temujin. Temujin assembled his forces as soon as he could, and went to meet the invaders. A great battle was fought, and Yezonkai was victorious. Temujin was defeated and put to flight. Yezonkai encamped after the battle on the banks of the River Amoor, near a mountain. He had all his family with him, for it was often the custom, in these enterprises, for the chieftain to take with him not only all his household, but a large portion of his household goods. Yezonkai had several wives, and almost immediately after the battle, one of them, named Olan Ayka, gave birth to a son. Yezonkai, fresh from the battle, determined to commemorate his victory by giving his new-born son the name of his vanquished enemy. So he named him Temujin.[2] His birth took place, as nearly as can now be ascertained, in the year of our Lord 1163.

[2] The name is intended to be pronounced *Tim-oo-zhin*.

Such were the circumstances of our hero's birth, for it was this Temujin who afterward became renowned throughout all Asia under the name of Genghis Khan. Through all the early part of his life, however, he was always known by the name which his father gave him in the tent by the river side where he was born.

Predictions of the astrologer

Among the other grand personages in Yezonkai's train at this time, there was a certain old astrologer named Sugujin. He was a relative of Yezonkai, and also his principal minister of state. This man, by his skill in astrology, which he applied to the peculiar circumstances of the child, foretold for him at once a wonderful career. He would grow up, the astrologer said, to be a great warrior. He would conquer all his enemies, and extend his conquests so far that he would, in the end, become the Khan of all Tartary. Young Temujin's parents were, of course, greatly pleased with these predictions, and when, not long after this time, the astrologer died, they appointed his son, whose name was Karasher, to be the guardian and instructor of the boy. They trusted, it seems, to the son to give the young prince such a training in early life as should prepare him to realize the grand destiny which the father had foretold for him.

Explanation of the predictions

There would be something remarkable in the fact that these predictions were uttered at the birth of Genghis Khan, since they were afterward so completely fulfilled, were it not that similar prognostications of greatness and glory were almost always offered to the fathers and mothers of young princes in those days by the astrologers and soothsayers of their courts. Such promises were, of course, very flattering to these parents at the time, and brought those who made them into great favor. Then, in the end, if the result verified them, they were remembered and recorded as something wonderful; if not, they were forgotten.

Karasher

Education of Temujin

Karasher, the astrologer's son, who had been appointed young Temujin's tutor, took his pupil under his charge, and began to form plans for educating him. Karasher was a man of great talents and of considerable attainments in learning, so far as there could be any thing like learning in such a country and among such a people. He taught him the names of the various tribes that lived

in the countries around, and the names of the principal chieftains that ruled over them. He also gave him such information as he possessed in respect to the countries themselves, describing the situation of the mountains, the lakes, and the rivers, and the great deserts which here and there intervened between the fertile regions. He taught him, moreover, to ride, and trained him in all such athletic exercises as were practiced by the youth of those times. He instructed him also in the use of arms, teaching him how to shoot with a bow and arrow, and how to hold and handle his sabre, both when on horseback and when on foot. He particularly instructed him in the art of shooting his arrow in any direction when riding at a gallop upon his horse, behind as well as before, and to the right side as well as to the left. To do this coolly, skillfully, and with a true aim, required great practice as well as much courage and presence of mind.

His precocity

Young Temujin entered into all these things with great spirit. Indeed, he very soon ceased to feel any interest in any thing else, so that by the time that he was nine years of age it was said that he thought of nothing but exercising himself in the use of arms.

His early marriage

Nine years of age, however, with him was more than it would be with a young man among us, for the Asiatics arrive at maturity much earlier than the nations of Western Europe and America. Indeed, by the time that Temujin was thirteen years old, his father considered him a man – at least he considered him old enough to be married. He was married, in fact, and had two children before he was fifteen, if the accounts which the historians have given us respecting him are true.

Just before Temujin was thirteen, his father, in one of his campaigns in Katay, was defeated in a battle, and, although a great many of his followers escaped, he himself was surrounded and overpowered by the horsemen of the enemy, and was made prisoner. He was put under the care of a guard; for, of course, among people living almost altogether on horseback and in tents, there could be very few prisons. Yezonkai followed the camp of his conqueror for some time under the custody of his guard; but at length he succeeded in bribing his keeper to let him escape, and so contrived, after encountering many difficulties and suffering many hardships, to make his way back to his own country.

Plans of Temujin's father

Karizu

Tayian

He was determined now to make a new incursion into Katay, and that with a larger force than he had had before. So he made an alliance with the chieftain of a neighboring tribe, called the Naymans; and, in order to seal and establish this alliance, he contracted that his son should marry the daughter of his ally. This was the time when Temujin was but thirteen years old. The name of this his first wife was Karizu – at least that was one of her names. Her father's name was Tayian.

Death of Yezonkai

Before Yezonkai had time to mature his plans for his new invasion of Katay, he fell sick and died. He left five sons and a daughter, it is said; but Temujin seems to have been the oldest of them all, for by his will his father left his kingdom, if the command of the group of tribes which were under his sway can

be called a kingdom, to him, notwithstanding that he was yet only thirteen years old.

Chapter IV
The First Battle

1175

In the language of the Monguls and of their neighbors the Tartars, a collection of tribes banded together under one chieftain was designated by a name which sounded like the word *orda*. This is the origin, it is said, of the English word *horde*.

