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A HISTORY

OF THE

SEPOY WAR IN INDIA

1857-1858.

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JOHN WILLIAM KAYE,

AUTHOR OF THE "HISTORY OF THE WAR IN APGHANISTAN."



VOL. I.

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I SHOULD HAVE DEDICATED

THESE VOLUMES

TO

LORD CANNING,

HAD HE LIVED,

I NOW INSCRIBIT THEM REVERENTIALLY

TO HIS MEMORY.

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PREFACE.

Ir was not without much hesitation that I undertook to write this narrative of the events, which have imparted so painful a celebrity to the years 1857-58, and left behind them such terrible remembrances. Publicly and privately I had been frequently urged to do so, before I could consent to take upon myself a responsibility, which could not sit lightly on any one capable of appreciating the magnitude of the events themselves and of the many grave questions which they suggested. If, indeed, it had not been that, in course of time, I found, either actually in my hands or within my reach, materials of history such as it was at least improbable that any other writer could obtain, I should not have ventured upon so difficult a task. But having many important collections of papers in my possession, and having received promises of further assistance from surviving actors in the scenes to be described, I felt that, though many might write a better history of the Sepoy War, no one could write a more truthful one.

So, relying on these external advantages to compensate all inherent deficiencies, I commenced what I knew must be a labour of years, but what I felt would be also a labour of love. My materials were too ample to be otherwise than most sparingly displayed. The prodigal citation of authorities has its advantages; but it encumbers the text, it impedes the narrative, and swells to inordinate dimensions the record of historical events. On a former occasion, when I laid before the public an account of a series of important transactions, mainly derived from original documents, public and private, I quoted those documents freely both in the text and in the As I was at that time wholly unknown to the public, it was necessary that I should cite chapter and verse to obtain credence for my statements. There was no ostensible reason why I should have known more about those transactions than any other writer (for it was merely the accident of private friendships and associations that placed such profuse materials in my possession), and it seemed to be imperative upon me therefore to produce my credentials. But, believing that this necessity no longer exists, I have in the present work abstained from adducing my authorities, for the mere purpose of substantiating my statements. I have quoted the voluminous correspondence in my possession only where there is some dramatic force and propriety in the words cited, or when they appear calculated. without impeding the narrative, to give colour and vitality to the story.

And here I may observe that, as on former occasions, the historical materials which I have moulded into this narrative are rather of a private than of a public character. I have made but little use

of recorded official documents. I do not mean that access to such documents has not been extremely serviceable to me; but that it has rather afforded the means of verifying or correcting statements received from other sources than it has supplied me with original materials. So far as respects the accumulation of facts, this History would have differed but slightly from what it is, if I had never passed the door of a public office; and, generally, the same may be said of the opinions which I have expressed. Those opinions, whether sound or unsound, are entirely my own personal opinionsopinions in many instances formed long ago, and confirmed by later events and more mature considevation. No one but myself is responsible for them: no one else is in any way identified with them. the wide range of inquiry embraced by the consideration of the manifold causes of the great convulsion of 1857, almost every grave question of Indian government and administration presses forward, with more or less importunity, for notice. Where, on many points, opinions widely differ, and the policy, which is the practical expression of them, takes various shapes, it is a necessity that the writer of cotemporary history, in the exercise of independent thought, should find himself dissenting from the doctrines and disapproving the actions of some authorities, living and dead, who are worthy of all admiration and respect. It is fortunate, when, as in the present instance, this difference of opinion involves no diminution of esteem, and the historian can discern worthy motives, and benevolent designs, and generous strivings after good, in those whose ways he may think erroneous and whose course of action he may deem unwise.

Indeed, the errors of which I have freely spoken were, for the most part, strivings after good. It was in the over-eager pursuit of Humanity and Civilisation that Indian statesmen of the new school were betrayed into the excesses which have been so grievously visited upon the nation. The story of the Indian Rebellion of 1857 is, perhaps, the most signal illustration of our great national character ever yet recorded in the annals of our country. It was the vehement self-assertion of the Englishman that produced this conflagration; it was the same vehement self-assertion that enabled him, by God's blessing, to trample it out. It was a noble egotism, mighty alike in doing and in suffering, and it showed itself grandly capable of steadfastly confronting the dangers which it had brought down upon itself. If I have any predominant theory it is this: Because we were too English the great crisis arose; but it was only because we were English that, when it arose, it did not utterly overwhelm us.

VIt is my endeavour, also, to show how much both of the dangers which threatened British dominion in the East, and of the success with which they were encountered, is assignable to the individual characters of a few eminent men. With this object I have sought to bring the reader face to face with the principal actors in the events of the Sepoy War, and to take a per onal interest in them. If it be true that the best history is that which most nearly resembles a bundle of biographies, it is especially true when said with reference to Indian history; for nowhere do the characters of individual Englishmen impress themselves with a more vital reality upon the annals of the country in which they live; nowhere are there such great opportunities of independent action; nowhere

are developed such capacities for evil or for good, as in our great Anglo-Indian Empire. If, then, in such a work as this, the biographical element were not prominently represented—if the individualities of such men as Dalhousie and Canning, as Henry and John Lawrence, as James Outram, as John Nicholson, and Herbert Edwardes, were not duly illustrated, there would be not only a cold and colourless, but also an unfaithful, picture of the origin and progress of the War. But it is to be remarked that, in proportion as the individuality of the English leaders is distinct and strongly marked, that of the chiefs of the insurrectionary movement is faint and undecided. In the fact of this contrast we see the whole history of the success which, by God's providence, crowned the efforts of our countrymen. If the individual energies of the leaders of the revolt had been commensurate with the power of the masses, we might have failed to extinguish such a conflagration. But the whole tendency of the English system had been to crush out those energies; so again, I say, we found in the very circumstances which had excited the rebellion the very elements of our success in suppressing it. Over the Indian Dead Level which that system had created, the English heroes marched triumphantly to victory.

In conclusion, I have only to express my obligations to those who have enabled me to write this History by supplying me with the materials of which it is composed. To the executors of the late Lord Canning, who placed in my hands the private and demi-official correspondence of the deceased statesman, extending over the whole term of his Indian administration, I am especially indebted. To Sir John Lawrence and Sir Herbert Edwardes, who have

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furnished me with the most valuable materials for my narrative of the rising in the Punjab and the measures taken in that province for the re-capture of Delhi; to the family of the late Colonel Baird Smith, for many interesting papers illustrative of the operations of the great siege; to Sir James Outram, who gave me before his death his correspondence relating to the brilliant operations in Oude; to Sir Robert Hamilton, for much valuable matter in elucidation of the history of the Central Indian Campaign; and to Mr. E. A. Reade, whose comprehensive knowledge of the progress of events in the North-Western Provinces has been of material service to me, my warmest acknowledgments are due. But to no one am I more indebted than to Sir Charles Wood, Secretary of State for India, who has permitted me to consult the official records of his Department—a privilege which has enabled me to make much better use of the more private materials in my possession. one, however, can know better or feel more strongly than myself, that much matter of interest contained in the multitudinous papers before me is unrepresented in my narrative. But such omissions are the necessities of a history so full of incident as this. I had yielded to the temptation to use my illustrative materials more freely, I should have expanded this work beyond all acceptable limits.

London, October, 1864.

ADVERTISEMENT TO VOL. I.

I MAY say here a few words about the general design of this work, and the course which the narrative is to take. The story is to be comprised in Nine Books, making three volumes. In the first of these volumes, now offered to the public, I have written of the antecedents of the mutiny of the Bengal Army. I have touched upon the principal political events, and upon the social and material progress, of the ten years which preceded the outburst; I have traced the history of the Bengal Army from its formation to the close of Lord Dalhousie's administration; and I have written in detail of the first year of Lord Canning's government and of the earlier incidents of the mutiny, up to the period of the outbreak at Meerut and the seizure of Delhi. It is intended that the second volume shall contain an account of the progress of mutiny and rebellion in the North-Western Provinces, of the mutiny in the Punjab, of the rebellion in Oude, of the rising in Behar, of the insurrection in the Southern Mahratta country, of the siege and capture of Delhi, and of the first relief of Lucknow. The third volume will, God willing, comprise a narrative of the operations of the army under Sir Colin Campbell, of the recovery of Oude, of the campaign in Central India, and finally of those measures by which, upon the re-establishment of British authority all over the country, Lord Canning sought to restore confidence to the princes and people of India, and general prosperity to the land.

... For to think that an handful of people can, with the greatest courage and policy in the world, embrace too large extent of dominion, it may hold for a time, but it will fail suddenly.

—Bacon.

... As for mercenary forces (which is the help in this case), all examples show that, whatsoever estate, or prince, doth rest upon them, he may spread his feathers for a time, but he will mew them soon after.—Bacon.

IY THERE BE FUEL PREPARED, IT IS HAND TO TELL WHENCE THE SPARK SHALL COME THAT SHALL SET IT ON PIRE. THE MATTER OF SEDITIONS IS OF TWO KINDS, MUCH POVERTY AND MUCH DISCONTENTMENT. IT IS CERTAIN, SO MANY OVERTHROWN ESTATES, SO MANY VOTES FOR TROUBLES. . . . THE CAUSES AND MOTIVES FOR SEDITION ARE, INNOVATIONS IN RELIGION, TAXES, ALTERATION OF LAWS AND CUSTOMS, BREAKING OF PRIVILEGES, GENERAL OPPRESSION, ADVANCEMENT OF UNWORTHY PERSONS, STRANGERS, DEATHS, DISBANDED SOLDIERS, FACTIONS GROWN DESPERATE; AND WHATSOEVER IN OPPRINDING PROFILE JOINETH AND KNITTETH THEM IN A COMMON CAUSE.—Bucon.

HISTORY OF THE SEPOY WAR.

BOOK I.-INTRODUCTORY.

[1846--1856.]

CHAPTER I.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF LORD DALHOUSIE—HIS PAREWELL MINUTE—
RETROSPECT OF THE FIRST SIKH WAR—THE MILITARY OCCUPATION OF
THE PUNJAB—THE COUNCIL OF REGENCY—THE SECOND SIKH WAR—
THE ANNEXATION OF THE PUNJAB—ITS ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE
LAWRENCES—THE CONQUEST OF PEGU.

Broken in bodily health, but not enfeebled in spirit, by eight years of anxious toil, beneath an Indian sun, Lord Dalhousie laid down the reins of government and returned to his native country to die. Since the reign of Lord Wellesley, so great in written history, so momentous in practical results, there had been no such administration as that of Lord Dalhousie; there had been no period in the annals of the Anglo-Indian Empire surcharged with such great political events, none which nearly approached it in the rapidity of its administrative progress. Peace and War had yielded their fruits with equal profusion.

On the eve of resigning his high trust to the hands of another, Lord Dalhousie drew up an claborate state1850

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paper reviewing the eventful years of his government. He had reason to rejoice in the retrospect; for he had acted in accordance with the faith that was within him, honestly and earnestly working out his cherished principles, and there was a bright flush of success over all the apparent result. Peace and prosperity smiled upon the empire. That empire he had vastly extended, and by its extension he believed that he had consolidated our rule and imparted additional security to our tenure of the country.

Of these great successes some account should be given at the outset of such a narrative as this; for it is only by understanding and appreciating them that we can rightly estimate the subsequent crisis. It was in the Punjab and in Oude that many of the most important incidents of that crisis occurred. Lord Dalhousie found them Foreign States; he left them British Provinces.

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Lord Hardinge conquered the Sikhs; but he spared the Punjab.) Moderate in victory as resolute in war, he left the empire of Runjeet Singh, shorn only of its outlying provinces, to be governed by his successors, and strove to protect the boy-prince against the law-lessness of his own soldiers. But it was felt that this forbearance was only an experimental forbearance; and the proclamation which announced the restoration of the Punjab to the Maharajah Duleep Singh sounded also a note of warning to the great military autocracy which had well-nigh overthrown the State. "If this opportunity," said the victor, "of rescuing the Sikh nation from military anarchy and misrule be neglected, and hostile opposition to the British army be renewed, the Government of India will make such

other arrangements for the future government of the Punjab as the interests and security of the British power may render just and expedient.") Thus was the doubt expressed; thus were the consequences foreshadowed. It did not seem likely that the experiment would succeed; but it was not less right to make it. It left the future destiny of the empire, under Providence, for the Sikhs themselves to determine. It taught them how to preserve their national independence, and left them to work out the problem with their own hands.

But Hardinge did more than this. He did not interfere with the internal administration, but he established a powerful military protectorate in the Punjab. He left the Durbar to govern the country after its own fashion, but he protected the Government against the lawless domination of its soldiery. The Sikh army was overawed by the presence of the British battalions: and if the hour had produced the man-if there had been any wisdom, any love of country, in the councils of the nation—the Sikh Empire might have survived the great peril of the British military protectorate. But there was no one worthy to rule; no one able to govern. The mother of the young Maharajah was nominally the Regent. There have been great queens in the East as in the West-women who have done for their people what men have been incapable of doing. (But the mother of Duleep Singh was not one of these. To say that she loved herself better than her country is to use in courtesy the mildest words. which do not actually violate truth. She was, indeed, an evil presence in the nation. It rested with her to choose a minister, and the choice which she made was another great suicidal blow struck at the life of the Sikh Empire. It may have been difficult in this

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emergency to select the right man, for, in truth, there were not many wise men from whom a selection could be made. The Queen-Mother cut through the difficulty by selecting her paramour.

Lal Singh was unpopular with the Durbar; unpopular with the people; and he failed.) He might have been an able and an honest man, and yet have been found wanting in such a conjuncture. But he was probably the worst man in the Punjab on whom the duty of reconstructing a strong Sikh Government could have devolved. To do him justice, there were great difficulties in his way. He had to replenish an exhausted treasury by a course of unpopular retrenchments. Troops were to be disbanded and Jagheers Lal Singh was not the man to do this, as one bowing to a painful necessity, and sacrificing himself to the exigencies of the State. Even in a country where political virtue was but little understood, a course of duty consistently pursued for the benefit of the nation might have ensured for him some sort of respect. But whilst he was impoverishing others, he was enriching himself. It was not the public treasury, but the private purse that he sought to replenish, and better men were despoiled to satisfy the greed of his hungry relatives and friends. Vicious among the vicious, he lived but for the indulgence of his own appetites, and ruled but for his own aggrandisement. The favourite of the Queen, he was the oppressor of the People. And though he tried to dazzle his British guests by rare displays of courtesy towards them, and made himself immer sly popular among all ranks of the Army of Occupation by his incessant efforts to gratify them, he could not hide the one great patent fact, that a strong Sikh Government could never be established under the wuzeerat of Lal Singh.

But the British were not responsible for the failure. The Regent chose him; and, bound by treaty not to exercise any interference in the internal administration of the Lahore State, the British Government had only passively to ratify the choice. But it was a state of things burdened with evils of the most obtrusive kind. We were upholding an unprincipled ruler and an unprincipled minister at the point of our British bayonets, and thus aiding them to commit iniquities which, without such external support, they would not have long been suffered to perpetrate. The compact, however, was but for the current year; and even for that brief period there seemed but little probability of Lal Singh tiding over the difficulties and dangers which beset his position.

(Very soon his treachery undid him. False to his own country, he was false also to the British Government. The province of Cashmere, which was one of the outlying dependencies taken by the British in payment of the war-charges, had been made over to Gholab Singh, chief of the great Jummoo family, who had paid a million of money for the cession. transfer had been resisted by the local governor, who had ruled the province under the Sikh Rajahs, and covertly Lal Singh had encouraged the resistance. The nominal offender was brought to public trial, but Dec. 181 it was felt that the real criminal was Lal Singh, and that upon the issue of the inquiry depended the fate of the minister. It was soon apparent that he was a traitor, and that the other, though for intelligible reasons of his own, reluctant to render an account of his stewardship, was little more than a tool in his

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hands. The disgrace of the minister was the immediate result of the investigation. He left the Durbar tent a prisoner under a guard, an hour before his own body-guard, of Sikh soldiers; and the great seal of the Maharajah was placed in the hands of the British Resident. (So fell Lal Singh;) and so fell also the first experiment to reconstruct a strong Sikh Government, on a basis of national independence.

Another experiment was then to be tried. There was not a native of the country to whose hands the destinies of the empire could be safely entrusted. If the power of the English conqueror were demanded to overawe the turbulent military element, English wisdom and English integrity were no less needed, in that conjuncture, to quicken and to purify the corrupt councils of the State. Sikh statesmanship, protected against the armed violence of the Prætorian bands, which had overthrown so many ministries, had been fairly tried, and had been found miserably wanting. A purely native Government was not to be hazarded Averse as Hardinge had been, and still was, to sanction British interference in the internal administration of the Punjab, there was that in the complications before him which compelled him to overcome his reluctance. The choice, indeed, lay between a half measure, which might succeed, though truly there was small hope of success, and the total abandonment of the country to its own vices, which would have been speedily followed, in self-defence, by our direct assumption of the Government on our own account. Importuned by the Sikh Durbar, in the name of the Maharajah, Hardinge tried the former The next effort, therefore, to save the Sikh Empire from self-destruction, embraced the idea of a native Government, presided over by a British statesman. (A Council of Regency was instituted, to be composed of Sikh chiefs, under the superintendence and control of the Resident; or, in other words, the British Resident became the virtual ruler of the country.)

And this time the choice, or rather the accident, of the man was as propitious, as before it had been untoward and perverse. The English officer possessed well-nigh all the qualities which the Sikh Sirdar so deplorably lacked. A captain of the Bengal Artillery, holding the higher rank of colonel by brevet for good service, Henry Lawrence had graduated in Punjabee diplomacy under George Clerk, and had accompanied to Caubul the Sikh Contingent, attached to Pollock's retributory force, combating its dubious fidelity, and controlling its predatory excessés on the way. the return of the expedition to the British provinces, he had been appointed to represent our interests in Nepaul; and there—for there was a lull in the sanguinary intrigues of that semi-barbarous Court-immersed in his books, and turning to good literary purpose his hours of leisure, he received at Catamandoo intelligence of the Sikh invasion, and of the death of George Broadfoot, and was summoned to take the place of that lamented officer as the agent of the Governor-General on the frontier. In the negotiations which followed the conquest of the Khalsa army, he had taken the leading part, and, on the restoration of peace, had been appointed to the office of British Resident, or Minister, at Lahore, under the first experiment of a pure Sikh Government hedged in by British troops.

If the character of the man thus placed at the head of affairs could have secured the success of this great compromise, it would have been successful far beyond

1846.

the expectations of its projectors. VFor no man ever undertook a high and important trust with a more solemn sense of his responsibility, or ever, with more singleness of purpose and more steadfast sincerity of heart, set himself to work, with God's blessing, to turn a great opportunity to great account for the benefit of his fellows. In Henry Lawrence a pure transparent nature, a simple manliness and truthfulness of character, were combined with high intellectual powers, and personal energies which nothing carthly could subdue. I may say it here, once for all, at the very outset of my story, that nowhere does this natural simplicity and truthfulness of character so often as in India survive a long career of public service. In that country public men are happily not exposed to the pernicious influences which in England shrivel them so fast into party leaders and parliamentary chiefs. With perfect singleness of ain and pure sincerity of purpose, they go, with level eyes, straight at the public good, never looking up in fear at the suspended sword of a parliamentary majority, and never turned aside by that fear into devious paths of trickery and finesse. It may be that ever since the days of Clive and Omichund an unsavoury odour has pervaded the reputation of Oriental diplomacy; but the fact is, that our greatest successes have been achieved by men incapable of deceit, and by means which have invited scrutiny. When we have opposed craft to craft, and have sought to out-juggle our opponents, the end has been commonly disastrous. is only by consummate honesty and transparent truthfulness that the Talleyrands of the East have been beaten by such mere children in the world's ways as Mountstuart Elphinstone, Charles Metcalfe, James Outram, and Henry Lawrence.

Henry Lawrence, indeed, was wholly without guile. He had great shrewdness and sagacity of character, and he could read and understand motives, to which his own breast was a stranger, for he had studied well But he was singularly open the Oriental character. and unreserved in all his dealings, and would rather have given his antagonist an advantage than have condescended to any small arts and petty trickeries to secure success. All men, indeed, trusted him; for they knew that there was nothing selfish or sordid about him; that the one desire of his heart was to benefit the people of the country in which it had pleased God to cast his lot. But he never suffered this plea of beneficence to prevail against his sense of justice. He was eminently, indeed, a just man, and altogether incapable of that casuistry which gives a gloss of humanity to self-seeking, and robs people for their own good. He did not look upon the misgovernment of a native State as a valid reason for the absorption of its revenues, but thought that British power might be exercised for the protection of the oppressed, and British wisdom for the instruction and reformation of their oppressors, without adding a few more thousand square miles to the area of our British possessions, and a few more millions of people to the great muster-roll of British subjects in the East.

Above the middle height, of a spare, gaunt frame, and a worn face bearing upon it the traces of mental toil and bodily suffering, he impressed you, at first sight, rather with a sense of masculine energy and resolution than of any milder and more endcaring qualities. But when you came to know him, you saw at once that beneath that rugged exterior there was a heart gentle as a woman's, and you recognised in his words and in his manner the kindliness of nature,

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which won the affection of all who came within its reach, and by its large and liberal manifestations made his name a very household word with thousands, who had never felt the pressure of his hand or stood in his living presence. But, with all this, though that name was in men's mouths and spoken in many languages, no unknown subaltern had a more lowly mind or a more unassuming deportment.

Such was the man who now found himself the virtual sovereign of the empire of Runjeet Singh. The new protectorate, established at the end of 1846, gave to Henry Lawrence "unlimited authority," "to direct and control every department of the State.") He was to be assisted in this great work by an efficient establishment of subordinates, but it was no part of the design to confer upon them the executive manage-The old officers of the Sikh Government of affairs. ment were left to carry on the administration, guided and directed by their British allies. Under such a system corruption and oppression could no longer run riot over the face of the land. It was a protectorate for the many, not for the few; and for a while it seemed that all classes were pleased with the arrangement. Outwardly, indeed, it did not seem that feelings of resentment against the British Government were cherished by any persons but the Queen-Mother and her degraded paramour.

(And so, in the spring of 1847, the political horizon was almost unclouded. The Council of Regency, under the control of Henry Lawrence, seemed to be carrying on the government with a sincere desire to secure a successful result. Tranquillity had been restored; confidence and order were fast returning. The Sikh soldiery appeared to be contented with their

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lot, and to be gradually acquiring habits of discipline and obedience, under a system which rendered them dependent on the British officers for whatever most promoted their interests and contributed to their But it did not escape the sagacious mind comforts. of the Resident, that serene as was the aspect of affairs, and promising as were the indications of continued repose, there were, beneath all this surfacecalm, dangerous elements at work, waiting only for time and circumstance to call them into full activity. The memory of frequent defeat was still too fresh in the minds of the humbled Khalsa to suffer them to indulge in visions of at once re-acquiring their lost supremacy. But as time passed and the impression waxed fainter and fainter, it was well-nigh certain that the old hopes would revive, and that outbursts of desperate Asiatic zeal might be looked for in quarters where such paroxysms had long seemed to be necessary to the very existence of a lawless and tumultuous class. It is a trick of our self-love-of our national vanity—to make us too often delude ourselves with the belief that British supremacy must be welcome wheresoever it obtrudes itself. But Henry Lawrence did not deceive himself in this wise. frankly admitted that, however benevolent our motives. and however conciliatory our demeanour, a British army could not garrison Lahore, and a British functionary supersede the Sikh Durbar, without exciting bitter discontents and perilous resentments. around him, struggling for existence, so many high officers of the old Sikh armies, so many favourites of the old line of Wuzeers now cast adrift upon the world, without resources and without hope under the existing system, that when he remembered their lawless

habits, their headstrong folly, their desperate suicidal zeal, he could but wonder at the perfect peace which then pervaded the land.

But whatsoever might be taking shape in the future, the present was a season of prosperity—a time of promise—and the best uses were made by the British functionaries of the continued calm. Interference in the civil administration of the country was exercised only when it could be turned to the very apparent advantage of the people. British authority and British integrity were then employed in the settlement of long-unsettled districts, and in the development of the resources of long-neglected tracts of country. subordinate officers thus employed under the Resident were few, but they were men of no common ability and energy of character-soldiers such as Edwardes, Nicholson, Reynell Taylor, Lake, Lumsden, Becher, George Lawrence, and James Abbott; civilians such as Vans Agnew and Arthur Cocks-men, for the most part, whose deeds will find ample record in these They had unbounded confidence in their chief, and their chief had equal confidence in them. Acting, with but few exceptions, for the majority were soldiers, in a mixed civil and military character, they associated with all classes of the community; and alike by their courage and their integrity they sustained the high character of the nation they represented. One common spirit of humanity seemed to animate the Governor-General, the Resident, and his Assistants. A well-aimed blow was struck at infanticide, at Suttee, and at the odious traffic in female slaves. In the agricultural districts, a system of enforced labour, which had pressed heavily on the ryots, was soon also in course of abolition. The weak were everywhere protected against the strong. An

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entire revision of the judicial and revenue systems of the country-if systems they can be called, where system there was none-was attempted, and with good success. New customs rules were prepared, by which the people were greatly gainers. Every legitimate means of increasing the revenue, and of controlling unnecessary expenditure, were resorted to, and large savings were effected at no loss of efficiency in any department of the State. The cultivators were encouraged to sink wells, to irrigate their lands, and otherwise to increase the productiveness of the soil, alike to their own advantage and the profit of the And whilst everything was thus being done to advance the general prosperity of the people, and to ensure the popularity of British occupation among the industrial classes, the Army was propitiated by the introduction of new and improved systems of pay and pension, and taught to believe that what they had lost in opportunities of plunder, and in irregular largesses, had been more than made up to them by certainty and punctuality of payment, and the interest taken by the British officers in the general welfare of their class.

As the year advanced, these favourable appearances rather improved than deteriorated. In June, the Resident reported that a large majority of the disbanded soldiers had returned to the plough or to trade, and that the advantages of British influence to the cultivating classes were every day becoming more apparent. But still Lawrence clearly discerned the fact that although the spirit of insurrection was at rest in the Punjab, it was not yet dead. There were sparks flying about here and there, which, alighting on combustible materials, might speedily excite a blaze. "If every Sirdar and Sikh in the Punjab," he

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wrote, with the candour and good sense which are so conspicuous in all his communications, "were to avow himself satisfied with the humbled position of his country, it would be the extreme of infatuation to believe him, or to doubt for a moment that among the crowd who are loudest in our praise there are many who cannot forgive our victory, or even our forbearance, and who chafe at their own loss of power in exact proportion as they submit to ours." People were not wanting even then, in our camp, to talk with ominous head-shakings of the "Caubul Catastrophe," and to predict all sorts of massacres and misfortunes. But there was no parallel to be drawn between the two cases, for an overweening sense of security had not taken possession of the British functionaries at Lahore. They had not brought themselves to believe that the country was "settled," or that British occupation was "popular" among the chiefs and people of the Punjab. With God's blessing they were doing their best to deserve success, but they knew well that they might some day see the ruin of their hopes, the' failure of their experiments, and they were prepared, in the midst of prosperity, at any hour to confront disaster.

