



was brought to bear on the Shah and on Kamran to force them to terms: but while the Afghan proposals were reasonable, the Persian demands under Russian influence passed all bounds; including not merely Kamran's submission as a vassal of the Shah but the recognition of Afghanistan as far as Ghazni as a Persian province. Kamran would not assent: Petersburg repudiated in public the action of its representative but did not interfere with him. In 1837 the Shah with a great army marched on Herat. The Barakzais at Kandahar, by no means with Dost Mohammed's approval, displayed an inclination to side with the invader. The expectation of a great Mussulman irruption, with Russia behind it, was setting all India in a ferment. It was evident that unless active and energetic steps were taken at once to counteract the intrigues of Russia, consequences of the most serious character might ensue to the British supremacy.

ms.
1340

The Persians march on Herat, 1837.



CHAPTER XXI

THE AFGHAN EXPEDITION: AUCKLAND
AND ELLENBOROUGH*(Maps I. and VI.)*

Lor Auckland. **I**N 1836, Lord Auckland arrived in India as Governor-General with the most beneficent and peaceful intentions. He was greeted by a letter of welcome and congratulations from Dost Mohammed, in which the Amir invited his good offices against the pestilent Sikhs. The Governor-General replied that the British never interfered in their neighbours' quarrels; and the Amir opened negotiations with Russia, not because he wanted a Russian alliance, but to facilitate diplomatic pressure on the British.

The situa-
tion, 1837. By the Autumn of 1837, the Shah of Persia was in full march on Herat; the Sikhs were in full possession of Peshawar; the Barakzais at Kandahar were negotiating with the Persians; and Alexander Burnes arrived at Kabul on what purports to be a commercial mission in connection with the opening up of the Indus in accordance with the schemes referring up of the Indus in accordance with the scheme referred to in the last chapter.¹ Russia was urging the Shah to go forward, and her envoy was hastening to Kabul. Also a young subaltern of the Bombay army, named Eldred Pottinger, was making his unofficial way—partly from information, and partly from sheer love of adventure—towards Herat, to which city he was to provide a sort of *Deus ex Machina*.

The central fact in the situation clearly was this: Since Persia had been thrown into the arms of Russia, her aggression, with all the accompanying dangers to our rule in India, must be checked by the interposition of a Govern-

¹ Chap. xx. p. 230.



ment in Afghanistan friendly to us, strong enough to hold its own against Persia, and with a knowledge that it could rely upon our support in case of necessity as confidently as the Western Power could rely upon that of Russia. It was of manifest importance that this should be effected without bringing about any sort of rupture between ourselves and the Lahore State.

The obvious course then was to secure the *de facto* Government of Afghanistan. From the time when Dost Mohammed had emerged as the recognised chief of the Barakzai botherhood, he had thrown off the excesses of his turbulent youth, and approved himself capable; just, as compared with his neighbours; and, for an Afghan, quite unusually byal and straightforward. There is no sort of doubt that he was extremely anxious for the British alliance, extremely averse to exchange it for Russian friendship. In the view of M'Neill our Minister at the Persian court, and of Burnes at Kabul, our wise course was to cement a close alliance with the Amir. The only difficulty lay in the relations between him and Ranjit Singh, and that was by no means insuperable. The Amir wanted Peshavar restored to him; Ranjit was quite ready to give it up—on terms. His Sikhs loathed the place, and were mutinous when there. Its worth to him lay in its value for negotiations with Afghanistan. There was nothing to prevent an adjustment with which both parties would have been sufficiently content.

But Lord Auckland and his advisers were possessed with an entire mistrust of Dost Mohammed: and also, as it would seem, with a craving to bestow upon Ranjit Singh favours for which the Maharaja had no sort of desire. They thought of extending his dominion to Kabul; they would not hear of his handing over Peshawar, unless Sultan Mohammed, a most experienced traitor, were reinstated there as his tributary. They treated the Amir as a person who ought to be quite grateful if he conceded everything and got nothing in return; and finally as an apt illustration of the theory that the British never interfered with the private affairs of neighbouring States, they made up their minds that the *de facto* Government of Kabul should be

The true British policy.

Policy of Lord Auckland to restore Shah Shuja.



upset, and the exiled Shah Shuja restored to the throne, by the help of the Sikhs whom the Afghans abhorred.

by means
of British
bayonets.

In its first form, this surprising scheme involved only that Shah Shuja's army of restoration should be officered and trained by British. But it was presently borne in upon the authorities that if the plan was to be carried to a successful issue a large force involving the employment of quantities of British troops would be desirable, especial was Ranjit Singh was obviously half-hearted; in spite of the fact that Shah Shuja himself took by no means the same view of a restoration by British bayonets as of one by troops whom he could regard as his own. The justification of the plan lay in the fact that Herat had already been besieged for a long time, and that it would require a great force, either to save it or to counteract the impetus which the Persian invasion would receive from its fall. Such, therefore, was the scheme which, with the official reasons and explanations, was announced to the world in the Simla manifesto, issued on October 1st, 1838.

Successful
defence of
Herat

In the meantime however, the chief *raison d'être* of the scheme had disappeared. On November 23, 1837, the Persian army had sat down before Herat. Month by month, the besieger attacked, bombarded, and were repelled by the stubborn determination of the garrison, maintained by the persistent energy of Eldred Pottinger, who had volunteered his extremely valuable services. Russian officers were aiding and encouraging the besiegers: M'Neill's arrival in the Persian camp had brought hopes of an accommodation, but an immediate access of Russian activity much more than neutralised his influence. Still, the brilliant conduct of the defence held the Persians at bay. A last desperate attack was desperately repulsed in June, and the siege became a blockade. But a small expedition dispatched from India to the Persian Gulf was magnified by report into an overwhelming force; the Shah began to realise that Russia did not intend to compromise herself more deeply, and to believe that England was going to put forth her might against him; and on September 9, 1838 he broke up camp and retired. For the time the danger



of Russo-Persian aggression was at any rate completely scotched.

Nevertheless, to the general amazement, Lord Auckland and his advisers resolved to go on with their plan for the restoration of Shah Shuja; a plan of which it may be said that practically every competent authority disapproved, as not only barely practicable in itself but involving consequent complications of incalculable extent. Auckland had the support of the Cabinet at Westminster guided by Sir John Hobhouse, President of the Board of Control; but the policy met with unmitigated condemnation not only from Wellesley, Bentinck, and the Duke of Wellington, but also from experts such as Elphinstone and Metcalfe. It was probably the most unqualified blunder committed in the whole history of the British in India. *or*

Auckland persists.

The army assembled at the British cantonments of Firozpur, on the Satlej. Ranjit Singh naturally objected to its marching through his dominions, so it was arranged that Shah Shuja, accompanied by Sir W. Macnaghten as Envoy and adviser, with the main army under Sir John Keane and Sir Willoughby Cotton, should march by way of Bahawalpur, Sindh, Biluchistan, and the Bolan and Khojak passes on Kandahar; while the Sikh expedition accompanied by Colonel Wade and Shah Shuja's son Timur should make its entry by the direct route for Kabul, by way of Peshawar and the Khyber pass. The reluctant Sindh Amirs were required to pay a heavy subsidy, influenced by the persuasive presence of Keane's troops. *Plan of campaign.*

It was not till the end of February (1839) that the Sindh difficulty was settled, and Cotton's column began to move from Shikarpur. The "military promenade" was tedious and painful; there was want of water and forage; it took sixteen days to traverse the country from Shikarpur to Dadar, the beginning of the Bolan pass. To get through the pass took six days more; and had not the Khan of Kelat restrained the tribesmen, the journey would hardly have been accomplished without disaster—though the Khan had also impeded the collection of supplies. Quetta was reached at the end of March. Early in April, the whole army was *Advance on Kandahar.*



assembled there, very much in want of supplies, and firmly convinced that the Khan of Kelat had been and still was deliberately throwing every possible obstacle in its way. But there was no military resistance, and at the end of the month Shah Shuja entered Kandahar, amid popular excitement which, at the moment, passed for enthusiasm; his formal installation a fortnight later hardly appearing to excite interest. There is no doubt that the restoration of the legitimate monarch presented itself to the Afghans merely in the light of a successful foreign invasion.

Capture of Ghazni. A mission was dispatched to Herat; and on the arrival of much needed supplies, about the end of June—while Ranjit Singh was dying in the Panjab—the army proceeded against Ghazni; Dost Mohammed having by its inaction been misled into a belief that Herat, not Kabul, was its objective. Ghazni was an almost impregnable fort, and Keane arrived before it without a siege train. By a convenient accident however, the fact was betrayed to Major Thomson of the Engineers that one of the gates had not been walled up, and might be breached. The defenders were beguiled by a feint, the gate was blown up and entered by a storming party: the strongest fortress in Afghanistan had fallen into our hands almost without an effort, though the actual fight to secure it was a sharp one.

Shah Shuja back at Kabul. The Amir at Kabul would fain have resisted, but the only terms offered him were, an asylum in British territory. He made a stirring appeal to his followers to let him lead them in a last charge; but their loyalty was not equal to the demand on it. Flight alone was left, and he escaped to the Hindu Kush, across the Afghan border, in spite of a hot pursuit. On August 7th Shah Shuja entered Kabul. Three weeks later he was joined by his son Timur, the Sikhs having been enabled to pass through the Khyber without difficulty by the successful tactics of Colonel Wade. For a little while it was imagined that fresh lustre had been added to the British Arms. By the end of 1841, that lustre, such as it was, had been lamentably besmirched.

Shah Shuja had been restored on the hypothesis that he was to be hailed with acclamation by a devoted population,



and maintained on his throne by their loyalty. Almost from the first moment it was manifest that he owed his re-instatement entirely to alien arms, and that if the British retired, he would have to make haste after them, back to Ludhiana. It was resolved to retain a garrison of 10,000 British troops at Kandahar, Kabul and other points, the main body at Kabul; where Cotton at first remained in command, but was later succeeded by the hopelessly incompetent General Elphinstone—a very different person from his particularly competent civilian namesake. General Nott was appointed to Kandahar where he performed his work well. Macnaghten with Burnes at Kabul controlled Political affairs. The way for ultimate disaster was carefully paved by the extraordinary folly which, in deference to Shah Shuja's request, resigned to him and his seraglio the citadel known as the Bala Hissar which completely commanded Kabul, and relegated the garrison of 5000 men to almost indefensible cantonments outside.

British
occupation
of Afghani-
stan.

Persia was now quiescent; Russia had more than enough to occupy her in Turkistan; the Khan of Kelat had been duly punished for his supposed delinquencies; the separate government of Herat was enjoying large subsidies; the tribal chiefs of Afghanistan (notably the Ghilzais of the Kandahar district who in the previous century had for a time made themselves masters of Persia), were bribed into good behaviour. Dost Mohammed was still at large, but the danger from him was removed in 1840. By a desperate charge at the head of a few horsemen, he had scattered in ignominious flight a much larger body of troops which had been sent against him; and having thus retrieved his honour, he voluntarily surrendered himself, and was placed under honourable restraint within the British dominion. Macnaghten and Burnes believed themselves to be complete masters of the situation.

Surrender
of Dost
Mo-
ammed

The expense, however, was enormous. The actual army of occupation is said to have numbered some 25,000 men. The Dost's surrender seemed to offer a legitimate opportunity for withdrawal, but neither Macnaghten nor Lord Auckland would countenance such a step. Retrenchment was the



course adopted, and the form it took was the withdrawal of the subsidies to the tribal chiefs. The whole country was promptly in a ferment of latent hostility, aggravated at Kabul by the habitual and flagrant misconduct of some of the English there. Suddenly in November (1841) the flame blazed out.

Murder of It began with an *émeute* in Kabul which ought to have
Burnes, been promptly and easily suppressed. A mob attacked the
Nov. 1841. house of Sir Alexander Burnes, captured it, and murdered Sir Alexander. The mob was not yet large; there were 5,000 troops outside. To have marched in and crushed the rising within twenty-four hours would have presented no difficulties to any commander of ordinary capacity. But the insurgents were allowed instead to sack the treasury and capture the military stores, while the General did nothing: and every Afghan was in arms forthwith.

Messages were dispatched to Nott at Kandahar and to Sale at Gandamak, calling for assistance: but the latter was in no position to answer the call, and took the wisest available course of falling back on Jellalabad, so as to command the Peshawar road. Nott dispatched a brigade, but with a strong conviction that between the snow which was beginning to fall and the now inevitable opposition of intervening tribes, it would either fail to reach Kabul or would only get there shattered, useless, and too late to help. The Brigade started; but its commander soon made up his mind that the advance was wholly impracticable, and returned to Kandahar.

Mis- At Kabul, Elphinstone's imbecility was palpable, and
manage- matters were not improved by the association with him of
ment at Shelton, whose temper rendered him equally destructive.
Kabul. Day after day every conceivable blunder was committed; disaster was heaped on disaster; by the end of the month the General informed Macnaghten, that it was impossible to maintain the position, and he must negotiate. The Afghans demanded the unconditional surrender of the whole force. Macnaghten refused; but the General in his turn obstinately declined either to occupy the Bala Hissar as Shah Shuja himself had urged, or to attempt to collect food and forage by force of arms.



On December 11, Macnaghten, made helpless by the military authorities, renewed negotiations. The terms agreed upon were that the troops at Kabul, Kandahar, Ghazni, and Jellalabad should evacuate the country; hostages were to be left; and the Afghans were to supply provisions and carriage to expedite departure. Shah Shuja might stay, with a pension, or retire, as he chose. The ignominy of the surrender was without parallel. It can only be said, that in the face of the attitude of the military authorities, Macnaghten had no choice, if the lives of any of the garrison were to be saved.

But Akbar Khan, son of Dost Mohammed, who immediately after the rising had been recognised by the insurgents as their chief, took no steps to carry out his part of the bargain, and began demanding the surrender of the military stores, and of more hostages. Macnaghten decided to try and play the game of intrigue: Akbar Khan proposed and Macnaghten accepted a plan for a plot which in saner moments the British Envoy would have recognised as a palpable trap for his destruction. In accordance with the proposal he gave his directions to the General, and went out to meet Akbar, with a total escort of three officers and sixteen men. The four officers were suddenly seized; Macnaghten struggled; in a moment of exasperation Akbar shot him dead with his pistol; the captors of the other three with difficulty carried two of them to a place of safety. The third fell, and was murdered where he lay.

Murder of
Mac-
naghten.

Major Eldred Pottinger, a recent arrival, on whom now devolved by general consent the office which had been held by Macnaghten, tried hard to have the convention repudiated: but the military authorities over-ruled him. It was ratified on January 4th, and orders were sent for the evacuation of Kandahar, Ghazni, and Jellalabad; at each of which places however, the instructions were repudiated. Two days later the evacuation of Kabul began, some 15,000 souls starting on the march: men, women, and children, insufficiently provided with food and clothing, and without means of defence, they went out through storm and snow. One day, three more officers including Pottinger and George Lawrence,

The great
disaster.



were demanded and surrendered as hostages: a day or two later, eleven ladies with fifteen children and eight officers were handed over; and again a little later, the generals themselves; chiefly because their position seemed fraught with less danger as captives, than with the unhappy force. The Afghans entirely disregarded their promises; in every defile and gorge the tribesmen poured in a heavy fire on the fugitives; of all that host a single survivor alone reached Jellalabad on January 14, to tell the awful story; all the rest save the hostages perished on the way, whether from exposure or from the murderous attacks of the Afghans.

The energy of George Clerk at Agra prevailed upon the despondent and almost paralysed Governor-General to dispatch a brigade for the relief of Jellalabad; but it was incompetently led, and the Sikhs—despite the good-will of Sher Singh, now Maharaja at Lahore—made the merest pretence of rendering assistance. The Brigade failed to advance beyond Peshawar. By sheer persistence Clerk practically forced Lord Auckland and the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Jasper Nicholls, to send forward a fresh brigade—commanded this time by the very able General Pollock; though it was still maintained that the sole purpose in view, the sole object to be achieved, was the safe withdrawal of the Jellalabad garrison.

Retire-
ment of
Lord
Auckland.

At the end of February (1842), Lord Ellenborough arrived as Auckland's successor: the most disastrous reign in our Indian annals was brought to a close. Lord Auckland possessed admirable qualities for a routine administrator under peaceful and progressive conditions; but he had proved himself totally incapable of facing a crisis; his want of self-reliance, his injudicious selection of advisers who controlled him, and his complete lack of nerve, made him utterly unfit to deal with great events. His successor was brilliant, and versatile, but erratic, bombastic, and theatrical to a degree. Lord Ellenborough's career in India destroyed his reputation; but it was at least less positively disastrous than that of Lord Auckland.

The British forces whose movements have to be followed were posted thus; the largest body at Kandahar, under Nott,



with a garrison at the fort of Kelat-i-Ghilzai; Sale at Jellalabad; Palmer at Ghazni. General England was ordered up to Kandahar with supplies and some fresh troops, by the Quetta route. General Pollock was to advance from Peshawar to the relief of Jellalabad.

At Kandahar, Nott and the political agent Major Rawlinson were in no straits. An attempt to raise the Durani tribe in their support, on the theory that Shah Shuja was in their favour, was unsuccessful; but when an insurgent army moved on the city, Nott inflicted a severe defeat on it after twenty minutes fighting; and in March, after a summons to evacuate, in accordance with the orders sent from Kabul, which was declined, another attempt of the insurgents to make their way in was severely repulsed by a portion of the garrison; the bulk of which had been temporarily enticed away from the scene of action. Ghazni on the other hand was surrendered at about the same time; opinions differing as to how far the Colonel in command was justified. At the end of the same month, General England allowed himself to be checked in his advance from Quetta, and declined to move again until he was sure that Nott was in possession of the intervening Khojak pass.