Temujin's accession

Discontent

The orda over which Yezonkai had ruled, and the command of which, at his death, he left to his son, consisted of a great number of separate tribes, each of which had its own particular chieftain. All these subordinate chieftains were content to be under Yezonkai's rule and leadership while he lived. He was competent, they thought, to direct their movements and to lead them into battle against their enemies. But when he died,

leaving only a young man thirteen years of age to succeed him, several of them were disposed to rebel. There were two of them, in particular, who thought that they were themselves better qualified to reign over the nation than such a boy; so they formed an alliance with each other, and with such other tribes as were disposed to join them, and advanced to make war upon Temujin at the head of a great number of squadrons of troops, amounting in all to thirty thousand men.

Taychot and Chamuka

The names of the two leaders of this rebellion were Taychot and Chamuka.

Young Temujin depended chiefly on his mother for guidance and direction in this emergency. He was himself very brave and spirited; but bravery and spirit, though they are of such vital importance in a commander on the field of battle, when the contest actually comes on, are by no means the principal qualities that are required in making the preliminary arrangements.

Arrangements for the battle

Accordingly, Temujin left the forming of the plans to his mother, while he thought only of his horses, of his arms and equipments, and of the fury with which he would gallop in

among the enemy when the time should arrive for the battle to begin. His mother, in connection with the chief officers of the army and counselors of state who were around her, and on whom her husband Yezonkai, during his lifetime, had been most accustomed to rely, arranged all the plans. They sent off messengers to the heads of all the tribes that they supposed would be friendly to Temujin, and appointed places of rendezvous for the troops that they were to send. They made arrangements for the stores of provisions which would be required, settled questions of precedence among the different clans, regulated the order of march, and attended to all other necessary details.

Temujin's ardor

In the mean time, Temujin thought only of the approaching battle. He was engaged continually in riding up and down upon spirited horses, and shooting in all directions, backward and forward, and both to the right side and to the left, with his bow and arrow. Nor was all this exhibition of ardor on his part a mere useless display. It had great influence in awakening a corresponding ardor among the chieftains of the troops, and among the troops themselves. They felt proud of the spirit and energy which their young prince displayed, and were more and more resolved to exert themselves to the utmost in defending his cause.

Porgie

There was another young prince, of the name of Porgie, of about Temujin's age, who was also full of ardor for the fight. He was the chieftain of one of the tribes that remained faithful to Temujin, and he was equally earnest with Temujin for the battle to begin.

Exaggerated statements

At length the troops were ready, and, with Temujin and his mother at the head of them, they went forth to attack the rebels. The rebels were ready to receive them. They were thirty thousand strong, according to the statements of the historians. This number is probably exaggerated, as all numbers were in those days, when there was no regular enrollment of troops and no strict system of enumeration.

The battle

At any rate, there was a very great battle. Immense troops of horsemen coming at full speed in opposite directions shot showers of arrows at each other when they arrived at the proper distance for the arrows to take effect, and then, throwing down

their bows and drawing their sabres, rushed madly on, until they came together with an awful shock, the dreadful confusion and terror of which no person can describe. The air was filled with the most terrific outcries, in which yells of fury, shrieks of agony, and shouts of triumph were equally mingled. Some of the troops maintained their position through the shock, and rode on, bearing down all before them. Others were overthrown and trampled in the dust; while all, both those who were up and those who were down, were cutting in every direction with their sabres, killing men and inciting the horses to redoubled fury by the wounds which they gave them.

Bravery of Temujin and Porgie

In the midst of such scenes as these Temujin and Porgie fought furiously with the rest. Temujin distinguished himself greatly. It is probable that those who were immediately around him felt that he was under their charge, and that they must do all in their power to protect him from danger. This they could do much more easily and effectually under the mode of fighting which prevailed in those days than would be possible now, when gunpowder is the principal agent of destruction. Temujin's attendants and followers could gather around him and defend him from assailants. They could prevent him from charging any squadron which was likely to be strong enough to overpower him, and they could keep his enemies so much at bay that they could

not reach him with their sabres. But upon a modern field of battle there is much less opportunity to protect a young prince or general's son, or other personage whose life may be considered as peculiarly valuable. No precautions of his attendants can prevent a bomb's bursting at his feet, or shield him from the rifle balls that come whistling from such great distances through the air.

Influence of Temujin's example

Taychot slain

The victory

At any rate, whether protected by his attendants or only by the fortune of war, Temujin passed through the battle without being hurt, and the courage and energy which he displayed were greatly commended by all who witnessed them. His mother was in the battle too, though, perhaps, not personally involved in the actual conflicts of it. She directed the manœuvres, however, and by her presence and her activity greatly encouraged and animated the men. In consequence of the spirit and energy infused into the troops by her presence, and by the extraordinary ardor and bravery of Temujin, the battle was gained. The army of the

enemy was put to flight. One of the leaders, Taychot, was slain. The other made his escape, and Temujin and his mother were left in possession of the field.