Even then, fair as was the prospect before us, there was one great blot upon the landscape; for whilst the restless nature of the Queen-Mother was solacing itself with dark intrigues, there was a continual source of disquietude to disturb the mind of the Resident with apprehensions of probable outbreaks and seditions. She hated the British with a deadly hatred. They had deprived her of power. They had torn her lover from her arms. They were training her son to become a puppet in their hands. To foment hostility against them, wheresoever there seemed to be any

hope of successful revolt, and to devise a plot for the murder of the Resident, were among the cherished objects by which she sought to gratify her malice. But she could not thus labour in secret. Her schemes were detected, and it was determined to remove her from Lahore. The place of banishment was Sheikopoor, in a quiet part of the country, and in the midst of a Mussulman population. When the decision was communicated to her by her brother, she received it with apparent indifference. She was not one to give her enemies an advantage by confessing her wounds and bewailing her lot. She uttered no cry of pain, but said that she was ready for anything, and at once prepared for the journey.

The autumn passed quietly away. But an important change was impending. Lord Hardinge was about to lay down the reins of government, and Colonel Lawrence to leave the Punjab for a time. The health of the latter had long been failing. He had tried in August and September the effect of the bracing hill air of Simlah. It had revived him for a while, but his medical attendants urged him to resort to the only remedy which could arrest the progress of disease; and so, with extreme reluctance, he consented to quit his post, and to accompany Lord Hardinge to England. He went; and Sir Frederick Currie, a public servant of approved talent and integrity, who, in the capacity of Political Secretary. had accompanied the Governor-General to the banks of the Sutlei, and who had been subsequently created a baronet and appointed a member of the Supreme Council of India, was nominated to act as Resident in his place.

Meeting the stream of European revolution as they journeyed homewards, Hardinge and Lawrence came

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1848. overland to England in the early spring of 1848.

V Brief space is allowed to me for comment; but before I cease to write Lord Hardinge's name in connexion with Sikh politics and history, I must give expression, if only in a single sentence, to the admiration with which I regard his entire policy towards the Punjab. It was worthy of a Christian warrior: it was worthy of a Christian statesman. It is in no wise to be judged by results, still less by accidents not assignable to errors inherent in the original design. Hardinge did, he did because it was right to do it. His forbearance under provocation, his moderation in the hour of victory foreshadowed the humanity of his subsequent measures. It was his one desire to render British connexion with the Punjab a blessing to the Sikhs, without destroying their national independence. The spirit of Christian philanthropy moved at his bidding over the whole face of the country not the mere image of a specious benevolence disguising the designs of our ambition and the impulses of our greed, but an honest, hearty desire to do good without gain, to save an Empire, to reform a people, and to leave behind us the marks of a hand at once gentle and powerful—gentle to cherish and powerful only to sustain.

quest of L'unjab. The portfolio of the Indian Government now passed into the hands of Lord Dalhousic, a young statesman of high promise, who, in the divisions of party politics at home, had been ranged among the followers of Sir Robert Peel, and professed the newly-developed liberalism of that great parliamentary chief. Held in esteem as a man of moderate views, of considerable administrative ability, and more than common assi-

duity in the public service, his brief career as an English statesman seemed to afford good hope that, in the great descriptive roll of Indian Viceroys, his name would be recorded as that of a ruler distinguished rather for the utility than for the brilliancy of his administration. And so, doubtless, it seemed to himself. What India most wanted at that time was Peace. Left to her repose, even without external aid, she might soon have recovered from the effects of a succession of wasting wars. But, cherished and fostered by an unambitious and enlightened ruler, there was good prospect of a future of unexampled prosperityof great material and moral advancement-of that oft-promised, ever realisable, but still unrealised blessing, the "development of the resources of the country." The country wanted Railroads, and the people Education, and there was good hope that Dalhousie would give them both.

When he looked beyond the frontier he saw that everything was quiet. The new year had dawned auspiciously on the Punjab. The attention of the British functionaries, ever earnest and active in welldoing-for the disciples of Henry Lawrence had caught much of the zealous humanity of their master -was mainly directed to the settlement of the Land Revenue and the improvement of the judicial system of the country. They had begun codifying in good earnest, and laws, civil and criminal, grew apace under their hands. In a state of things so satisfactory as this there was little to call for special remark, and the Governor-General, in his letters to the Home Government, contented himself with the simple observation, that he "forwarded papers relating to the Punjab." But early in May intelligence had reached Calcutta which impelled him to indite a more stirring

epistle. The Punjab was on the eve of another crisis.

In September, 1844, Sawun Mull, the able and energetic Governor* of Mooltan, was shot to death by an assassin. He was succeeded by his son Moolraj, who also had earned for himself the reputation of a chief with just and enlightened views of government, and considerable administrative ability. But he had also a reputation very dangerous in that country: he was reputed to be very rich. Sawun Mull was believed to have amassed immense treasures in Mooltan; and on the instalment of his son in the government, the Lahore Durbar demanded from him a succession-duty† of a million of money. The exorbitant claim was not complied with; but a compromise was effected, by which Moolraj became bound to pay to Lahore less than a fifth of the required amount. And this sum would have been paid, but for the convulsions which soon began to rend the country, and the disasters which befel the Durbar.

On the re-establishment of the Sikh Government the claim was renewed. It was intimated to the Dewan that if the stipulated eighteen lakhs, with certain amounts due for arrears, were paid into the Lahore Treasury, he would be allowed to continue in charge of Mooltan; but that if he demurred, troops would be sent to coerce him. He refused payment of the money, and troops were accordingly sent against Thus threatened, he besought the British Government to interfere in his favour, and consented to adjust the matter through the arbitration of the Resi-The result was, that he went to Lahore in the

telligible to ordinary English readers, of the district, with the control of but it does not fitly represent the office held by the "Dewan," who was

† Nuzzurana.

^{*} I have used the word most in- financial manager or revenue-farmer

autumn of 1846; promised to pay by instalments the money claimed; and was mulcted in a portion of the territories from which he had drawn his revenue. The remainder was farmed out to him for a term of three years. With this arrangement he appeared to be satisfied. He was anxious to obtain the guarantee of the British Government; but his request was refused, and he returned to Mooltan without it.

For the space of more than a year, Moolraj remained in peaceful occupation of the country which had been leased out to him. There was no attempt, on the part of the British functionaries, to interfere with the affairs of Mooltan. That territory was especially exempted from the operation of the revenue settlement, which had taken effect elsewhere, and of the new customs regulations which had been established in other parts of the Punjab. But the compact which had been entered into with the Lahore Durbar did not sit easily upon him. He thought, or affected to think, that its terms were too rigorous; and accordingly, about the close of 1847, he repaired to the capital to seek some remission of them. soon began intriguing with the Durbar for the reduction of the stipulated rents; and not coming to any satisfactory arrangement, intimated his wish to resign a charge which he had found so little profitable. was told that his resignation, when formally tendered, would be accepted; but was recommended to reflect upon the subject before finally coming to a determination, which could not be subsequently revoked. Moolraj quitted Lahore; and sent in first a somewhat vague, and afterwards a more distinct, resignation of his office; and the Durbar at once appointed a suc-Sirdar Kan Singh, who was described as "a brave soldier and intelligent man," was nominated to

the Governorship of Mooltan, on a fixed annual salary. At the same time, Mr. Vans Agnew, a civil servant of the Company, and Lieutenant Anderson, of the Bombay army, were despatched to Mooltan with the new Governor, and an escort of five hundred men, to receive charge of the place. On their arrival before the city there were no symptoms of any hostile intentions on the part of its occupants. Moolraj himself waited on the British officers on the 18th of April, and was peremptorily called upon to give in his accounts. Disconcerted and annoyed, he quitted their presence, but next morning he met them with a calm aspect, and conducted them through the fort. Two companies of Goorkhas and some horsemen of the escort were placed in possession of one of the fort-gates. The crisis was now at hand. formally gave over charge of the fort; and as the party retired through the gate, the British officers were suddenly attacked and severely wounded. Moolraj, who was riding with them at the time, offered no assistance, but, setting spurs to his horse, galloped off in the direction of his garden-house, whilst the wounded officers were carried to their own camp by Kan Singh and a party of the Goorkhas.

In the course of the following day all the Mooltanee troops were in a state of open insurrection. Moolraj himself, who may not have been guilty in the first instance of an act of premeditated treachery, and who subsequently pleaded that he was cocreed by his troops, sent excuses to Vans Agnew, who, with the generous confidence of youth, acquitted him of all participation in the outrage. But he was soon heart and soul in the work; and his emissaries plied their trade of corruption with unerring effect. Before nightfall, the commandant of the escort, with all his

men, went over to the enemy. The building in which the wounded officers lay was surrounded. A motley crew of ruffians-soldiers and citizens-men of all classes, young and old, moved by one common impulse, one great thirst of blood, came yelling and shouting around the abode of the doomed Feringhees. In they rushed, with a savage cry, and surrounded their victims. The wounded officers lay armed on their beds, and helpless, hopeless as they were, put on the bold front of intrepid Englishmen, and were heroes to the last. Having shaken hands, and bade each other a last farewell, they turned upon their assailants as best they could; but overpowered by numbers, they fell, declaring in the prophetic language of death, that thousands of their countrymen would come to avenge them. The slaughter thoroughly accomplished, the two bodies were dragged out of the mosque, and barbarously mutilated by the murderers, with every indignity that malice could devise.

Irretrievably committed in the eyes both of our countrymen and his own, Moolraj now saw that there was no going back; he had entered, whether designedly or not, on a course which admitted of no pause, and left no time for reflection. All the dormant energies of his nature were now called into full activity. He took command of the insurgents—identified himself with their cause—bestowed largesses upon the men who had been most active in the assault upon the British officers, retained all who would take service with him, laid in stores, collected money, and addressed letters to other chiefs urging them to resistance. He had never been looked upon by others—never regarded himself—as a man to become the leader of a great national movement; but now circumstances

had done for him what he would never willingly have shaped out for himself; so he bowed to fate, and became a hero.

Thus was the second Sikh War commenced. wardly, it was but the revolt of a local governmentthe rebellion of an officer of the Sikh State against the sovereign power of the land. But, rightly considered, it was of far deeper significance. Whether Moolraj had been incited to resistance by the promptings of a spirit far more bitter in its resentments, and more active in its malignity than his own, is not very apparent. But it is certain that when he raised the standard of rebellion at Mooltan, he did but anticipate a movement for which the whole country was ripe. Already had ominous reports of ill-concealed disaffection come in from some of the outlying districts, and though the mortifying fact was very reluctantly believed, it is certain that the state of things which Henry Lawrence had predicted was already a present reality, and that the Sikhs, chafing under the irritating interference of the European stranger, were about to make a common effort to expel him. A finer body of officers than those employed under the British Resident in the Punjab seldom laboured for the good of a people. That they worked, earnestly and assiduously, animated by the purest spirit of Christian benevolence, is not to be doubted. But it was not in the nature of things that even if the thing done had been palatable to the Sikhs, they would have reconciled themselves to the doers of it. Habituated to rule in all parts of the world, and to interfere in the affairs of people of all colours and creeds, Englishmen are slow to familiarise themselves with the idea of the too probable unpopularity of their inter-They think that if they mean well they must secure confidence. They do not consider that

our beneficent ways may not be more in accordance with the national taste than our round hats and stiff neckcloths; and that even if they were, alien interference must in itself be utterly distasteful to them. It is not to be doubted, I say, that the young Englishmen first employed in the Punjab laboured earnestly for the good of the people; but their very presence was a sore in the flesh of the nation, and if they had been endowed with superhuman wisdom and angelic benevolence, it would have made no difference in the sum total of popular discontent.

But it is probable that some mistakes were committed—the inevitable growth of benevolent ignorance and energetic inexperience-at the outset of our career as Punjabee administrators. The interference appears to have been greater than was contemplated in the original design of the Second Pro-At that time the God Terminus was held by many of our administrators in especial veneration. The Theodolite, the Reconnoitring Compass, and the Measuring Chain were the great emblems of British rule. And now these mysterious instruments began to make their appearance in the Punjab. We were taking sights and measuring angles on the outskirts of civilisation; and neither the chiefs nor the people could readily persuade themselves that we were doing all this for their good; there was an appearance in it of ulterior design. And, as I have hinted, the agents employed were sometimes wholly inexperienced in business of this kind. "My present rôle," wrote a young ensign* of two years' standing in the service, whose later exploits will be recorded in these pages, "is to survey a part

^{*} W. R. Hodson ("Hodson of Hodson's Horse"), January, 1828.
This young officer narrowly escaped

* W. R. Hodson ("Hodson of the fate of Anderson at Mooltan, for he had been selected in the first instance to accompany Vans Agnew.

of the country lying along the left bank of the Ravee and below the hills, and I am daily and all day at work with compasses and chain, pen and pencil, following streams, diving into valleys, burrowing into hills, to complete my work. I need hardly remark, that having never attempted anything of the kind, it is bothering at first. I should not be surprised any day to be told to build a ship, compose a code of laws, or hold assizes. In fact, 'tis the way in India; every one has to teach himself his work, and to do it at the same time." Training of this kind has made the finest race of officers that the world has ever seen. But the novitiate of these men may have teemed with blunders fatal to the people among whom they were sent, in all the self-confidence of youth, to learn their diversities of work. As they advance in years, and every year know better how difficult a thing it is to administer the affairs of a foreign people, such public servants often shudder to think of the errors committed, of the wrong done, when they served their apprenticeship in government without a master, and taught themselves at the expense of thousands. The most experienced administrators in the present case might have failed from the want of a right understanding of the temper of the people. But it was the necessity of our position that some who were set over the officers of the Sikh Government knew little of the people and little of administration. They were able, indefatigable, and conscientious. They erred only because they saw too much and did too much, and had not come to understand the wise policy of shutting their eyes and leaving alone.

And so, although the rebellion of Moolraj was at first only a local outbreak, and the British authorities were well disposed to regard it as a movement against the Sikh Government, not as an outrage especially directed against ourselves, that fiction could not be long maintained—for every day it became more and more apparent that the whole country was ripe for another war with the intruding Feringhee. The Durbar officers did not hesitate to express their conviction that to send Sikh troops to act against Moolraj would only be to swell the number of his adherents. have despatched with them a small English force would have been to risk its safety and precipitate the conflict. An overwhelming display of force, on the part of the British Government, might have crushed the rebellion at Mooltan and retarded the general rising of the country. But the season was far advanced; the responsibility was a great one. The Commander-in-Chief of the British army in India was not far distant. Currie, therefore, though his own judgment inclined to the commencement of immediate hostilities, rightly referred the momentous question to the military chief. Lord Gough was against immediate action; and the head of the Indian Government unreservedly endorsed the decision.

The remnant of the old Khalsa army eagerly watched the result, and were not slow to attribute our inactivity, at such a moment, to hesitation—to fear—to paralysis. I am not writing a military history of the Second Sikh War, and the question now suggested is one which I am not called upon to discuss. But I think that promptitude of action is often of more importance than completeness of preparation, and that to show ourselves confident of success is in most cases to attain it. The British power in India cannot afford to be quiescent under insult and outrage. Delay is held to be a sign of weakness. It encourages enmity and confirms vacillation. It is a disaster in

itself—more serious, often, than any that can arise from insufficient preparation, and that great bugbear the inclemency of the season. On the other hand, it is not to be forgotten that to despise our enemies is a common national mistake, and that sometimes it has been a fatal one. We have brought calamities on ourselves by our rashness as we have by our indecision. The History of India teems with examples of both results; the most profitable lesson to be learnt from which is, that, however wise we may be after the event, criticism in such a case ought to be diffident and forbearing.

But whilst the Commander-in-Chief, in the cool mountain air of Simlah, was deciding on the impossibility of commencing military operations, a young lieutenant of the Bengal army, who had been engaged in the Revenue settlement of the country about Bunnoo, was marching down upon Mooltan with a small body of troops, to render assistance to his brotherofficers in their perilous position, and to support the authority of the Lahore Durbar. A letter from Vans Agnew, dictated by the wounded man, had providentially fallen into his hands. He saw at once the emergency of the case; he never hesitated; but abandoning all other considerations, improvised the best force that could be got together, and, with fifteen hundred men and two pieces of artillery, marched forth in all the eager confidence of youth, hoping that it might be his privilege to rescue his countrymen from the danger that beset them.

The name of this young officer was Herbert Edwardes. A native of Frodley, in Shropshire, the son of a country clergyman, educated at King's College, London, he had entered the Company's service as a cadet of infantry, at an age somewhat more advanced

than that which sees the initiation into military life of the majority of young officers. But at an age much earlier than that which commonly places them in possession of the most superficial knowledge of the history and politics of the East, young Edwardes had acquired a stock of information, and a capacity for judging rightly of passing events, which would have done no discredit to a veteran soldier and diplomatist, He had served but a few years, when his name became familiar to English readers throughout the Presidency to which he belonged, as one of the ablest anonymous writers in the country. His literary talents, like his military qualities, were of a bold, earnest, impulsive character. Whatever he did, he did rapidly and well. He was precisely the kind of man to attract the attention and retain the favour of such an officer as Henry Lawrence, who, with the same quiet love of literature, combined a keen appreciation of that energy and fire of character which shrink from no responsibility, and are ever seeking to find an outlet in dashing exploits. In one of the earliest and most striking scenes of the Punjabee drama, Edwardes had acted a distinguished part. When the insurrection broke out in Cashmere, he was despatched to Jummoo, to awaken Gholab Singh to a sense of his duty in that conjuncture; and there are few more memorable and impressive incidents in Sikh history than that which exhibited a handful of British officers controlling the movements of large bodies of foreign troops,—the very men, and under the very leaders, who, so short a time before, had contested with us on the banks of the Sutlei the sovereignty of Hindostan.

On the reconstruction of the Sikh Government, after the deposition of Lal Singh, Herbert Edwardes

was one of the officers selected to superintend the internal administration of the country; and he had just completed the Revenue settlement of Bunnoo, when the startling intelligence of the Mooltanee outbreak reached his camp. He marched at once to succour his brother-officers; crossed the Indus, and took possession of Leia, the chief city in the Sindh Saugor But tidings by this time had reached him of the melancholy fate of Agnew and Anderson, and there was then no profit in the immediate movement on Mooltan to compensate for its certain danger. But the demonstration still had its uses. It was something that there was a force in the field with a British officer at the head of it to assert the cause of order and authority in the name of the Maharajah of the Punjab. Such a force might, for a time at least, hold rebellion in check in that part of the country. But Edwardes dreamt of higher service than this. To the south of Mooltan, some fifty miles, lies Bahwulpore, in the chief of which place we believed that we had a staunch ally. In the name of the British Government, Edwardes called upon him to move an auxiliary force upon Mooltan; and he had little doubt that, after forming a junction with these troops, he could capture the rebel stronghold. The confidence of the young soldier, stimulated by a victory which he gained over a large body of rebels on the great anniversary of Waterloo, saw no obstacle to this enterprise which could not be overcome if the Resident would only send him a few heavy guns and mortars, and Major Napier, of the Engineers, to direct the operations of the siege. He knew the worth of such a man in such a conjuncture, and every year that has since passed has made him prouder of the youthful forecast which he then evinced.

The Bahwulpore troops were sent, the junction was formed, and the forces marched down upon Mooltan. Placing himself at the head of a considerable body of men, the rebel chief went out to give them battle, but was beaten by Edwardes, aided by Van Cortlandt, a European officer in Sikh employ, who has since done good service to the British Government, and Edward Lake, a gallant young officer of Bengal Engineers, directing the Bahwulpore column, who has abundantly fulfilled, on the same theatre of action, the high promise of his youth. But much as irregular levies, so led, might do in the open field, they were powerless against the walls of Mooltan. Again, therefore, Edwardes urged upon the Resident the expediency of strengthening his hands, especially in respect of the ordnance branches of the service. Only send a siege train, some Sappers and Miners, with Robert Napier to direct the siege, and—this time, for the difficulties of the work had assumed larger proportions in his eyes-a few regular regiments, under a young brigadier, and we shall "close," he said, "Moolraj's accounts in a fortnight, and obviate the necessity of assembling fifty thousand men in October."

In the early part of July this requisition was received at Lahore. The interval which had elapsed, since the disastrous tidings of the rebellion of Moolraj had reached the Residency, had not been an uneventful one at the capital. Early in May, discovery was made of an attempt to corrupt the fidelity of our British Sepoys. The first intimation of the plot was received from some troopers of the 7th Irregular Cavalry, who communicated the circumstance to their commanding officer. The principal conspirators were one Kan Singh, an unemployed general of the Sikh army, and Gunga Ram, the confidential Vakeel of the

Maharanee. These men, and two others, were seized, tried, and convicted. The two chief conspirators were publicly hanged, and their less guilty associates transported. That they were instruments of the Maharanee was sufficiently proved. The conspirators acknowledged that she was the prime instigator of the treacherous attempt, and her letters were found in their possession. With this knowledge, it could no longer be a question with the Resident as to what course it behoved him to adopt. The mother of the Maharajah and the widow of Runject Singh could no longer be suffered to dwell among the Sikhs. She had already been removed from Lahore to Sheikopoor. It now became necessary to remove her from the Punjab. Accordingly, certain accredited agents of the Lahore Durbar, accompanied by two British officers, Captain Lumsden and Lieutenant Hodson, were despatched to Sheikopoor, with a mandate under the seal of the Maharajah, directing her removal from that place. Without offering any resistance, or expressing any dissatisfaction, she placed herself under the charge of the deputation; and, when it became clear to her that she was on her way to the British frontier, she desired—not improbably with that blended irony and bravado which she so well knew how to employ—that her thanks might be conveved to the Resident for removing her to the Company's dominions, out of the reach of the enemies who would destroy her. With a considerable retinue of female attendants, she was conveyed to Ferozepore, and eventually to Benares, where she was placed under the charge of Major George Macgregor, an Artillery officer of high personal character and great diplomatic experience, who had well sustained in the Punjab the brilliant reputation which he had earned at Jellalabad.

Such was the apparent growth visible at the British Residency, recognised in our State-papers, of those three months in the Punjab. But in the hands of a Sikh historian these incidents would form but a small part of the national annals, for all over the country the great chiefs were actively maturing the plan of their emancipation, calling upon all true Sikhs, in the name of the great Founder of their Faith, to exterminate the Christian usurpers, and even those nearest to the throne were among the arch-promoters of the movement. The daughter of Chuttur Singh and the sister of Shere Singh was the betrothed wife of the Maharajah; but these Sirdars, though anxious to veil their designs until the whole country was ripe for a simultaneous rising, were intriguing and plotting for our overthrow. The former was in the Hazareh, where his fidelity had been for some time suspected by James Abbottanother officer of the Bengal Artillery, friend and comrade of Henry Lawrence, who had been settling that part of the country—one of those men whose lot in life it is never to be believed, never to be appreciated, never to be rewarded; of the true salt of the earth, but of an unrecognised savour; chivalrous, heroic, but somehow or other never thoroughly emerging from the shade. not one to estimate highly the force of the maxim that "speech is silver, silence is gold;" and his suspicions are said not to have been acceptable at Lahore. But though it may be good to suspect, it is doubtless good, also, not to appear to suspect. And if Currie, in that conjuncture, had betrayed a want of confidence in the Sikh Sirdars, he would have precipitated the collision which it was sound policy to retard. So, whatever may have been his genuine convictions, he

still appeared to trust the chiefs of the Regency; and Shere Singh, with a strong body of Sikh troops, was sent down to Mooltan. It was wise to maintain, as long as possible, the semblance of the authority of the Sikh Durbar-wise to keep up the show of suppressing a rebellion by the hand of the native Government. To send down that undeveloped traitor to the great centre of revolt may have been a hazardous experiment, but it was hazardous also to keep him where he was; and the master-passion of the Sikh soldiery for plunder might have kept his battalions nominally on the side of authority, until they had glutted themselves with the spoils of Mooltan, and preparations had, meanwhile, been made in the British provinces for the commencement of military operations on a scale befitting the occasion. But the repeated requisitions of Edwardes for British aid at last wrought upon the Resident, and Currie determined to send a force to Mooltan, with a siege-train for the reduction of the fortress. In General Samson Whish, of the Artillery, under whose command the force was despatched, there was not literally what Edwardes had asked for-"a young brigadier"-but there was a general officer of unwonted youthfulness of aspect and activity of body, who could sit a horse well, could ride any distance at a stretch, and was generally esteemed to be one of the best artillery officers This forward movement was not in the service. countenanced in high places. The Commander-in-Chief shook his head. The Governor-General shook his head. But the Resident had ordered it, and it could not be countermanded, without encouraging a belief that there was a want of unanimity in British councils.

So the besieging force marched upon Mooltan, and

arrived before the city in high health and excellent spirits. On the 5th of September, in the name of the Maharajah and Queen Victoria, the British General summoned the garrison to surrender. No answer was returned to the summons, and the siege commenced. But on the 14th, when our guns were within breaching distance of the walls of the town, Whish, to his bitter mortification, was compelled to abandon the siege. The Sikh force under Shere Singh had gone over to the enemy.

This event had long been matter of anxious speculation in the British camp, and now took no one by surprise. It was known that the hearts of the soldiery were with Moolraj; but there was something of a more doubtful character in the conduct of the Rajah himself, who had on more than one occasion testified his zeal and loyalty by voluntary acts of service in In his own camp, the Khalsa troops said contemptuously, that he was a Mussulman. Edwardes he was outwardly on the best possible terms; spoke freely of the conduct of his father, Chuttur Singh; declared that he washed his hands of all the old man's rebellious projects; and candidly avowed his mistrust of the Sikh troops. But in all this he was playing a part. He had written to his brother to say that he intended to go over to the enemy on that very 14th of September, and he kept his word to the letter. On the morning of that day, the whole Durbar force sought entrance into the city. Doubtful of the real nature of the movement, Moolraj at first refused them admittance; but soon satisfied of their intentions, he opened his gates; the long dreaded and fatal junction was effected; and the British General was under the mortifying necessity of raising the siege of Mooltan.

The whole truth was now visible before the world. It was impossible any longer to maintain the fiction of a local rebellion, to pretend that the Lahore Government, assisted by British troops, was endeavouring to coerce a refractory subject. The very heads of that Government were in open hostility to the British, raising the standard of nationality in the name of the Maharajah. It was obvious that the war now about to be waged, was between the British and the Sikhs. Some hope was at one time to be drawn from the fact of long-standing feuds among the different Sikh families. Then there was the not unreasonable conviction that the Mahomedan population of the Punjab might easily be kept in a state of enmity with the Sikhs. But these assurances soon melted away. Hostile families and hostile religions were content to unite for the nonce against the Feringhees; and the Commander-in-Chief, as the cold weather approached, was gratified by finding that there had been no premature birth of victorythat the work was yet to be done - and that an army of twenty thousand men, under his personal command, was required to take the field.

