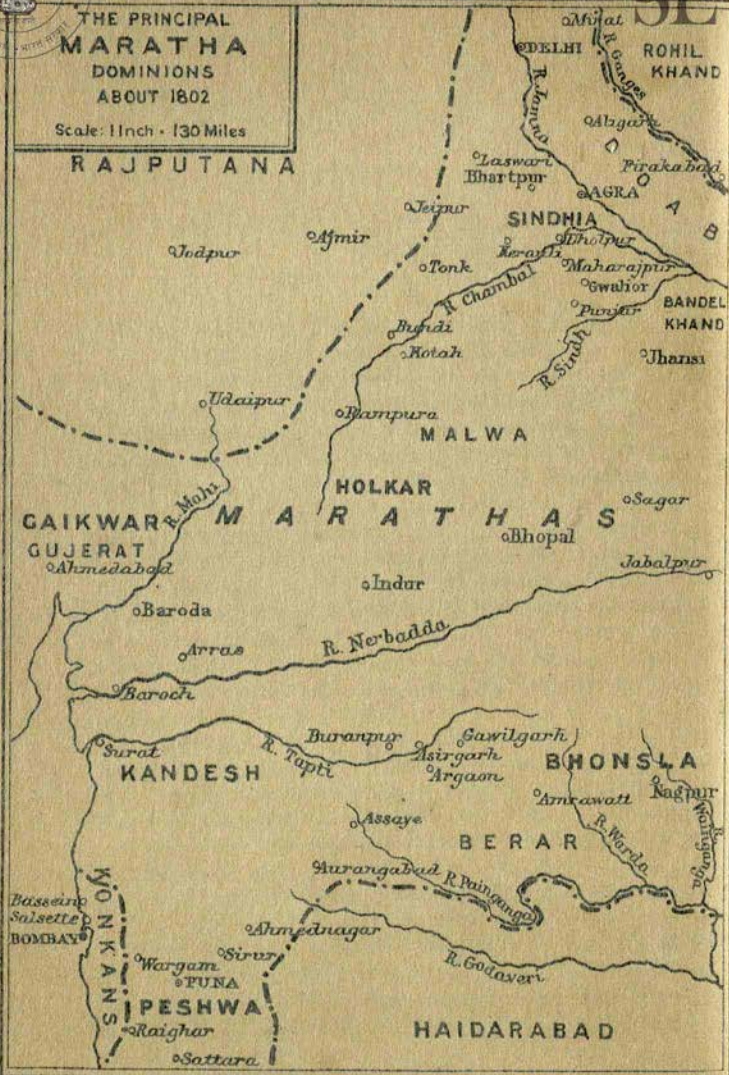




THE PRINCIPAL  
**MARATHA**  
DOMINIONS  
ABOUT 1802

Scale: 1 Inch = 130 Miles

RAJPUTANA





They regarded Wellesley's tone towards them as arrogant, he considered their tone to him as insulting. Moreover he was vehemently dissatisfied with the treatment he received from Government, who had rewarded him with an Irish Marquisate for converting the Dekhan into a province of Britain. As yet however, neither directors nor ministers were at all prepared to do without him; and when he sent in his resignation in 1802, he was requested with complimentary phrases to continue at his post.

Now, however, a new phase was opened by the complications of Maratha affairs.

On the death of Madhava Rao Sindhia in 1794, his vast dominion and a somewhat impaired supremacy among the Marathas descended to the young Daulat Rao. The death of the Peshwa, the nominal head of the confederacy, shortly afterwards led to the establishment in that position of Baji Rao, son of that Ragonath Rao or Ragoba who had caused so much disturbance in the time of Warren Hastings. The minister Nana Farnavis, after some fluctuations of fortune, returned to his position as admittedly the shrewdest head in Maratha counsels till his death in 1800. The dominions of the house of Holkar had for some time been well administered by Ahalya Bai, the widow of the last chief, excellently served by Takoji Holkar, a member of the same clan. These two dying within a short time of each other, the Holkar succession and the Holkar dominions fell into the utmost confusion; out of which Jeswant Rao Holkar, son of Takoji, ultimately emerged as the chief; in alliance with Amir Khan, a Pathan leader of free-lances. Throughout 1800-1802, Holkar and Sindhia and the Peshwa were raiding and ravaging in each other's dominions, each striving for his own supremacy. At last, in October 1802, there was a fierce battle fought under the walls of Puna, between Holkar and the allied troops of Sindhia and the Peshwa, in which Holkar's desperate valour in what seemed the moment of defeat changed the fortunes of the day; and Holkar entered Puna in triumph, the Peshwa himself, Baji Rao, having retired precipitately out of reach.

Now Wellesley had already been for some time endeavour-





Reluctance  
of the  
Powers to  
attempt  
subsidiary  
alliances.

ing to impose his system upon Puna; that is, to repeat at Puna what was accomplished at Haidarabad. The establishment there of a strong British subsidiary force, and the dismissal of Frenchmen from the Maratha service, would complete the security of the English dominion; and would naturally result in the extension of a *Pax Britannica* over nearly the whole peninsula. Apart from the question of security, the populations outside our own dominions could not fail to benefit enormously by the termination of a perpetual state of war, waged after the bloodthirsty and desolating Oriental fashion. Naturally, however, the Country Powers took a different view: acquiescence came only when a sovereign felt that his only escape from destruction by rival Powers lay in British protection. It was not an abstract fondness for British rule, or a thirst for the reign of Peace which led the Nizam to accept the Wellesley scheme: it was fear of the Marathas, though the Nizam's peaceable subjects were probably very well pleased. The Marathas therefore themselves, who in combination had nothing to fear from any quarter except the British—especially since Tippu had been removed—united in resisting the most pressing invitations to admit a subsidiary force. None of the rival chiefs wanted protection; each wanted dominion, which was incompatible with British control.

Treaty of  
Bassein  
with the  
Peshwa.

Now however the opportunity had at last arrived. To the Peshwa it appeared that his own power was irretrievably ruined by Holkar's victory at Puna; by accepting the British proposals he could recover a position corresponding to that of the Nizam; the only alternative was, to escape to private life in British territory. Accordingly, Baji Rao declared his readiness to accept the proposals which he had previously rejected; and on December 31st, 1802, the treaty of Bassein was signed.

However the actual supremacy among the Marathas might be from time to time absorbed by a Bhonsla, a Sindhia, or a Holkar, the formal primacy of the Peshwa was always recognised. By the treaty of Bassein, the technical head of the Maratha confederacy accepted British control—the



presence of a subsidiary British force, for the support of which districts were assigned ; British arbitration in disputes with the Nizam ; an obligation to employ no European belonging to nations at war with the British, and to enter on no war without the British assent. It was a formal abrogation of Maratha independence.

It is a contingency remotely imaginable that if Wellesley had not made this treaty, the Marathas might have continued fighting each other until they ceased to be a formidable Power. In any other event they must sooner or later have become involved in a life and death struggle with the British. It was still perfectly possible that they might enter on that struggle with the French as allies. The treaty forced their hand. If they acquiesced it would not be long before the British would make their grip in the west too firm to be shaken. If resistance was intended, it must be soon. And the British were in a stronger position for the struggle with the treaty than without it ; the creation of the subsidiary force alone was of no little strategic value as securing a military foothold in the country. The argument for the treaty however involves the recognition of a principle which the Western mind is always disposed *a priori* to reject—that a powerful native State is by its nature aggressive and bellicose ; a consolidated Maratha empire would not have divided India with the British, but would necessarily have challenged the British arms, and have renewed the challenge until one or other was shattered, whether the French intervened or not ; while the continuation of the existing system with unchecked internal rivalries and uncontrolled feuds would be not only ruinous to the Maratha country, but a perpetual incitement to disorder within the British dominions.

Grounds  
for the  
treaty.

In May 1803, Baji Rao was reinstated at Puna ; but already he was repenting. The Bhonsla was making his best endeavours to unite the chiefs in an anti-British league. Sindhia's co-operation was secure, but Holkar from whatever motive was hanging back and the Peshwa with Arthur Wellesley controlling him was powerless to act.

Combina-  
tion of  
Maratha  
chiefs.

The General called upon Sindhia and the Bhonsla to





retire with their troops to their own respective dominions; but they remained. In August, the British Agent with Sindhia was instructed to withdraw—which amounted to a declaration of war. To follow the war and the subsequent arrangements, we must note the situation of the various Maratha dominions.<sup>1</sup>

The  
Maratha  
dominions.

The Bhonsla's territories extended from Berar to Kattak; the Peshwa's embraced the western Dekhan. The lands of the Gaikwar, Holkar and Sindhia are not easy to disentangle. Sindhia's lay chiefly on the North and East, including Gwalior, the upper part of the Ganges and Jamna Doab, and some districts west of the Jamna; west of Sindhia, with his capital at Indur, and his chief fortress at Rampura, was Holkar; west of Holkar, the Gaikwar. Both Sindhia and Holkar claimed authority over sundry Rajput States.

During the nine years that had passed since Madhava Rao Sindhia's death, young Daulat Rao had never been in his own territories; which had been left mainly to the care of the Frenchman Perron, De Boigne's successor. Sindhia himself had spent his time, always with a powerful army, in the Dekhan, occupied with the intrigues at Puna and the operations of Holkar. Thus, when the Maratha war broke out, Sindhia and the Bhonsla were able to act in conjunction in the Dekhan, while Sindhia's second great army with its French general, French officers, and French organisation, was acting in upper Hindostan. Holkar was sulking in his tent, while the Gaikwar, always the least formidable of the "pentarchy," was neutralised by the persuasive diplomacy of the British Agent, Major Walker.

The command of the British army in the Dekhan was entrusted to Arthur Wellesley: that in Hindostan to General Lake. Wellesley struck at once. The Agent had been withdrawn from Sindhia on Aug. 3. Ahmednagar and Assaye: Aurangabad were captured successively, and on Sept. 23 was fought the great battle of Assaye; where, after a fierce struggle the combined armies of Sindhia and the Bhonsla were routed with great slaughter, and with British losses amounting to nearly one third of the force present. Two

<sup>1</sup> Maps II. and V.



months later, the Bhonsla again faced the same general at Argaon, where he was completely defeated; and his resistance was ended by the capture of his great fortress of Gawilgarh, a fortnight later.

Equally prompt and vigorous were Lake's measures in Hindostan. Aligarh between Delhi and Agra was taken on Sept. 4. Perron, the French General, whose position had long been rendered extremely difficult by the intrigues of native rivals, learnt just at this time that the intriguers had succeeded in procuring his dismissal—which he anticipated by resignation; a step from which a fine spirit of loyalty had alone hitherto restrained him. The command was taken by another Frenchman, Bourquin, who faced Lake in the neighbourhood of Delhi. He was completely defeated after a hard fight; Delhi, and the person of Shah Alam, fell into the hands of the British, and three days later Bourquin surrendered. Agra was taken on Oct. 18; and on Oct. 31, Sindhia's forces were finally crushed at the battle of Laswari. Throughout the campaign, they had fought magnificently: but the war conveyed two military lessons in particular. One was an old one—that by taking a vigorous offensive, even with very great risks, victory was certain to fall to the British if they were well led. The other had not before been demonstrated; that a native Power which adopted European methods in the field, although placed at a great advantage in fighting Oriental rivals, was less fitted to maintain a prolonged resistance to the British, because the effect of any defeat was much more decisive.

By the end of December 1803, Sindhia and the Bhonsla, both completely worsted, had signed respectively the treaties of Surji Arjangaon and Deogaon. Both surrendered all claim to *chauth*, agreed to accept British arbitration in disputes with the Nizam, and gave up the employment of French officers. Sindhia ceded, in the Dekhan, Baroch and Ahmednagar, the latter being transferred to the Nizam; in Hindostan, the Doab, and other districts north of the Chambal river. The Nagpur Raja ceded Berar (west of the Warda) which was also transferred to the Nizam, and Kattak on the East coast, so that the British territory now

Successes  
of General  
Lake in  
Hindo-  
stan.

Sub-  
mission  
of the  
Bhonsla  
and  
Sindhia.





extended unbroken from Calcutta to the Carnatic. Apart from the new revenues thus acquired, these treaties gave the British through communication by land between Bengal and the South, and a defensible frontier in upper Hindostan; besides what was of immense political importance, the guardianship and control of the Mogul himself, and therewith the official responsibility of general sovereignty.

Wellesley's policy up to 1802 had effected a complete change in our position in India: the treaty of Bassein and the war of 1803 expanded the change into a revolution, which proved too much for the nerves of the authorities at home. Their restive disapprobation was converted into panic by the events of 1804. The disturbing factor was Holkar. He had abstained from supporting Sindhia and the Bhonsla: but it became clear as time passed that he was minded to try conclusions with the British on his own account. Within four months of the treaties with Sindhia and the Nagpur Raja, it became necessary to declare war on Jeswant Rao.

Resistance  
of Holkar.

The British troops this time were to advance from Gujerat under Murray, and from the Jamna under Lake. Rampura was taken within the month; Holkar retreated. Lake ought either to have moved in hot pursuit or to have waited till after the rains for further action; but unfortunately what he did was to withdraw his main army beyond the Jamna, sending forward Colonel Monson, with a force which only brilliant leadership could have made adequate, that he and Murray might catch Holkar on two sides. But Murray fell back before the Maratha who turned on Monson. Thereupon Monson began to retreat. Holkar's horsemen, without joining battle, harassed him cruelly. The rajas through whose territories he was passing, at Kotah and elsewhere, refused him passage. The rains coming on made the country almost impassable. Supplies were failing, and the intelligence Department was useless. Monson paused in his retreat for some time at Rampura; then he moved again; the retreat became both hasty and disorderly; Holkar's attacks became more and more destructive; it was finally a routed remnant of the corps that found its way

Monson's  
retreat.



back to Agra, while Holkar swept northwards and laid siege to Delhi.

The triumph was short-lived, but an infinity of harm had already been accomplished. All the Marathas were preparing to rise: insulting ballads were sung all over the country.<sup>1</sup> At home the alarm at the India House spread to Ministers, and Wellesley's recall was decided on. Cornwallis, now sixty-seven years of age, was entreated to go out once more and save India, by reversing the entire policy of the headstrong Governor-General. He consented, and arrived in India in July 1805. In the meantime, Holkar had been just repulsed at Delhi which was brilliantly defended by Ochterlony, afterwards famous in the Ghurka war; then he was routed at Dig, pursued through the Doab, and finally expelled from it by General Fraser. To Lake himself it was due that the recovery of prestige was seriously discounted by the complete and sanguinary failure of his siege of Bhartpur—which had gone over to Holkar in the tide of his success. It was evident however that the Marathas' powers of resistance were practically exhausted, and that Wellesley's policy was on the verge of being decisively vindicated in the military point of view, when he found himself superseded.

Alarm in England.

Successful operations against Holkar.

Wellesley recalled.

On his return to England, Parliament declined to support

<sup>1</sup> A rhyme which survives in nurseries to-day is worth quoting, if only because of Macaulay's curious misinterpretation of it.

"Ghore par hauda,  
Hathi par zin  
Jaldi bhag-gaya  
Kornail Monsin"—

rendered by Yule

Horses with howdahs, and  
Elephants saddled  
Off helter-skelter the  
Sahibs skedaddled.

Now this rhyme was of early date, and the name of "Warren Hasteen" often takes the place of "Colonel Monseen." But Macaulay, unaware of the inversion of howdahs and saddles, thought it was a tribute to the splendour of the great Governor-General: whereas it probably refers to his escape from Benares.





the attacks made on the great Empire-builder : but the India House, Directors and Proprietors alike, condemned him ; nor was it till some thirty years later that they rescinded their condemnation and rendered their applause to one of the greatest of their many great servants.



## CHAPTER XIV

## NON-INTERVENTION

THE immense and far reaching activity of Lord Wellesley had created something like a panic among the authorities in England; and a brief era followed, which began with an energetic reversal of policy, but developed under Lord Minto into a perpetual straining at the Directors' leash—a renewal of activity which required constant defence, and yet fell far short of the necessities of the case.

Wellesley's immediate successor was once more Cornwallis, who took up his duties in India in July 1805. Cornwallis however died early in October—not three months after he landed. The home authorities had made no provision for such a contretemps, and Sir George Barlow, the senior Member of Council succeeded to the office of Governor-General, pending a fresh appointment from London. Barlow became an energetic devotee of the new policy and found much favour with the Court of Directors. But in the beginning of 1806 a new ministry was formed at Westminster which included some strong advocates of Wellesley's policy. The Directors wished to confirm Barlow as Governor-General, and Lord Minto, at this time President of the Board of Control, agreed to the appointment as a temporary measure. The Ministry however would have none of him, and appointed Lord Lauderdale. Lauderdale was opposed to the Company's monopoly, besides having indulged in an extravagant display of Jacobinism at an early stage of the French Revolution: so the Directors in their turn would have none of him. The deadlock was removed by the appointment of Lord Minto himself, a capable statesman, well grounded in Indian affairs by his experience at the Board of Control. He arrived in India in 1807, remaining till 1813 when he was succeeded by Lord Moira, better known as Lord Hastings.

Reversal  
of Wel-  
lesley's  
policy.

The  
successors  
to the  
Governor-  
General-  
ship:  
Corn-  
wallis:  
Barlow.

Lord  
Minto  
appointed.





The  
French  
menace.