Rewards and honors

Of course, after having fought with so much energy and effect on such a field, Temujin was now no longer considered as a boy, but took his place at once as a man among men, and was immediately recognized by all the army as their prince and sovereign, and as fully entitled, by his capacity if not by his years, to rule in his own name. He assumed and exercised his powers with as much calmness and self-possession as if he had been accustomed to them for many years. He made addresses to his officers and soldiers, and distributed honors and rewards to them with a combined majesty and grace which, in their opinion, denoted much grandeur of soul. The rewards and honors were characteristic of the customs of the country and the times. They consisted of horses, arms, splendid articles of dress, and personal ornaments. Of course, among a people who lived, as it were, always on horseback, such objects as these were the ones most highly prized.

Temujin's rising fame

The consequence of this victory was, that nearly the whole country occupied by the rebels submitted without any farther resistance to Temujin's sway. Other tribes, who lived on the borders of his dominions, sent in to propose treaties of alliance. The khan of one of these tribes demanded of Temujin the hand of his sister in marriage to seal and confirm the alliance which he proposed to make. In a word, the fame of Temujin's prowess spread rapidly after the battle over all the surrounding countries, and high anticipations began to be formed of the greatness and glory of his reign.

His second wife

In the course of the next year Temujin was married to his second wife, although he was at this time only fourteen years old. The name of his bride was Purta Kugin. By this wife, who was probably of about his own age, he had a daughter, who was born before the close of the year after the marriage.

Purta carried away captive

Customary present

In his journeys about the country Temujin sometimes took his wives with him, and sometimes he left them temporarily in some place of supposed security. Toward the end of the second year Purta was again about to become a mother, and Temujin, who at that time had occasion to go off on some military expedition, fearing that the fatigue and exposure would be more than she could well bear, left her at home. While he was gone a troop of horsemen, from a tribe of his enemies, came suddenly into the district on a marauding expedition. They overpowered the troops Temujin had left to guard the place, and seized and carried off every thing that they could find that was valuable. They made prisoner of Purta, too, and carried her away a captive. The plunder they divided among themselves, but Purta they sent as a present to a certain khan who reigned over a neighboring country, and whose favor they wished to secure. The name of this chieftain was Vang Khan. As this Vang Khan figures somewhat conspicuously in the subsequent history of Temujin, a full account of him will be given in the next chapter. All that is necessary to say here is, that the intention of the captors of

Purta, in sending her to him as a present, was that he should make her his wife. It was the custom of these khans to have as many wives as they could obtain, so that when prisoners of high rank were taken in war, if there were any young and beautiful women among them, they were considered as charming presents to send to any great prince or potentate near, whom the captors were desirous of pleasing. It made no difference, in such cases, whether the person who was to receive the present were young or old. Sometimes the older he was the more highly he would prize such a gift.

Vang Khan, it happened, was old. He was old enough to be Temujin's father. Indeed, he had been in the habit of calling Temujin his son. He had been in alliance with Yezonkai, Temujin's father, some years before, when Temujin was quite a boy, and it was at that time that he began to call him his son.

Purta and Vang Khan

Accordingly, when Purta was brought to him by the messengers who had been sent in charge of her, and presented to him in his tent, he said,

"She is very beautiful, but I can not take her for my wife, for she is the wife of my son. I can not marry the wife of my son."

Vang Khan, however, received Purta under his charge, gave her a place in his household, and took good care of her.

Purta's return

Birth of her child

When Temujin returned home from his expedition, and learned what had happened during his absence, he was greatly distressed at the loss of his wife. Not long afterward he ascertained where she was, and he immediately sent a deputation to Vang Khan asking him to send her home. With this request Vang Khan immediately complied, and Purta set out on her return. She was stopped on the way, however, by the birth of her child. It was a son. As soon as the child was born it was determined to continue the journey, for there was danger, if they delayed, that some new troop of enemies might come up, in which case Purta would perhaps be made captive again. So Purta, it is said, wrapped up the tender limbs of the infant in some sort of paste or dough, to save them from the effects of the jolting produced by the rough sort of cart in which she was compelled to ride, and in that condition she held the babe in her lap all the way home.

Jughi

She arrived at her husband's residence in safety. Temujin was overjoyed at seeing her again; and he was particularly pleased with his little son, who came out of his packing safe and sound. In commemoration of his safe arrival after so strange and dangerous a journey, his father named him Safe-arrived; that is, he gave him for a name the word in their language that means that. The word itself was Jughi.

Temujin's wonderful dream

The commencement of Temujin's career was thus, on the whole, quite prosperous, and every thing seemed to promise well. He was himself full of ambition and of hope, and began to feel dissatisfied with the empire which his father had left him, and to form plans for extending it. He dreamed one night that his arms grew out to an enormous length, and that he took a sword in each of them, and stretched them out to see how far they would reach, pointing one to the eastward and the other to the westward. In the morning he related his dream to his mother. She interpreted it to him. She told him it meant undoubtedly that he was destined to become a great conqueror, and that the directions in which his kingdom would be extended were toward the eastward and

toward the westward.

Disaffection among his subjects

A rebellion

Temujin continued for about two years after this in prosperity, and then his good fortune began to wane. There came a reaction. Some of the tribes under his dominion began to grow discontented. The subordinate khans began to form plots and conspiracies. Even his own tribe turned against him. Rebellions broke out in various parts of his dominions; and he was obliged to make many hurried expeditions here and there, and to fight many desperate battles to suppress them. In one of these contests he was taken prisoner. He, however, contrived to make his escape. He then made proposals to the disaffected khans, which he hoped would satisfy them, and bring them once more to submit to him, since what he thus offered to do in these proposals was pretty much all that they had professed to require. But the proposals did not satisfy them. What they really intended to do was to depose Temujin altogether, and then either divide his dominions among themselves, or select some one of their number to reign in his stead.