And from that time Mooltan ceased to be the focus of rebellion and the head-quarters of the war. In the Hazareh country Chuttur Singh had thrown off all vestments of disguise, and plunged boldly into the troubled waters that lay before him. The thoughts of Shere Singh soon began to turn towards that quarter—indeed, such had been his desire from the first—and before the second week of October had passed away, he had marched out of Mooltan to join his father. The whole country was now rising against us. Having used the name of the Maharajah, the Sikh leaders were eager to possess themselves of

the person of the boy-King, and but for the vigilance of the Resident they would have achieved an object which would have added a new element of strength to the national cause. Duleep Singh remained in our hands virtually a prisoner at Lahore.

All this time the Governor-General was at Calcutta, watching from a distance the progress of events, and betraying no eagerness to seize a favourable opportunity for the conquest of the Punjab. Indeed, it has been imputed to him, as a grave political error, that he did not at an earlier period make due preparation for the inevitable war. But, it would seem that in the summer of 1848, his desire was to recognise as long as possible only internal rebellion in the Sikh country—to see, not the rising of a nation against a foreign intruder, but the revolt of a few unloyal chiefs against their own lawful sovereign. But with the first breath of the cool season there came a truer conception of the crisis, and Lord Dalhousie prepared himself for the conflict. "I have wished for peace," he said, at a public entertainment, early in October; "I have longed for it; I have striven for But if the enemies of India determine to have war, war they shall have, and on my word they shall have it with a vengeance. A few days afterwards he turned his back upon Calcutta, and set his face towards the north-west. All the energies of his mind were then given to the prosecution of the war.

The British army destined for the re-conquest of the Punjab assembled at Ferozepore, and crossed the Sutlej in different detachments. On the 13th of November the head-quarters reached Lahore. At that time it could hardly be said that British influence extended a rood beyond the Residency walls. In all parts of the country the Sikhs had risen against 1848.

the great reproach of the English Occupation. In many outlying places, on the confines of civilisation, our English officers were holding out, in the face of every conceivable difficulty and danger, with constancy and resolution most chivalrous, most heroic, hoping only to maintain, by their own personal gallantry, the character of the nation they represented. There was, indeed, nothing more to be done. We had ceased to be regarded as allies. So eager and so general was the desire to expel the intruding Feringhee, that the followers of Govind sank for a time all feelings of national and religious animosity against their Afghan neighbours, and invoked Mahomedan aid from the regions beyond the passes of the Khyber.

On the 21st of November, Lord Gough joined the army on the left bank of the Sutlej. A veteran commander, who within the space of a few years had fought more battles in different parts of the world than were crowded into the lives of most living warriors—a general whose uniform good fortune had glossed over his want of forecast and science, and whose repeated successes had silenced criticism—he was now about to engage in military operations greater than those of his antecedent campaigns, with, perhaps, even less knowledge of the country and less consideration of the probable contingencies of the war. But all men had confidence in him. India had been won by a series of military mistakes that would have disgraced an ensign before the examination period, and, perhaps, would not have been won at all if we had infused into our operations more of the pedantry of military science. He was a soldier, and all who fought under him honoured his grey hairs, and loved him for his manly bearing, his fine frank character, and even for the impetuosity which so often entangled his legions in difficulties, and enhanced the cost of the victories he gained.

The arrival of the Commander-in-Chief was the signal for the immediate commencement of hostilities. The force then under his personal command consisted of upwards of twenty thousand men, with nearly a hundred pieces of artillery, and Gough was in no temper for delay. On the day after his arrival in camp was fought the battle of Ramnuggur, the first of those disastrous successes which have given so gloomy a character to the campaign. The enemy had a strong masked battery on the other side of the fiver, and very cleverly contrived to draw the British troops into an ambuscade. The operations of the Commander-in-Chief, commenced with the object of driving a party of the rebels, who were on his side of the Chenab, across the river, had the effect of bringing his cavalry and artillery within reach of these concealed guns; and twenty-eight pieces of ordnance opened upon our advancing columns. The cavalry were ordered to move forward to the attack as soon as an opportunity presented itself. They found an opportunity, and charged a large body of the enemy, the Sikh batteries pouring in their deadly showers all the while. Many fell under the fire of the guns, many under the sabre-cuts of the Sikh swordsmen, many under the withering fire of a body of matchlockmen, who, taking advantage of the nature of the ground, harassed our horsemen sorely. Nothing was gained by our "victory;" but we lost many brave and some good soldiers; and our troops returned to camp weary and dispirited, asking what end they had accomplished, and sighing over the cost.

Some days afterwards a force under General Thack-

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well was sent out to cross the river, but being scantily supplied with information, and grievously hampered by instructions, it succeeded only in losing a few men and killing several of the enemy. No great object was gained, but great opportunities were sacrificed. The Commander-in-Chief pompously declared that "it had pleased Almighty God to vouchsafe to the British arms the most successful issue to the extensive combinations rendered necessary for the purpose of effecting the passage of the Chenab, the defeat and dispersion of the Sikh force under the insurgent Rajah Shere Singh and the numerous Sikh Sirdars who had the temerity to set at defiance the British power." These "events, so fraught with importance," were to "tend to most momentous results." sults were, that the field of battle was shifted from the banks of the Chenab to the banks of the Jhelum. The enemy, who might have been taken in rear, and whose batteries might have been seized, if Thackwell had been free to carry out the most obvious tactics, escaped with all their guns; and on the 13th of January bore bloody witness to the little they had suffered, by fighting one of the greatest and most sanguinary battles in the whole chronicle of Indian warfare.

By this time Henry Lawrence had returned to the Punjab. The news of the outbreak at Mooltan had reached him in England, whilst still in broken health, and had raised within him an incontrollable desire, at any hazard, to return to his post. He had won his spurs, and he was eager to prove that he was worthy of them, even at the risk of life itself. It has been said that he ought not to have quitted the Punjab, and that if he had been at Lahore in the spring of 1848, the war would not then have been preci-

pitated by the rebellion of Moolraj, for "any one but a civilian would have foreseen that to send Vans Agnew and Anderson down to Mooltan at the time and in the manner selected was almost sure to produce an ebullition of feeling and violence." But if Calcutta Lawrence had not gone to England at that time, he would, in all human probability, have died; and though he might not have sent the same men to Mooltan, he would have sent a mission there for the same purpose. "I meant to have sent Arthur Cocks," was his remark to the present writer, when the disastrous news reached us in London. He saw at once that the Mooltanee revolt was but the prelude to a great national outbreak, and though his friends trembled for his safety and counselled delay, his strong sense of duty to the State overruled all personal considerations, and so he carried back his shattered frame and his inexhaustible energies to the scene of the coming conflict. Leaving London at the end of October, he reached Bombay early in December, and pushing up the Indus with characteristic rapidity of movement, joined the camp of General Whish, before the walls of Mooltan, two days after the great festival of Christmas.

On the second day of the new year, Whish, reinforced from Bombay, carried the city of Mooltan. Long and obstinate had been the resistance of the besieged; and now that our storming columns entered the breach, the garrison still, at the bayonet's point, showed the stuff of which they were made. Frightful had been the carnage during the siege. mangled bodies about the battered town bore ghastly witness to the terrible effects of the British ordnance. But many yet stood to be shot down or bayoneted in the streets; and the work of the besieging force was 1848.

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yet far from its close. Moolraj was in the citadel with some thousands of his best fighting-men; and the fort guns were plied as vigorously as before the capture of the town. The strength of this formidable fortress seemed to laugh our breaching batteries to Mining operations were, therefore, commenced; but carried on, as they were, beneath a constant discharge from our mortars, it seemed little likely that the enemy would wait to test the skill of the engineers. The terrible shelling to which the fortress was exposed dismayed the pent-up garrison. By the 21st of January they were reduced to the last extremity. Moolraj vainly endeavoured to rally his followers. Their spirit was broken. There was nothing left for them but to make a desperate sally and cut their way through the besiegers, or to surrender at once. The nobler alternative was rejected. Asking only for his own life and the honour of his women, Moolraj tendered on that day his submission to the British General. Whish refused to guarantee the first, but promised to protect the women; and on the following morning the garrison marched out of Mooltan, and Dewan Moolraj threw himself upon the mercy of the British Government.

Meanwhile, Henry Lawrence, having witnessed the fall of the city of Mooltan, hastened upwards to Ferozepore, conveyed to Lord Dalhousie the first welcome tidings of that event, took counsel with the Governor-General, made himself master of the great man's views, then hurried on to Lahore, communicated with the Resident, and on the same evening pushed on to the camp of the Commander-in-Chief, which he reached on the night of the 10th of January. He was there in no recognised official position, for Currie's tenure of office did not expire until the beginning of the ensuing

month; but he was ready for any kind of service, and he placed himself at Lord Gough's disposal, as an honorary aide-de-camp, or any other subordinate officer, in the fine army which was now stretching out before him.

Three days after Lawrence's arrival in camp the battle of Chillianwallah was fought. The time had arrived when a far less impetuous general than Gough might have deemed it incumbent on him to force the Sikh army into a general action. It is true that the final reduction of the fortress of Mooltan would have liberated a large portion of Whish's column, and greatly have added to the strength of the British army on the banks of the Jhelum. But the Sikh Sirdars, on this very account, were eager to begin the battle, and would not have suffered us to wait for our reinforcements. Gough already had a noble force under him, equal to any service. It was panting for action. There had been a lull of more than a month's duration, and all through India there was a feeling of impatience at the protracted delay. Gough, therefore, prepared for action. Ascertaining the nature of the country occupied by the Sikh army, and the position of their troops, he planned his attack upon sound tactical principles, and fully instructed his generals in the several parts which they were called upon to play. On the afternoon of the 13th everything was ready, and the battle was to have been commenced early on the following morning. But, unwilling to give the British General the long hours of the morrow's light, from daybreak to sunset, that he wanted, to fight his battle according to approved principles of modern warfare, the Sikh leaders, when the day was far spent, determined, if possible, to aggravate him into an immediate encounter. They

knew their man. So they advanced a few guns, and sent some round-shot booming in the direction of the British camp. The bait took. The warm Hibernian temperament of the British leader could not brook the insult. He moved up his heavy guns, responded with some chance shots at the invisible enemy, and then, there being little of the day left for his operations, gave the command for his line to advance.

The story of what followed has been often told, and it is not so gratifying a page of history that I need care to repeat it. Night closed upon the fearful carnage of that terrible engagement, and both armies claimed the victory. What it cost us is written in the Gazette. Never was an official bulletin received in England with a wilder outcry of pain and passion. The past services, the intrepid personal courage, the open honest character, the many noble qualities of the veteran Commander were forgotten in that burst of popular indignation, and hundreds of English families turned from the angry past to the fearful future, and trembled as they thought that the crowning action with that formidable enemy had yet to be fought by a General so rash, so headstrong, and so incompetent.

In the high places of Government there was universal discomposure, and the greatest military authority in the country shook his head with an ominous gesture of reproach. Then arose a wild cry for Napier. The conqueror of the Beloochees was sent out in hot haste to India to repair the mischief that had been done by Gough, and to finish off the war with the Sikhs in a proper workmanlike manner. But the hottest haste could not wholly annihilate time and space, and though this sudden supersession of the brave old chief, who had fought so many battles and

won so many victories, might shame his grey hairs, it could not bring the war to a more rapid or a more honourable close. The carnage of Chillianwallah shook for a time the confidence of the army in their chief, but it did not shake the courage of our fightingmen, or destroy their inherent capacity for conquest. It was a lesson, too, that must have scored itself into the very heart of the British chief, and made him a sadder man and a wiser commander. The errors of the 13th of January were to be atoned for by a victory which any leader might contemplate with pride, and any nation with gratitude. Scarcely had his appointed successor turned his back upon England when Gough fought another great battle, which neither Napier, nor Wellington himself, who talked of going in his place, could have surpassed in vigour of execution or completeness of effect.

Anxiously was intelligence of the surrender of Moolraj looked for in the camp of the Commanderin-Chief. Since that disastrous action at Chillianwallah, Gough had been entrenching his position, and waiting reinforcements from Mooltan. The surrender of that fortress set free some twelve thousand men, and Whish, with unlooked-for rapidity, marched to the banks of the Jhelum to swell the ranks of the grand army. A great crisis was now approaching. Thrice had the British and Sikh forces met each other on the banks of those classical rivers which had seen the triumphs of the Macedonian—thrice had they met each other only to leave the issue of the contest yet undecided. A great battle was now about to be fought-one differing from all that had yet been fought since the Sikhs first crossed the Sutlej, for a strange but not unlooked-for spectacle was about to present itself-Sikhs and Afghans, those old heredi-

tary enemies, fighting side by side against a common foe. The Sikh Sirdars, I have said, had been intriguing to secure the assistance of the Ameer of Cabool. For some time there appeared little likelihood that old Dost Mahomed, whose experience ought to have brought wisdom with it, would lend himself to a cause which, in spite of temporary successes, was so sure to prove hopeless in the end. But neither years, nor experience, nor adversity had taught him to profit by the lessons he had learned. The desire of repossessing himself of Peshawur was the madness of a life. The bait was thrown out to him, and he could not resist it. He came through the Khybur with an Afghan force, marched upon the Indus, and threatened Attock, which fell at his approach; despatched one of his sons to the camp of Shere Singh, and sent a body of Dourance troops to fight against his old Feringhee enemy, who for years had been the arbiter of his fate. How deplorable an act of senile fatuity it was, the events of the 21st of February must have deeply impressed upon his mind. On that day was fought an action—was gained a victory, in the emphatic words of the Governor-General, "memorable alike from the greatness of the occasion, and from the brilliant and decisive issue of the encounter. For the first time, Sikh and Afghan were banded together against the British power. was an occasion which demanded the putting forth of all the means at our disposal, and so conspicuous a manifestation of the superiority of our arms as should appal each enemy, and dissolve at once their compact by fatal proof of its futility. The completeness of the victory which has been won equals the highest hopes entertained." And there was no official exaggeration in this; none of the vain boasting of the interested

despatch-writer. At Goojrat, to which place the enemy had unexpectedly moved their camp, Lord Gough fought a great battle as a great battle ought to be fought, coolly and deliberately, by a British Commander. Every arm of his fine force was brought effectively into play; each in its proper place, each supporting and assisting the others, and each covering itself with glory. From the early dawn of that clear bright morning the cannonade commenced. Never had the Bengal Artillery made a nobler display; never had it been worked with more terrible effect. Resolute and well handled as was the Sikh army, it could not stand up against the steady fire of our guns. By noon the enemy were retreating in terrible disorder, "their position carried, their guns, ammunition, camp equipage, and baggage captured, their flying masses driven before their victorious pursuers, from mid-day receiving most severe punishment in their flight." And all this was accomplished with but little loss of life on the side of the victorious army. It pleased the Almighty that the bloody lessons of the Chenab and the Jhelum should not be thrown away.

A division under Sir Walter Gilbert, an officer of great personal activity, unequalled in the saddle, was ordered to follow up the success of Goojrat, and to drive the Afghans from the Punjab. And well did he justify the choice of his chief. By a series of rapid marches, scarcely excelled by any recorded in history, he convinced the enemy of the hopelessness of all further resistance. The Barukzye force fled before our advancing columns, and secured the passage of the Khybur before British influence could avail to close it against the fugitives. By the Sikhs themselves the game had clearly been played out. The

Khalsa was now quite broken. There was nothing left for Shere Singh and his associates but to trust themselves to the clemency of the British Government. On the 5th of March, the Rajah sent the British prisoners safely into Gilbert's camp. On the 8th, he appeared in person to make arrangements for the surrender of his followers; and on the 14th, the remnant of the Sikh army, some sixteen thousand men, including thirteen Sirdars of note, laid down their arms at the feet of the British General.

The military chief had now done his work, and it was time for the appearance of the Civil Governor on the scene. Lord Dalhousie was on the spot prepared for immediate action. Already was his portfolio weighty with a proclamation which was to determine the fate of the empire of Runjeet Singh. I do not suppose that a moment's doubt ever obscured the clear, unsullied surface of the Governor-General's resolution. It was a case which suggested no misgivings and prompted no hesitation. The Sikhs had staked everything on the issue of the war, and they had lost it in fair fight. They had repaid by acts of treachery and violence the forbearance and moderation of the British Government. We had tried to spare them; but they would not be spared. First one course, then another, had been adopted in the hope that eventually a strong native Government might be established, able to control its own subjects, and willing to live on terms of friendly alliance with its neighbours. Our policy had from the first been wholly unaggressive. There was no taint of avarice or ambition in it. But it had not been appreciated; it had not been successful. The whole system had collapsed. And now that again a British ruler was called upon to solve the great problem of the Future of the

Punjab, he felt that there was no longer any middle course open to him; that there was but one measure applicable to the crisis that had arisen; and that measure was the annexation of the country to the territories of the British Empire. So a Proclamation was issued announcing that the kingdom founded by Runjeet Singh had passed under British rule; and the wisdom and righteousness of the edict few men are disposed to question.

1849.

The last Sikh Durbar was held at Lahore. The March 29, fiat of the British conqueror was read aloud, in the presence of the young Maharajah, to the remnant of the chiefs who had not committed themselves by open rebellion; and a paper of Terms was then produced by which the British Government bound themselves to pay the annual sum of forty or fifty thousand pounds to the boy-Prince and his family,* so long as he should remain faithful to his new master and abide by his sovereign will. It was a happy change for Duleep Singh, born as he was for the Sikh shambles; for in his new state he had abundant wealth, perfect safety, freedom from all care, and the insurpassable blessing of a saving faith. Becoming, in his twelfth year, the ward of the Governor-General, he was placed under the immediate tutelage of an Assistant-Surgeon of the Bengal Army, t who was so fit a man for the office, so worthy of the confidence reposed in him, that the little Sikh Prince, under his wise ministrations, developed into a Christian gentleman, an English courtier, and a Scotch laird. And it may be recorded here, before I pass on to the history of British rule in the Punjab, that the mother

^{*} This is not the loose diction of doubt. The agreement was, that the British Government should pay not the lakes of rupees.

† Afterwards Sir John Login.

1849. of Duleep Singh, the widow of old Runjeet, that restless, turbulent Chund Kowr, whose intrigues did so much to precipitate the fall of the Sikh Empire, after a series of strange romantic vicissitudes, prematurely old, well-nigh blind, broken and subdued in spirit, found a resting-place at last under the roof of her son, in a quiet corner of an English castle, and died in a London suburb.

1349. ministran of the njab.

The Proclamation which turned the Punjab into a British province was not the only weighty Statepaper in the portfolio of the Governor-General. Whilst Gough had been preparing to strike the last crushing blow at the military power of the Khalsa, Dalhousie, with Henry Elliot at his elbow, never doubting the issue, was mapping out the scheme of administration under which it seemed good to him to govern the country which was about to pass under our rule. The crowning victory of Goojrat found everything devised and prepared to the minutest detail. The men were ready; the measures were defined. There was no hurry, therefore-no confusion. Every one fell into his appointed place, and knew what he had to do. And never had any Governor better reason to place unbounded confidence in the men whom he employed; never was any Governor more worthily served.

The country which had thus fallen by right of conquest into our hands embraced an area of fifty thousand square miles, and contained a population of four millions of inhabitants. These inhabitants were Hindoos, Mahomedans, and Sikhs. The last were a new people—a sect of reformed Hindoos, of a purer faith than the followers of the Brahminical superstitions. It was a Sikh Government that we

had supplanted; and mainly a Sikh army that we had conquered; but it must not be supposed that Punjabee is synonimous with Sikh, that the country was peopled from one end to the other with the followers of Nanuk and Govind, or that they were the ancient dwellers on the banks of those five legendary The cities of the Punjab were Mahomedan cities; cities founded, perhaps, ere Mahomed arose, enlarged and beautified by the followers of the Ghuz-The monuments were mainly Mahomedan monuments, with traces here and there of Grecian occupation and Bactrian rule. Before Delhi had risen into the imperial city of the Moguls, Lahore had been the home of Indian kings. But the rise of the Sikh power was cotemporaneous with our own, and the apostles of the new Reformation had not numbered among their converts more than a section of the people. And as was the population, so was the country itself, of a varied character. Tracts of rich cultivated lands, the corn-field and the rosegarden, alternated with the scorched plain and the sandy desert. Here, as far as the eye could reach, a dreary level of jungle and brushwood; there, a magnificent panorama, bounded by the blue ranges and the snowy peaks of the Himalayah. And ever the great rivers as they flowed suggested to the cultured mind of the English scholar thoughts of that grand old traditionary age, when Porus fought, and Alexander conquered, and Megasthenes wrote, and the home-sick Argive, on the banks of those fabulous streams, sighed for the pleasant country he had left, and rebelled against his leader and his fate. It was a country full of interest and full of opportunity; and it grew at once into the pet province of the

1849. British Viceroy, the youngest and the most hopeful of all.

That a country so situated, so circumstanced, and so peopled, should not be brought under the system of administration prevailing in our long-settled provinces was a mere matter of course. But Dalhousie had no disposition to rush into the opposite extreme of a purely military government. He had at no time of his career any class prejudices, and he did not see why soldiers and civilians should not work harmoniously together in the administrative agency of the province. He had faith in both; each in his appointed place; for there was rough soldiers' work to be done, and much also that needed the calm judgment and the tutored eye of the experienced civilian. (So he called in the aid of a mixed Staff of civil and military officers, and at the head of this he placed a Board of Administration, presided over by Henry Lawrence.* \

The Board was to consist of three members, with secretaries to do the pen-work of the administration, and to scatter its instructions among the subordinate functionaries of the province. It was not a controlling authority which a man of Dalhousie's stamp was likely to affect; scarcely, indeed, could he be supposed to tolerate it. But he could not set aside the great claims of Henry Lawrence, nor, indeed, could he safely dispense with his services in such a conjuncture; yet he was unwilling to trust to that honest, pure-minded, soldier-statesman the sole direction of affairs. The fact is that, with a refinement of the justice and moderation which were such conspicuous features of Henry's character, he dissented from the

^{*} Sir Frederick Currie had by this time resumed his scat in the Supreme Council of India.

policy of annexation. He thought that another effort might have been made to save the Sikh Empire from destruction. Out of this difficulty arose the project of the Board. It was natural that Dalhousie should have desired to associate with one thus minded some other statesman whose views were more in harmony with his own. A Board of two is, under no circumstances, a practicable institution; so a Triumvirate was established. But sentence of death was written down against it from the very hour of its birth.

The second seat at the Board was given to the President's brother, John Lawrence. An officer of the Company's Civil Service, he had achieved a high reputation as an administrator; as one of those hardworking, energetic, conscientious servants of the State, who live ever with the harness on their back, to whom labour is at once a duty and a delight, who do everything in a large unstinting way, the Ironsides of the Public Service. He had taken, in the earlier stages of his career, an active part in the Revenue Settlement of the North-Western Provinces, and had subsequently been appointed Magistrate of the great imperial city of Delhi, with its crowded, turbulent population, and its constant under-current of hostile intrigue. In this post, winning the confidence of men of all classes and all creeds, Lord Hardinge found him when, in 1845, he journeyed upwards to join the army of the Sutlej. There was an openness, a frankness about him that pleased the old soldier, and a large-hearted zeal and courage which proclaimed him a man to be employed in a post of more than common difficulty, beyond the circle of ordinary routine. So, after the campaign on the Sutlej, when the Jullindur Doab was taken in part payment of the charges of the war, John Lawrence was appointed to superintend the administration of

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that tract of country; and on more than one occasion, during the enforced absence of Henry from Lahore, in the first two years of the British Protectorate, he had occupied his brother's seat at the capital, and done his work with unvaried success. That there were great characteristic differences between the two Lawrences will be clearly indicated as I proceed; but in unsullied honesty and intrepid manliness, they were the counterparts of each other. Both were equally without a stain.

The third member of the Lahore Board of Administration was Mr. Charles Grenville Mansel, also a covenanted civilian, who had earned a high reputation as one of the ablest financiers in India, and who supplied much of the knowledge and experience which his colleagues most lacked. His honesty was of as fine a temper as theirs, but he was a man rather of thought than of action; and wanted the constitutional robustness of his associates in office. Perhaps his very peculiarities, rendering him, as it were, the complement of the other two, especially marked him out as the third of that remarkable triumvirate. Regarded as a whole, with reference to the time and circumstances of its creation, the Board could not have been better constituted. It did honour to the sagacity of Lord Dalhousic, and fully justified the choice of agents he had made.

The system was one of divided labour and common responsibility. On Henry Lawrence devolved what was technically called the "political" work of the Government. The disarming of the country, the negotiations with the chiefs, the organisation of the new Punjabee regiments, the arrangements for the education of the young Maharajah, who had now become the ward of the British Government, were among

the immediate duties to which he personally devoted himself; the chief care of John Lawrence was the civil administration, especially the settlement of the Land Revenue; whilst Mansel superintended the general judicial management of the province; each, however, aiding the others with his advice, and having a potential voice in the general Council. Under these chief officers were a number of subordinate administrators of different ranks, drawn partly from the civil and partly from the military service of the Company. The province was divided into seven divisions, and to each of these divisions a Commissioner was appointed. Under each of these Commissioners were certain Deputy-Commissioners, varying in number according to the amount of business to be done; whilst under them again were Assistant-Commissioners and Extra Assistants, drawn from the uncovenanted servants of

Government-Europeans, Indo-Britons, or natives of

pure descent.

The officers selected for the principal posts under the Lahore Board of Administration were the very flower of the Indian services. Dalhousie had thrown his whole heart into the work which lay before him. Resolved that it should not be marred by the inefficiency of his agents, he looked about him for men of mark and likelihood, men in the vigour of their years, men of good performance for the higher posts, and sturdy, eager-spirited youths of good promise for the lower. It mattered not to him whether the good stuff were draped in civil black or military red. Far above all petty prejudices of that kind, the Governor-General swept up his men with an eye only to the work that was in them, and sent them forth to do his bidding. Some had already graduated in Punjabee administration under the Protectorate: others crossed

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the Sutlei for the first time with honours taken under Thomason and his predecessors in the North-West Provinces. And among them were such men as George Edmonstone, Donald Macleod, and Robert Montgomery from the one service; Frederick Mackeson and George Macgregor from the other; such men, besides those already named,* as Richard Temple, Edward Thornton, Neville Chamberlain, George Barnes, Lewin Bowring, Philip Goldney, and Charles Saunders; soldiers and civilians working side by side, without a feeling of class jealousy, in the great work of reconstructing the administration of the Punjab and carrying out the executive details; whilst at the head of the department of Public Works was Robert Napier, in whom the soldier and the man of science met together to make one of the finest Engineer officers in the world.

