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CASHMERE AND ITS PRINCE

AN AUTHENTIC EXPOSITION
OF THE
RECENT *IMBROGLIO*
IN
CASHMERE

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BY

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PREFACE.

My object in writing this pamphlet is to submit for the information of the Supreme Government, the Government at Home, and the great British Nation, the true facts, as far as I have been able to ascertain them, in connection with the recent *imbroglio* in Cashmere. Having been a Member of the Maharaja's Government for a time, I enjoyed exceptional opportunities of carefully watching the Maharaja, and was greatly impressed with his numerous personal qualities. My firm conviction is that he is one of the best of Indian Princes. But he has been grossly misrepresented, and hence a proper measure of justice has not been meted out to him. If this pamphlet contributes to remove the false notions that have obtained currency regarding His Highness and to obtain a redress of his wrongs, I shall consider my object gained and my troubles amply rewarded.

There is one point in the pamphlet which may call for a little explanation. The Maharaja, in his letter to the Viceroy (Appendix I. A.), said that he had asked for the loan of two well-experienced officers from the Government of India to act as his Councillors, whereas I have said that they were thrust upon him. This may look like a contradiction; but the fact is that the Maharaja at first expressed a desire to have men of his choice, but failing to get them, he submitted to the suggestion to obtain a couple of officials from British India, and asked for them. It is clear, therefore, that he would not have taken these officials if he had obtained those whom he wanted.

I have given in Appendix II. translations of a few of the orders and proclamations, issued by the Maharaja during the first year of his reign for the amelioration of the condition of his



subjects. A large number of them had been issued, but the offices having come under the control of the Maharaja's opponents, copies of most of them could not be procured. I have given those only that were in my possession.

In conclusion, I may add that when I was in the Maharaja's service, I was opposed to no party in the State, and that I gave up service voluntarily, because I found it impossible to help on the reforms to assist which I had, at some personal sacrifice joined the Maharaja's Government.

CALCUTTA,
20th, September, 1889.

J. C. BOSE.



CASHMERE AND ITS PRINCE.

CHAPTER I.

POLITICAL HISTORY—TREATY OF AMRITSAR—SERVICES BY SUCCESSIVE MAHARAJAS.

THE Cashmere *imbroglio* has caused a deep sensation throughout the country. The Native Press is almost unanimous in its condemnation of the measures recently adopted in Cashmere, while the Anglo-Indian papers, with one recent exception, have spoken out in support of those measures. The discussion has thus assumed an importance and a magnitude quite in keeping with the greatness of the subject involved in it. The discussion is, however, not free from difficulties. Want of full and accurate information and of a right understanding of the merits of the case has, apart from party bias and interested prejudices, contributed not a little to swell those difficulties. It will, therefore, be my earnest endeavour to give, in some detail, those facts and circumstances that may lead to a right apprehension of the case, and dispel many a false notion that now seems to hang over its discussion.

To discharge faithfully this self-imposed task, it is necessary to commence with a rapid glance of the recent political history of Cashmere. But before I plunge into this branch of the subject, it will be well to remember that, in speaking of Cashmere generally, I shall mean not only the "Happy Valley," but the whole of those territories that are governed by the Maharaja of



Jummoo and Cashmere, comprising the five provinces of Jummoo, Cashmere, Ladakh, Baltistan and Gilgit. The area of these territories has by Frederick Drew been given at 68,000 square miles, of which only 3,900 square miles, or about a seventeenth part, is, according to the same authority, occupied by Cashmere proper. These territories had not been under one ruler before the time of Maharaja Golab Singh, the grandfather of the present Maharaja. They had, on the contrary, been broken up into a number of petty principalities. Cashmere, Baltistan and Gilgit had long passed into Mahomedan hands, but Ladakh and Jummoo never acknowledged a foreign sway—the last, in particular, which has always been governed by Hindu kings. In the middle of the last century, the ruler of Jummoo was the well-known Runjit Dev, who claimed descent from the ancient dynasty of the Moon. Runjit Dev had three brothers of whom the youngest was Soorat Dev. Maharaja Golab Singh was the great grandson of Soorat Dev. After the death of Runjit Dev, his principality fell into confusion and was devastated by civil war. It remained in this condition for about half a century. At length, Golab Singh, who had taken service under the Lahore Durbar, reduced Jummoo and the adjacent hill states to subjection, for which he was rewarded with his hereditary chiefship of Jummoo, held as a fief under the late Maharaja Runjit Singh. This was in 1820. Golab Singh now turned his attention towards introducing order among his subjects who had become lawless and turbulent during the anarchy that followed the death of Runjit Dev. He accomplished this work so successfully that, in respect of security of person and property, his state soon became "a pattern." Having established

a firm rule in Jummoo, Golab Singh cast a wistful eye on Ladakh which as well as Baltistan was conquered for him by his General, Zorawar Singh, between the years 1835-1840. In 1843, his youngest brother Suchet Singh died childless, and the chiefship of Ramnagar, held by the latter, was incorporated in the Jummoo territories. So, about this time, Golab Singh became master of most of the possessions now held by his family, save Cashmere and Gilgit.

In the winter of 1845-46, the first Sikh War broke out, but Golab Singh held aloof from hostilities. This was one of the most hotly contested campaigns that our English rulers ever fought in this country, and victory at one time trembled in the balance. The battle of Sobraon, however, decided the fate of the contest in favour of the British. Then Golab Singh appeared as a mediator between the contending parties. His mediation was gladly accepted and a treaty was, on 9th March 1846, concluded between the British Government and the Lahore Durbar by which the latter ceded, as an indemnity for one crore of rupees, to the East India Company, in perpetual sovereignty, the hill-country between the Beas and the Indus. A week later, that is, on 16th March 1846, a second treaty, known as the treaty of Amritsar, was made by the British Government with Maharaja Golab Singh by which about three-fourths of the above hill-country were agreed to be made over to him. This treaty contained the following articles :—

“ I.—The British Government transfers and makes over for ever, in independent possession, to Maharaja Golab Singh and the heirs male of his body, all the hilly and mountainous country, situated to the eastward of the river Indus and westward of the river Ravee, in-

ARTICLES OF THE TREATY.

cluding Chamba and excluding Lahoul, being part of the territories ceded to the British Government by the Lahore State, according to the provisions of article IV of the Treaty of Lahore, dated 9th March 1846.

" II.—The eastern boundary of the tract, transferred by the foregoing article to Maharaja Golab Singh, shall be laid down by Commissioners appointed by the British Government and Maharaja Golab Singh, respectively, for that purpose, and shall be defined in a separate engagement after survey.

" III.—In consideration of the transfer made to him and his heirs by the provisions of the foregoing articles, Maharaja Golab Singh will pay to the British Government the sum of rupees (Nanakshahi) fifty lakhs to be paid in ratification of this treaty, and twenty-five lakhs on or before the 1st October of the current year A. D. 1846.

" IV.—The limits of the territories of Maharaja Golab Singh shall not, at any time, be changed without the concurrence of the British Government.

" V.—Maharaja Golab Singh will refer to the arbitration of the British Government any disputes or questions that may arise between himself and the Government of Lahore or any other neighbouring State, and will abide by the decision of the British Government.

" VI.—Maharaja Golab Singh engages for himself and his heirs to join, with the whole of his military force, the British troops when employed in the hills, or in the territories adjoining his possessions.

" VII.—Maharaja Golab Singh engages never to take or retain in his service any British subject nor the subject of any European or American State without the consent of the British Government.

" VIII.—Maharaja Golab Singh engages to respect.



in regard to the territory transferred to him, the provisions of articles V. VI. and VII. of the separate engagement between the British Government and the Lahore Durbar, dated 9th March 1846. (These clauses in the Lahore Treaty referred to the Jagirdars, to arrears of revenue and to the property in the forts thereby transferred.)

“IX.—The British Government will give its aid to Maharaja Golab Singh in protecting his territories from external enemies.

“X.—Maharaja Golab Singh acknowledges the supremacy of the British Government, and will in token of such supremacy present annually to the British Government one horse, twelve perfect shawl goats of approved breed (six male and six female), and three pairs Cashmere shawls.”

Three things become quite clear from the above conditions, namely, first, that the territories included in the Treaty of Amritsar were made over to Golab Singh and the heirs male of his body for ever in independent possession ; second, that those territories were so made over, not only for eminent services and in confirmation of existing rights, but actually for a valuable consideration in hard cash ; and third, that the Maharaja was exempted from payment of a tribute and thus accorded a place higher than that of most Indian Princes and Chiefs. It would be well to bear in mind these three things in order to clearly understand the discussion that is hereafter to follow.

A good deal of controversy has taken place of late as to whether the British Government was right in selling Cashmere to Maharaja Golab Singh. It would be bootless, for my present purpose, to pursue that controversy in all its details. Those who *now* object to the



transfer evidently forget the circumstances that surrounded the Government of the East India Company at the time the bargain was made. But in dealing with a delicate question of this nature, I prefer quoting the words of an English writer on the subject, whose observations are worthy of attentive perusal :—

“One great object the Governor-General had in view when he made this arrangement for the Jummoo and Cashmere territories, was to lessen the force of the Sikhs by establishing on their flank a power independent of them and inclined to the British. This object may be said to have so far succeeded that, in the next and final trial of strength between the Sikhs and the British (which occurred two or three years later), Golab Singh's aid was withheld from the nation to which formerly belonged his allegiance. But the result of this last struggle, which was nothing less than the absorption of the Punjab into the British Empire in India, rendered that object useless or superfluous. Hence some have been led to think that it was a great pity, a great mistake, to have made the treaty that separated Cashmere from the Punjab, since but for that the oft-coveted country would have fallen into our hands at this time, namely, in 1849. As far as this is a criticism of policy, and not merely regret at the loss of a possible piece of good fortune, it is enough to point out that in 1846, no one expected that the Punjab would fall into our hands in 1849.....
.....Not till two years after the treaty had been entered into with Golab Singh did those events, at that time unforeseen, occur which are brought forward as reasons for not entering into the engagement.”

The regret for the loss of Cashmere is an after-thought, generated subsequent to the conquest of the Punjab,

but those who indulge in it should bear in mind that, though treachery prevailed in the camp of the Sikhs, the contest for dominion with them was a most arduous one, and that the establishment of a friendly power on its border greatly facilitated the acquisition of that province. Who knows what but for this would have been the result of the contest ?

After the conclusion of the Treaty of Amritsar, Maharaja Golab Singh sent a small force to take possession of Cashmeré. But Sheikh Imamuddin, who held it as Governor on behalf of the Lahore Durbar, declined to give it up and routed Golab Singh's troops near Srinagar. The British Government thereupon sent a contingent to help the Maharaja in taking possession of the country. An actual fight was, however, averted as Sheikh Imamuddin gave up opposition at the intercession of Colonel Lawrence, and Golab Singh obtained peaceable and undisputed possession. This was, as already said, in 1846. In 1860, Lord Canning gave Maharaja Runbir Singh, who had succeeded Golab Singh in 1857, the *sanad* of adoption which provided that, in case of failure of issue, he and his successors would be competent to adopt an heir and thus perpetuate the line. This *sanad*, granted after eminent services performed at the mutiny, amplified the scope of the expression "heirs male of the body" in the first article of the Treaty of Amritsar, and bestowed upon a faithful ally a valued privilege which is coveted by every Hindu.

It may be added that the conditions of the Treaty of Amritsar have been more than scrupulously adhered to by the Maharaja of Cashmere since the days of Golab Singh. The sixth article of that treaty laid down that the Maharaja should help the British Government with



his military resources "in the hills or the territories adjoining his possessions," but the Maharaja did not think of confining himself within the letter of this article. Thus when the mutiny broke out in 1857, Maharaja Runbir Singh, notwithstanding that his father Golab Singh had just died, sent a strong contingent to Delhi, far removed from Jummoo, under General Hari Chand, which rendered conspicuous service at the siege and capture of that city. This expedition cost the Maharaja, besides the life of General Hari Chand, very dearly in men and money. Maharaja Runbir Singh also helped substantially the Hazara expedition a few years later, and contributed materially to the success of the far-famed Yarkund Mission. For this last, the Maharaja afforded not only every help and facility, but made some sacrifices too. For instance, the Maharaja readily gave his assent to the settlement of foreign subjects within a distance of three miles on either side of the highway towards the Changchenmo Valley, though such settlement had ever been opposed to the principle and policy of the Government of Cashmere. Maharaja Runbir Singh also rendered much valuable service in getting, at the request of the British Government, secret information of the doings of Russia in Central Asia and keeping a strict watch on her movements. Then there were the Agror Valley and the Black Mountain expeditions, both of which the late Maharaja and Maharaja Pratap Singh assisted in a most efficient manner. And later still, that is during the present year, the Maharaja has stationed a force of two thousand strong on the Gilgit frontier, to keep in control the turbulent local population and checkmate the designs of the Norther Bear in the regions beyond the Hindu Kush.



CHAPTER II.

MAHARAJA PRATAP SINGH—HIS CHARACTER—HIS
DIFFICULTIES—REFORMS INTRODUCED BY HIM.

MAHARAJA Runbir Singh died in 1885, and was succeeded by his eldest son Pratap Singh, the present Maharaja, who was then about 37 years of age. Maharaja Runbir Singh was anxious to give his son a liberal education, and though the latter had fallen into evil ways in his younger days, his father's efforts upon him were not altogether thrown away. He studied literature, law and science in which he made some progress. Even before his father's death, he had considerably improved his habits, and when he ascended the *guddee*, he had become quite a changed man. Few have been so grossly misrepresented and vilified as Maharaja Pratap Singh. For instance, Sir Lepel Griffin called him "a drunken debauchee" and "a slave of the vilest passions," and he has been depicted in the Anglo-Indian Press as "a wretched specimen of humanity." It is, however, an unquestionable fact that the Maharaja has never tasted liquor in all his life. He hates drunkenness and sensuality with the hatred of an austere Hindu. He himself professes the orthodox Hindu faith. He spends hours every day in his devotions. He follows strictly the rites of Hinduism and spends much in charitable gifts and in feeding the poor. He respects the learned, and is liberal in his presents to



Pundits and to Brahmans. But though a rigid Hindu himself, he does not despise the followers of other religions, and is ever ready to extend to them his helping hand. He is fond of encouraging learning, and became very much pleased when two high Schools were started in his territories for the education of his subjects. He is mild, generous, affectionate and forgiving—traits of character which in his case have proved no unmixed blessing, as they have often been taken advantage of by his oppressors and enemies. He takes an ardent interest in the welfare of his subjects. His subjects also hold him in great esteem and, notwithstanding the reverses that have recently come over him, cherish towards him feelings of deep devotion and loyalty. He takes a positive pleasure in transacting the business of the State. He is thoroughly loyal to the British Government and emulates his father in offering it his zealous services. Intelligent though not brilliant, open-handed though not ostentatious, he is alive to the responsibilities of his exalted rank and position. He possesses a quick sense of honor and is truthful and honest. He is exceedingly polite and courteous and mindful of the comforts of others, and I have known occasions when he preferred to put up with inconvenience himself rather than discomfort his attendants and servants.

Those whose minds have been saturated with malignant reports against him may smile with incredulity at the above picture, but it is nevertheless perfectly true. If he had been more showy and forward and succeeded in pleasing those who now oppress him, he might have been set up for an exemplar without one-half of his present virtues. But he is somewhat shy and unobtrusive and the result is, as often happens,



that he has been misrepresented and misunderstood. It cannot be gainsaid that he is one of the best abused men of his time. I do not pretend to say that he is immaculate. He has, on the contrary, several defects in his character, for example, superstition and other similar frailties. But it may be confidently asserted that his virtues far outweigh his weaknesses. The wonder is that nevertheless he should have been so unjustly and so severely dealt with. But there are causes for this, as will be gradually shewn.