Events at
Kandahar.

At Jellalabad the defence was maintained with great skill and success; the main credit being perhaps due to the spirited counsels and energetic action of Captains Broadfoot and Havelock. A day or two after the occupation an attack in force had been soundly defeated. A position at first hardly defensible had been rapidly converted into a strong fort. There was a short period about the end of January, during which the principal authorities wavered, owing to the belief that Government had abandoned them. But while negotiations were passing, news came that Pollock was on his way; a foray brought in a quantity of cattle; the chiefs took heart, and broke off the negotiations. A great earthquake overthrew the fortifications, but they were repaired with such speed and vigour that the enemy believed the shock had passed harmlessly. Akbar Khan, son of Dost Mohammed, appeared on the scenes and attacked the town: the garrison sallied forth and repulsed him. A

Defence of
Jellalabad.



few days later, another sally and foray brought in another ten days' supplies. Before the ten days were out, the garrison (April 7th) arranged a decisive plan of attack on the besiegers, drove them from all their positions into the river, captured guns and supplies, and effectively raised the siege.

A week later Pollock arrived. He had reached Peshawar on February 5th, but for two months he had been employed in mastering the mutinous spirit not only of the Sikh allies, but of some of his own officers. Not till April 5th had he been able to move, clearing the Khyber by masterly manoeuvring; when he joined hands with Sale at Jellalabad, the whole of the district, as well as the whole Kandahar district, was practically under British control again.

The position in April '42.

Such was the position in Afghanistan, when, in Hindostan, the Governor-General and the Commander-in-Chief made up their minds that Kandahar and Jellalabad must both be evacuated and the troops withdrawn at the earliest possible date; the prisoners being still in the hands of the Afghans, and the career of the luckless puppet king at Kabul having been ended by his assassination two days before the siege of Jellalabad was raised.

Nott and Rawlinson received the order to retire; in spite of their disgust, they had no alternative but to set about the preparations for carrying it out, although their position had been still further strengthened by the complete repulse, with heavy slaughter, of a fierce attack on Kelat-i-Ghilzai. Pollock discovered that the want of cattle must prevent an immediate evacuation of Jellalabad, and might detain him for several months. Throughout the Indian peninsula there was an explosion of indignation. Just in time, Lord Ellenborough discovered a way to maintain a particularly empty show of consistency, and at the same time to satisfy the universal

With- demand for the decisive re-conquest of Kabul and recovery drawal *via* of the prisoners as a preliminary to withdrawal. On July 4th he dispatched a letter to Nott, suggesting that he might perhaps, if he thought the risk not too great, retire from Kandahar *via* Ghazni and Kabul: and a copy of the same to Pollock, with a suggestion that if Nott elected to retire *via* Kabul, the Jellalabad force might co-operate. It was



somewhat as though a French army occupying Dresden should be instructed to withdraw with the option of taking Berlin *en route*.

Nott had nearly completed his preparations for retirement; Pollock had accumulated large supplies. Both promptly decided in favour of the novel method of withdrawal suggested. On August 7th, Nott marched in force from Kandahar; on the 20th Pollock advanced from Jellalabad. The former re-took Ghazni, and blew up the fortifications; the latter inflicted a complete defeat on Akbar Khan at Tezin. On the 15th September he hoisted the British Flag once more on the Bala Hissar at Kabul; on the 16th, Nott joined him.

The prisoners during these months had been shifted from place to place; sometimes protected, not without difficulty, by the good offices of a chief named Zeman Khan; but on the whole receiving fairly good treatment. When Nott and Pollock advanced on Kabul, Akbar Khan hurried his captives off to the Hindu Kush, and they were given to understand that their destiny was, to be distributed in permanent captivity among the Usbeg chiefs beyond the Afghan border. Before reaching a place called Bamian, however, the cupidity of the chief of their escort was so worked upon that when they were there, Pottinger assumed command, set up a new Governor, retained the escort in his own service, and prepared for a siege. On receiving the news of Pollock's victory at Tezin, the party resolved on an immediate return to Kabul, started on September 16, were met next day by the advance body of troops sent to recover them, and on the 22nd were once more at Kabul—free.

Nott and Pollock had vindicated the honour of the British arms. They had proved that we had competent commanders against whom the Afghan levies could make no stand. They had rescued the prisoners. They had re-taken Kabul. The Insurgents were everywhere in full flight. Their troops, in Kabul itself, getting out of hand, had taken signal vengeance for the fate of their comrades. There was nothing more to be done but to retire from the hopelessly false and untenable position into which Lord Auckland's great blunder had thrust

The
British
prisoners.

The
triumphal
march
back.



us. On October 12, the victorious forces began a triumphal march from Kabul to Agra. Lord Ellenborough issued a proclamation which would have done credit to Bonaparte. The sandal-wood gates of the temple at Somnath—or copies of them—carried off centuries ago by Mahmud of Ghazni, were brought back as a trophy, the centre of much grandiloquent rhetoric; and promptly forgotten. At Firozpur there was a grand review, with great pomp and circumstance, intended especially to impress the Sikhs. Finally, Dost Mohammed was liberated, and returned to rule for several years at Kabul; where in 1856 his successful opposition to Persia showed how entirely superfluous the whole disastrous episode had been.

Effect of the episode. But that wanton act of interference bore its evil fruit for us, not only in the great disaster of 1841; and subsequent internal complications in Afghanistan, but also in its revelation to the Native mind—as the events of the next six years proved, at the cost of no little bloodshed—that possibly after all the British arms might not be invincible.



CHAPTER XXII

SINDH AND GWALIOR: AUCKLAND AND
ELLENBOROUGH.*(Maps I. and V.)*

IF the Afghan episode is the most disastrous in our Indian annals, that of Sindh is morally even less excusable.

Sindh is the country lying on both banks of the Indus below the Panjab, with the Shikarpur region at the extreme north, and the sea on the south. The upper districts had been tributaries of the Durani kingdom. The chieftainship of the whole was divided amongst a Biluchi family, known as the Talpurs, in three groups—the Amirs of Khairpur, Mirpur, and Haidarabad; their subjects were mainly Biluchi Mussulmans.

Sindh and
the Sindh
Amirs.

As early as 1809 a treaty had been made between them and the British, for excluding "the tribe of the French." From 1832 to 1838 various commercial agreements were made in connection with the opening up of the Indus. In the last year, Ranjit Singh had been doing his best to obtain the assent of the British to his carrying his arms into Sindh; and the treaty with the Amirs provided for our mediating between them and the Maharaja. This mediation took the form of an arrangement by which Shah Shuja as *de jure* monarch of Kabul released the Amirs from all claims to service or tribute in consideration of a cash payment whereof some two-thirds was to be handed to Ranjit Singh. The demand for payment however was not pressed till negotiations for a fresh treaty in connection with our advance into Afghanistan were set on foot in 1839. The justification of the proposals then made is not obvious, seeing that the Shah had already given the Amirs a formal release in return



for benefits received on the occasion of his attempted restoration in 1833; and also we now claimed what had been expressly refused to us in existing treaties, the right of sending our forces and stores through Sindh. On the other hand, it is fair to recognise that the Amirs had been showing signs of hostility to us, and threatening alliances with Persia; which conduct at least gave colour to a demand on our part for a subsidy and a military station at Thatta on the Indus, some sixty miles below Haidarabad. The Amirs submitted under protest; and if they were sore at our treatment, they still fulfilled the letter of their engagement throughout our Afghan troubles, when it lay in their power to cause us considerable embarrassment.

Outram. Shortly after the restoration of Shah Shuja in 1839 Major James Outram—"the Bayard of India," as Sir Charles Napier named him later—was appointed Resident for Sindh and Biluchistan, in which post he did much admirable work, especially in the pacification of Kelat. Unfortunately for himself, he offended Lord Ellenborough—who had virtually promised to make him Envoy instead of merely Resident—by restoring Quetta and the Shal valley to the new Khan (from whose predecessor they had been taken), in accordance with his recommendation approved by Lord Auckland but neither ratified nor rejected by the new Governor-General.

The disasters in Afghanistan had created much unrest, which affected the Amirs unfavourably. Such charges against them as required investigation were formulated by Outram; and there is little doubt that in self-defence it was advisable for us to demand concessions which would enable us more readily to check anything like active disaffection. But in the autumn of 1842, while Nott and Pollock were restoring British prestige in Afghanistan, Outram was superseded by the veteran soldier Sir Charles Napier who was placed in supreme control both military and political.

Sir Charles Napier and the Amirs. Sir Charles conducted his operations on the theory that the annexation of Sindh would be a very beneficent and advantageous piece of rascality for which it was his business to find an excuse—a robbery to be plausibly effected. Ali Murad, a brother of Rustam the old Rais or head of the



Khairpur Amirs, is the villain of the piece. Rustam had no sort of idea of resisting the British power; but Ali Murad wanted the "Turban" or symbol of authority for himself. To Napier he posed as the one friend of the British, while he terrified the old Rais by friendly warnings of the dire fate that awaited him if he fell into the hands of the British Commander; whose hectoring tone gave a certain specious plausibility to the flagrant misrepresentation of his intentions. Rustam did not dare to obey Sir Charles's summons to meet him; Sir Charles attributed his conduct to contumaciousness, regarded his excuses and protests as mere prevarication, and made Ali Murad Rais in his place: at the same time sequestering the upper territories of Khairpur as far as Sakhar (Sukkur). The rest of the Amirs were then ordered to meet Outram at Khairpur to sign a treaty which was practically an abrogation of their sovereign status. Ali Murad succeeded in preventing their attendance on the appointed day, and on their arrival two days later, they were ordered to meet Outram at Haidarabad instead.

The result was that the treaty was not signed till Feb. 12 (1843), by which time the Biluchi population at Haidarabad had been roused to a violent pitch of animosity; and three days later they made a fierce attack on Outram at the Residency. The attack was brilliantly repelled, but Outram was obliged to withdraw to his steamer on the river. This overt act necessitated the appeal to arms. Napier, who, two months before, had deliberately dispatched a force of some five hundred men to seize the fort of Imamgarh in the Mirpur territory without provocation—an act of splendid audacity from the military point of view, but morally indefensible—was now marching on Haidarabad. With a force of 2700 men, he met the Biluchi army numbering 20,000 at Miani a few miles from Haidarabad on Feb. 27; and by brilliant generalship routed them completely with great slaughter, at the cost of casualties amounting to about a tenth of his little force. Haidarabad surrendered, and the Amirs submitted. About a week later, Sher Mohammed of Mirpur made a gallant attempt to recover independence, but was completely routed at Daba, a village not far from

The Sindh War.

Miani.



Haidarabad ; a detachment was sent to seize Amirkot ; Sir Charles Napier made his famous and only too truthful pun—" *peccavi*, I have Sindh"—and another province was annexed to the British empire.

The Annexation of Sindh.

The fatuity and blundering which had marked our operations in Afghanistan until the armies of Kandahar and Jellalabad vindicated our honour, were counterbalanced by the brilliancy of the general commanding in Sindh ; but the story of the annexation is a unique and deplorable example of departure from every principle which had hitherto made annexation only the last resort in dealing with persistently irreconcilable powers, or at most the final remedy for endless misrule. Our interference in Afghanistan, however unjustifiable, was at least not dictated by the desire of territory. Sindh is the one instance in which it is difficult to believe that the case for annexation was not more or less deliberately manufactured, in opposition to the declared sentiments of the most high-minded, capable, and well informed servants of the Government.

The excuse, such as it was, is to be found in the loss of prestige consequent on the Kabul disaster, though such disaffection as it had produced in the Amirs was trivial enough. But elsewhere it was not trivial, and was responsible for the particularly short and sharp two days' campaign of Gwalior, and, two years later, for the first sanguinary struggle with the Panjab State. The annexed territory was placed for the time under the administrative control of Sir Charles Napier.

Mutinies of sepoy regiments.

A minor result of the annexation—not however without significance in the light of later events—was the first grave outbreak of a mutinous spirit among the sepoy regiments ; the first sign of a tendency which was probably intensified by the Sikh wars, during which perpetual appeals were made by the agents of the Khalsa to the cupidity as well as the religious sentiment of the sepoys, and comparisons instituted between the rate of pay for serving and for opposing the British. In the case of Sindh, the trouble arose because before the Annexation the sepoys of the Bengal Army in Sindh were paid as for service on a foreign station ; after it,



they were required to serve beyond the Indus without extra allowances. The matter was probably made worse by the fact that many of the sepoys employed in the Afghan war had literally lost caste on service. One regiment after another refused to march: the 64th N.I. at last breaking into open mutiny. They were quieted by injudicious and unauthorised promises on the part of the Colonel; and the promises being repudiated at Shikarpur, they mutinied again. The General commanding in the district, recognising the provocation, was content with punishing the ringleaders. Very much the same thing happened with some Madras regiments which were ordered to Sindh: after which, neither Bengal nor Madras troops were called upon to serve there, the province being associated with the Bombay army. But the beginnings of insubordination were a premonition of troubles to come, as yet unsuspected by all but a few.

In an earlier chapter (xv.) it has been observed that on Gwalior, the conclusion of the Maratha wars in 1818, Daulat Rao Sindhia at Gwalior was allowed to retain a very much greater independence than any of the other Maratha princes; since he had displayed, though much against his will, a practical recognition of British paramountcy. Daulat Rao died without issue in 1827; when his energetic and ambitious widow found herself compelled to adopt his kinsman Jankoji, though she retained the government in her own hands for some six years. In 1833 Jankoji wrested control from her, and she was driven from his dominions. In 1843 (February), Jankoji died, leaving an extremely youthful widow, Tara Bai—she was in her thirteenth year—without issue and without having adopted a successor. Tara Bai adopted a boy of eight years old, with the concurrence of her own chiefs and of the Governor-General. Under such circumstances, and considering the great extent of Sindhia's dominions, Lord Ellenborough insisted on the appointment of a single regent in lieu of a Council. The Rani's selection for the post was the hereditary chamberlain known as the Dada: Lord Ellenborough's was an uncle of Jankoji's known as the Mama. The Mama was duly appointed: and the Rani and the Dada

Intrigues
for power.



proceeded forthwith to intrigue against him, while the British Government was under the circumstances obliged to range itself definitely in his support. Now, Sindhia—that is to say the Gwalior Government—was lord of one of the two great native armies still existing in India; the second and the greater being the Khalsa in the Panjab. When a political situation develops such as had now appeared in Gwalior, and also as we shall presently see in the Panjab; when the Government is divided into factions, and there is also a large and united army; the army very promptly becomes the leading factor in the situation, and can dictate its own terms to the rival factions as soon as it realises its own powers.

The Gwalior army. It may be remarked that, while Sindhia was a Maratha, the whole of his principality was outside the real Maratha country, in the heart of Hindostan. The army consisted mainly of Brahmin or Rajput regiments with no sentimental allegiance to the Maratha dynasty which was of inferior caste to their own; to the arrogance of conscious power it added the pride of caste—the pride not of nationality but of race: to which was conjoined unity of religion. The special danger of the situation lay in the fact that the Sikhs also were a sect, if an unorthodox sect, of Hindus; the religious antipathies of Hindu and Mussulman would not be present to stand in the way of a combination; a combination would mean a desperate bid for the recovery of Hindu supremacy throughout the Indian Peninsula: and the general belief in the practicability of such an attempt had been immensely advanced by the Kabul disaster, while the newly reported victory of Miani had been effective more as restoring our own confidence in ourselves than as recovering our prestige among the natives in general: and finally the controlling perspicacity of Ranjit Singh in the Panjab had been removed for nearly four years.

For some months the Gwalior army continued to wax in insubordination and arrogance. The court intrigues continued. The Mama was not strong enough to control the situation; the Rani dismissed him from his office, and the Dada drove him from the country. Lord Ellenborough



took the next step to breaking off diplomatic relations by withdrawing the Resident to Dholpur on the border.

The Rani was now nominally at the head of affairs: the Dada was practically dominant. The Rani entreated the Resident to return: he replied that the Dada must be surrendered as a condition precedent. The Rani offered to deprive the Dada of office, but demurred to giving up his person. Some of the nobles, supported by part of the army, captured him; but he escaped, resumed office, and succeeded in issuing eight months' pay to the troops, thereby securing them on his side. In the meantime, Sher Singh the Sikh Maharaja, who had been personally loyal to the British, was assassinated, and the attitude of the Khalsa was increasingly threatening. The Governor-General made up his mind that the Gwalior crisis must be ended.

A "camp of exercise" was formed at Agra; in other words a very considerable army was assembled there and set in fighting trim. Thither came Lord Ellenborough on December 11th, 1843, and forthwith he informed the Rani that a friendly government capable of keeping order must be established at Gwalior, and that his army was on the march to see that it was done. A week later this message was supplemented by a demand for the reduction of the Gwalior army, and the increase of the British subsidiary contingent in the dominion. The Governor-General somewhat characteristically backed his demand by reference to a treaty nearly forty years old which had been ignored by both parties from the date of its signature. Moreover he declined to remain within the British border, to receive the Rani for the signature of the proffered treaty. The army was not to be held back; the meeting was to take place on the 26th, in Gwalior territory.

The Gwalior chiefs and the army alike regarded this as tantamount to declaring the independence of the State at an end: and the army in particular felt that its doom would be sealed by submission. It was resolved to fight. The Rani was dissuaded or frightened out of attending on the day named. The bulk of the army marched out to a strong

With-
drawal of
the British
Resident.

Demands
of Lord
Ellen-
borough.