They found much to do, but little to undo. The Government of Runjeet Singh had been of a rude, simple, elementary character; out of all rule; informal; unconstitutional; unprincipled; one great despotism and a number of petty despotisms; according to our English notions, reeking with the most "frightful injustice." But somehow or other it had answered the purpose. The injustice was intelligible injustice, for it was simply that of the strong will and the strong hand crushed down in turn by one still stronger. Petty governors, revenue-farmers, or kardars might oppress the people and defraud the State, but they knew that, sooner or later, a day of reckoning would come when their accounts would be audited by the process of compulsory disgorgement,

* Ante, p. 12. I have here named Others there were, appointed at a only those distinguished during the later period, equally entitled to ho-

earlier period of our Punjabee career. nourable mention.

or in some parts of the country settled in the noose of the proconsular gibbet. No niceties of conscience and no intricacies of law opposed an obstacle to these summary adjustments. During the existence of that great fiction the Council of Regency, we had begun to systematise and to complicate affairs; and as we had found-at least, as far as we understood the mattera clear field for our experiments, we now, on assuming undisguisedly the administration of the country, had a certain basis of our own to operate upon, and little or nothing to clear away.

The system of administration now introduced into the Punjab, formal and precise as it may have been when compared with the rude simplicity of the old Sikh Government, was loose and irregular in comparison with the strict procedure of the Regulation Provinces. The administrators, whether soldiers or civilians, were limited to the discharge of no particular departmental functions. They were judges, revenue-collectors, thief-catchers, diplomatists, conservancy officers, and sometimes recruiting serjeants and chaplains, all in one. Men trained in such a school as this, and under such masters as the Lawrences, became equal to any fortune, and in no conjuncture, however critical, were ever likely to fail. There was hardly one among them who did not throw his whole heart into his work; who ever thought of ease, or leisure, or any personal enjoyment beyond that which comes from an honest sense of duty done. They lived among the people of the country, their tents open to all the points of the compass;* and

* Sir John Malcolm used to say that the only way to govern the people of a newly-acquired country was by means of char durwaseh kolah, tent is the proper home of him who tent is the proper home of him who loves his duties and his people. Thus he comes to know and be known of

or four doors open. That the Pun-.jabee officials well understood this.

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And so, far sooner than even sanguine men ventured to predict, the Punjab began to settle down under its new rulers. Even the old Khalsa fightingmen accepted their position, and with a manly resignation looking cheerfully at the inevitable, confessed that they had been beaten in fair fight, and submitted themselves to the English conqueror. Some were enlisted into the new Punjabee Irregular Regiments, which were raised for the internal defence of the province. Others betook themselves, with the pensions or gratuities which were bestowed upon them, to their fields, and merged themselves into the agricultural population. There was no fear of any resurrection of the old national cause. For whilst the people were forced to surrender all their weapons of war-their guns, their muskets, their bayonets, their sabres, their spears—the whole province was bristling with British An immense military force was maintained in the Punjab. It was a happy circumstance that, as the Indus had now become our boundary and the country of the Sikhs our frontier province, it was necessary for purposes of external defence, after the apparent settling down of our newly-acquired territories, still to keep our regular troops, European and native, at a strength more than sufficient to render utterly harmless all the turbulent elements of Punjabee society. Had the British army been withdrawn

them; thus personal influence and local knowledge give him a power not to be won by bribes or upheld by bayonets. The notables of the neighbourhood meet their friend and ruler on his morning march; greybeards throng round his unguarded door with presents of the best fruits of the land, or a little sugar, spices,

and almonds, according to the fashion of their country, and are never so happy as when allowed to seat themselves on the carpet and talk over old times and new events—the promise of the harvest and the last orders of the rulers."—Calcutta Review, vol. xxxiii.

from the Punjab, as at a later period it was from Oude, it is hard to say what might not have resulted from our confidence and incaution.

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On the acquisition of a new country and the extinction of an old dynasty, it has commonly happened that the chief sufferers by the revolution have been found among the aristocracy of the land. The great masses of the people have been considerately, indeed generously treated, but the upper classes have been commonly prostrated by the annexing hand, and have never recovered from the blow. This may be partly attributed to what is so often described as the "inevitable tendency" of such a change from a bad to a good government. It has been assumed that the men whom we have found in the enjoyment of all the privileges of wealth and social position, have risen to this eminence by spoliation and fraud, and maintained it by cruelty and oppression. And it is true that the antecedents of many of them would not bear a very jealous scrutiny. Now, so far as the substitution of a strong and pure for a weak and corrupt government must necessarily have checked the prosperous career of those who were living on illicit gains and tyrannous exactions, it was, doubtless, the inevitable tendency of the change to injure, if not to ruin them, as the leaf must perish when the stem dies. But it must be admitted that for some years past the idea of a native aristocracy had been an abomination in the eyes of English statesmen in India; that we had desired to see nothing between the Sircar, or Government, and the great masses of the people; and that, however little we might have designed it, we had done some great wrongs to men, whose misfortune, rather than whose fault, it was that they were the growth of a corrupt system. There was at the bottom of this a

strong desire for the welfare of the people—an eager and a generous longing to protect the weak against the tyranny of the strong; but benevolence, like ambition, sometimes overleaps itself, and falls prostrate on the other side, and out of our very love of justice come sometimes unjust deeds.

To the great chiefs of the Punjab the annexation of the country to the British Empire was a source of sore disquietude.* Mercy to the vanquished in the hour of victory was not one of the weaknesses they had been accustomed to contemplate. They had played for a great stake, and they had lost. They had brought their losses on themselves. They had invited by their own acts the conflict which had ruined them. In no one instance had our policy been aggressive. We had not coveted the possession of the Punjab. We had not invited either the first or the second great conflict between the British and the Sikh armies. A brave nation fighting for its independence is one of the noblest spectacles of humanity; and the leaders of such a movement have just claim to sympathy and respect. But these men had risen against us whilst they pretended to be our friends. They had soiled their patriotism by treachery, and forfeited their honour by falsehood and deceit. Still, to a man of large mind and catholic spirit like Henry Lawrence, it could not seem right to judge these Sirdars as he would the

thusiasm, cannot return to the ordinary level of society and the common occupations of life without feeling some discontent and some enmity against their powerful but humane conquerors. But it is pre-bable that the mass of the people will advance in material prosperity and in moral elevation under the influence of British rule."

^{*} This was admitted in the first Punjab Report, the following passage of which may be advantageously quoted:—"A great revolution cannot happen without injuring some classes. When a State falls, its nobility and its supporters must to some extent suffer with it; a dominant sect and party once moved by political ambition and religious en-

flower of European chivalry. So he dealt gently with their offences; and when he came to consider their position under the new Government, he respected their fallen fortunes, and laid a lighter hand upon their tenures than higher authority was altogether willing to sanction. That a large portion of the revenue would be alienated by grants to military chiefs and to priestly sinecurists was certain; not less certain did it appear that the money might be better bestowed. Still, it might be politic, even in a financial aspect, to tolerate for a time abuses of this kind, as not the most expensive means of reconciling the influential classes to our rule. argued Henry Lawrence. So these privileged classes received from him, in many instances, though not all. that he wished to give, more perhaps than they had dared to expect. Existing incumbents were generally respected; and the privileges enjoyed by one generation were to be only partially resumed in the next.

Thus, by a well-apportioned mixture of vigour and clemency, the submission, if not the acquiescence, of the more dangerous classes was secured; and our administrators were left, undisturbed by the fear of internal revolt, to prosecute their ameliorative measures. It would be beyond the scope of such a narrative as this to write in detail of the operations which were carried out, under the Lahore Board, at once to render British rule a blessing to the people, and the possession of the Punjab an element of strength and security to the British Empire. These great victories of peace are reserved for others to record. That the measures were excellent, that the men were even better than the measures, that the administration of the Punjab was a great fact, at which Englishmen pointed with pride and on which

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1849. foreigners dwelt with commendation, is freely admitted, even by those who are not wont to see much that is good in the achievements of the British Government in India. Under the fostering care of the Governor-General, who traversed the country from one end to the other, and saw everything with his own eyes, the "Punjab system" became the fashion, and men came to speak and to write of it as though it were a great experiment in government originated by Lord Dalhousie. But it was not a new system. It had been tried long years before, with marked success, and was still in force in other parts of India, though it had never been carried out on so large a scale, or in so fine a country, or been the darling of a viceroy. The only novelty in the construction of the administration was the Lahore Board, and that was abandoned as a failure.

I do not say that it was a failure; but it was so regarded by Lord Dalhousie, who, in 1853, remorselessly signed its death-warrant. A delicate operation, indeed, was the breaking up of the Punjabee Cabinet and the erection of an autocracy in its place. the will of the Governor-General that the chief direction of affairs should be consigned to the hands, not of many, but of one. And when the rumour of this resolution went abroad, there was scarcely a house, or a bungalow, or a single-poled tent occupied by an English officer, in which the future of the Punjabthe question of the Lawrences-was not eagerly discussed. Was Henry or was John Lawrence to remain supreme director of affairs? So much was to be said in favour of the great qualities of each brother, that it was difficult to arrive at any anticipatory solution of the question. But it was in the

character of the Governor-General himself that the key to the difficulty should have been sought. Lord Hardinge would have chosen Henry Lawrence. Lord Dalhousie chose John. No surprise is now expressed that it was so; for, in these days, the character and policy of Dalhousie are read by the broad light of history. No regret is now felt that it was so; for, when the great hurricane of which I am about to write swept over India, each of those two great brothers was, by God's providence, found in his right place. But there were many at the time who grieved that the name of Henry Lawrence, who had been for so many years associated with all their thoughts of British influence in the Sikh country, and who had paved the way to all our after successes, was to be expunged from the list of Punjabee administrators. It was said that he sympathised overmuch with the fallen state of Sikhdom, and sacrificed the revenue to an idea; that he was too eager to provide for those who suffered by our usurpation; whilst Dalhousie, deeming that the balance-sheet would be regarded as the great test and touchstone of success, was eager to make the Punjab pay. John Lawrence, it was said, better understood the art of raising a revenue. He was willing, in his good brotherly heart, to withdraw from the scene in favour of Henry; but the Governor-General needed his services. So he was appointed Chief-Commissioner of the Punjab, and a new theatre was found for the exercise of Henry Lawrence's more chivalrous benevolence among the ancient states of Rajpootana.

Outwardly, authoritatively, and not untruthfully, the explanation was, that the work of the soldier-statesman was done, that the transition-period in which 1853.

Henry Lawrence's services were so especially needed had passed; that the business of internal administration was principally such as comes within the range of the civil officer's duties; and that a civilian with large experience, especially in revenue matters, was needed to direct all the numerous details of the Executive Government. Dalhousie never liked the Board. It was not a description of administrative agency likely to find favour in his eyes; and it is not impossible that he placed, with some reluctance, at the head of it a man who had not approved the original policy of annexation. But he could not have read Henry Lawrence's character so badly as to believe for a moment that, on that account, the policy once accomplished, he could have been less eager for its success, or less zealous in working it out. There was the indication, however, of a fundamental difference of opinion, which as time advanced became more and more apparent, for Henry's generous treatment of his fallen enemies came from that very source of enlarged sympathy which rendered the policy of annexation distasteful to him. (It was natural, therefore, that the Governor-General, who had resolved to rid himself of the Board on the first fitting opportunity, should have selected as the agent of his pet policy, the administrator of his pet province, the civilian who concurred with, rather than the soldier who dissented from, his views. The fitting opportunity came at last, for there was a redistribution of some of the higher political offices;* and Dalhousie then

* The Hyderabad Residency was

bered) that either he or his brother should be sent to Hyderabad. Lord about to be vacated. It was an should be sent to Hyderabad. Lord office that had been held by Sir Dalhousie, however, sent General Charles Metcalfe and other eminent Low to the Court of the Nizam, and men. I believe that Henry Law-rence suggested (for the days of the Board had been for some time num-vernor-General's agent in Rajpootana.

swept away the obnoxious institution, and placed the administration of the Punjab in the hands of a single man.

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Henry Lawrence bowed to the decision, but was not reconciled to it. He betook himself to his new duties a sadder and a wiser man. He did not slacken in good service to the State; but he never again had the same zest for his work. Believing that he had been unfairly and ungratefully treated, he had no longer his old confidence in his master, and as the Dalhousie policy developed itself, under the ripening influence of time, he saw more clearly that he was not one to find favour in the eyes of the Governor-General. Much that he had before but dimly seen and partly understood now became fully revealed to him in the clear light of day. Once, and once only, there was any official conflict; but Henry Lawrence saw much that whilst he deplored he could not avert, and he sighed to think that his principles were out of date and his politics out of fashion.

In the mean while, John Lawrence reigned in the Punjab. The capacity for administration, which he had evinced as a Member of the Board, had now free scope for exercise, and was soon fully developed. His name became great throughout the land, and he deserved the praise that was lavished upon him. Right or wrong he did all in accordance with the faith that was in him. He was a fitting agent of Dalhousie's policy, only because he believed in that policy. And happily the greater part of his work lay along the straight road of undebatable beneficence. How he worked, day after day, early and late, and how all men worked under him, is a history now well known. He was emphatically a man without a weakness. Strong himself, bone and muscle, head and heart, of

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adamantine strength, that would neither bend nor break, he expected others to be equally strong. They sighed, perhaps they inwardly protested, but they knew that the work he exacted from them he gave, in his own person, unstintingly to the State; and they could not regard as a hard task-master one who tasked himself hardest of all. From moral infirmities of all kinds he appeared to be equally free. He did not even seem to be ambitious. Men said that he had no sentiment, no romance. We so often judge our neighbours wrongly in this, that I hesitate to adopt the opinion; but there was an intense reality about him such as I have never seen equalled. seemed to be continually toiling onwards, upwards, as if life were not meant for repose, with the grand princely motto, "I serve," inscribed in characters of light on his forehead. He served God as unceasingly as he served the State; and set before all his countrymen in the Punjab the true pattern of a Christian gentleman.

And it was not thrown away. The Christian character of British administration in the Punjab has ever been one of its most distinguishing features. It is not merely that great humanising measures were pushed forward with an alacrity most honourable to a Christian nation—that the moral elevation of the people was continually in the thoughts of our administrators; but that in their own personal characters they sought to illustrate the religion which they professed. Wherever two or three were gathered together, the voice of praise and prayer went up from the white man's tent. It had been so during the Protectorate, when, in the wildest regions and in the most stirring times, men like the Lawrences, Reynell Taylor, and Herbert Edwardes, never forgot the

Christian Sabbath.* And now that peace and order reigned over the country, Christianity asserted itself more demonstratively, and Christian churches rose at our bidding. There was little or none, too, of that great scandal which had made our names a hissing and a reproach in Afghanistan. Our English officers, for the most part, lived pure lives in that heathen land; and private immorality under the administration of John Lawrence grew into a grave public offence.

And so the Punjab administration flourished under Conquest of the Chief-Commissioner and his assistants of and the Pegu. active mind of Lord Dalhousie was enabled to direct itself to new objects. Already, far down on the south-eastern boundary of our empire—at the point farthest removed of all from the great country whose destinies we have been considering—the seeds of war had been sown broad-cast. Ever since 1826, when the first contest with Ava had been brought to a close by the surrender to the English of certain tracts of country in which no Englishman could live, our relations with the Burmese had been on an unsatisfactory footing. In truth, they were altogether a very unsatisfactory people; arrogant and pretentious, blind to reason, and by no means anxious to manifest their

appreciation of the nice courtesies of diplomatic in-

was sufficiently a Christian to be admitted to swell the two or three into three or four.

^{*} Many will remember that delightful little story, so pleasantly told in Edwardes's "Year on the Punjab Frontier," of Reynell Taylor's invitation to prayer on a Sunday morning in February, 1818, and of the question whether the half-caste colonel, "John Holmes," who had "always attended prayers at Peshawur" in George Lawrence's house.

[†] On the abolition of the Board, Mr. Montgomery, who had succeeded Mr. Mausel as third member, became Judicial Commissioner, and Mr. Macleod was appointed Financial Commissioner.

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To find just cause, according to European 1849. tercourse. notions, for chastising these people would at any time have been easy. But their insolence did us very little We could tolerate, without loss of credit or of prestige, the discourtesies of a barbarian Government on the outskirts of civilisation. An insult on the banks of the Irrawaddy was very different from an insult on the banks of the Jumna. The Princes and chiefs of India knew nothing and cared nothing about our doings far out beyond the black waters of the Bay of Bengal. But at last these discourtesies culminated in an outrage which Lord Dalhousie thought it became the British Government to resent. Whether, under more discreet management, redress might have been obtained and war averted, it is now of little moment to inquire. (A sea-captain was appointed to conduct our diplomacy at Rangoon, and he conducted it successfully to a rupture. A war ensued to which the future historian of India may devote a not very inviting chapter, but its details have nothing to do with the story of this book. English arms were triumphant, and the province of Pegu lay at our Dalhousie annexed it to the British Empire, "in order that the Government of India might hold from the Burmese State both adequate compensation for past injury, and the best security against future danger." Thus did the British Empire, which had so recently been extended to the north-west, stretch itself out to the south-east; and the white man sat himself down on the banks of the Irrawaddy as he had seated himself on the banks of the Indus. There were not wanting those who predicted that the whole of Burmah would soon become British territory, and that then the "uncontrollable principle," by reference to which a great English statesman justified the

seizure of Sindh, would send the English conqueror to grope his way through the Shan States and Siam to Cochin-China. But these apprehensions were groundless. The administrator began his work in Pegu, as he had begun his work in the Punjab, and there was no looking beyond the frontier; but, on the other hand, a desire to avoid border disputes, or, if they could not be avoided, to treat them as matters of light account, inevitable and soon to be forgotten. There was a military officer, admirably fitted for the work, who had served long and successfully, as a civil administrator, in Arracan; who knew the Burmese language and the Burmese people, and had a great name along the eastern coast. Those isolated regions beyond the Bay of Bengal are the grave of all catholic fame. Whilst the name of Lawrence was in all men's mouths, Phayre was pursuing the even tenor of his way, content with a merely local reputa-But the first, and as I write the only commissioner of Pegu, is fairly entitled to a place in the very foremost rank of those English administrators who have striven to make our rule a blessing to the people of India, and have not failed in the attempt.

In India the native mind readily pervades vast distances, and takes little account of space that the foot can travel. But it is bewildered and confused by the thought of the "black water." The unknown is the illimitable. On the continent of India, therefore, neither our war-successes nor our peace-successes in the Burmese country stirred the heart of Indian society. In the lines of the Sepoy or the shops of the money-changer they were not matters of eager interest and voluble discourse. We might have sacked the cities of Ava and Amarapoora, and caused their sovereign lord to be trodden to death by one of his

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1849. white elephants without exciting half the interest engendered by a petty outbreak in Central India, or the capture of a small fort in Bundelkund. The Princes and chiefs of the great continent of Hindostan knew little and cared less about a potentate, however magnificent in his own dominions, who neither worshipped their gods nor spoke their language, and who was cut off from their brotherhood by the intervention of the great dark sea. We gained no honour, and we lost no confidence, by the annexation of this outlying province; but it opened to our Native Soldiery a new field of service, and unfortunately it was beyond the seas.



CHAPTER II.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF LORD DALHOUSIE-ADOPTION-THE "RIGHT OF LAPSE"-SATTARAH-NAGPORE-JHANSI-KEROWLEE-THE CARNATIC-TANJORE-THE CASE OF THE PEISHWAH-DUNDOO PURT, NAMA SAHIB-SUMBHULPORE.

So, three years after his arrival in India, Dalhousie 1848-1856. had brought to a close two great military campaigns, and had captured two great provinces. He had then done with foreign wars; his after-career was one of peaceful invasion.) Ere long there was a word which came to be more dreaded than that of Conquest. The native mind is readily convinced by the inexorable logic of the sword. There is no appeal from such arbitration. To be invaded and to be conquered is a state of things appreciable by the inhabitant of India. It is his "kismut;" his fate; God's will. One stronger than he cometh and taketh all that he hath. arc, however, manifest compensations. His religion is not invaded; his institutions are not violated. Life is short, and the weak man, patient and philosophical, is strong to endure and mighty to wait. But LAPSE . is a dreadful and an appalling word; for it pursues the victim beyond the grave. Its significance in his eyes is nothing short of eternal condemnation.

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"The son," says the great Hindoo lawgiver, "delivers his father from the hell called Put." are, he tells us, different kinds of sons; there is the son begotten; the son given; the son by adoption; and other filial varieties. It is the duty of the son to perform the funeral obsequies of the father. If they be not performed, it is believed that there is no resurrection to eternal bliss. The right of adoption is, therefore, one of the most cherished doctrines of Hindooism. In a country where polygamy is the rule, it might be supposed that the necessity of adopting another man's offspring, for the sake of these ceremonial ministrations, or for the continuance of an ancestral name, would be one of rare occurrence. But all theory on the subject is belied by the fact that the Princes and chiefs of India more frequently find themselves, at the close of their lives, without the solace of male offspring than with it. The Zenana is not an institution calculated to lengthen out a direct line of Princes. The alternative of adoption is one, therefore, to which there is frequent resort; it is a source of unspeakable comfort in life and in death; and politically it is as dear to the heart of a nation as it is personally to the individual it affects.

It is with the question of Adoption only in its political aspects that I have to do in this place. There is a private and personal, as there is a public and political, side to it. No power on earth beyond a man's own will can prevent him from adopting a son, or can render that adoption illegal if it be legally performed. But to adopt a son as a successor to private property is one thing, to adopt an heir to titular dignities and territorial sovereignty is another. Without the consent of the Paramount State no adoption

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of the latter kind can be valid. Whether in this case 1948-1856 of a titular Prince or a possessor of territorial rights, dependent upon the will of the Government, Hindooism is satisfied by the private adoption and the penalties of the sonless state averted, is a question for the pundits to determine; but no titular chief thinks the adoption complete unless he can thereby transmit his name, his dignities, his rights and privileges to his successor, and it can in no wise be said that the son takes the place of his adoptive father if he does not inherit the most cherished parts of that father's possessions.

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But whether the religious element does or does not rightly enter into the question of political adoptions, nothing is more certain than that the right, in this larger political sense, was ever dearly prized by the Hindoos, and was not alienated from them by the Lords-Paramount who had preceded us. perial recognition was required, and it was commonly paid for by a heavy "nuzzurana," or succession-duty, but in this the Mogul rulers were tolerant. Ut was reserved for the British to substitute for the right of adoption what was called "the right of lapse," and in default of male heirs of the body lawfully begotten to absorb native principalities into the great amalgam of our British possessions.\" In 1849," wrote Lord Dalhousie, in his elaborate farewell minute, "the principality of Sattarah was included in the British dominions by right of lapse, the Rajah having died without male heir." The Princes of Sattarah were the descendants of Sevajie, the founder and the head of the Mahratta Empire. Their power and their glory had alike departed. But they were still great in tradition, and were looked up to with respect by the

Mahrattas of Western India. In April, 1848, the last Rajah died; * and a question arose as to whether, no direct male heir of the body having been left by the deceased, a son by adoption, or a collateral member of the family; should be permitted to succeed him, or whether the rights and titles of the principality should be declared to be extinct, Sir George Clerk was then Governor of Bombay. He looked at the Treaty of 1819; saw that "the British Government agreed to ' cede in perpetual sovereignty to the Rajah of Sattarah, his heirs and successors," the territories which he had 11 held, and at once declared himself in favour of the continuance of the native Raj. The members of his Council looked upon the question as purely one of expediency, and considered it the duty of the British Government to decide it in the manner most advantageous to ourselves. I But the Governor refused to admit any secondary considerations, saying, "If it be inconsistent with justice to refuse confirmation to the act of adoption, it is useless to inquire whether it is better for the interests of the people or of the empire at large to govern the Sattarah territories through the medium of a native Rajah, or by means of our own administration." The trumpet of that statesman was

When this question first arose, the Governor-General was in his novitiate. But new as he was to the consideration of such subjects, he does not appear to have faltered or hesitated. The opinions, the practical expression of which came subsequently to be called

not likely to give an uncertain sound,

Appa Suhib. He had succeeded his brother, who in 1839

creditable. It is worthy of remark, that Sir Robert Grant, being satisfied was deposed, and, as I think, very of the Rajah's guilt, proposed to rightly, on account of a series of punish him in the manner least intrigues against the British Golikely to be advantageous to ourvernment, equally foolish and dis-

the "policy of annexation," were formed at the very outset of his career, and rigidly maintained to its Eight months after his first assumption of the close. Government of India, he placed on record a confession of faith elicited by this agitation of the Sattarah question. Subsequent events of far greater magnitude dwarfed that question in the public mind, and later utterances of the great minute-writer caused this first manifesto to be comparatively forgotten; but a peculiar interest must ever be associated with this earliest exposition of Dalhousie's political creed, and therefore I give it in the words of the statesman himself: "The Government," he wrote on the 30th of April, 1848, "is bound in duty, as well as policy, to act on every such occasion with the purest integrity, and in the most scrupulous observance of good faith. Where even a shadow of doubt can be shown, the claim should at once be abandoned. But where the right to territory by lapse is clear, the Government is bound to take that which is justly and legally its due, and to extend to that territory the benefits of our sovereignty, present and prospective. In like manner, while I would not seek to lay down any inflexible rule with respect to adoption, I hold that, on all occasions, where heirs natural shall fail, the territory should be made to lapse, and adoption should not be permitted, excepting in those cases in which some strong political reason may render it expedient to depart from this general rule. There may be conflict of opinion as to the advantage or the propriety of extending our already vast possessions beyond their present limits. (No man can more sincerely deprecate than I do any extension of the . frontiers of our territory which can be avoided, or which may not become indispensably necessary from

considerations of our own safety, and of the maintenance of the tranquillity of our provinces.) But I cannot conceive it possible for any one to dispute the policy of taking advantage of every just opportunity which presents itself for consolidating the territories that already belong to us, by taking possession of States that may lapse in the midst of them; for thus getting rid of these petty intervening principalities, which may be made a means of annoyance, but which can never, I venture to think, be a source of strength, for adding to the resources of the public Treasury, and for extending the uniform application of our system of government to those whose best interests, we sincerely believe, will be promoted thereby. Such is the general principle that, in our humble opinion, ought to guide the conduct of the British Government in its disposal of independent States, where there has been a total failure of heirs whatsoever, or where permission is asked to continue by adoption a succession which fails in the natural line."

The Court of Directors of the East India Company confirmed the decision of the Governor-General, and Sattarah was annexed. There were men, however, in the Direction who protested against the measure as an act of unrighteous usurpation. "We are called upon," said Mr. Tucker, ever an opponent of wrong, "to consider and decide upon a claim of right, and I have always felt that our best policy is that which most closely adheres to the dictates of justice." "We ought not to forget," said Mr. Shepherd, who, on great questions of this kind, was commonly to be found side by side with his veteran friend, contending for the rights of the native Princes of India, "that during the rise and progress of our empire in the East, our Governments have continued to announce

and proclaim to the people of India that not only should all their rights and privileges which existed under preceding Governments be preserved and maintained, but that their laws, habits, customs, and prejudices should be respected."* And what right more cherished, what custom more honoured, than the right and custom of adoption? But the majority of the Court of Directors supported the views of the Governor-General. They had heard the voice of the charmer. And from that time the policy of Dalhousie became the policy of Leadenhall-street, and the "Right of Lapse" was formally acknowledged.