Maharaja Pratap Singh, on his accession to the throne, found that abuses had crept into almost every department of the administration. As heir-apparent, he had, during the lifetime of his father, witnessed many of these abuses, and one of the first resolutions he framed after ascending the *guddee* was to remove those and other abuses as speedily and as completely as he possibly could. I shall presently enumerate the measures of reform that Maharaja Pratap Singh laboured hard to introduce into his Government. But before doing so, I should give some idea of the difficulties under which he has had to work. Firstly, the late Maharaja had placed his two younger sons in charge of important departments of the State. On his death, the present Maharaja found it necessary to continue them in their offices, though he knew that such a course would give birth to undesirable complications, especially as it appeared that the Resident was inclined to sympathize with his brothers more than with himself. Secondly, one great obstacle to the introduction of reforms was the thick phalanx of opposition which the Maharaja met with from an influential though hopelessly corrupt body of officials, who flourished by the existence of abuses in the administration. These officials, almost to a man, set



their faces against the proposals of His Highness and sedulously spread false reports against him. Thirdly, the Maharaja in all his exertions for the improvement of his State never received any encouragement from the Resident, who, though euphemistically called "friend, philosopher and guide," did his best to thwart him in every possible way.

But in spite of these difficulties, Maharaja Pratap Singh accomplished a large amount of substantial work during the short period that he was left comparative master of himself. I shall shew further on how, in about a year's time after his installation, His Highness was reduced to almost the position of a nominal ruler. It should suffice to observe here that the adverse influences to which he was exposed soon produced their blighting effect upon his laudable exertions for the good of his people and prevented their fruition.

The reforms introduced by Maharaja Pratap Singh may be classed mainly under the following heads, namely, administrative, fiscal, economical, judicial and educational. The greatest curse of the State was the rank corruption of the administrative machinery in all its branches. This the Maharaja was fully conscious of, and immediately after his accession, he began looking about to set his house in order in this particular. Previous to his time, the officials were never regularly paid their salaries. Arrears, in consequence, used to accumulate, and payments after the lapse of months even were made only in part. Thus the officials were thrown back upon their own resources and compelled to maintain themselves as best they could. The inevitable result was to stereotype official dishonesty. One of the most efficient means of checking this dishonesty, therefore, was to enforce a system of monthly payments, so that



the officials could urge no excuse in extenuation of their corrupt practices. The military establishment had also become demoralized by a system of payment in arrears and the benefit of this reform was therefore rightly extended to it. The carrying out of this reform necessitated the disbursement of a large sum from the Treasury which gave birth to a loud outcry in certain quarters that the Maharaja was extravagant and was squandering away the resources of the State.

But the introduction of the system of monthly payments alone was not enough to eradicate dishonesty. It was necessary that the heads of departments should be men of the strictest integrity, and possessed of the required educational and other qualifications in order to be able to exercise efficient control and supervision over their subordinates. Accordingly, it was proposed to engage the services of competent men, and the proposal was partly carried out. Of course, all such men could not be found in the State, and a few outsiders on respectable salaries (no competent men would accept service in a Native State at niggardly rates of remuneration), were therefore imported, their total number however falling far short of the number of importations that have taken place under the present *régime*. The pay of old officials was enhanced in certain instances as an encouragement to official honesty and diligence. The emoluments attached to certain posts was also increased to make them attractive to duly qualified men.

The Maharaja next issued orders, enjoining upon the higher officials to exercise strict supervision over their subordinates and exhorting all the servants of the State to be honest in the discharge of their duties on pain of criminal prosecution. This may move a smile in some, but nevertheless such exhortation was indis-

pensable. Corruption had become so deeply-rooted in the soil, that few officials could conceive that it was their duty to be honest. This will be rendered clear from the following extract from a proclamation (in Persian) dated the 15th Asoj, Sambut 1942 (beginning of October 1885):—

“Be it known to all cashiers and cashiers’ writers that, by taking anything as a bribe from the holders of payment-orders or such persons to whom money is otherwise paid, they will render themselves liable to the punishment prescribed by law and will be punished accordingly. Whoever gives information as to bribe-taking and establishes it against a culprit shall receive a reward of rupees fifty.”

To enhance the purity of the courts of justice, the Maharaja further promulgated instructions, forbidding men of dignity and position from trying to influence the decisions of those courts by writing letters and adopting similar other means, as it had almost become customary to do, when the friends, relations or dependants of such men were arraigned before them or appeared as parties in a civil litigation.

The collection of the land revenue was another pregnant cause of popular oppression. The system upon which the collection used to be made was a most rotten one. No regular receipts were given for amounts realized to guard against renewed demand from the cultivator or misappropriation by the officials. No regular cash-books were kept. It was optional with the Treasurer and Accountant to keep a book in such form as he pleased, and it was further optional with him whether to produce the book or not, if required to do so. The book was never considered State property. Some returns used to be drawn up, but these were very



defective in the first place, secondly they were never regularly submitted, and thirdly, when submitted, they were seldom checked or were capable of being checked in the absence of proper materials for the purpose. The Tehsildars and District Officers could put down as much as they liked as outstandings, as their figures were hardly ever scrutinized. The controlling authorities would never move out in camp, never examine the subordinate authorities or inspect the book and try to check the entries. It was difficult to find out on what date a sum of money had been paid to the Treasurer, the money lying with the Tehsildar sometimes for months or even years. The Treasury accounts were neither received nor gone into till some years afterwards when checking had become impossible, and as if all this was not enough, payments of revenue were received from land-holders and bankers in bonds which, curiously enough, used to be treated as cash. This allowed ample opportunities for cheating the State as well as the people. Maharaja Pratap Singh was fully sensible of the disorder, injustice and oppression that this absurd system was the mother of. Accordingly, soon after his accession, proper cash-books were introduced, and manuals for District Officers, Tehsildars and Kanungoes were prepared, published and issued with appropriate forms to guide them. More detailed instructions were in course of preparation, when the Luchman Das ministry superseded the Maharaja and the whole arrangement was upset.

But the above was not all. The land revenue used to be very often farmed to the highest bidder. The farmer used his lease as a double-edged sword, by which he struck both the cultivator and the State, at the same time. For instance, if he got his farm for Rs. 50,000, he realised Rs. 70,000 from the people and paid perhaps

Rs. 20,000 into the Treasury, withholding the residue payable under his contract on plea of non-realization. This residue was seldom paid, and the result was the accumulation of arrears, technically known as *Bakis*, which, added on from year to year, ultimately assumed fabulous proportions. A sort of corollary to this farming system was that sepoy were told off to help the farmer in collecting the land revenue. These sepoy were quartered upon the people and they, in addition to being maintained by them, tried to fleece them as much as they could. Maharaja Pratap Singh saw the enormity of this system and ordered its strict prohibition.

The Cashmere Government, before the time of Maharaja Pratap Singh, allowed another kind of farming as pernicious as the last one. This was the leasing out to the highest bidder the right of appointing and dismissing police-officers and spies throughout the valley of Cashmere. The farmer-general, known by the name of Hurkarabashi, with numerous greedy subordinates, each grade often guaranteeing its superior grade certain amount of profits, received no remuneration from the Government, and these had not only to shift for themselves as best they could, but also to pay into the exchequer a large sum of money annually, (it was Rs. 61,000 when Maharaja Pratap Singh abolished the system), in consideration of the right, as it were, they enjoyed of oppressing the people. The cess called *asari*, or one seer per *kharwar* of rice, which this department levied on the peasant population could not amount even to a half of what they paid to the Government, and this cess itself also they had often to disgorge. The revenue derived from the *Hurkarabashi* was therefore a tax pure and simple, on authorized oppression which contri-

buted very largely to swell the miseries of the people in Cashmere, and Maharaja Pratap Singh was blessed by his grateful and rejoicing subjects when he issued a proclamation abolishing this most baneful institution.

The other reforms of His Highness I shall briefly allude to here. (1) One of them was the abolition of the inhuman practice of punishing the innocent relatives of deserters from the army, when the deserters themselves could not be found.

(2.) A practice existed of buying *looīs*, *ghee*, horses, wool and other articles from the cultivators through the medium of officials at nominal prices fixed by the Government. This practice was even more oppressive in operation than appears at first sight. For instance, if the Maharaja wanted 200 *looīs*, he ordered his Tehsildars to supply, say, 10 *looīs* each, at a very low price. The Tehsildars generally took many more from the people than the required number at the prescribed low rate and, after complying with the Maharaja's order, disposed of the rest at the ordinary Bazar rate to their own advantage. Maharaja Pratap Singh peremptorily ordered this practice to be put a stop to.

(3.) The export duties on certain goods were heavy and arrested the development of trade. These export duties were ordered to be abolished.

(4.) Numerous vexatious duties used to be levied from manufacturers and traders, *e. g.* (a) The *Zar-nakhas* which was a duty of 25 per cent. upon the sale proceeds of every horse within the Valley. (b) *Naosakht*—a duty on the construction of boats. (c) The "*ravangi* of *pashmina*," levied at the rate of 20 per cent. on the price of *pashmina* goods sent out of Srinagar. This last yielded an annual revenue of about 2 lakhs of rupees, but it had a most depressing effect upon the *pashmina*



trade. The above and others of a similar nature were ordered to be abolished.

(5.) A number of heavy cesses used to be levied among which were the *Dharmarth* or charity cess, the temple cess, the education cess, &c. These cesses amounted to a certain percentage on the gross produce of land, and were collected sometimes by the Tehsildars but more generally by the farmers of the land revenue and were productive of much hardship. These were ordered to be remitted.

(6.) The State enjoyed a monopoly of making bricks, lime, paper and some other articles. With regard to the monopoly of paper, the Maharaja ordered by proclamation that "hitherto, in the provinces of Jummoo and Cashmere, the manufacture of paper was allowed under a monopoly, that is, its manufacture and sale were not allowed except under conditions laid down by the State. We are resolved to remove this restrictive monopoly from this day. Every one who wishes shall from this day forward be able to manufacture and sell paper on his own account and as he pleases." Similar orders were issued with regard to the other monopolies and they too were abolished.

(7.) Edibles imported into the towns of Srinagar and Jummoo and other provincial towns were sometimes heavily taxed. For instance, for each rupee worth of edibles brought into Srinagar, a duty of two annas used to be charged. This duty was in some cases remitted and in others reduced. In a proclamation, dated 10th Asoj, Sambat 1942 (end of September 1885), it was said—"In the towns of the province of Jummoo, vegetables were liable to be charged and this charge used to be farmed out. From this day the charge is remitted and people can sell and purchase as they think fit."



(8.) In a graceful proclamation dated the 10th Phagun, Sambat 1842 (end of February 1885), it was ordered—"Be it known to the public, high and low, that with the object of bettering the condition and for the happiness of our people, we do hereby remit from the 1st Bysak 1942, the two items of *Panj Nazrat* and *Thanapatti*. These two items were levied hitherto in the province of Jummoo—*Panj Nazrat*.....at the rate of two annas in a rupee, and *Thanapatti* in shape of marriage dues, from the people."

(9.) There existed an invidious tax on Mahomedan marriages in Cashmere which was ordered to be remitted.

(10.) Justice used to be farmed out in respect of certain classes of the people, *e. g.*, *Kahars*, &c. This was done in the following way :—The farmer paid to the State a certain amount, say, Rs. 10,000 and got the exclusive right of trying all cases among the class concerned, say, the *Kahars*. If after that any *Kahar* brought a suit against any other *Kahar* in the ordinary court of justice, the farmer immediately raised an objection on the ground that he had purchased the exclusive right of trying the suit and that the Court had no jurisdiction to hear it. In this way, the jurisdiction of the Court being ousted, the farmer got a strong hold upon the litigants and dealt with them as he pleased. Maharaja Pratap Singh ordered this absurd practice to be put down.

(11.) The system of *begar* both as regards labour and provisions was in vogue in Jummoo and Cashmere. Particular care was taken to abolish this system. The Durbar laid down an equitable scale of rates for labour and provisions when required for State purposes, and issued strict orders that no one should take either without payment.



(12.) Skilled workmen, such as carpenters and others, used to be engaged for State purposes at lower than the current rates of remuneration. Besides that this practice acted oppressively upon the workmen, the officials often used to take advantage of it and get their work done cheap. It was accordingly ordered to be discontinued.

(13.) Brahmans were practically exempt from punishment. They naturally used this exemption to their own advantage and the disadvantage of other classes of the society. Maharaja Pratap Singh ruled that if a man was found guilty after trial in a court of justice, he must be punished irrespective of caste considerations.

(14.) The Maharaja, as has been already remarked, is fond of encouraging education among his people. He, therefore, established a couple of high Schools, one at Jummoo and the other at Srinagar. The *neucleii* for these schools already existed, but they were in a very poor and disorderly condition. The Maharaja utilised them, remodelled the institutions, gave them a new shape and direction, and enlarged their scope and usefulness.

(15.) A municipal constitution was bestowed on Jummoo and another on Srinagar. The Maharaja took particular interest in the working and management of both the municipalities and wished that they should prove successful.

(16.) Besides amending certain laws in force in the State and enforcing other beneficial ones that had become neglected, the Maharaja ordered the preparation of a code of Leave Rules, Education Rules and other Rules calculated to promote public interests.

I have here mentioned most of the leading reforms introduced by Maharaja Pratap Singh for the better



administration of his State during the first year of his reign. Writing mostly from memory and having only a few official documents at my disposal, it is natural that I have not been able to treat the subject as exhaustively as I might have wished. Yet I may confidently state that if I have failed, my default is not one of commission but of omission,—it lies not in saying things which cannot be substantiated but in omitting to say many good things which are susceptible of proof. In concluding this part of my subject, I may however generally remark that in the departments of law, of forest, of medicine, of accounts and in other departments, Maharaja Pratap Singh tried to sweep away abuses and to render those departments as efficient as practicable. It was His Highness' constant desire to make Cashmere a model State, but he was too good for his surroundings and the result was that he was thwarted, opposed and obstructed till the reforms introduced by him were rendered inoperative and ultimately abandoned.

There is one more observation I wish to make before bringing this chapter to a close. The abolition of vexatious and oppressive cesses and imposts cost a large sacrifice of income, but Maharaja Pratap Singh justified it on the ground that the first duty of the sovereign was to promote the welfare and happiness of his subjects, and as these cesses and imposts interfered with both, His Highness thought he could not repeal them a moment too soon. He considered these cesses and imposts also objectionable as opposed to the sound principles of political economy and was of opinion that, though their repeal was expensive at the outset, it could not fail to be beneficial to the State in the long run. Few will feel disposed to question the correctness of the



Maharaja's views in both these respects, though cavillers have not been wanting who have criticised the abolition of these cesses and imposts as contrary to established usage and as curtailing the resources of the State. It may be added that Maharaja Pratap Singh never involved the State in a pice of debt, though he had found it necessary now and then to draw upon reserve funds to meet extraordinary charges.



CHAPTER III.

BRIEF SKETCH OF MAHARAJA PRATAP SINGH'S REIGN—
MR. PLOWDEN AS RESIDENT—HIS TREATMENT OF
THE MAHARAJA—MR. NILAMBAR MOOKERJEE—
THE LUCHMAN DAS MINISTRY.