Temujin discouraged

At last, Temujin, finding that he could not pacify his enemies, and that they were, moreover, growing stronger every day, while those that adhered to him were growing fewer in numbers and diminishing in strength, became discouraged. He began to think that perhaps he really was too young to rule over a kingdom composed of wandering hordes of men so warlike and wild, and he concluded for a time to give up the attempt, and wait until times should change, or, at least, until he should be grown somewhat older. Accordingly, in conjunction with his mother, he formed a plan for retiring temporarily from the field; unless, indeed, as we might reasonably suspect, his mother formed the plan herself, and by her influence over him induced him to adopt it.

Temujin plans a temporary abdication

The plan was this: that Temujin should send an embassador to the court of Vang Khan to ask Vang Khan to receive him, and protect him for a time in his dominions, until the affairs of his own kingdom should become settled. Then, if Vang Khan should accede to this proposal, Temujin was to appoint his uncle to act as regent during his absence. His mother, too, was to be married

to a certain emir, or prince, named Menglik, who was to be made prime minister under the regent, and was to take precedence of all the other princes or khans in the kingdom. The government was to be managed by the regent and the minister until such time as it should be deemed expedient for Temujin to return.

Arrangement of a regency

Temujin's departure

This plan was carried into effect. Vang Khan readily consented to receive Temujin into his dominions, and to protect him there. He was very ready to do this, he said, on account of the friendship which he had borne for Temujin's father. Temujin's mother was married to the emir, and the emir was made the first prince of the realm. Finally, Temujin's uncle was proclaimed regent, and duly invested with all necessary authority for governing the country until Temujin's return. These things being all satisfactorily arranged, Temujin set out for the country of Vang Khan at the head of an armed escort, to protect him on the way, of six thousand men. He took with him all his family, and a considerable suite of servants and attendants. Among them was his old tutor and guardian Karasher, the person who had been appointed by his father to take charge of him, and to teach

and train him when he was a boy.

Being protected by so powerful an escort, Temujin's party were not molested on their journey, and they all arrived safely at the court of Vang Khan.

Chapter V
Vang Khan

1175

Karakatay

Vang Khan's dominions

The country over which Vang Khan ruled was called Karakatay. It bordered upon the country of Katay, which has already been mentioned as forming the northern part of what is now China. Indeed, as its name imports, it was considered in some sense as a portion of the same general district of country. It was that part of Katay which was inhabited by Tartars.

Vang Khan's name at first was Togrul. The name Vang Khan, which was, in fact, a title rather than a name, was given him long afterward, when he had attained to the height of his power. To avoid confusion, however, we shall drop the name Togrul, and call him Vang Khan from the beginning.

The cruel fate of Mergus

Vang Khan was descended from a powerful line of khans who had reigned over Karakatay for many generations. These khans were a wild and lawless race of men, continually fighting with each other, both for mastery, and also for the plunder of each other's flocks and herds. In this way most furious and cruel wars were often fought between near relatives. Vang Khan's grandfather, whose name was Mergus, was taken prisoner in one of these quarrels by another khan, who, though he was a relative, was so much exasperated by something that Mergus had done that he sent him away to a great distance to the king of a certain country which is called Kurga, to be disposed of there. The King of Kurga put him into a sack, sewed up the mouth of it, and then laid him across the wooden image of an ass, and left him there to die of hunger and suffocation.

His wife's stratagem

The wife of Mergus was greatly enraged when she heard of the cruel fate of her husband. She determined to be revenged. It seems that the relative of her husband who had taken him prisoner, and had sent him to the King of Kurga, had been her lover in former times before her marriage; so she sent him a

message, in which she dissembled her grief for the loss of her husband, and only blamed the King of Kurga for his cruel death, and then said that she had long felt an affection for him, and that, if he continued of the same mind as when he had formally addressed her, she was now willing to become his wife, and offered, if he would come to a certain place, which she specified, to meet her, she would join him there.

Nawr

He falls into the snare

Nawr, for that was the chieftain's name, fell at once into the snare which the beautiful widow thus laid for him. He immediately accepted her proposals, and proceeded to the place of rendezvous. He went, of course, attended by a suitable guard, though his guard was small, and consisted chiefly of friends and personal attendants. The princess was attended also by a guard, not large enough, however, to excite any suspicion. She also took with her in her train a large number of carts, which were to be drawn by bullocks, and which were laden with stores of provisions, clothing, and other such valuables, intended as a present for her new husband. Among these, however, there were a large number of great barrels, or rounded receptacles of some

sort, in which she had concealed a considerable force of armed men. These receptacles were so arranged that the men concealed in them could open them from within in an instant, at a given signal, and issue forth suddenly all armed and ready for action.