And it was not, for reasons which I have already given, likely long to remain a dead letter. Soon another of the great Mahratta chiefs was said to be dying, and in a few days news came to Calcutta that he was dead. It was the height of the cold season of 1853—a few days before Christmas—when the slow booming of minute guns from the Saluting Battery of Fort William announced the death of Ragojee Bonslah, Rajah of Nagpore. At the age of forty-seven he succumbed to a complication of disorders, of which debauchery, cowardice, and obstinacy were the chief. There have been worse specimens of royalty, both in Eastern and Western Palaces, than this poor, worn-out, impotent sot; for although he was immoderately addicted to brandy and dancinggirls, he rather liked his people to be happy, and was not incapable of kindness that caused no trouble to himself. He had no son to succeed him; a posthumous son was an impossibility; and he had not adopted an heir. \

It may seem strange and contradictory that if the

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^{*} Colonel Oliphant and Mr. Leslie Mclville recorded minutes on the same side.

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right of adoption as sanctioned by religion and prescribed by ancestral usage be so dear to the people of India, they should ever fail to adopt in default of heirs of their body. But we know that they often do; and the omission is readily explicable by a reference to the ordinary weaknesses of humanity. We know that even in this country, with all the lights of civilisation and Christianity to keep us from going astray, thousands of reasoning creatures are restrained from making their wills by a vague feeling of apprehension that there is something "unlucky" in such a procedure: that death will come the sooner for such a provision against its inevitable occurrence. wonder, then, that in a country which is the very hotbed of superstition, men should be restrained by a kindred feeling from providing against the event of their dissolution? But in this case there is not only the hope of life, but the hope of offspring, to cause the postponement of the anticipatory ceremony. under the most discouraging circumstances, still cling to the belief that by some favourable reaction of nature they may, even when stricken in years, beget an heir to their titles and possessions. In this sense, too, adoption is held to be unlucky, because it is irreligious. It is like a surrender of all hope, and a betrayal of want of faith in the power and goodness of the Almighty. No man expects to beget a son after he has adopted one.

In the case, too, of this Mahratta Prince, there were special reasons why he should have abstained from making such a provision for the continuance of his House. According to the law and usage of his country, an adoption by his widow would have been as valid as an adoption by himself. It was natural, therefore, and assuredly it was in accordance with

the character of the man, who was gormandising and dallying with the hand of death upon him, that he should have left the ceremony to be performed by Whether it was thus vicariously performed is others. not very clearly ascertainable. But it is certain that the British Resident reported that there had been no adoption. The Resident was Mr. Mansel, who had been one of the first members of the Lahore Board of Administration—a man with a keen sense of justice, favourable to the maintenance of native dynastics, and therefore, in those days, held to be crotchety and unsound. He had several times pressed the Rajah on the subject of adoption, but had elicited no satisfactory response. He reported unequivocally that nothing had been done, and asked for the instructions of the Supreme Government.

Lord Dalhousie was then absent from Calcutta. He was making one of his cold-weather tours of inspection—seeing with his own eyes the outlying province of Pegu, which had fallen by right of conquest into his hands. The Council, in his absence, hesitated to act, and all the instructions, therefore, which they could send were to the effect that the Resident should provide for the peace of the country, and keep things quiet until further orders. There was no doubt about Dalhousie's decision in such a case. Had the Rajah adopted a son, there was little likelihood of the Governor-General's sanction of the adoption; but as he had wilfully failed to perform the ceremony, it appeared to be as clear as noon-day that the great organ of the Paramount State would pronounce the fatal sentence of Lapse.

Dalhousie returned to Calcutta, and with characteristic energy addressed himself to the mastery of the whole question. Before the first month of the

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an. 28, 1854. new year had worn to a close, he attached his signature to an elaborate minute, in which he exhausted all the arguments which could be adduced in fayour of the annexation of the country. Printed at full length, it would occupy fifty pages of this book. was distinguished by infinite research and unrivalled powers of special pleading. (It contended that there had been no adoption, and that if there had been, it would be the duty of the British Government to refuse to recognise it. " I am well aware," he said, "that the continuance of the Raj of Nagpore under some Mahratta rule, as an act of grace and favour on the part of the British Government, would be highly acceptable to native sovereigns and nobles in India; and there are, doubtless, many of high authority who would advocate the policy on that special ground. understand the sentiment and respect it; but remembering the responsibility that is upon me, I cannot bring my judgment to admit that a kind and generous sentiment should outweigh a just and prudent policy."

Among the members of the Supreme Council at that time was Colonel John Low. An old officer of the Madras army, who long years before, when the Peishwah and the Bonslah were in arms against the British, had sate at the feet of John Malcolm, and had graduated in diplomacy under him, he had never forgotten the lessons which he had learnt from his beloved chief; he had never ceased to cherish those "kind and generous sentiments" of which the Governor-General had spoken in his minute. His whole life had been spent at the Courts of the native Princes of India. He had represented British interests long and faithfully at the profligate Court of Lucknow. He had contended with the pride, the obstinacy, and

the superstition of the effete Princes of Rajpootana. He had played, and won, a difficult game, with the bankrupt State of Hyderabad. He knew what were the vices of Indian Princes and the evils of native misrule. But he had not so learnt the lesson presented to him by the spectacle of improvident rulers and profligate Courts; of responsibilities ignored and opportunities wasted; as to believe it to be either the duty or the policy of the Paramount Government to seek "just occasions" for converting every misgoverned principality into a British province. Nor had he, knowing as he did, better perhaps than any of his countrymen, the real character of such misgovernment, ever cherished the conviction that the inhabitants of every native State were yearning for the blessings of this conversion. There were few such States left-Hindoo or Mahomedan—but what remained from the wreck of Indian dynasties he believed it to be equally just and politic to preserve. And entertaining these opinions, he spoke them out; not arrogantly or offensively, but with what I believe may be described as the calm resolution of despair. He knew that he might speak with the tongue of angels, and yet that his speech would no more affect the practical result than a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. am I against so many? he said; nay, what am I against one? Who will listen to the utterance of my ideas when opposed to the "deliberately-formed opinion of a statesman like the Marquis of Dalhousie, in whose well-proved ability and judgment and integrity of purpose they have entire confidence?"* But great statesmen in times past had thought that the extension of British rule in India was, for our own sakes, to be arrested rather than accelerated; that the

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^{*} Minute of Colonel John Low. February 10, 1854.

native States were a source to us of strength rather than of weakness, and that it would go ill with us when there were none left.*

> Strong in this belief, Colonel Low recorded two minutes, protesting against the impolicy and the injustice of the proposed annexation of Nagpore. He said that already the annexation of Sattarah had in many parts of India had a bad moral effect; that it had shaken the confidence of the people in the justice and good faith of the British Government; that people had asked what crime Sattarah had committed that sentence of political death should thus have been pronounced against it; that throughout India acquisition by conquest was well understood, and in many cases admitted to be right; that the annexation of the Punjab, for example, had not been regarded as a wrong, because the chiefs and people had brought it on themselves, but that the extinction of a loyal native State, in default of heirs, was not appreciable in any part of India, and that the exercise of the alleged right of lapse would create a common feeling of uncertainty and distrust at every Durbar in the

* "If Great Britain shall retain her present powerful position among the States of Europe, it seems highly probable that, owing to the infringement of their treaties on the part of native Princes and other causes, the whole of India will, in the course of time, become one British province; but many eminent statesmen have been of opinion that we ought most carefully to avoid unnecessarily accelerating the arrival of that great change; and it is within my own knowledge that the following five great men were of that number—namely, Lord Hastings, Sir Thomas Munro, Sir John Malcolm, the Hon. Mountstuart Ehphinstone, and Lord Microslie."—Minute, Feb. 10, 1854.

† "When I went to Malwa, in

1850, where I met many old acquaintances, whom I had known when a very young man, and over whom I held no authority, I found these old acquaintances speak out much more distinctly as to their opinion of the Sattarah case; so much so, that I was, on several occasions, obliged to check them. It is remarkable that every native who ever spoke to me respecting the annexation of Sattarah, asked precisely the same question: 'What crime did the late Rajah commit that his country should be seized by the Company?' Thus clearly indicating their notions, that if any crime had been committed our act would have been justifiable, and not otherwise.' Misute of Colonel Low, Feb. 10, 1854.

country. He dwelt upon the levelling effects of British dominion, and urged that, as in our own provinces, the upper classes were invariably trodden down, it was sound policy to maintain the native States, if only as a means of providing an outlet for the energies of men of good birth and aspiring natures, who could never rise under British rule. He contended that our system of administration might be far better than the native system, but that the people did not like it better; they clung to their old institutions, however defective, and were averse to change, even though a change for the better. "In one respect," he said. "the natives of India are exactly like the inhabitants of all parts of the known world; they like their own habits and customs better than those of foreigners."

Having thus in unmeasured opposition to the Dalhousie theory flung down the gauntlet of the old school at the feet of the Governor-General, Low ccased from the enunciation of general principles, and turned to the discussion of the particular case before He contended that the treaty between the British Government and the late Rajah did not limit the succession to heirs of his body, and that, therefore, there was a clear title to succession in the Bonslah family by means of a son adopted by either the Rajah himself or by his eldest widow, in accordance with law and usage. The conduct, he said, of the last Prince of Nagpore had not been such as to alienate this right; he had been loyal to the Paramount State, and his country had not been misgoverned; there had been nothing to call for military interference on our part, and little to compel grave remonstrance and rebuke. For what crime, then, was his line to be cut off and the honours of

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his House extinguished for ever? To refuse the right of adoption in such a case would, he alleged, be entirely contrary to the spirit, if not to the letter, of the treaty—But how was it to be conceded when it was not claimed; when no adoption had been reported; when it was certain that the Rajah had not exercised his right, and there had been no tidings of such a movement on the part of his widow? The answer to this was, that the Government had been somewhat in a hurry to extinguish the Raj without waiting for the appearance of claimants, and that if they desired to perpetuate it, it was easy to find a fitting successor.

Of such opinions as these Low expected no support in the Council-chamber of Calcutta—no support from the authorities at home. It little mattered, indeed, what the latter might think, for the annexation of Nagpore was decreed and to be accomplished without reference to England. As the extinction of the Sattarah State had been approved by the Company, in the face of an undisputed adoption asserted at the right time, Dalhousie rightly judged that there would be no straining at a gnat in the Nagpore case, where there had been no adoption at all. Indeed, the general principles upon which he had based his proceedings towards Sattarah, in the first year of his administration, having been accepted in Leadenhallstreet, there could be no stickling about so mild an illustration of them as that afforded by the treatment of Nagpore. The justification of the policy in the latter instance is to be found in the fact that there was no assertion of an adoption-no claim put forward on behalf of any individual—at the time when the British Government was called upon to determine the course to be pursued. It is true that the provisional Government might, for a time, have been vested in the eldest widow of the deceased Prince. adoption by whom would have been recognised by Hindoo law and Mahratta usage; but it was not probable that the British Government would have thus gone out of its way to bolster up a decayed Mahratta dynasty, when the head of that Government conscientiously believed that it was the duty of the Paramount State to consolidate its dominions by recognising only among these effete Princes succession by direct heirship of the body. Cherishing the faith which he did, Dalhousie would have gone grievously wrong, and he would have stood convicted of a glaring inconsistency, if he had adopted any other course; so the kingdom of Berar was declared to have lapsed to the British Government, and the family of the Bonslah was extinct.

The country passed under British rule, and the people became British subjects, without an audible murmur of discontent except from the recesses of the palace. (There the wretched ladies of the royal household, at first dismayed and paralysed by the blow which had fallen upon them, began, after a little space, to bestir themselves and to clamour for their asserted rights. Liberal pensions had been settled upon them; but their family was without a head, and that which might soon have faded into an idea was rendered a galling and oppressive reality by the spoliation of the palace, which followed closely upon the extinction of the Raj. The live stock and dead stock of the Bonslah were sent to the hammer. must have been a great day for speculative cattledealers at Seetabaldee when the royal elephants,

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1854. horses, and bullocks were sold off at the price of carrion;* and a sad day, indeed, in the royal household, when the venerable Bankha Baee,† with all the wisdom and moderation of fourscore well-spent years upon her, was so stung by a sense of the indignity offered to her, that she threatened to fire the palace if the furniture were removed. But the furniture was removed, and the jewels of the Bonslah family, with a few propitiatory exceptions, were sent to the Calcutta market. And I have heard it said that these scizures, these sales, created a worse impression, not only in Berar, but in the surrounding provinces, than the seizure of the kingdom itself.!

But even in the midst of their degradation, these unfortunate ladies clung to the belief that the Bonslah family would some day be restored and rehabilitated. The Governor-General had argued that the widow, knowing that her husband was disinclined to adopt, had, for like reasons, abstained from adoption. He admitted the right according to Mahratta usage, but declared that she was unwilling to exercise it. He contended, too, that the Bankha Baee, the most influential of the royal ladies, would naturally be averse to a measure which would weaken her own authority in the palace. But his logic halted, and

^{*(}Between five and six hundred elephants, camels, horses, and bullocks were sold for 1300/. The Ranees sent a protest to the Commissioner, and memorialised the Governor-General, alleging, in the best English that the Palace could furnish, that "on the 4th instant (Sept.) the sale of animals, viz. bullocks, horses, camels, and elephants, commenced to sell by public auction and resolution—a pair her huckery bullocks, valued 106 rupees, sold in the above sale for 5 rupees."

[†] The Bankha Bace was a widow of the deceased Rajah's grandfather.
‡ I know that the question of public and private property, in such cases, is a very difficult one, and I shall not attempt to decide it here. I only speak of the intease mortification which these sales create in the family itself, and the bad impression which they produce throughout the country. Rightly or wrongly, they cast great discredit on our rance; and the gain of money is not worth the loss of character.

his prophecy failed. Both the elder and the younger lady were equally eager to perpetuate the regal dignities of their House. Mr. Mansel had suggested a compromise, in the shape of an arrangement somewhat similar to that which had been made with the Newabs of the Carnatic, by which the title might be maintained, and a certain fixed share of the revenue set apart for its dotation. But he had been severely censured for his indiscretion, and had left Nagpore in disgrace. He was, perhaps, the best friend that the Ranecs had in that conjuncture; but—such is the value of opinion—they accused him, in the quaint Palace-English of their scribe, of "endeavouring to gain baronetage and exaltation of rank by reporting to the Governor-General that the late Rajah was destitute of heirs to succeed him, with a view to his Lordship being pleased to order the annexation of the territory."* But there was not a man in the country less disposed to annex provinces and to humour Governors than Charles Mansel, and instead of being exalted in rank, he sacrificed his prospects to his principles and retired from the Service.

Failing altogether to move the Governor-General, the Ranecs sent agents to London, but with no better

* Lord Dalhousie, in his Nagpore Minute, says that the Rajah did not adopt, partly because he did not like to acknowledge his inability to beget a son, and partly because he feared that the existence of an adopted son might some day be used as a pretext for deposing him. He then observes: "The dislike of the late Rajah to the adoption of a successor, was of course known to his widow; and although the custom of the Mahrattas exempts her from that necessity for having the concurrence of her husband in adoption, which general Hindoo law

imperatively requires, in order to render the act of adoption valid, still the known disinclination of the Rigat to all adoption could not fail to disincline his widow to have recourse to adoption after his disease." It will be seen at once that the ordinary logical accunen of the Governor-General failed him in this instance, for the very reasons given by the writer himself for the failure of adoption by the Rigal consed altoge her to be operative, ipso facto, "after his decease."

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result. After the manner of native emissaries from Indian Courts, they spent large sums of money in feeing lawyers and printing pamphlets, without making any impression on Leadenhall-street or Cannon-row, and at last, being recalled by their employers, and having nothing wherewith to pay their debts, they flung themselves on the generosity of their opponents, and were sent home by the help of the great Corporation whom they had reviled. Meanwhile, the elder widow of the late Rajah died, and a boy, of another branch, whom the Ranees called Janojee Bonslah, and in whose person they desired to prolong the , Nagpore dynasty, was formally adopted by the dving lady. Clutching at any chance, however desperate. an attempt was made to revive the question of the political adoption; but the sagacity of the Bankha Baee must have seen that it was too late, and that nothing but the private property of the deceased Princess could be thus secured to the adopted The country of the Bonslahs had become as heir. inalienably a part of the Company's possessions as the opium go-downs of Patna, or the gun-factory at Cossipore.

Thus, within a few years of each other, the names of two of the great rulers of the Mahratta Empire ceased from off the roll of Indian Princes; and the territories of the Company were largely increased. Great in historical dignity as was the Sattarah Raj, it was comparatively limited in geographical extent, whilst the Bonslah, though but a servant in rank, owned rich and productive lands, yielding in profusion, among other good gifts, the great staple of our English manufactures.* Whilst the annexation of

^{*} Lord Dalhousie put forth the ments which he adduced in favour of cotton-growing qualities of the Berar the annexation of the territory.

the Punjab and of Pegu extended the British Empire at its two extreme ends, these Mahratta acquisitions helped to consolidate it. Some unseemly patches, breaking the great rose-hued surface, which spoke of British supremacy in the East, were thus effaced from the map; land the Right of Lapse was proclaimed to the furthermost ends of our Indian dominions.

There is a circumstantial difference between these two cases, inasmuch as that, in the one, there was an actual and undisputed adoption by the deceased Rajah, and in the other there was none; but as Dalhousie had frankly stated that he would not have recognised a Nagpore adoption had there been one, the two resumptions were governed by the same principle. And this was not a mere arbitrary assertion of the power of the strong over the weak, but was based, at all events, on a plausible substratum of something that simulated reason and justice. It was contended that, whenever a native Prince owed his existence as a sovereign ruler to the British Government, that Government had the right, on failure of direct heirs, to resume, at his death, the territories of which it had originally placed him in possession. The power that rightly gives, it was argued, may also rightfully take away. Now, in the cases both of Sattarah and Nagpore, the Princes, whom the British Government found in possession of those States, had forfeited their rights: the one by hidden treachery and rebellion, the other by open hostility. The one, after full inquiry, had been deposed; the other, many years before, had been driven into the jungle, and had perished in obscurity a fugitive and an outcast.* In

^{*} It is to be observed, too, with respect to Sattarah, that not only had the last Rajah been clevated by the British Government, but that the

both cases, therefore, the "crime" had been com-1854. mitted which the natives of India are so willing to recognise as a legitimate reason for the punishment of the weaker State by the stronger. But the offence had been condoned, and the sovereignty had been suffered to survive; another member of the reigning family being set up by the Paramount State in place of the offending Prince. Both Pertaub Singh and Ragojee Bonslah, as individuals, owed their sovereign power to the grace and favour of the British Government. All this is historical fact. It may be admitted, too, that when the crimes of which I have spoken were committed by the heads of the Sattarah and Nagpore families, the British Government would have been justified in imposing conditions upon the restoration of the Raj, to the extent of limiting the succession to heirs of the body, or even in making a personal treaty with the favoured Prince conferring no absolute right of sovereignty upon his successors. But the question is whether, these restrictions not having been penally imposed, at the time of forfeiture, the right which then might have been exercised could be justly asserted on the occurrence of a subsequent vacancy created by death? I Lord Dalhousie thought that it could—that the circumstances under which the Sattarah and Nagpore Princes had received their principalities as free gifts from the British Government conferred certain rights of suzerainty on that Government, which otherwise they could not have properly asserted. But, on the other hand, it is contended that both principalities, what-

him up in a principality of his own; a fact which, assuming the validity of the argument against adoption,

said, at his last gasp; we had rescued him from his enemies, and set to it. The same may be said of the Nagpore Raj. It was "resuscitated" by the British Government,

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soever might have been the offences committed years before by their rulers, had been re-established in their integrity—that no restrictions as to their continuance had then been imposed—that treaties had been concluded containing the usual expressions with respect to succession—in a word, that the condonation had been complete, and that both the Sattarah and the Nagpore Houses really possessed all the rights and privileges which had belonged to them before the representative of the one compromised himself by a silly intrigue, and the head of the other, with equal fatuity, plunged into hostilities which could result only in his ruin.

This justificatory plea, based upon the alleged right of the British Government to resume in default of direct heirs tenures derived from the favour of the Lord Paramount, was again asserted about the same time, but with some diversity of application. Comparatively insignificant in itself, the case claims especial attention on account of results to be hereafter recorded in these pages. (In the centre of India, among the small principalities of Bundelkund, was the state of Jhansi, held by a Mahratta chief, origi- Jhansi. nally a vassal of the Peishwah. But on the transfer to the British Government of that Prince's possessions in Bundelkund, the former had resolved "to declare the territory of Jhansi to be hereditary in the family of the late Sheo Rao Bhow, and to perpetuate with his heirs the treaty concluded with the late Bhow;" and, accordingly, a treaty was concluded with the ruling chief, Ram Chand, then only a Soubahdar, constituting "him, his heirs and successors," hereditary rulers of the territory. Loyal and well disposed, he won the favour of the British Government, who, fifteen years after the conclusion of

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1854. the treaty, conferred upon him the title of Rajah, which he only lived three years to enjoy.

For all purposes of succession he was a childless man; and so various claimants to the chiefship ap-The British agent believed that the most valid claim was that of the late Rajah's uncle, who was at all events a direct lineal descendant of one of the former Soubahdars. He was a leper, and might have been rejected, but, incapable as he was, the people accepted him, and, for three years, the administration of Jhansi was carried on in his name. the end of those three years he died, also without heirs of the body, and various claimants as before came forward to dispute the succession. Having no thought of absorbing the State into our British territories, Lord Auckland appointed a commission of British officers to investigate and report upon the pretensions of the several claimants; and the result was, that Government, rightly considering that if the deceased Rajah had any title to the succession, his brother had now an equally good title, acknowledged Gungadhur Rao's right to succeed to the hereditary chiefship.

(Under the administration of Ragonath the Leper the country had been grossly mismanaged, and as his successor was scarcely more competent, the British Government undertook to manage the State for him, and soon revived the revenue which had dwindled down under the native rulers. But, in 1843, after the amputation of a limb of the territory for the support of the Bundelkund Legion, the administration was restored to Gungadhur Rao, who carried on the government for ten years, and then, like his predecessors, died childless

Then again arose the question of succession; but

the claims of the different aspirants to the Raj were regarded with far other eyes than those which had scrutinised them in times past. The Governor-General recorded another fatal minute, by which the death-warrant of the State was signed. It was ruled that Jhansi was a dependent State, held by the favour of the Peishwah, as Lord Paramount, and that his powers had devolved upon the British Government. A famous minute recorded, in 1837, by Sir Charles Metcalfe, was cited to show the difference between Hindoo sovereign Princes and "chiefs who hold grants of land or public revenue by gift from a sovereign or paramount Power," and to prove that, in the latter case, "the Power which made the grant, or that which by conquest or otherwise has succeeded to its rights, is entitled to limit succession," and to "resume on failure of direct heirs of the body."* To demonstrate the right to resume was in those days tantamount to exercising it. So Jhansi was resumed. In vain the widow of the late Rajah, whom the Political Agent described as "a lady bearing a high character, and much respected by every one at Jhansi," protested that her husband's House had ever been faithful to the British Government-in vain she dwelt upon services rendered in former days to that Government, and the acknowledgments which they had elicited from our rulers-in vain she pointed to the terms of the treaty, which did not, to her simple understanding, bar succession in accordance with the laws and usages of her country-in vain she quoted

really said was, that the paramount Power was "entitled to limit succession according to the limitations of the grant, which in general confirms it to heirs male of the body, and consequently precludes adoption. In

* But what Sir Charles Metcalfe such cases, therefore, the Power which granted, or the Power standing in its place, would have a right to resume on failure of heirs male of the body.' This passage is very fairly quoted in Lord Dalhousie's Minute.

precedents to show that the grace and favour sought 1853. for Jhansi had been yielded to other States. The fiat-It had been ruled that the interests was irrevocable. both of the Jhansi State and the British Government "As it lies in imperatively demanded annexation. the midst of other British districts," said Lord Dalhousie, "the possession of it as our own will tend to the improvement of the general internal administration of our possessions in Bundelkund. That its incorporation with the British territories will be greatly for the benefit of the people of Jhansi a reference to the results of experience will suffice to show." results of experience have since shown to what extent the people of Jhansi appreciated the benefits of that incorporation.)

Kerowlcc.

Whilst this question was being disposed of by Lord Dalhousie and his colleagues, another lapse was under consideration, which had occurred some time before, but regarding which no final decision had been passed. In the summer of 1852, the young chief of Kerowlee, one of the smaller Rajpoot States, had died, after adopting another boy, connected with him by ties of kindred. At that time Colonel Low represented the British Government in Rajpootana, and he at once pronounced his opinion that the adoption ought immediately to be recognised.

The Governor-General hesitated. It appeared to him that Kerowlee might, rightly and expediently, be declared to have lapsed. But his Council was divided; his Agent in Rajpootana had declared unequivocally for the adoption; and the case differed in some respects from the Sattarah question, which had already been decided with the sanction and approval of the Home Government. How great the difference really was appeared for more clearly to the

experienced eye of Sir Frederick Currie than to the vision of the Governor-General, clouded as it was by the film of a foregone conclusion.* The name of Sattarah had, by the force of accidental circumstances, become great throughout the land, both in India and in England; it was a familiar name to thousands and tens of thousands who had never heard of Kerowlce. With the Mahrattas, too, the House of Sivajee had been held in high veneration; but the Mahrattas could only boast of recent sovereignty; their high estate was one of modern usur-Their power had risen side by side with our own, and had been crushed down by our greater weight and greater vigour. But the Houses of Rajpootana had flourished centuries before the establishment of British rule, and the least of them had an ancestral dignity respected throughout the whole length and breadth of Hindostan, and treaty rights not less valid than any possessed by the greatest of territorial Princes. To men who had graduated, from boyhood upwards, in Indian statesmanship, there was something almost sacrilegious in the idea of laying a destroying hand even upon the least of the ancient Houses of Rajpootana-of destroying titles that had been honoured long years before the face of the white man had been seen in the country. But impressions of this kind are the growth of long intercourse with the people themselves, and we cannot be surprised that, after a year or two of Indian government, Lord Dalhousie, with all his unrivalled quickness of perception, should not have thoroughly understood the vital differences between the various

^{*} Sir Frederick Currie's Minute facts, clear in its logic, and unexception the Kenowlee question is an admirable state-paper—accurate in its

races inhabiting the great continent of India. Had he done so, he would at once have sanctioned the proposed adoption; as it was, he referred the question to the final decision of the Home Government.

Eager as they were at that time to support the policy

of Lord Dalhousie, and entire as was the faith of many of them in his wisdom, the Directors could not look with favour upon a proposal to commence the gradual extinction of the ancient principalities of Rajpootana. "It appears to us," they said, "that there is a marked distinction in fact between the case of Kerowlee and Sattarah, which is not sufficiently adverted to in the Minute of the Governor-General. The Sattarah State was one of recent origin, derived altogether from the creation and gift of the British Government, whilst Kerowlee is one of the oldest of the Raipoot States. which has been under the rule of its native Princes from a period long anterior to the British power in India. It stands to us only in the relation of protected ally, and probably there is no part of India into which it is less desirable, except upon the strongest grounds, to substitute our government for that of the native rulers. In our opinion, such grounds do not exist in the present case, and we have, therefore, determined to sanction the succession of Bhurt Pal."