I have, in the first chapter, traced the political connection of the State of Jummoo and Cashmere with the British Government. The Treaty of Amritsar, which I have reproduced *in extenso*, clearly shews the superior independent status of the Maharaja. I have also alluded to some of the more prominent services rendered by His Highness to the Paramount Power. It will have become apparent that during the last forty-three years, Maharaja Golab Singh and his successors had vied with one another in proving their loyalty and devotion to the British Government, and that Pratap Singh is not a whit less in this respect than his predecessors were. In the second chapter, I have tried to do justice to the character of the much-maligned Pratap Singh and to describe, with as much detail as the space and means at my command permitted, the reforms that were introduced by this Prince during the first year of his reign. I have also in that chapter touched briefly on some of the difficulties that the Maharaja had to contend against from the very commencement of his reign. It will be my endeavour now to narrate briefly the principal events of

His Highness' reign, and to shew what kind of treatment he has received at the hands of the British Resident.

Maharaja Pratap Singh ascended the *guddee* in 1885. Sir Oliver St. John was, at the time of Maharaja Runbir Singh's death, the "Officer on Special Duty" in Cashmere. Immediately on the accession of the present Maharaja, he was made Resident in His Highness' Court. Sir Oliver continued Resident for a period of about six months. Mr. Plowden then succeeded him. Dewan Anantram was the Prime Minister at the Maharaja's accession. But he soon became incapacitated on account of ill health, on which a ministry was formed with Dewan Gobind Sahai as Prime Minister and Mr. Nilambar Mookerjee as Minister of Finance. This ministry lasted for about a year. In the end of September 1886, Mr. Nilambar Mookerjee resigned his post. This led to the virtual collapse of the ministry, though Dewan Gobind Sahai continued in office for about a month more. Shortly afterwards, Dewan Luchman Das was appointed to the premiership which he held till the spring of 1888, when he was dismissed from his post. On the dismissal of Dewan Luchman Das, Raja Amar Singh, the youngest brother of the Maharaja, was made Prime Minister. A few months later, a Council was formed with His Highness as President and his two brothers with two or three others as Members. About October or November 1888, Mr. Plowden was transferred from the Cashmere Residency, and shortly afterwards Colonel Nisbet was installed in his place. Hardly had Colonel Nisbet been in office for a couple of months, when those incriminating letters, breathing murder and treason, purporting to have been written by the Maharaja, were found, with which Colonel Nisbet went down to Calcutta



to wait upon the Viceroy and to consult the opinion of the Foreign Office. He also took a document with him which was a *Parwana* or order, addressed by His Highness to Raja Amar Singh, his Prime Minister, but which both he as well as the Government of India designated a "letter of abdication." Colonel Nisbet returned from Calcutta in a few days with instructions from the Foreign Department. On reaching Cashmere, where the Maharaja with his brothers and officials had just arrived from Jummoo, Colonel Nisbet announced the decision of the Government of India with regard to the future administration, in a letter addressed to Raja Amar Singh. The result of this communication was the practical deposition of the Maharaja and the transfer of his powers to a Council which was to act under the control and guidance of the Resident. Raja Ram Singh, the second brother of the Maharaja, was appointed President of this Council. The Maharaja stayed at Srinagar for about a month and a half after the promulgation of this decision. He returned to Jummoo in June 1889, and Raja Ram Singh accompanied him. But the Council remained in Cashmere with the Resident. In the beginning of August, advantage was taken of the absence of Raja Ram Singh to elevate Raja Amar Singh to the Presidentship. I shall comment on this short sketch of events as I proceed.

The treatment accorded to Maharaja Pratap Singh has been somewhat different from that dealt out to his predecessors. It is not difficult to assign a satisfactory explanation for this, but I shall not attempt to offer one at this place. I shall here content myself with a bare statement of facts, leaving events to unfold themselves as they take place.

The first innovation introduced after the accession of



Maharaja Pratap Singh was the appointment of a Resident in Cashmere. Previous to this, there used to be only an "Officer on Special Duty," who was located for eight months at Srinagar, to look after the Europeans sojourning in the "Happy Valley" during the summer season. He also sat in a mixed court, consisting of himself and an official of the Maharaja's, which heard and decided litigation between these European sojourners and the Maharaja's subjects. He never used to be the medium of communication between His Highness and the Government of India. The appointment of a Resident put a stop to this practice. The Maharaja objected to the appointment but to no purpose. The objection was not groundless. Firstly, direct communication with the Government of India is a great desideratum with the Native States. It often happens that a Prince and the Resident are not on the best of terms, and in such a case it becomes difficult for the former to lay before the Government his complaints against the proceedings, however unjust and oppressive, of the latter through whom, under existing rules, those complaints are to be forwarded. Secondly, the "Officer on Special Duty" had nothing to do with the internal affairs of the State. But a Resident by the very tradition of his office interferes in such affairs, and if the Prince, at whose Court he is posted, fail to please him or to fall in with his views of government, he becomes a positive stumbling block in the way of good and effective administration. Thirdly, the appointment of a Resident was in violation of the treaty engagement entered into with Maharaja Golab Singh in 1846. No provision was made in that treaty, which I have reproduced in the first chapter and which is still in force, for the appointment of a Resident, nor was any Resident appoint-



ed during the period of thirty-nine years that intervened between the conclusion of that treaty and the 'accession of the present Maharaja. An "Officer on Special Duty" was desired by the Maharaja himself, in view of the large influx of European travellers every year in Cashmere, to prevent any disagreeableness arising. There could be no parallel between such an Officer and the Resident, and his appointment did not in any way contravene the treaty of 1846, as he hardly possessed any political status and authority so far as the Maharaja's Court and dominions were concerned. The posting of a Resident, therefore, all of a sudden, before the present Maharaja had done anything whatever to shew the merits or the demerits of his rule, came upon the Durbar at Jummoo as a perfect surprise. The Union Jack was also, at this time, contrary to previous practice, hoisted at Srinagar. This led to some further correspondence which however failed to produce the result desired by the Durbar.

There was about this time a talk of establishing a British cantonment in Cashmere. This was a very important matter. The precedent at Morar in Gwalior had bred an apprehension that a cantonment, once established, it would be difficult to have removed afterwards. The Durbar had already opposed two of the Residents' proposals unsuccessfully, and they naturally thought that if a representation was submitted through the Resident, it would prove equally abortive. So the Maharaja undertook a trip to Calcutta to represent the matter personally to Lord Dufferin. This trip, though it cost His Highness a large amount of money, had the desired effect. The establishment of a British cantonment in Cashmere was averted. Another object of this visit was to stop the sale of lands to European

settlers in Cashmere. In this also His Highness succeeded. The sale of lands to Europeans in the midst of a large native population was opposed by His Highness as capable of giving rise to undesirable complications. Besides, European settlers would not submit to be governed by the *lex loci* of Cashmere, and hence also their settlement was considered exceedingly objectionable.

The Maharaja's visit to Calcutta took place in the cold season of 1885-86. Shortly after his return to Jummoo, Sir Oliver St. John was transferred from the Cashmere Residency and succeeded by Mr. Plowden. Sir Oliver, though not on very cordial terms with the Maharaja for the reasons mentioned above, did not set himself in opposition to the Maharaja's Government at every step, nor withdraw every sympathy with its aims and objects. Mr. Plowden, however, from the moment he took over charge of his office, assumed an attitude unfavourable to His Highness. He seems to have joined his post with a foregone conclusion against the Maharaja. He affected a lofty, supercilious air, and treated the Durbar with almost undisguised contempt. On occasions, he went so far as to insist upon the Ministers' retiring before he would condescend to speak to the Maharaja. Latterly, after the dismissal of Dewan Luchman Das, he somewhat relaxed the stiffness of his behaviour, but at the time of which I am now speaking, every one could perceive that his appointment was a misfortune to the Maharaja. His Highness had just ascended the *guddee* and, anxious as he was to reform the administration, he wanted a friend and a sympathizer rather than an adversary in the person of the Resident. Mr. Plowden soon began to make himself obnoxious. He joined his post about



March 1886. Shortly afterwards, the summer season setting in, he went to Srinagar and became anxious that the Maharaja also should go there. His Highness himself had entertained a desire of visiting Cashmere, but the Maharani fell ill and he had to put off his departure from day to day. On this, the Resident grew impatient. He began to telegraph to His Highness in a somewhat imperative tone, and hinted the displeasure of the Government of India in case of delay. The Maharaja, always loyal and obedient to the wishes of the Paramount Power, was thus in a manner dragged away from his bed-ridden wife—a paragon of a Hindu lady. Some ill-feeling was generated in consequence. Nevertheless, when the Maharaja reached Srinagar, he did not shew any unfriendliness towards Mr. Plowden, but treated him with the courtesy and consideration due to the Representative of the British Government.

The Maharaja stayed at Srinagar for about a month on this occasion. During all this time, Mr. Plowden, who had been so solicitous for His Highness' arrival in Cashmere, had hardly many improvements to suggest in the administration. His visits to the Maharaja were rare and formal, and he seldom discussed State matters with the Durbar at these visits. There was one thing, however, which attracted his particular notice. The Maharaja was anxious that his subjects should receive a liberal education. This seemed to excite Mr. Plowden's worst alarms, and he did not rest till he had secured possession of the Educational Rules which the Durbar had framed.

The Maharaja had been thinking of an equitable land settlement in Cashmere. To carry out this object, he had written a letter to his friend Sir Charles Aitchison, late Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab, who used to



take a great interest in the welfare of the State, for a well qualified Native Settlement Officer. Sir Charles Aitchison, after the needful enquiry, recommended a couple of men, and asked the Maharaja to make a selection from among them. His Highness, in reply, requested Sir Charles himself to make the selection, and expressed preference for a Mahomedan, the population of Cashmere being mostly Mahomedans. On this, Sir Charles made a selection which was forwarded to the Government of India for sanction, as is necessary in all cases of transfer of services from British India to a Native State. But Mr. Plowden expressed a wish to His Highness that it would be better to appoint an Englishman for settlement work in Cashmere. The Maharani's illness having at this juncture taken a serious turn, and the season for the performance of the annual *shradh* of the late Maharaja having also arrived, His Highness started for Jummoo before the matter could be settled. On his way, he received a telegram from the Resident, advising the appointment of Mr. Wingate as settlement officer. By this appointment, both the Maharaja as well as Sir Charles Aitchison were placed in a delicate position, and the latter got even a little offended with His Highness for having readily submitted to it.

Soon after the Maharaja's return to Jummoo, Mr. Nilambar Mookerjee resigned his post. It may not be out of place to say a few words here regarding this gentleman who cut a prominent figure in Cashmere politics for a period of nearly twenty years. One of the most distinguished graduates of the University of Calcutta, he went to Lahore in 1867 to join the bar of the Punjab Chief Court. In the following year, Dewan Kripa Ram, the late able and liberal-minded



Prime Minister of Cashmere, who had heard of Mr. Mookerjee's talents and learning, recommended him to Maharaja Runbir Singh, who appointed him Chief Judge of Cashmere. While working in that capacity, he was deputed by his master to make arrangements for His Highness' properties in Lahore. This work as well as his work as Chief Judge was so satisfactorily performed that the Maharaja, in token of approbation, almost doubled his remuneration. Shortly after this, the silk industry was started in Cashmere and Mr. Mookerjee was placed in charge of it. The industry rapidly developed and expanded, and Mr. Mookerjee was favoured with the commendatory notices of the Government of India and the Secretary of State. He rose very high in the estimation of his master, but his brother officials now began to eye him with jealousy and to whisper ill-natured reports against his management of the silk concern. This disgusted him and he prayed his master to be allowed to retire from his charge. Maharaja Runbir Singh, while granting his prayer, shewed a due appreciation of his valuable past services by promoting him to the rank of a minister, which he held till the date of His Highness' death. Prince Pratap Singh had not been very favourably inclined towards Mr. Mookerjee in his younger days. But as he grew up, he came to understand Mr. Mookerjee, whom the late Maharaja also, on his death-bed, enjoined upon him to regard as his most faithful servant and trusted councillor. Maharaja Pratap Singh, on ascending the *guddee*, appointed Mr. Mookerjee his Finance Minister. Mr. Mookerjee worked with the zeal, honesty, devotion and single-mindedness that characterize him, for a period of twelve months. But finding that far from receiving any help, he was treated with coldness

and suspicion, and seeing that he could do little good to the State, he tendered his resignation in September 1886, which the Maharaja thrice declined to accept, but which His Highness accepted, when pressed a fourth time, with great reluctance.

Different men take different views of Mr. Mookerjee's resignation. For my part, I think matters had been driven to such a crisis that it became impossible for a highly honest and conscientious man to continue in office any longer. It must, however, be admitted that his resignation intensified the difficulties of his master's position, and rendered His Highness an easy prey to the machinations of his designing opponents.

On the departure of Mr. Nilambar Mookerjee from Jummoo, Dewan Gobind Sahai was removed and Dewan Luchman Das made Prime Minister in his place. Mr. Plowden had longed for this consummation, and felt glad that it had been got about. Dewan Luchman Das was his special favourite, and he moved heaven and earth to raise him to dignity and power. But the Dewan, though not devoid of intelligence, never possessed business habits, and soon after his elevation to the Premiership, gave himself up to enjoyment, leaving the affairs of State to be mostly taken care of by his subordinates. He was, besides, a staunch advocate of everything that was old and, from inclination as well as from self-interest, had never looked upon the reforms, introduced by his master during the previous year, with favour. The abolition of vexatious imposts and cesses had the effect of reducing the income of the State, and Dewan Luchman Das, who, according to an arrangement entered into by Maharaja Golab Singh with his father, was entitled to a payment of Rs. 4 on every Rs. 1,000 of revenue, resented the loss which it caused



him. So, on assuming the reins of office, he swept away with little scruple or hesitation most of the reforms that had been introduced during the preceding twelve months, and the Maharaja, rendered powerless by Mr. Plowden, could not save them from total wreck. Neither did Luchman Das's method of work nor his action in this particular call forth the slightest disapproval of his patron. He had been appointed with the sanction of the Government of India, Raja Amar Singh siding with him at the outset, and the Maharaja was reduced to a nullity. But Nemesis was near at hand. The Plowden-*cum*-Luchman Das *régime* fell through on account of its own weakness, in spite of the support accorded to it. Its inconsiderate bearing towards the Maharaja and its apathy to the best interests of the State became more and more apparent, till even the Anglo-Indian Press, which a few months before had glorified it, pronounced it "a phenomenal failure." About this time, Raja Amar Singh, who was closely watching his opportunity, came over to join the Maharaja and moved His Highness, already exasperated, to be rid of his Minister Luchman Das, who was accordingly dismissed. This was in the spring of 1888. Mr. Plowden continued in Cashmere for a few months after the dismissal of his *protégé*. He was grieved to see the gossamer-web which he had so elaborately woven around the Maharaja torn into shreds, and he maintained a sullen dignity. But Lord Dufferin was aware of the overbearing manner in which he conducted himself towards the Maharaja, and His Excellency found it necessary to order his transfer. This was done on the happening of a vacancy for his promotion.