Armed men in ambuscade

Death of Nawr

Among the other stores which the princess had provided, there was a large supply of a certain intoxicating drink which the Monguls and Tartars were accustomed to make in those days. As soon as the two parties met at the place of rendezvous the princess gave Nawr a very cordial greeting, and invited him and all his party to a feast, to be partaken on the spot. The invitation was accepted, the stores of provisions were opened, and many of the presents were unpacked and displayed. At the feast Nawr and his party were all supplied abundantly with the intoxicating liquor, which, as is usual in such cases, they were easily led to drink to excess; while, on the other hand, the princess's party, who knew what was coming, took good care to keep themselves sober. At length, when the proper moment arrived, the princess made the signal. In an instant the men who had been placed in ambuscade in the barrels burst forth from their concealment

and rushed upon the guests at the feast. The princess herself, who was all ready for action, drew a dagger from her girdle and stabbed Nawr to the heart. Her guards, assisted by the re-enforcement which had so suddenly appeared, slew or secured all his attendants, who were so totally incapacitated, partly by the drink which they had taken, and partly by their astonishment at the sudden appearance of so overwhelming a force, that they were incapable of making any resistance.

The princess, having thus accomplished her revenge, marshaled her men, packed up her pretended presents, and returned in triumph home.

Credibility of these tales

Early life of Vang Khan

Reception of Temujin

Such stories as these, related by the Asiatic writers, though they were probably often much embellished in the narration, had doubtless all some foundation in fact, and they give us some faint idea of the modes of life and action which prevailed among these half-savage chieftains in those times. Vang Khan himself

was the grandson of Mergus, who was sewed up in the sack. His father was the oldest son of the princess who contrived the above-narrated stratagem to revenge her husband's death. It is said that he used to accompany his father to the wars when he was only ten years old. The way in which he formed his friendship for Yezonkai, and the alliance with him which led him to call Temujin his son and to refuse to take his wife away from him, as already related, was this: When his father died he succeeded to the command, being the oldest son; but the others were jealous of him, and after many and long quarrels with them and with other relatives, especially with his uncle, who seemed to take the lead against him, he was at last overpowered or outmanœuvred, and was obliged to fly. He took refuge, in his distress, in the country of Yezonkai. Yezonkai received him in a very friendly manner, and gave him effectual protection. After a time he furnished him with troops, and helped him to recover his kingdom, and to drive his uncle away into banishment in his turn. It was while he was thus in Yezonkai's dominions that he became acquainted with Temujin, who was then very small, and it was there that he learned to call him his son. Of course, now that Temujin was obliged to fly himself from his native country and abandon his hereditary dominions, as he had done before, he was glad of the opportunity of requiting to the son the favor which he had received, in precisely similar circumstances, from the father, and so he gave Temujin a very kind reception.

Prester John

His letter to the King of France

There is another circumstance which is somewhat curious in respect to Vang Khan, and that is, that he is generally supposed to be the prince whose fame was about this period spread all over Europe, under the name of Prester John, by the Christian missionaries in Asia. These missionaries sent to the Pope, and to various Christian kings in Europe, very exaggerated accounts of the success of their missions among the Persians, Turks, and Tartars; and at last they wrote word that the great Khan of the Tartars had become a convert, and had even become a preacher of the Gospel, and had taken the name of Prester John. The word *prester* was understood to be a corruption of presbyter. A great deal was accordingly written and said all through Christendom about the great Tartar convert, Prester John. There were several letters forwarded by the missionaries, professedly from him, and addressed to the Pope and to the different kings of Europe. Some of these letters, it is said, are still in existence. One of them was to the King of France. In this letter the writer tells the King of France of his great wealth and of the vastness of his dominions. He says he has seventy kings to serve and wait upon him. He

invites the King of France to come and see him, promising to bestow a great kingdom upon him if he will, and also to make him his heir and leave all his dominions to him when he dies; with a great deal more of the same general character.

Other letters

The other letters were much the same, and the interest which they naturally excited was increased by the accounts which the missionaries gave of the greatness and renown of this more than royal convert, and of the progress which Christianity had made and was still making in his dominions through their instrumentality.

The probable truth

It is supposed, in modern times, that these stories were pretty much all inventions on the part of the missionaries, or, at least, that the accounts which they sent were greatly exaggerated and embellished; and there is but little doubt that they had much more to do with the authorship of the letters than any khan. Still, however, it is supposed that there was a great prince who at least encouraged the missionaries in their work, and allowed them to preach Christianity in his dominions, and, if so, there is little doubt that Vang Khan was the man.

At all events, he was a very great and powerful prince, and he reigned over a wide extent of country. The name of his capital was Karakorom. The distance which Temujin had to travel to reach this city was about ten days' journey.

Temujin and Vang Khan

He was received by Vang Khan with great marks of kindness and consideration. Vang Khan promised to protect him, and, in due time, to assist him in recovering his kingdom. In the mean while Temujin promised to enter at once into Vang Khan's service, and to devote himself faithfully to promoting the interests of his kind protector by every means in his power.

Chapter VI
Temujin in Exile

1182

Temujin's popularity

Vang Khan gave Temujin a very honorable position in his court. It was natural that he should do so, for Temujin was a prince in the prime of his youth, and of very attractive person and manners; and, though he was for the present an exile, as it were, from his native land, he was not by any means in a destitute or hopeless condition. His family and friends were still in the ascendency at home, and he himself, in coming to the kingdom of Vang Khan, had brought with him quite an important body of troops. Being, at the same time, personally possessed of great courage and of much military skill, he was prepared to render his protector good service in return for his protection. In a word, the arrival of Temujin at the court of Vang Khan was an event calculated to make quite a sensation.