Maharaj-
pur.



position at Chanda, and on the night of the 28th entrenched itself at Maharajpur. Another column on the south of Gwalior awaited the expected advance of a second British column in that quarter from Jhansi.

On the morning of the 29th Sir Hugh Gough, the Commander-in-Chief, with between six and seven thousand men, advanced on Maharajpur. A complete conviction prevailed in British quarters that the resistance would be insignificant, and not only Lord Ellenborough but a party of ladies accompanied the advance. The nature of the country made it impossible to bring up the heavy guns. The enemy's lines were as a matter of fact carried only by sheer hard fighting in the face of exceedingly stubborn resistance, their men standing fast and fighting hand to hand; but they were finally driven in complete rout, with heavy loss.

Puniar. On the same day, General Grey, advancing from Jhansi, routed the second Gwalior column at Puniar, losing only some two hundred men. The total British casualties in the two engagements were just over 1000.

New arrangements at Gwalior. There was no further resistance. Sindhia's kingdom was not dismembered but was deprived of independence. A council of regency was appointed to conduct the government until the young Raja should come of age, the Resident having authority to dictate their measures at his discretion. The army was reduced from 40,000 to 9,000 men, and a British contingent of 10,000 was subsidised. This contingent, it may be remarked, subsequently became a particularly well-appointed and capable instrument of war, which in the time of the Mutiny joined the revolt, murdered its British officers, and had the unique credit of defeating an English General on its own responsibility.

Recall of Lord Ellenborough. Six months after Maharajpur, Lord Ellenborough was recalled, and was succeeded in the Governor-Generalship by Sir Henry (afterwards Lord) Hardinge. His erratic methods and his gasconading proclamations had been no less distasteful to the India House than the dictatorial tone of his correspondence with them: while his absorption in the excitement of military programmes had entirely withdrawn



his attention from administrative concerns. In Afghanistan he had fortunately changed his policy between April and July. In Sindh he had unfortunately withdrawn his confidence from Outram and transferred it to Sir Charles Napier. At Gwalior he had adopted a sound course, but had gone out of his way to put forward an unsound justification. His proceedings were a series of surprises and produced a nervous perturbation, and an uneasy suspense, particularly ill adapted to the exigencies of the government of India: the feeling that he was not "safe" was irresistible. No one had ever suspected Lord Auckland of genius; he was simply a capable domestic administrator who found himself involved in diplomatic and military complications entirely outside his province and beyond his capabilities. Different as were the causes of his failure, Lord Ellenborough is perhaps the only one of our Governors-General to whom the famous phrase about Galba applies—*omnium consensu capax imperii, nisi imperasset.*



CHAPTER XXIII

THE PANJAB: HARDINGE

(Map VI.)

Sir Henry
Hardinge.

LIKE each of his immediate predecessors, Sir Henry Hardinge arrived in India, hoping for an era of peace; as in their case, his rule is remembered as an era of war. In no other respect, however, does his administration resemble that of either Auckland or Ellenborough. The Afghan affair was wantonly conceived, recklessly conducted, and brought its own nemesis. The Sindh business had destroyed such credit as we had hitherto obtained for abstaining from wilful aggression. But the war with the Sikhs was forced upon Lord Hardinge by an unprovoked invasion; the terms imposed at the close of a hard-fought but triumphant campaign were studiously moderate; the Panjab State was maintained in its independence in spite of a quite legitimate excuse for annexation. The men who were brought to the front by the Governor-General's choice or with his approbation were those whose names stand in the front rank of the British roll of honour. Retrenchments were required of him where policy would have maintained the existing expenditure, but the resulting dangers were reduced to a minimum by judicious organisation; and the great soldier who had won a European reputation in Spain before he was thirty added a fresh wreath to his laurels, partly, it must be admitted, owing to the undue detraction of which his Commander-in-Chief, Sir Hugh Gough, was made the object.

The Panjab after Ranjit Singh. There were many reputed sons of Ranjit Singh, but only one his paternal relationship to whom he confidently recognised. This prince, Khārāk Singh, who was almost imbecile, succeeded Ranjit as Maharāja, the government falling into



the hands of his son Nao Nihāl Singh, and of the family variously known as the Dogra Rajas or the Jammu brothers, of whom the chief were Dhian Singh and Gholāb Singh. These men were not Sikhs, but Rajputs, who had won the favour of the old Lion of the Panjab—very able, very unscrupulous, and decidedly unpopular with the Sikhs themselves. At the end of 1840, Kharak Singh died, and his son—too capable and promising to suit the Jammu brothers (so called, because Ranjit Singh had made them jointly Rajas of Jammu when he acquired that country)—met with a fatal "accident." Sher Singh, a reputed son of Ranjit, was made Maharaja, with Dhian Singh as Wazir, Gholab Singh retiring to Jammu. Sher Singh and the brothers kept the Khalsa under some degree of restraint, and the Sikh government succeeded in maintaining a friendly attitude to the British throughout the Afghan troubles. In 1843, Dhian Singh, aiming at greater power, joined in a plot for the assassination of Sher Singh; but this was hardly accomplished when his fellow-conspirators removed him also; and his son Hira Singh in turn overthrew the conspirators, made himself Wazir, and established as Maharaja the boy Dhulip Singh, a possible son of Ranjit's by a young wife known as the Rani Jindan. She with her brother and her paramour Lal Singh, played a leading part in the Sikh Anarchy which followed.

Now it was that the Khalsa became the principal factor in the situation. We have seen that the great Maharaja had organised a powerful standing army on European models, with the help of European officers. It included some Mussulman regiments, but the great bulk of it consisted of Sikhs, who were fanatical religionists however little they respected the moral code of Nanuk. They had a curious constitution of their own; the regiments were really controlled, not by their officers, but by elected committees of five known as *Panchayets* on the analogy of the Village Communities. Their insubordinate conduct towards the officers had given to British observers a totally erroneous idea of their effective discipline in the field, for to the instructions of the panchayets they were absolutely obedient.

Their armament included 250 guns, in the management

The
Khalsa.



of which they were experts; and when we found ourselves at war with them it was discovered that they were also experts in the art of rapidly throwing up entrenchments behind which they would fight with unsurpassed doggedness and courage. The Sikh Sirdars were able to bring large bodies of armed retainers into the field, but these were quite inferior to the Khalsa regiments as instruments of war, and quite inadequate to making head against them for political purposes.

Intrigue
and
Anarchy.

The Rani and her entourage intrigued against Hira Singh; both parties endeavoured to win over the Khalsa. Both had in their minds the consciousness that so long as the Khalsa, loyal to itself and to "Govind" only, retained its organisation, any and every Government would be insecure. Both had the idea that the way out of the difficulty might be found in letting the army loose against the British; in which case, it would either solve the problem by being totally wrecked, or would by victory give prestige to the Government, which would claim the credit. The Sikh Sirdars were afraid of the army; they hated alike the Rani's circle and the Jammu party; and their sentiments to the British were mixed. In the game of intrigue, the Rani won, and Hira Singh, whose success might perhaps have eventually produced a strong government, was killed. The Khalsa more than ever became masters of the situation; and by the autumn of 1845, there was little room to doubt that they had resolved to make a bid for the Empire of Hindostan.

The Sikh
problem.

Ever since the assassination of Sher Singh the Sikh Anarchy had been a source of grave anxiety to the British Government. It had hurried on the decisive action of Maharajpur: which in its turn had helped to curb, for the time, the aggressive inclinations of the Khalsa, and had most fortunately cleared away the one formidable force whose geographical location at Gwalior would have rendered it not only an inevitable but an exceedingly dangerous ally of Sikh invaders, by threatening the rear of our advance. The Lahore Government could put at least fifty thousand drilled troops and probably nearly twice as many irregulars in the field, and the British forces in the frontier districts were quite insufficient to deal with such an army effectively: while to



increase their numbers would be to court the charge of wilful provocation. But in the circumstances, the thing had to be done, and was done with no little skill and the least possible display. Nevertheless, the problem of balancing the demands of political against military expediency offered its usual difficulty, and the attempt to evade war involved making the shock of sudden onset the more perilous.

During October and November (1845), the Khalsa obtained entire control over the Lahore Court or *Durbar*; but the British Political Agent, Major Broadfoot, still thought it possible that the Sikhs would abstain from the irrevocable step of crossing the Satlej. The British troops, of which an unduly small proportion were Europeans, were now collected to the number of 7,000 at the advanced fort of Firozpur, and were in considerable force at Ludhiana, Amballa, and one or two other forts west of the river Jamna. The largest station was at Mirat, or Meerut, east of the Jamna. The threatening movements of the Sikhs led Sir Hugh Gough, the Commander-in-Chief, to order up some of the Mirat troops; but optimistic advisers induced Hardinge, who was himself at Ludhiana, to have them sent back, though all available regiments were ready to move on receiving the order. On the 9th Dec. Broadfoot announced the Sikhs' advance. On the 12th came the news that they were over the Satlej and marching on Firozpur; on the 13th the Governor-General issued his declaration of war, and the troops at the western station were immediately on the march.

Disposition of British troops.

The Sikhs cross the Satlej.

18

Gough himself was in command; and the Governor-General, whose military repute was of the highest, placed himself a week later at the service of the Commander-in-Chief as second in command. The situation was somewhat awkward; previous Governors-General, who had been soldiers, had either exercised their right of taking supreme control, or had not accompanied their armies.

The advance was performed with extraordinary rapidity; the Amballa force starting on the 12th, overtaking that from Ludhiana and reaching Mudki on the 18th, having covered about 140 miles in seven days, their route lying for the most part through heavy sand or jungle.



Mudki.

On reaching Mudki after a twenty mile march the troops numbering some ten thousand had halted to rest, when approaching clouds of dust heralded the arrival of the advance column of the Sikh army; the battle was joined at about four in the afternoon. The engagement was fierce and the resistance stubborn, but the Sikhs, whose number may have been anything between twelve and thirty thousand were driven from the field, with the loss of 17 guns. So hot was the fighting while it lasted that the victors lost little short of 900 men.

Firozpur.

Firozpur was now not very far off; and after two days' halt to enable more troops to join, the army advanced on its way thither. Littler, commanding there, had orders to join hands with the relieving force. It was known that one portion of the Sikh army under a prominent Sirdar, Tej Singh, was before Firozpur; and the other portion under Lal Singh the Wazir, the Rani's favourite, had been thrown forward to oppose the advance. By skilful manœuvring, Littler brought a division out of Firozpur, evading Tej Singh, on the 21st, while Gough and Hardinge on the same day moved from Mudki. The Sikhs had entrenched and occupied at Firozshah a formidable position shaped like a horse shoe, impossible to turn, commanding the line of march.

Firozshah,

Dec. 21.

Here in the morning, the main British army found them. Gough, having inspected the position was anxious to make an immediate attack: Hardinge wished to wait for Littler's re-inforcement. After the unlooked-for vigour of the opposition at Mudki, the Governor-General was so convinced of the immense risk involved, should his force prove insufficient, that he exercised his authority and over-ruled Gough. Littler arrived at three o'clock; the attack commenced at four. When night fell, the British had partly carried the entrenchments, but the fight was still raging, the troops were losing touch of each other in the dark, and there was nothing left for it but to fall back and renew the attack next day. Never had a British army in India been placed in so critical a position; for no one could feel that defeat was impossible, especially if Tej Singh should re-inforce Lal Singh; and defeat would mean annihilation for the force and, for the



time being, of the British Power in India. The stubborn resolution of officers and men alike was rewarded when in the early morning the entrenchments were rushed and it turned out that dissensions, born of distrust in the competence and loyalty of their leaders, had caused the Sikhs to withdraw most of their forces during the night, falling back towards the north.

The crisis was not passed, for the British had been for no long time in occupation of the Firozshah position—they were too much exhausted for effective pursuit—when Tej Singh with some thirty thousand fresh men was seen to be approaching. If a new attack were vigorously pressed, disaster was still possible. But though it was opened with vigour, it was not maintained. For some reason unknown, Tej Singh began to fall back. A small body of light Dragoons and Lancers made a sudden charge, which precipitated retreat into flight: the great struggle was converted into a complete rout of the foe.

Firozshah,
Dec. 22.

It is commonly assumed that Hardinge's action in over-Current ruling Gough on the 21st saved India from disaster. Yet criticisms it is at least an open question whether Gough's plan was not the sounder. As it fell out, the attack did not begin till four o'clock in the afternoon of the shortest day of the year. But of Littler's force, for whose arrival it had been delayed, only one regiment took effective part in the fight. Before night fell, the entrenchments had been forced, and another hour of daylight would have made the victory complete. If Gough had had his way, Littler would have been in time, with his reinforcement, to make the result secure, much as it befel Moltke at Sadowa, and Tej Singh's appearance next day would have been fraught with nothing like the same danger. It may be that of the two plans Hardinge's was on the whole the right one—the less risky—to follow; but it is certainly unjust to describe the one as a piece of hot-headed rashness and the other as a counsel of sober judgment. Both the alternatives—there was no third—carried the risk of an overwhelming catastrophe; the one chosen all but led to disaster, but ended, not without the help of good fortune, in complete success, though at the cost of close upon 2,500 casualties.



Firozshah broke up the Sikh invasion; it was now our turn to overthrow the Khalsa in the Panjab. Within two months, on Feb. 10th, the decisive battle was fought at Sobraon. In the interval, the British were engaged in gathering their forces for the final blow, the Sikhs in completing their defences on the Satlej, and in threatening the British line of communication towards Ludhiana. A partial success at Budhowāl on Jan. 20th was redeemed by Sir Harry Smith's decisive victory at Aliwāl on the 26th when the raiding column was driven over the river.

Sobraon, Feb. 10, '46. The Sikh position at Sobraon, on the British bank of the Satlej, was of extraordinary strength; but if it could be stormed, retreat would be for the bulk of the enemy impossible. Gough resolved to storm it. At sunrise on Feb. 10, the artillery opened fire; but after a two hours' duel, it was clear that we had gained no advantage. The advance with musket and bayonet was ordered; after desperate fighting, with more than one check, the entrenchments were carried, the Sikhs resisting valiantly to the last; when finally they were being driven in complete rout over the bridge, it gave way with them; their losses amounted to not less than 10,000 men and sixty-seven guns; the possibility of effective resistance was at an end. The British losses were much the same as at Firozshah, though the proportion of killed was much smaller.

In two months there had been four fierce engagements, all stubbornly fought, two of them at greater cost than even Assaye. The resistance had been of a quality such as no native opponents had ever before displayed except the Ghurkas; in sixty days, the menace of the Khalsa was shattered.

The Lahore treaty. Annexation, or the attempt to establish a capable government in the Panjab, were the alternatives before the Governor-General, who chose the second. At the end of March (1846) the Lahore treaty was signed. By way of penalty and indemnity, the Jalandar Doab—*i.e.* the lands between the Beas and the Satlej—was annexed; about a million and a half sterling was demanded, and the cession of Kashmir with half a million sterling accepted instead;



Kashmir was then handed over, as an independent State, to Gholab Singh of Jammu for a million; the Sikhs gave up the artillery they had used in the war; their army was reduced to thirty thousand men; a Council of Regency was appointed; by desire of the Sirdars, British troops were to remain at Lahore till the end of the year, the chiefs declaring that without such assistance they could not be responsible for maintaining order; Henry Lawrence was appointed Resident with large powers, and the great race of British Frontier Officers was called into existence. The excitement created throughout India by the Sikh invasion, and by the rumours of a coming Hindu triumph, was allayed by a triumphal march on which the 250 surrendered or captured guns were displayed. When Lord Hardinge retired (he and Gough having been raised to the peerage) something less than two years later, early in 1848, he was under the belief that no more wars would be needed for several years to come.

The task before the Resident, Henry Lawrence, in the Panjab, was one of extraordinary difficulty, and was performed by him with extraordinary success. The personal confidence and the influence he acquired among the Sirdars, were amazing. Hardly was he established at Lahore when in October this power was shown by his leading a Sikh army with only a small contingent of British troops to force the recalcitrant governor of Kashmir to yield that country to Gholab Singh; a mission accomplished without a single blow being struck. The Court party however, were by no means satisfied with the new order of things, intriguing against the Resident, and fomenting the ill-feeling of the Khalsa, which retained a conviction that its defeat had been due to the treachery of its Commander, not to its own military inferiority. When the time came at the end of the year, for the retirement of the British troops, the Sirdars again declared that anarchy must result. Despite the Governor-General's anxious desire to withdraw from the Panjab, the force of the Sirdars' argument was conclusive. A new treaty was accordingly concluded at Bhairawal or Bhyrowal by which the Panjab administration was placed absolutely under

Henry Lawrence

Treaty of Bhairawal



British control—Henry Lawrence becoming virtual dictator—until the young Maharaja Dhulip Singh should come of age in a little less than seven years' time; when the British were to withdraw altogether.

The Panjab officers. During 1847 many of the Panjab men who were to become famous learned their work under Lawrence's inspiration—John Nicholson, Herbert Edwardes, James Abbott, and others including Henry Lawrence's no less famous brother John. One notable effect of their actions was that the Pathan and Biluchi tribes, from Hazara on the North to the Sindh border on the South, learned a curious devotion to the Englishmen which stood them in good stead when the Khalsa again rose. For the Mussulman tribesmen did not love their Sikh masters, whose conception of Government had been hitherto restricted to the collection of tribute. Their method was unconsciously summed up by the remark of a Sirdar, that as there had been no contributions from the Derajat for two or three years, it was "time to send an army." The methods of Edwardes, Abbott, and the rest were less drastic but more efficacious and a good deal less costly; persuasion coupled with an occasional display of supreme audacity, impressing the untutored mind in a way which astonished the Sikhs. It must not be forgotten however, that all the time Lawrence's men were acting as representatives not of the British Power but of the Lahore Government temporarily administered through them.