After the dismissal of Dewan Luchman Das, the Ma-



haraja telegraphed to Mr. Nilambar Mookerjee to return to Cashmere and to resume his duties. Mr. Plowden, getting intimation of this, immediately sent a counter-telegram, forbidding Mr. Mookerjee to join without the permission of the Government of India in the Foreign Department. By what right he did this does not appear, but the Maharaja's idea of forming a Ministry of his choice was thus frustrated. Then the formation of a Council under His Highness' Presidentship was conceived, and the Maharaja again made an attempt to get back his trusted and faithful servant as Financial Member, Mr. Mookerjee possessing an intimate acquaintance with the Finances of Cashmere. But this was disallowed on the ground that Mr. Mookerjee was not a good Financier! Then His Highness suggested that Mr. Mookerjee, an experienced and practical lawyer, might serve him at least as Judicial Member, proposing, in the alternative, the name of Mr. P. C. Chatterjee, of the Panjab Chief Court Bar, for long the Legal Adviser of the State, in case Mr. Mookerjee's services were refused. But neither the one nor the other was permitted to be employed by His Highness. It would appear that even an eminent lawyer like Mr. Chatterjee, who has filled with credit the post of a Chief Court Judge, was held disqualified for working as Judicial Member in the Cashmere Council. I mention these facts to show how, in the face of an existing treaty engagement and in spite of the most cordial relationship, His Highness' wishes were, without any justifying cause, ruthlessly over-ridden. In place of men whom the Maharaja knew and wanted, others perfect strangers to His Highness were thrust upon him as Members of his Council. We shall see in the sequel how this Council has gradually reduced him to his present straits.



CHAPTER IV.

AN EPISODE—COLONEL NISBET SUCCEEDS MR. PLOWDEN
—RAJA AMAR SINGH—COLONEL NISBET LEAGUES
WITH HIM—COLONEL NISBET'S TREATMENT OF
THE MAHARAJA.

BEFORE resuming the thread of my narrative, I cannot help noticing briefly an episode which has a bearing on the main drift of my argument. After the dismissal of Dewan Luchman Das in the spring of 1888, the Maharaja went to Srinagar, his summer Capital. Cholera had already made its appearance there. It soon assumed an epidemic form and spread like wild fire through the valley of Cashmere. The Resident took refuge on the heights of Gulmarg, but the Maharaja and his courtiers stayed at Srinagar, taking up their quarters in the outskirts of the city. The number of cases in Srinagar itself far exceeded a hundred a day, and thousands of people died of the fell disease in course of two or three months. But the Durbar were not idle spectators of the appalling scene around them. Active medical relief was instituted, and medicines and food were distributed with a lavish hand to save the dying and succour the needy. The Sudder Dispensary alone treated thousands of patients and rescued many of them from a premature death. The mofussil Dispensaries, too, following the example of their chief,

exerted their best to relieve suffering humanity. The whole arrangement was prompt, thorough and effectual, and reflected the greatest credit on the Maharaja's Medical Department, which His Highness had placed on an improved basis during the first year of his reign, as has been already noticed. Dewan Luchman Das, though not on cordial terms with His Highness' chief medical officer, had not removed him from office, and this gentleman, selected by the Maharaja, acquitted himself so well on the dire occasion as to deserve repeated commendations from various authorities. The Maharaja had just shaken off the thralldom of the Luchman Das ministry, and he was not at all hampered in his exertions on behalf of his diseased and panic-stricken subjects. People are not wanting who talk of the Maharaja's misgovernment, but their statement is due either to ignorance or to bad faith, as will have already appeared and will further appear later on.

Now to return to our subject. It so happened that when Mr. Plowden was still Resident of Cashmere, the Maharaja had occasion to pass through Rawalpindi, where Colonel Nisbet, the present Resident, saw him. Colonel Nisbet was not unknown to Maharaja Runbir Singh, and when he met Maharaja Pratap Singh, he told the latter that he was a great friend of his father's, and that if he were appointed he would try his best to help His Highness in every possible way. Referring to this meeting, His Highness, in a letter addressed to Colonel Nisbet on the 26th May last, wrote as follows :—
“While in the time of Mr. Plowden, I got the chance of passing through Rawalpindi, and seeing you there, I was promised by you that if you ever became Resident in Cashmere, you will increase my reputation in every respect.”



It was thus that the unsuspecting Maharaja was induced to move the Government of India to appoint Colonel Nisbet in Mr. Plowden's place. The offer of the post was made to Colonel Nisbet and he accepted it. He took charge of his office in the end of 1888. Immediately afterwards he formed an intimacy with Raja Amar Singh, whose natural ambition had been excited by the predictions of astrologers who had foretold that in the dynasty of Golab Singh the third son was always destined for the *guddee*. Colonel Nisbet, known in the Punjab where he had served for about twenty-five years for his autocratic tendencies, was longing for power, and he found in young Amar Singh a convenient fool to gain his purpose. The Maharaja was anxious to preserve the privileges of his State—a fact which placed him in the bad book of the Resident. But Raja Amar Singh did not care if he was required to part with some or even most of those privileges, provided he got the throne which, at present, is somewhat removed from him; for the Maharaja can adopt a son and Raja Ram Singh is alive and has a son living, and unless the branches of the Maharaja and Raja Ram Singh both become extinct, he has no chance, in the ordinary course of things, of getting it. Accordingly a sort of bargain, it seems, was struck between Colonel Nisbet and Raja Amar Singh, the former enjoying dictatorial power during his incumbency and the latter supplanting the Maharaja, if possible. Besides, the Maharaja is an orthodox Hindu while Raja Amar Singh has imbibed certain European tastes and habits. Consequently, the gallant Colonel soon conceived a preference for the jovial youth to his staid elder brother. The friendship between the Colonel and the Raja, therefore, grew apace, and in a short time those incriminating letters

were found with which Col. Nisbet ran down to Calcutta, in most indecent haste, in March last. About those letters, I shall have occasion to speak hereafter.

The Maharaja in his letter to the Viceroy, dated the 14th May 1889, (*vide* Appendix I. A.) spoke of Raja Amar Singh in very disparaging terms, and this was natural, for His Highness had exhausted every means to conciliate him and yet could not induce him to remain faithful. His Highness observed :—
“My chief enemy and in the present circumstances enemy of the State, who has taken a fancy to become the ruler of Cashmere and envies my position since a long time, is, I am sorry to say, my own youngest brother, Raja Amar Singh. It is now that I have found him out in his true colors and all doubts as to his ill motive have been removed. Since the very day I succeeded to the throne, *he* caused to set afloat all sorts of rumours against me—about my incapacity, insanity, &c., &c. ; many a time he was directly caught in conspiring against me. He encouraged, pecuniarily and otherwise, people connected with the Press with the only object of their writing against my person, vilifying me and causing to circulate the worst rumours against me. Having convenient access to European visitors, &c., and the Residents (to which I never objected, having no suspicion regarding his doings) he filled their ears as often as possible with such black stories about me directly and indirectly ; thinking very well that that his doing so will indirectly set the Government of India against me and he will be proclaimed ruler of Jummo and Cashmere territories, in that case. To almost every Resident, and especially to Colonel Parry Nisbet, he appeared to be the most reliable and intimately connected informant, and all should have believed in what he said : and I have every



reason to believe that all rumours which reached the Government against me must have been through this and this source alone."

It is a matter of extreme regret that the Maharaja should have had such things to say in respect of his own younger brother. His Highness always treated Raja Amar Singh as his son, granted him the richer Jagir of Bhadarwah in place of the poorer one of Bisoli settled upon him by his father, and elevated him, in spite of his youth, to the highest dignity in the State immediately next to his own. But what has the Raja done to repay all this kindness? And yet it is Raja Amar Singh who has always received the sympathy of the British Residents and the support of the Anglo-Indian Press!

One may feel disposed to ask why, if Raja Amar Singh was constantly intriguing against the Maharaja, did the latter show him so much indulgence? In answer, I should let the Maharaja himself speak. In his letter to the Viceroy referred to above, His Highness wrote:—"Being disgusted with his (Raja Amar Singh's) this unworthy conduct and having ample proofs to silence him in his face, I twice resolved to order him to remove to his Jagir, and have nothing to do in the Capital. On both these occasions, being informed of my resolution against him, he entered my room, where was none except him and myself, shedding childish tears, throwing his turban on my feet, imploring for mercy, promising all good will and hearty loyalty for the future and asking for pardon as my dear son and humblest slave. After all he was my youngest brother, very dear to me, his lovely young face is still liked by me, and on both of these occasions my blood was naturally warm for him,



and I was completely moved by his entreaties and pardoned him after all."

There is an air of *naïveté* in the above which challenges belief. The Maharaja is not equally outspoken with regard to Colonel Nisbet as he would not be guilty of discourtesy towards the Representative of the Paramount Power. Yet Amar Singh after all is but a young man, and it may well be doubted whether he would have dared so far against his elder brother and Chief if he had not met with encouragement. The whole arrangement between him and the Resident is transparent as crystal, and it is very strange that the highest authorities should have failed to look through it.

It is painful to have to remark that since Colonel Nisbet joined his present post, intrigue has gone on increasing in Cashmere on an unprecedented scale. It has grown in magnitude and no longer seeks to conceal itself from the light of day. To treat the rightful sovereign with contumely has now-a-days become a virtue, and those who betray the slightest good will or loyalty to him are severely dealt with. To strengthen the Resident's position, many old servants who shewed any sympathy for the Maharaja in his present difficulties, have been summarily dismissed. As for those old servants who are still in service, they have been mostly gained over by threats and promises, and the few not so gained over are faint-hearted and lukewarm in their fidelity to their master. And to finish all, strenuous efforts are being made to fill every department with favorites, subordinates and partisans who now swarm from British India in daily increasing numbers. What makes the case worse is that little regard seems to be paid to the qualifications of these men, as will appear



from the fact that one has recently been appointed to the Chief Judgship of Jummo who does not know law and who would not get the lowest judicial appointment in the Punjab. It is not difficult to multiply examples of this kind. The Council itself has also been cleverly managed to have a standing majority of Government members. It consisted originally of four members, two of them being the Maharaja's brothers and the other two being servants of the British Government whose services have been lent to the State. These last two possess no attachment for, nor owe any gratitude to, the Maharaja. The remuneration they now get is double or more than double of what they used to receive under their former masters, and as their continuance in their present posts depends a good deal upon the favour of the Resident, they may be naturally expected to side with him rather than with the Maharaja. These two members, therefore, with Raja Amar Singh formed a majority whom Raja Ram Singh alone, who is loyal and devoted to His Highness, could not successfully oppose. But one of the two brothers being President, if they coalesced, the majority might turn in the opposite direction. To prevent such a contingency, there is now a fifth member, a nominee and *whilom* subordinate of Colonel Nisbet's, being the third member from the British service, who, with the two other Government members, makes it impossible for the Maharaja's interests to prevail.

But that is not all. In June last, Raja Ram Singh, President of the Council, had the hardihood to enter a protest against the indiscriminate dismissal of the old servants of the State and the hasty appointment of new ones in their place. He proposed that, if it was thought proper to pass any order on the subject, some satisfactory test

of qualification might be laid down in respect of both dismissal and appointment. Information of this wayward conduct was duly conveyed to the Resident, who sent for the Raja and scolded him as if he were a school-boy. The Raja, a high-spirited Rajput Prince, with generous impulses and military instincts, was thereupon wounded to the quick, and he immediately resolved to leave Srinagar with the Maharaja who was then preparing to return to Jummo. When Colonel Nisbet heard this, he went to the Maharaja to chide him and persuade him to stay at Srinagar. He argued, he remonstrated, he threatened, but to no effect. The Maharaja remained firm and did not move from his purpose. He thought, as he wrote to the Resident,—“It is disagreeable for me to stop here for nonsense, as I am considered here nothing but a cypher. It is better for me now that I should set myself apart from all feelings of contempt, which are expressed for me by many eyes.” He plainly told the Resident, when the latter began to bully him, that he had not yet become his prisoner, and that he would certainly leave Srinagar unless he was detained by force. And he was justified in assuming this bold—almost desperate—attitude. The Resident had made the place too hot for him. The Council, with the exception of the Resident, did not shew him any consideration or respect. His officers dared not visit him except on pain of immediate punishment, and even his subjects could not pay him their respects. Pundit Peyare Lal, formerly Accountant-General and President of the Jummo Municipality, was removed from the service because he had penned a telegram for his master, and Sonu Shah, one of the leading Mahomedan merchants and Reises of Srinagar, was actually bound down to a sum of Rs. 10,000 because, following his usual



custom, he had gone to do obeisance to his sovereign!†

I have been exceedingly sorry to be compelled, in the course of this pamphlet, to be somewhat personal against two British officers who have successively held the high post of Resident in Cashmere. But I have this much to urge in self-defence that whatever I have herein said is in sheer good faith and with the view to do justice to the cause which I feel it my duty to vindicate. The Viceroy, in his reply to the letter of the Maharaja, (*vide* Appendix I. B.) and the Government of India, in its despatch to the Secretary of State (*vide* Appendix I. C.), have laid particular stress on the reports submitted against His Highness by Mr. Plowden and Colonel Nisbet. It becomes imperatively necessary, therefore, to point out, as clearly as possible, the harsh, overbearing and hostile manner in which both have treated him, to show that to take their reports against the Maharaja as Gospel is to prejudge the whole case and arrive at an erroneous conclusion.



CHAPTER V.

CHARGES AGAINST THE MAHARAJA—(1) THAT HE HAS NO CHARACTER—(2) THAT HE MISGOVERNS—(3) THAT HE IS EXTRAVAGANT—(4) THAT HE IS SURROUNDED BY UNWORTHY FAVORITES—(5) THAT HE CARRIED ON A TREASONABLE AND MURDEROUS CORRESPONDENCE—REFUTATION OF THESE CHARGES.

I have, in the course of the preceding pages, touched on the principal events in the reign of Maharaja Pratap Singh and also described the kind of treatment that His Highness received at the hands of the Residents stationed by the Paramount Power at his Court. It will be my duty now to deal with the charges which have been advanced against the Maharaja by his opponents and by the Government of India. These charges may be briefly summarised as follows—(1) That he possesses no character, (2) That he misgoverns, (3) That he is extravagant, (4) That he is surrounded by low and unworthy favourites, and (5) That he carried on a treasonable and murderous correspondence. As regards the first and the second of these charges, I have already said enough in Chapter II. to convince all un-biassed minds that the character of Maharaja Pratap Singh, though not immaculate, is at any rate respectable, possessed of many noble and generous traits, and that his rule, though far from perfect, has been on the whole beneficent to his subjects, its defects being due



to causes over which he could exercise no control. It is, therefore, unnecessary for me to dilate here on these two charges. I shall only mention one more fact to illustrate the Maharaja's anxiety for a sound administration. Soon after his accession, Dewan Anant Ram, his father's Prime Minister, the eldest son of the late Dewan Kripa Ram, became incapacitated for work on account of illness which ultimately affected his mind. The Maharaja was, therefore, called upon to form a new Ministry in doing which he shewed considerable tact and discrimination. There were at that time, besides Anant Ram, three members of the Dewan family in his service, namely, Dewan Luchman Das, the step-brother, Dewan Amar Nath, the younger son, and Dewan Gobind Sahai, the cousin, of the late Dewan Kripa Ram. With Dewan Luchman Das, who as I have already observed was opposed to most of the reforms introduced by His Highness, the Maharaja could never agree. Dewan Amar Nath was young and inexperienced. Dewan Gobind Sahai, though not possessed of much ability, was not obstinate like Luchman Das nor inexperienced like Amar Nath, and having been for years with the Government of India as the Maharaja's Agent, was, at least, prepared to sympathize with an administration conducted on a reformed and liberal basis. His character was not above impeachment, yet as the Maharaja thought it was not safe to pass over the Dewan family altogether, his services were availed of, and the Maharaja, after much deliberation, formed a Cabinet consisting of Dewan Gobind Sahai and of Mr. Nilambar Mookerjee of whom I have already had occasion to speak. His Highness thought that by this means he was combining the old with the new, family influence with ability, prestige with power,



and there can be no doubt that, with the materials then at his command, this was the best arrangement that he could possibly make. Of his brothers, Raja Amar Singh was very young yet whose unripe understanding was quite inadequate for conducting the government of a great State, while Raja Ram Singh was a military man with little aptitude for civil work. Nevertheless, he associated both in the work of administration, placing Raja Amar Singh at the head of the judicial department and making Raja Ram Singh the Commander-in-Chief of his forces. It is extremely probable that if the Maharaja had been given free scope to govern his own State and the misrepresentations of the Residents had not been encouraged and allowed to prevail, Cashmere would have by this time been one of the best governed of Indian States, and His Highness would have been regarded as one of the best of Indian Princes.