But before the arrival of the despatch expressing these just sentiments and weighty opinions, all chance of the succession of Bhurt Pal had passed away. Had the adoption been granted at once, it would, in all probability, have been accepted by the members of the late Rajah's family, by the principal chiefs, and by the people of the country. But it is the inevitable tendency of delay in such a case to unsettle the public mind, to raise questions which but for this suspense

Jan. 26, 1853.

would not have been born, and to excite hopes and stimulate ambitions which otherwise would have lain So it happened that whilst London and dormant. Calcutta were corresponding about the rights of Bhurt Pal, another claimant to the sovereignty of Kerowlee was asserting his pretensions in the most demonstrative manner. Another and a nearer kinsman of the late Prince-older, and, therefore, of a more pronounced personal character-stood forward to proclaim his rights, and to maintain them by arms. The ladies of the royal family, the chiefs, and the people, supported his claims; and the representative of the British Government in Rajpootana recognised That representative was Sir Henry their validity. Lawrence. Succeeding General Low in the Agency, he cherished the same principles as those which had ever been so consistently maintained by that veteran statesman; but circumstances had arisen which moved him to give them a different application. This new pretender to the throne had better claims on the score of consanguinity than Bhurt Pal, but Adoption overrides all claims of relationship, and, if the adoption were valid, the latter was legally the son and heir of the deceased. In this view, as consonant with the customs of the country, Henry Lawrence would have supported the succession of Bhurt Pal; but, on investigation, it appeared that all the requirements and conditions of law and usage had not been fulfilled, and that the people themselves doubted the validity of the adoption. It appeared to him, therefore, that the British Government would best discharge its duty to Kerowlee by allowing the succession of Muddun Even on the score of adoption his claims were good, for he had been adopted by the eldest of the late Rajah's widows, which, in default of adoption by

the Rajah himself, would have been good against all claimants. But, in addition to this, it was to be said of the pretensions of this man that he was older than the other; that a minority would thus be avoided altogether; that he had some personal claims to consideration; and that the voice of the chiefs and the people had decided in his favour. As the succession, therefore, of Bhurt Pal had not been sanctioned, and as the decision of the Home Government in his favour had not been published, there would be no wrong to him in this preference of his rival, so Henry Lawrence recommended, and the Government of Lord Dalhousie approved, the succession of Muddun Pal to the sovereignty of Kerowlee.

So Lapse, in this instance, did not triumph; and the aucient Houses of Rajpootana, which, during these two years of suspense, had awaited the issue with the deepest interest, felt some temporary relief when it was known that the wedge of annexation had not been driven into the time-honoured circle of the States. But it is not to be supposed that because no wrong was done at last no injury was done by the Public rumour recognises no Secret Depart-It was well known at every native Court, in every native bazaar, that the British Government were discussing the policy of annexing or not annexing Kerowlee. The mere fact that there was a question to be discussed, in such a case, was sufficient to fill the minds of the people with anxiety and alarm. For two years Kerowlee was without any other ruler than the Political Agent of the British Government; and this was a significant fact, the impression of which was not to be removed by the subsequent decision. The Rajpoot Princes lost their confidence in the good faith of the British Government. Kerowice had been

spared, they scarcely knew how; some were fain to attribute it to the well-known justice and liberality of Henry Lawrence. But the same moderation might not be displayed again; there were childless men amongst them; and from that time a restless, uneasy feeling took possession of them, and no man felt sure that his House would not perish with him. not strange, indeed, that a year or two afterwards there should have been in circulation all over the country ominous reports to the effect that the policy of Lord Dalhousie had eventually triumphed, and that the gradual absorption of all the Rajpoot States had been sanctioned by the Home Government. was a dangerous lie; and even the habitual reticence of the Court of Directors was not proof against the grossness of the calumny; so it was authoritatively. contradicted. But not before it had worked its way in India, and done much to undermine the foundations of that confidence which is one of the main pillars of our strength.

There is one other story of territorial annexation Sumbhulpore yet to be told-briefly, for it was not thought at the time to be of much political importance, and now is held but little in remembrance. Beyond the southwestern frontier of Bengal was the territory of Sum-It had formerly been an outlying district bhulpore. of the Nagpore principality, but had been ceded by the Bonslah family, and had been bestowed by the British on a descendant of the old Sumbhulpore Rajahs, under terms which would have warranted the resumption of the estate on the death of the first incumbent. But twice the sovereign rights had been bestowed anew upon members of the family, and not until 1849, when Narain Singh lay at the point of death, was it determined to annex the territory to

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1849.

the British dominions. There were no heirs of the body; no near relatives of the Rajah. No adoption had been declared. The country was said to have been grievously misgoverned. And so there seemed to be a general agreement that the Lapse was perfect, and that annexation might be righteously proclaimed. Dalhousie was absent from the Presidency; but the case was clear, and the Government neither in India nor in England hesitated for a moment. And, perhaps, though it was not without its own bitter fruit, there is less to be said against it, on the score of abstract justice, than against anything of which I have written in this division of my work.

But there were lapses of another kind, lapses which involved no gain of territory to the British Government, for the territory had been gained before. There were several deposed princes in the land, representatives of ancient Houses, whose sceptres had passed by conquest or by treaty into the white man's hand, but who still enjoyed the possession of considerable revenues, and maintained some semblance of their former dignity and state. It happened that, whilst Dalhousie reigned in India, three of these pensioned princes died. Of the story of one of them I must write in detail. There had once been three great Mahratta Houses: the Houses of Sattarah, of Nagpore, and of Poonah. It has been told how Dalhousie extinguished the two first; the third had been for some thirty years territorially extinct, when he was sent out to govern India. In 1818. at the close of the second great Mahratta war, the Peishwah, Badjee Rao, surrendered to Sir John He had been betrayed into hostility, and treacherous hostility; he had appealed to the sword, and he had been fairly beaten; and there was nothing

The story of the Peishwah.

left for him but to end his days as an outcast and a fugitive, or to fling himself upon the mercy of the British Government. He chose the latter course: and when he gave himself to the English General, he knew that he was in the hands of one who sympathised with him in his fallen fortunes, and would be a generous friend to him in adversity. pledged the Government to bestow upon the Peishwah, for the support of himself and family, an annual pension of not less than eight lakhs of rupees. The promise was said to be an over-liberal one; and there were those who at the time condemned Malcolm for his profuseness. But he replied, that "it had been the policy of the British Government, since its first establishment in India, to act towards princes, whose bad faith and treachery had compelled it to divest them of all power and dominion, with a generosity which almost lost sight of their offences. effect of this course of proceeding in reconciling all classes to its rule had been great. The liberality and the humanity which it had displayed on such occasions had, I was satisfied, done more than its arms towards the firm establishment of its power. It was, in fact, a conquest over mind, and among men so riveted in their habits and prejudices as the natives of their country, the effect, though unseen, was great beyond calculation." It was a solace to him to think that these sentiments were shared by such men as Mountstuart Elphinstone, David Ochterlony, and Thomas Munro.

So Badjee Rao went into honourable seclusion, and an asylum was found for him at Bithoor, distant some twelve miles from the great military station of Cawnpore, in the North-Western Provinces of India. He was not then an old man, as age is calcu-

lated by years, but he was said to be of debauched 1818-51. habits and feeble constitution; and no one believed that he would very long survive to be a burden upon the Company. But he outlived his power for a third part of a century, living resignedly, if not contentedly, in his new home, with a large body of followers and dependents, mostly of his own race, and many others of the outward insignia of state. the assemblage, under such circumstances, of so large a body of Mahrattas, some feeling of apprehension and alarm might have arisen in the mind of the British Government, especially in troubled times; but the fidelity of the ex-Peishwah himself was as conspicuous as the good conduct and the orderly behaviour of his people. Nor was it only a passive loyalty that he manifested; for twice in critical conjunctures, when the English were sore-pressed, he came forward with offers of assistance. When the War in Afghanistan had drained our Treasury, and money was grievously wanted, he lent the Company five lakhs of rupees; and when, afterwards, our dominions were threatened with an invasion from the Punjab, and there was much talk all over the country of a hostile alliance between the Sikhs and the Mahrattas, the steadfastness of his fidelity was evidenced by an offer made to the British Government to raise and to maintain at his own cost a thousand Horse and a thousand Foot. the disposition, so also had he the means to serve His ample pension more than sufficed for the wants even of a retired monarch; and as years passed, people said that he had laid by a great store of wealth, and asked who was to be its inheritor? For it was with him, as it was with other Mahratta princes, he was going down to the grave leaving no

son to succeed him. So he adopted a son, from his 1818-51. own family stock,* and, some years before his death, sought the recognition of the British Government for an adoption embracing more than the right of succession to his savings (for this needed no sovereign sanction) the privilege of succeeding to the title and the pension of the Peishwah. The prayer was not granted; but the Company did not shut out all hope that, after the death of Badjee Rao, some provision might be made for his family. The question was reserved for future consideration—that is, until the contingency of the ex-Peishwah's death should become an accomplished reality; and as at this time the old man was feeble, paralytic, and nearly blind, it was not expected that his pension would much longer remain a burden on the Indian revenues.

But not until the 28th of January, 1851, when Death of there was the weight of seventy-seven years upon Badjee Rao. him, did the last of the Peishwahs close his eyes upon the world for ever. He left behind him a will, executed in 1839, in which he named as his adopted son, "to inherit and be the sole master of the Guddee of the Peishwah, the dominions, wealth, family possessions, treasure, and all his real and personal property," a youth known as Doondoo Punt, Nana Sahib. The Nana When Badjee Rao died, the heir was twenty-seven Sauib. years old; described as "a quiet, unostentatious young man, not at all addicted to any extravagent habits, and invariably showing a ready disposition to attend to the advice of the British Commissioner."

* Strictly it should be said that Rao, my grandson; these three are he adopted three sons and a grand-son. His will says: "That Doondoo Punt, Nana, my eldest son, and Gungadhur Rao, my youngest and third son, and Sada-Sheo Punt Dada, son of my second son, Punder Hing

my sons and grandson. After me Doondoo Punt, Nana, my eldest son, Mookh Perdan, shall inherit and be the sole master of the Guddee of the Peishwah, &c."--MS. Records.

What he was safe to inherit was about 300,000l., more than one-half of which was invested in Government securities;* but there was an immense body of dependents to be provided for, and it was thought that the British Government might appropriate a portion of the ex-Péishwah's stipend to the support of the family at Bithoor. The management of affairs was in the hands of the Soubahdar Ramchunder Punt, a faithful friend and adherent of Badjee Rao, who counselled his master with wisdom, and controlled his followers with vigour; and he now, with all due respect for the British Government, pleaded the cause of the adopted son of the Peishwah. "Nana Sahib," he said, "considering the Honourable Company in the room of the late Maharajah as his protector and supporter, is full of hopes and free of care on this subject. His dependence in every way is on the kindness and liberality of the British Government, for the increase of whose power and prosperity he has ever been, and will continue to be, desirous." The British Commissioner at Bithoort supported the appeal in behalf of the family, but it met with no favour in high places. Mr. Thomason was then Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces. He was a good man, an able man, a man of high reputation, but he was one of the leaders of the New School, and was no friend to the princes and nobles of the land; and he told the Commissioner to discourage all hopes of further assistance in the breasts

† It should rather be said, "two British Commissioners." Colonel Manson was Commissioner when the Peishwah died, but he left Bithoor shortly afterwards, and Mr. Morland, then magistrate at Cawnpore, took his place, and on him devolved the principal business of the settlement of the ex-Peishwah's affairs.

^{*} The official report of the Commissioner said, 16 lakhs of Government paper, 10 lakhs of jewels, 3 lakhs of gold coins, 80,000 rupees gold ornaments, 20,000 rupees silver plate.

of the family, and to "strive to induce the numerous retainers of the Peishwah speedily to disperse and return to the Deccan." Lord Dalhousie was Governor-General; and, in such a case, his views were little likely to differ from those of his Lieutenant. So he declared his opinion that the recommendations of the Commissioner were "uncalled for and unrea-"The Governor-General," it was added, "concurs in opinion with his Honour (Mr. Thomason) in thinking that, under any circumstances, the Family have no claim upon the Government; and he will by no means consent to any portion of the public revenues being conferred on them. His Lordship requests that the determination of the Government of India may be explicitly declared to the Family without delay." And it was so declared; but with some small alleviation of the harshness of the sentence, for the Jagheer, or rent-free estate, of Bithoor was to be continued to the Nana Sahib, but without the exclusive jurisdiction which had been enjoyed by the ex-Peishwah.

When Doondoo Punt learnt that there was no hope Memorial of of any further assistance to the family at Bithoor the Nana. from the liberality of the Government of India, he determined to appeal to the Court of Directors of the East India Company. It had been in contemplation during the lifetime of Badjee Rao to adopt such a course, and a son of the Soubahdar Ramchunder had been selected as the agent who was to prosecute the appeal. But discouraged by the Commissioner, the project had been abandoned, and was not revived until all other hope had failed after the ex-Peishwah's death. Then it was thought that a reversal of the adverse decision might be obtained by memorialising the authorities in England, and a

cccmber 29, memorial was accordingly drawn up and despatched, in the usual manner, through the Government in "The course pursued by the local governments," it was said, "is not only an unfeeling one, towards the numerous family of the deceased prince, left almost entirely dependent upon the promises of the East India Company, but inconsistent with what is due to the representative of a long line of sovereigns. Your memorialist, therefore, deems it expedient at once to appeal to your Honourable Court, not merely on the ground of the faith of treaties, but of a bare regard to the advantages the East India Company have derived from the last sovereign of the Mahratta Empire. It would be contrary to the spirit of all treaties hitherto concluded to attach a special meaning to an article of the stipulations entered into, whilst another is interpreted and acted upon in its most liberal sense." And then the memorialist proceeded to argue, that as the Peishwah, on behalf of his heirs and successors, had ceded his territories to the Company, the Company were bound to pay the price of such cession to the Peishwah and his heirs and successors. If the compact were lasting on one side, so also should it he on the other. "Your memorialist submits that a cession of a perpetual revenue of thirty-four lakhs of rupees in consideration of an annual pension of eight lakhs establishes a de facto presumption that the payment of one is contingent upon the receipt of the other, and hence that, as long as those receipts continue, the payment of the pension is to follow." It was then argued that the mention, in the treaty, of the "Family" of the Peishwah indicated the hereditary character of the stipulation, on the part of the Company, as such mention would be unnecessary and unmeaning in its application to a mere life-grant, "for a provision for the support of the prince necessarily included the maintenance of his family;" and after this, from special arguments, the Nana Sahib turned to a general assertion of his rights as based on precedent and analogy. "Your memorialist," it was said, "is at a loss to account for the difference between the treatment, by the Company, of the descendants of other princes and that experienced by the family of the Peishwah, represented by him. The ruler of Mysore evinced the most implacable hostility towards the Company's government; and your memorialist's father was one of the princes whose aid was invoked by the Company to crush a relentless enemy. When that chieftain fell, sword in hand, the Company, far from abandoning his progeny to their fate, have afforded an asylum and a liberal support to more than one generation of his descendants, without distinction between the legitimate and the illegitimate. With equal or even greater liberality the Company delivered the dethroned Emperor of Delhi from a dungeon, re-invested him with the insignia of sovereignty, and assigned to him a munificent revenue, which is continued to his descendants to the present day. Wherein is your memorialist's case different? It is true that the Peishwah, after years of amity with the British Indian Government, during which he assigned to them revenues to the amount of half a crore of rupecs, was unhappily engaged in war with them, by which he perilled his throne. But as he was not reduced to extremities, and even if reduced, closed with the terms proposed to him by the British Commander, and ceded his rich domains to place himself and his family under the fostering care of the Company, and as the Company still profit by the revenues

of his hereditary possessions, on what principle are his descendants deprived of the pension included in those terms and the vestiges of sovereignty? Wherein are the claims of his family to the favour and consideration of the Company less than those of the conquered Mysorean or the captive Mogul?" Then the Nana Sahib began to set forth his own personal claims as founded on the adoption in his favour; he quoted the best authorities on Hindoo law to prove that the son by adoption has all the rights of the son by birth; and he cited numerous instances, drawn from the recent history of Hindostan and the Deccan, to show how such adoptions had before been recognised by the British Government. "The same fact," he added, "is evinced in the daily practice of the Company's Courts all over India, in decreeing to the adopted sons of princes, of zemindars, and persons of every grade, the estates of those persons to the exclusion of other heirs of the blood. Indeed, unless the British Indian Government is prepared to abrogate the Hindoo Sacred Code, and to interdict the practice of the Hindoo religion, of both of which adoption is a fundamental feature, your memorialist cannot understand with what consistency his claim to the pension of the late Peishwah can be denied, merely on the ground of his being an adopted son."

Another plea for refusal might be, nay, had been, based upon the fact that Badjee Rao, from the savings of his pension, had accumulated and left behind him a large amount of private property, which no one could alienate from his heirs. Upon this the Nana Sahib, with not unreasonable indignation, said: "That if the withholding of the pension proceeded from the supposition that the late Peish-

wah had left a sufficient provision for his family, it would be altogether foreign to the question, and unprecedented in the annals of the History of British The pension of eight lakhs of rupees per annum has been agreed upon on the part of the British Government, to enable his Highness the late Badjee Rao to support himself and family; it is immaterial to the British Government what portion of that sum the late prince actually expended, nor has there been any agreement entered into to the effect that his Highness the late Badjee Rao should be compelled to expend every fraction of an annual allowance accorded to him by a special treaty, in consideration of his ceding to the British Government territories yielding an annual and perpetual revenue of thirty-four lakhs of rupees. earth had a right to control the expenditure of that pension, and if his Highness the late Badjee Rao had saved every fraction of it, he would have been perfectly justified in doing so. Your memorialist would venture to ask, whether the British Government ever deigned to ask in what manner the pension granted to any of its numerous retired servants is expended? or whether any of them saves a portion, or what portion, of his pension? and, furthermore, in the event of its being proved that the incumbents of such pensions had saved a large portion thereof, it would be considered a sufficient reason for withholding the pension from the children in the proportions stipulated by the covenant entered into with its servant? And yet is a native prince, the descendant of an ancient scion of Royalty, who relies upon the justice and liberality of the British Government, deserving of less consideration than its covenanted servants? To disperse, however, any erroneous impression that

may exist on the part of the British Government on that score, your memorialist would respectfully beg to observe that the pension of eight lakhs of rupees, stipulated for by the treaty of 1818, was not exclusively for the support of his Highness the late Badjee Rao and his family, but also for the maintenance of a large retinue of faithful adherents, who preferred following the ex-Peishwah in his voluntary exile. Their large number, fully known to the British Government, caused no inconsiderable call upon the reduced resources of his Highness; and, furthermore, if it be taken into consideration the appearance which Native princes, though rendered powerless, are still obliged to keep up to ensure respect, it may be easily imagined that the savings from a pension of cight lakhs of rupees, granted out of an annual revenue of thirty-four lakhs, could not have been large. But notwithstanding this heavy call upon the limited resources of the late Peishwah, his Highness husbanded his resources with much care, so as to be enabled to invest a portion of his annual income in public securities, which, at the time of his death, yielded an income of about eighty thousand rupees. Is then the foresight and the economy on the part of his Highness the late Badjee Rao to be regarded as an offence deserving to be visited with the punishment of stopping the pension for the support of his 3. Records, family guaranteed by a formal treaty-2"

But neither the rhetoric nor the reasoning of the Nana Sahib had any effect upon the Tiome Govern-The Court of Directors of the East India ment. Company were hard as a rock, and by no means to be moved to compassion. They had already expressed an opinion that the savings of the Peishwah were sufficient for the maintenance of his heirs and dependents;* and when the memorial came before 1853.
them, they summarily rejected it, writing out to the the Compan Government to "inform the memorialist that the pension of his adoptive father was not hereditary, that he has no claim whatever to it, and that his application is wholly inadmissible." Such a reply as May 4, 18 this must have crushed out all hope from the Bithoor Family, and shown the futility of further action; but it happened that, before this answer was received, the Nana Sahib had sent an agent to England to pro-This agent was not the son of the secute his claims. old Mahratta Soubahdar, to whom the mission first contemplated was to have been entrusted, but a young and astute Mahomedan, with a good presence, a plausible address, and a knowledge of the English language. His name was Azim-oollah Khan. In the summer of 1853 he appeared in England, and in conjunction with an Englishman, named Biddle, prosecuted the claims of the Nana, but with no success. Judgment had already been recorded, and nothing that these agents could say or do was likely to cause its reversal.

So Azim-oollah Khan, finding that little or nothing could be done in the way of business for his employer, devoted his energies to the pursuit of pleasure on his own account. Passing by reason of his fine clothes for a person of high station, he made his way into good society, and is said to have boasted of favours received from English ladies. Outwardly he was a gay, smiling, voluptuous sort of person; and

* "May 19, 1852.—We entirely three years afforded him the means of making an abundant provision for his family and dependents, and the property, which he is known to have left, is amply sufficient for their support."—The Court of Directors to the Government of Indus. - MS.

approve of the decision of the Governor-General that the adopted son and dependents on Badjee Rao have no claim upon the British Government. The large pension which the ex-Peishwah enjoyed during thirty-

even a shrewd observer might have thought that he was intent always upon the amusement of the hour. There was one man, however, in England at that time, who, perhaps, knew that the desires of the plausible Mahomedan-were not bounded by the enjoyment of the present. For it happened that the agent, who had been sent to England by the deposed Sattarah Family, in the hope of obtaining for them the restoration of their principality, was still resident in the English metropolis. This man was a Mahratta named Rungo Bapojee. Able and energetic, he had pushed his suit with a laborious, untiring conscientiousness, rarely seen in a Native envoy; but though aided by much soundness of argument and much fluency of rhetoric expended by others than hired advocates, upon the case of the Sattarah Princes, he had failed to make an impression on their judges. Though of different race and different religion, these two men were knit together by common sympathies and kindred tasks, and in that autumn of 1853, by like failures and disappointments to brood over and the same bitter animosities to cherish. What was said and what was done between them no Historian can relate. They were adopts in the art of dissimulation. So the crafty Mahratta made such a good impression even upon those whom his suit had so greatly troubled, that his debts were paid for him, and he was sent back at the public expense to Bombay with money in his pocket from the Treasury of the India House; * whilst the gay Mahomedan floated about the surface of society and made a conspicuous figure at crowded watering places, as if he dearly loved England and the English, and could not per-

^{*} Rungo Bapojee returned to India Company gave him 25001. and India in December, 1853. The East a free passage.

suade himself to return to his own dreary and benighted land.

1853.

So little material are they to this History that I Carnatic and need not write in detail of the circumstances attend. Tanjore. ing the extinction of the titular sovereignties of the Carnatic and Tanjore, two ancient Houses, one Mahomedan, the other Hindoo, that had once flourished in the Southern Peninsula. (Lord Wellesley had stripped them of territorial power. Ut remained, therefore, only for Lord Dalhousie, when the Newab of the Carnatic and the Rajah of Tanjore died without heirs of the body, to abolish the titular dignities of the two Families and "to resume the large stipends they had enjoyed, as Lapses to Government." Pensions were settled upon the surviving members of the two Families; but in each case, the head of the House made vehement remonstrance against the extinction of its honours, and long and loudly clamoured for restitution. There were many, doubtless, in Southern India who still clung with feelings of veneration to these shadowy pageants, and deplored the obliteration of the royal names that they had long honoured; and as a part of the great system of demolition these resumptions made a bad impression in more remote places. But empty titular dignities are dangerous possessions, and it may be, after all, only mistaken kindness to perpetuate them

1854. 1855.

*** In this chapter might have been included other cases of Lapse, as those of the Pergunnah, of Odei-poor, on the South-Western Fron-tier, and of Jeitpore, in Bundle-khund; but, although every additional absorption of territory tended

when the substance of royalty is gone.

to increase, in some measure, the feeling of insecurity in men's minds, they were comparatively of little political importance; and Lord Dalhousie did not think them worth a paragraph in his Farewell Minute.

CHAPTER III.

THE ANNEXATION OF OUDE—EARLY HISTORY OF THE PROVINCE—THE TREATY OF 1801—EFFECTS OF THE DOUBLE GOVERNMENT—CREATION OF THE KINGSHIP—PROGRESS OF MISRULE—REPEATED WARNINGS—THE UNRATIFIED TREATY—COLONEL SLEEMAN'S REPORTS—LORD DALHOUSIE'S MINUTE—VIEWS OF THE COURT OF DIRECTORS—SIR JAMES OUTRAM BESIDENT—ANNEXATION PROCLAIMED.

1856.

There was still another province to be absorbed into the British Empire under the administration of Lord Dalhousie; not by conquest, for its rulers had ever been our friends, and its people had recruited our armies; not by lapse, for there had always been a son or a brother, or some member of the royal house, to fulfil, according to the Mahomedan law of succession, the conditions of heirship, and there was still a king, the son of a king, upon the throne; but by a simple assertion of the dominant will of the British Government. This was the great province of Oude, in the very heart of Hindostan, which had long tempted us, alike by its local situation and the reputed wealth of its natural resources.

It is a story not to be lightly told in a few sentences. Its close connexion with some of the more important passages of this history fully warrants some amplitude of narration. Before the British settler had established himself on the peninsula of India, Oude was

a province of the Mogul Empire. When that empire 1756-1796. was distracted and weakened by the invasion of Nadir Shah, the treachery of the servant was turned against the master, and little by little the Governor began to govern for himself. But holding only an official, though an hereditary title, he still acknowledged his vassalage; and long after the Great Mogul had shrivelled into a pensioner and a pageant, the Newab-Wuzeer of Oude was nominally his minister.

Of the earliest history of British connexion with the Court of the Wuzeer, it is not necessary to write in detail. There is nothing less creditable in the annals of the rise and progress of the British power in the East. The Newab had territory; the Newab had subjects; the Newab had neighbours; more than all, the Newab had money. But although he possessed in abundance the raw material of soldiers, he had not been able to organise an army sufficient for all the external and internal requirements of the State, and so he was fain to avail himself of the superior military skill and discipline of the white men, and to hire British battalions to do his work. At first this was done in an irregular, desultory kind of way, job-work, as in the infamous case of the Rohilla massacre; but afterwards it assumed a more formal and recognised shape, and solemn engagements were entered into with the Newab, by which we undertook, in consideration of certain money-payments, known as the Subsidy, to provide a certain number of British troops for the internal and external defence of his Excellency's dominions.