Outlook in the Panjab. The Rani's party had been weakened before the treaty of Bhairawal by the removal of Lal Singh who was implicated in the resistance of Kashmir: and in 1847, the discovery of other plots and correspondence caused the Rani herself to be removed from Lahore, though not for some months, unfortunately, from the Panjab. By the end of the year, it seemed as if the Khalsa itself was settling down into a sullen acquiescence in the new order; a good many of the Sirdars were becoming more definitely well-disposed to the British; the non-military population was discovering the advantages of British administration; the hill tribes were increasingly friendly. Could Henry Lawrence's sympathetic acumen have been retained at Lahore continuously for the



next six years, it is more than possible that a complete and salutary revolution of Sikh sentiment, and even of Sikh methods of government, might have been peacefully brought about. But Lawrence's health broke down; the situation demanded an extraordinary man, and he was replaced by an ordinary one; while simultaneously a new and inexperienced if exceptionally able Governor-General succeeded Lord Hardinge. In January, 1848, Hardinge and Lawrence sailed together from India: Lord Dalhousie arrived at Calcutta: and Sir Frederick Currie was placed in charge at Lahore. A new war was not long in following.



CHAPTER XXIV

CONQUEST OF THE PANJAB, AND OF PEGU:
DALHOUSIE*(Maps I. and VI.)*

Position of
British
forces.

THE desire for retrenchment and the expectation of a prolonged peace induced Lord Hardinge before his retirement to make a very large reduction in the Native or Sepoy army; though he so reorganised the distribution of forces that a greatly increased mass of troops was placed in the North West districts. At Lahore, Jalandhar (the newly ceded territory), and Ferozpur, brigades were formed as movable columns of all arms, which made a repetition of the Satlej campaign impossible. Nevertheless, before the end of April (1848) a revolt broke out which in six months' time had developed into a fresh rising of the Khalsa against British influence.

The
Multan
revolt.

Multan, at the South Western corner of the Panjab, was the scene of the outbreak. The Governor, Mulraj, had been in correspondence with the Rani. He had declared his desire to be relieved of the Governorship, on the ground that he was not able to collect the revenues of his district. On his presenting himself at Lahore, it was decided to allow his resignation; and two British officers, Vans Agnew and Anderson, accompanied by Sikh and other troops, returned with him to take temporary charge of affairs. On reaching Multan, Mulraj's soldiers rose; he declared that they would not permit his resignation; Agnew and Anderson were murdered, and a revolt against the British domination was proclaimed.

Multan was in rebellion against what was not a usurped but a perfectly legitimate Government at Lahore. Techni-



ally it was the business of the Sikh authorities to suppress the rebellion. But if the rebellion made head, there was every probability that the Sikh soldiery would join instead of suppressing it. A message had been got through by Agnew, before his murder, calling for help, to Herbert Edwardes in the Derajat; and the news was soon at Lahore and Ferozpur. At the moment, it seemed incumbent on the British to march to the rescue of the Englishmen in Multan, regardless of the technicality. But when it was known that the murders were accomplished, the position changed. Punishment was the business of the Sikh Government: and it was resolved that the British troops should not interfere. The argument was, that interference might be resented; that if the Sikh State were really well disposed, it could and would quell the rebellion; if it were not, the whole country would shortly be in arms, and the risk to small columns in such an event would be greater than the chance of their being able to quench the conflagration at the outset. Lord Gough preferred the chance of a big revolt with the certainty of throwing a powerful conquering army into the Panjab late in the year to the hazai. At once sending a small force, when failure might precipitate serious disaster: especially as Multan was reputed to be exceedingly strong, and the country a dangerous one to Europeans for summer campaigning, being intensely hot. This view was endorsed by Housie, and acquiesced in by Currie.

Campaign deferred.

For a year past, Lieutenant Herbert Edwardes had been employed under the Sikh Government, controlled by Henry Lawrence, as an officer in the Derajat beyond the Indus. Here he had wrought wonders among the tribesmen by the novelty of his methods. Never before had discussions between them and the collectors of taxes been carried on with arguments less material than the musket or the tulwar. His frankness, his geniality, his audacity and his untiring energy won their confidence and admiration; between them and their old Sikh oppressors there was no love lost, but in Edwardes they recognised a born leader. Remote as was his position, he could not await orders, and when Agnew's message reached him, he did not hesitate to take

Herbert Edwardes.



on himself the responsibility of action. The hill-men answered to his call, and he soon had at his back Pathan levies whom he could trust, as he could not trust the Sikhs who formed his regular troops. His chief reliance was upon a very able, brave, and wholly trustworthy Mussulman, Foujdar Khan, and a capable half-caste commander, Van Cortlandt. He set himself energetically to preparing for a move on Multan, and to urging on the authorities the advisability of securing success by some British help; failing which, he could only do his best with his own regiments, and the assistance of the friendly Mussulman State of Bahawalpur. Meantime the Lahore Government was preparing columns to send to Multan; but it was obvious from the outset that while some reliance might be placed on the Mussulman regiments, those of the Khalsa were by no means trustworthy.

In June Edwardes crossed the Indus; on the 18th, the anniversary of Waterloo he joined hands with the Bahawalpur force, and won a victory at Kiniri. On July 1st, he won another victory at Saddusam which brought him close up to Multan: and a week later, the Khalsa contingents, commanded by the Sirdar Sher Singh, arrived. As yet, Sher Singh seems to have been personally well affected; but his father Chattar Singh was playing a double game in the Peshawar and Hazara districts, intriguing for Afghan support in exchange for the cession of Peshawar, and urging his son by letter to use the opportunity to raise a revolt of the Khalsa: and Edwardes was painfully alive to the possibility that the bulk of the army before Multan might go over to Mulraj any day.

About this time, Currie resolved to use his powers, and send the movable columns at Lahore to support Edwardes. Gough thereupon, while protesting against the whole policy of the movement, still considered that if a column was to go, it must be strengthened. The result was that Mulraj continued to improve his defences until, early in September, General Whish joined Edwardes with a division and a siege train. Some minor engagements, preliminary to an intended general assault, met with success; but the situation was suddenly changed when, on the 14th, Sher Singh and the whole of his

Whish sent
to Multan,
Sept. '48.



Sikh troops went over to Mulraj. The capture of Multan was now rendered impossible; the besieging force could only sit down in front of it, and three weeks later Sher Singh was able to depart with his troops northwards, unmolested, calling all the old members of the Khalsa to his standard as he went. The Sikhs had committed themselves once more to a stand-up fight with the British.

Rising of
the
Khalsa.

Gough's plan of operations precluded him from listening to appeals for the help of a brigade at Peshawar, Hazara, or Bannu between Peshawar and the Derajat, though George Lawrence and Abbot were urgent. His scheme required the concentration of his forces, with the exception of the Bombay column ordered to join Whish at Multan: with whom a junction was to be effected after the fall of that town. Consequently the Sikhs from the Derajat prepared to join Sher Singh, and Chattar Singh's intrigues resulted by the beginning of January (1849) in the capture by insurgent forces, with some Afghan help, of Peshawar and Attok, with George Lawrence. The force at Multan was not strong enough to push the attack till the Bombay column arrived late in December, and the place was not finally won till Jan. 22nd.

In the meantime, Gough completed his preparations and began his advance. Broadly speaking, all the districts beyond the river Chenab were in revolt; those between the Chenab and the Satlej were restrained from open rebellion partly by the influence of a few Sirdars, partly by the activity of John Lawrence in securing posts which might otherwise have become centres for the gathering of insurgents.

Gough's
advance,
Nov. '48.

By the middle of November, Sher Singh was waiting with a large army to dispute the passage of the Chenab, which was not bridged. On November 22 a sharp skirmish took place about the river bed at Ramnagar (Ramnuggar), where a gun stuck fast in the sand under the enemy's fire, and had to be abandoned, while the Sikh advance posts and a regiment of British cavalry, the 14th Light Dragoons, were both severely handled. The Sikh position was too strong to be forced; but a few days later, a considerable body of troops was taken across twenty miles up the stream and moved

Ram-
nagar.



Sadulapur.

down to attack the Sikh encampment. This turning movement made Sher Singh resolve to fall back to another position. A part of his army engaged the British turning force on the afternoon of Dec. 3 at Sadulapur, retiring under cover of night; the Sikh leader withdrawing his whole force Northward to the Jhilum river, at Rässül.

The Chenab was crossed; but the enemy's army was in full strength, entrenched, in a very difficult country, well supplied with artillery, and thoroughly skilled in maintaining a defensive position though with no corresponding skill in attack. Gough wished to wait for the fall of Multan and the release of his column there before proceeding to strike what he hoped would be the final blow; but strong pressure was brought to bear on him in political quarters to make him advance at once, lest Sher Singh should be re-inforced from the North; a contingency made the more probable by the fall of Attok. Accordingly on Jan. 12 ('49) he moved forward with an army of about 14,000 men; and on the following afternoon was fought the bloody and indecisive battle of Chillianwalla.

Chillian-
walla,
Jan. '49.

A turning movement being in the Commander-in-Chief's view not practicable it was his intention to make a frontal attack. Towards mid-day on the 13th the enemy's entrenched position was disclosed, extending along the near bank of the river with their left flank resting on the Rassul hills. Gough proposed to camp at Chillianwalla, and to fight next day but the Sikhs had actually advanced to a nearer position through jungle, and suddenly opened fire showing that the intended encampment would be untenable. It would be necessary for Gough either to fall back or to attack at once; and he chose the latter alternative. In advancing through the jungle, certain brigades failed to keep touch with each other; there was a panic among the cavalry on the right wing, and a stampede, which left the flank uncovered. For a time it seemed possible that there might be a great disaster. But by pluck and hard fighting, the Sikhs were at last beaten off and driven in rout towards the river. Once again, as at Sadulapur and on the first night of Firozshah, a complete if sanguinary victory was snatched from the British



by the fall of darkness; this was followed up by three days of heavy rains which made further movements impossible. Thus a desperately contested battle left the Sikhs still in occupation of a very strong position at Rassul, where for a month to come the British had to be content with watching them.

The carnage on both sides had been great: colours had been lost: some regiments had brought grave discredit on themselves. There was a great outcry at home and in some circles in India over the disaster, and Sir Charles Napier was appointed to take Gough's place as Commander-in-Chief. But before the change took effect, Gough had already terminated the war by the brilliant victory of Gujerāt.

While Chillianwalla was being fought, the closing operations of the siege of Multan were in progress; a week later, the citadel fell. The expected re-inforcements from the North came into Sher Singh's camp, but the troops released from besieging Multan were on their way to join Gough. The Sikhs attempted two or three times to draw him into making a fresh attack, in which they were abetted by renewed British political pressure; but the General was not to be again enticed or pushed until he had his whole army concentrated, and his guns raised to the requisite numbers by the arrival of the batteries from the South. Hitherto, despite the surrender of cannon after the Satlej campaign, the Sikh artillery had always proved superior.

A month after the battle, on Feb. 14th, Sher Singh suddenly marched on Gujerat: Gough in turn moving, not to bring on a fight but to cover the river (the Chenab). On the 20th Feb. he was joined by the Multan column and their guns. Next morning the battle opened with heavy cannonading; but at last the British had the superiority; in less than three hours the Sikh defence was broken up; and only then was the general advance ordered. In another hour the enemy were in flight, leaving their camp, their baggage, and their guns; an effective chase being maintained by the British cavalry till nightfall. The Khalsa had received the final irrevocable blow, our casualties being less than one third of those at Sobraon, Chillianwalla, or Firozshah.



A force was despatched under Sir Walter Gilbert which followed hard on the tracks of the routed Sikhs; who finally surrendered at discretion on March 12. Peshawar was yielded a few days later, and the Afghan contingent made good its escape over the border. This time the Sikhs felt that they had been soundly and unmistakably beaten in fair fight without suspicion of treachery on the part of their leaders; so that a primary incentive to revolt was finally removed.

The Panjab annexed. The attempt to evolve an independent and friendly government in the Panjab had failed. Five years before, Sindh had been annexed without reasonable excuse: in the Panjab we had manifestly done our utmost to abstain from Annexation; but abstention was no longer possible. On March 30th, 1849, the Panjab was formally annexed to the British Dominions; the boy Maharaja, Dhulip Singh, was deposed and withdrawn from the territory, but granted an ample pension; and Lord Dalhousie proceeded to the settlement of the new province.

Henry Lawrence and the annexation. In the beginning of the year ('49) Henry Lawrence had returned from England. In his view, the sound policy to follow was one of conciliation; annexation was at best an unpleasant necessity, and on any other principle would become not only dangerous but also unjust. As he regarded matters, greater tact and skill would have averted the Multan outbreak altogether: failing that, the outbreak could and should have been nipped in the bud. The Sirdars would have remained loyal if they could: but the British had insisted on throwing all responsibility on them, and leaving them to keep the Khalsa in check unaided; the Khalsa had once more proved too strong for them; and they deserved very little blame for finally yielding to the pressure and throwing in their lot with the revolt. Dalhousie had no sympathy with this view, which implied a certain censure on the course he had adopted; he considered that the Sirdars deserved the sternest treatment. Lawrence, again, held that if we annexed, policy apart from justice required that the Sirdars should have increased not diminished power as compared with the soldiery; and that with adequate British



forces in the province, they would become loyal themselves and exercise a very strong influence in our favour, as the natural leaders of the people. Dalhousie held that the less power they had the more readily would the population at large be converted into supporters of British rule. And Dalhousie was supported by Henry Lawrence's brother John.

Sir Henry was the last man to be placed in office for the carrying out of a policy to which he was diametrically opposed; while there was no doubt of the practical necessity for retaining his services in the Panjab. Dalhousie solved the difficulty by appointing a Board of three instead of a single Chief Commissioner, consisting of Henry Lawrence as President, with John Lawrence, and Mansel (succeeded by Robert Montgomery) as legal member. The outcome of the brothers' divergent views was a series of compromises. The Sirdars, with diminished wealth and influence, sombrely, if without enthusiasm, acquiesced in a treatment which was at any rate less severe than they might have looked for; and the population at large soon found themselves enjoying an unprecedented prosperity. The Khalsa was disbanded, but many of its members were re-enrolled in new British regiments; while the more turbulent spirits among the frontier tribesmen found scope for their energies in the irregular corps raised to form the afterwards famous Panjab frontier force by Nicholson, Lumsden, Coke, Hodson, and others. A general disarmament, in which the village headmen found themselves associated with Government and made responsible for enforcing its orders, combined with a judicious distribution of garrisons, made the prospect of any organised rising so remote that its possibility soon faded from the popular mind. The essential work of the Board was virtually accomplished before the differences of the two great brothers made a continuation of compromises impossible. Dalhousie then chose the one whose views agreed with his own to be Chief Commissioner; and Henry Lawrence, to the deep disappointment of himself and the "frontier men" who worshipped him, was transferred to Rajputana as Resident in 1852. Here also however his sympathetic tact gave him an influ-

The
Governing
Board.

Henry
Lawrence
transferred
to Raj-
putana.



ence over the Rajput chiefs which enabled him to tranquillise them under the excitement produced by certain aspects of Dalhousie's policy to which we shall presently turn; but for which it is probable that they would have taken active part in the great rising of 1857.

Dost Mohammed. Dost Mohammed at Kabul had practically stood aloof from the Panjab war, though he had allowed his brother Sultan Mohammed to help Chattar Singh. He was now thoroughly convinced of the inevitability and permanency of British Ascendancy; and in 1855 he made a treaty with Lord Dalhousie's Government, (finally ratified at the beginning of 1857), which bore fruit not only in his successful resistance to Persia in the following year, but also in the complete absence of disturbance on the frontier throughout the Sepoy revolt.

From the conquest of the Panjab we turn to Dalhousie's second conquest, that of Pegu, on the Far East.

Burmese affairs. The Burmese monarch, since the peace of 1826, had shown no disposition to carry out the spirit of the treaty then made. The British Residents sent to his capital at Ava had experienced such habitual discourtesy that they had been finally withdrawn. The merchants established on the coast, instead of being protected by the Governor of Rangoon, were harassed in every possible way, subjected to groundless accusations, and fined even when acquitted. By the summer of 1851, matters had reached such a point that in September the European community at Rangoon memorialised the Government at Calcutta, setting forth their grievances, demanding intervention, and declaring that in the alternative they would be compelled to abandon their business and their property.

Insult to the British, 1851. Two months later, a British warship anchored off Rangoon: commanded by Commodore Lambert, with authority to enquire into the complaints of the merchants, and to demand suitable compensation from the Burmese Government, together with the removal of the Governor of Rangoon. The attitude of the Governor himself was uncompromising; but the Commodore's missives were dispatched to Ava, and met with a reply which was taken as being friendly and pacific. Its



apparent purport was belied by action. The Governor was indeed withdrawn from Rangoon, but with every mark of honour, instead of disgrace. His successor ignored Lambert's existence. An audience was demanded, but when at the appointed hour the officers reached the Palace, they were informed that the Governor was asleep; and after being kept waiting in the open under a burning sun for many hours, they withdrew in great indignation.

Such a deliberate insult changed the aspect of affairs. The Commodore demanded the immediate payment of the compensation, assessed at only £1000 sterling, and a personal apology from the Governor. Further, he seized a royal vessel lying in the river as security for the payment, and announced a blockade. The Governor then addressed Calcutta, but in terms not of compliance but of extreme arrogance.