I shall now take up the third charge, namely, that of extravagance. If by this charge is meant waste of public money, it is utterly groundless. In respect of public funds, far from being extravagant, the Maharaja is rather cautious and economical. Following his father's practice he, from the commencement of his reign, fixed a monthly allowance for his private and domestic expenses, and latterly reduced the amount of that allowance. Of course, this allowance, which in itself is not a very big sum for a Prince of his dignity and position, being only Rs. 43,000 or less than £3,000 per month, he spends in any way he thinks proper, but no one can possibly object to his doing so. Then, since his accession, he has incurred six or seven big items of expenditure. The first of these was on the occasion of the late Maharajas' *shradh*, the second was in undertaking a trip



to Calcutta to meet Lord Dufferin, the third was to pay off arrears due to the civil and military establishments, the fourth was on the occasion of the formal installation of His Highness, the fifth was for the purpose of paying some debts which the Maharaja had incurred as heir-apparent, the sixth was for performing the first annual *shradh* of the late Maharaja, and the seventh for celebrating the remarriage of Raja Amar Singh on the demise of his first wife.

No reasonable mind can raise any objections with regard to the first, second, third, fourth and sixth of these items. These were spent for necessary State ceremonies or State purposes, and should be allowed to pass perfectly unchallenged. The fifth item may admit of some question, and much discussion took place between His Highness and his ministers at the time it was disbursed. If the Maharaja had been inclined to defraud his creditors, he could have easily done so. The only courts where they could sue him were his own, and he might have, if so minded, influenced his courts in his own favour, thereby rendering it impossible for his creditors to obtain decrees or to execute the same. But his instincts are too generous for such a subterfuge. He spurned the idea of depriving his creditors of their just dues. He argued with his ministers, he expostulated with them, he assured them that the debts had been really incurred, he laid stress upon the iniquity that would rest upon his head if he withheld payment, he pourtrayed the consequent uneasiness to which he would be subject, and he quoted the authority of the *shastras* to show that it was his bounden duty to discharge these debts in order to escape infamy in this world and retribution in the next. His ministers were overpowered, and His Highness satisfied his conscience and his keen sense of

honor by keeping his promises with his creditors. The seventh item was unavoidable, though its amount might have been somewhat less than what it is reported to have been. It is not customary to perform remarriages with extraordinary *eclat*, but Raja Amar Singh was quite young and, besides, the Maharaja was at that time very fond of him and wanted to shew that he looked upon him as his son. This item also, therefore, cannot be regarded as very heinous. The expenditure was not altogether unwarranted, and to base upon it the charge of extravagance is to lay the foundations of a stone bridge upon a floating straw.

I cannot help making one remark here. In the charge of extravagance, as in that of misgovernment, the Maharaja's critics are beautifully vague and general in their language. This makes it difficult to ascertain the exact dimensions of the charge and to urge its refutation; and I have been compelled to enter into details to prove how utterly ungrounded it generally is. The charge could undoubtedly have been much better met if particular instances had been mentioned, but the absence of such instances, while enhancing the difficulty of successful refutation, also weakens the charge itself. Lord Lansdowne, in his reply to the Maharaja observed—"Notwithstanding the ample resources of your State, your Treasury was empty," but what was the condition of the Treasury when His Highness ascended the *guddee*? It is essential to ascertain this fact before saddling the Maharaja with the responsibility of an exhausted exchequer.

The next charge is that of being surrounded by low and unworthy favorites. On examining this charge, it would be found that the Maharaja has in his private establishment a few men in whom he places



great confidence. And very naturally, for they have been serving him faithfully for years, and a feeling of mutual attachment has grown up as it always does under such circumstance. This happens not only with Princes and Kings, but also with private individuals. In the present case, there exists another and stronger reason for the growth of such attachment, namely, the intrigues that infest the Court at Jummoo which render it highly necessary for the Maharaja to have about him men upon whom he can absolutely rely. If he were to take new, untried men in his household, he would most probably jeopardise his own life. The removal of these men, therefore, would not be safe nor advisable. These, moreover, are mere attendants, and though the Maharaja favours them, it is, I submit, an exaggeration to say that they are his "favorites." They are favorites only by a stretch of language, and in the same restricted sense that a faithful domestic servant of a kind-hearted householder is his favorite. There is, however, one man who is "unworthy," but who nevertheless exercises some influence over His Highness. This is an astrologer. But this man is in no sense a "favourite" of the Maharaja's. His influence is due to his art alone, for the Maharaja knows that he is not fully loyal and does not trust him implicitly. Yet a sort of superstition impels His Highness to keep the man in his service. This is a weakness, but not of such proportions as to justify the deposition or even suspension of an *independent* Prince.

The last charge is that of having carried on a treasonable and murderous correspondence. Though the Government of India does not seem to attach much importance to this charge, yet it should not be allowed to pass unnoticed. The Maharaja is said to have written



letters that breathe treason and murder, and Colonel Nisbet went with these letters to Calcutta in all seriousness to lay them before the Viceroy. Various stories obtained currency as to how these letters came into the possession of Colonel Nisbet, but an Anglo-Indian paper attributed their disclosure to Raja Amar Singh whom it also charged with traitorous designs against the Maharaja. *Prima facie* the information of this paper appears correct, especially as it is substantially corroborated by His Highness himself. Writing to the Viceroy, the Maharaja, referring to these letters, said (*vide* Appendix I. A.)—"At this juncture, the brewing plot of the much talked of letters, alleged to have been written by me, was brought into force. Almost all the rumours from which they are purported to have reached the Resident are false. Solely, Raja Amar Singh was at the bottom of the whole thing. They are the most daring forgeries, and there was no one more daring than my blood-relation the Raja." The internal evidence furnished by the letters themselves also shews that they are most daring though rather clumsy forgeries, and one may well wonder on perusing them that Colonel Nisbet, with some judicial experience on his back, should have taken them in such a serious light, and actually run down with them to Calcutta to interview the Viceroy about them. Some of them have already appeared in the public prints, and I reproduce four of them here as samples. Two of these, said to be addressed by the Maharaja to one Ramanand, a priest, are in the following terms—"As Raja Ram Singh is against me, kill him and reward will be given you," and "Arrange to kill Lord Dufferin and also Mr. Plowden." The other two, reported to have been written to one Meeran Bux, a private servant of the



Maharaja's, ran thus—"You told me that when Dhulip Singh comes here, the English will run away. Then I will side with Dhulip Singh." And again—"You send a confidential agent to Russia through Ladakh and Yarkand to tell that I am Russia's friend. Take as much money as you like from Sardar Karm Singh, and let nobody know it."

Now, both Meeran Bux and Ramanand, the addressees of these letters, were in almost constant attendance upon the Maharaja. Why then should he have written such communications to these men? And were they the proper parties to write to in such grave and dangerous matters? Besides, these letters bear no signature nor date. Another very suspicious circumstance is that when the Maharaja denied having written such letters and desired to see them, Colonel Nisbet declined to produce them before His Highness.

Under these circumstances, it was only natural that the Government of India did not attach any excessive importance to these letters. In their Despatch to the Secretary of State, dated the 3rd April 1889, (Appendix I. C.) they wrote—"We were not disposed to attach any excessive importance to these letters, because we had received a number of similar documents a year before and were not ignorant of the Maharaja's failings." The last clause of the above sentence implies a suggestion against His Highness, which is repeated in the following passage of Lord Lansdowne's reply (Appendix I. B.) to the Maharaja's letter—"In the spring of this year, my attention was called to the documents referred to in your Highness' letter: many of these had every appearance of being genuine, and they have, moreover, a striking resemblance to those other papers of which I have already spoken and which came into the possession of

the Government of India at a previous time." This would seem to show that the Government of India believed in the genuineness of at least some of the letters, and yet, in the very next sentence, His Excellency says—"Your Highness is correct in expressing your belief that the action subsequently taken by my Government was not justified merely by the disclosures contained in these letters. Even if the whole of these had been unquestionably genuine, I could not bring myself to believe that they had been written deliberately or with a full appreciation of their meaning." This, it may be humbly submitted, is adding insult to injury. It is first broadly hinted that the Maharaja is capable of writing these letters, and, next that he is so great an idiot that, if he wrote them, his scribblings are unworthy of notice. The fact, however, is that the Maharaja is far from being an idiot. He possesses at least as much intelligence as the average Indian Prince, and his own remarks concerning these letters deserve an attentive perusal. Writing to Lord Lansdowne, he said (*vide* Appendix I. A.)—"I *never* admitted the genuineness of these letters, and even an ordinary sense can find out that I could never write such nonsense as the letters are purported to contain. Do I not know the dangers of the change of Governments? Do I not understand the value of a peaceful Government presiding over us all? Do I not know what security all the Native Princes are enjoying? Do I not understand that my dominions are most safe under the benign British Government? Then what on earth can induce me to correspond with Russia? Who is in Russia to read the *Dogra* vernacular? Having been in possession of high honours and all regard from the British Government and having got everything from being loyal to it, what more can I



aspire to get from a Foreign Power whose tyranny and despotism are well-known here? As to Dhulip (God forbid!) if he ever happen to come here, who is in a more dangerous position to suffer from his wrath? That I would conspire with him is to hit the axe at the very root of my own existence. About the attempt to poison Mr. T. C. Plowden, I think Mr. Plowden himself must be the best witness.....Moreover, who is the fool in this world to commit such conspiracies to writing? Supposing there was such a foul conspiracy on my part, would not the whole thing have been managed orally? But I assure your Excellency with all sacredness that such an idea never occurred to me in dream even."

The good sense, unsophisticated argument and intense feeling contained in the above passage carry conviction into the most sceptical mind. It is to be sincerely regretted that in spite of such a powerful denial and in the face of the most doubtful circumstances, the Maharaja should have been, in the matter of these letters, condemned unheard, and an unjust slur and unwarranted suspicion cast upon him. In my humble opinion, it would have been fairer as well as more honorable to have either acquitted His Highness of this charge altogether, or allowed him an opportunity of publicly defending his innocence which he so strongly and so confidently asserts.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PRACTICAL DEPOSITION OF THE MAHARAJA—
THE SO-CALLED "EDICT OF RESIGNATION"—
HOW IT WAS OBTAINED—ITS TEXT—ITS
CONTENTS—ITS MEANING.

THE charges brought against the Maharaja by his critics and opponents as well as by the Government of India are, as I have hereinbefore shewn, perfectly unsustainable. His Highness has nevertheless been temporarily deposed or suspended from the exercise of rights, powers and privileges which appertain to him by birthright. This was done by a letter dated the 17th April 1889, addressed by the Resident to Raja Amar Singh, the Prime Minister. In this letter, the Resident wrote to the Raja to say that the Viceroy in Council, "after full consideration of affairs in the Cashmere State for a long time past, has ordered me to inform His Highness the Maharaja that for a time at least he will be expected to refrain from all interference in the administration. He will retain his rank and dignity as Chief of the State, but full powers of Government will be vested in a Council consisting of the Maharaja's brothers and three or four officials selected by the Government of India." The letter further said:—"His Highness the Maharaja and the members of the Council should thoroughly understand that, although the Council will have full powers of administration, they will be



expected to exercise these powers under the guidance of the British Resident. They will take no step of importance without consulting him, and they will follow his advice whenever it may be offered." Thus, by one stroke of the pen, has a Sovereign Prince, to whose grandfather the territories of Cashmere were transferred *for ever, in independent possession*, reduced to the position of a nominal ruler, and the administration of his State subordinated to the wishes of a British officer, the Resident, who may now be said to govern Cashmere in absolute sway.

But on what grounds has this large measure of interference been sanctioned? To find them out, one must be referred to the Government of India's Despatch to the Secretary of State on Cashmere affairs, dated Simla, 3rd April 1889 (Appendix I.C). In that Despatch, the Government of India, after reciting the fact that both Mr. Plowden and Colonel Nisbet, (two of the bitterest opponents of the Maharaja), had reported unfavourably against His Highness, and referring to the incriminating letters, of which I have already spoken, said—"We were not disposed to attach any excessive importance to those letters, because we had received a number of very similar documents a year before, and were not ignorant of the Maharaja's failings. But in this instance, the discovery of the letters was immediately followed by a voluntary resignation of power on the part of the Maharaja; and taking into consideration this and all the other circumstances of the case, he (the Resident) felt that the time had come when some measure of interference could be no longer deferred. We have, therefore, determined that the Maharaja's resignation should be accepted, and that we should avail ourselves



of the opportunity in order to effect a thorough reorganization of the Cashmere Government." It will appear clearly from the above that it was on the recommendation of the very same Resident, who was trying his best to encompass the Maharaja's ruin and himself engross all authority in the State, that the present arrangement in Cashmere, vesting him with unlimited powers of interference, was adopted. It will also appear that the Maharaja's "voluntary resignation" was the immediate cause of a measure which has roused a deep sensation throughout the length and breadth of India. It behoves, therefore, to describe in some detail the "edict" upon which this so-called "voluntary resignation" has been based as well as the circumstances under which the "edict" itself was obtained.

In the beginning of March last, Raja Amar Singh, the Maharaja's youngest brother and Prime Minister, one day suddenly, on his return from Sialkote, where he had gone to visit the Resident, asked the Maharaja's permission to accompany the Resident to Calcutta. His Highness, who had never heard of the Resident's intended trip to the British capital, asked the Raja why the Resident was going to Calcutta, on which the Raja replied to the effect that "the honor of our house was at stake, we were ruined, certain letters had been found which proved that the Maharaja was in league with Russia and Dhulip Singh," and begged that he might be permitted to accompany the Resident. The Maharaja, surprised at this mysterious declaration, declined the sought-for permission to the Raja, and made a formal request to the Resident to see him at Jummoo. The Resident did not vouchsafe any reply for two days. The Maharaja felt embarrassed in consequence and some of his unfaithful Councillors, to improve the opportunity, en-



hanced his embarrassment by depicting in horrible colors the severe fate that awaited him. The Maharaja denied that he had ever written the letters, on which Raja Amar Singh informed His Highness that he had told the Resident that the writing appeared to be His Highness', though the signatures were doubtful. This opened the eyes of the Maharaja, and he immediately saw, as he said in his letter to the Viceroy (Appendix I A.), that "Raja Amar Singh was at the bottom of the whole thing." Surrounded by traitors, betrayed by his own dearly loved brother, his sense of honor touched to the quick, and his personal dignity and even safety endangered, the Maharaja after this felt so uneasy that he did not take his meals for two days. The Resident then, without giving any previous notice, went to Jummoo and had a long interview with Raja Amar Singh. He next called on His Highness, talked to him in the most offensive and threatening manner, and brought those "great and many-sided pressures" to bear of which the Maharaja speaks in his above letter to the Viceroy. His Highness protested his innocence, swore that the letters were forgeries and begged that he might be allowed to have a look at them, but to no effect. The Resident promptly and authoritatively observed that he was satisfied that the letters were genuine, and that he would not listen to anything His Highness might have to say with regard to them. He also said that he had told Raja Amar Singh how the matter could be squared, and that if His Highness was anxious to save himself, he must act as the Raja might suggest. Then the draft of an edict was laid before His Highness which, however, he firmly and persistently refused to sign. At last overcome by menaces and subdued by "great and many-sided pres-



tures," His Highness reluctantly signed the following edict. I give here a literal translation of the edict which was in Persian :—

"Dear younger brother, possessed of much good manners, Rajah Amar Singhji.