European affairs continued during this period to have their effect on the government of India, direct or indirect. Napoleon had become Emperor in 1804. In October 1805, the victory of Trafalgar finally ended his maritime ambitions. But in Europe, his course of conquest was maintained at Austerlitz, and in October 1806 at Jena. In 1807, his power attained its most alarming pitch when he entered on the treaty of Tilsit with Russia, and it seemed probable that the combination would not only crush the life out of Europe, but would threaten Asia as well. But in 1808, the Spanish people rose against the Bonapartist dominion; British troops were thrown into Portugal, and the Peninsula war began, absorbing masses of Napoleon's troops. In 1809 the amity between the Tsar and Napoleon was markedly cooling, and in 1810 it had turned into hostility. In 1809 therefore, all dread of immediate aggression in Asia had passed away, and from that time, the terror of France fades and presently vanishes, to be replaced as the years passed on by the ever encroaching, ever approaching shadow of Russia.

The  
Russian  
menace.

The practical effect then is, that up till 1805, it had continued to be a primary object to guard against the possibilities of French troops being thrown into India by sea, to lend their aid to Native Powers against the British. The reality of the risk had in fact been removed by the battle of the Nile; yet not with sufficient definiteness to allow of its being ignored. After 1805, the possibility to be guarded against becomes that of invasion overland; of which feeling the first clear symptom was Malcolm's mission to Persia in 1800. The problem of external defence is transferred to the North West frontier and the lands beyond it; and even here, after Lord Minto's time, no serious general apprehensions are aroused for a quarter of a century. Since then, the frontier, and frontier policy, have been always with us.

Wel-  
lesley's  
policy left  
uncom-  
pleted.

Wellesley had systematically acted with the following objects—to control the international policy and the military armaments of all great Native States; to do so, by maintaining within each of them, a British force, theoretically for



the security of the Native Government; the force being therefore justly supported at the expense of the said Governments; from whom in consequence cessions of territory were demanded, as security for the payment of the forces. It was not however a part of his policy to take over the administration of the States themselves, except in such a case as that of Arcot, where the ruling dynasty had for half a century proved itself consistently incapable beyond hope of revivification. In Mysore an alien dynasty which had usurped dominion less than forty years before, was destroyed; but the earlier dynasty was restored, with very much its original domains, and the administration was not withdrawn. In general, it was required only that the Native rulers should not allow their territories to fall into such a condition of anarchy as would make them a menace to the general peace.

But these ends had been achieved only by a very heavy immediate outlay, alarming to the commercial instincts of Leadenhall Street, where it seemed as though endless vistas of military projects were being opened out. The achievement was yet incomplete, the Marathas had been only partially brought within the scheme, Holkar was still in the field, when the reins were transferred to other hands, the policy was reversed. Yet the work was necessary; it had to be completed a dozen years later; and that it might be completed much of it had then to be done over again.

When Cornwallis arrived, Holkar was still active, and Sindhia's attitude was extremely uncertain. He had agreed to Wellesley's terms under the impression that he was to withdraw from the territories north of the Chambal; but Wellesley demanded also the cession of Gwalior itself, in spite of Lake's remonstrances. Cornwallis however was prepared to go much further in the way of concession; to restore Gwalior and even Delhi to Sindhia, and to withdraw the promised protection from the Rajput princes. These views he embodied in a dispatch to Lake on Sept. 19; but Lake would not act on them till he had submitted his objections, and the Governor-General had died before these reached him. Barlow, taking office declared for the new

Reactionary policy of Cornwallis and Barlow.





policy. In the meantime Lake was simultaneously moving troops, and negotiating with Sindhia, who fortunately had just appointed a minister favourable to the British and animated by a strong dislike to Holkar and his Pathan associate Amir Khan. Sindhia therefore was satisfied with the retention of Gwalior, and the establishment of the Chambal as his boundary.

Barlow's  
conces-  
sions to  
Holkar.

Holkar withdrew towards the Panjab, raising troops; Lake started in pursuit, chased him across the Satlej, and came to an agreement with Ranjit Singh, the Raja of Lahore, who refused thenceforth to countenance the Maratha chief. Holkar was forced to sue for peace, and got it, very much to his own contemptuous astonishment, on the lines laid down by Barlow. The Governor-General however altered even the accepted proposals in Holkar's favour, gave back to him all possessions south of the Chambal including Rampura which had before been expressly excepted, and entirely withdrew all protection from the Rajput Rajas of Jeipur, Bundi and other States, who had loyally declined to support the Marathas against the British, and were now shamefully left to pay the penalty which Holkar exacted to the full. Lake himself was so scandalised at the desertion that he resigned his political functions. The final result of the Maratha settlement as effected by Sir George Barlow was that the Rajput States, where disorder and violence were normal, passed through a period of desperate turmoil, suffering many things beyond their wont at the hands of Sindhia, Amir Khan, and Holkar. The career of the last however was shortly brought to a close; for in 1808 he became totally insane, and died three years later.

Occasional  
firmness of  
Barlow.

Unhappy as were the consequences of Barlow's government on the independent States of Hindostan, within the area where British control had already been definitely established he evinced some degree of firmness. Having originally supported the treaty of Bassein, he declined to recede from it at the call of the Directors; and at Haidarabad, when the Nizam began to display a desire to be rid of his protectors, Sir George insisted on his restoring to office a minister friendly to the British.



The latter part of Barlow's administration was made memorable by the mutiny of the Sepoys at Vellur. The Princes of Tippu's family had been allowed to take up their residence there. The mutineers, one regiment of whom consisted of Mysore Mussulmans, hoisted Tippu's flag, and there was no doubt that the deposed family were responsible for encouraging the movement; though, on investigation, it became tolerably clear that the Sepoys had actually risen on the strength of their own grievances; various new regulations having been introduced by a commander who did not appreciate native prejudices, which appear trivial enough but to them have a serious religious import. The idea was started that the regulations were a step towards imposing Christianity upon the Sepoy. Several officers were murdered: but the mutiny was promptly quelled by the arrival from Arcot of Colonel Gillespie with a small detachment. The ring-leaders were executed; there was some delay in dealing with the rest, as the matter was referred home. It was finally settled by Lord Minto on his arrival, the men being dismissed instead of suffering any severer punishment, on the ground that they had had a really serious grievance. Lord William Bentinck, Governor of Madras and subsequently Governor-General, was recalled, with the Commander-in-Chief, as soon as the news of the mutiny reached England, though Bentinck was not in fact to blame. Tippu's family, though not without complicity in the rising, were removed to Calcutta but not otherwise punished.

The  
Vellur  
mutiny.

Another mutiny of a somewhat serious character occurred in 1809-10 when Sir George Barlow was Governor of Madras, whither he had gone on vacating the governor-generalship. This time, the mutineers were the British officers of the Madras army. According to the vicious system of underpaying the Company's servants, and making up the deficiency in anomalous perquisites, certain contracts were placed in the hands of the officers. They were wrong in principle, and ought to have been abolished; but the authorities set about abolishing them by way of curtailing expenditure. Much violent language was used on the part of Sir George Barlow on one side, and the Commander-in-Chief on the other, and

Mutiny of  
the Madras  
officers.





improper arrests were made on both sides. Matters however quieted down on the General's retirement; but some months later Barlow revived the trouble by attacking some of the officers who had taken part in the agitation. The whole military body was furious; but a few stood by the Government as a matter of discipline: and the King's troops were loyal. Barlow successfully defied the mutineers, though strongly advised to give way. The contingents at Haidarabad, Masulipatam and Seringapatam, had all declared their adhesion to the revolt; but in a calmer moment they realised the nature of their action and made submission. The personal feeling against Barlow had counted for much, and the resolute but conciliatory intervention of Lord Minto terminated what had at one time threatened to prove a very serious incident. Barlow was recalled—an unfortunate example of an admirable public servant who was quite unfit to rule.

Persia and France. Lord Minto's arrival in India was signalised almost immediately by a collision with the Home Government. Persia having hastily entered on a Russian War in 1806, appealed for British protection on the strength of the 1800 treaty, in 1807. The appeal was declined, and she turned to Napoleon. A French Embassy arrived and was about to complete arrangements extremely adverse to both Russia and Britain, when the treaty of Tilsit changed the French policy towards the former Power. A British envoy had clearly something to do at Teheran. Lord Minto dispatched Malcolm, whose previous mission qualified him eminently for the post; but ministers sent Sir Harford Jones. Sir Harford was detained at Bombay: but Malcolm, on arriving in Persia, took umbrage at the treatment he received and withdrew. Sir Harford was now allowed to proceed; but a few days later, it was resolved to send a military expedition as the best counterpoise to the French influence at Teheran. Meantime, Sir Harford informed the Shah, speaking as the representative not of the Governor-General but of the Crown, that there should be no aggression against his territories. The change in the attitude of the French towards Russia had now become apparent, and a treaty of friendship was promptly accepted; the Shah agreeing to resist the passage of any European force through his

Counter-embassies of Malcolm and Jones.



territories, while the British engaged to help him with troops or money if Persia were invaded. Lord Minto accepted the treaty, but felt bound to assert himself by sending Malcolm on what may be called an Embassy of Display, and the presence of two opposition British ambassadors at one court was in danger of producing most unseemly results. The two however had the wisdom to join hands; Malcolm had an immense gift of popularity; and the friction was dissolved. The recurrence of the trouble was obviated by the appointment from London of Sir Gore Ouseley, and the withdrawal of both Malcolm and Sir Harford. From that time, British diplomacy in Persia has been controlled not from India but from Westminster—with very little credit to Westminster.

The same anxiety as to the possibilities of a European attack overland brought about the mission to Kabul of Mountstuart Elphinstone; by which little was gained, beyond some knowledge of the country, owing to the fact that the position of the king, Shah Shuja, was at the time too unstable to allow his friendship to be of much value: and he was summarily ejected from his realm a year later. A mission to Sindh about the same time issued in a treaty of friendship of no great value.

Missions  
to Kabul  
and Sindh.

Within India, Lord Minto was unable to revert to Wellesley's policy; but he saw at once that unmitigated non-intervention was impossible. His attention was called to Bandelkhand immediately on his arrival. Bandelkhand is a district, inhabited largely by Rajput clans, lying on the south of the Jamna, east of its confluence with the Chambal. It had owned the supremacy not, as might have been expected, of Sindhia, but of the Peshwa; who, a year after the treaty of Bassein, had exchanged it for territories in the Dekhan, ceded to the British under that instrument. Anarchy and robbery, to which the Marathas had no objection, had habitually prevailed throughout the country which was studded with fortresses. The free-booting Sirdars objected to an organised rule; and despite the representations of Lake, Barlow had not considered it worth while to take the steps necessary for bringing it into order. Lord Minto forthwith made it known that anarchy within the British

Bandel-  
khand.





dominion would not be tolerated, and most of the rajas were prompt to make submission when they realised that the warning was meant seriously. The wilder spirits however were in possession of the great fortresses, and offered a prolonged resistance; with such vigour indeed that four years elapsed before the last and ablest of them offered to submit, on terms highly favourable to himself, which a weary Government conceded.

Lord A more definite breach, however, of the theory of non-intervention was brought about in Sirhind, lying between the Satlej and the Jamna, in the occupation of a number of Sikh chiefs. The trans-Satlej Sikhs of the Panjab had of late years been growing into a strong military organisation, especially since the rise of Ranjit Singh, Maharaja of Lahore, who now sought to extend his dominion over his Cis-Satlej compatriots. They however were not interested in the ambitions of the Panjab Sikhs, nor were they threatened by the same enemies, and they proceeded to request the intervention and protection of the British, in 1808. Ranjit entered his protest, with a declaration that they were his subjects. Lord Minto was alive to the impolicy of allowing the Panjab to absorb Sirhind, but was at the time embarrassed by the desire to secure the friendliness of the frontier State in case of Franco-Russian machinations. Charles Metcalfe was sent to negotiate, and Ranjit was quite alive to the advantages of his own diplomatic position. The young civilian however encountered him with great firmness and tact. While the diplomatic contest was still going on, the fears of the Government of India were allayed by the severance of France and Russia and the situation changed at once. The astute Ranjit had no intention of risking a war, retreated skilfully from his position, and agreed to withdraw his claims on Sirhind if the British would promise not to interfere with him in the Panjab. From that hour till his death he remained the very good friend and ally of the British—though with a possible moment of wavering, during the Gurkha war.

By 1809 the consequences of the lenient treatment of Pindaris. Holkar began to be displayed in unmistakable fashion by the raids of his ally the Pathan free-lance Amir Khan. Holkar's



insanity had already developed, and Amir Khan, who had at his back half the Mussulman and Pindari<sup>1</sup> mercenaries of India, professed to act in Holkar's interests. Having made the most of extensive opportunities in Rajputana, he next thought fit to plunder Nagpur. Now however the limits of British neutrality had been reached. In defiance of doctrines of non-intervention, Lord Minto prepared to take arms in defence of the Bhonsla. The Nagpur troops themselves twice defeated Amir Khan in the field, but he was renewing the attack when he learnt that the British were advancing against him; whereupon he retired to Indur, on the ostensible ground that the regency there required his services. The immediate object of the British being accomplished, the Governor-General held his hand, and turned his attention to other affairs, not without much doubt as to the view that might be taken of his intervention at the India House. So beyond the Nerbadda, Pathans and Pindaris were allowed to wax gross.

To Lord Minto however fell the opportunity, which he seized with great success, of intervention in the deadly struggle with Napoleon. The French naval station at Mauritius was a standing danger while French fleets were powerful: it continued to be a thorn in the side of the East India trade even after Trafalgar. British expeditions thither had proved completely unsuccessful. But at the end of 1810, the Governor-General fitted out a great expedition from India which captured the islands, and permanently extracted the thorn. Further, Napoleon having absorbed Holland, the Spice Islands had become French property. In 1811, the Governor-General, having obtained permission to attack Java, personally accompanied a great expedition to the Island. The prize was secured after some hard fighting in which Colonel Gillespie who had quelled the Vellur mutiny greatly distinguished himself.

Capture of  
Mauritius  
and Java.

Shortly after his return to India, Lord Minto learnt to his surprise that he had been superseded by Lord Hastings. The new Governor-General however did not arrive till the autumn of 1813.

Lord  
Minto  
recalled.

<sup>1</sup> The Pindaris were free-booting bands of light horse, mainly Marathas.





## CHAPTER XV

## LORD HASTINGS

*(Maps I., V. and VIII.)*

Lord Hastings. **L**ORD MOIRA, who soon afterwards was created Marquess of Hastings, was now in his fifty-ninth year. He had seen active service as a very young man in the war of American Independence. He had taken a considerable part in public affairs, was a *persona grata* with the Prince Regent, and had made an unsuccessful attempt to form a ministry. Wellesley had left England with a strong prejudice against Warren Hastings, but his Indian experience rapidly converted him into a political disciple and a personal admirer. Lord Hastings in his turn—he was not related to his predecessor—when in England was strongly opposed to Wellesley's policy of aggrandisement, but in his career as Governor-General, the policy he found it imperative to carry out was that of which Wellesley was the typical exponent—the systematic extension of control over Native States.

The circumstances were in fact too strong for a preconceived judgment to stand against them. The new Governor-General found himself almost at the outset face to face with a new aggressor; by the time that aggressor was disposed of, Pindaris, Pathans, and Marathas, had given such unmistakable proofs that they could be dealt with only by the strong hand that even a Barlow would have been convinced. The necessary policy might however have been pursued reluctantly and incompletely; Hastings having once accepted it carried it out firmly, intelligently and thoroughly.

The Gurkhas. The new aggressor was the Gurkha State of Nepal, lying along the Northern Mountain border of India the whole way



from the Satlej on the west to Sikkim on the east. The Gurkhas are an admirably hardy and courageous race of Mountaineers, claiming a Rajput descent, but probably sprung from a Mongolian stock with a comparatively recent infusion of Rajput blood derived from militant Rajput immigrants. In number they were singularly few, very unlike the hordes of the Marathas, and not even comparable to the Sikh minority which dominated the Panjab; but in fighting qualities they were second to none. They had begun to organise themselves into a State only in the latter half of the eighteenth century, and had rapidly established themselves from end to end of the long and narrow strip of territory known as Nepal. But they were not content with their mountains and began to encroach on the Terai—the fertile plain skirting the foothills, watered by the upper streams of the Ganges and its tributaries. During the first decade of the nineteenth century the encroachments began to affect British territory.

At the close of Lord Minto's administration the advancing Gurkhas laid claim to districts near Gorakhpur, which they occupied. Their claim was negatived, and they were required to withdraw, but before their official answer was received, Lord Hastings was in office. Their reply was a refusal, and Hastings returned a peremptory response, followed up by the occupation of the disputed districts. Counsels were divided at Katmandhu, the Nepal capital. Amar Singh, their best soldier, opposed war; but the Durbar, confident in the impregnability of their mountains, were defiant, and threw down the gauntlet by attacking the occupied district: and war followed.

In Indian warfare there is one established rule—not to take a defensive, but to strike and strike hard against almost any odds. In this case, the numerical odds were all against the Gurkhas, whose trained force amounted to little if at all above 12,000 men. In their favour however, they had the extremely difficult nature of the country, while the Governor-General was greatly hampered by want of funds, and neither the officers nor the men of the Bengal army had experience of hill fighting.





The Gurkha war: disastrous opening. The Hastings was Commander-in-Chief, as well as Governor-General, and controlled the plan of campaign. Two columns were to enter Nepal at the Western end, commanded by Ochterlony and Gillespie; two were to advance on Katmandhu at the Eastern end, from Behar. Ochterlony's skilful manoeuvring on the extreme west against Amar Singh was rendered ineffective by a disaster to Gillespie; whose headlong valour led him to a quite unnecessary attempt to storm a Gurkha fort. Gillespie himself was killed; in this and a subsequent attack the valiant defenders slew more of the enemy than their own numbers all told; and the whole column was held at bay throughout the winter (1814). In the meantime, the Eastern columns under Generals Marley and Wood met with no better success: the Gurkhas repulsed their attacks, and the Generals lacked the persistence to force their way and the intelligence to out-manoeuvre the much smaller forces opposed to them.

Excitement in Hindoostan.