Rivals and enemies appear

Plots

At first every body was very much pleased with him, and he was very popular; but before long the other young princes of the court, and the chieftains of the neighboring tribes, began to be jealous of him. Vang Khan gave him precedence over them all, partly on account of his personal attachment to him, and partly on account of the rank which he held in his own country, which, being that of a sovereign prince, naturally entitled him to the very highest position among the subordinate chieftains in the retinue of Vang Khan. But these subordinate chieftains were not satisfied. They murmured, at first secretly, and afterward more openly, and soon began to form combinations and plots against the new favorite, as they called him.

Yemuka

Wisulujine

An incident soon occurred which greatly increased this

animosity, and gave to Temujin's enemies, all at once, a very powerful leader and head. This leader was a very influential chieftain named Yemuka. This Yemuka, it seems, was in love with the daughter of Vang Khan, the Princess Wisulujine. He asked her in marriage of her father. To precisely what state of forwardness the negotiations had advanced does not appear, but, at any rate, when Temujin arrived, Wisulujine soon began to turn her thoughts toward him. He was undoubtedly younger, handsomer, and more accomplished than her old lover, and before long she gave her father to understand that she would much rather have him for her husband than Yemuka. It is true, Temujin had one or two wives already; but this made no difference, for it was the custom then, as, indeed, it is still, for the Asiatic princes and chieftains to take as many wives as their wealth and position would enable them to maintain. Yemuka was accordingly refused, and Wisulujine was given in marriage to Temujin.

Yemuka's disappointment

His rage

Conspiracy formed

Yemuka was, of course, dreadfully enraged. He vowed that he would be revenged. He immediately began to intrigue with all the discontented persons and parties in the kingdom, not only with those who were envious and jealous of Temujin, but also with all those who, for any reason, were disposed to put themselves in opposition to Vang Khan's government. Thus a formidable conspiracy was formed for the purpose of compassing Temujin's ruin.

The conspirators first tried the effect of private remonstrances with Vang Khan, in which they made all sorts of evil representations against Temujin, but to no effect. Temujin rallied about him so many old friends, and made so many new friends by his courage and energy, that his party at court proved stronger than that of his enemies, and, for a time, they seemed likely to fail entirely of their design.

Progress of the league

At length the conspirators opened communication with the foreign enemies of Vang Khan, and formed a league with them to make war against and destroy both Vang Khan and Temujin together. The accounts of the progress of this league, and of the different nations and tribes which took part in it, is imperfect and confused; but at length, after various preliminary contests and manœuvres, arrangements were made for assembling a large army with a view of invading Vang Khan's dominions and deciding the question by a battle. The different chieftains and khans whose troops were united to form this army bound themselves together by a solemn oath, according to the customs of those times, not to rest until both Vang Khan and Temujin should be destroyed.

Oath of the conspirators

The manner in which they took the oath was this: They brought out into an open space on the plain where they had assembled to take the oath, a horse, a wild ox, and a dog. At a given signal they fell upon these animals with their swords, and cut them all to pieces in the most furious manner. When they had finished, they stood together and called out aloud in the following

words:

The oath

"Hear! O God! O heaven! O earth! the oath that we swear against Vang Khan and Temujin. If any one of us spares them when we have them in our power, or if we fail to keep the promise that we have made to destroy them, may we meet with the same fate that has befallen these beasts that we have now cut to pieces."

They uttered this imprecation in a very solemn manner, standing among the mangled and bloody remains of the beasts which lay strewed all about the ground.

Karakorom

Plan formed by Temujin

The campaign

These preparations had been made thus far very secretly; but tidings of what was going on came, before a great while, to Karakorom, Vang Khan's capital. Temujin was greatly excited when he heard the news. He immediately proposed that he should

take his own troops, and join with them as many of Vang Khan's soldiers as could be conveniently spared, and go forth to meet the enemy. To this Vang Khan consented. Temujin took one half of Vang Khan's troops to join his own, leaving the other half to protect the capital, and so set forth on his expedition. He went off in the direction toward the frontier where he had understood the principal part of the hostile forces were assembling. After a long march, probably one of many days, he arrived there before the enemy was quite prepared for him. Then followed a series of manœuvres and counter-manœuvres, in which Temujin was all the time endeavoring to bring the rebels to battle, while they were doing all in their power to avoid it. Their object in this delay was to gain time for re-enforcements to come in, consisting of bodies of troops belonging to certain members of the league who had not yet arrived.

Unexpected arrival of Vang Khan

His story

At length, when these manœuvres were brought to an end, and the battle was about to be fought, Temujin and his whole army were one day greatly surprised to see his father-in-law, Vang Khan himself, coming into the camp at the head of a small and

forlorn-looking band of followers, who had all the appearance of fugitives escaped from a battle. They looked anxious, way-worn, and exhausted, and the horses that they rode seemed wholly spent with fatigue and privation. On explanation, Temujin learned that, as soon as it was known that he had left the capital, and taken with him a large part of the army, a certain tribe of Vang Khan's enemies, living in another direction, had determined to seize the opportunity to invade his dominions, and had accordingly come suddenly in, with an immense horde, to attack the capital. Vang Khan had done all that he could to defend the city, but he had been overpowered. The greater part of his soldiers had been killed or wounded. The city had been taken and pillaged. His son, with those of the troops that had been able to save themselves, had escaped to the mountains. As to Vang Khan himself, he had thought it best to make his way, as soon as possible, to the camp of Temujin, where he had now arrived, after enduring great hardships and sufferings on the way.