Whereas for the good of the State, its better administration on the model of the great British Government is desired by us, we do hereby entrust all the administrative matters of the State of Jummoo and Cashmere to Members of Council, detailed below, for a period of five years—

Raja Ram Singh.

Raja Amar Singh.

An experienced European to be appointed in consultation with the Government of India on a salary of Rs. 2,000 to Rs. 3,000 per month, who shall be a servant of the State.

Rai Bahadur Pundit Suraj Koul.

Rai Bahadur Pundit Bhag Ram.

The above-mentioned Council shall exercise administrative powers in all departments of the State for a period of five years. In case of any vacancy occurring within the said period of five years in the post of the above-mentioned last three members only, the vacancy will be filled up at our desire by the Government of India.

After the expiry of the said period of five years, we shall have power to adopt such administration for the State as may to us appear proper. The said period of five years will commence from the date of this *purwana*. All matters, great or small, 'private' or connected with 'private,' and the Mahalat (the palace), both inner and outer, shall not be liable to interference of any sort by the Council, nor shall the Council have any concern with them.

Such cash and kind for our own expenses, and for those of the Mahalat (the palace) or connected with 'private,' as are fixed and allowed up to this, and are taken from the State, shall, in future, be received as heretofore. The Council shall, on no account, have the power of causing any reduction in the same.

Such Jagirs and properties, movable and immovable, as are



attached to the Mahalat (the palace) or are 'private,' shall not also be subject to interference by the Council. These shall be entirely under the personal control of ourselves.

Such expenses, as will be incurred on occasions of marriage and death and in the observance of other temporal and religious rites, shall be defrayed by the State.

The President of the Council shall be appointed by the order of ourselves from among our full-brothers.

For the period of the above-mentioned five years, we shall not interfere in the management of the State. But in other respects, the honor and freedom, due to our rank, shall rest with ourselves.

The above-mentioned Council shall not have the power, without our sanction, to enter into any new treaty of agreement with any State, or the Government of India, or to modify, rescind or renew any treaty or agreement of our ancestors or our own.

The Council shall not have the power of granting or giving, without the sanction of ourselves, any Jagir, or proprietary rights and *pottas* of land, or of selling any immovable property of the State or public, or alienating any movable property or any other beneficial rights of the State.

Dated the 27th Falgun, Sambat 1945."

Even a cursory perusal of the above will shew that it is a *purwana* or edict or State order, addressed by the Maharaja to his own Prime Minister, and that there is no mention in it of the Resident or the Government of India, nor the faintest allusion to a "resignation." Acting under exceptionaal undue influence, the Maharaja agreed to a temporary arrangement for the government of his own State, but in doing so, he had the courage and presence of mind to reserve certain very important powers in his own hands. How any one can construe this document, executed under the circumstances narrated above, into a "voluntary resignation," it is not easy to conceive or understand. But the words of a Resident, however unreliable in themselves, are to our

Government worth a hundred times more than the most solemn declarations of the greatest Indian potentate, and no wonder that the statement of Colonel Nisbet should have carried greater weight than that of the Maharaja. Princes are not always the best of men, and I have admitted more than once that Maharaja Pratap Singh is far from a perfect character; but that is no reason why one should forget that human nature is human nature, and that, given certain circumstances, certain results are likely to follow in the case of most men. There is nothing in Colonel Nisbet to shew that he is an exception to the rule, and I humbly venture to submit that when the Maharaja writes out a categorical statement, fairplay demands that it should not be disbelieved and belied on the mere strength of a counter-statement made by a party or parties most interested in denying its truth. Yet this is what, I regret to observe, His Excellency the Viceroy has done in his reply to the Maharaja (*vide* Appendix I. B.)

The fact then is that the document reproduced above was neither "voluntarily" executed, nor did it imply a "resignation" of the Maharaja's powers. The theory of "voluntary resignation," therefore, altogether falls to the ground. But that is not all. The reader will have seen that the Maharaja's *purwana* contains some important provisions, which restrict the Council's power of interference in some very material particulars. How are these provisions got rid of? Let the Government answer this question for itself. In the Despatch to the Secretary of State (Appendix I. C.), it says—"These arrangements will not be exclusively based upon the Maharaja's edict of resignation which was an attempt to save his dignity and secure better terms than he could otherwise expect. This edict contains



some inconvenient stipulations and it would be embarrassing to agree to it as it stands. We prefer to treat it as a confession of incapacity for the rule of the State, and to base our further proceedings upon general grounds." This shews that, while the Paramount Power determined "that the Maharaja's resignation should be accepted" and that it should avail itself "of the opportunity in order to effect a thorough reorganisation of the Cashmere Government," it, at the same time, determined that it should strain the language of the document beyond the utmost limit, putting a construction which the wording does not admit of but which was most favourable for its own purposes, and that it should reject those portions of the document which were objectionable in its eyes or opposed to any object it might have in view. But was this fair, or was this just, or was this reasonable? It is quite possible that the Government of India labours under a serious misconception as to the true facts of the case, but how is its above action to be justified or even accounted for? The Resident hurries down to Calcutta with certain suspicious-looking documents, gives a version regarding those documents and the general administration of the State adverse to the Maharaja, and probably expresses a wish that the power of government may be removed from the Maharaja's hands and placed in his own. The Paramount Power without holding any enquiry, without even granting a hearing to the accused Maharaja, comes to the conclusion that the Resident must be right and the Maharaja wrong, and wrests from the latter his sacred birth-rights to equip the former who was coveting to possess the same.

The Government of India calls the Maharaja's *purwana* or edict "an attempt to save his dignity and



secure better terms than he could otherwise expect," but surely the Maharaja had no ground to suspect when he wrote it that an *ex parte* judgment would be passed against him. Besides, all unbiassed minds must agree that it affords conclusive proof that the Maharaja is not such a fool and an idiot as His Highness' enemies try to make him out to be. He saw the difficulties of his position and wrote the edict to save himself for the moment, "having full faith," to use His Highness' own words, "that Your Excellency's (Lord Lansdowne's) Government would never accept such a one-sided view of the case, and opportunity will be given to me of defending myself." Yet even while yielding to the irresistible pressure of circumstances, he took sufficient precaution to safeguard those valued rights and privileges which he knew might suffer tremendously at the hands of a Council ready to nod assent to the most preposterous demands of a man who is as great a despot as the Czar of all the Russias. The Maharaja was particularly careful about treaty rights and a few other rights which the vaulting ambition of his brother might any day sacrifice to satisfy itself. But more than everything else he was careful that there should be in the Council an experienced European on a salary of Rs. 2,000 to Rs. 3,000 per month, "who shall be a servant of the State," which means a sufficiently respectable and qualified European, bound by ties of gratitude to the State, and therefore pledged to protect its interests against the encroachments of an all-absorbing Resident. To the superficial observer, this condition in the edict may look somewhat absurd and "unpatriotic, but there is a deep meaning attached to it which places the fact that the Maharaja is possessed of intelligence and foresight beyond all dispute.



Men are not wanting who argue that when the Maharaja is so weak that he cannot resist the pressure of a British Resident, he deserves to be deposed. These are heroic critics, however, whose knowledge is defective and who base their conclusion upon premises that are fallacious. They forget the difficulties that surround the Maharaja, the power that the British Resident wields, and the danger there is in incurring the wrath of the Paramount Power. The time is long gone by when wrongs could be righted and injuries repaired by force of arms in this country. Before the power and might of the British Government, the Indian Princes and Chiefs must quail as does the robin before Jove's own bird, and they must, if they wish to exist, bear in mind that the principle of "might is right" has not disappeared from this country even under the benign rule of Great Britain. A man does not lose an acre of land without a struggle. How could the Maharaja have "voluntarily" thrown away a kingdom? Yet "voluntary resignation" was seriously put forward as one of the main grounds for His Highness' temporary deposition. The Indian administration is not in unintelligent hands, and the above should suffice to silence those heroic critics who think that the Maharaja could have saved himself, if only he had said "nay" to Colonel Nisbet's proposals.



CHAPTER VII.

THE QUEEN'S PROCLAMATION OF 1858. THE MAHARAJA'S TREATY RIGHTS—THE ARRANGEMENT NOW SANCTIONED IN CASHMERE—ITS IMPERFECTIONS—ITS PERFECT FAILURE AS AN EXPERIMENT.

THE great Indian Mutiny of 1857, brought on chiefly by the immoral annexation policy of Lord Dalhousie, which shook the very foundations of the British power in India, had cast a gloom over the face of this mighty empire. But the clouds that had gathered over the welkin gradually passed away, light dawned upon the afflicted and terrified land, and peace once more made its appearance to repair with its constructive hand the havocs of a ruinous civil war. At this moment, Her Majesty the Queen-Empress, full of motherly affection for her 200 millions of dusky subjects, issued that gracious proclamation, each syllable of which dropped a healing balsam and soothed the wounded and quivering hearts of the Princes and people of India. To the latter it promised valuable rights and privileges, and to the former it conveyed assurances which brought them security and repose. Referring to the Princes, Her Majesty said :—"We hereby announce to the Native Princes of India that all treaties and engagements made with them, by or under the authority of the Honorable East India Company, are by us accepted, and will be scrupulously maintained ; and we look for the like observance on their part. We desire no ex-



tension of our present territorial possessions, and while we permit no aggression upon our dominions or our rights to be attempted with impunity, we shall sanction no encroachment on those of others. WE SHALL RESPECT THE RIGHTS, DIGNITY AND HONOUR OF NATIVE PRINCES AS OUR OWN, and we desire that they, as well as our own subjects, should enjoy that prosperity and that social advancement which can only be secured by internal peace and good government." Her Majesty thus pledged her royal word to be bound by the treaties made with the Indian Princes by the East India Company's Government, and to respect their rights, dignity and honor "*as our own*," and her Government is therefore also committed to adopt the same line of policy and to adhere to the terms of her gracious proclamation—the highly-prized and dearly-loved MAGNA CHARTA of the Princes and people of this vast country.

I reproduced in Chapter I. the treaty of Amritsar, entered into by the Government of Lord Hardinge with Maharaja Golab Singh in 1846, and also briefly alluded to the services rendered to the British Government by Maharaja Golab Singh and his successors. I also pointed out that the result of that treaty was to make over the territories mentioned in it to the Maharaja and *the heirs male of his body, for ever, in independent possession*, in lieu of important services and for a valuable consideration in hard cash, and to accord to him a place higher than that of most Indian Princes and Chiefs. There are two additional facts that I should not omit to mention here. First, that though the Maharajas of Cashmere have, in pursuance of the treaty and as a faithful friend and ally, repeatedly rendered help to the British Government, it is seldom that they have had occasion to require any help from



the latter in return ; and, secondly, that when, after the Mutiny, the British Government offered to Maharaja Runbir Singh an extension of territories for his invaluable services during that terrible crisis, that mag-nanimous Prince thankfully declined the offer, observing that whatever humble services he had performed was for the sake of duty and not in hopes of receiving a reward. Thus we have here a solemn treaty, ratified by the cordial friendship of nearly half a century, strengthened by the pledged word of the Queen-Em-press, and rendered fifty times more obligatory by the zealous, devoted and disinterested services of three ge-nerations. Is the British Government, in the face of all this, justified in reducing Maharaja Pratap Singh to his present position ? Does not the conduct of the British Government in this particular amount to a distinct breach of faith, a clear violation of the treaty engagement, an act of positive ingratitude for forty-three years' good and faithful services ?

The Government of India has grounded its recent action in Cashmere on certain charges brought against the Maharaja, and on his own "voluntary resignation." If the charges could be brought home to the Maharaja and the "voluntary resignation" proved, there might be a justification for the course adopted. But I have shewn in Chapter V. that the charges are perfectly groundless, and in Chapter VI. that the Maharaja never tendered or submitted a "voluntary resignation" of his powers to the Government of India. It is, therefore, quite hopeless to seek a justification on any of these grounds. The Resident reported to the Viceroy that the charges were true and told His Excellency that His Highness had really resigned his powers of his own free will and consent ; but, as regards the first, the facts



contradict the Resident, and as regards the second, when the Maharaja availed himself of the earliest opportunity to deny that he ever voluntarily resigned, the authority of the Resident cannot be regarded conclusive on the point. I am aware that the British Government has a mission in this country, and that it should not look with absolute indifference on the prevalence of anarchy in a neighbouring State. But in Cashmere there is no such anarchy, in the first place, as calls for interference, and, secondly, whatever misgovernment exists in Cashmere is due entirely to the fact that the Maharaja has not been allowed to govern his own State. It would be no exaggeration to say that Maharaja Pratap Singh is one of the best disposed of Indian Princes, but the Residents have always been opposed to him for causes I have already enumerated, and it is reversing the course of justice to condemn him on the information of his determined opponents. The Government of India, in its Despatch to the Secretary of State (Appendix I. C.), expressed a conviction that, "in the interests of the people of Cashmere, and the ruling family itself, it is no longer right or possible to leave the control of affairs in the hands of the Maharaja." Judged by the light of events, this conviction would appear to be altogether wrong, but I shall, nevertheless, try to examine at this place, whether the arrangement that has now been sanctioned is likely to be conducive to the good of the ruling family or of the people of Cashmere.

What is that arrangement? It consists, first, of a Council with Raja Amar Singh as President, (Raja Ram Singh having been deposed from the Presidentship since more than a month), and three Native British Indian Officials, besides Raja Ram Singh, as members; and, secondly, of the Resident under whose



guidance the Council is to act, whom the Council is bound to consult in all important matters, and whose advice the Council is enjoined to follow whenever any advice may be offered. Now, the great initial objection to this arrangement is that it involves a system of double government which cannot fail to be highly detrimental to the best interests of the State and its people. Such double government has, from the days of Lord Clive downwards, invariably proved a mistake. Then, those interests are not identical with the interests of the British Government which it is the duty of the Resident to watch over and protect, nor can the Resident with his head full of notions from British India form an accurate idea of what those interests are. Besides, he does not seem to be much mindful of those interests. For instance, the interests of the people demand that the resources of the State should be carefully husbanded, but he is now encouraging lavish expenditure, as I shall presently show. Again, the wholesale importation of favourites and dependents and partisans, irrespective of their qualifications, from British India may be gratifying to him, but is a positive loss to the people. It is needless to multiply examples. The Council may form a better idea of the people's needs and requirements, but it dares not go contrary to the Resident's wishes, for it is painfully aware of the fact that the Maharaja has been reduced to his present straits simply because he failed to curry the Resident's favour, and as it loves its own existence, it carefully avoids treading in the Maharaja's steps. What, moreover, is the constitution of the Council? Of the two Rajas, the President, Raja Amar Singh, is said to aspire to the throne, and, if so, he would be the last person to displease the Resident by a too scrupulous adherence to the cause of the State or its subjects. The three



members imported from the British service owe no allegiance to any one save the Resident, and up to this time none of them has shewn courage enough to be able to sacrifice his own gain for the sake of duty. Raja Ram Singh is no doubt honest, devoted and loyal, but what can he alone do? There is an overwhelming majority against him, and further he has already incurred the Resident's displeasure. The upshot, therefore, is that the true interests of the State are sadly neglected and intrigue, waste and misgovernment are more rampant than before.