The effect of the check was serious. All over India the natives again began to believe that the decadence of the British power had commenced. The Peshwa renewed intrigues with the other Maratha princes. Sindhia and Amir Khan set their forces in motion. Ranjit Singh moved an army to the Satlej. On the other hand, Hastings raised new regiments and otherwise prepared for emergencies. Fortunately, internal quarrels broke up the hostile armaments. Sindhia's generals fell out: Ranjit Singh found affairs on the Afghan border pressing: Amir Khan could not resist the opportunity for plundering Jodhpur. Most important of all, Ochterlony turned the tide of failure. After months of ~~fruitless~~ manoeuvring against a skilful foe, he ~~retook~~ recaptured Amar Singh and his brave followers in the fort of Malaun, in the Simla district, in April. In the same month, a ~~small~~ force of irregulars under Colonels Gardner and Nicholas took Almora, the principal place in Kumaon. When affairs had become desperate, Amar Singh allowed those who would to surrender, but resolved himself to resist to the last with a small but devoted band. Finding however, that this was only to doom them to certain death in a hopeless cause, he at length surrendered. All honour was paid to the heroic



for; but the whole territory from the Satlej eastward to the river Kali submitted to the conquerors; and the Gurkhas of those territories having been fairly beaten in a stand-up struggle forthwith attached themselves heartily and loyally to the new Government.

Hastings now offered terms to the Nepal Government at Katmandhu, and at the end of the year it seemed that his proposal had been accepted, when Amar Singh succeeded in reviving the no-surrender policy. He had raised his voice against the war originally, but he held it shame to surrender now to the British demands. Ochterlony however was placed in command of the force to proceed to Katmandhu. The passes were held, but the British general turned the Gurkha positions, and they had no option save surrender to his superior numbers and armament. The cession of the territory west of the River Kali was confirmed by treaty; a portion of the Terai was given up and transferred to the Nawab of Oudh who had rendered valuable pecuniary assistance; and a war redounding to the honour of the Gurkhas was concluded by an honourable peace, and an amity no less honourably maintained ever since (March 1816).

Conquest  
of the  
Gurkhas.

Ever since Cornwallis had stopped the completion of Wellesley's schemes, the power of the great free-booting companies assembled about and beyond the Nerbadda valley had been growing increasingly dangerous. These free-booters were of two classes; the Mussulmans or Pathans who contemned any occupation but that of fighting, and the Pindaris, largely Marathas, who also lived by pillage, and had formed themselves into large bands of light horsemen, but had never definitely attached themselves to any one in particular among the Maratha potentates. These two classes, Pathans and Pindaris, were to some extent interchangeable: but for the most part the Pathans served under the banner of Amir Khan, and the Pindaris under those of other captains of whom the ablest was Chitu. The Pindaris proved audacious enough to carry their incursions, which were accompanied by the most ghastly atrocities, even into the British districts of Orissa.

Pathans  
and  
Pindaris.





Disturbances in Central India.

To curb these dangerous bands, Lord Hastings sought to establish a subsidiary alliance with Nagpur, but the Bhonsla was too anxious to preserve his independence. Hastings then proposed to follow that course with other minor princes at Sagar near the Bandelkhand border, and notably with the ruler of Bhopal in the Nerbadda valley—a Mussulman principality which had on various occasions rendered loyal service to the British.

In 1813, Sindhia and the Bhonsla combined to attack Bhopal; where however Wazir Mohammed offered a stubborn resistance, and appealed for British help. The Governor-General, in spite of the still active Gurkha complication, took upon himself to warn off the Marathas; and while Sindhia was protesting, Ochterlony was restoring the British fortunes in Nepal. The Bhonsla and Sindhia both retired, but the alliance which Hastings had contemplated was almost simultaneously declined by Wazir Mohammed and vetoed by the India House.

The Members of Council, like the India House, were opposed to the views which Hastings had developed: but the Governor-General laid them before the authorities in London at an auspicious time. George Canning had just become President of the Board of Control; and though his first despatch was antagonistic, the report of the last Pindari irruption caused it to be followed in three weeks by another authorising the most rigorous action and practically allowing Hastings a free hand.

Intrigues of Baji Rao Peshwa.

In the meantime, the conduct of Baji Rao the Peshwa had been extremely unsatisfactory. While avoiding any open display of hostility, he was constantly engaged in intriguing against the British at the other Maratha Courts. The Gaikwar was at this time the most friendly of the Powers to the British: partly owing to the influence of a Brahmin minister. On the other hand the Peshwa, himself a Brahmin, was much under the influence of a low-caste Hindu named Trimbakji. Ostensibly for the settlement of disputes between the Peshwa and the Gaikwar, the minister of the latter, known as the Shastri, was inveigled to Puna under a British guarantee of safety, and was then murdered



by Trimbakji's orders (July 1815): no one having a doubt of Baji Rao's complicity. Formally of course his declarations of innocence were accepted; he was obliged however by the resolute attitude of the Resident, Elphinstone, to surrender the person of Trimbakji, but continued his intrigues none the less zealously.

In 1816 affairs at Nagpur took a favourable turn. Raghoji Bhonsla died: his son was an imbecile; the regency was disputed; and Apa Sahib, the heir presumptive, thinking that British support would be useful to him, offered to accept the subsidiary alliance which Raghoji had always declined. He showed clearly enough later on, that he had not been actuated by any pro-British sentiment; but the accomplishment of the treaty gave us a military control within his dominions which proved of no little value.

Subsidiary  
treaty with  
Nagpur.

The whole position, then, at the close of 1816, may be summarised. The danger which had for a short time arisen with the disasters at the beginning of the Gurkha war, was over: no disturbance threatened from Nepal. The Pindaris in Central India were growing more audacious and irrepressible. The minor princes were divided in mind between their desires for British protection and for their own independence—incompatible advantages. Sindhia, Holkar, and Amir Khan, had not been brought under British control; and were certainly not friendly. Daulat Rao, it may be noted, was still little more than thirty; and Holkar was a minor, whose Durbar was divided into factions. The Peshwa and the Bhonsla's regency were now held in check by the British Residents and Contingents, but the former at least was vehemently set upon escaping from the bonds which he had forged for himself. The Nizam had ceased, and the Panjab had not really begun, to be active political factors. The recent performances of the Pindaris had almost converted the opposition members of the Calcutta Council, and Canning's dispatches withdrawing the non-intervention instructions were on the way out.

The situa-  
tion in  
1817.

The plain truth was that there never had been order in Hindostan, except while some paramount Power was

Need of a  
paramount  
Power.





recognised all over it. Hence the Mogul dominion with all its defects had rendered great benefits to the whole population. That dominion had not been overthrown by the British: it had collapsed for reasons already explained. But it had become imperative that its place should be taken by someone, and the only possible someone was the British Power. On us, however reluctant the merchants and politicians in London might be to face the fact, the responsibility had devolved; it was no longer possible to refuse its acceptance.

Attitude  
of the  
Marathas.

In 1817, matters were clearly working up to a crisis. On the one hand, Nasir Mohammed, the successor of Wazir Mohammed in Bhopal, accepted the subsidiary alliance, afterwards displaying the habitual loyalty of his house; and several of the Princes of Rajputana came into the British alliance. On the other hand, the imbecile Bhonsla was murdered and succeeded by the regent Apa Sahib; who, no longer needing external support for his claims, was now as anxious as the Peshwa to be rid of British control. In the Puna country, Trimbakji escaped from confinement, and set actively to work to produce an anti-British insurrection; it was perfectly certain that he was in league with the Peshwa: and the latter after much evasion was compelled to assent to a new treaty confirming that of Bassein, but also accepting an increase of the Contingent, and making material cessions of territory and fortresses besides formally resigning the suzerainty or hegemony of the Maratha Confederacy. Finally, negotiations were entered upon with Sindhia, Amir Khan and Holkar—who were all notoriously interested in maintaining the Pindaris—with a view to persuading or coercing them into taking part in the suppression of the free-booters. In especial, it was impressed upon Sindhia that he had frequently violated the conditions upon which he had been permitted to retain his independence, and that a revision of terms was imperative.

Opening  
of the  
Campaign,  
1817.

The campaign against the Pindaris opened in the Autumn of 1817, on a gigantic scale: for the arrangements were necessarily based on the possibility that the whole force of



the Marathas, as well as of Amir Khan, might act on behalf of the Pindaris.

Of the military operations which followed, it is impossible to do more than attempt to give an intelligible outline.

Looking at the Maratha map (V.): the Pindaris, whose suppression was the prime object of the war, had their head-quarters in and about the valley of the Nerbadda. It must be observed that the Doab had now passed from Sindhia to the British, who were free also to operate from Bandelkhand, from the Bhonsla's dominions, the Haidarabad border, and the districts from Puna north to Gujerat. That is, they formed a sort of horse-shoe embracing Sindhia, the Pindaris, Amir Khan, and Holkar; with the Rajput States on the open side. At the same time, both Puna and Nagpur might rise upon them. Hastings had carefully disposed the divisions of the great army he had been preparing—it numbered nearly 120,000—so that as they moved towards the centre they would come in touch with each other and form a cordon. The first movement however did not take place till the end of October (1817) when two divisions were suddenly advanced from the Doab so as to threaten Gwalior from two sides and paralyse any attempt at adverse action on Sindhia's part: whereby he found himself compelled promptly to sign the treaty which he had been evading for some months past. One of the divisions then pushed southward up the Chambal. Another division was advancing from Bandelkhand under Marshall, and another was already on the upper Nerbadda under Adams, while Malcolm was advancing from Amrawati. The progress of these three drove the Pindaris to retreat, one portion under Chitu moving west, the other under two chiefs named Wasil Mohammed and Karim, towards Gwalior.

Skilful  
disposi-  
tions of  
Lord  
Hastings.

This move was due to Sindhia having received temporary relief, cholera having broken out in the division left to watch him, which in consequence had changed its quarters. But it was brought into the field again in time to isolate Sindhia and intercept the Pindaris, who now had to make all haste to escape back into Holkar's country; which their extreme

Forced in-  
activity of  
Sindhia  
and  
Holkar.





mobility enabled them to do, though not without suffering heavy losses by the way.

**Fight at Kirki:** During this time—roughly the months of November and December—Sindhia had been effectively paralysed by the defeat of the grip of the northern British divisions. Holkar remained the Peshwa. inactive; but both Puna and Nagpur witnessed memorable struggles. The Peshwa collected a large army, ostensibly to attack the Pindaris; but Elphinstone, the Resident, knew their purpose to be different. Accordingly on November 1st he removed the British brigade to a strong position at Kirki, in the immediate neighbourhood. On the fifth, he himself joined them, and had hardly left the Residency when it was sacked. More British troops were expected, and the Peshwa resolved to begin by wiping out those present. He moved his 25,000 men against Kirki: the force in Kirki, about a tenth of their number, took the offensive, and after a sharp action routed them. A fresh attack was not ventured upon: ten days later, the arrival of re-inforcements enabled the British to attack and occupy Puna which the Peshwa evacuated in haste, retiring to Sattara where he carried off the raja—the descendant of Sivaji—and for some time to come found sufficient occupation in evading the British pursuit.

**Fight at Sitabaldi:** Very similar were the events at Nagpur. The still smaller British force there withdrew, with the Resident, Richard Jenkins, to Sitabaldi close by: they were attacked on the 27th after a night of bombardment by masses of the defeat of Bhonsla's troops which included a large body of Arab mercenaries; the attack was stoutly resisted and finally dispersed by a brilliant cavalry charge. The Marathas lost heart, and in a few days re-inforcements arrived. The Sabih. Bhonsla, however, did not escape but surrendered. It was somewhat unfortunate that the Arabs, who had seized the citadel were permitted to surrender on their own terms.

**Submission of Amir Khan.** Amir Khan, who appears to have evinced a wholesome distaste for coming to actual blows with the British, after some hesitation accepted the terms offered him, though the treaty was not signed till December 15. His Pathans, who, unlike their chief, were not comfortably provided for



were in no hurry to lay down their arms; but Ochterlony, who had brought down a reserve division from the North, drove a wedge between the two main bodies, who thereupon submitted and gave up their arms.

The leaders of Holkar's army, and his Durbar, were divided by faction; the army itself was eager to rise for the Peshwa. The more turbulent faction got the upper hand, murdered the regent, a widow of Jeswant Rao, and were consequently promptly attacked, and the army shattered, by the nearest British division. Malcolm marched in pursuit of Holkar, who accepted a treaty on Jan. 6. By Jan. 1818 therefore the war had resolved itself into a pursuit of the scattered bands of Pindaris; of whose chiefs, Karim made terms, Wasil Mohammed was captured, and Chitu alone made good his escape. By a singularly appropriate nemesis, he was killed in the jungle a year later by a tiger.

Collapse of  
Holkar.

Baji Rao and his troops remained to be accounted for, and the treacherous Apa Sahib of Nagpur had not been deposed. At the end of December, the Peshwa was once more marching on Puna when he caught a small body of 800 British on the way to reinforce the garrison there. The little force however spent New-year's day in offering an extraordinarily brilliant defence, and the next day—evading the Peshwa by a ruse—their leader, Captain Staunton brought them back in triumph to Sirur, from whence they had started. The Peshwa again retired hastily from the pursuit of the British brigades. He was overtaken however, and fled from the field, while his best general was killed, and his captive, the Sattara Raja, fell into the hands of the British. Baji Rao himself made for Nagpur (March 1818).

Successes  
against the  
Peshwa.

It had become evident however that Apa Sahib was preparing for a rising: and in March, Jenkins placed him in confinement. Baji Rao after a series of doubles found himself hemmed in near the Nerbadda: and was finally allowed by Malcolm to surrender on very generous terms. Not the least remarkable achievement during this period was the subjugation of the Southern part of the Peshwa's dominions by Sir Thomas Munro; who, left with only a very small

Final  
opera-  
tions.





force, by personal influence and skilful management, gathered troops, overcame all resistance, and converted a hostile into a friendly territory. The escape of Apa Sahib, and the need of reducing fortresses, protracted matters for some time. The ex-Bhonsla disappeared, eventually reaching the Panjab where his presence was ignored by Ranjit Singh, and he ended his career under surveillance in Rajputana. The last fortress—Asirgarh, near Buranpur—did not surrender till April 1819; when it was found that the resistance had been maintained at Sindhia's instigation.

**Results of the war.** The Governor-General's object had been completely achieved. For the sake of clearness the story of the great war has been narrated, without interruption by details of the several treaties entered upon in its course. These may now be reviewed as forming the ground work of the necessary

1. Pathans  
and  
Pindaris.

reconstruction. With the Pindaris, no treaty was made. They were simply broken up and scattered without possibility of re-combining. The Arab mercenaries in the service of the Bhonsla and the Peshwa were for the most part shipped out of the country. The Pathan chief Amir Khan was favoured with a principality at Tonk; his artillery was handed over to the British; and the Pathan troops were disarmed and disbanded, large numbers of them being transformed into Sepoys of the Company.

2. Sindhia.

Sindhia had been ruled out of the conflict from the beginning, by the pressure of the British armies; and had to accept a treaty freeing the British from the obligation, imposed on them by Barlow's earlier treaty, of abstaining from political relations with the Rajput and other chiefs over whom Sindhia claimed supremacy. The extension of the British Protectorate over them followed. Asirgarh was ceded, and a small subsidiary contingent admitted.

3. Nagpur.

The treachery of Apa Sahib resulted in his deposition. Instead however of annexing Nagpur, the British set up a new Raja of the Bhonsla family, during whose minority the State was admirably administered by the Resident, Richard Jenkins.

4. Holkar.

Holkar, after the brief outbreak, accepted a subsidiary treaty, and resigned all his claims in Rajputana. Some



minor principalities, notably Sagar, whose Rajas had misbehaved, were annexed.

Finally the arch-Maratha, Baji Rao, who had called for Wellesley's protection in 1802, and ever since the granting of it had persistently plotted and intrigued against his protectors, was accounted beyond the pale of political restitution. His office and his honours were abolished, and his dominions were annexed by the British. Yet so strong was the desire to maintain native administrations wherever possible, that a portion of the territory was set aside and erected into the new principality of Sattara with the representative of the house of Sivaji as its head: the principle of political subjection and administrative independence being maintained. The idea of this arrangement was no doubt in part to destroy what had become in the course of a century the traditional elevation of the Peshwa family to the Maratha hegemony, a position which the Sivaji family would have no opportunity of recovering for themselves. Much to the Governor-General's annoyance, the Peshwa himself was allowed by Malcolm to retire to a jaghir in the Doab with a pension four times as large as Hastings had intended to sanction.

The total result therefore was this. Sindhia, despite the privy instigations to resistance of which he was known to have been guilty while openly professing loyalty, was not further penalised. He was allowed to retain a larger degree of independence than any other prince, nor was he deprived of more territory, though certain exchanges were made for greater convenience. Holkar was reduced to the position of a normal subsidiary ally, with an able native minister appointed by the British. The trans-Chambal claims of both Sindhia and Holkar were cancelled. It is noteworthy that Daulat Rao Sindhia at last recognised the logic of facts and remained docile and loyal for the rest of his days. The Gaikwar was already in the position of a subsidiary ally. A new Bhonsla was set up at Nagpur, in a like subordinate position, in preference to annexation. The lands of the fifth member of the pentarchy were annexed, excepting the portion allotted to the new Sattara State. Protection was extended

5. The Peshwa.

Summary of results.





to the provinces of Rajputana, and to the minor principalities within the area of Maratha supremacy. The work of pacification and the introduction of orderly government was carried out under the supervision of that brilliant gathering of administrators, among whom the most famous names are those of Munro, Elphinstone, Malcolm, Jenkins, Ochterlony, and Metcalfe.

The King  
of Oudh  
and the  
Mogul.