Temujin's promises

Temujin was at first much amazed at hearing this story. He, however, bade his father-in-law not to be cast down or discouraged, and promised him full revenge, and a complete triumph over all his enemies at the coming battle. So he proceeded at once to complete his arrangements for the coming fight. He resigned to Vang Khan the command of the main body

of the army, while he placed himself at the head of one of the wings, assigning the other to the chieftain next in rank in his army. In this order he went into battle.

Result of the battle

Temujin victorious

The battle was a very obstinate and bloody one, but, in the end, Temujin's party was victorious. The troops opposed to him were defeated and driven off the field. The victory appeared to be due altogether to Temujin himself; for, after the struggle had continued a long time, and the result still appeared doubtful, the troops of Temujin's wing finally made a desperate charge, and forced their way with such fury into the midst of the forces of the enemy that nothing could withstand them. This encouraged and animated the other troops to such a degree that very soon the enemy were entirely routed and driven from off the field.

State of things at Karakorom

Erkekara

The effect of this victory was to raise the reputation of Temujin as a military commander higher than ever, and greatly to increase the confidence which Vang Khan was inclined to repose in him. The victory, too, seemed at first to have well-nigh broken up the party of the rebels. Still, the way was not yet open for Vang Khan to return and take possession of his throne and of his capital, for he learned that one of his brothers had assumed the government, and was reigning in Karakorom in his place. It would seem that this brother, whose name was Erkekara, had been one of the leaders of the party opposed to Temujin. It was natural that he should be so; for, being the brother of the king, he would, of course, occupy a very high position in the court, and would be one of the first to experience the ill effects produced by the coming in of any new favorite. He had accordingly joined in the plots that were formed against Temujin and Vang Khan. Indeed, he was considered, in some respects, as the head of their party, and when Vang Khan was driven away from his capital, this brother assumed the throne in his stead. The question was, how could he now be dispossessed and Vang Khan restored.

Preparations for the final conflict

Erkekara vanquished

Vang Khan restored

Temujin began immediately to form his plans for the accomplishment of this purpose. He concentrated his forces after the battle, and soon afterward opened negotiations with other tribes, who had before been uncertain which side to espouse, but were now assisted a great deal in coming to a decision by the victory which Temujin had obtained. In the mean time the rebels were not idle. They banded themselves together anew, and made great exertions to procure re-enforcements. Erkekara fortified himself as strongly as possible in Karakorom, and collected ample supplies of ammunition and military stores. It was not until the following year that the parties had completed their preparations and were prepared for the final struggle. Then, however, another great battle was fought, and again Temujin was victorious. Erkekara was killed or driven away in his turn. Karakorom was retaken, and Vang Khan entered it in triumph at the head of his troops, and was once more established on his

throne.

Temujin's popularity

Of course, the rank and influence of Temujin at his court was now higher than ever before. He was now about twenty-two or twenty-three years of age. He had already three wives, though it is not certain that all of them were with him at Vang Khan's court. He was extremely popular in the army, as young commanders of great courage and spirit almost always are. Vang Khan placed great reliance upon him, and lavished upon him all possible honors.

He does not seem, however, yet to have begun to form any plans for returning to his native land.

Chapter VII
Rupture With Vang Khan

1182-1202

Temujin remained at the court, or in the dominions of Vang Khan, for a great many years. During the greater portion of this time he continued in the service of Vang Khan, and on good terms with him, though, in the end, as we shall presently see, their friendship was turned into a bitter enmity.

Erkekara

State of the country

Wandering habits

Erkekara, Vang Khan's brother, who had usurped his throne during the rebellion, was killed, it was said, at the time when Vang Khan recovered his throne. Several of the other rebel

chieftains were also killed, but some of them succeeded in saving themselves from utter ruin, and in gradually recovering their former power over the hordes which they respectively commanded. It must be remembered that the country was not divided at this time into regular territorial states and kingdoms, but was rather one vast undivided region, occupied by immense hordes, each of which was more or less stationary, it is true, in its own district or range, but was nevertheless without any permanent settlement. The various clans drifted slowly this way and that among the plains and mountains, as the prospects of pasturage, the fortune of war, or the pressure of conterminous hordes might incline them. In cases, too, where a number of hordes were united under one general chieftain, as was the case with those over whom Vang Khan claimed to have sway, the tie by which they were bound together was very feeble, and the distinction between a state of submission and of rebellion, except in case of actual war, was very slightly defined.

Yemuka

Sankum

Yemuka, the chieftain who had been so exasperated against Temujin on account of his being supplanted by him in the

affections of the young princess, Vang Khan's daughter, whom Temujin had married for his third wife, succeeded in making his escape at the time when Vang Khan conquered his enemies and recovered his throne. For a time he concealed himself, or at least kept out of Vang Khan's reach, by dwelling with hordes whose range was at some distance from Karakorom. He soon, however, contrived to open secret negotiations with one of Vang Khan's sons, whose name was something that sounded like Sankum. Some authors, in attempting to represent his name in our letters, spelled it *Sunghim*.

Yemuka's intrigues with Sankum

Yemuka easily persuaded this young Sankum to take sides with him in the quarrel. It was natural that he should do so, for, being the son of Vang Khan, he was in some measure displaced from his own legitimate and proper position at his father's court by the great and constantly increasing influence which Temujin exercised.