Thus the arrangement sanctioned, instead of promoting the interests of the people of Cashmere, is only calculated to damage them. The interests of the ruling family too are likely to suffer in equal or greater proportions, as it is being gradually shorn of those rights and privileges upon which it has always set a high value. It is a painful duty to have to say all this, and I am sorry that I have to say much more. One of the charges brought against the Maharaja—a charge upon which much stress has been laid—is that of extravagance. Lord Lansdowne, in his letter to His Highness (Appendix I. B.), said that “notwithstanding the ample resources of your State, your Treasury was empty.” If it was so, who is to be held responsible? Six lacs of rupees are annually spent on the Jhelum Valley Cart Road. Besides, within about a year's time, thirteen lacs of rupees have been remitted to the Sialkote Treasury for the Jummoo-Sialkote Railway, with three more lacs for the Water-Works at Jummoo, and twenty-five lacs have been lent to the British Government. These last three items give a total of forty-one lacs. Only a few months ago, Rs. 50,000 were paid to the Lady Dufferin's



Fund, and Rs. 25,000 to the Aitchison College at Lahore. Last winter, about Rs. 50,000 were lavished upon a European pig-sticking party near Sialkote. A new Residency is being built at Gulmarg and another new one at Jummoo, for which last alone the estimate is Rs. 1,00,000, besides Rs. 25,000 for furniture, though the Resident stays there little now and will stay less when the railway line to Sialkote is completed. Was the Maharaja anxious for all this heavy expenditure? Was not, on the contrary, all this expenditure incurred at the instance of the British Government and of its Agent at His Highness' Court, and are not they alone answerable for it? At a time when the treasury, to use Lord Lansdowne's own expression, "was empty," was it proper and opportune to lay out thirteen lacs of rupees on a railway which is not a necessity, and which will serve very little to enhance the prosperity of the people of Jummoo. The trade of the place is not considerable and is not susceptible of much development—so the line will prove but an expensive luxury after all. Then what good house-holder thinks of lending twenty-five lacs of rupees to a neighbour with endless resources, when his own coffers are quite exhausted? The Water-Works at Jummoo, which could have been managed cheaper, will be beneficial, but what good will the Lahore Aitchison College or the Lady Dufferin's Fund do to the people of Cashmere, that so much money should have been spent upon them at a time of need? Then could not the pig-sticking party at Sialkote be dispensed with, and the construction of the Residency buildings at Gulmarg and Jummoo put off for a more convenient time? There is another big item I have omitted to mention. It is the lac of rupees spent at the recent visit of the Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Forces to the "Happy Valley." Every man who



accompanied His Excellency, from the Aid-de-Camp down to the grass-cutter, was treated at the State expense. The Maharaja of Kuppurthala's recent sojourn cost the State more than Rs. 50,000. Did Maharaja Pratap Singh invite him to Cashmere? Last year Lord Dufferin intended to travel in the State, and the preparations for His Lordship's reception cost a lac of rupees. He gave up his intended tour and so a couple of lacs more was saved. But these are only the bigger items, and their list too as given here is far from exhaustive. If a detail of the smaller items were attempted, it would occupy pages. So, considering the limited space at my command, it is better to refrain from the attempt. What I have said above will give some idea of the reckless extravagance that is going on under the auspices of the British Government and the British Resident.

But that is not all. I ought to give here a few samples of the Council's work, which, the Government of India may be under the impression, has been managing affairs very economically. (1) The *Vakil* with the Resident used to get Rs. 66 a month; the present man, a *confidant* of Raja Amar Singh's, is paid Rs. 400 a month. (2) The monthly pay of the officer over the *Toshakhana* used to be Rs. 200 only. Raja Amar Singh's private servant's father has been appointed on Rs. 600. (3) A photographer, who has no public duty so far as one can ascertain, but who constantly dances attendance upon Raja Amar Singh, has been employed on Rs. 500 per month. (4) Dhunjibhoy, a favourite of Colonel Nisbet's, gets a monthly payment of Rs. 500, because he is said to have established a Tonga *Dak* along the Murree Route, though he has nothing whatever to do with the carrying of the mails which come *via* Jummoo. (5) A headman for the reception of European

visitors has been appointed on Rs. 500 per month. (6) Formerly there was a Native Doctor on the Murree Road on a pay of Rs. 50 or thereabouts, but a European has now been retained on Rs. 300 a month. (7) Spedding & Co. have got a contract on the whole of the Murree Road at double the rates formerly allowed to Native Contractors. (8) It is in contemplation to lay out a few lacs on Water Works at Srinagar, where there is already a plentiful supply of wholesome water, while the conservancy of the city is in a lamentably neglected condition. (9) Lands are being measured for European settlements at Gupkar near Srinagar and at Gulmarg, and also plans are being made for gardens, pleasure walks, &c. All this will entail a vast expenditure, besides other things, in the payment of compensation to those poor men who will have to be turned out of their holdings. (10) A continual round of festivities, including racing, picnics, &c., is going on in Cashmere at the expense of the State. This has been costing large sums of money.

It is difficult to get well-authenticated facts from Cashmere. No means has been left unused to prevent their escape into British India. Yet, the above will suffice to convince any mind open to conviction that, if the Maharaja was at all extravagant (as I have shewn he was not), the present *regime* has far outdone him in extravagance, and is frittering away the resources of the State on vain and worthless purposes. And this is not unexpected. The arrangement sanctioned by the Government has reduced the Council to the veriest "sham." Its whole object is anyhow to please the Resident and seek his favour, and to attain this object it has degraded itself to the position of the Resident's Secretary, its duty being to register his decrees and carry out his behests. The Resident writes to the Gov-



ernment of India that the financial catastrophe that threatened Cashmere is over, and the Government of India thinks on the arrangement it has brought about with complacent satisfaction. But in the meantime the administration becomes rotten to the core, far worse than what it was under the direct rule of the Maharaja, and person and property become a good deal less secure than before. Corruption rides triumphant and is attributed to some of the very highest officials. Handsome girls disappear and are no more heard of, and theft and violence take place in the broad light of day. Vindictiveness reigns supreme, and it is not an unusual thing for owners of property to be unceremoniously turned out of their possessions for the satisfaction of a grudge, private or public. Pandit Mohanundju, late Governor of Jummoo and one of the recognised leaders of the community in Cashmere, now lives in exile at Lahore and apprehends that his ancestral belongings, as old as the days of Akber and Jehangir, will soon cease to exist, really because he favoured the Maharaja's cause, but ostensibly on some ground which cannot stand examination. The Editor of *Uchit Vakhta* has been writing unpalatable things, and has been punished with the seizure of his house and lands. He has submitted a representation of his case to the Council in which, among other things, he says:—"Sometime ago, I was exceedingly surprised to hear from one of my cousins at home that a Munshi under the Samba Tehsil, named Gokul Chand, had taken possession of my house without the permission of those in whose charge it was, and that the said Munshi has been putting up there with his family. Nor is this all. I was further told by my cousin that when my relations at Samba saw Gokul Chand to occupy the house, they

protested against his proceedings. But Gokul Chand not only did not pay heed to their representations, but he assumed a threatening attitude to coerce them into submission. 'Do you know who am I?' said Gokul Chand to them—'I am the servant of Tehsil under the Council. Woe to the man who will try to oust me from the house.' "The Maharaja's mild and benignant rule has been substituted by an iron despotism, and high-handed oppression stalks abroad. Even the Court of Justice is not safe, and latterly Colonel Nisbet sent an order to the Judge on the bench in a case in which a European Military Officer was concerned. The Government of the State is without a responsible head who can feel a genuine interest in its prosperity and in the happiness of the people. Every body's duty has become no man's work, and the one engrossing object of attention almost all round is to "make hay while the sun shines."

"As for reforms, the record shews, as may be expected, almost a perfect blank, notwithstanding the loud trumpeting of the *quasi*-official organs. And what little has been done or is being attempted is more a misnomer than otherwise. To illustrate my meaning: The law of appeals recently underwent an amendment, and the alteration was to the effect that when the Sudder Court at Jummoo passed a decision, an appeal from it was to be heard by the deciding Judge and the Governor, possessing no judicial functions, with whose recorded opinions it was to go before the Judicial Member of the Council for final orders! Again, we have been hearing of a "Budget" since sometime, but none seems to have been ushered into existence yet. One has been drafted at much cost of time and money, but it is a miserable rag, full of rents and holes, which will most



probably have to be re-woven before it becomes fit to serve any useful purpose. And again, what has been done in regard to the finances? The realization of the revenue is in incompetent hands, and its tardiness and insufficiency have already produced a financial depression. The Resident himself is not a clever financier, and the Financial Member, too, with his imperfect education, understands little of financing. Under the circumstance and in view of the great waste that is being tolerated and encouraged, a crisis may shortly be expected, unless something happens in the meantime to avert the evil.



CHAPTER VIII.

THE VALLEY OF CASHMERE—ITS POSSESSION COVETED—
REASONS WHY COVETED—NATURAL ATTRACTIONS—
STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE—COLONISATION OF CASHMERE
—OBJECTIONS—APPEAL TO LORD LANSDOWNE, THE
BRITISH GOVERNMENT AND THE BRITISH
PEOPLE—CONCLUSION.

I HAVE already touched on the controversy that has gone on ever since the annexation of the Punjab as regards the propriety of transferring Cashmere to Maharaja Golab Singh. Every unprejudiced and right-thinking man must admit that the grounds upon which that transfer is now objected to are perfectly erroneous, and that they are the outcome of an immoral desire to take possession of the "Happy Valley." Those affected with the desire, however, cannot perceive its immorality, and prosecute their exertions for its attainment with a zeal and perseverance that might have done credit to a better cause. And as might be expected, the means they employ to gain their end have not always been of the most honorable kind. The charges of misgovernment and treason brought against the present Maharaja are not new in their kind. Maharaja Runbir Singh was so worried and bothered with charges of a similar nature that latterly his spirit became quite vexed and exasperated. Constant anxiety preyed on his mind and he, though naturally strong and well-built, became sub-



ject to a disease which soon brought him down. Thus, one of the best and most faithful of England's friends in this country was brought to a premature grave by the unwearied persecutions of some of her own children. To illustrate what I mean, I take the liberty to cite here a few instances which would clearly shew the aggressive wantonness with which he was treated almost during the whole course of his reign : (1) At the request of the British Government, he sent a trusted and faithful servant to enquire into the doings of Russia in Central Asia. The way in which this work was performed got him thanks from the Government of India, but a clique of opponents raised a hue and cry against the Maharaja that he was carrying on a secret correspondence with the Czar and demanded condign punishment. This was about 23 years ago. (2) A few years later, Captain Hayward, of the Geographical Society, was deputed by that Society to explore the Central Asian regions. Maharaja Runbir Singh, in the presence of Sir Donald M'Leod, late Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, pointed out the dangers of the undertaking, and advised him to give it up. But the Captain was not daunted, and Sir Donald told the Maharaja that he had nothing to fear as the Captain was going on his own responsibility. It so happened that Captain Hayward was murdered on the Trans-Gilgit frontier by the ruler of Yasin, who was absolutely beyond the Maharaja's control. But a tremendous uproar was immediately raised by the same clique of greedy opponents, and matters were pushed so far as actually to produce a document which purported to prove that the foul deed was done at the instigation of His Highness. Subsequent investigation, however, satisfactorily proved that the document was a for-

gery. " It may be added that Captain Hayward's was not a political mission, and it would, therefore, have been altogether gratuitous for the Maharaja to have arranged for his murder. (3) A Mr. Thorpe, who used to spend many of his days in Cashmere, died at Srinagar in consequence of some affection of the lungs. But a rumour of poisoning was raised which was found to be perfectly false and groundless. (4) Dr. Elmslie, a medical missionary, died in British India after a long stay in Cashmere. The lynx-eyed opponents of the Maharaja immediately detected slow-poisoning in his death and pressed for an enquiry which, however, resulted altogether in the Maharaja's favour. (6) When Mr. Johnson, Joint-Commissioner of Ladakh, died at Jummoo of apoplexy, the charge of poisoning was repeated again and the entrails, &c., of the deceased were sent to the Punjab for a chemical examination which ended in a verdict for the Maharaja. (5) A dire famine raged in Cashmere in 1879, and it was complained that the Maharaja had ordered hundreds of men to be drowned in the Wular Lake to hide starvation from the eyes of the British Government. A *purwana* of the Maharaja's, ordering the diabolical deed, was produced, and the "Officer on Special Duty" took a leading part in pressing the case against His Highness. A large number of witnesses, who had been promised *jagirs* and rewards, were examined, matters began to assume a serious aspect, and the Maharaja's ruin seemed inevitable, when the men alleged to have been drowned presented themselves and the whole thing ended in a miserable *fiasco*.

The charges against the present Maharaja proceed from a continuation of the same wanton policy that made Maharaja Runbir Singh's life one of endless



bitterness and pain. But why should Cashmere be so much coveted? For two reasons. First, earth-hunger, that insatiable craving which does not refuse bleak rocks and barren deserts, and which, therefore, naturally longs for a land

“With roses, the brightest that earth ever gave,

“And temples, and grottos, and fountains as clear

“As the love-lighted eyes that hang over their wave.”

No statesman possessed of a grain of common sense or the least idea of morality would ever think of encouraging this unlawful, this oppressive, this malicious craving. He would as soon do this as encourage one to covet his neighbour's handsome wife or fruitful vineyard.

The second reason is the strategic position of Cashmere. Some men seem to think that the safety of the empire demands that we should have the “Happy Valley” in our own hands. This view appears erroneous. An invasion of India by way of Cashmere looks like an impossibility. On this point I would fortify myself with the deliberate opinion of an Englishman, the late Dr. Wakefield, attached to Her Majesty's Field Forces. This gentleman after visiting the country wrote:—

“In its relations to our rule in India, the position of this kingdom (Cashmere), its physical and other characters, have an importance which its extent and general barrenness would scarcely warrant; for it constitutes a formidable defence, a rocky bulwark to our Empire on its northern frontier, a natural obstacle to any foe proceeding from that quarter, and one which is said to be strengthened still further at the present time by the acquisition to the Maharaja, with the consent of our Government, of the territory lying a little to the north-west, on the very borders of Turkistan.....But the frontier of these territories is satisfactory for



defensive purposes, and the River Indus supplements the great ranges of mountains, whose passes are long and difficult to traverse, few in number, covered with snow for the greater part of the year, and whose ruler, the Maharaja of Jummoo and Cashmere, is our friend and faithful ally. Hence I opine that to invade India on this side would be a wild and profitless undertaking; and granted even that a hostile force advanced through these mountains, and occupied the fertile Valley of Cashmere itself, which would afford them supplies, it would prove a precarious situation, unless they immediately passed out thence in sufficient strength to ensure a decisive victory over our troops on the adjacent plains of the Punjab. This would be difficult; for it would be only feasible for a lightly equipped force to traverse these rough mountain parts. The paths to the Vale are few in number, and instead of glorious victory, more probably complete defeat would be their portion. Snow would in all likelihood cut off their retreat by the way they had come; while over the less lofty ridges of the ranges that skirt our border could the offended British legions cross, and in their might and power overwhelm and crush them before aid or succour could arrive from the North."