These events had taken place between September 1851 and January 1852. At the end of the month, Dalhousie, who had been in the North West, reached Calcutta. He made immediate preparations for war, but at the same time, while announcing his intention of appealing to arms, he informed the Burmese Government that a peaceful settlement might still be obtained by meeting all the previous demands and paying a further indemnity of £100,000 by the first of April. It was of the first importance that the campaign should be concluded by the end of that month, by reason of the rains and the unhealthy climate, which the war in Lord Amherst's time had shown to be much more formidable than the Burmese army.

Preparation for war.

The preparations were pushed on with extraordinary skill and vigour; and with an unparalleled attention to the sanitary requirements of the troops. An important result of the Panjab annexation was now manifested. The problem of transporting Hindu soldiery across the sea had been hitherto serious, for Caste reasons: but it was found that the Sikhs were entirely free from that prejudice, and were perfectly ready to take service.

Early in April, the whole army was concentrated on the Irawadi; on the 11th it was before Rangoon. During the next three days, there was heavy cannonading while the

Capture of Rangoon.



British General, Godwin, was making his dispositions; on the 14th the great Pagoda, the fortified temple which formed the citadel, was stormed with extraordinary valour; Rangoon was captured, and the British occupation was accompanied by the immediate establishment of a firm provisional Government.

Godwin rightly declined to advance upon Ava in the summer; in September Dalhousie himself arrived on the

And of scene. In October, Prome, half way to Ava, was captured, Prome and and a month later the town of Pegu was finally secured.

Pegu,
1852.

This terminated the military operations. The extension of dominion outside the British boundaries was not, *a priori*, a part of Dalhousie's programme, though in the case of the Panjab he had annexed without reluctance. On the other hand, he had no intention of drawing back a yard from territory on which the British flag had once been planted. An advance on Ava would in his view necessitate the annexation of all Burma; and therefore he resolved to proceed no further but to annex the conquered province of Pegu. Even this he described as an annoying necessity forced on him by the circumstances.

Annexa-
tion of
Lower
Burma.

The annexation was effected simply by Proclamation, unratified by any treaty—a matter of the less consequence, since it was certain that the Burmese court would have regarded any treaty as waste paper. The act cannot be regarded as in any way exemplifying a spirit of greed or aggression. In the circumstances, there had been no alternative to a war, or to a cession of territory on the conclusion of the war—virtually a universal rule in the East. And in this case, there was no sort of question that the entire population of the annexed province would have chosen, had the choice been offered, to be placed under the British flag in place of the unqualified tyranny under which they suffered. The condition of the provinces of Arakan and Tenasserim previously ceded had been the object of their envy for many years: in Pegu the annexation was undoubtedly a matter of rejoicing, and to Pegu it brought unexampled prosperity. It was not however till the time of Lord Dufferin that the further inevitable step was taken, and Upper Burmah also was added to the British Empire.



CHAPTER XXV

DALHOUSIE AND THE NATIVE THRONES

(Maps I. and VIII.)

AS concerns the two annexations by conquest, of which the history has been related in the last chapter, the verdict that no other course was open to the Governor-General is almost unanimous. It is conceivable that Henry Lawrence might have rebuilt the Panjab State; it is quite certain that no other man in India could have done so. Nor is it possible to find fault with the annexation of Pegu, except on the hypothesis that the despot at Ava was entitled to behave as he pleased to foreigners within his own territory—an argument which would have justified Suraj ud daulah.

The course however which was adopted by Dalhousie towards the dependent and semi-dependent States of India is a matter of debate. When the Mutiny broke out, innumerable voices were raised, laying the blame of it primarily upon the "Annexation Policy," and condemning that policy as immoral *per se* and as a departure from all precedent. Since that time, Dalhousie's apologists have held the field; and it has become customary to treat any criticism of him with very scant respect. Yet at the time, not a few of the ablest and most experienced officers in India were on the other side.

Dalhousie's actual view was frankly and definitely stated in his Sattara Minute; quoted in every book which deals with the subject. He held that if any *legitimate* opportunity occurred for bringing a dependent State under the formal dominion of the Company, it would be wrong to let the opportunity pass. The grounds for that view are no less clear than the view itself. The quality of any native government depended almost entirely on the personal character of

The annexations by conquest.

The "Annexation Policy."

Dalhousie's theory.



the ruler for the time being. Under the Oriental system the degeneration of every royal family was assured; while even the ancient remedy of violent deposition by a capable adventurer was now forbidden. Hence, it was only by absorption into the British dominion that any prospect of continuous good government could be obtained.

The opposed theory. In the opposition view, it was maintained that people do as a matter of fact prefer to be ill governed (within limits) under methods with which they are familiar, and which have been evolved in the course of their own history, rather than to be scientifically governed under alien methods. It was better therefore to help the indigenous system to develop in a healthy manner, rather than to impose a foreign system in itself greatly superior. The ceaseless wars of the past had prevented that healthy development; now, with peace guaranteed by the might of Britain, the opportunity had come. Therefore, it was not advisable to annex, except as the alternative to palpable irredeemable mis-government, or to the up-growth of a dangerous militarism.

Conflict- ing views as to land- holders. One point deserves to be noted as strongly influencing the minds of the partisans of either view. British dominion was inevitably accompanied by the loss of influence and wealth on the part of the owners of large estates—jaghirdars or zemindars—and theoretically at least by an improvement in the lot of the peasants. But in many parts of India, especially in the Rajput districts from Behar to Rajputana, the relations of the landholder and the peasantry were often akin to those of Highland chieftains to their clansmen, owing to hypothetical bonds of family: or to the looser but still effective bond of feudalism. The advocates of one view pointed to the palpable, tangible, material superiority of the modern over the mediæval system: the advocates of the other laid stress on the real value of the mediæval sentiment, and the danger of attempting to bridge five centuries by a proclamation.

Policy in the past. It will be observed that the question now presenting itself was different from that dealt with generally by the earlier Empire-builders. Wellesley had extended British dominion by obtaining cessions of territory; but even in the case of



Mysore he had gone out of his way to reinstate a native dynasty; the cessions had been treated as matters of political necessity. His subsidiary alliances and Lord Hastings's treaties had always assumed that the native States should be entirely responsible for their own domestic affairs. The question whether it was better to maintain a native State on these conditions, or to end its existence as a State had been habitually answered in favour of its maintenance; except where, as in the case of Arcot, the reigning dynasty had been given up as past hope. In like manner, the irreconcilable attitude of Baji Rao had led to the annexation of the Peshwa's dominions, but even in the act Hastings had restored the principality of Sattara.

In short, it would seem that the right of annexation on sufficient ground had been recognised and acted upon, whether the ground was irreconcilability or flagrant and continuous misgovernment; but opportunities had not been sought, and where they had occurred they had repeatedly and deliberately been declined more often than accepted. The attitude had been, that the individual case must be judged on its merits, but that the presumption was in favour of maintaining the Native State.

It is here therefore that we shall find Dalhousie's "departure." There was fully adequate precedent for every one of his annexations. But his predecessors had acted on the general principle of avoiding annexation if it could be avoided; Dalhousie acted on the general principle of annexing if he could do so legitimately. Neither Dalhousie nor his predecessors, however, treated the general principle as a Universal Law.

Nature of
Dal-
housie's
departure.

The third alternative, of intervention in the domestic affairs of a native state, without annexation, had never been treated as practicable except when the reigning prince was a minor, as for instance in the Panjab between the two Sikh wars. It was always laid down that such intervention should cease when the prince attained his majority.

Now it happened that during Dalhousie's time a singularly large number of opportunities for annexation occurred. The case of Pegu belongs to the category of cessions rather than



annexations; it was the confiscation of territory after a successful war, not the absorption of a principality. The annexation proper, after conquest, of the Panjab, has already been discussed; but there remain the "opportunities" within the sphere of Ascendancy.

Different
grounds
for annexa-
tions.

These fall into two classes. In very nearly every instance, annexation was carried out. The classes are, those of lapse or escheat, and those of misgovernment. In the former there are four leading cases—Sattara, Nagpur, Jhansi and Kerauli: in the latter the leading case is that of Oudh.

In each of the five there were two questions to be asked—would annexation be legitimate? And if so, would it be expedient? An affirmative answer to the first question would by no means necessarily involve an affirmative answer to the second. And it might even be that in each case, if treated by itself on its own merits and if treated in conjunction with the rest, a different answer might be given.

The adop-
tion ques-
tion.

In the cases of lapse, the legitimacy turns primarily on the question of Adoption. It was admitted that on the demise of a Dependent Prince leaving no heir, the government legitimately lapsed to the Sovereign Power. The peculiarities however of the Hindu religion had brought about the custom of Adoption. The welfare of the soul in the next life depended in part on the due performance in this world of sundry religious functions by the offspring of the departed: if a man died without offspring, these functions could not be performed: hence the doctrine of adoption, by which all the capacities and qualities of genuine offspring were created in an adopted child, with a full religious sanction. The adopted child became the heir of his adoptive father, precisely as if he had been bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh.

As far as private concerns and private property were affected, this was simple enough: the complication arose when inheritance of political functions also was claimed. It does not appear that in dependent Hindu States, the validity of such inheritance had been disputed. But half the Hindu principalities had been subordinate to a paramount Mahommedan power; and the paramount power had main-



tained that for political purposes its own sanction was required to render an adoption valid. That sanction had been on occasion withheld, and had habitually been made conditional on some sort of payment. In taking the place of that paramount Power, it seems quite indisputable that the British Government were entitled to refuse their sanction to an adoption; and that their refusal rendered it invalid for political though not for private purposes.

Accordingly, as long ago as 1834, the Court of Directors had laid it down that adoptions should be sanctioned not as a matter of course, but only as a matter of exceptional grace. The occasions however had hitherto been rare; though the declaration of 1834, supported by two or three instances which had occurred in the interval, were clearly sufficient to justify Dalhousie in treating fresh cases as "legitimate opportunities" for absorption. Dalhousie had hardly arrived in India when the question was raised in connection with the principality of Sattara.

The instructions of 1834.

On the annexation by Lord Hastings of the Peshwa's dominions, the Governor-General had erected out of a portion of them the State of Sattara which he had bestowed upon the representative of the house of Sivaji. In 1839 the Raja had been deposed for persistent misgovernment, and replaced by his brother. The brother had no children; and he recognised the authority of the British Government by repeatedly petitioning for permission to adopt a son, which permission was consistently refused. Nevertheless, just before his death in 1848, he did adopt a son. Hence arose the question—should the British Government recognise that adoption, although it had not been sanctioned, or should it claim that Sattara had lapsed to the Sovereign Power, since there was no other heir to the prince upon whom the State had been bestowed by grace of the British Government in 1818.

The case of Sattara.

The legitimacy then of annexation is beyond dispute. It was a departure from a policy which had prevailed up to 1834, but it was in accordance with the declaration of that year, which moreover had been acted upon more than once in the interval: nor did the fact that a different policy had



been followed before touch the legitimacy of a change. The question was which of two legitimate policies should be followed. Dalhousie decided for annexation. The weight of authority favoured that view ; and it received the approbation of authority in England. The opposition, mainly represented by Sir George Clerk, one of the ablest administrators in India, relied on the injustice of acting upon a plea technically valid but by custom exercised only in exceptional cases.

The case
of Jhansi.

The second case was that of Jhansi, a district in Bandelkhand, ceded by the Peshwa in 1817. The hereditary authority of its subordinate ruler had been then confirmed by the British, and he had been dignified with the title of Raja fifteen years later. On his death in 1835, a son adopted without sanction had been set aside, and a kinsman had been given the succession. On his death, the British had again selected the successor who died in 1853: leaving an heir whose adoption had not been sanctioned. Again, the legitimacy of absorption is clear ; its expediency from the point of view of the Jhansi population was supported by the disastrous effects of the rule of the first two Rajas. Jhansi was annexed, and the Raja's widow pensioned ; but the proceedings filled her with the bitterest animosity to the British.

The case
of Kerauli.

Kerauli stands third. This was a small Rajput state, lying just beyond the Chambal, which had been subject to the Marathas. The case differed from those of Sattara and Jhansi in this, that it was a principality of considerable antiquity, in which—as throughout Rajputana—the right of adoption had not hitherto been challenged : whereas both Sattara and Jhansi had been in effect creations of the British, within areas where the political validity of adoption had long depended on recognition by the paramount Power. Dalhousie himself was in favour of maintaining even in this instance the principle of refusing to recognise an unauthorised adoption ; but he was alive to the distinction, and referred the case home. The Directors decided in favour of the adopted heir, on the ground that Kerauli was not a “dependent principality” but a “protected ally.”

These three may be regarded as the test cases of the Adoption question. They implied the definite decision that



in minor dependent States at any rate, the perpetuation of a dynasty by the method of adoption would no longer be permitted, and that such States on the failure of heirs would henceforth be escheated.

The annexation of Nagpur was on a somewhat different footing. Like the Peshwa's dominions, Nagpur had fallen forfeit in 1818; but Lord Hastings then deliberately reinstated a youthful member of the royal house as Raja. During his minority, the administration had been conducted by the British Resident, Richard Jenkins, to the extreme satisfaction of the general population. When the Raja came of age, laxity and dissipation set in. In 1853, about the same time as the Jhansi Raja, the Raja of Nagpur died. He had consistently refused to adopt an heir. There was no legitimate successor. There was a general sense that British administration would be welcome: the alternative was to discover some one, remotely connected with the late Raja, who might perhaps prove a success; but there was no candidate who was in the least promising. On the other hand, Nagpur had been one of the great States of the Maratha Confederacy. Its position after 1817 had been different from that of the states of Holkar or Sindhia; but for certain purposes, such distinctions are apt to be lost sight of. The disappearance of Nagpur would certainly be felt as ominous, its reinstatement would be held as auspicious. In forming his decision Dalhousie placed before all other considerations the prosperity of the people of Nagpur: therefore he annexed. But the bulk of the princes of India attributed his action to the other motive, the desire to add to the Company's territories. In the whole series of annexations by Lapse they amounted to more than a dozen in Dalhousie's time; but the Governor-General had declared that he did not intend his rule to apply in semi-sovereign States; but it seemed unreasonable to suspect that its extension to them would follow logically in due course; and it would have been very remarkable if no uneasiness had been produced in such a court as that of Gwalior, where it was at least half believed that every reigning Sindhia was fated to die without leaving any actual heir of his body.

The case
of Nagpur.



The case
of Oudh.

Persistent
mis-
govern-
ment.

The final act of Annexation, that of Oudh, did not turn on the doctrine of Lapse at all. After the battle of Buxar in 1764, Oudh was forfeit to the British by all Oriental precedent. Clive, by what was regarded as a pure act of grace, had then reinstated the Nawab Wazir. Some forty years later, Wellesley had been within an ace of deposing a later Nawab, and annexing his dominions; nor would such a step have seriously shocked the Native mind at that time, when the government was still regarded as existing by grace of the British. But the dynasty had been allowed to go on, though one after another the Governors-General threatened and remonstrated. A century and a quarter of rulership had established a belief in its permanence; yet the misgovernment seemed to grow worse year by year, and the king's mercenary army to grow more dangerous, more undisciplined, more uncontrolled.

In 1847, Lord Hardinge had given the king two years to put his government in order, with a very explicit warning that in case of his failing to do so, the British Government would have to assume control. 1849 came, yet once more remonstrance alone was resorted to. Two years later, Colonel Sleeman, then Resident at Lucknow, sent in a report which seemed to point to only one possible conclusion. Finally in 1854, Colonel James Outram, Resident in his turn, once more reported that the condition of the province could hardly be worse.

Alterna-
tive pro-

It was clearly impossible for affairs to continue as they were. The British must undertake the administration, either term of years or in perpetuity. In either case, the king be allowed to maintain his rank and dignities. The remaining alternative was formal deposition and annexation. Of the three courses, the second was recommended. In deciding which to adopt, it had to be remembered on the one hand that the dynasty with all its members had been uniformly loyal to the British, and on the other hand that it was only the British protection of the dynasty which had preserved it from overthrow by revolution. The British could not free themselves therefore from some responsibility for the endless misrule, nor from a very marked obligation to the dynasty.



Of the members of Council, two supported Dalhousie's plan of maintaining the ostensible sovereignty of the king; two advocated open annexation. The arguments appeared to be very evenly balanced and it is noteworthy that in this case it was the Home authorities who decided in favour of the extreme measures to which the Governor-General's judgment was opposed, though not strongly opposed: for in stating his view, he had expressed his own readiness to carry out the annexation if that course should be decided upon. The actual performance of the task was entrusted to Outram; who however failed to persuade the king to abdicate, and Oudh was formally annexed by proclamation on Feb. 13, 1856. Oudh annexed.

In addition to these annexations, and a series of minor ones mostly effected on the ground of lapse, but partly on that of misgovernment, and partly also, as in the case of Sambalpur, on the petition of the population, the Company's territories were increased by an assignment from the Nizam. The transaction was somewhat complicated and difficult. According to treaty, the Nizam maintained a Contingent with British officers, controlled by the Resident. The payments were constantly in arrears, but no reduction of the force was practicable; a heavy debt had already been incurred to the Company for advances to cover the deficiency, and still the arrears accumulated. From 1849 onwards, Dalhousie repeatedly pressed the Nizam, and in 1850 a temporary reduction was actually effected, but the debt immediately began to grow again. The Nizam was urged to transfer territory, partly to liquidate the debt, partly to secure the regular payment of the Contingent; he would only reply with promises, and declarations that any cession was quite unnecessary. At last in 1853 a treaty was presented for his acceptance which found favour with his ministers; but the Nizam himself remained obstinate, and was finally with the utmost difficulty persuaded by his own people to sign it in a modified form. Berar and other districts were assigned, to be under the control of the Resident, the Nizam retaining his sovereignty. The Nizam was released from his treaty obligations to help the British The Berar Assignment.



with troops when called on; but the Contingent ceased to be a part of his army, while the British were now under obligation to maintain it. The surplus revenue from the districts was to be paid back into the Haidarabad treasury. It may be remarked that a portion of the territory was restored in 1860, when it had been proved that under British administration Berar by itself supplied the requisite revenue.