In truth it was a vicious system, one that can hardly be too severely condemned. By it we established a Double Government of the worst kind. The Political and Military government was in the hands

of the Company; the internal administration of the Oude territories still rested with the Newab-Wuzeer. In other words, hedged in and protected by the British battalions, a bad race of Eastern Princes were suffered to do, or not to do, what they liked. such influences it is not strange that disorder of every kind ran riot over the whole length and breadth of Never were the evils of misrule more horribly apparent; never were the vices of an indolent and rapacious Government productive of a greater sum of misery. The extravagance and profligacy of the Court were written in hideous characters on the desolated face of the country. It was left to the Nabob's Government to dispense justice: justice was not dispensed. It was left to the Nabob's Government to collect the revenue; it was wrung from the people at the point of the bayonet. The Court was sumptuous and profligate; the people poor and The expenses of the royal household were wretched. enormous. Hundreds of richly-caparisoned voracious elephants ate up the wealth of whole districts, or carried it in glittering apparel on their backs. A multitudinous throng of unserviceable attendants; bands of duncing-girls; flocks of parasites; costly feasts and ceremonies; folly and pomp and profligacy of every conceivable description, drained the coffers of the A vicious and extravagant Government soon beget a poor and a suffering people; a poor and a suffering people, in turn, perpetuate the curse of a bankrupt Government. The process of retaliation is To support the lavish expenditure of the Court the mass of the people were persecuted and outraged. Bands of armed mercenaries were let loose upon the ryots in support of the rapacity of the Aunils, or Revenue-farmers, whose appearance was a terror to

the people. Under such a system of cruelty and extortion, the country soon became a desert, and the Government then learnt by hard experience that the prosperity of the people is the only true source of wealth. The lesson was thrown away. The decrease of the revenue was not accompanied by a corresponding diminution of the profligate expenditure of the Court, or by any effort to introduce a better administrative system. Instead of this, every new year saw the unhappy country lapsing into worse disorder, with less disposition, as time advanced, on the part of the local Government to remedy the evils beneath which it was groaning. Advice, protestation, remonstrance were in vain. Lord Cornwallis advised, protested, remonstrated: Sir John Shore advised. protested, remonstrated. At last a statesman of a very different temper appeared upon the scene.

Lord Wellesley was a despot in every pulse of his But he was a despot of the right kind; for he was a man of consummate vigour and ability, and he seldom made a mistake. The condition of Oude soon attracted his attention; not because its government was bad and its people were wretched, but because that country might either be a bulwark of safety to our own dominions, or a sea of danger which might overflow and destroy us. That poor old blind ex-King, Shah Zemaun, of the Suddozye family of Caubul, known to the present generation as the feeble appendage of a feeble puppet, had been, a little while before the advent of Lord Wellesley, in the heyday of his pride and power, meditating great deeds which he had not the ability to accomplish, and keeping the British power in India in a chronic state of unrest. If ever there had been any real peril, it had passed away before the new century was a year old. But it

might arise again. Doubtless the military strength of the Afghans was marvellously overrated in those days; but still there was the fact of a minacious Mahomedan power beyond the frontier, not only meditating invasion, but stirring up the Mahomedan Princes of India to combine in a religious war against the usurping Feringhee. Saadut Ali was then on the musnud of Oude; he was the creature and the friend of the English, but Vizier Ali, whom he had supplanted, had intrigued with Zemaun Shah, and would not only have welcomed, but have subsidised also an Afghan force in his own dominions. At the bottom of all our alarm, at that time, were some not unreasonable apprehensions of the ambitious designs of the first Napoleon. At all events, it was sound policy to render Oude powerful for good and powerless for evil. To the accomplishment of this it was necessary that large bodies of ill-disciplined and irregularly paid native troops in the service of the Newab-Wuzeer —lawless bands that had been a terror alike to him and to his people—should be forthwith disbanded, and that British troops should occupy their place. Now, already the Wuzeer was paying seventy-six lakhs of rupees, or more than three-quarters of a million of money, for his subsidised British troops, and though he was willing to disband his own levies, and thereby to secure some saving to the State, it was but small in proportion to the expense of the more costly machinery of British military defence now to be substituted for them. The additional burden to be imposed upon Oude was little less than half a million of money, and the unfortunate Wuzeer, whose resources had been strained to the utmost to pay the previous subsidy, declared his inability to meet any further demands on his treasury. This was

what Lord Wellesley expected—nay, more, it was what he wanted. If the Wuzeer could not pay in money, he could pay in money's worth. He had rich lands that might be ceded in perpetuity to the Company for the punctual payment of the subsidy. So the Governor-General prepared a treaty ceding the required provinces, and with a formidable array of British troops at his call, dragooned the Wuzeer into sullen submission to the will of the English Sultan. The new treaty was signed; and districts then yielding a million and a half of money, and now nearly double that amount of annual revenue, passed under the administration of the British Government.

Now, this treaty—the last ever ratified between the two Governments-bound the Newab Wuzeer to "establish in his reserved dominions such a system of administration, to be carried on by his own officers, as should be conducive to the prosperity of his subjects, and be calculated to secure the lives and properties of the inhabitants," and he undertook at the same time "always to advise with and to act in conformity to the counsels of the officers of the East India Company." But the English ruler knew well that there was small hope of these conditions being "I am satisfied," he said, "that no effecfulfilled. tual security can be provided against the ruin of the province of Oude until the exclusive management of the civil and military government of that country shall be transferred to the Company under suitable provisions for the maintenance of his Excellency and his family." He saw plainly before him the breakdown of the whole system, and believed that in the course of a few years the entire administration of the province would be transferred to the hands of our There was one thing, however, on British officers.

1800.

which he did not calculate—the moderation of his 1801-17. He lived nearly half a century after these words were written, and yet the treaty outlived him by many years.

> If there was, at any time, hope for Oude, under purely native administration, it was during the wuzeership of Saadut Ali, for he was not a bad man, and he appears to have had rather enlightened views with respect to some important administrative questions.* But the opportunity was lost; and whilst the counsels of our British officers did nothing for the people, the bayonets of our British soldiers restrained them from doing anything for themselves. Thus matters grew from bad to worse, and from worse to worst. One Governor-General followed another; one Resident followed another; one Wuzeer followed another: but still the great tide of evil increased in volume, in darkness, and in depth.

> But, although the Newab-Wuzeers of Oude were, doubtless, bad rulers and bad men, it must be admitted that they were good allies. False to their people -false to their own manhood-they were true to the British Government. They were never known to break out into open hostility, or to smoulder in hidden treachery against us; and they rendered good service, when they could, to the Power to which they owed so little. They supplied our armies, in time of war, with grain; they supplied us with carriage-cattle; better still, they supplied us with cash. There was money in the

* Sir Henry Lawrence says that he was "in advance of the Bengal Government of the day on revenue arrangements," and gives two striking instances of the fact. With characteristic candour and impartiality, Lawrence adds that Saadut Ali's mal-administration was "mainly at- See also Lawrence's I tributable to English interference, this paper is printed.

to the resentment he felt for his own wrongs, and the bitterness of soul with which he must have received all advice from his oppressors, no less than to the impunity with which they enabled him to play the tyrant."—Calcutta Review, vol. iii. See also Lawrence's Essays, in which

Treasury of Lucknow, when there was none in the Treasury of Calcutta; and the time came when the Wuzeer's cash was needed by the British ruler. Engaged in an extensive and costly war, Lord Hastings wanted more millions for the prosecution of his great enterprises. They were forthcoming at the right time; and the British Government were not unwilling in exchange to bestow both titles and territories on the Wuzeer. The times were propitious. The successful close of the Nepaul war placed at our disposal an unhealthy and impracticable tract of country at the foot of the Hills. This "terai" ceded to us by the Nepaulese was sold for a million of money to the Wuzeer, to whose domains it was contiguous, and he himself expanded and bloomed into a King under the fostering sun of British favour and affection.* The interest of the other million was paid away by our Government to a tribe of Oude pensioners, who were not sorry to exchange for a British guarantee the erratic benevolence of their native masters.

It would take long to trace the history of the progressive misrule of the Oude dominions under a succession of sovereigns all of the same class-passive permitters of evil rather than active perpetrators of iniquity, careless of, but not rejoicing in, the sufferings of their people. The rulers of Oude, whether Wuzeers or Kings, had not the energy to be tyrants.

rence seems to have thought that this was precisely what was iutended. "The Newab Ghazer-cond-deen Hyder," he wrote, "we en-couraged to assume the title of King; Lord Hastings calculated on cutta Review, vol. iii.; and Essays,

^{*} Sir John Malcolm said that the very mention of "his Majesty of Oude" made him sick. "Would I make," he said, "a golden calf, and suffer him to throw off his subordinate title, and assume equality with the degraded representative of a line of monarchs to whom his ancestors on the degraded representative of a line of monarchs to whom his ancestors on the degraded representative of a line of monarchs to whom his ancestors on the degraded representative of a line of monarchs to whom his ancestors of the degraded representative of a line of monarchs to whom his ancestors. have been for ages really or nomi-culta Revnally subject?" Sir Henry Law- page 119.

They simply allowed things to take their course. Sunk in voluptuousness and pollution, often too horribly revolting to be described, they gave themselves up to the guidance of pandars and parasites, and cared not so long as these wretched creatures administered to their sensual appetites. Affairs of State were pushed aside as painful intrusions. Corruption stalked openly abroad. Every one had his price. Place, honour, justice-everything was to be bought. Fiddlers and barbers, pimps and mountebanks, became great functionaries. There were high revels at the capital, whilst, in the interior of the country, every kind of enormity was being exercised to wring from the helpless people the money which supplied the indulgences of the Court. Much of the land was farmed out to large contractors, who exacted every possible farthing from the cultivators; and were not seldom, upon complaint of extortion, made, unless inquiry were silenced by corruption, to disgorge into the royal treasury a large portion of their gains. Murders of the most revolting type, gang-robberies of the most outrageous character, were committed in open day. There were no Courts of Justice except at Lucknow; no Police but at the capital and on the frontier. The British troops were continually called out to coerce refractory landholders, and to stimulate revenue-collection at the point of the bayonet. sovereign-Wuzeer or King-knew that they would do their duty; knew that, under the obligations of the treaty, his authority would be supported; and so he lay secure in his Zenana, and fiddled whilst his country was in flames.

And so years passed; and ever went there from the Residency to the Council-chamber of the Supreme Government the same unvarying story of frightful misrule. Residents expostulated, Governors-General

protested against it. The protests in due course became threats. Time after time it was announced to the rulers of Oude that, unless some great and immediate reforms were introduced into the system of administration, the British Government, as lordsparamount, would have no course left to them but to assume the direction of affairs, and to reduce the sovereign of Oude to a pensioner and a pageant.

By no man was the principle of non-interference supported more strenuously, both in theory and in practice, than by Lord William Bentinck. But in the affairs of this Oude State he considered that he was under a righteous necessity to interfere. In April, 1831, he visited Lucknow; and there, distinctly and emphatically told the King that "unless his territorics were governed upon other principles than those hitherto followed, and the prosperity of the people made the principal object of his administration, the precedents afforded by the principalities of the Carnatic and Tanjore would be applied to the kingdom of Oude, and to the entire management of the country, and the King would be transmuted into a State prisoner." This was no mere formal harangue, but the deliberate enunciation of the Government of India; and to increase the impression which it was calculated to make on the mind of the King, the warning was afterwards communicated to him in writing. But, spoken or written, the words were of no avail. He threw himself more than ever into the arms of parasites and pandars; plunged more deeply into debauchery than before, and openly violated all decency by appearing drunk in the public streets of Lucknow.* With the corruption of the Court the

perhaps the worst. I speak dubrously, however, of their compara-biously, however, of their compara-

^{*} This was Nussur-ood-deen Hyder tive merits. Colonel Sleeman seems—the second of the Oude kings, and to have thought that he might have

1831. disorders of the country increased. The crisis seemed now to have arrived. A communication was made to the Court of Oude, that "instructions to assume the government of the country, if circumstances should render such a measure necessary, had arrived, and that their execution was suspended merely in the hope that the necessity of enforcing them might be obviated."

But in what manner was the administration to be assumed—in what manner was the improvement of the country to be brought about by the intervention of the British Government? There were different courses open to us, and they were all diligently considered. We might appoint a Minister of our own selection, and rule through him by the agency of the Resident. We might depose the ruling sovereign, and set up another and more hopeful specimen of royalty in his place. We might place the country under European administration, giving all the surplus revenues to the King. We might assume the entire government, reducing the King to a mere titular dignitary, and giving him a fixed share of the annual revenues. Or we might annex the country outright, giving him so many lakhs of rupees a year, without reference to the revenues of the principality. The ablest and most experienced Indian statesmen of the day had been invited to give their opinions. Malcolm and Metcalfe spoke freely out. The first of the above schemes seemed to represent the mildest form of interference; but both the soldier and the civilian unhesitatingly rejected it as the most odious, and, in practice, the most ruinous of all interposi-Far better, they said, to set up a new King, or even to assume the government for ourselves. those were days when native dynasties were not considered unmixed evils, and native institutions were not

pure abominations in our eyes. And it was thought that we might assume the administration of Oude, but not for ourselves. It was thought that the British Government might become the guardian and trustee of the King of Oude, administer his affairs through native agency and in accordance with native institutions, and pay every single rupee into the royal treasury.

This was the scheme of Lord William Bentinck, a man of unsurpassed honesty and justice; and it met with favourable acceptance in Leadenhall-street. The Court of Directors at that time, true to the old traditions of the Company, were slow to encourage their agents to seek pretexts for the extension of their dominions. The despatches which they sent out to India were for the most part distinguished by a praiseworthy moderation; sometimes, indeed, by a noble frankness and sincerity, which showed that the authors of them were above all disguises and pretences. They now looked the Oude business fairly in the face, but hoping still against hope that there might be some amelioration, they suffered, after the receipt of Lord William Bentinck's report, a year to pass away, and then another year, before issuing authoritative orders, and then they sent forth a despatch, which was intended to bring the whole question to a final issue. They spoke of the feelings which the deplorable situation of a country so long and so nearly connected with them had excited in their minds—of the obligations which such a state of things imposed upon them-of the necessity of finding means of effecting a great alteration. They acknowledged, as they had acknowledged before, that our connexion with the country had largely contributed to the sufferings of the people, inasmuch as it had afforded protection to tyranny, and rendered

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hopeless the resistance of the oppressed.* This made it the more incumbent upon them to adopt measures for the mitigation, if not the removal, of the existing evil. They could not look on whilst the ruin of the country was consummated. It was certain that something must be done. But what was that something to be? Then they set in array before them, somewhat as I have done above, the different measures which might be resorted to, and, dwelling upon the course which Bentinck had recommended, placed in the hands of the Governor-General a discretionary power to carry the proposed measure into effect at such period, and in such a manner as might seem advisable, but with the utmost possible consideration for the King, whose consent to the proposed arrangement was, if possible, to be obtained. It was suggested that all the titles and honours of sovercignty should remain with his Majesty as before; that the revenues should be mainly expended in the administration and the improvement of the country, and that either the surplus, or a fixed stipend, should be assigned to the King. But, at the same time, the Government were instructed, in the event of their proceeding to assume the administration of the country, distinctly to announce that, so soon as the necessary reforms should have been effected, the administration of the country, as in the case of Nagpore, would be restored to its native rulers.

Colonel John Low, of whose character and career I have already spoken, was then Resident at Luck-

vengeance." This scandal no longer existed; but our battalions were still stationed in the country, ready to dragoon down any open insurrection that might result from the

^{*} For a long time, as we have said, our troops were employed by the King's officers to aid them in the collection of the revenue; thereby active, as the Court frankly described it, as "instruments of extortion and misgovernment of Oude.

now. The despatch of the Court of Directors, authorising the temporary assumption of the Government of Oude, was communicated to him, and he pondered over its contents. The scheme appeared in his eyes to be distinguished by its moderation and humanity, and to be one of a singularly disinterested character. But he was convinced that it would be misunderstood. He said that, however pure the motives of the British Government might be, the natives of India would surely believe that we had taken the country for our-So he recommended the adoption of another method of obtaining the same end. Fully impressed with the necessity of removing the reigning King, Nussur-ood-deen, he advised the Government to set up another ruler in his place; and in order that the measure might be above all suspicion, to abstain from receiving a single rupee, or a single acre of ground, as the price of his elevation. "What I recommend is this," he said, "that the next heir should be invested with the full powers of sovereignty; and that the people of Oude should continue to live under their own institutions." He had faith in the character of that next heir; he believed that a change of men would produce a change of measures; and, at all events, it was but bare justice to try the experiment.

But, before anything had been done by the Government of India, in accordance with the discretion delegated to them by the Court of Directors, the experiment which Low had suggested inaugurated itself. Not without suspicion of poison, but really, I believe, killed only by strong drink, Nussur-ood-deen Hyder died on a memorable July night. It was a crisis of no common magnitude, for there was a disputed succession; and large bodies of lawless native troops in Lucknow were ready to strike at a moment's notice.

1835.

The cool courage of Low and his assistants saved the city from a deluge of blood. An uncle of the deceased Prince—an old man and a cripple, respectable in his feebleness—was declared King, with the consent of the British Government; and the independence of Oude had another lease of existence.

Lord Auckland was, at that time, Governor-General The new King, who could not but feel that he was a creature of the British, pledged himself to sign a new treaty. And soon it was laid before That the engagements of the old treaty had been violated, day after day, year after year, for more than a third part of a century, was a fact too patent to be questioned. The misgovernment of the country was a chronic breach of treaty. Whether the British or the Oude Government were more responsible for it was somewhat doubtful to every clear understanding and every unprejudiced mind. source of the failure was in the treaty itself, which the author of it well knew from the first was one of impossible fulfilment. But it was still a breach of treaty, and there was another in the entertainment of vast numbers of soldiers over and above the stipulated allowance. Those native levies had gradually swollen, according to Resident Low's calculations, to the bulk of seventy thousand men. Here was an evil not to be longer permitted; wonder, indeed, was it that it should have been permitted so long. This the new treaty was to remedy; no less than the continued mal-administration of the country by native agency. It provided, therefore, that in the event of any further-protracted misrule, the British Government should be entitled to appoint its own officers to the management of any part, small or great, of the province: that the old native levies should be abandoned, and a new force, commanded by British officers, organised in its place, at the cost of the Oude Government. But there was no idea of touching, in any other way, the revenues of the country. An account was to be rendered of every rupee received and expended, and the balance was to be paid punctually into the Oude Treasury.

This was the abortion, often cited in later years as the Oude Treaty of 1837. Authentic history recites that the Government of India were in throes with it, but the strangling hand of higher authority crushed all life out of the thing before it had become a fact. The treaty was wholly and absolutely disallowed by the Home Government.* They took especial exception to the establishment of the new auxiliary force, which was to cost the Oude Treasury sixteen lakhs of rupees a year; for, with all the pure logic of honesty, they said that the treaty of 1801 had made it compulsory on the British Government to provide for the defence of the country, and that a large tract of territory had been ceded with the express object of securing the payment of the troops necessary for this purpose. If, then, it were expedient to organise a fresh force under British officers, it was for the Company, not for the Oude Government, to defray the expenses of the new levy. But not only on these grounds did they object to the treaty. It is true that, a few years before, they had given the Governor-General discretionary power to deal, as he thought best, with the disorders of Oude, even to the extent of a temporary assumption of the government; but this authority had been issued at a time when Nussurood-deen, of whose vicious incapacity they had had

^{*} That is to say, by the Secret Committee, who had, by Act of Parliament, special powers in this matter of Treaty-making.

many years' experience, sat upon the throne; and the Home Government were strongly of opinion that the new King, of whose character they had received a favourable account, ought to be allowed a fair trial, under the provisions of the treaty existing at the time of his accession to the throne. They therefore directed the abrogation, not of any one article, but of the entire treaty. Wishing, however, the annulment of the treaty to appear rather as an act of grace from the Government of India than as the result of positive and unconditional instructions from England, they gave a large discretion to the Governor-General as to the mode of announcing this abrogation to the Court of Lucknow.

The receipt of these orders disturbed and perplexed the Governor-General. Arrangements for the organisation of the Oude auxiliary force had already advanced too far to admit of the suspension of the measure. It was a season, however, of difficulty and supposed danger, for the seeds of the Afghan war had been sown. Some, at least, of our regular troops in Oude were wanted to do our own work; so, in any view of the case, it was necessary to fill their places. The Auxiliary Force, therefore, was not to be arrested in its formation, but it was to be maintained at the Company's expense. Intimation to this effect was given to the King in a letter from the Governor-General, which, after acquainting his Majesty that the British Government had determined to relieve him of a burden which, in the existing state of the country, might have imposed heavier exactions on the people than they were well able to bear, expressed a strong hope that the King would see, in the relaxation of this demand, good reason for applying his surplus revenues firstly to the relief of op-

pressive taxation, and, secondly, to the prosecution of useful public works. But nothing was said, in this letter, about the abrogation of the entire treaty, nor was it desired that the Resident, in his conferences with the King or his minister, should say anything on that subject. The Governor-General, still hoping that the Home Government might be induced to consent to the terms of the treaty (the condition of the auxiliary force alone excluded), abstained from an acknowledgment which, he believed, would weaken the authority of his Government. But this was a mistake, and worse than a mistake. betrayed an absence of moral courage not easily to be justified or forgiven. The Home Government never acknowledged the validity of any later treaty than that which Lord Wellesley had negotiated at the commencement of the century.

Such is the history of the treaty of 1837. never carried out in a single particular, and seldom heard of again until after a lapse of nearly twenty years, except in a collection of treaties into which it crept by mistake.* And, for some time, indeed,

* Much was attempted to be made out of this circumstance—but the mistake of an under Secretary cannot give validity to a treaty which the highest authorities refused to ratify. If Lord Auckland was unwilling to declare the nullity of the treaty because its nullification hurt the pride of his Government, the Home Government showed no such unwillingness, for, in 1838, the following return was made to Parliament, under the signature of one of the Secretaries of the Board of Con-

"There has been no treaty con-cluded with the present King of Oude, which has been ratified by the Court the Commissioners for the affairs of (Signed) "R. GORDON.

"India Board, 3rd July, 1835." India Board, 3rd July, 1838."

It must, however, be admitted, on the other hand, that, years after this date, even in the Lucknow Residency, the treaty was held to be valid. In October, 1853, Colonel Sleeman wrote to Sir James Hogg: "The treaty of 1837 gives our tipermunt, must, authority to take vernment ample authority to take the whole administration on ourselves." And again, in 1854, to Colonel Low: "Our Government would be fully authorised at any time to enforce the penalty pre-scribed in your treaty of 1837." This was doubly a mistake. The of Directors, with the approbation of treaty was certainly not Low's.

little was heard of Oude itself. A Native State is 1838-46. never so near to death, but that it may become quite hale and lusty again when the energies and activities of the British are engrossed by a foreign war. it happened that, for some time to come, the British had quite a crop of foreign wars. First, the great Afghanistan war of Auckland, which made him wholly forgetful of Oude-her People and her King -her sorrows and her sensualities. Then there was the Sindh war of Ellenborough, intended to wash out by a small victory the stain of a great defeat, but fixing a still deeper stain upon the character of the nation; and next the fierce Mahratta onslaught, which followed closely upon it. Then there was the invasion from beyond the Sutlej, and the first Sikh war, in which Hardinge was most reluctantly immersed. Altogether, some eight years of incessant war, with a prospect of further strife, kept the sword out of the scabbard and the portfolio out of the hand. Oude was safe in its insignificance and obscurity. Moreover, Oude was, as before, loyal and sympathising, and, although the hoardings of Saadut Ali had long since been squandered, there was still money in the Treasure-chests of Lucknow. peace came, and with it a new birth of danger to the rulers of that misruled province. There had been no

> Lord Hardinge, in the quiet interval between the two Sikh wars, turned his thoughts towards the kingdom of Oude, he found Wajid Ali Shah, then a young man in the first year of his reign, giving foul pro-

change for the better; nay, rather there had been change for the worse, during the years of our conflicts beyond the frontier. One Prince had succeeded another only to emulate the vices of his ancestors with certain special variations of his own. And when

mise of sustaining the character of the Royal House.*

1847.

With the same moderation as had been shown by Lord William Bentinck, but also with the same strong sense of the paramount duty of the British Government to arrest the disorders which had so long been preying upon the vitals of the country, Lord Hardinge lifted up his voice in earnest remonstrance and solemn warning; and the young King cowered beneath the keen glance of the clear blue eyes that were turned upon him. There were no vague words in that admonition; no uncertain sound in their utterance. Wajid Ali Shah was distinctly told that the clemency of the British Government would allow him two years of grace; but that if at the end of that period of probation there were no manifest signs of improvement, the British Government could, in the interests of humanity, no longer righteously abstain from interfering peremptorily and absolutely for the introduction of a system of administration calculated to restore order and prosperity to the kingdom of Oude. The discretionary power had years before been placed in the hands of the Governor-General, and these admonitions failing, it would assuredly be exercised. A general outline of the means, by which the administration might be reformed, was laid down in a memorandum read aloud to the King; and it was added that, if his Majesty cordially entered into the plan, he might have the satisfaction.

* There was something in the number seven fatal to the Princes of Oude. Ghuzee-ood-deen Hyder died in 1827; Nussur-ood-deen in 1837; and Unijid Ali Shah in 1817. The last named succeeded, in 1812, the old King, whom we had set up, and from whose better character there appeared at one time to be some

hope of an improved administration. But, capax imperia nisi imperasset, he was, for all purposes of government, as incompetent as his predecessors. His besetting infirmity was avarice, and he seemed to care for nothing so long as the treasure-chest was full.

within the specified period of two years, of checking and eradicating the worst abuses, and, at the same time, of maintaining his own authority and the native institutions of his kingdom unimpaired—but that if he should adhere to his old evil ways, he must be prepared for the alternative and its consequences.

Nervous and excitable at all times, and greatly affected by these words, the King essayed to speak; but the power of utterance had gone from him. he took a sheet of paper and wrote upon it, that he thanked the Governor-General, and would regard his counsels as though they had been addressed by a father to his son. There are no counsels so habitually disregarded; the King, therefore, kept his word. Relieved from the presence of the Governor-General his agitation subsided, and he betook himself, without a thought of the future, to his old courses. and dancers, singing men and eunuchs, were suffered to usurp the government and to absorb the revenues of the country. The evil influence of these vile panders and parasites was felt throughout all conditions of society and in all parts of the country. Sunk in the uttermost abysses of enfeebling debauchery, the King pushed aside the business which he felt himself incapable of transacting, and went in search of new pleasures. Stimulated to the utmost by unnatural excitements, his appetites were satiated by the debaucheries of the Zenana, and, with an understanding emasculated to the point of childishness, he turned to the more harmless delights of dancing, and drumming, and drawing, and manufacturing small Had he devoted himself to these pursuits in private life, there would have been small harm in them, but overjoyed with his success as a musician, he went about the crowded streets of Lucknow with

a big drum round his neck, striking as much noise out of it as he could, with all the extravagance of childish delight.