The marked loyalty displayed so repeatedly by the Nawab of Oudh was rewarded in a peculiar manner. He was elevated from the rank of Wazir of the Mogul to that of a formally independent sovereign, with the title of Padishah or King. A similar honour offered to the Nizam was indignantly refused as treason to the recognised head of the Mohammedans in India. Wellesley's idea had been to make use of the power of the Mogul's name: that of Hastings was to deprive it of weight, and induce the recognition of the British Empire on its own merits. In Wellesley's time, when the Hindu Sindhia had set so much value on the Mogul fiction, he was certainly right. Time had probably justified the change of view as concerned the Hindus; but it is at least plausibly held that the earlier attitude helped to maintain a hold on the Mussulmans, and that the change was one among the innumerable factors associated with the mutiny of 1857.

The affair  
of Palmer  
& Co.

Great as were the services rendered by Lord Hastings, there were those at home whom he had offended, and who wished to enjoy the fruits of his policy, while repudiating its author. A further handle was given to this party by an incident at the close of the Governor-General's career; in which Hastings behaved in a manner sufficiently injudicious to allow of grave misconstruction being placed on his conduct. The trouble arose at Haidarabad. The Nizam was required to maintain a force known as the Haidarabad Contingent, which was separate from the subsidiary force. On this and on other objects an extravagant expenditure was kept up. Finally to help him out of his difficulties, an exception was made to the usual rules, and an English banking house, Palmer & Co., was allowed in 1816 to make advances to the Nizam's treasury. One of the partners



was a connection of the Governor-General, who used expressions which gave rise to a belief that Palmer & Co., could rely upon Government to back them in any differences with their clients. When Metcalfe arrived at Haidarabad in 1820 he found that the position the house had acquired was anomalous, dangerous, and strongly suggestive of jobbery. Hastings at first met his representations with indignation, but on finding how real was the ground on which they were based, he approved the cancelment of the permit granted to Palmer & Co., and provided funds for the Nizam to meet his obligations, by arbitrarily commuting for a lump sum the tribute hitherto paid by the British for the Sarkars. But the accusation of having been improperly connected with the Banking House—which was ultimately ruined by the issue of the transaction—continued to be urged against him by his ill-wishers.

The suppression of the Pindaris had been sanctioned by Canning in 1816; but the authorities in London maintained a consistent incapacity for recognising the necessity of the consequences involved. The great extension of British territory accompanied by the formal acceptance of ever-increasing responsibilities which it would have been a crime towards the weaker States at least to ignore, found no favour in London; while ministers applauded the accomplishment of great military achievements, they regretted the inevitable appearance of insatiable ambition: and when ministers regretted, Directors displayed active hostility. Moreover though the result of the war was to place the Indian treasury in a more completely satisfactory position than had been known for many years, the outlay was of course enormous, and the Company had ever an intense aversion to casting its bread upon the waters. Also, Hastings had a perverse determination to put the best men in positions of responsibility, whereas the directors considered that their own totally irrelevant wishes should be paramount.

Conduct of  
the India  
House.

Thus the tone of the India House had for some time been captious; on the affair of Palmer & Co. Hastings regarded it as a tantamount to a censure: and he resigned.

Retire-  
ment of  
Lord  
Hastings.





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## EXTENSION OF SUPREMACY

CSL

His resignation was accepted, with formal compliments; but it was strictly in accordance with precedent that two years later the India House practically censured him as guilty in the Palmer matter—only six years after raising a statue to Warren Hastings, who died in 1818.



## CHAPTER XVI

BETWEEN LORD HASTINGS AND LORD  
AUCKLAND*(Map I.)*

THERE was some doubt as to who should succeed Lord Hastings. George Canning had actually been ap-<sup>Amherst.</sup> pointed, when the death of Castlereagh made him elect to remain at Westminster. The choice then remained between Lord William Bentinck, to whom reparation was owed for his recall from Madras, and Lord Amherst who had conducted an embassy to China with credit and had suffered from shipwreck and other troubles in connection therewith. Amherst was chosen. Bentinck's turn was to come later.

Hastings left India in Jan. 1823, the administration being conducted in the interim by Mr Adam: and it was not till some months had passed that his successor arrived, to find trouble brewing in a new quarter.

The rulers of Hindostan had never carried their dominion into the mountains on the East of Bengal. Chittagong, <sup>"Further India."</sup> lying east of the delta of the Brahmaputra, was included in the Bengal province; otherwise the Brahmaputra valley was in effect its eastern limit, passing along the frontiers of Assam and of the hill tribes of Manipur and Lushai. Immediately south of Chittagong was the kingdom (at one time) of Arakan, south of that Pegu, and south of that the coast of Tenasserim. In the latter half of the eighteenth century, Arakan, Pegu, Tenasserim, and the whole basin of the Irawadi, besides Assam, were absorbed into the kingdom of Burma with its capital at Ava. It was the action of the Burmese monarchy which forced upon the new Governor-





Retrospect  
of relations  
with  
Burma.

General a not very glorious and a particularly expensive war, and a quite unpremeditated extension of territory.

As early as the rule of Sir John Shore, the Burmese monarchy had come in contact with the British. Fugitives from Arakan had sought an asylum in Chittagong; the Burmese troops followed them: and Shore declined to shelter the fugitives, provided that the Burmese would keep to their own territories. Consequently the Burmese supposed that the British were a feeble folk. Not long after, several thousands of Arakanese again took flight into British territory. Wellesley was Governor-General, and they were not surrendered; on the contrary they made several armed invasions into Arakan from their new quarters. Three missions were however sent at intervals to Ava; but since their instructions were in each case conciliatory, the earlier impressions of the Burmese court were confirmed. Moreover, the Burmese authorities were as ignorant of affairs outside as the Chinese, and suffered from a similar mental inflation. Therefore, when during the lapse of several years the British steadily declined to surrender the Arakanese, the king of Ava in 1818 sent to Lord Hastings, demanding the restoration of his territories of Chittagong, Dakka and Murshedabad! The communication was returned to the king by Hastings with the remark that of course it was a forgery.

Collision  
with the  
Burmese.

Now the Burmese possessed a by no means contemptible general named Bandula, who was quite confident of his own ability to conquer the British: and the desire to try conclusions developed not only at the Court but all over the country. There is a small island, where the borders of Chittagong and Arakan meet. This the British had always regarded as their own. In 1823 the Governor-General thought it necessary to place a guard on the island. The Burmese sent a force which ejected the guard and took possession. Lord Amherst ejected the ejectors, and wrote to the king saying that his government wished for peace but would find themselves forced to retaliate if persistently insulted. So Bandula prepared to invade Bengal, and the Burmese Governor of Pegu was instructed to inform the



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Governor-General that he had better make his petition to Bandula, as the "Lord of the White Elephant" would receive no more communications. After that, it was sufficiently obvious that a declaration of war was the only course open: and war was declared in Feb. 1824.

Ignorance of the country was the great obstacle with which the British had to contend. There was a strong conviction that any attempt to enter Burma by land would be disastrous from pestilence and the want of supplies. So the plan was devised of sending the expedition by sea to Rangoon, on the hypothesis that it could then proceed up the Irawadi. The Bengal army was largely composed of high-caste Hindus, under a religious prohibition against crossing the sea. The Madras troops being drawn from the lower castes did not feel the same objection; therefore the expedition was made up of Europeans and Madras sepoys.

Plan of  
Campaign:  
1824.

The armament reached Rangoon in May. The town was promptly occupied, but the entire population disappeared from it into the jungle leaving it denuded of every species of supplies. Then came the rains, and with them malaria and dysentery; while the troops were fed on the provisions procured from Calcutta contractors. Calcutta contractors were notorious. The exertions of Sir Thomas Munro, now Governor of Madras, only sufficed to save the situation—but the army was forced to remain almost inactive till nearly the end of the year.

Operations of  
1824.

Bandula had started on his invasion of Bengal, also in May. An unsupported British outpost in Chittagong had suffered disaster at his hands; but he was recalled in order to deal with the counter-invasion in Pegu. In December, he arrived before the British position at Rangoon, with sixty thousand men, who threw up a stockade behind which they prepared pits with great rapidity and dexterity. But a fight on December 7 followed by another on the 15th caused him to fall back to a position several miles up the river.

The British General, Sir Archibald Campbell, did not however advance till February. Bandula in his entrenchments repulsed the column sent against him, and the general

Operations of  
1825:  
Spring.





advance was delayed till April 1st, when Bandula was killed by a bursting shell, and his army beat a hasty retreat. The British proceeded as far as Prome, which they occupied without resistance, but the rainy season set in, and again stopped offensive operations.

Two other expeditions set out by the routes rejected in the previous year—one by way of Manipur, the other into Arakan. The first found the country hopelessly impassable the moment the rains set in; which they did as early as February. The commander could see no alternative to withdrawal. Morrison in Arakan progressed very slowly; and as soon as the rains began, the greater part of his army was prostrated by disease which killed large numbers, though they found no other enemy to fight.

Operations of 1825: Autumn. As the year passed on, the British offered to negotiate; but the court of Ava though less confident of the invincibility of its army, refused to agree to the cession of Tenasserim and Arakan, with the payment of a heavy indemnity. Another army was collected, but suffered a complete defeat, and the Burmese reopened negotiations. Their envoys agreed to everything except the amount of the indemnity, which was then reduced. But while the ratification of the treaty was being awaited the enemy strengthened their entrenchments. Therefore on Jan. 19 the British attacked and routed them, capturing all their guns and stores, and marched towards the

End of the war. capital. A last desperate effort was made with a force of some 16,000 men—all that the Burmese could collect—to crush the British force which now had less than a tenth of that number in its fighting line. The attack was completely defeated; and the Lord of the White Elephant accepted the British terms. Assam, Arakan and Tenasserim were ceded; Manipur was declared independent; a heavy indemnity was paid; and the presence of a British Resident at Ava was assented to.

Considerations thereon. The most remarkable result of the war was the amazing development of the resources of the three ceded provinces, which had not been supposed to have much value. The war itself had been in many respects a disastrous one. It had been declared on Feb. 24, 1824: the treaty of



peace was signed on Feb. 24, 1826 after precisely two years. As a mere matter of fighting the troops opposed to us were of less account than any of our previous antagonists; but there was much gross mismanagement which, coupled with the effects of the climate, caused an appalling amount of disease and a very heavy mortality; attributed by the sepoys to the magic arts of the enemy. To hold back from the war would have been impossible, and the subsequent accession of territory was inevitable—the more so as the population of the ceded districts detested the Burmese rule, which was peculiarly unenlightened.

One unfortunate incident must be noticed—the mutiny of a sepoy regiment at Barrackpur close to Calcutta. The soldiers had been expected to pay for the transport of their own baggage; but this regiment, which was under orders to march for Arakan, asked to be relieved on the ground that the transport expenses were exceptionally high. Their memorial, a perfectly proper one, was curtly rejected by the military authorities. The officers had only been with the regiment for three months, and had not acquired influence; the men became insubordinate. Two European regiments were brought up to the spot by night; the sepoys were paraded and ordered to march or ground arms. They would do neither. The Europeans opened fire on them. No resistance was made: numbers were killed; the ring-leaders were executed and the remainder sent to work in irons. Next year these were pardoned. After the point of mutiny had been reached, it is probable enough that any less severe action would have had a disastrous result; but if the men had been fairly met at first, there would never have been any mutiny.

The  
Barrack-  
pur  
Mutiny.

If the memory of disaster is quickly wiped out by victories, the memory of victories is still more quickly wiped out by disaster. The contrast between the swift successes of Lord Hastings and the dreary drag of the Burmese war, agitated the minds of the Indian population, and there was danger of fresh disturbances. For a moment affairs at Bhartpur, the Jat principality west of the Jamna, before whose fortress Lake had so signally failed some years before, became

Trouble at  
Bhartpur:  
1725.





extremely threatening. The succession of a child to the throne was officially recognised: but the child was dispossessed a month later by a cousin named Durjan Sal. Ochterlony, who had been fighting in the Company's armies ever since the days of Haidar Ali, was in charge of the Rajputana and Malwa district. He promptly ordered up a British field force to establish the rightful Raja and vindicate British authority. But in doing so, he exceeded his legal powers; to proceed against Bhartpur meant besieging it again: the place was of immense strength, and had baffled Lake completely in 1805: a fresh failure would certainly have very serious results. Government, which was by no means on the best of terms with the old soldier, snubbed him, and countermanded the force. Durjan Sal, who had manifested a disposition to yield, was encouraged to believe that the British were afraid. Ochterlony, who was perfectly confident of his ability to capture Bhartpur, resigned his position in bitterness of spirit. There were thousands of fighting men deprived of their occupation by the recent settlement, who now flocked to Durjan Sal's standard: disaffection became generally recrudescent. These events took place in 1825, while India was very doubtful as to the probable issue of the Burmese war. The Calcutta Council was divided as to the proper course to take. Thither however came Metcalfe, on his way from Haidarabad to replace Ochterlony in the North-West. With the facts before him, his opinion was emphatic. The circumstances absolutely demanded that the British should assert themselves unmistakably. The Governor-General bowed to his judgment. Metcalfe proceeded to Delhi, and tried a preliminary expostulation with Durjan Sal who continued recalcitrant. The princes of Upper India, deluded by the belief that Burma was exhausting the entire British resources, were surprised by the appearance of an army of twenty thousand men. The great fortifications which Lake had persistently attempted to storm, fell before the science of the Engineers, and in January 1826, the capture of Bhartpur obliterated the misconceptions of twenty years. There was no longer an "impregnable" fortress left. The achievement

Capture of  
Bhartpur.



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was more convincing to the Native mind than all the successes of the Pindari campaigns: and removed all remaining inclination to challenge the supremacy of British arms.

Bhartpur was the decisive expression of an already accomplished fact. Between the Burmese annexations of 1826 and the conquest of Sindh in 1843 there was no further territorial expansion; nor any serious military operations till the Afghan expedition of 1839. The attention of the Governors-General was concentrated on administration and progress. The further dealings with Native States, up to the time of Lord Auckland may be treated in a few paragraphs.

Amherst was succeeded in 1828 by Lord William Bentinck, formerly Governor of Madras, whose benevolent and progressive government received its merited and eloquent eulogium from the brilliant pen of Macaulay. In his dealings with the Native States among which British Ascendancy was accepted, he was controlled by the emphatic instructions from England to maintain the habit of non-intervention. The unfortunate effects of the extreme application of this policy, especially in Oudh and at Gwalior became apparent in after years.

After the death of Daulat Rao Sindhia in 1827, the affairs of that State fell into considerable disorder, resulting ultimately in the undue predominance of the soldiery therein, which had to be terminated by the campaign of Maharajpur in the time of Lord Ellenborough. In Oudh, the misgovernment became so serious that even the India House authorised annexation in the last resort; but Bentinck contented himself with remonstrances and threats, periodically renewed, but not enforced till the end of Dalhousie's administration.

Some interference however was made necessary by mal-administration in the Rajput State of Jeipur, where a permanent Resident was finally appointed, who exercised a salutary influence. Bentinck also found himself compelled not to annex, but to take over the administration of Mysore; where however the dynasty has since been re-instated in authority. Affairs there had prospered under the first





minister appointed by Wellesley ; but after his death anarchy had developed, and it was the actual revolt of the population against the government which necessitated Bentinck's action—an action received with the complete acquiescence of the Mysore State itself.

The small State of Kurg on the south of Mysore, which had actively helped us against Tippu Sahib was in a somewhat similar manner annexed on account of the general violence of its ruler ; and the little province of Kachar, on the borders of Assam and Manipur, was by its own desire, on the death of its Raja without an heir, added to the British dominion.

Metcalfe  
Governor-  
General *ad*  
*interim.*

In 1835, Sir Charles Metcalfe succeeded to the Governor-Generalship ; but in spite of a strong body of opinion which recognised his essential fitness for the post, his appointment was not confirmed in London, and ultimately after long delay the post was bestowed upon Lord Auckland, who went to India in 1836.

Metcalfe had an unusually strong title to exceptional treatment, but was prepared to return to the position of Governor of the North-West Provinces or of Madras. During his tenure of the Governor-Generalship, however, he had taken a strong and independent line in releasing the Press from the strict Government control to which it had hitherto been subjected. This step was distasteful to the India House ; and not only was he passed over for Madras, but the North-West provinces were once more reduced to a Lieutenant-Governorship before the appointment there was again offered to him. The slight was too grave ; and Metcalfe resigned the Indian service, to follow out his distinguished career in Canada and elsewhere.

Appoint-  
ment of  
Lord  
Auckland.

With Lord Auckland's administration there commenced a new era of warfare, with its inevitable result of expanding dominion, reaching its climax in the rule of Lord Dalhousie and the transfer of the Government from the Company to the Crown in consequence of the great Mutiny.



## CHAPTER XVII

## THE SYSTEM

A STAGE has now been reached in the story of the British Expansion, at which it becomes practicable to give a connected review of the machinery by which the expanding rule was made effective, and of the results which that rule brought into being.

In the early days of British dominion, the whole system of government was tentative, experimental, amounting to very little more than a makeshift. Between 1760 and 1765 it was no better than that of the Afghan Nawabs. Clive's last visit had wrought considerable improvements. Then came the open assumption of the Diwani, North's Regulating Act, and the Governor-Generalship of Hastings. That temporary constitution has been already examined. In 1785 it was replaced by the new Constitution framed under Pitt's India Act, which remained substantially in force until the Act renewing the Company's Charter in 1833; from which time until the suppression of the Company in 1858 no grave change was introduced.

Now in 1785, the British dominion proper extended on the Ganges over Bengal, Behar, and certain ceded districts on the east of Oudh, forming the Bengal Presidency: the Northern Sarkars, and some districts in the Carnatic, forming the Madras Presidency; and some districts in the neighbourhood of Bombay, forming the Bombay Presidency; the whole extent of which may be seen at a glance on the map (VIII. A). As new districts were acquired, those south of the Krishna River were attached to Madras; those on the west of the Nizam's dominions to Bombay; and the rest to the dominating Presidency of Bengal. In course of time the great accumulation of new territories attached to Bengal led

First stages of Ascendancy.