Deceit

"And besides," said Yemuka, in the secret representations which he made to Sankum, "this new-comer is not only interfering with and curtailing your proper influence and

consideration now, but his design is by-and-by to circumvent and supplant you altogether. He is forming plans for making himself your father's heir, and so robbing you of your rightful inheritance."

Sankum listened very eagerly to these suggestions, and finally it was agreed between him and Yemuka that Sankum should exert his influence with his father to obtain permission for Yemuka to come back to court, and to be received again into his father's service, under pretense of having repented of his rebellion, and of being now disposed to return to his allegiance. Sankum did this, and, after a time, Vang Khan was persuaded to allow Yemuka to return.

Temujin's situation

His military expeditions

Thus a sort of outward peace was made, but it was no real peace. Yemuka was as envious and jealous of Temujin as ever, and now, moreover, in addition to this envy and jealousy, he felt the stimulus of revenge. Things, however, seem to have gone on very quietly for a time, or at least without any open outbreak in the court. During this time Vang Khan was, as usual with such princes, frequently engaged in wars with the neighboring hordes.

In these wars he relied a great deal on Temujin. Temujin was in command of a large body of troops, which consisted in part of his own guard, the troops that had come with him from his own country, and in part of other bands of men whom Vang Khan had placed under his orders, or who had joined him of their own accord. He was assisted in the command of this body by four subordinate generals or khans, whom he called his four intrepids. They were all very brave and skillful commanders. At the head of this troop Temujin was accustomed to scour the country, hunting out Vang Khan's enemies, or making long expeditions over distant plains or among the mountains, in the prosecution of Vang Khan's warlike projects, whether those of invasion and plunder, or of retaliation and vengeance.

Popular commanders

Temujin was extremely popular with the soldiers who served under him. Soldiers always love a dashing, fearless, and energetic leader, who has the genius to devise brilliant schemes, and the spirit to execute them in a brilliant manner. They care very little how dangerous the situations are into which he may lead them. Those that get killed in performing the exploits which he undertakes can not speak to complain, and those who survive are only so much the better pleased that the dangers that they have been brought safely through were so desperate, and that the harvest of glory which they have thereby acquired is so great.

Stories of Temujin's cruelty

Probably fictions

Temujin, though a great favorite with his own men, was, like almost all half-savage warriors of his class, utterly merciless, when he was angry, in his treatment of his enemies. It is said that after one of his battles, in which he had gained a complete victory over an immense horde of rebels and other foes, and had taken great numbers of them prisoners, he ordered fires to be built and seventy large caldrons of water to be put over them, and then, when the water was boiling hot, he caused the principal leaders of the vanquished army to be thrown in headlong and thus scalded to death. Then he marched at once into the country of the enemy, and there took all the women and children, and sent them off to be sold as slaves, and seized the cattle and other property which he found, and carried it off as plunder. In thus taking possession of the enemy's property and making it his own, and selling the poor captives into slavery, there was nothing remarkable. Such was the custom of the times. But the act of scalding his prisoners to death seems to denote or reveal in his character a vein of peculiar and atrocious cruelty. It is possible, however, that the story may not be true. It may have been invented by Yemuka and

Sankum, or by some of his other enemies.

Vang Khan's uneasiness

Temujin

For Yemuka and Sankum, and others who were combined with them, were continually endeavoring to undermine Temujin's influence with Vang Khan, and thus deprive him of his power. But he was too strong for them. His great success in all his military undertakings kept him up in spite of all that his rivals could do to pull him down. As for Vang Khan himself, he was in part pleased with him and proud of him, and in part he feared him. He was very unwilling to be so dependent upon a subordinate chieftain, and yet he could not do without him. A king never desires that any one of his subjects should become too conspicuous or too great, and Vang Khan would have been very glad to have diminished, in some way, the power and prestige which Temujin had acquired, and which seemed to be increasing every day. He, however, found no means of effecting this in any quiet and peaceful manner. Temujin was at the head of his troops, generally away from Karakorom, where Vang Khan resided, and he was, in a great measure, independent. He raised his own recruits to keep the numbers of his army good, and it was always

easy to subsist if there chanced to be any failure in the ordinary and regular supplies.

Vang Khan's suspicions

A reconciliation

Besides, occasions were continually occurring in which Vang Khan wished for Temujin's aid, and could not dispense with it. At one time, while engaged in some important campaigns, far away among the mountains, Yemuka contrived to awaken so much distrust of Temujin in Vang Khan's mind, that Vang Khan secretly decamped in the night, and marched away to a distant place to save himself from a plot which Yemuka had told him that Temujin was contriving. Here, however, he was attacked by a large body of his enemies, and was reduced to such straits that he was obliged to send couriers off at once to Temujin to come with his intrepids and save him. Temujin came. He rescued Vang Khan from his danger, and drove his enemies away. Vang Khan was very grateful for this service, so that the two friends became entirely reconciled to each other, and were united more closely than ever, greatly to Yemuka's disappointment and chagrin. They made a new league of amity, and, to seal and confirm it, they agreed upon a double marriage between their two families. A son

of Temujin was to be married to a daughter of Vang Khan, and a son of Vang Khan to a daughter of Temujin.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.