The two years of probation had passed away, and the British Resident reported that "the King had not, since the Governor-General's visit in October, 1847, shown any signs of being fully aware of the responsibility he incurred." "In fact," he added, "I do not think that his Majesty can ever be brought to feel the responsibilities of sovereignty strongly enough to be induced to bear that portion of the burden of its duties that must necessarily devolve upon him; he will always confide it to the worthless minions who are kept for his amusements, and enjoy exclusively his society and his confidence." So the time had arrived when the British Government might have righteously assumed the administration of Oude. The King had justly incurred the penalty, but the paramount power was in no haste to inflict it. Lord Dalhousie was Governor-General of India; but again the external conflicts of the British were the salvation of the sovereignty of Oude. The Punjab was in flames, and once more Lucknow was forgotten. The conquest of the Sikhs; the annexation of their country; the new Burmese war and its results; the lapses of which I have spoken in my last chapter; and many important affairs of internal administration of which I have yet to speak, occupied the ever-active mind of Lord Dalhousie until the last year of his reign; but it was felt by every one, who knew and pondered over the wretched state of the country, that the day of reckoning was approaching, and that the British Government could not much longer shrink from the performance of a duty imposed upon it by every consideration of humanity.

1819-50.

Colonel Sleeman was then Resident at Lucknow. He was a man of a liberal and humane nature, thoroughly acquainted with the character and feelings, the institutions and usages of the people of India. No man had a larger toleration for the short-comings of native Governments, because no one knew better how much our own political system had aggravated, if they had not produced, the evils of which we most complained. But he sympathised at the same time acutely with the sufferings of the people living under those native Governments; and his sympathy overcame his toleration. Having lived all his adult life in India—the greater part of it in, or on the borders of, the Native States—he was destitute of all overweening prepossessions in favour of European institutions and the "blessings of British rule." But the more he saw, on the spot, of the terrible effects of the misgovernment of Oude, the more convinced he was of the paramount duty of the British Government to step in and arrest the atrocities which were converting one of the finest provinces of India into a moral pest-In 1849 and 1850 he made a tour through the interior of the country. He carried with him the prestige of a name second to none in India, as that of a friend of the poor, a protector of the weak, and a redresser of their wrongs. Conversing freely and familiarly in the native languages, and knowing well the character and the feelings of the people, he had a manner that inspired confidence, and the art of extracting from every man the information which he was During this tour in the interior, best able to afford. he noted down, from day to day, all the most striking facts which were brought to his notice, with the reflections which were suggested by them; and the whole presented a revolting picture of the worst type of misrule—of a feebleness worse than despotism, of an apathy more productive of human suffering than the worst forms of tyrannous activity. In the absence of all controlling authority, the strong carried on everywhere a war of extermination against the weak. Powerful families, waxing gross on outrage and rapine, built forts, collected followers, and pillaged and murdered at discretion, without fear of justice overtaking their crimes. Nay, indeed, the greater the criminal the more sure he was of protection, for he could purchase immunity with his spoil. There was hardly, indeed, an atrocity committed, from one end of the country to the other, that was not, directly or indirectly, the result of the profligacy and corruption of the Court.*

Such was Colonel Sleeman's report of the state of the Oude country; such was his account of what he had seen with his own eyes or heard with his own ears. There was not a man in the Two Services who was more distressed by the fury for annexation which

"The Talookdars keep the country in a perpetual state of disturbance, and render life, property, and industry, everywhere insecure. Whenever they quarrel with each other, or with the local authorities of the Government, from whatever cause, they take to indiscriminate plunder and murder—over all lands not held by men of the same class—uo road, town, village, or hamlet, is secure from their merciless attacks—robbery and murder become their diversion, their sport, and they think no more of taking the lives of men, women, and children, who never offended them, than those of deer and wild hogs. They not only rob and murder, but seize, confine, and torture all whom they seize, and suppose to have money or credit, till they ransom themselves with all they have, or can beg or borrow. Hardly

a day has passed since I left Lucknow, in which I have not had abundant proof of numerous atrocities of this kind committed by landholders within the district through which I was passing, year by year, up to the present day." And again: "It is worthy of remark that these great landholders, who have recently ac-quired their possessions by the plunder and the murder of their weaker neighbours, and who continue their system of plunder in order to acquire the means to maintain their gangs and add to their possessions, are those who are most favoured at Court, and most conciliated by the local rulers, because they are more able and more willing to pay for the favour of the one and set at defiance the authority of the other."-Slesman's Diary.

was at that time breaking out in the most influential public prints and the highest official circles. He saw clearly the danger into which this grievous lust of dominion was hurrying us, and he made a great effort to arrest the evil; * but he lifted up a warning voice The letters which he addressed to the Governor-General and to the Chairman of the East India Company appear to have produced no effect. He did not see clearly, at that time, that the principles which he held in such abhorrence were cherished by Lord Dalhousie himself, and he did not know that the Court of Directors had such faith in their Governor-General that they were content to substitute his principles for their own. But, utterly distasteful to him as were the then prevailing sentiments in favour of absorption and confiscation, Sleeman never closed his eyes against the fact that interference in the affairs of Oude, even to. the extent of the direct assumption of the government, would be a righteous interference. Year after year he had pressed upon the Governor-General the urgent necessity of the measure. But, perhaps, had he known in what manner his advice was destined to be followed, and how his authority would be asserted in justifica-

* See Sleeman's Correspondence, passim. Exempli gratia: "In September, 1848, I took the liberty to mention to your Lordship my fears that the system of annexing and absorbing Native States—so popular with our Indian Services, and so much advocated by a certain class of writers in public journals—might some day render us too visibly dependent upon our Native Army; that they might see it, and that accidents might occur to unite them, or too great a portion of them, in some desperate act."—(Colonel Sleeman to Lord Dalhousis, April, 1852.) And again: "I deem such doctrines to be

dangerous to our rule in India, and prejudicial to the best interests of the country. The people see that these annexations and confiscations go on, and that rewards and honorary distinctions are given for them and for the victories which lead to them, and for little else; and they are too apt to infer that they are systematic and encouraged and prescribed from home. The Native States I consider to be breakwaters, and when they are all swept away we shall be left to the mercy of our Native Army, which may not always be sufficiently under our control."—('olonel Sleeman to Sir James Hogg, January, 1853.

tion of an act which he could never countenance, he would rather have suffered the feeble-minded debauchee who was called King of Oude still to remain in undisturbed possession of the throne, than have uttered a word that might hasten a measure so at variance with his sense of justice, and so injurious as he thought to our best interests, as that of which the interference of Government eventually took the shape.

Sleeman's advice had been clear, consistent, unmistakable. "Assume the administration," he said, "but do not grasp the revenues of the country." Some years before the same advice had been given by Henry Lawrence,* between whom and Sleeman there was much concord of opinion and some similitude of character. The private letters of the latter, addressed to the highest Indian functionaries, and, therefore, having all the weight and authority of public documents, were as distinct upon this point as the most emphatic words could make them. "What the people want, and most earnestly pray for," he wrote to the Governor-General, "is that our Government should take upon itself the responsibility of governing them well and permanently. All classes, save the knaves. who now surround and govern the King, earnestly pray for this—the educated classes, because they would then have a chance of respectable employment, which none of them now have; the middle classes, because they find no protection or encouragement, and no hope that their children will be permitted to inherit

(The italics are Lawrence's.) "Let Oude be at last governed, not for one man, the King, but for him and his people."—Calcutta Review, vol. iii. (1845); and Lawrence's Essays, p. 132.

^{*&}quot;Let the management," he said,
"be assumed under some such rules
as those which were laid down by
Lord William Beutinck. Let the
administration of the country, as far
as possible, be native. Let not a
rapec come into the Company's coffers."

the property they leave, not invested in our Government Securities; and the humbler classes, because they are now abandoned to the merciless rapacity of the starving troops and other public establishments, and of the landholders driven or invited to rebellion by the present state of misrule." But he added: "I believe that it is your Lordship's wish that the whole of the revenues of Oude should be expended for the benefit of the Royal Family and People of Oude, and that the British Government should disclaim any wish to derive any pecuniary advantage from assuming to itself the administration." And again, about the same time, he had written to the Chairman of the Court of Directors, urging the expediency of assuming the administration, but adding: "If we do this, we must, in order to stand well with the rest of India, honestly and distinctly disclaim all interested motives, and appropriate the whole of the revenues for the benefit of the People and Royal Family of Oude. If we do this, all India will think us right." And again, a few months later, writing to the same high authority, he said, mournfully and prophetically, that to annex and confiscate the country, and to appropriate the revenues to ourselves, would "be most profitable in a pecuniary view, but most injurious in a political one. It would tend to accelerate the crisis which the doctrines of the absorbing school must sooner or later bring upon us."*

Such was the counsel Sleeman gave; such were the warnings he uttered. But he did not remain in India, nay, indeed he did not live, to see his advice ignored, his cautions disregarded. After long years of arduous and honourable service, compelled to retire in broken

^{*} Private correspondence of Sir of the English edition of his "Diary W. H. Sleeman, printed at the end in Oude."

health from his post, he died on his homeward voyage, leaving behind him a name second to none upon the roll of the benefactors and civilisers of India, for he had grappled with her greatest abomination, and had Thuggee. effectually subdued it. Some solace had it been to him when he turned his back upon the country to know that his place would be well and worthily filled. "Had your Lordship left the choice of a successor to me," he wrote to the Governor-General, "I should September, have pointed out Colonel Outram; and I feel very much rejoiced that he has been selected for the office, and I hope he will come as soon as possible."

An officer of the Company's army on the Bombay establishment, James Outram had done good service to his country, good service to the people of India, on many different fields of adventure; and had risen, not without much sore travail and sharp contention, to a place in the estimation of his Government and the affections of his comrades, from which he could afford to look down upon the conflicts of the Past with measureless calmness and contentment. Versed alike in the stern severities of war and the civilising humanities of peace, he was ready at a moment's notice to lead an army into the field or to superintend the government of a province. But it was in rough soldier's work, or in that still rougher work of mingled war and diplomacy which falls to the share of the Political officer in India, that Outram's great and good qualities were most conspicuously displayed. For in him, with courage of the highest order, with masculine energy and resolution, were combined the gentleness of a woman and the simplicity of a child. No man knew better how to temper power with mercy and forbearance, and to combat intrigue and perfidy with pure sincerity and stainless truth. This truth-

fulness was, indeed, perhaps the most prominent, as it was the most perilous, feature of his character. Whatsoever he might do, whatsoever he might say, the whole was there before you in its full proportions. He wore his heart upon his sleeve, and was incapable of concealment or disguise. - A pure sense of honour, a strong sense of justice, the vehement assertions of which no self-interested discretion could hold in restraint, brought him sometimes into collision with others, and immersed him in a sea of controversy. But although, perhaps, in his reverential love of truth, he was over-eager to fight down what he might have been well content to live down, and in after life he may have felt that these wordy battles were very little worth fighting, he had still no cause to regret them, for he came unhurt from the conflict. after one of these great conflicts, the growth of serious official strife, which had sent him from an honourable post into still more honourable retirement, that, returning to India with strong credentials from his masters in Leadenhall-street, Lord Dalhousie selected him to succeed Sleeman as Resident at Lucknow.

The choice was a wise one. There was work to be done which required a hand at once gentle and strong. The fame of Outram was not the fame of a spoliator, but of a just man friendly to the native Princes and chiefs of India, who had lifted up his voice against wrongs done to them in his time, and who would rather have closed his public career than have been the agent of an unrighteous policy. But a measure which Low, and Sleeman, and Henry Lawrence had approved, nay, which in the interests of humanity they had strenuously recommended, was little likely to be an unrighteous one, and Outram, whilst rejoicing that his past career had thus been stamped by

his Government with the highest practical approval, accepted the offer in the full assurance that he could fulfilits duties without a stain upon his honour or a burden upon his conscience.*

Making all haste to join his appointment, Outram quitted Aden, where the summons reached him, and took ship for Calcutta, where he arrived in the first month of the cold season. His instructions were soon November, prepared for him; they were brief, but they suggested the settled resolution of Government to wait no longer for impossible improvements from within, but at once to shape their measures for the assertion, in accordance with Treaty, of the authority of the Paramount State. But it was not a thing to be done in a hurry. The measure itself was to be deliberately carried out after certain preliminary formalities of inquiry and reference. It was Outram's part to inquire. A report upon the existing state of Oude was called for from the new Resident, and before the end of March it was forwarded to Calcutta. It was an elaborate history of the misgovernment of Oude from the commencement of the century, a dark catalogue of crime and suffering "caused by the culpable apathy of the Sovereign and the Durbar." "I have shown," said the new Resident, in conclusion, "that the affairs of Oude still continue in the same state, if not worse, in which Colonel Sleeman from time to time described them to be, and that the improvement which Lord Hardinge peremptorily demanded, seven years ago, at the hands of the King, in pursuance of the Treaty of 1801, has not, in any degree, been effected. And I have no hesitation in declaring my opinion,

1854.

1854.

ministration. The manner of carry-

^{*} I speak, of course, of the mere ing out the measure had not then fact of the assumption of the adbeen decided.

therefore, that the duty imposed on the British Government by that treaty, cannot any longer admit of our 'honestly indulging the reluctance which the Government of India has felt heretofore to have recourse to those extreme measures which alone can be of any real efficiency in remedying the evils from which the state of Oude has suffered so long."

To this report, and to much earlier information of the same kind with which the archives of Government were laden, the Governor-General gave earnest and sustained attention amidst the refreshing quiet of the Blue Mountains of Madras. The weighty document had picked up, on its road through Calcutta, another still more weighty, in the shape of a minute written by General Low. Few as were the words, they exhausted all the arguments in favour of intervention, and clothed them with the authority of a great name. No other name could have invested them with this authority, for no other man had seen so much of the evils of native rule in Oude, and no man was on principle more averse to the extinction of the native dynasties of India. All men must have felt the case to be very bad when John Low, who had spoken the brave words in defence of the Princes and chiefs of India which I have cited in the last chapter, was driven to the forcible expression of his conviction that it was the paramount duty of the British Government to interfere at once for the protection of the people of Oude.*

March 28, 1855.

* Low said that he was in favour of interference, "because the public and shameful oppressions committed on the people by Government officers in Oude have of late years been constant and extreme; because the King of Oude has continually, during many years, broken the Treaty by syste-

matically disregarding our advice, instead of following it, or even endeavouring to follow it; because we are bound by *Treaty* (quite different in that respect from our position relatively to most of the great Native States) to prevent serious interior misrule in Oude; because it has

It was not possible to add much in the way of fact to what Outram had compiled, or much in the way of argument to what Low had written. But Dalhousie, to whom the fine bracing air of the Neilgherries had imparted a new-born capacity for sustained labour, sat himself down to review the whole question in a gigantic minute. He signed it on the 18th June; and, indeed, it was his Waterloo-the crowning victory of It is not necessary to repeat the facts, annexation. for I have stated them, or the arguments, for I have suggested them. No reader can have followed me thus far, without a strong assurance on his mind that it would have been a grievous wrong done to humanity to have any longer abstained from interference. But what was the interference to be? Here was a question for the Governor-General to solve in the invigorating atmosphere of Ootacamund—a question, the solution of which was to yield the crowning measure of his long vice-regal career:

There may have been many ways of working out the practical details of this measure; but there was only one uncertain point which was of much substantial importance. All men agreed that the Treaty of 1801 might rightfully be declared to have ceased by reason of repeated violations, and that with the consent of the King, if attainable, or without it, if unattainable, the Government of the country might be transferred to the hands of European administrators. That the King must be reduced to a mere cypher was

been fully proved that we have not to these pungent sentences an exprevented it, and that we cannot pression of opinion that the unprevent it by the present mode of conducting our relations with that State; and because no man of common sense can entertain the smallest expectation that the present King of Onde can ever become an efficient ference by the orders of higher ruler of his country." And he added authority at home.

fulfilled threats of Lord Hardinge had increased the evil, inasmuch as that they had produced an impression in Oude that the Indian Government were restrained from inter-

certain; it was certain that all possible respect ought to be shown to him in his fallen fortunes, and that he and all his family ought to be splendidly endowed; no question could well be raised upon these points. The question was, what was to be done with the surplus revenue after paying all the expenses of administration? Just and wise men, as has been shown, had protested against the absorption of a single rupee into the British Treasury. They said that it would be as politic as it would be righteous, to demonstrate to all the States and Nations of India, that we had not deposed the King of Oude for our own benefitthat we had done a righteous act on broad principles of humanity, by which we had gained nothing. Lord Dalhousie, though he proposed not to annex the country, determined to take the revenues.

It is not very easy to arrive at a just conception of his views: "The reform of the administration," he said, "may be wrought, and the prosperity of the people may be secured, without resorting to so extreme a measure as the annexation of the territory and the abolition of the throne. I, for my part, therefore, do not recommend that the province of Oude should be declared to be British territory." But he proposed that the King of Oude, whilst retaining the sovereignty of his dominions, should "vest all power, jurisdiction, rights and claims thereto belonging, in the hands of the East India Company," and that the surplus revenues should be at the disposal of the Company. What this territorial sovereignty was to be, without territorial rights or territorial revenues, it is not easy to see. When the Newab of the Carnatic and the Rajah of Tanjore were deprived of their rights and revenues, they were held to be not territorial, but titular sovereigns. The Nizam, on the

other hand, might properly be described as "territorial sovereign" of the Assigned Districts, although the administration had been taken from him, because an account of the revenue was to be rendered to him, and the surplus was to be paid into his hands. But the King of Oude, in Dalhousie's scheme, was to have had no more to do with his territories, than the titular sovereigns of the Carnatic and Tanjore; and yet he was to be told that he was "to retain the sovereignty of all the territories" of which he was then in possession.

Strictly interpreted to the letter, the scheme did not suggest the annexation of Oude. The province was not to be incorporated with the British dominions. The revenues were to be kept distinct from those of the empire; there was to be a separate balance-sheet; and thus far the province was to have a sort of integrity of its own. This is sufficiently intelligible in itself; and, if the balance being struck, the available surplus had been payable to the King of Oude, the rest of the scheme would have been intelligible also, for there would have been a quasi-sovereignty of the territories thus administered still remaining with the King. But the balance being payable into the British Treasury, it appears that Oude, in this state of financial isolation, would still have substantially been British territory, as much as if it had become a component part of the empire. Again, under the proposed system, Oude would have been beyond the circle of our ordinary legislation, in which respect it would not have differed much from other "Non-Regulation Provinces;" and if it had, even this Legislative segregation superadded to the Financial isolation of which I have spoken, would not have made it any the less British The Channel Islands have a separate territory.

Budget and distinct laws of their own, but still they are component parts of the British Empire, although they do not pay their surplus into the British Treasury. But in everything that really constitutes Kingship, the Bailiff of Jersey is as much the territorial sovereign of that island as Wajid Ali would have been territorial sovereign of Oude under Lord Dalhousie's programme of non-annexation.

But this transparent disguise was not to be worn; this distinction without a difference was not to be asserted, anywhere out of Lord Dalhousie's great The thing that was to be done soon came to take its proper place in the Councils of the Indian Empire as the Annexation of Oude: and it was as the annexation of Oude that the measure was considered by the Government at home. The Court of Directors consented to the annexation of Oude. Board of Control consented to the annexation of Oude. The British Cabinet consented to the annexation of Oude. The word was not then, as it since has been, freely used in official documents, but it was in all men's minds, and many spoke it out bluntly instead of talking delicately about "assuming the Government of the Country." And, whether right or wrong, the responsibility of the measure rested as much with the Queen's Ministers as with the Merchant Company. That the Company had for long years shown great forbearance is certain. They had hoped against hope, and acted against all experience. eager, indeed, had they been to give the native Princes of India a fair trial, that they had disallowed the proposed treaty of 1837, and had pronounced an authoritative opinion in favour of the maintenance of the then existing Native States of India. But twenty more years of misrule and anarchy had

raised in their minds a feeling of wondering selfreproach at the thought of their own patience; and when they responded to the reference from Calcutta, they said that the doubt raised by a survey of the facts before them, was not whether it was then incumbent upon them to free themselves from the responsibility of any longer upholding such a Government, but whether they could excuse themselves for not having, many years before, performed so imperative a duty.

in the middle of November. At midnight on the 2nd of January, the Governor-General mastered its

contents. Had he thought of himself more than of his country he would not have been there at that time. The energies of his mind were undimmed; but climate, and much toil, and a heavy sorrow weighing on his heart, had shattered a frame never constitutionally robust, and all men said that he was "breaking." Without any failure of duty, without any imputation on his zeal, he might have left to his successor the ungrateful task of turning into stern realities the oft-repeated menaces of the British rulers who had gone before him. But he was not one to shrink from the performance of such a task because it was a painful and unpopular one. He believed that by no one could the duty of bringing the Oude Government to solemn account be so fitly

1855.

The despatch of the Court of Directors was signed November 19, 1855.

discharged as by one who had watched for seven years the accumulation of its offences, and seen the measure of its guilt filled to the brim. He had intimated, therefore, to the Court of Directors his willingness to remain at his post to discharge this duty, and in the despatch, which he read in the quiet of alacrity with which his offer was accepted, and he girded himself for the closing act of his long and eventful administration.*

Next morning he sumutoned a Council: It was little more than a form. Dalhousie had waited for the authoritative sanction of the Home Government: but he knew that sanction was coming, and he was prepared for its arrival. The greater part of the work had, indeed, been already done. The instructions to be sent to the Resident; the treaty to be proposed to the King; the proclamation to be issued to the people had all been drafted. The whole scheme of internal government had been matured, and the agency to be employed had been carefully considered. The muster-roll of the new administration was ready, and the machinery was complete. The system was very closely to resemble that which had been tried with such good success in the Punjab, and its agents were, as in that province, to be a mixed body of civil and military officers, under a Chief Commissioner. All the weighty documents, by which the revolution was to be effected, were in the Portfolio of the Foreign Secretary; and now, at this meeting of the Council, they were formally let loose to do their work.

The task which Outram was commissioned to perform was a difficult, a delicate, and a painful one. He was to endeavour to persuade the King of Oude formally to abdicate his sovereign functions, and to make over, by a solemn treaty, the government of his territories to the East India Company. In the event of his refusal, a proclamation was to be issued, declaring the whole of Oude to be British territory.

^{*} The Court of Directors to the Government of India, November 19, 1855. Paragraph 19.

By a man of Outram's humane and generous nature no counsel from his Government was needed to induce him to do the work entrusted to him in the manner least likely to wound the feelings of the King. · But it was right that such counsel should be given. It was given; but the decree of the Paramount State, tempered as it might be by outward courtesy of manner, was still to be carried out, with stern and resolute action. No protests, no remonstrances, no promises, no prayers were to be suffered to arrest the retributive measure for a day. It need not be added that no resistance could avert it. A body of British troops, sufficient to trample down all possible opposition, had been moved up into a position to overawe Lucknow, and for the doomed Government of Oude to attempt to save itself by a display of force would have been only to court a most useless butchery.

Outrain received his instructions at the end of On the last day of the month he placed himself in communication with the Oude Minister, clearly stated the orders of the British Government, and said that they were final and decisive. days were spent in preliminary formalities and negotiations. In true Oriental fashion, the Court endeavoured to gain time, and, appealing to Outram, through the aged Queen Mother-a woman with far more of masculine energy and resolution than her son-importuned him to persuade his Government to give the King another trial, to wait for the arrival of the new Governor-General, to dictate to Wajid Ali any reforms to be carried out in his name. All this had been expected; all this provided for. Outram had but one answer; the day of trial, the day of forbcarance was past. All that he could now do was to deliver his message to the King.

On the 4th of February, Wajid Ali announced his willingness to receive the British Resident; and Outram, accompanied by his lieutenants, Hayes and Strange and sig-Weston, proceeded to the palace. nificant symptoms greeted them as they went. guns at the palace-gates were dismounted. lace-guards were unarmed. The guard of honour, who should have presented arms to the Resident, saluted him only with their hands. Attended by his brother and a few of his confidential Ministers, the King received the English gentlemen at the usual spot; and after the wonted ceremonies, the business commenced. Outram presented to the King a letter from the Governor-General, which contained, in terms of courteous explanation, the sentence that had been passed upon him, and urged him not to resist it. draft of the proposed treaty was then placed in his hands. He received it with a passionate burst of grief, declared that treaties were only between equals; that there was no need for him to sign it, as the British would do with him and his possessions as they pleased; they had taken his honour and his country, and he would not ask them for the means of maintaining his life. All that he sought was permission to proceed to England, and cast himself and his sorrows at the foot of the Throne. Nothing could move him from his resolution not to sign the treaty. He uncovered his head; placed his turban in the hands of the Resident, and sorrowfully declared that title, rank, honour, everything were gone; and that now the British Government, which had made his grandfather a King, might reduce him to nothing, and consign him to obscurity.

In this exaggerated display of helplessness there was something too characteristically Oriental for any

part of it to be assigned to European prompting. But if the scene had been got up expressly for an English audience, it could not have been more cunningly contrived to increase the appearance of harshness and cruelty with which the friends of the King were prepared to invest the act of dethronement. was more likely than Outram to have been doubly pained, in the midst of all his painful duties, by the unmanly prostration of the King. To deal harshly with one who declared himself so feeble and defenceless, was like striking a woman or a cripple. five millions of people were not to be given up, from generation to generation, to suffering and sorrow, because an effeminate Prince, when told he was no longer to have the power of inflicting measureless wrongs on his country, burst into tears, said that he was a miserable wretch, and took off his turban instead of taking out his sword.

There was nothing now left for Outram but to issue a proclamation, prepared for him in Calcutta, declaring the province of Oude to be thenceforth, for ever, a component part of the British Indian Empire. It went forth to the people of Oude; and the people of Oude, without a murmur, accepted their new masters. There were no popular risings. Not a blow was struck in defence of the native dynasty of Oude. The whole population went over quietly to their new rulers, and the country, for a time, was outwardly more tranquil than before.

This was the last act of Lord Dalhousic's Ministry. When he placed the Portfolio of Government in the hands of Lord Canning, the British officers to whom had been entrusted the work of reforming the administration of Oude, were discharging their prescribed duties with an energy which scemed to

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promise the happiest results. The King was still obstinate and sullen. He persisted in refusing to sign the treaty or to accept the proposed stipend of twelve lakhs; and though he had thought better of the idea of casting himself at the foot of the British Throne, he had made arrangements to send his nearest kindred—his mother, his brother, and his son—to England to perform a vicarious act of obeisance, and to clamour for his rights.

With what result the administration, as copied closely from the Punjabee system, was wrought out in detail, will be shown at a subsequent stage of this narrative. It was thought, as the work proceeded in quietude and in seeming prosperity, that it was a great success; and it gladdened the heart of the Government in Leadenhall-street, to think of the accomplishment of this peaceful revolution. that the measure itself made a very bad impression on the minds of the people of India, is not to be doubted; not because of the deposition of a King who had abused his powers; not because of the introduction of a new system of administration for the benefit of the people; but because the humanity of the act was soiled by the profit which we derived from it; and to the comprehension of the multitude it appeared that the good of the people, which we had vaunted whilst serving ourselves, was nothing more than a pretext and a sham; and that we had simply extinguished one of the few remaining Mahomedan States of India that we might add so many thousands of square miles to our British territories, and so many millions of rupees to the revenues of the British Empire in the East. And who, it was asked, could be safe, if we thus treated one who had ever been the most faithful of our allies?