The growth of the three Presidencies.





to the institution of separate Lieutenant-Governorships or Commissionerships within the Presidency, such as the North-West Provinces—*i.e.* the Ganges districts above Behar—the Central Provinces, Arakan, and the Panjab; but the army in all was the Bengal army.

The Constitution of 1784.

Primarily then, the Constitution of 1784 recognised the three Presidencies, each having its own Governor, its own Council, its own army, and its own Commander-in-Chief. But the Governor, Council and Commander-in-Chief in Bengal were also supreme over the Madras and Bombay authorities. With them lay the making of treaties, of war, of peace. Bombay could not again drag the Governor-General into a war, as it had done with Warren Hastings over Ragoba's affairs, nor could Madras make havoc of the results of a successful campaign as it had done in Mysore in 1784. As yet however, the two minor Presidencies were independent in the matter of legislation.

Technical powers of the Governor-General.

The supreme government in India, then, was that of the Governor-General in Council. The other members of the Council being now three in number, the support of one of them sufficed to ensure that there should be no such unseemly thwartings of the Chief as had made the tenure of office by Warren Hastings so incomparably and unreasonably difficult. Further, the Governor-General had power to act on emergency without consulting his Council. Thus when immediate action was necessary, he was no longer under the necessity of submitting to formal checks and delays, or to the risk of being hampered by unprofitable hesitations. At the same time, no practical danger existed of the liberty being abused, since he was liable to be called to account, and to be compelled subsequently to justify the treatment of any particular crisis as an emergency.

On the other hand, he was obliged to exercise what almost amounted to the authority of an autocrat on the spot with an eye to the supreme authority in England. He was in fact much in the position of the Manager of a Company whose Board lays down the general principles of policy, but leaves him a large latitude in neglecting the letter of their instructions provided that he can point to a reasonable

His practical powers.



justification in the circumstances for his having done so. Thus, according to Cornwallis's instructions, he was taking a risk in going to war with Mysore without express permission from home; but the London authorities commended him for having done so. Wellesley carried out his policy at his own risk, dragging a more or less reluctant assent after the act from London, until at last London refused to assent any longer. His successors would not venture to ride roughshod over the sentiments of the home authorities, trusting to the accomplished fact as their justification: but Lord Hastings succeeded in carrying them with him sufficiently far for the execution of his plans, though in the interval Lord Minto had been restrained from the degree of activity which he himself rightly deemed desirable. But in any case, the home authorities could be absolutely secure that each of their Governors-General left England with views in substantial agreement with their own; and the Governor-General knew that if his own views at starting became materially changed, he would either have to subordinate them, or to convert the home authorities, or to take the risk of being recalled, censured, and possibly impeached.

The Home authorities were on one side the Company, The Board of Control. on the other the Parliamentary Board of Control. In all political matters the initiative as well as the guidance lay with the latter body, which was required by the Act of 1793, renewing the Charter, to meet for the authorisation of dispatches. This Board consisted originally of sundry members of the Privy Council and two others; the Charter Acts of 1793 and 1813 left it unaltered, but that of 1833 made some additional Ministers *ex officio* members. As a matter of practice however, it appears that the whole of the real work of the Board was done by the President and a couple of secretaries; acting no doubt largely in accordance with the recommendations of the Directors.

The partial abolition of the Company's monopolies by the Charter Act of 1813 led to a more careful consideration on its part of political problems; and this change was made more complete by the act of 1833; the last also modifying the Constitution of the Indian Governments. By it, the Charter Acts of 1813 and 1833.





legislative powers of the Presidencies were subordinated to the supreme Government. Moreover, the Supreme Government was now made to consist of the Governor-General, three members of the Company's service (one being military) and a legislative member from home. If the Governor-General was not also Commander-in-Chief—functions which had been combined several times, when he was an experienced soldier—the Commander-in-Chief might act as an extra member of Council.

Within the actual British Dominion, then, Government was in the hands of the Presidency Governors-in-Council, except so far as they were subordinate to the Supreme Government at Calcutta: while the deposed sovereigns or their families enjoyed ample pensions, retaining in sundry cases something of the pomp and circumstance of royalty, but absolutely without power. Within the sphere of Ascendancy—practically that is where subsidiary alliances prevailed—Government lay with the Native Durbar, but external relations were controlled by the British Supreme Government, acting through a Resident or Agent at the Capital, who also exercised some degree of informal influence in domestic affairs. These officers might be either civilians or soldiers, and the proportion of the latter increased as time went on, the appointment to their posts resting with the supreme Government. The employment of soldiers as "politicals" is one of the notable features of the system, and a certain jealousy between the Services is occasionally observable in the memoirs of distinguished members of both branches; though it would be extremely difficult to award the palm of superiority to either, where services so brilliant were rendered by both.

The Company's Service. Until the conquest of Bengal, the civilian servants of the Company in India had been in fact clerks of various grades in a great commercial concern. Then in spite of themselves the clerks were forced to learn the business of government. Warren Hastings had to initiate the process by which they were to be converted into administrators. It was many years however before the Company began to feel that trade was no longer its own primary *raison d'être*, and also



that of its civilian employes. But the facts were too strong, and under persistent pressure from one Governor-General after another, from Cornwallis onwards, the training and the character of the Civil Service improved till it became a body of quite exceptional efficiency and capacity. Its more brilliant members found their way into the ranks of the Residents and Agents, Commissioners, Deputy Commissioners, Members of Council. The functions of the general body were associated either with revenue or judicial business or both, according as the working system was from time to time modified.

Bengal was the birth-place of British administration; for many years its only field. Before North's Regulating Act, the Company had already "stood forth as Diwani" and begun to lay upon its servants the duties of Collectors and Magistrates, though as yet the native servants of the titular Nawab exercised functions both in the revenue and judicial departments. By North's Act, the new Judicial element of the Supreme Court was introduced, with results at the time which have been already examined: while the responsible revenue offices were withdrawn from the natives.

Early administrative methods.

Under Hastings then, the judicial system was at first as follows. In the several districts of Bengal, a civil court, and a criminal court were established, the European Collector being in charge not only of the Revenue but also of the Civil Court: while the Criminal Court retained its native judges, administering the Mohammedan law. Two corresponding Courts of Appeal were established at Calcutta, the Governor presiding in the civil court, and a Mohammedan judge in the criminal. In the districts the Collector, and at Calcutta the Governor, exercised a certain supervision over the Mohammedan Courts. On the arrival of the Supreme Court, consisting of judges from England, these claimed entire control of the judicial system, administering the Law according to the canons of Westminster; with the disastrous results we have seen, until something like a working compromise was arrived at by Hastings and Impey. In 1780, regulations were issued, under which the ordinary Civil





Courts were placed under officers appointed thereto, instead of the Collectors; but the Collectors retained the charge of Revenue suits.

Changes under Cornwallis. In 1787, however, under Cornwallis, there was first a reversion; the Collectors again becoming the Civil judges. Moreover their jurisdiction was at the same time extended to minor criminal offences. But in 1790, owing to the prevalence of crimes of violence, another step was taken. Four Courts of Circuits were appointed for the administration of Criminal justice in Bengal and Behar, each under two British Judges appointed from the Company's servants. The Governor-General and Council at the same time took over the Criminal Court of Appeal in Calcutta. The Mohammedan law remained except for the abolition of such barbaric forms of punishment as mutilation. Finally the junction in one person of the offices of Civil Judge and Collector proved to be dangerous in working, because it enabled an unprincipled officer to confirm in one capacity his own derelictions of duty in the other; hence before Cornwallis left India, the judicial and the revenue functions were completely separated, and the principle which Warren Hastings had attempted to establish was vindicated. Further, four "Provincial" Courts of Appeal were established, intervening between the lower courts and the "*Sadr Adalat*" or Court of Final Appeal at Calcutta.

Changes under Bentinck. The system remained unchanged till the time of Lord William Bentinck, who once more turned over some of the judicial functions to the Revenue Department: to the detriment of the magisterial work, which the Collector was apt to regard as a mere appendage to his normal duties. But another change effected by him was of a very different order. It was a fundamental part of the Cornwallis system to exclude Natives from any but the lowest offices. Hence on the one hand the Natives had a grievance, and on the other there were not enough Europeans to do the work. Bentinck considerably extended the openings for Natives, and during his term of office, the dispatches from London definitely laid it down as a principle that colour or creed as such were no longer to debar from office. The removal of



the legal barrier by no means abolished the practical barrier; but did render it no longer insurmountable.

Subject to some modifications, the system in force in Bengal applied to the territories acquired up to Lord Minto's time, and to the bulk of those acquired under Lord Hastings: which were inclusively termed Regulation Provinces. In the Sikh Cis-Satlej territories, however, in central India, and in Burma, known as Non-regulation provinces, administrative posts were to a great extent entrusted to soldiers, and the system was allowed to shape itself much more according to the peculiar circumstances of the district; large latitude and independence being allowed to the officers there: a rule applying generally where British Ascendancy had been less felt before it was transformed into Dominion.

Generally then in the sphere of Government and judicial administration certain periods may be observed. First the tentative period, at the close of which Warren Hastings had fore-shadowed the principles which ultimately guided us, but which he was not always allowed to carry out. Second, the period of the Cornwallis system, practically synchronous with the domination at home of Pitt and his Tory successors. Third, the modified system initiated under Lord William Bentinck, and by the Charter Act of 1833: corresponding with the era initiated in Home affairs by the struggle over the Reform Bill. The good and the evil of the political ideas prevailing at home during each of these periods finds its counterpart, of course with modifications, in the Government of Britain's great dependency: just as we have already noted the reflection in Indian politics of European complications.

To one branch of the service however these considerations do not apply, and it remains to conclude this chapter with a brief account of the Army.

The troops employed in India were of two branches—the King's army, and the Company's three armies. The former were British regiments, sent out to take their turn of service in India. The latter were almost entirely Native regiments, with a small number of regiments of Europeans raised and paid by the Company for the Company's service. In each of the three armies of Bengal, Madras and Bombay, the general

Regulation and Non-regulation Provinces.  
Three administrative periods.

The Army in India.





principles were the same. In the Native regiments, all the commissioned officers were British, while the non-commissioned officers were promoted from the native rank and file. But there were characteristic differences of detail. In the Bengal army, promotion went practically by seniority; in the other two, mainly by selection. The Bengal army was recruited mainly from the Brahmins and Rajputs of the upper Ganges with a leaven of Mussulmans; Hindostanis. In southern India, where the proportion of Brahmins and especially of Rajputs to the general population was very much smaller, the bulk of the regiments were drawn from lower castes; though in Bombay, the Hindostani element was considerable. Now, the higher the caste, the more stringent are the regulations and observances required of the pious Hindu, the heavier are the penalties attached to breaches thereof, and the greater is the danger of a collision between the demands of military and religious obedience. Hence the risk of such a collision was greater in the Bengal army than in those of Madras and Bombay. Added to this, the mixture of castes in the southern armies tended to produce a purely regimental esprit-de-corps; while the system of recruiting in the North gave scope for an extra-regimental clan or family bond among the soldiers, which when they were loyal would be an element of strength, but if they turned disloyal became an element of indiscipline. Moreover the southern plan of promotion by merit, while apt to cause jealousies, still gave control to men who by the fact of their promotion were attached to the system, and *ceteris paribus* were more likely to offer a decisive opposition to anything like mutiny. The utmost care was indeed required even in Madras, as the Vellur affair proved: but the Burmese war also proved that demands might be made on the Madrasis which could not with safety be pressed upon the Hindostanis.

It has further to be noted that every annexation of territory and every subsidiary alliance entailed an increase in the number of sepoy regiments, and ought for safety's sake to have been accompanied—though it never was—by a proportionate increase in the number of King's regiments or at



least of the Company's Europeans. If the sepoy was to have a master, he preferred the "*Sahib*"; but owing to the disregard of this precaution, a time came when he became possessed with the idea that he could dispense with masters altogether.





## CHAPTER XVIII

## LAND SETTLEMENT

Land taxation the main source of Indian revenue.

IN India, the prime source of revenue is the Land, and it is from the land that the great mass of the inhabitants derive their maintenance. The Land "settlements" therefore are of vital importance both in the fiscal and the social system. The subject is unattractive to the ordinary reader, and it is particularly complicated because the actual historical facts are often in dispute, and are made more confusing by being translated in terms of Western half-analogies. In the present chapter, we shall endeavour to make clear the different methods of settlement adopted in different parts of the peninsula, the reason for the differences, and their effects.

At all times it had been a matter of course that whatever other taxes might be levied, the Government claimed a share of the produce of the soil. The assessment of the value of the produce, the share to be so appropriated, and the method of collection, all lay with the ruling Power for the time being, and had varied considerably. So did the tenures under which the cultivators occupied the lands they tilled.

The Mogul system.

When the Mogul dominion had been in full and undisputed force, the system followed had been roughly as follows. The land was parcelled out into considerable districts: the amount of land under cultivation and the nature of the crops were ascertained; from this the normal yield was estimated, and so the amount to be paid to the Government by each district was arrived at. A collector was appointed for the district who was responsible for paying over the sum fixed on to the Government, less the amount of his own allowance; and it was his business to see that the amount which he collected was not less than that which



he had to pay. The collector was called an *āmil* or a *zemindār*, and the collectorship, and the district a *zemindāri*. The *zemindār*. Officers were in many cases given districts, as a reward for services, without having to pay the assessed tax to the Government, on condition of rendering certain military services. A district so assigned was called a *jāghir*, and the officer a *jāghirdār*. The grant of a *zemindari* or a *jāghir* was not in form hereditary, but in practice both became so, subject as a rule to the payment of fines on succession. Technically, the Sovereign retained the right of resuming either *jāghir* or *zemindari* at pleasure.

The persons from whom the *zemindar* claimed the tax or rent varied according to the locality. It might be the individual cultivator. It might be the Village Community, an institution to which we shall presently revert. It might be a local chief, recognised by his clansmen as the lord of the soil.

Now it was not unusual for the office of *zemindar* to have been conferred on one of these local chiefs, who might be regarded as having something resembling a proprietary right dating from a remote antiquity. But the *zemindar*, as such, had no proprietary right; he merely held a position which he had a reasonable expectation would in the ordinary course be continued to him and his heirs, subject always to the caprice of the Monarch.

Where the regulation methods of the Moguls had been less generally enforced, as for instance in the Southern and Western Dekhan, the *zemindar* here generally known as a *poligar* was less prominent, or non-existent; the office was not hereditary, and the individual was not permanently associated with the district.

Such were the main features of the prevalent system or Want of systems in operation when the British first began to exercise security. dominion. The actual assessment was liable to arbitrary revision. The share demanded by Government was liable to arbitrary enhancement. The tenure of the rent or tax-collector's office might, from the Government point of view, be merely temporary or practically hereditary; his status, from the peasant's point of view, might be that of a





Highland chief or that of a magnified excisema. And the actual cultivators held their plots in virtue of no legal enactments but in accordance with infinitely varying local usages. To Western eyes, the system wore the appearance not of system at all but of chaos. All that it was possible for Warren Hastings to do was to endeavour to extract from the chaos some guiding principles, and on them to base tentative but necessarily very defective arrangements.

When Lord Cornwallis arrived in Bengal, the subject absorbed a great share of his attention, and that of some of his most capable subordinates, notably Shore.

Bengal. Throughout Bengal and Behar, and the Sarkars—the regions which now practically made up the British Dominion—the Mogul system was in full force. The country was divided into zemindaris. Nearly always, the zemindars were Hindus, since for financial purposes the Hindus had always been better agents than Mussulmans. Within the last half century, several of the great zemindars had been elevated to the rank, and bore the title, of rajas.

Superficially, these zemindars presented a considerable analogy to the great landlords, the County Families of England. Guided by that analogy, Cornwallis constructed the Permanent Settlement of Bengal.

The English landowner. Under the English system, the welfare of the whole agricultural community is largely dependent on the prosperity of the landlord class. A century ago, the landowner in theory at least, was the source of all progress in the rural population: it was he who found the money for improvements, encouraged industry and thrift, and preserved the spirit of order and loyalty in the peasantry. In general, he might be trusted to be generous according to his lights; and anything which would have tended seriously to diminish his influence would have been accounted a misfortune. His position was secure, unless he forfeited it by grave misconduct or folly: and his security was in no small degree the cause of his usefulness.

Theory of the zemindari settlement. Thus it was argued that if the zemindar were given the same security he would have the same inducements to exercise his influence and to spend his money for the



general benefit, looking for his return to the increased value of his property. Moreover he would acquire a strong interest in the maintenance of the Government to whom he owed his security. In short, just as in England, the proprietary right in the soil was for the most part vested in landowners, while the cultivation was carried on by their tenants, so also it should be in Bengal: the cultivator holding from the zemindar under the conditions established by custom.

The vital matter then was that the zemindar should feel that he was not going to be displaced, and that if he spent his money on improvements, the Government would not step in and demand an increased rent from him.

To attain this object, the land was assessed; the rent or tax to be paid by the zemindar was then fixed, and was established in permanence.

The actual result was that the zemindars of Bengal and Behar did become a loyal body, and kept firmly to their allegiance when the mutiny came: they did not, however, fulfil the expectations of Cornwallis in introducing agricultural improvements; and no opportunity was left for anyone but the zemindars themselves to profit by the system. Improvements in the value of the land might come from the energy of the cultivators, from the action of the zemindars, from the general effects of a strong Government which prevented war and pillage, from specific measures of the Government such as irrigation works; the profit in each case went to the zemindar, except where the cultivator could show that he had a title to the benefit of his own improvements.

