

## RAJPUTANA.

### CHITTOR.

Chittor is over 60 miles north-east of Udaipur. It was little known to Europeans, being in the heart of Rajputana, until the Malwa branch of the Rajputana-Malwa Railway brought it within twelve hours of Ajmir. The station is about half a mile from the present town, beyond which towers the ancient fortress on a hill, 400 feet high and three miles long, by half a mile wide. The ascent is a mile to the upper gate, with a slope of about one in fifteen. Bappa, the ancestor of the present Mewar Rana, established himself at Chittor in A.D. 728.

The hill is enclosed by a fortified wall and covered with the remains of palaces, temples, and tanks. A description of Chittor in the *Koman Rasa*, or story of Rawat Khoman, written in the ninth century A.D., runs as follows:—

“Chutterkote is the chief among the 84 castles renowned for strength; the hill on which it stands rising out of the level plain beneath, the Tilac on the forehead of Awini (the earth). It is within the grasp of no foe, nor can the vassals of its chief know the sentiment of fear.” . . . “Its towers of defence are planted on the rock, nor can their inmates even in sleep know alarm. Its kotars (granaries) are well filled, and its reservoirs, fountains, and wells are overflowing.” . . . “There are 84 bazaars, many schools for children, and colleges for every kind of learning; many scribes of the Beedur tribe, and the 18 varieties of artisans.”

The Moslem invaders of India made an attack on the fortress as early as A.D. 836, but the first sack of the stronghold took place about 1303 A.D. under Ala-ud-din Khilji. To commemorate a brilliant victory over Mahmud of Malwa, the Rana Khambo erected the great tower in Chittor, and from the commencement of that prince's prosperous reign (A.D. 1440) much attention was bestowed on the architecture of the country. Bahadur Shah of Gujerat sacked Chittor for the second time in A.D. 1533, and 35 years later the third sack was conducted by Akbar. Since then the buildings have been left unrepaired and the capital moved to Udaipur.

We are told in Tod's *Rajasthan* (p. 276, vol. I.) that the temples and palaces were dilapidated, and to complete the humiliation of the Rajput city Akbar “bereft her of all the symbols of regality; the Nakaras (or grand kettledrums) whose reverberations proclaimed for miles around the entrance and exit of her princes, the candelabras from the shrine of the ‘great mother’ who girt Bappa Rawul with the sword with which he conquered Chittor, and in mockery of her misery her portals, to adorn his projected capital Akberabad.” A pair of doors known as the Chittor gates may still be seen in the Agra Palace. The nakar khana, or band house, of Khoja Syud's tomb still contains two huge drums presented by Akbar, also a gong, a portion of the spoils of Chittor, whilst the actual tomb of the saint has a pair of sandalwood doors taken from the fortress.

The most prominent monument of the hill is the Tower of Victory erected by the Rana Khambo in commemoration of the defeat and capture of Mahmud of Malwa in A.D. 1439 (see Plate 39). It is said to have cost 90 lakhs of rupees, and was constructed between A.D. 1442 and 1449. Built throughout of stone, and measuring 30 feet wide at the base by nearly 130 feet in height, the tower is in itself a striking object, whilst its position on the summit of the Chittor Hill gives it the advantage of command over the surrounding country. The style is Jain and resembles that of the smaller Jain tower, which, as far as is known, is the earliest monument of the Chittor fortress. In the older example the height is under 80 feet, and the central staircase winds up from base to summit through the central shaft divided up into six floors. In the present case there is a height of nearly 130 feet (the present dome obscures the actual termination of the original roof), and the staircase passes up the tower through nine floors. The architect was not content with a single central well. The second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh floors have each a square compartment in the middle surrounded by a gallery up both of which the stairs wind alternately. Each storey is lighted by trellis windows, and the angles and recesses not intersected by steps are utilised for sculptured statues and ornaments. The exterior surface of the tower is broken up into nine principal divisions, each furnished with its windows, balustrades, and eaves or *chujjas*, and emphasized by columns, pilasters, and numberless horizontal bands or cornices. The whole is covered with sculptures, and most of the gods of Hindu mythology are represented wherever niche or panel occurs.

Near the Tower of Victory stands a fine stone temple, the Mokul-ji-ka-mandir—dating from the 15th century A.D. The exterior is adorned with elaborate and interesting friezes of figures which appear to depict real scenes in history. North and east of this temple are two gate buildings; that to the east, here represented (see Plate 40, Ahar-ki-Darwaza) opens into the street of the Sindhi Bazaar, and the mud houses which encroach on it right and left might with great advantage be removed. The architecture of the gate is purely Hindu; the delicate carvings are applied with taste, but vegetation is destroying the fabric, which, unless speedily strengthened, will fall to the ground.