In the field of relations to Native dynasties it remains briefly to dismiss certain cases in which the Governor-General was accused of "spoliation" or harsh dealing.

The Nagpur treasures. On the death of the Nagpur Raja, the British, correctly as a matter of law, laid claim to considerable treasures which the deceased prince had accumulated out of State funds. Dalhousie however decided that the treasures should be sold and the proceeds appropriated not by the British but for the benefit of the Raja's family. There was some friction, because the Begums refused to give up a part of the treasure for the purpose; and some ill-feeling was aroused because the sale was accomplished by the undignified process of auction; but there was no spoliation in the matter.

The Arcot family. The Nawab of Arcot died in 1853. In 1801, the title, the dignities, and a pension, had been bestowed on a member of the family; but the clause in the draft treaty continuing them to his heirs had been deliberately struck out. The grant was strictly personal. It was renewed however to his son in 1819, and to his son again in 1825. On the death of this last in 1853, a claim to succession was made by his uncle; but the Governor and Council of Madras were supported by Dalhousie in considering that the continuation of the title and dignities would be contrary to the public weal, and that the previous grants, so far from recognising a claim, had expressly disallowed it. It was therefore decided that the justice of the case would be fully met by bestowing adequate allowances on the uncle Azim Jah and other members of the family.

Last is the affair of the notorious Dündü Pānth, better known as the Nana Sahib who later achieved eternal infamy



by the Cawnpore massacre. He was the adopted son of Baji Rao and the Baji Rao, formerly Peshwa. Baji Rao after a career marked by some talent and ceaseless treacheries had been finally Nana Sahib. dethroned by Lord Hastings, and removed from Puna: when Sir John Malcolm incurred some disapprobation for the exceedingly generous terms granted to the fallen Peshwa, who was to have some eight lakhs—£80,000 per annum. Malcolm did not consider the amount very excessive, precisely because it was granted to him personally, and not to his heirs. Baji Rao lived to 1856, and made sundry unsuccessful attempts to get the pension extended to his heirs. Dying, he left much wealth, and might if he had chosen very easily have left much more. To this wealth the Nana was of course recognised as the heir, and Government added to it a considerable jaghir. Nana Sahib however persuaded himself that he had a right to the continuance of the pension and that he was a victim of the most flagrant injustice. He never forgave the British for treatment which erred, if at all, in the direction of superfluous generosity: and when his opportunity came he took a signal and ghastly revenge.



CHAPTER XXVI

GENERAL PROGRESS

1838-1848. **I**N an earlier section¹ of this volume, we described by anticipation some of the administrative achievements of the ten years preceding Dalhousie's arrival in India. To this period belong Thomason's Settlement of the North West Provinces, the greater part of the crusade against Dacoity, and the more definite successes in the combat with Infanticide.

In other respects however, these years, with their constant warfare on and beyond the frontier, were not remarkably fruitful. To Thomason falls the credit of having advanced the cause of Education by the establishment and encouragement of schools in which the vernacular was the medium of instruction. In the department of Public Works, progress was slow. A great famine in 1838 was contemporaneous with and gave an impulse to activity in canal-making; but even in this field, a set-back was given by Lord Ellenborough, who disorganised the great scheme of the Ganges canal, then slowly progressing, partly by reducing its scope, partly by changing its main purpose from irrigation to transport. Lord Hardinge however reverted to the original project. But throughout these years all public works were woefully hampered through coming under the financial control of a body called the Military Board which acquired a singular reputation for preventing efficiency wherever its power extended. Another change also took place after 1842, which greatly affected India, though it did not emanate either from the Company or from Government; in the establishment of a great service of steam communication *via* Suez by the

¹Chaps. xviii., xix.



famous Peninsular and Oriental Company. Tentative efforts had been made in this direction under Lord William Bentinck, but the Home authorities had discouraged and discountenanced them.

There remains during this period one important piece of work to which only a brief reference has hitherto been made; the abolition of the custom of Human Sacrifices among the Khonds of Orissa.

The Khonds were a primitive race, dwelling in the hilly districts about part of the Mahanadi. Technically their country fell partly in the Madras Presidency, partly in that of Bengal; but in fact they had not been brought under British control. They believed in a Good Spirit, and also in an Evil Spirit; but whereas one section believed that the former had brought the latter into subjection, another section held that prosperity was conditional on an adequate propitiation of the evil goddess. This propitiation could only be effected by the ceremonial sacrifice of human victims. These people were also much given to Infanticide though for a peculiar reason. When one of their women was wedded, the husband paid a large price to her father; but she was free to leave him after a year, and in that case the price had to be repaid; which might be a difficult matter. Also the woman might elect to attach herself to a new husband who was thereupon bound to receive her—and to pay. But in each case, it was not only the individual but the entire tribe which became responsible for the payment. Consequently the man who possessed marriageable daughters was by no means to be envied, for the feuds arising out of these peculiar matrimonial customs were innumerable. Therefore the habit was to take the short way of avoiding the possession of marriageable daughters.

The district of Gumsūr is on the edge of the Khond territories, under the hills, almost on the border of the Northern Sarkars. Gumsur was tributary to the British, and its failure to pay in 1835 brought the British for the first time into actual contact with the Khonds. The resulting punitive expedition revealed some of the peculiarities of these unknown tribes; and Captain Charters Macpherson,

The
Gumsur
Khonds
and Mac-
pherson.



remaining at the Agency in those parts, became keenly interested in studying them. Reports were made on the subject of the Human Sacrifices. No systematic effort was made to put them down; but an occasional rescue party marched into the hills and rescued a batch of victims.

Abolition
of Human
Sacrifices.

At last however, in 1842, Macpherson was commissioned to deal with matters more systematically. He proceeded on the principles which Hall and Outram had found so successful with the Mers and the Bhils. He gradually persuaded the Gumsur Khonds that his intentions were entirely friendly. He got himself called in to preside over their judicial councils; where his awards were accepted with keen satisfaction. He argued out with them the principles of their theory of sacrifices, pointing out how other races had outgrown the idea. At last he persuaded them to attempt the alarming experiment. The British, he said, would accept the responsibility. The goddess might be invited by the Khonds to visit her vengeance on them as the real cause of this defection from her service. The experiment was tried. The victims who were to have been offered at the great annual sacrifice, whereof the particular object was to secure a good harvest, were handed over instead to the British—and as it befel, the harvest was certainly none the worse. The Gumsur Khonds were convinced, and made up their minds that at last the Good Spirit had got the evil goddess fairly in subjection.

Macpherson's operations were at first confined to the Madras territory; but he was presently deputed by the Governor-General to deal with the Khonds in general, whether in the Madras or the Bengal regions. The adjoining tribes of Bod or Boad followed the example of Gumsur; and though Macpherson's work was greatly thrown back by his removal from the district, under circumstances which reflected very little credit upon those who were responsible for that wholly inexcusable step, the work of civilisation was carried on by the Khond Agency, until human sacrifices entirely disappeared, and infanticide was at least very greatly reduced.



Before Lord Dalhousie's time, the most important of the non-regulation provinces was the newly-conquered Sindh, where the administration was given a singularly military form under the control of Sir Charles Napier. But of the new territories acquired under Dalhousie's rule, one—the Panjab—immediately assumed a position of the first importance. The Governor-General dominated every department of the State: but to none were his energies and his interest so enthusiastically given as to the organisation of the new Province. He devised for it a scheme of Government, in the form of the triple Board, without precedent and without parallel; but that scheme—impossible for continuance, and most galling to the members of the Board while it lasted—was precisely calculated to effect the immediate objects which Dalhousie had in view. Antagonistic as were the ideas of the Lawrence brothers, most of the subordinate officers had already absorbed the spirit of the one before he was transferred to Rajputana; while the other, seeing eye to eye with his chief, had imported a greater strictness of method and a closer attention to detail than was compatible with Henry's temperament or was much to the taste of the brilliant subordinates who chafed against the bonds of what seemed to them superfluous control. Nevertheless, they were allowed in their own districts a freedom of initiative and an amplitude of personal responsibility unknown elsewhere. However deeply the once great jaghirdars might resent their loss of power, prestige, and wealth, to the population in general the new order of things quickly proved acceptable enough. Many taxes were removed altogether, others which had been intolerably heavy were very much lightened; with the usual paradoxical result that they yielded a greatly increased revenue, owing to the increased demand and the improved profit on production. Reasonable assessments reconciled the frontier tribes to paying their dues without having an army sent to extort them. The Hill-men found their thirst for fighting satisfied in the ranks of Coke's Rifles or Lumsden's Guides; and their military talents were utilised in the suppression instead of in the practice of robbery, the bandit or assassin of one day becoming the loyal soldier of the next. Thuggee

Dalhousie
and the
Panjab.

The
Lawrence
brothers.

Benefits of
their rule.



which had survived under the Lahore Government was stamped out. The great inducement to infanticide was removed with excellent results; for here too, despite the strong injunctions of Nanuk, the father of the Sikh religion, infanticide had prevailed. The barbarous punishment of mutilation tempered by fines which had been extended to every sort of offence by Ranjit Singh, gave place to the milder, but not less effective penalties acceptable to British ideas. Further, Dalhousie, more lavish in his expenditure on public works than any of his predecessors, was most lavish in his favourite province; in which, it is to be finally observed, alone among his acquisitions, a really adequate military force was raised or planted, with a proper proportion of European troops, and officered by the pick of the service—an arrangement which bore very good fruit in the Panjab itself, but increased the already excessive disproportion between Sepoys and European soldiers through the whole of Hindostan.

Increased
import-
ance of
the Upper
Provinces.

In other respects, the Panjab helped to shift the Imperial centre of gravity. Simla became almost as much the headquarters of Government as Calcutta; the relative importance of Mirat (or Meerut) as a military station was greatly increased, many more troops being concentrated in the Upper Ganges Provinces. To the extension of territory may also be attributed the change by which Bengal was now placed under a regular Lieutenant-Governor, the Governor-General being relieved of any specific association with that province.

Educa-
tion.

The first steps towards the institution of Vernacular education had been taken by Thomason; and after a brief experience, Dalhousie proposed to extend the scheme throughout the North-West Provinces. The home authorities however, went beyond what he had recommended; and in 1854 a despatch from Sir Charles Wood laid down new principles, which were vigorously applied by the Governor-General, and amounted to what might be called an educational Charter. A complete system was established of schools regularly graded, from the local native schools up to Universities, under State control; and these have steadily increased and multiplied, till their students at the present day number some millions.



It is only when we succeed in realising the enormous extent of India that we can quite grasp the vastness of the change introduced by a revolution in the means of communication and of transit. Vienna is the European capital furthest from the sea; the distance from Delhi to the coast is nearly double as great. Supposing Vienna to occupy in Europe the traditional political position of Delhi; the distances from Delhi in a straight line to Calcutta, Madras, Bombay and Lahore correspond nearly to the distances from Vienna of St Petersburg, Madrid, Paris, and Berlin respectively. From Calcutta to Peshawar is about as far as from Paris to Constantinople. Hence for the purposes of Government from any one centre the process of communication before the introduction of steam and telegraphy was infinitely slow; and that of transferring the Governor-General with his entourage from point to point—not to speak of masses of troops—involved an immense expenditure of time.

Until Lord Dalhousie's time, railway enterprise had received the minimum of encouragement. The risk for private capital was far too great; and Government would undertake nothing and guarantee nothing. Lord Ellenborough scoffed at the whole idea. The financial railway crash in England frightened the investing public. By 1852, the whole of the mileage of railway lines sanctioned in India amounted only to a couple of hundred miles. In that year however, Dalhousie was urgently pressing for a change of policy in this matter; English capitalists were already waiting only for guarantees to be more than willing to invest; and the next year the renewal of the Company's Charter was to come before Parliament. Presented with so many motives for action, the Directors resolved to take up railway construction; Dalhousie laid his plans for running lines all over India; thousands of miles were brought under survey for the purpose and railway works were commenced. Had these schemes been initiated ten years earlier and carried out with the same vigour, Government, when the Mutiny came, would have been able to shift and transport troops in a way which might easily have crushed the great Revolt before it

Railways.



had assumed formidable proportions. The sanction came too late for that. By a curious irony, the railways in 1857 had not yet reached the stage of being actively serviceable, while the operations connected with them had gone far enough to arouse by their incomprehensibility the suspicions of uneducated Native intelligence. But in a few years' time they were to bear ample fruit.

The Telegraph. Something of the same kind happened with the Telegraph. Experiment of any kind was made particularly difficult by the liability of the atmosphere to violent electrical disturbances and by the lack of skilled electrical engineers; but the difficulties were triumphed over. The magic wires were stretched across the land. The story is familiar, how the cool-headed operator in Delhi flashed to Lahore the news of the rising in a sentence that was barely finished; and Sir Colin Campbell throughout his campaigns was in telegraphic communication with Calcutta. But the system was still too incomplete for full use to be made of it, and in the popular mind it was still a thing uncanny, suspicious, and reflecting suspicion on the British. As it was Dalhousie whose designs ultimately brought Peshawar as near to Calcutta as Patna had been in the days of Warren Hastings, so it was to Dalhousie's energy that the creation of the telegraphic system was due.

The P.W.D. Dalhousie also created a new Department of Public Works with an Engineer at its head in each Presidency, abolishing the effete and unworkable Military Board. Roads were built of which the most notable was perhaps that from Dakka to Arakan, whereby it became possible for the sepoy to march from Bengal to Burma without crossing the "black-water." Irrigation by canals was greatly advanced, and more particularly the great Ganges canal was at last completed, watering the upper Ganges districts. Steamers also were multiplied on the Hugli, the Indus, and the Irawadi. Not the least important of the reforms for which Dalhousie was

Half-penny Post. responsible was the creation of a half-penny post for the whole of India; in lieu of the old system of heavy charges, varying according to distance, and materially increased by the illegitimate demands of local native officials; a charge



which broke down the walls that isolated every village, and immensely facilitated the free communication which is invaluable to commerce.

When at the beginning of 1856 Dalhousie withdrew from the scene of his labours, his exhausted frame bore witness to the amazing energies he had devoted to his task. He had not been satisfied to conduct a part of the Government himself and to supervise the rest; everywhere he had exercised a control so vigorous and intimate as to render him in fact the working head of every department. Swift in decision and utterly self-confident, he was a complete autocrat; and though, when his affections were stirred, he could on occasion show no little kindness and even tenderness, he was as a rule little disposed to show consideration for the susceptibilities of others, and tolerated nothing that savoured of opposition to his will. When that equally autocratic veteran, Sir Charles Napier, came into collision with him, the Commander-in-Chief was forced to resign. Over such a man as Henry Lawrence he asserted his authority with an absence of courtesy and an arrogance of tone which were needlessly galling. Hence, as not seldom happens with men of a masterful genius, many of Dalhousie's subordinates learnt to regard themselves as mere instruments, and lost the spirit of initiative and the readiness to assume responsibility so necessary in a crisis, when the master hand was no longer there.

Estimate
of Lord
Dal-
housie.

The day is still to come when the final judgment shall be passed on the great Governor-General: for he left many documents with strict injunctions that they should not be made public till fifty years after his death. But whether he is to be adjudged greater or less great than the general verdict pronounces him to-day, more far-sighted or less so than we deem him, it is at least certain that his place will be found amongst the Great rulers who have guided the destinies of the race, and have emphatically "made History."



CSL⁹⁸

BOOK V
THE CONFIRMATION OF
SOVEREIGNTY



CHAPTER XXVII

THE EVE OF THE MUTINY

EARLY in 1856, Dalhousie's successor arrived. Lord Canning was George Canning's third son: but both his elder brothers had died. Canning himself had been offered, without accepting the post of Foreign Secretary, and in 1855 was a member of the Cabinet, when he accepted the Indian appointment; to become the last of the Company's Governors-General, and the first of the Viceroys of the Crown. His rule was the epoch of a great convulsion; and before following its events, it is well to examine the actual situation in India, as left by Lord Dalhousie.

Dalhousie had completed the Dominion of the British. From the mountain barrier to the sea, all India acknowledged their supremacy; though Native princedoms remained in varying stages of dependence, from the Nizam and Sindhia down. The Nizam's rule in the Dekhan, and the old Mogul's court at Delhi, were practically all that was left of the great empire of Baber's race, and the Mussulman supremacy. Of the Maratha pentarchy, the formal head had long been removed, and the greater part of the real Maratha country had been annexed at the same time. Then another cantle of the Maratha country had been absorbed with Sattara, and another of the pentarchy had vanished with the last Nagpur Bhonsla. Of the three remaining members, the Gaikwar had never been dangerous; Holkar's power had been shattered; and that of Sindhia, the least Maratha of the five, had been diminished. Not fifteen years ago, the independent State of Sindh had been annexed, and six years later the independent State of Lahore. The last act of the administration just closed had been the deposition of one of the two still reigning Mussulman dynasties in Oudh.



300 CONFIRMATION OF SOVEREIGNTY

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British
versus
Native
Dominion.

Now the history of India had been the history of a series of alien conquests. The Mogul dominion was alien. The Maratha dominion in Hindostan was for the most part alien. The Mussulman sultanate of Mysore was alien. But the British dominion was more distinctively alien than that of any predecessor just as in Teutonic Europe the Turk would be more alien than the Spaniard.