The Cornwallis Settlement was the archetype of all zemindari settlements; those, that is, in which the cultivator held from the zemindar, the zemindar held from the Government, and the Government claimed its rent or land-tax not from the cultivator or from a group of cultivators but from the zemindars—whether these intermediaries were of old or recent standing. In his capacity as a tenant from the Government, the zemindar got what he never had before—fair rent, fixity of tenure, and freedom of transfer. The

The Permanent Settlement: its effect on the zemindar.





only legitimate ground for his ejection was his failure to pay the rent. But as landlord, he was bound in his treatment of the cultivators to act in accord with established usages, and to justify an enhancement of rentals before the Court when challenged.

**Its defect.** In making the settlement absolutely permanent Cornwallis acted against the judgment of Shore. In the view of the latter, a fully sufficient security would have been given by fixing the settlement not in perpetuity but for a long term of years. The contrast between that security and the previous capricious tenure would have satisfied the zemindars, and have given them not much less inducement to devote energy and money to getting the most out of the land. On the other hand it would have enabled the Government ultimately to participate in the increased profits of production and of the new land brought under cultivation; and also to readjust the relations of the zemindar and the cultivator in the light of a wider and more accurate knowledge of the traditional rights of the latter.

Experience has endorsed Shore's view. The Permanent Settlement deprived the Government of future days of what would have become a perfectly legitimate source of revenue that would have entailed no sort of hardship or injustice on the zemindars; and also made it impossible to confer on the cultivators or restore to them proprietary rights which might have been desirable. Still in its broad outline, the Cornwallis Settlement was a valuable piece of legislation, which, without being intended to do so, in fact revolutionised, greatly for the better, the pre-existing state of affairs.

The accession of territory in Southern India consequent upon the Mysore wars of Cornwallis and Wellesley made a settlement necessary in the newly acquired districts. The leading principle was to adapt and regulate the existing system. The Bengal settlement was an adaptation of the existing zemindari system. In the South, Haider Ali and Tippu had worked something of the kind, but it was not the traditional system, and the zemindari was not an established institution. Here the name most closely

The Ryot-  
war settle-  
ment,  
Madras.



connected with the Settlement is that of Sir Thomas Munro.

Munro was one of the remarkable trio of Scotsmen, all of very much the same standing, who did much to mould the future of India during the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Although one of the three was a civilian, Elphinstone, all of them rendered distinguished service in the field; all displayed great ability as administrators; all were diplomatists of a high order. Twice while still a young man Malcolm, the third, was the chosen envoy to Persia of the Indian Government; it was he who nipped in the bud the attempt of the Indur Marathas to take active part in the Pindari war, and he to whom the Peshwa surrendered.

Elphinstone, when four and twenty, rode by the side of Arthur Wellesley in the Maratha Campaign of 1803; when the great soldier told him that nature had meant him for a soldier—a judgment ratified by the skill and resource with which he baffled the Marathas at Kirki, having performed with great ability the functions of Resident at Puna, at the court of the crafty Baji Rao, as well as those of first envoy to Kabul in 1808. To him, when the war was over, was entrusted the Settlement of the districts added to the Bombay Presidency, a task carried out in the light of Munro's example in the Madras territory.

Of Munro's talents as a soldier, the fact that Arthur Wellesley invited his criticisms of the campaign of 1803 is a sufficient proof, ratified again by his skilful operations in the southern Dekhan during the last Maratha war: but perhaps his highest title to fame is that he led the way in the great work of endeavouring to establish the land-settlement on the basis of customs understood and prevalent, instead of on theories derived from misleading western analogies. He was little more than a boy when with Major Read as his superior he examined and reported on the tenures in the Baramahal district just ceded by Tippu to Cornwallis. A little later, he had like work to do in Canara, and finally after Tippu's fall in the "ceded districts," or territories lying between Mysore and the Nizam's dominions.

The system established is distinguished as the *Ryotwāri*.





The *Raiyat*, or in familiar spelling Ryot, is the term for a peasant cultivator; under the system, he holds direct from the Government, with no intervening landlord; hence the name Ryotwari, as the name zemindari applies where it is the zemindar who holds from the Government.

The essence then of the Ryotwari system is that the proprietary right in the soil belongs to the Ryot: though it may be questioned whether the term "proprietary" is not somewhat strained both in his case and in the zemindar's, the Government having the right of resumption if the rent is unpaid. The primary object of the zemindari settlement, economically, is to give the landlord a direct interest in improving his estate; that of the Ryotwari is to give the cultivator a like incentive. The valuation was made and the Government rental fixed for an extended term of years, giving the cultivator his fair rent, freedom of transfer, and practical fixity of tenure. A good deal of misapprehension however has arisen from the fact that an annual assessment was necessitated by the Ryot's privilege of surrendering a part of his holding or taking up a new holding hitherto waste. The rent in consequence fluctuated according to the changes in the boundaries of the ryot's holding, and hence an impression arose that the assessment of the plots under cultivation was annually revised. Nothing of the kind occurred under the zemindari settlements, where the zemindari included jungle, and the assessment was not affected by its being brought under cultivation or lapsing into non-cultivation.

The Ryot-  
wari settle-  
ment,  
Bombay.

The subsequent appropriation of Maratha territories under Lord Hastings led to a ryotwari settlement on very similar lines in the new territory, under the management of Mountstuart Elphinstone, in the Western Dekhan. It is to be noted that in these settlements the share claimed by the Government was considerably lower than that demanded by its native predecessors: and further, that the individual ryot was dealt with. The previously existing usage, which had treated the whole group forming a village as being responsible for the rent of each member, was abolished. If the individual failed to pay his rent, he lost his holding and Government lost the rent; whereas the agents of



Haider and Tipu had compelled the village to make up the amount. There was nothing unjust in the old system; essentially the Village Community had been looked upon as the real unit, and so regarded itself: but as yet the communal idea had not become familiar to the British mind, which gave a readier acceptance to the ultra-individualist doctrines of Jeremy Bentham.

Under a ryotwari settlement then, nothing even remotely resembling a landlord class existed: though there was a brief interval, when Barlow was Governor of Madras, during which an attempt was made, but soon abandoned to create a class of zemindars.

In the next great settlement, however, the Village Community played a more important part. This was in the North-West Provinces, that is the districts on the Jamna and Ganges above Behar, the country to which the name Hindostan is applied in its narrowest signification. Here the Permanent Settlement had not been introduced, assessments had been made for short terms, and no principle recognising ownership in the soil had been established. It was resolved under Lord William Bentinck to organise a settlement on a lasting basis; of which the ground-work was laid down by Robert Merttins Bird, and the structure was completed by James Thomason. Thomason was not at the head of the work until the next decade: but it will be more convenient to treat the whole subject in the present chapter.

In the Bengal settlement, the zemindar was constituted the proprietor. In the Dekhan settlements, the ryot was constituted the proprietor. In the North-West Provinces, it was recognised that the question, Who should be recognised as proprietor? was one that might be answered in various ways. The great work Bird and Thomason had to accomplish was, first the assessment, and secondly the registration of rights.

We saw that in Bengal, the zemindar was sometimes a local chief, who in a sense had already been looked upon by the peasants as the lord of the soil. Such chiefs were known as *talukdars*; and Hindostan was full of *talukdars*. In the Dekhan, we saw that the predecessors of the British had treated the Village Community as a unit, though the





The Village Community.

Theory of Thomason's settlement.

British did so no longer. In Hindostan the structure of the Village Community was still more marked, and it was constantly evident that the proprietary rights in an estate lay with the Village, not with the individuals whom it comprised. And there were cases in which it appeared that the proprietary right lay with the individual ryot. As before, the intention of the settlement was to secure to the proprietor, whoever the proprietor might be, a fair rent, fixity of tenure, and freedom of transfer. So the assessment was made for at least thirty years, and the Government claim was fixed for that period. If the talukdar could make his title good, his right was confirmed: if the ryot did so, his right was confirmed. The joint responsibility of the Village Community wherever it already subsisted was maintained. In short, the utmost care was taken to ascertain and give the full force of law to native usages, without reading foreign Western analogies into them.

So far then, the principles of the settlement were entirely sound. There was no idea of forcing upon the people a law theoretically perfect in the eyes of the legislator; the object was to bring existing usages into working order. But in deciding between the conflicting claims of co-existing usages, there was very considerable scope for the theoretical bias of the administrator to come into play.

The conflicts in the North-West Provinces arose between the claims of talukdars and ryots.

Objections to the actual settlement.

According to one set of theorists, the talukdar was an excrescence on the ancient system of a peasant proprietary. According to the opposing theory, his rights were at the least of a very respectable antiquity. There were plenty of cases where the latter view was evidently true, and the talukdar was readily confirmed. In others it was evidently not true, and the talukdar's claim gave way to that of the ryot. But in an immense number of instances, it was not at all clear whether abstract justice ought to confirm or to cancel the talukdar's title. The bias of the Thomasonian settlement leaned steadily to the ryot.

Democratic ethics support Thomason's principle. Abstract economics are on the same side. But strong political reasons could be adduced in opposition, and it is certainly doubtful



on which side the popular sentiment lay. What we are in the habit of calling the feudal feeling was strong; it has valuable moral effects when present; and it is contended by the critics adverse to the Thomasonian method that the consideration afforded to that feeling was altogether insufficient. The effect at any rate was to diminish the power and authority of the talukdars individually and collectively, and to deprive a class singularly wanting in initiative energy, of such leadership as the talukdars might have supplied: presenting those chiefs with a grievance against the British, while the class benefited lacked a countervailing appreciation of what they had gained. On the other hand, it is in the gains of the latter and the general economic advancement that the Thomasonians find their own sufficient justification and reward.





## CHAPTER XIX

## GENERAL PROGRESS

Settled  
govern-  
ment. **WE** have observed the continuous progress of the system of Indian administration from the days of Clive to those of Lord Auckland. We have watched the extension of the peace area, and the consequent cessation of rapine and bloodshed on the greater scale. We have noted the gradual establishment of judicial tribunals which possessed at least the merit of being incorruptible and impartial, even if they failed in complete adaptation to native habits and ideas; and we have seen revenue systems framed with immense care, which, whatever might be said against them, aimed at giving stability to existing institutions, and did give to the tillers of the soil a security hitherto unknown. The British, in short, had raised up in India a government which consistently and conscientiously strove to maintain order and justice throughout its own dominions and to urge the rulers outside its dominions to like efforts. Had this been the sole result of the rise of the British Power it would still have been an immense improvement on a state of things in which order and justice depended mainly on the convenience and capacity of individual nawabs and rajas.

Beyond this, however, there was room for progress in two directions: one the abolition of customs in their nature barbarous and dating from barbarous ages; the other, the introduction of positive improvements tending to raise the material, moral and intellectual condition of the people, by public works, education, and the force of example.

Difficulty  
of intro-  
ducing re-  
forms. In these directions, progress was slow. Immemorial customs cannot be rooted out without risk of producing violent irritation; new ideas are received with intense suspicion; the type of man drawn to India in the Company's



service, in its early days, required improvement before much moral influence could be habitually exercised by him. The efforts in this direction of Hastings, Cornwallis, and Wellesley were increasingly effective; but they hardly bore visible fruit before the second decade of the century. The real tangible progress therefore did not receive its full impulse till the British Ascendancy was completed by the Pindari and Maratha wars; and the Burmese interlude over, Lord William Bentinck was enabled to devote his full energies to matters which had necessarily received only a fraction of the attention of his predecessors.

In various parts of India and with varying degrees of virulence, practices subsisted which were essentially barbarous, sanctioned by neither the Hindu nor the Mohammedan code, but in two cases at least grafted on to the former—*Suttee*, the self immolation of the widow on the death of her spouse: and Infanticide. Two others, *Thuggee* and *Dacoity*, have an odd association with caste. A fifth, that of human sacrifices, has no sort of connection with Hinduism.

Of these institutions, the most gruesome was *Thuggee*;<sup>1</sup> *Thuggee*. an organised system of murder and robbery, existent from time immemorial, which remained actually unsuspected for many years after the establishment of the British Power. It appears to have prevailed all over India—known to the population but carefully concealed from the British. The Thugs were a hereditary association of murderers: a caste. They had their tutelary goddess, their initiatory observances, their mythical origin, their sacrificial and other rites in connection with their hereditary occupation. Their business was the strangulation and robbery of travellers. If a man started out on a journey and never reached his destination, there were plenty of ways of accounting for his disappearance. The kinsfolk rarely attempted to trace his movements. The Thugs worked in small gangs; when they were not engaged in their abominable trade, they were usually peaceful dwellers in villages. Often enough they were known to

<sup>1</sup> The spelling *Thuggee*, *Dacoity*, and *Suttee* is too familiar to give place to the more correct *Thagi*, *Dakaiti* and *Sati*.





their fellow villagers: but superstition held that they were under divine or diabolic protection, and that ill would befall anyone who went against them. Their method of procedure was usually to entice the intended victim into conversation, slip a noose round his throat in an unsuspecting moment, throttle, rifle and bury him. Hence the pick-axe as well as the noose was an emblem of their trade. The deed done, they would return to their ordinary avocations—very likely paying toll to the *pāṭēl*, or headman of the village.

The suppression.

Popular belief in the *ikbal* or Luck of the Company, proved to be of no little assistance in the stamping out of the institution. It was soberly believed that the great Madhava Rao Sindhia had been smitten with his fatal illness by the guardian goddess of the Thugs, for having disposed of a nest of them; but it was admitted that the Company's *ikbal* was too strong for Davi, as the goddess was named. Evidence therefore was easier to obtain. It was about 1829 that the systematic suppression of Thuggee was decided on; the man entrusted with the leading part therein was Major Sleeman. The process of bringing particular crimes home to the perpetrators was immensely difficult; but it became gradually easier as the nature of the organisation was laid bare. Captured Thugs turned informers, and gave invaluable evidence not only about specific cases but about the whole system. The village patels began to dread finding themselves brought in as accessories. Various legal regulations, constructed on the British principle of giving every conceivable advantage to the accused, were relaxed; the chances of evading trial or punishment on a merely technical plea were diminished. The Thugs themselves, who had considered that Davi's protection made them invulnerable, were disgusted at discovering their error; and their employment lost something of its zest, though their consciences remained quite unperturbed. The result was that within ten years Thuggee in the British dominion had practically ceased, and had largely disappeared in the independent native States as well.



Dacoity proved more difficult of the practice was much more difficult than Thuggee had kept it for six and seven hundred years as were its victims, they were less numerous; yet so strong was the imagination of the Dacoits. The Thugs were, however, the Garotters; dacoity was an organised system, the Governor-General is a silent ghastliness about the dacoit and his condign punishment on Thug: the dacoit worked with lawless impunity. Even when with the Thugs, there were regular expressed themselves pursued their trade with an accompanying force, after obtaining But unlike the Thugs, the dacoits were not active interference murder was merely a normal incident in the mind of the natives not an essential feature; in fact, they were separate and distinct. At last were not of the genuine dacoit families, though the evil, and of some of these as leaders was consoling those who knew element of success. Among them were many prominent respectable members of society. Their rendering guilty of of considerable importance to the dacoit, and abetting a ceremony village communities and landholders were a willing party or not of bringing crimes home in the dacoits of violent oppression was enormous. Warren Hastings the complete disappearance of very summary methods was accomplished without evidence which obtain in Britain. With the British success the complicity of Village Communities in their ears, the principle that it was better that a few should fall victims to the dacoits than that a large number of persons should be falsely condemned to death. The legality vetoed Hastings's plan, and dacoity flourished to others flourish, though here and there some few of and therefore suffered exemplary punishment. Even when the dacoits of which had proved so successful with Thuggee were apprehended by the same skilful operator (now Colonel) Sleeman, the dacoits moved to new pastures and were still flourishing almost under the walls of Calcutta in Dalhousie's time; partly no doubt because at the headquarters of the British government it was less easy to dispense with the legal technicalities in which the brigands found protection.

The origin of the practice of Suttee—*sati*, "dedicated"—Suttee is unknown. It was more prevalent in Hindostan than in other parts of India. Having no sort of sanction from the





OF SUPREMACY

it is still possible to see how it  
conditions produced by Hindu  
widow is, under that law, painful;  
so. The idea of a faithful spouse  
of life is not a wholly repulsive  
for suicide which at least is not  
that many a woman became  
herself to the flames, not only  
with an enthusiasm akin to that of

Regular belief religious devotees in Christian convents. proved to be of no utility attached to the wife who thus the institution. The east of the West have recognised Madhava Rao "self-slaughter" from whatever motive; illness by the guern, suttee was in fact honoured as an act disposed of a nest-sacrifice.

Company's *trial* may find not justification but a moral was named. Evidence form, in which the motive was a was about 1829 that the existence of the custom leant was decided on; the man & unwilling suttee is an unspeak- therein was Major Sleeman were with painful frequency particular crimes home to It is well to distinguish between difficult; but it became sense, and others which, however the organisation was laid the Christian code, still invite a informers, and gave the doer: but when no test can be specific cases but at a particular act belongs to one class patels began to mer, the distinction cannot be recognised accessories. Vane Mohammedan emperors forbade the British prison of an unwilling widow, and sometimes actively the across; for a long time, the British attempted to work on the same lines; but in the great majority of cases, it was impossible to ascertain whether the widow acted under pressure. The relatives of the deceased husband had motives of convenience in urging the widow to destruction; they could point to the supposed rewards of the fatal act, and could threaten the recalcitrant with long years of utter joylessness; so that a woman might easily be led to elect for death, yet be practically murdered. Therefore suttee involved in effect an abomination which could be cured by nothing short of total prohibition.



No doubt the actual prevalence of the practice was much exaggerated, though in 1819 between six and seven hundred cases were reported in Bengal alone: yet so strong was the impression of its hold upon the religious imagination of the people, that one after another of the Governors-General hesitated to do more than threaten condign punishment on all who were responsible for an unwilling suttee. Even when the Court of Directors at home expressed themselves emphatically on the subject, Lord Amherst, after obtaining numerous reports, believed that any more active interference than that of moral suasion would excite the mind of the natives so greatly as to render the risks too serious to run. At last, however, Lord William Bentinck faced the evil; and supported by the weight of opinion among those who knew the natives best, promulgated a law in 1829 prohibiting suttee altogether in British territory, and rendering guilty of culpable homicide all persons aiding and abetting a ceremony of the kind, whether the widow were a willing party or not. It is remarkable that the prognostications of violent opposition were entirely falsified, and the complete disappearance of suttee in the British dominions was accomplished without endangering the public peace. With the British success before their eyes and British remonstrances in their ears, the Native rulers were not disinclined to follow an example which public opinion—under the circumstances—proved unexpectedly ready to endorse.

Its suppression after long hesitation.

Though Thuggee and Dacoity were profitable to others besides those who actually practised them, and therefore found shelter under a certain degree of popular protection of a negative kind, they were always regarded as crimes; whereas Suttee was an honoured custom. But Infanticide was accounted as a sort of peccadillo necessitated by the conditions of society. As in the case of Suttee, it had no sanction—was indeed forbidden—in the sacred books. Yet in many parts of India, so persistent was the habit of destroying female babies that among some tribes or clans the proportion of girls to boys was about one to six. The motive lay in the disgrace attaching under the Hindu religion to unmarried women; a disgrace reflected on their

Infanticide.





parents. It was better that a babe should die than that she should grow up to remain unwed. But the marriage of daughters involved two difficulties: that of finding a husband of admissible caste; and that of providing the wedding expenses. The higher the station of the parents, the more serious became both these difficulties; the stronger was the temptation to evade them by having no daughters to marry; the more resolutely did public opinion close its eyes to the methods by which that evasion was achieved.

Difficulty  
of dealing  
with it.

Two circumstances combined to make infanticide easy: one, the impenetrable veil behind which the Zenana was and is hidden from all enquirers; the other, the extreme difficulty of ascertaining the real cause of an infant's death. It needs only not to "strive officiously to keep alive." From the beginning the British endeavoured to eradicate the custom; the Natives admitted its existence, readily owned that it was very wrong, zealously declared their intention of putting it down—but the huge disproportion between girls and boys continued unabated. Practically it was only in the small district of Merwara or Mairwarra in the hills near Ajmir in Rajputana that any important advance was made before the fourth decade of the century.

The mo-  
tives to In-  
fanticide  
minimised.

Hitherto nothing had been tried but moral suasion, for the plain reason that there was no practicable method of applying force, and no alternative course had been discovered; now however it was resolved to attack the *cause*. Custom had made imperative an expenditure on wedding festivities so immense, that to marry and dower a single daughter often exhausted the savings of a lifetime. The individual was hopelessly shackled by Convention. For those shackles, the fetters of law were substituted, limiting the expenditure on marriages, and forcibly excluding the hordes of privileged beggars who swarmed to every such ceremony and exacted alms and entertainment as a sacred right. By a happy chance, the guilt of certain chiefs was brought home to them, and they were compelled to pay exemplary fines. Thus the removal of the great source of temptation was followed by alarming breaches in the immunity which had prevailed hitherto; with the excellent result that in a few



years, in one after another of the worst districts, the number of growing girls had recovered its normal proportion to that of the boys. The evil did not indeed disappear, but it ceased to be a horrible portent.

The abolition of Thuggee and Suttee, the declaration of a remorseless war with Dacoity, the immense reduction in the crime of Infanticide, were all in effect the work of Bentinck's administration, though those objects were none of them completely achieved immediately; and of themselves were a sufficient justification of British dominion. Nor can there be the slightest real doubt that but for the British dominion, every one of these practices would have remained active until the present day. Their suppression became possible only when the Pax Britannica was thoroughly established.

Equally characteristic was the civilisation of the wild hill tribes who came under British rule—folk of more primitive races, dwelling in the Aravalli mountains of Rajputana, the western Ghats of Kandesh, the hilly tracts on the east through which the Mahanadi flows.

Merwara has already been mentioned. It fell under British sway at the close of the career of Lord Hastings in 1821. The Mers, its inhabitants, lived as banditti, by plunder; agriculture in the barren hills was too precarious too dependent on accidents of weather to satisfy them. The district was placed in charge of Captain Hall who adopted the expedient which has served as a precedent for all similar cases; he converted the bandit into a soldier of the Government. Companies of Mers were formed who forthwith became a highly efficient and loyal police. The Agent won the personal devotion of the people, and with it an almost unbounded influence over them. Under his direction they were ready to appreciate the advantages of arbitration as compared with the various forms of trial by ordeal which had hitherto prevailed; they gave up the immemorial habit of selling their womenkind, and they led the way in putting an end to infanticide, when a Government grant was made for the purpose of providing the necessary dower for their daughters. Hall was succeeded in 1835 by

These reforms due wholly to British rule.

The civilising of Merwara.





Dixon, another of the same type; who gave to agriculture a new impetus and a new security by making wells and reservoirs; and then literally created or imported a *bazaar* or market town into their midst, which gave an impulse hitherto unknown to the arts of peace and the desire for order.

**The Bhils.** As with the Mers of Merwara, so was it with the Bhils of Kandesh—the hill-country where the Peshwa's domains touched Holkar's. The Bhil country was ceded at the end of the Pindari war, but the Bhils defied authority. British invitations to settle down peaceably were regarded as mere pretences: British troops were easily evaded in the passes by the expert hill-men. Conciliation and coercion appeared to be equally futile. The tribe of primitive savages who had set at defiance the punitive enormities of Maratha over-lords were not to be quelled by the most rigorous pressure that the British Government could sanction.

**Outram and the Bhils.** In 1825 the task of bringing them to order was entrusted to Lieutenant James Outram, in after days renowned as the "Bayard of India." Outram began operations with a practical illustration of the superiority of British troops, by falling suddenly with a few sepoy on a Bhil encampment, scattering most of them, killing a few and capturing a considerable number. The eyes of the prisoners were opened to the real purposes of the British; they were transformed into envoys to their own people. With deep suspicion and much hesitation the Bhils began to come in, to see for themselves. The personal contact with Outram was the one thing needed; they found him trusting them, and they trusted him in return. His frankness, his courage, his sportsmanship, conquered them. Outram's own sepoy acted in the spirit of their leader, and suspicion yielded to confidence. Hitherto the Bhils had rejected all attempts to enlist them—now a Bhil corps was speedily enrolled with results precisely like those in Merwara. The work so well begun was efficiently carried on, on the same lines: agricultural settlements were formed, arbitration courts were established, money was advanced for farm-stock; on the other hand, strict police regulations were enforced, but



always on the plan of making the Bhils responsible, and turning the village patels into responsible officers of the government; and so, as time passed, the Bhils were converted from a primitive banditti into an orderly agricultural folk.

The story of the Khonds of Orissa, and the abolition of Human sacrifices prevalent in that district, belongs to the next decade, and will be related in a subsequent chapter.

So far we have dealt chiefly with the abolition of evil customs, and with the encouragement of peaceable occupations in the wilder districts. But perhaps the movement forward with which Bentinck's name is most intimately associated in the British mind, is that of Education; and this for the reason that Macaulay was himself intimately connected with Lord William's measures. Macaulay went to India as the first Legal Member of Council under the Act of 1833: and he found Calcutta rife with discussion of the Education question. Educa-  
tion.

Until 1813, nothing had been done in that direction: in that year, the Directors gave instructions that a lakh of rupees should be set apart annually for educational purposes. But education had been interpreted as meaning instruction in the language and literature of the classic tongues of the Hindus and the Mohammedans—Sanskrit and Arabic: in other words, the inculcation of purely Oriental learning; which was very much as if in Europe public instruction should be confined to the language and the treatises of the mediæval schoolmen. The Calcutta College, a private institution which sought to introduce the natives to Western science and English literature, received no Government support till ten years later; and this enlightened theory of education continued to be entirely overshadowed by the idea that the Oriental classics were the proper subjects for Orientals to study—in part perhaps from the very misleading analogy of the study of Greek and Latin in Europe. Bentinck and his advisers however recognised that neither Sanskrit nor Arabic was the language of India, the tongues of the people being many: that English had become the proper official language, associated with the various vernaculars. The immensely superior value of English literature as an instrument Oriental-  
ism.





The learning of the West.

of education, and of western knowledge as a subject of study, was recognised and maintained with unanswerable skill by Macaulay ; and early in 1835 an order was promulgated by the Governor-General in Council, providing for the new teaching instead of the old in all the Government schools and colleges. The effect of the change was very far-reaching, since without it there would have been no possibility of natives becoming practically fitted to enter the public service. By it, the necessary equipment was placed at least comparatively within their reach, if they could show also the necessary capacity and character. The bar to their advancement was removed, without any risk that they would crowd in dangerous numbers through the open portals.

Public Works.

Finally, in the matter of Public Works ; the British Government made no attempt to emulate the Moguls or their predecessors in the erection of buildings which like the Taj Mahal, should rank among the wonders of the world ; but already in Lord Minto's time the enormously important question of Irrigation began to attract its attention, and by slow degrees the creation of canals for the distribution of water was taken up in the North-West Provinces. Roads also were improved ; the Grand Trunk Road from Calcutta to Delhi, ultimately carried on to Lahore and Peshawar, was built, and that from Bombay to Agra was commenced. But although these measures had an excellent effect on the revenue, there is always a difficulty in grasping the fact that a very heavy expenditure may be financially more than justified by indirect results ; and it is probable that a more lavish outlay on public works would not only have done much towards mitigating recurrent famines with all their horrors, but would also have been repaid in the increase of the Government Revenue, and of the national wealth.



CSL

BOOK IV

COMPLETION OF DOMINION







## CHAPTER XX

## TRANS-INDUS: A RETROSPECT

*(Maps I. and VI.)*

IN the twenty years from 1818 to 1838 the only extensive military operation of Government had been the Burmese war. For twenty years to come, wars of varying gravity were to afford constant occupation. The disastrous Afghan war; the short and sharp campaigns of Sindh and Gwalior; the two fierce conflicts with the Sikhs, involving at least three battles of a desperate character; the second Burmese war; finally the grim struggle in which month after month the European garrison of Hindostan supported by a few loyal native regiments fought with their backs to the wall till the longed-for succour came and the great mutiny was crushed; these followed on each other in steady succession.

Hitherto Lahore and Sindh and Kabul have hardly influenced the policy of Governors-General: now they become factors of the first importance. Hitherto, consequently there have been only incidental allusions made to them: now a retrospective chapter will enable us to follow the course of events with unbroken continuity.

Mention has been made of the Sikhs as a Hindu people occupying the Panjab and Sirhind. The Panjab proper is the great triangle of which the Indus and the Satlej form two sides, and the Kashmir mountains the third. This "land of the Five Rivers" has a title which the geographers have some difficulty in explaining, since the great rivers which water it are six in number, not five, and it is a moot question whether the Indus, the Satlej, the Ravi, or the Beas, is the one which is excluded. Sirhind lies between the Satlej and the Jamna, on which Delhi stands. This district is also known





by the same name as a portion of the Maratha dominion, Malwa. The Satlej, for military and political purposes, has always been an effective dividing line; and consequently the whole Sikh territory is in two parts—the Panjab, Manjha, or Trans-Satlej; and the Sirhind, Malwa, or Cis-Satlej.

This distinction however became marked only with the development of the Sikh political organisation, towards the close of the eighteenth century.

Racially the inhabitants of the whole Sikh region are partly Pathan, especially in the northern and western parts, but mainly Rajput or Jat; between whom many ethnologists recognise little if any distinction. The proportion of Mussulmans is large, forming about half the population. The Sikhs primarily are not a separate race, but a Hindu sect which has gradually absorbed a large number of the Hindus in a particular area. Their peculiar tenets however, the persecutions to which they were at times subjected, the sense of fraternity and unity amongst themselves in the conflict with those who do not accept their doctrines, have combined to induce a constant separateness which in turn has endowed them with racial characteristics, physical, moral and intellectual, until the Sikh has in fact become a definite and distinct breed.

Nanuk, founder of the Sikh sect. The founder of the sect was Nanuk, a teacher who was about contemporary with Baber; whose doctrine was in the main a protest against the formalism and the hide-bound conventions of the Hinduism of his day. He reverted to first principles: he taught of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of Man without distinction of caste or creed: of virtuous living in the world of men as the way of Salvation in the future life: and he had the very exceptional experience among reformers of arousing no hostility, winning the regard and honour both of Mussulmans and Brahmins. His followers took the title of Sikhs (disciples), forming a united band of religious enthusiasts, under a succession of *Gurus*—a term better rendered by “prophet” than “priest”—gradually assuming a military character under the pressure of Mohammedan fanaticism and the laxity of Oriental rule; a transformation which



culminated, in the days of Aurangzib, in the person of the tenth Guru, Govind Singh—Govind's father had been slain with the connivance if not by the order of the imperial zealot. The religious fervour of the son developed into a fanatical wrath against Mohammedans at large, and the Moguls in particular. Under Govind's leadership the Sikh brotherhood was transformed into the *Khalsa*, "the army of the free"; bound together by solemn rites and curious distinctive observances—the wearing of blue garments, total abjuration of razor and scissors, constant carrying of steel, the adoption of the common name of *Singh* (Lion), which led to their being frequently referred to as the Singhs; marked by the same kind of devoted adherence as the Covenanters of Scotland who at very much the same period were bidding defiance to Claverhouse. About a year after Aurangzib's death, Govind was assassinated by the sons of a man who had died by his orders; and a long period followed of bloody insurrections and bloody suppressions, in which the *Khalsa* seemed time after time to have been wiped out, yet time after time revived.

Govind,  
the organ-  
iser of the  
Sikhs.

The great expansion of the Maratha power and the invasions of Nadir Shah and Ahmed Shah at last delivered the Sikhs from Mogul dominion, and during the concluding forty years of the eighteenth century, the *Khalsa* becomes a great association of Sirdars, or what may be called baronial families, in Sirhind and the Panjab; not organised as a State, but every sirdar with his retainers fighting for his own hand; acting however for the most part in aggregates known as *Misls*, bound together by the intense *esprit de corps* of common devotion to the *Khalsa* against all external foes, without feeling thereby precluded from internal rivalries and dissensions; owning and disowning allegiance to Afghan or Mogul viceroys and governors as the convenience of the moment might dictate; and capable on occasion of offering a combined and formidable resistance to such armies as either Kabul or Delhi could send to operate in their territories.

Develop-  
ment of the  
*Khalsa*.

In 1780 was born the man who was to weld this loose confederacy into the powerful Panjab State, Ranjit Singh.





West of the Indus above its confluence with the ~~Satlej~~ lies Afghanistan, with Biluchistan to the South. Of Afghanistan proper there are four principal towns: on the western side, close to the Persian frontier, Herat; on the eastern, near the Indian frontier, Kabul; on the south, about equidistant from Herat and Kabul, Kandahar; and on the direct line between Kabul and Kandahar, Ghazni. The passage from Afghanistan into India through the mountains is either from Kabul by way of the Khyber Pass—through which flows the Kabul river to join the Indus near Attok—guarded by the great military post of Peshawar; or else from Kandahar through the Khojak and Bolan passes by way of Quetta on the Biluchi border: the one route lying through the Panjab, and the other through Sindh. At the end of the eighteenth century the Afghan kings sprung from the Durani chief Ahmed Shah ruled not only over Afghanistan but also over Kashmir, and dominated both Sindh and the Panjab; holding both the great passes, Biluchistan being tributary. Afghan Governors were posted at Peshawar and at Multan; and the Sikh or Rajput Rajas of the country, as far as Pātīāla in Sirhind, held their titles formally by the Kabul monarch's patent.

When the new century opened, the occupant of the throne at Kabul was Zemān Shah, one of Ahmed Shah's grandsons; of the Sudozai clan or family. All over India, by British and natives alike, his power was vastly overestimated in consequence of the achievements of his predecessors; his desire to invade Hindostan was known; the Mussulmans were anxious to welcome him as a deliverer in the name of the Prophet. Moreover the belief that an invasion would be heavily backed up by Napoleon was universally prevalent. As a matter of fact however, neither the finances nor the stability of the Kabul throne were equal to any such schemes on Zeman's part; every movement towards the Indus was quickly rendered abortive by insurrections in Afghanistan; and the Sikh Misls were quite

The as likely to attack as to help a Mussulman invader. In 1801, a family known as the Barakzais obtained the reins of power; the eldest of a score of brothers Fatch Khan, Barakzai brothers.



deposed Zeman Shah whose eyes were put out; and after some vicissitudes the Shah's younger brother, Shuja, became king; making his peace with the Barakzais as well as with the incompetent usurper they had proposed to set up.