It will not be pretended that the change to British Government was anything less than an incalculable benefit to the mass of the population. To them, the enforcement of the *Pax Britannica*, and the protection of the weak against the strong, were an unmixed blessing. But for those who had been the "strong"—who had been wont to reap the advantages of the "good old rule, the simple plan"—the blessings were less obvious. It was precisely this section which was capable of becoming dangerous; and within British territory this section, already deprived of licence, was inevitably restive; while in the semi-independent territory the annexation policy caused it to anticipate a like fate in the near future. That this should have been the case is no condemnation of that policy. It meant in the first place that the conditions of life in India through centuries had taught a large proportion of the inhabitants to be turbulent and predatory and opposed to all restraint by whomsoever exercised, except so far as organisation was helpful in the practice of plunder. To all such spirits, British government was unpopular precisely in proportion to its restraining force. This was the class which would always desire to have no settled government at all: the class which attained its worst development in the old Pindari days, and was now not stamped out but caged. To these must be added the classes which had been accustomed to exercise dominion, including particularly the Mussulmans associated with the Mogul supremacy. The glory had departed from Delhi. It is probable enough that without our intervention the Marathas would have wiped out the glory with thoroughness: but it appeared to be the British who had wiped it out, an impression intensified by the Oudh annexation. The Marathas themselves on the other hand felt that they had been beaten in their bid for empire, while

The pre-
datory
classes.

The ruling
classes.



in them that feeling was joined to the Pindari spirit. And beyond these, wherever the British had come seeking to alleviate the lot of the peasant at the expense of the landholder, the landholder, whether he happened to be called a jaghirdar, or a zemindar, or a talukdar, felt himself to be a person with a legitimate grievance.

The irony of the situation lay in the fact that those vast classes who did definitely gain by British rule, could neither appreciate the extent of their advantages, nor appear as active factors in any political or military complications. When the wolf and the sheep-dog fall out, the flock has very little to say to the contest. Also, guarded by the dog, it learns to forget the wolf's bite, whereas the dog's bark makes it feel nervous. In like manner, the British method of government made the peasantry nervous.

The industrial classes.

A vigorously effective combination of these various elements for hostile purposes was not in any event probable; their conjunction was only possible for purely destructive ends; they would inevitably split over their incompatible policies of reconstruction. Moreover it was palpable that so long as the British wielded the sepoy army, any attempt to resist them was foredoomed to entire failure. In the control of the sepoy army lay the crux of the position.

Could the sepoys have brought a trained political judgment to bear upon the facts, it would have been evident that for them in the aggregate at least, the British rule was satisfactory. Under it the sepoy's livelihood was secure, and he would expect his sons and his son's sons to follow him in taking service with the British. The Brahmins and Rajputs, of whom the Bengal army was mainly composed, had no natural inclination to become subject to low-caste Marathas or to Mussulmans. But when once an army has become imbued with the idea that it can choose its own Cæsar, it is apt not to be governed by cool reasoning, but to become the tool of political intriguers—though with the proverbial qualities of edged tools.

The Sepoys.

Here, then, lay the danger. The paradox of the British conquering India and holding it mainly with native troops was sufficiently surprising: but from the earliest times every



Deficiency
of Euro-
pean
troops.

Governor-General had recognised that unless a due proportion of British to Native troops were maintained, the paradox might have alarming developments. It had always been admitted that a ratio of one to four was absolutely the lowest which could be viewed without very serious apprehension, and that a ratio of one to three would be anything but excessive. Yet in 1856, the ratio of British soldiers to sepoy was no more than one to five. This was due in part to the great increase in the number of sepoys necessitated by the annexations (Note B), the additional troops being required in the new districts: in part to the reduction of the British garrison by the home authorities, who, instead of sending out additional regiments as urged by Dalhousie, withdrew troops to serve in the Crimea and never even replaced them.

This disproportion, dangerous in any case as tending to produce in the sepoy mind a conviction that the native army was the real master of the situation, was rendered the more so by other considerations. The blunder which in defiance of the terms of enlistment had ordered Bengal sepoys to serve in Burma, had quite recently enabled one regiment to achieve a victory over the authorities. The withdrawal of British troops to the Crimea, had revived the idea that Britain's resources were not sufficient to cope with her foes elsewhere. The newly acquired Panjab had absorbed a disproportionate share not only of European regiments, but of the best British officers, denuding Hindostan. Outside the Panjab, the military commands were held by men who at the worst were something less and at the best very little more than respectable from the professional point of view.

Unconsci-
ousness of
danger.

Finally, it was not the least perilous feature of the situation that the authorities, almost without exception, appear to have been totally unconscious of the thinness of the ice. Henry Lawrence was awake to the danger, but practically every one else, including his brother John in the Panjab was utterly taken aback when the outbreak came; and except in Lucknow no precautions had been taken. It is pathetic to read how the officers of one regiment after another fell victims to the conviction that, whoever else might mutiny, *their* men would prove staunch.



Apart from these political and military considerations, the native mind generally was in that condition of nervous disquietude which is the opportunity of the secret agitator. Even in the long ago days of the Vellur mutiny, suspicion had been rife that the British intended to force Christianity on their Native subjects mainly by the insidious method of making them break caste rules. There were always a few British officers who were far too ready to override religious prejudices in their disciplinary regulations. Of recent years, missionaries had been allowed to become more aggressive. The Government had put down the practice of suttee, and had refused to let a change of religion interfere with inheritance as the Hindu law prescribed. The Educators had hardly concealed their expectation that with western knowledge the sacred fairy tales of the East would be dissolved, and the basis of popularly cherished creeds would be swept away.

The religious disquietude.

These things were not enough to produce revolt, but they created an atmosphere favourable to revolt. And lastly, apart from the prestige of Government, the prestige of the "sahibs" as sahibs was—in the view of many who were in India in those days—materially diminished by the tone of superiority adopted by the "pukka" civilians, *i.e.* those in the Government service, not only towards the up-country planters and dealers, but towards the military branch as well.

The British tone.

During the fifteen months which passed between the succession of Canning and the outbreak of the Revolt, some of these conditions were modified, it might be for the better—it might be for the worse.

The deposition of the King of Oudh irritated the Mussulman population of the province, who were chiefly congregated in the cities. But the greater part of the land was in the possession of talukdars, of Rajput or semi-rajput clans or castes, surrounded by their clansmen who had no particular interest in the Mussulman dynasty. While Outram remained to administer the newly annexed country, the talukdars were by no means dissatisfied with the change, Outram being one of those who had learned by his experience with the Bhils

The condition of Oudh.



SL

and in Sindh to pay a due regard to the fixed ideas and prejudices of the native mind, however little they might be consonant with the abstract political theories of the West. But Outram was compelled by health to go home on leave: and for some months the district was administered by subordinates. Dalhousie, with his masterful practice of dominating every department, would have kept them in order himself: but this very masterfulness had tended to bring to the front officials who were excellent servants but wanted initiative and capacity for independent action. Canning with his task to learn, slower to form unalterable convictions, and slower in acting upon them, did not assume a mastery like Dalhousie; and the subordinates were inadequately controlled. They set about reforms with more zeal than discretion; they ignored the clan-relation between the talukdars and the people; the former found themselves deprived of traditional rights, while the latter failed to appreciate material benefits which they hardly knew how to utilise, conferred at the expense of immemorial sentiments. Oudh was soon in a ferment, which however was to a great extent allayed when Henry Lawrence was called from Rajputana to take charge. The beneficent effect of his influence was seen after a few weeks; the vast majority of the talukdars refusing to join in the revolt, until they were persuaded that the British had given up the hope of fighting their way through to Lucknow, and had surrendered the Residency garrison to its fate.

Rajputana
and the
Panjab. The same influence, exercised in Rajputana, had already toned down the alarm created among the princes of that semi-independent province over the Adoption question; and a like spirit to Sir Henry's was shown by his brother George who succeeded him there. In the Panjab, the policy of John Lawrence and Dalhousie had not conciliated the Sirdars, but it had deprived them of much of their influence; while the old Khalsa men, whatever their sentiments might be towards the British, were more positively hostile towards the Hindostani sepoys, who were apt to assume the offensive airs of conquerors. The British Frontier officers had acquired the devoted adherence of half the hill tribesmen;



there was even a sect of "Nikalsainis," who had deified John Nicholson to his own intense disgust. And beyond the border, Dalhousie's movement—instigated by Herbert Edwardes—towards an alliance with Dost Mohammed of Kabul, was successfully consummated by treaty in Feb. 1857, with the result that the old Amir stood loyally by his troth when the conflagration came.

On the other hand, the state of the Bengal army was increasingly unsatisfactory. Except for a few recently raised Sikh and Ghurka regiments, it was enlisted almost entirely from the Hindostanis, that is from the dwellers in Hindostan proper; a small proportion were Mussulmans, but the great bulk were high-caste Hindus. By the terms of enlistment they might not—except in the case of six specific regiments—be called upon to serve outside India; and they further differed from the Bombay and Madras armies in regimental organisation, in ways which induced a comparative laxity of discipline. Now the annexations in Burma had put the authorities in a dilemma. Burma needed troops. To increase the call on the Madras army would check enlistment in that province. To meet the difficulty, Lord Canning issued the General Service Enlistment Act, under which all recruits for the Bengal army were in future to be liable for general as well as for home service—a serious matter for the high-caste families, who looked to the army as a profession for their sons after them, and to whom the crossing of the sea involved a breach of caste. The new regulation appeared to have been accepted quietly; but it was soon brought, in the minds of the sepoys, under the category of the insidious measures aimed at Caste: another of the items accumulating to form an avalanche.

At the end of 1856, a quarrel which had been growing with Persia came to a head. Encouraged by the Crimean war, the attitude of the Persian Government had for a year past been first insolent and then defiant. In spite of vigorous representations, the Persians marched an army on Herat, and took it in October. War was declared next month, and in the beginning of 1857 a considerable force from Bombay, including some European regiments, and commanded by

The Bengal army.

The General Service Enlistment Act.

The Persian expedition.



Outram with Havelock and Jacob under him, was engaged in bringing Persia to reason. Thus the loyal garrison was further reduced at the most critical time. For India it was a fortunate accident that Britain had also become involved in a war with China—whereby in the summer, the Indian government was enabled to intercept and detain for its more urgent need some troops which arrived from England under orders for the Chinese war.

Then in the beginning of 1857 came the blunder, which gave the enemies of British rule a gratuitous lever wherewith to engineer an upheaval.

The cartridge incident.

This was the affair of the greased Cartridges. It had been decided to replace the musket hitherto in use by the Enfield rifle. Depôts for the new weapon were established at Dumdum, one of the cantonments near Calcutta, and at Amballa in Sirhind, and a cartridge factory also at Mirat, south-east of Delhi where there were several regiments. A lubricant was needed in the manufacture of these cartridges, which the sepoy would have to bite before using. At the beginning of January—before a cartridge had been issued—a low-caste employé at the Dumdum factory, quarrelling with a high-caste sepoy, threatened him with impending loss of caste and degradation for all sepoys because he said cow's fat and pig's fat were being used in the manufacture of the new cartridges: for the Hindu accounts the cow as sacred; and the Mussulman too would be defiled, since Mohammedans hold swine to be unclean. From station to station the report sped like wild fire. The minds of the sepoys, wrought up to an acute stage of religious nervousness already, were gripped

The Mussulmans and the Nana Sahib.

by it. Agitators who had been watching for their opportunity seized it. The panic among the soldiery was vigorously if secretly fomented. Moslem fanatics found excited listeners of their own creed. Intriguers of the Mogul party played insidiously on the fears of the "infidels" whom they meant to use as catspaws: the Brahmin heir of the late Peshwa, hot with wrath against the British, from his jaghir at Bithûr near Cawnpore, began secretly to play for his own hand.

Signs of unrest.

Denials and explanations were vain; the Government regulations as to the ingredients in the manufacture had been



strict enough, but contractors were known to have evaded them to some extent. In February a regiment near Murshidabad, the home of the old Bengal dynasty, refused the cartridges, and practically carried their point. Incendiarism broke out. At the end of March a Barrackpur regiment became insubordinate. There were no objectionable ingredients in the cartridges issued, but nothing would convince the sepoys that it was so; instead, the wildest rumours were swallowed of contamination in other government supplies. A prophecy was repeated from lip to lip that the British were to reign for their hundred years—and this was the hundredth year from Plassey. Yet the authorities continued to take no steps for dealing with a possible outbreak. In the end of April, some troopers at Mirat mutinied: the mutiny was suppressed, and the men were thrown into gaol. The insubordinate Barrackpur regiment was disbanded; so was that of Murshidabad. Then suddenly, at the centre of Mogul disaffection, the blow was struck.

The truth has to be found somewhere between those who say that the Revolt was simply a Mutiny of sepoys in a panic, and those who call the Mutiny an organised Revolt. The panic was engineered by political intriguers; but the insurrection was not organised. None of the Native rulers had made up their minds to rise. There is every indication that the sepoys took their leap blindly in the dark, not knowing whither they were going. But there is also every indication that the Nana Sahib on one side and a Mogul faction on the other had a great deal to do with working them up to take the leap, and that the Mogul faction at least had a tolerably definite idea of the use which was to be made of the leap when taken. It was a use which did not appeal to the Hindu princes; and by showing their hand at the outset, the Mussulmans provided these last with an excellent reason for holding back. Whether they would otherwise have risen remains an open question; but on the surface, it would seem that the panic took effect prematurely, and so forced a premature pronouncement from the Moguls.

Was the
Revolt
organised?

At any rate, on the tenth of May, the sepoys at Mirat The mutinied, released their imprisoned comrades, broke open the outbreak.



gaols, shot their officers, killed every European they could find away from the British regimental quarters, and made for Delhi. On their arrival there the next morning, the city population rose : the Europeans were massacred : half a score of British held the arsenal for some time—then when resistance was no longer possible blew it up, and with it two thousand of the insurgents ; and then the Restoration of the Mogul Empire was proclaimed. The Revolt had begun.



THE
MUTINY.
Shewing
THE DISTRICTS CHIEFLY AFFECTED
Scale - 1 Inch 95 Miles





CHAPTER XXVIII

REVOLT

(Map VII.)

THE outbreak at Mirat and the seizure of Delhi by the insurgents were the beginning of the great revolt: yet the explosion did not follow immediately. Had the rising been thoroughly organised, the mutineers could have practically made themselves masters of the country from Delhi to Patna. Had the British, on the other hand, been prepared for the emergency, they could have paralysed the revolt, unorganised as it was at the beginning. As matters stood, nearly all the sepoy in the Ganges districts were given the opportunity of joining the insurgents, while on the other hand the British were given time, so to speak, to get their backs to the wall.

Breathing-time.

Between Delhi and Patna there were an immense number of sepoy regiments; but the supply of European troops was extraordinarily small. At Mirat there were two regiments and a strong force of artillery: at Agra, one regiment, and some artillery: at Lucknow, one regiment and a few artillerymen: at Dinapur, near Patna, one regiment: at Cawnpore, there was a detachment of the Lucknow regiment. The Native regiments at these stations were—Mirat, three; Agra, two; Lucknow, four; Dinapur, four; Cawnpore, four. At Benares, and at the all-important station and fortress of Allahabad, there were no European troops at all, and none at Delhi.

Disposition of troops.

It was within this region that the British with the loyal Native regiments, were at death-grips with the sepoys, until the pressure was relieved by the capture of Delhi and the first relief of the Lucknow Residency in September. Outside

Area of the Mutiny.



this area, prompt and vigorous measures entirely prevented the rising from making any head in the Panjab; it was held in check in Bengal; and though the Gwalior army rose after some delay, it did not throw itself into the struggle during this first stage. South of the Nerbadda, there was no outbreak. Of the reigning native Princes, none associated himself with the revolt, for the Mogul at Delhi was a mere simulacrum; but the Oudh Begum and her son, the Rani of Jhansi, and Nana Sahib the adopted son of the quondam Peshwa Baji Rao, threw all their energies into the struggle.

The real series of mutinies did not begin till May 28th, nearly three weeks after the Mirat outbreak. In the interval, the Panjab had been secured: a force had been collected at Amballa and Mirat to attack Delhi: Henry Lawrence in Lucknow had been steadily pressing on preparations in expectation of a siege, and detachments of troops were beginning to make their way up from lower Bengal towards Allahabad.

The Panjab secured. In the Panjab were many of the men whose names men hold in highest honour: John Lawrence, the Chief Commissioner, at the head; Neville Chamberlain, Herbert Edwardes, John Nicholson in the Peshawar district; Montgomery: McLeod, Richard Lawrence, J. D. Macpherson and Corbett, at Lahore. At the moment of the Delhi news arriving, John Lawrence himself was absent. The Lahore officers forthwith resolved to disarm the sepoy regiments. The presence of a British regiment there, and of two others at the arsenals of Ferozpur and Phillur made it possible to carry out the disarmament and secure those important points. With John Lawrence's assent, the frontier officers promptly formed a movable column, which marched rapidly upon disaffected stations, and soon brought the whole province under control. It must be observed that in the Panjab, not only was there an exceptionally large proportion of European soldiers, but also the levies of frontier tribesmen such as the famous Guides, and the regiments composed of Panjabis and Sikhs, were antagonistic to the Hindostani regiments of the Bengal army, and in many cases enthusiastically devoted to



their British officers: so that there was also an exceptionally large proportion of well-affected Native troops.

Between May 30th and June 14th nearly every regiment from Delhi to Benares mutinied. Some murdered their officers: others escorted them to places of safety. Some of the regiments marched off to join the main body at Delhi, others to swell the armies gathering on Lucknow. The mutineers of Cawnpore were actually taking the former course, when Nana Sahib induced them to return to besiege Cawnpore. Series of mutinies.

At Benares the mutiny took place on June 4, but the station was saved by Neill who had just arrived with a British detachment. At Allahabad, Brasyer with a Sikh regiment seized the fort, which was secured five days later by Neill's advance from Benares.

West of the Jamna and the Chambal, outside of the Panjab, the sepoy mutinied successfully at Hansi, Hissar, and Sirsa; to the east of those places, the chiefs of the Cis-Satlaj Sikhs were actively loyal. Southwards, Nasirabad close to Ajmir was one of the first to revolt, the sepoy afterwards distinguishing themselves by maintaining their order and discipline among themselves: and at Nimāch, well to the South, the men also mutinied. These regiments went to swell the army at Delhi.

The Gwalior contingent, in Sindhia's service, officered by British, mutinied on June 14th: but Sindhia himself, guided by his able minister Dinkar Rao, and the agent S. C. Macpherson, was loyal and succeeded in conveying most of the British to Agra. The Gwalior troops for the time remained south of the Chambal and Jamna. At Jhansi the mutineers massacred the British; but at Sāgar, southwards, a loyal native regiment secured and held the fort.

By June 12, the column from Amballa and Mirat had driven the mutineers opposed to it into Delhi after some sharp engagements, and was in occupation of the famous Ridge. Being gradually joined by forces from the Panjab, its numbers at the end of June reached 6500: while the Delhi sepoy were probably nearly 30,000. The force before Delhi.

At Cawnpore, a handful of combatants and a large number



of non-combatants held out against the Nana from June 8 to June 26. By that time the defences had become worthless and the defenders were decimated. The station had at one time been of great importance, and it now contained a large number of European women and children. These had been collected together behind very inadequate intrenchments; but the swarming sepoy and followers of Nana Sahib were kept at bay day after day with extraordinary resolution, the small garrison pouring so fierce a fire upon the enemy that they were constantly beaten off. But the sufferings of the besieged were intense; in less than three weeks some two hundred and fifty had perished; and when the Nana offered terms, it was felt that for the sake of the women and children they must be accepted. The whole party were to be placed in boats, and sent down to Allahabad under safe conduct. Then ensued that ghastly act of treachery which roused the English People to frenzy, and to a thirst for vengeance which dominated every other sentiment. The exhausted garrison were allowed to reach the river, and were packed into the thatch-covered native boats; but instead of starting on the journey down stream, the Native boatmen slipped overboard, and volley upon volley was poured into the doomed vessels. The thatch was fired: as a last resort, men, women, and children struggled into the water. The men were killed, save a very few who succeeded in escaping; the women and children were allowed to live, and were taken back to Cawnpore, to be literally butchered, in cold blood, to the number of over two hundred, not three weeks later, when Havelock's force was all but entering the town.

Preparations at Lucknow.

The fall of Cawnpore turned the siege of Lucknow into a certainty. There Henry Lawrence had made the Residency ready for a prolonged resistance, while maintaining the Machi Bhaun fort temporarily, in order to control the city. Now however, the mutineers concentrated on the N.E. An attempt to check them was foiled at Chinhat; it then became necessary to evacuate the Machi Bhaun, which was successfully accomplished; and the famous siege of the Residency or Baily Guard began upon June 30th.

On the same day, Henry Havelock who had been on the



Persian Campaign arrived at Allahabad and took over the command there.

With the close of June ends the first phase of the revolt, by which its character was established. Whatever the original design may have been, it had actually resolved itself into a rising of the Hindostani sepoys, of whom the vast majority were Brahmins or Rajputs—high-caste Hindus; while owing to the deliberate policy of the British, only a small proportion of Mussulmans were recruited. The Mussulman population however, was heartily on the side of the rebellion, which the Mohammedan leaders intended to turn to account for the restoration of the Mogul dominion. But as yet, not only did the princes, Maratha, Rajput, and Sikh, abstain from hostilities, but the great landholders and their clansmen in Oudh also held aloof; with the exception only of such as considered that they had an extreme personal grievance against the British, like Nana Sahib and the Jhansi Rani, their tendency was to observe neutrality. Nor was there any recognised head, or any clearly defined policy; for while the Mogul party had a programme, it was not one acceptable to the Hindus.

Hence at this point, the total result was:—The mutineers controlled by Mussulman leaders were in great force at Delhi (where the British had planted themselves on the ridge lying on the N.W. side of the city). They were in great force at Lucknow, where the British were completely hemmed in, and where the party of the Oudh Begum was dominant. They were in strong force at Cawnpore, which commanded the passage of the Ganges, where any force advancing to the relief of Lucknow would have to cross, and here they were under the command of the Maratha Brahmin, Nana Sahib. On the south of the Jamna, the mutineer regiments had not yet concentrated; but later on, they drew together near Kalpi. Eastward of Benares and Azimgarh, they had not yet broken out, and the line of communication between Allahabad and lower Bengal *via* Dinapur was not cut, so that along this line British reinforcements were pushing up steadily though in dribblets. Hence during the next three months attention is concentrated on three points—

Composition of the mutineer armies.

Distribution of mutineer armies, June 30.



the operations before Delhi of the British, gradually reinforced by troops from the Panjab: the defence of Lucknow: and the advance of Havelock to the relief of Lucknow. With each one of these forces there were bodies of loyal sepoys.

Operations before Delhi.

The Commander-in-Chief, Anson, had originally intended to conduct the Delhi operations; but he had died of cholera at the end of May, being succeeded in the command by General Barnard. On July 9, Barnard in turn succumbed, and was succeeded by General Reed, who, from illness, had to give place immediately after to Archdale Wilson.

From the Ridge, the line of communication to Kurnal, Amballa, and so to the Panjab, was open. On the other hand, the enemy were free to move where they would. There had been a moment, just after the Ridge was seized, when it had seemed possible that the walls of Delhi might be captured at once by a sudden attack; but the doubtful opportunity was not used, and there was nothing for it but to settle down to a siege, in which it was open to question which of the combatants was really besieger and which besieged. It was clear however that the city could not be carried until the arrival of the siege train from Ferozpur. During July, and the beginning of August, it was the mutineers who attacked the British position; four times in force in July, and on August 10-12; but each time they were repulsed, as were also innumerable minor attacks. In the meantime, the uncertainty as to the state of the Panjab

Reinforcements from the Panjab.

was passing away; John Lawrence was very urgent that Delhi should be taken, but it was some while before he would consent either to the raising of Sikh levies in the Panjab itself, or to the dispatch from it of Nicholson's movable column—either measure being obviously full of risk, but the second at least being essential if the Delhi force was to accomplish its object. At last however yielding to the urgent representations of Macpherson and John Nicholson, he resolved to take the risk; for the greater need, the Panjab was almost denuded of troops; and Nicholson led reinforcements to the Ridge which brought up the numbers there to more than 8000 effectives, of whom nearly half were British. An attempt was made at the end of August to intercept the



approach of the siege train but this was brilliantly foiled by Nicholson. By Sept. 6, the siege train had arrived, and about 3000 additional native levies had joined. Wilson was persuaded, not without difficulty, to adopt the scheme of attack laid down by Baird Smith the chief engineer, the arrangements being carried out with great skill and audacity by Alexander Taylor. The breaching batteries began to open out on the 11th, and continued through the 12th and 13th. On the night of the 13th an immediate assault was resolved on. Four columns of attack were prepared: early on the morning of the 14th, the way was laid open for one of them by the splendid act of Home and Salkeld, who blew in the Kashmir gate. Two other columns forced their way through the breaches, but the fourth assault was repulsed. The ramparts were won, but in the attempt to press forward Nicholson received a mortal wound—Nicholson, the dauntless soldier, whose figure has become perhaps more vividly impressed upon the English mind than that of any other among the heroes of the war. So grave was the situation that Wilson is erroneously supposed to have been on the verge of ordering a withdrawal. But if there was any indecision in his mind, it was removed by the unanimous opinion of those round him. At all risks, the foothold won was to be maintained. Gradually, day by day, the British drove their way through the city; on the 21st the whole of it, with the person of the Mogul, was in their hands, and the mutineers were in full flight to join the army in Oudh. A column was despatched first in pursuit, and then to Agra; whence later on it went to join Sir Colin Campbell's relieving force, at Cawnpore.

The storming of Delhi.

Meanwhile, the force at the Lucknow Residency had been maintaining a fierce struggle. In it were some 3000 souls, including more than 500 women and children, 700 loyal sepoys, and 1000 British combatants. There was food enough stored for a long siege—there were more guns than could be adequately worked. But round about lay thousands of the enemy, under cover, which in places brought them within a few yards of our defences.

The defence of the Lucknow Residency.

The garrison suffered a terrible blow at the outset, Henry Lawrence receiving a mortal wound. The plans for defence



Character
of the
siege.

however were thoroughly understood. It did not take long to learn that the ramparts were too well prepared to be rushed, and that there was no fear of the enemy's artillery making an effective breach. The supreme risk lay in the almost limitless possibilities of mining. The amazing fact of the siege is, that out of thirty-seven attempts, from July 20 to Sept. 23, one only was successful in making a breach; six mines, which were duly exploded, were short, and did no harm; whereas no fewer than twenty-five were either broken into and destroyed by counter-mines or abandoned on hearing counter-mines. The circumference which had to be defended was about a mile. The ceaseless toil and vigilance entailed on the engineers, and on the men detailed for mining—there happened to be a good many Cornish miners among the English troops, which was fortunate—may be imagined. Had the enemy run galleries as they might easily have done, at several points simultaneously, it would have been physically impossible to detect and meet them all.

Perilous
position of
the garri-
son.

The mutineers could not storm the defences; but they could and did make it impossible for any member of the garrison to expose himself from a loophole, for however short a time, without receiving a bullet. Three times also they made attacks in force; and though all were triumphantly repulsed, the fighting force was being seriously and constantly reduced by wounds and sickness. On the one occasion when a breach actually was made by mining, it was effectively repaired before an attempt was made to storm it. But the strain was terrific. Communications with the outside world were almost entirely cut off. Rumours of disaster were rife. Some of the loyal sepoys, doggedly though they fought, had made up their minds that unless relief came by the end of the month, they would abandon the defence. An impression prevailed, which was carried through to Havelock, that the food supplies were all but exhausted. It became known that Havelock, after penetrating into Oudh had been forced to fall back to Cawnpore: which was construed as the abandonment of Oudh. The clansmen of the Oudh chiefs from that time swelled the ranks of the besiegers. As a matter of fact, the food supplies were ample, and the actual strength of the garrison was



sufficient to have held the position for some time longer ; but it is extremely doubtful whether the "Banner of England" would have continued to blow after Oct. 1st, if Havelock and Outram had not arrived before the mutineers from Delhi.

On June 30th Havelock was at Allahabad and forthwith dispatched Renaud with a party in advance towards Cawnpore. He had hardly done so, when the news of the fall of Cawnpore arrived. The whole of Nana Sahib's force was now free to act against Renaud, and might be joined by the mutineers from Benares and elsewhere. But on July 7, Havelock was ready to march, leaving Allahabad garrisoned. He had with him not two thousand men, of whom more than a fourth were sepoys, mostly Sikhs. On the 11th he came up with Renaud. Next day he drove back the enemy from Fatehpur, where they had expected to catch Renaud. Three days later he again routed them in two successive actions. It was believed that there were still prisoners to be rescued at Cawnpore. He pushed on. Next day, the 16th, his force, now reduced to less than 1500, routed a mass of the Nana's troops which included 5000 regulars ; pushed on to find the enemy again drawn up and reinforced ; routed them again ; was faced a third time in the same day on the outskirts of Cawnpore ; drove them in rout a third time ; and entered Cawnpore the next day—to find that the Nana had already completed his ghastly work by slaughtering the prisoners.

Havelock's advance to Cawnpore.

It was not possible to push on towards Lucknow without a brief delay ; but on the 29th Havelock was across the Ganges with but 1500 men, and advanced to fight two more successful actions on that day ; leaving an entrenched post behind him at Mangarwar, on the Oudh bank of the Ganges besides three hundred men under Neill in Cawnpore itself. Nineteen guns were captured ; but between the fighting and an outbreak of cholera, a sixth of his force was killed or *hors de combat*. And then came the news that the Dinapur regiments down the river had mutinied, the communications with Bengal were threatened, and there was no present prospect of reinforcements coming. Havelock had no choice but to fall back on his entrenched post at Mangarwar.

Havelock in Oudh.

Thence he again marched on Aug. 4, to fall on the



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gathering enemy a second time at Basharat Ganj, the scene of his last victory. But again cholera was ravaging his little force; and to add to his difficulties, there seemed to be every prospect of the mutineers at Kalpi moving on Cawnpore. With intense reluctance, Havelock felt that he must retire to Cawnpore though not without first inflicting a third defeat on the rebels at Basharat Ganj, and clearing them from his own neighbourhood.

Havelock's retirement to Cawnpore, August. The retirement to Cawnpore meant evacuation of Oudh territory. To the Oudh local chiefs, this seemed the abandonment of the Residency garrison. At last they yielded to the pressure from the rebels, and sent their retainers, as we have seen, to join the mutineer army at Lucknow; but till this time, they had not done so, nor even now did they personally take up arms. They did no more than accept what appeared to be a *de facto* dominion.

Besides the threatening Gwalior Contingent at Kalpi, the Rohillas were now gathering at Firkabad, to the N.W.

In the meantime, however, the line of communication *via* Dinapur had been cleared. The sepoys in Behar had not mutinied till near the end of July; when they did so, the leadership was taken up by Raja Kunwar Singh of Jugdespur (south of the Ganges), an aggrieved talukdar; who turned his forces against Arrah, a post where there were a very few Europeans and some treasure. But besides the Europeans, there were fifty of Rattray's Sikhs at Arrah. A Civil Engineer, Mr. Vicars Boyle, had on his own account converted a house into a fort; in which the fifteen Europeans and the Sikhs collected, and conducted a brilliant and successful defence. A detachment was sent from Dinapur to relieve them, but it was ambushed and driven back with heavy loss. Major Vincent Eyre, however, who was proceeding up the river with some guns, learning the position of affairs, collected a small force, marched upon Arrah defeating and dispersing a large body of the enemy, relieved the place, and with the garrison and some further reinforcements, broke the neck of a resistance which had threatened seriously to delay the arrival of the forces about to proceed to Cawnpore.



These events happened between July 26th and August 13th; and a few days later, Outram, who had recently arrived at Calcutta and was given supreme command in the district, was on his way to join Havelock. On reaching Cawnpore, with a couple of fresh regiments, instead of taking command over Havelock, he declared that his comrade should have the glory of the Relief, he himself serving as a volunteer. But this junction of Outram with Havelock was not completed till Sept. 15. Neither the Gwalior mutineers nor the Rohilla troops were moving. By the 20th, the little army, scarcely over 3000 in number, was in Oudh once more. On the 21st it routed an opposing force at Mangarwar. On the 23rd it reached and captured the Alam Bagh fort, four miles from the Lucknow Residency. On the 25th, leaving a sufficient force to hold the Alam Bagh, it fought its desperate way into the Residency. Lucknow was saved.

Outram
joins
Havelock.

Rescue of
the Luck-
now Resi-
dency.

The great defence had been of incalculable service to the Delhi force, by detaining so large a mass of the rebels in Oudh. It is a curious point that had Delhi been captured sooner, Lucknow itself might have been overwhelmed by the influx of regiments retreating from the capital, before Havelock and Outram could have reinforced the garrison.

Technically a "relief" involves the liberation of the garrison relieved. In this sense, the reinforcement of Outram and Havelock was not a relief, as it did not allow of the withdrawal of non-combatants. But it was a rescue, inasmuch as the Residency was in real danger of falling, partly owing to the exhaustion of the defenders under the strain, though there was no fear whatever of starvation, partly because the Native portion of the garrison, loyally as it fought, was meditating withdrawal. That danger was now entirely removed. The force within the Residency now knew that it would have no difficulty in holding its own against the besiegers for at least a couple of months, in an extended position with improved means of defence. The rear-guard left at the Alam Bagh was also able to communicate with Cawnpore, and by semaphore with the garrison. So the Residency settled down to the second stage of the defence.



CHAPTER XXIX

CONQUEST: GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

(Map VII.)

Events elsewhere. **W**HILE these great events had been taking place, there had been no mutiny south of the Nerbadda. The Nizam's Mussulmans were restive and even clamorous: but they were kept in hand by the ability of his minister Salar Jang. The attitude however of the Marathas in what had been the Peshwa's dominions, irritated by the Sattara annexation, and much in sympathy with Nana Sahib, caused a good deal of anxiety and prevented the Bombay forces from securing Holkar's territory; where the soldiery, whether sepoys or local levies, declared against the British without making any very active movement. Mhow, however, the station close to Indur, was occupied early in August by a British brigade. The outbreak had thus been stemmed and its impact broken at the end of September by the forces already in Hindostan. But now on the one hand the fall of Delhi gave a tremendous impulse to the hitherto doubtful loyalty of the Panjab, in which it at once became practicable to raise immense levies for the suppression of the revolt; and on the other hand strong reinforcements were beginning to pour in at Calcutta and Bombay, the former to be used in the Ganges provinces, the latter in the Central Indian districts. Sir Colin Campbell had arrived in September to take the chief command; in October he was organising his campaign. In the beginning of November, he had six thousand men at Cawnpore, and battalions on their way up from Bengal. On November 9 he crossed the Ganges leaving a garrison of 1000 men at Cawnpore: on the 12th he reached the Alam Bagh: and then, after some hard fighting,

Change in the situation.

Relief of the Lucknow Residency.