By 1808, Ranjit Singh had become the recognised leader of the Panjab Sikhs. Shah Shuja was not yet dispossessed at Kabul. Lord Minto was Governor-General; and the Napoleonic terror was still prevalent. It was eminently desirable therefore to insure that Afghanistan should be an effective buffer against any possible combinations into which France, Persia, and Russia, might enter. It was also very undesirable that Ranjit Singh, now Raja of Lahore, should be allowed to have his wish of bringing the Sirhind Sikhs under his sway, and forming a great military State extending across the Satlej; while the Sikh Power was already quite sufficient to make the maintenance of friendly relations with it important. Mountstuart Elphinstone was accordingly

sent in charge of a mission to Kabul, and Charles Metcalfe in charge of a mission to Ranjit. Just at this time, however, the rupture between France and Russia and the progress of the Peninsula War relieved the tension of feeling about the possible projects of Napoleon: the fear of the French faded; and negotiations with the Asiatic Powers were ultimately conducted on the revised hypothesis that it was they rather than the British who could least afford to quarrel. Shah Shuja's attitude was entirely friendly to the British. Ranjit Singh had a sounder appreciation of British power and British armies than almost any other Oriental. Consequently while he pressed his claims to the utmost limit of diplomatic bargaining, he was resolved throughout his career to keep the British Government as his very good friends. Thus the treaties of 1809 proved satisfactory to all parties. That with Shah Shuja indeed turned out to be of little moment, as he was in his turn deposed and driven out of Afghanistan in the following year. By that with Ranjit, the Cis-Satlej Sikhs were (in accordance with their own desire) taken under British protection, Cis-Satlej estates held by Trans-Satlej chiefs being on the same footing as the rest: while in the Panjab the British recognised Ranjit as

Missions to  
Shah  
Shuja and  
Ranjit  
Singh:  
1808.





Maharaja, and in effect promised him a free hand so long as he did not attack British interests. An anti-French treaty of friendship was at the same time concluded with the Amirs of Sindh.

Ranjit Singh and Shah Shuja. For some thirty years, Ranjit, the one-eyed "Lion of the Panjab," continued steadily and gradually to augment and consolidate his dominion, till it included one slice after another cut from the dominion of Afghanistan. Jammu, Kashmir, Multan, the Derajat, Peshawar, were absorbed, and the Khalsa developed into a mighty engine of war. Throughout the same period Shah Shuja was ever making fresh attempts, with or without the assistance of the Sindh Amirs, of Ranjit, or of the British, to recover the throne from which he had been driven. It would be difficult in all history to name a man with whom the whirligig of fortune played stranger pranks. Also throughout the same period the Barakzai brothers from Fateh Khan to Dost Mohammed managed among them to dominate affairs in Afghanistan, to a normal accompaniment of internecine strife, interspersed with foul murders and assassinations of which they were sometimes the victims and sometimes the perpetrators.

The problem of forming a nation out of the confederacy of Sikh Misls resolved itself primarily into that of finding an individual who could succeed in getting himself accepted as its head. The secondary condition was that the head, when found, should avoid challenging combat with the one Power which was certain to win if it came to fighting.

Estimate of Ranjit Singh. Ranjit Singh possessed precisely the requisite qualities. Like the Maratha Sivaji, he was a mere boy when he began to distinguish himself, and was regarded as the greatest figure of his race before he reached thirty. He achieved his position by a combination of military skill, daring, extreme shrewdness, a consciousness that treachery is not an end in itself but only an occasionally useful means, an entire absence of scrupulosity, a pose of religious enthusiasm, and unfailing self-confidence, courage, and doggedness. Gratitude to benefactors and compassion for the weak were unknown to him; but so long as anyone was of use to him, the services



rendered were adequately remunerated in some form or other. In action, he displayed a rare admixture of salutary caution with calculated audacity. But what distinguished him most from the ordinary type of military adventurer who achieves empire was the absence of what the Greeks called *ὑβρις*; the sane measurement of his own powers, the level-headedness which averts Nemesis. Without for an instant placing him in comparison with a supreme genius like Akbar, we may fairly class him along with Sivaji and Haidar Ali—all three were absolutely illiterate—among the most uniformly successful of Asiatic monarchs, and that in despite of exceptionally difficult conditions: a curious contrast to his Durani contemporary.

For Shah Shuja's virtues and vices were precisely those which do not make for success. He was persistent, but irresolute; intellectual, but devoid of shrewdness; magnanimous on occasion, without the strength needed to make magnanimity politic; loyal, but not without lapses; ambitious, but hopelessly improvident. Ranjit Singh knew in whom he could repose confidence, whom he must outwit, whom to use as a tool, whom to stamp out. Shah Shuja was habitually outwitted, and made a tool of; he never stamped out anyone; and his confidence was constantly given to the wrong people. Therefore he lost his throne, and for nearly thirty years failed in every effort to recover it: therefore also when he was reinstated, it was only to reign for a short time as a puppet, and to perish at last by the hand of an assassin.

Estimate  
of Shah  
Shuja

There may have been an interval, before Ochterlony in Nepal restored British prestige, shaken by the first stages of the Gurka war, when Ranjit contemplated war with the British as a feasible item in his scheme of aggrandisement. If so, the idea was quickly removed from his mind.

By the normal Oriental, power is conceived of mainly as a means to conquest. The normal native prince could not assimilate the idea of a great military State which was not bent on possessing itself of its neighbour's territory. The acquisition of wealth preferentially by commerce was an idea altogether foreign to him: just as, to the uneducated mind, mechanical improvements always presented themselves as

Commerce  
as a politi-  
cal end.





devices to tighten the grip of the governing race or class on the general population. Hence the entirely honest professions of the British Government have rarely obtained credence: their wish to introduce factories and acquire commercial rights beyond their own borders have been habitually accounted as the first insidious step in a systematic scheme having annexation as its goal. Suspicion breeds secret hostility, which in its turn causes counter-irritation; the latent hostility becomes overt; the collision arrives, and a new territory is added to the British Raj.

Insight  
of Ranjit  
Singh.

Ranjit however was almost unique in realising that the British as a simple matter of fact did not want his territory. He knew that the time would come when his Sikhs would get out of hand, and bring about the downfall of his kingdom. There is an authentic story that, near the close of his career, he sent the son of one of the Sirdars to Ludhiana to get learning from the British; and the lad returned with some government maps. Ranjit looked at them. "What are all those red circles?" he asked. "They mark the Dominions of the Feringhis." Ranjit kicked the map from him with a wrathful exclamation—"It will be all red soon." But he did not mean the Panjab to be red while he lived; and nothing would induce him to risk a quarrel.

Develop-  
ment of his  
army.

Therefore he devoted his energies to organising the Khalsa on lines which should make it as formidable as possible when opposed to other native levies; he perceived that European methods gave an immense superiority in the field, and that the instrument of their power lay in a strong artillery, a compact infantry, and the presence of European officers. On these lines he organised his army, with the assistance of Europeans—Allard, Ventura, Court, Avitabile—who had seen service in the wars of Napoleon. To such an army, a couple of crushing defeats in the field were far more destructive than to the ill-disciplined mounted hordes of Haidar Ali or Holkar, so that there is ground for regarding it as less fitted than they were to war with the British, less suited to maintain a prolonged struggle. But in proportion to its numbers, it made an exceptionally effective machine for native wars, and the British themselves found more difficulty



in dealing with it at odds of three to one than in routing thrice the numbers of Mysore or Maratha troops.

Ranjit's policy, then, was to extend and consolidate his dominions beyond the Satlej, where his proceedings would not disturb British susceptibilities; and he set about his work systematically, advancing step by step and making his conquests sure as he advanced. He had acquired his predominance among the Sikhs by finding pretexts for overthrowing rivals and appropriating their estates, and by calmly dispossessing minors and others who were too weak to resist. It was now his object to complete his dominion in the Panjab proper by the acquisition of Multan which was a province of the Afghans; to extend his own frontiers across the Indus over Peshawar and the Derajat, and to add Kashmir to his territory.

His aims.

An opportunity for operating against the Afghan monarchy arose almost immediately after his treaty with the British when, in 1810, Shah Shuja was driven from Kabul and Fateh Khan the Barakzai set up another of the Sudozai family, Mahmud, in his place; making himself Wazir and actual ruler, and placing Kandahar, Ghazni, and Peshawar, in the hands of others of his own brotherhood. Ranjit seized the occasion to offer Shah Shuja his assistance, for a consideration. The Shah moved against Peshawar, but his attempt failed; he was carried off into Kashmir by his own pretended friends, and there held a prisoner. This gave both Ranjit and Fateh Khan the Barakzai a pretext for attacking Kashmir: and the two came to terms, neither having the slightest intention of carrying them out, if he could repudiate them to his own advantage. Fateh Khan anticipated his ally in reducing Kashmir, and at once declined to go shares with the Maharaja. The Maharaja in return captured Attok, and got possession of the person of Shah Shuja. For the time however, his projects in Kashmir were checked, Fateh Khan's brother Azim being left there as Governor. Shah Shuja also succeeded with much difficulty in escaping from his clutches, leaving behind him however the famous Koh-i-nur diamond which Ranjit had long coveted greedily; and after various vicissitudes he found

Ejection of  
Shah  
Shuja from  
Kabul.





an asylum at Ludhiana, the British advanced fort on the upper Satlej.

Ranjit ab- Foiled for the time in Kashmir, Ranjit renewed his atten-  
sorbs tions to Multan; where the Governor professed allegiance to  
Multan. the reigning king at Kabul, while confining its expression to  
opposing Ranjit. In 1818, Multan after a long and stubborn  
resistance was suddenly carried by a furious and unpre-  
meditated assault, met and almost repulsed by the desperate  
valour of the garrison.

Embroll- In Afghanistan meantime Fateh Khan had practically  
ments in parcelled out the whole kingdom except Herat—which was  
Afghani- retained as the headquarters of the Sudozai kings—among  
stan. the Barakzai brotherhood. Persia was encroaching on the  
western border. Thither marched Fateh Khan, ostensibly to  
check the Persians, incidentally to acquire Herat. The  
capture of Herat, with the king and prince Kamran was en-  
trusted to a young brother, Dost Mohammed. But Dost  
Mohammed, while he succeeded in breaking into Herat,  
committing sundry outrages, and placing himself beyond the  
pale of pardon by violating the royal Harem, failed to secure  
his position and had to fly for his life to his brother Azim in  
Kashmir. The great Wazir fell into the hands of Kamran  
and was horribly mutilated and murdered. The Barakzais  
determined on revenge. Shah Shuja from Ludhiana was  
drawn into the vortex, but vomited out again as a less con-  
venient puppet than one or two others of the Sudozai dynasty.  
Kabul was captured; Kamran failed in his attempt to  
recover it and retired to Herat; and once more the whole  
country with the exception of that province was in the hands  
of the Barakzais, who now accepted Azim as the head of the  
family, Kabul falling to his share while Dost Mohammed  
took possession of Ghazni.

Ranjit These complications gave Ranjit Singh his opportunity.  
secures Azim had found it necessary to be at the centre of events,  
Kashmir. and in his absence from Kashmir the forces left behind there  
offered no strong resistance to Ranjit. Kashmir was added  
to the Panjab dominion, a year after Multan.

As soon as Azim felt his own position sufficiently estab-  
lished, he resolved to attack Ranjit Singh, and collected a



mighty force to march by way of Peshawar. But the Maharaja was an adept at intrigue, and drew Dost Mohammed as well as Sultan Mohammed, the brother in command at Peshawar, into a conspiracy against Azim. The advancing army was filled with rumours of treachery: suddenly, almost in a night, it melted away. Azim had to return to Kabul a broken man, and died there in 1823. Sultan Mohammed remained at Peshawar as Ranjit's tributary and governor in his name, till Azim's death; returning thither in the same capacity after a brief struggle for supremacy among the Barakzais in which he was defeated by Dost Mohammed. The Dost, still professing allegiance to a Sudozai king, assumed the office of Wazir, the Governorship of Kabul, and the headship of the brotherhood, in 1826; and remained the first man in Afghanistan till the reinstatement of Shah Shuja.

Rise of  
Dost Mo-  
hammed.

In 1834, Shah Shuja made another attempt to get to Kabul, this time seeking to approach Kandahar from Sindh; the northern part of which was nominally a province of Afghanistan. Ranjit would give no help—his terms were too high. The British Government had declined to break through its policy of non-interference. Shah Shuja collected and marched an army to Shikarpur, and, after inflicting a defeat on the Sindh Amirs, induced them to acknowledge his sovereignty, and to assist his advance. But when he entered Afghanistan, he failed as usual. He reached Kandahar, but the place held out till a relieving force arrived; when the Shah was completely defeated, but was allowed to escape over the border to Kelat, in Biluchistan, and thence to his asylum at Ludhiana.

Shah  
Shuja at-  
tempts to  
recover the  
throne.

In the meantime Ranjit Singh took possession of Peshawar. While Sultan Mohammed was there, it would have been difficult to say whether the fortress belonged to the Lahore or the Kabul State. But now Sultan Mohammed took the opportunity practically to make a present of it to the Maharaja. This was too much for Dost Mohammed, who proclaimed a *jehād* or religious war against the Sikh monarchy, adopting for himself the title of Amir as "Commander of the Faithful." The fanaticism of both sides was aroused. Moslems of every

Ranjit se-  
cures  
Peshawar.





description flocked to the Amir's standard. But intrigue proved too much for Dost Mohammed, as in like case it had done for his brother Azim. An American adventurer, Harlan, was sent by Ranjit Singh ostensibly to negotiate, actually to sow dissension. He proved completely successful. Sultan Mohammed suddenly deserted with ten thousand men. When the next morning dawned, the Amir's camp was broken up, and the jihad was over.

In 1837 there was another collision between the Afghans and the Sikhs at Jamrud above Peshawar, when the latter lost their general, and received a severe defeat; but Ranjit had organised his military system so thoroughly that reinforcements and guns were pushed up to the front with extraordinary rapidity, and the Afghans found that whatever chance they had of recovering Peshawar was hopelessly lost. The district was now placed under the command of Avitabile, one of the Maharaja's Europeans, and was finally and completely incorporated in the Panjab domains.

Ranjit and  
Sindh.

In one direction only had the British interfered with Ranjit Singh's plans. He had desired to carry his arms into Sindh; but just at the same time the British had made up their minds to get the Indus opened up for commerce; and a war between Sindh and the Panjab would have disconcerted their measures. Ranjit Singh bowed to the inevitable, silencing the murmurs of his sirdars with the unanswerable argument—"Where are the two hundred thousand spearmen of the Marathas?" But the consequent irritation, and the suspicion engendered by investigatory expeditions sent up the Indus, bore their fruit at a later day when the strong hand and shrewd brain of Ranjit Singh had ceased to control the Khalsa.

Not long after the rounding off of his dominion by the final occupation of Peshawar, the great Panjab monarch died; some months after the ill-omened expedition of the British to Afghanistan had started on its way (June 1839).

At the beginning of the century the Sikhs were only commencing their career as an independent Power. Afghanistan was already falling into the turbulent and disorganised condition which destroyed its power of serious independent



aggression. Its real importance lay in its position between Persia and the Indian peninsula—and Russia loomed beyond Persia. Persia and Russia.

We have already noted the part played by embassies to Persia in the first decade of the century, when the Power that oppressed the minds of Indian statesmen was France. On our part, the Persian treaties were directed against France: on the part of Persia however, they were directed against Russia. Virtually though not explicitly the idea was that we guaranteed Persia against Russian designs in return for Persia's guarantee against French designs. By 1826, however, we were in no danger from France. It is the recognised rule of British politics, that movements in unfamiliar geographical districts attract no attention till we find ourselves plunged into an unexpected war; and accordingly Westminster was not interested in the progress of Russia in Central Asia. It is a singular fact that when either Russia or England goes to war in the East the open rupture is always due to an act of aggression by the Asiatic Power against Russia or England. The overt act of hostility comes from the other side. The explanation of course is different in the two cases. Russia, we know, provokes the aggression on purpose; with us there would be no provocation, but for persistent if intelligible misconstruction of our benevolent intentions. That is how the matter ordinarily and honestly presents itself to the British but not always to the Continental mind.

In 1826 Russian progress excited Persia into a *jehad* against her, with the natural result when a weak State attacks a strong one. Persia had to make an ignominious peace. England was bound by the definitive treaty of 1814 to support Persia in a war with any European Power, unless Persia should be the aggressor. England in this case applied to Russia the doctrine which she usually keeps for application at home; and so finding Persia the aggressor refused assistance. There was an uneasy feeling in the British mind that we had in this done something very like shirking a positive obligation; and we adopted the unimpressive course of giving Persia cash to pay her indemnities in consideration of her formally cancelling such obligations for the future. Russo-Persian war, 1825.





Persia for her part formed the conclusion that England was a broken reed, and resolved for the future to cultivate by preference the amity of Russia.

Persia as  
Russia's  
protégé.

When the horse had been stolen the use of stable doors began to be borne in on the political mind. Russia and Persia were suddenly become friends; and Persia began to find warm and hardly veiled encouragement to aggression in the direction of the Indian border. Under the aegis of Russia, she became suddenly formidable. The alarm which had once been inspired by Zeman Shah in combination with French possibilities was transferred to Persia combined with Russian possibilities, and from that day to this the latter have never ceased to dominate all Indian military or politico-military problems; not because a Russian invasion is practicable, but lest the hope of Russian help should rouse the natives of India to revolt. The idea of a great Mussulman invasion backed by Russia, and of a call to arms of the Mussulmans in India, followed hard on the Russo-Persian treaty; and there is no doubt that the idea was seriously entertained by the Persian princes. Afghanistan however must first be absorbed. Herat was in the hands of the Sudozai Kamran, who was anathema to the Barakzais as the murderer of Fasih Khan. If nevertheless the brothers should fail to join for his destruction, the group at Kandahar might as a next step, be detached from the Amir at Kabul.

Aggressive  
designs of  
Persia,  
1834.

The new aspect of affairs did not immediately penetrate to the official mind, though Persian restlessness caused it some uneasiness. The Shah-in-Shah's grandson Mohammed moved on Herat in 1833, but he was obliged to withdraw by his father's death and a threatening of troubles about the succession. In the next year these difficulties were disposed of; Mohammed Shah ascended the throne on his grandfather's death, and the talk of vast aggressive schemes became more open.

A new move on Herat was in contemplation. There was in fact a good deal of solid justification for such an expedition in the conduct of Kamran who had raided Persian territory and kidnapped Persian subjects. But the British objections were as obvious as the Russian encouragement. Pressure