There is much force and cogency in the argument set forth above, and it is strengthened by the fact that up to this time no invader of India, not even Tamerlane to whom it was the nearest, ever entered the country by the Cashmere route. Thus it appears that the strategic position of Cashmere does not necessitate its annexation. On the contrary, the Maharaja has all along been able to defend his frontiers most successfully, and even now he has a strong force stationed in those quarters. This force is maintained by the Maharaja



and the Empire is thereby saved an outlay in both men and money. Policy as well as economy, therefore, dictates that the Chiefship of Cashmere should be maintained intact. But supposing the Maharaja's means and preparations are not adequate, of which no proof has hitherto been found, for the efficient protection of the Gilgit and Baltistan borders, would it not be better to supplement them and render back to the Maharaja that help which he has always given and which he so eminently deserves, rather than annex his territories and thus strike at the root of British fairness, justice, power and prestige in the East?

Sir Lepel Griffin lately lectured in England on the colonization of Cashmere by three millions of Englishmen, as the best means of keeping out the Northern Bear from the limits of the Indian Empire. His scheme is so chimerical and impracticable that it has met with the universal derision of all right-thinking and well-informed men. In the first place, a colony of three millions of Englishmen means a colony of about ten millions of human beings, the aged and the young, males and females, all told. That means, if these ten millions are to be cooped up in the Valley which has an area of only 3,900 square miles, a population of more than 2,500 heads per square mile! I have not in this calculation included the land taken up by hills, rivers and lakes which cover a considerable area. Now, Behar has got only about 800 to the square mile, and it is the most congested portion of India, where squalor and poverty prevail more than in any other province, in spite of the richness and fertility of its soil. It may well be doubted if the soil of Cashmere is half so rich as that of Behar. How will it then maintain 2,500 of English colonists, with their expensive habits and modes



of living, besides a pretty dense Native population, in a square mile of ground? Then, how and in what manner and time will these ten millions be transported from England to India? But supposing the proposal were a feasible one, would it be conducive to the interests of England? Would not three millions of Englishmen be too powerful to be kept in check by a close bureaucracy whose tendencies are opposed to all forms of liberal government? And will not these three millions of Englishmen be a dreadful rival to British trade, to British power and British supremacy in this country?

Sir Lepel Griffin's chimera apart, there are others who think that Cashmere may well be colonized by Anglo-Indians, and that it will be advantageous to do so. There are, however, several serious objections to this scheme also. In the first place, such colonization would be opposed to the principle and policy of the Cashmere Government, which justly looks upon an Anglo-Indian settlement with great suspicion and alarm. Secondly, the Anglo-Indian colonists and settlers would not acknowledge the *lex loci* of Cashmere, but would claim to be governed by British laws. This could not be permitted without materially infringing the rights of the Maharaja as an independent Prince. Thirdly, even if it were allowed, it would introduce an invidious distinction which, though it may exist in British India, should never be tolerated in a Native State. Fourthly, this distinction would give rise to undesirable complications and materially clog the wheels of government. Fifthly, such colonization will interfere with the rights of the natural-born subjects of the Maharaja, some of whom, at least, must be ousted from their possessions in order to make room for the settlers. Sixthly, it



is only the poorer classes of Anglo-Indians that would avail themselves of the privilege, if allowed, and these Anglo-Indians, it may be conceded by their best friends, are not a very superior class of men. Their introduction in the Valley would cause much injustice, high-handedness and oppression. Seventhly, hitherto only respectable Europeans have been allowed to visit Cashmere. A few years ago there used to be a limited number of "passes," without which none could travel in Cashmere. The object of these "passes" was to prevent overcrowding, and the Maharaja was nevertheless so anxious about the sojourners that he applied for a "Special" officer to look after them. These respectable Europeans, sojourning in the Valley for only a few months out of the year and partaking freely of the Maharaja's hospitality, kept the Maharaja on the *qui vive*. But when there is a permanent population of low class Anglo-Indians, capable of defying the Maharaja's laws and Government, the trouble and the annoyance to the Maharaja and the oppression to his subjects can be better imagined than described.

I have already adverted to the fact that lands are being measured at Gupkar, in the immediate vicinity of Srinagar, and at Gulmarg, for allotment to Anglo-Indian settlers. I am not aware of the details on which the plan of this settlement is proposed to be carried out. But whatever those details may be, it is difficult to understand how and under what authority it is intended to plant it. The Maharaja is by immemorial custom the owner of the soil. He is independent, and an alliance exists between him and the British Government by the treaty of Amritsar, concluded with his grandfather in 1846. That treaty makes no provision for such encroachment as is now intended upon the Maha-



raja's rights. The Maharaja, when he signed, under "great and many-sided pressure," the document mis-called the "edict of resignation," reserved to himself the power of transferring land. Even if he signed the document voluntarily, the Council thereby did not become possessed of power which the Maharaja never delegated to it. The Government of India, it is true, while attributing to the Maharaja, a "voluntary *resignation*," which is denied by the Maharaja and negatived by the document itself, did not agree to the saving clauses mentioned in the document. Yet, it never meant that the Council should supersede the Maharaja. It simply directed "the administration of the State to be handed over to the Council," not for ever, but only "for a time." This means that the Council is temporarily empowered to carry on the ordinary government of the country, but it certainly does not imply that the Council will be able to effect a change in those matters which affect the permanent status and dignity of the State. For instance, by no manner of cavilling can it be said to convey to the Council the power of entering into a new treaty with the Paramount or any other Power. This allotment of lands to Anglo-Indian settlers, therefore, if it is really intended, is entirely without jurisdiction. I have already pointed out the mischiefs it would create. It may be added that the British Government has, by suspending the Maharaja's powers, introduced a sort of *interregnum*, and is now in the position of a trustee to His Highness. It is, therefore, bound to restore the State with all the powers, privileges and rights that belonged to it at the time it took over charge. To return the State with the ownership of a portion of the land alienated to strangers and with an Anglo-Indian



population settled among his subjects, would amount to a distinct violation of a trust which, it is difficult to believe, the British Government can ever be guilty of.

My task is now nearly done. It has been my humble endeavour in the course of this pamphlet to give as correct an exposition of the recent *imbroglio* in Cashmere as I can. Man is liable to error, and it is possible that, in spite of my most earnest efforts to ascertain and describe the truth, some errors may have crept in. But this much I feel certain that I have not overstated the Maharaja's case. His opponents speak of his maladministration, but I, for one, would defy them to bring one single specific act of maladministration home to His Highness. Nothing is easier than to advance, and nothing more difficult than to refute, vague and general charges, but the burden of proving such charges, when brought, rests with ten times additional weight on those who bring them. It appears to me that far from being able to discharge that burden, the Maharaja's accusers have not even succeeded in bringing any evidence worth the name against him. His Highness had been condemned unheard, and when he took the earliest opportunity to give a categorical denial to the charges brought against him, his conviction on the bare statement of his accusers was upheld. One would find it difficult to reconcile this procedure with the probity that characterizes the British Government.

Before bringing this to a close, I would venture to make an appeal to the Marquess of Lansdowne—to his Lordship's sense of justice and generosity—to those noble instincts which are his by education and inheritance—and to the British Government and the British Nation, to deal out to the Maharaja that consi-



derate treatment which has not up to this time been accorded to him. The sentence that has been passed upon the Maharaja is harsh and undeserved, but few will feel inclined to doubt that, if His Excellency has been instrumental in causing hardship and injustice to His Highness, that is because the true facts of the case were never collectively placed before him. The reports that reached him were all one-sided, and hence he was inevitably led into error. The Maharaja is perfectly right when he says (*vide* Appendix I. A.), "Now, to put it very plainly, I have never up to this time enjoyed complete independence of action in State affairs—some sort of pressure or other has always been put upon me since my accession to the throne, and I have never been free to administer the State according to my internal satisfaction. Under such circumstances, it has been very cruel indeed to hold me *personally* responsible for any maladministration and punish me severely as a criminal." Truer words were never uttered, and I have throughout the preceding pages tried to prove the very position assumed by His Highness here. Further on, the Maharaja adds—"If your Excellency really wants to make me responsible for the administration of the State, (and I am very glad and ready to take such responsibility on my head), I would ask to be a responsible ruler. In spite of what has been represented against me about my incapacity, &c., &c., I would ask your Excellency to give me a fair trial in order to see what I do for the furtherance of the Supreme Government and the prosperity of the State. From three to five years' time is quite sufficient for me to put everything into order from the date of holding responsibility; provided I am allowed full strength and independence to choose my own Councillors



and Ministers; and the British Resident, instead of throwing obstacles in my way, like Colonel R. Parry Nisbet, supports and strengthens my hands. This just Resident should be chosen by the Government of India. I shall always be glad and ready to seek his advice and sympathy, but in all matters concerning the State, &c., the Resident will have to consult me solely." The prayers contained in the above extract are just and reasonable. It is idle to talk of responsibility when His Highness is not allowed advisers and ministers of his own choice, men upon whom he can absolutely rely, who may be thoroughly loyal and faithful to him, and who may co-operate with him in the arduous work of administration with single-minded zeal, honesty and devotion. It will not do to thrust upon him a few effete or nearly effete servants of the British Government, who have always moved in one groove and are fit to carry on mere routine work, who possess little education or strength of character, who owe no sort of obligation to the Maharaja, and whose minds are not wide enough to grasp the problems that await solution every moment in conducting the affairs of a large State. The Resident also must be a just and thoroughly conscientious man, who, while carefully watching over the interests of the British Government, may scrupulously avoid trenching upon the Maharaja's rights, and regard it a sin to encroach upon His Highness' powers and privileges. He should also be friendly and sympathetic, and refrain from doing any thing that might have the effect of throwing the administrative apparatus out of gear.

And lastly, the Maharaja ought to have a fair trial as proposed by himself. With reference to this proposal, Lord Lansdowne, in his reply (Appendix I. B.) to the



Maharaja's letter, after adverting to the formation of a Council on the dismissal of Dewan Luchman Das, and to the transfer of Mr. Plowden and appointment of Colonel Nisbet, observed—"Looking back at these events, it is surely not too much to say that the result of the action of the Government of India in 1888 was to give your Highness, in the fullest sense of the term, a fair trial, such as you now so earnestly ask. I am, however, constrained to tell Your Highness distinctly that the result of that trial appears to have been of a most unsatisfactory kind." But, as I have already pointed out, the Council, in the first place, was not constituted after the Maharaja's choice and included men who owed no obligation to the Maharaja and were, therefore, not called upon to act in unison and sympathy with him; secondly, the formation of the Council, which was delayed till almost the end of the year, Pandit Bhag Ram taking his seat in November or December last, prevented the Maharaja's taking any definite steps to carry out his own plan of administration; and, thirdly, when the Council was formed, Colonel Nisbet's friendship with Raja Amar Singh began which, growing stronger from day to day, led to that *denouement* which all India now deplores. The Maharaja, therefore, I humbly submit, had no "trial" during the period the Viceroy speaks of. He had had an opportunity at the commencement of his reign, and that, as I have already shewn, he fully utilized, introducing beneficent reforms and trying to impart a new tone and character to the administration. It is, therefore, due to both the Maharaja as well as the British Government to give the Maharaja the trial he so ardently seeks, to vest him with responsible powers, and to afford him every facility to work out the glorious programme which he has always



thought of, but which he has never been able to carry into execution.

In conclusion, I would beg to note that, though the Maharaja is an *independent* Prince, he has always expressed his willingness to act according to the advice of the British Government. In his letter to the Viceroy (Appendix I. A.) he said—"As advised by my late lamented father from my very childhood, my heart is full of loyalty to the Paramount Power, and I am always ready to do all that can be desired by the blessed Government. Your Excellency is authorized to consider me as one of your most faithful and humble servants." His Highness has been no gainer by adopting this humble course, which has cost him his sovereign powers; yet he does not grudge but still professes the same loyalty and devotion as ever. He says—"When my late father always considered it an honor to serve the Government loyally and faithfully, I should and I do consider it greater honor still to follow his example. All my dominions, my treasury, even my life and blood, are at the disposal of the British Government and our Mother-Sovereign, H. I. M. the Queen-Empress." These are words that proceed from the heart and they should not fail to produce their full measure of good.

This Cashmere *imbroglio* has caused a deep sensation throughout the country. Princes and people alike are anxiously watching its course, and even our grisly neighbour of the Northern Bear is not indifferent to it. The subjects of His Highness, particularly the warlike Dogras, who have never been subjected to foreign domination, all chafe and fret and look upon the present arrangement as exceedingly unsatisfactory—in fact, as subversive of the normal state of things. Under such



circumstances, I have felt it incumbent upon me, as a loyal and dutiful subject, to inform our beloved Government how matters really stand and to point out the unwisdom and impolicy, as it appears to me, of persisting in an arrangement that is the offspring of misconception. The Indian population have been somewhat reassured by Lord Cross' generous declaration in the House of Lords that the Government had no intention of annexing Cashmere and that powers would be restored to the Maharaja, but the contingency with which he coupled this promise has bred considerable misgivings. It is known throughout the country, except perhaps in the highest quarters, that Maharaja Pratap Singh is a virtuous Prince, and that he has been made the victim of a powerful and selfish clique; the words "no sooner the situation in that quarter is remedied," in his Lordship's declaration, are, therefore, calculated to inspire a fear that the sufferings that have been inflicted upon him are likely to be prolonged. No time should be lost in removing that fear. The powers and privileges of which the Maharaja has been wrongly deprived can not be rendered back to him a moment too soon. By doing this, the British Government will accomplish a two-fold purpose. It will uphold the cause of justice and it will vindicate its own reputation for honesty and fairplay—a reputation which is of infinitely greater service in maintaining its power and prestige in the East than burning powder or cold steel. "Righteousness exalteth a nation," and it is to righteousness that the British Nation owes its prosperity and success. May it ever grow in righteousness, and may prosperity and success be its for evermore!



APPENDIX I.

A.

*Letter of the Maharaja of Cashmere addressed to His
Excellency Lord Lansdowne, Viceroy and Governor-
General of India.*

My Lord,—It is after great suffering and distress and undergoing greatest contempt and taunt at the hands of my inferiors that I have with fear decided to send this special message to your Excellency per bearer. Necessity and feeling of loyalty have obliged me to seek advice from your Lordship and take shelter under the fatherly care of your Excellency. As advised by my late lamented father from my very childhood, my heart is full of loyalty to the Paramount Power and I am always ready to do all that can be desired by the blessed Government. Your Excellency is authorized to consider me as one of your most faithful and humble servants. When my late father always considered it an honor to serve the Government loyally and faithfully, I should and I do consider it greater honor still to follow his example. All my dominions, my treasury, even my life and blood, are at the disposal of the British Government and our Mother-Sovereign, H. I. M. the Queen-Empress.

I know very well that I have been extremely misrepresented before the Government of India through sources which had a show of reliableness; but this alas! I have come to know too late, when my internal enemies who are envious of my position have succeeded to drive me to a very mean and pitiable position and I implore your Excellency to release and save me from it, taking my destitute position in consideration.

The recent allegations brought against me about secret correspondence with Russia, conspiracy with Dhalip Singh, at-



tempt to poison the British Resident and lots of other stupid stories did not affect my mind in the least, for I was under the impression that some special officer will be deputed by your Excellency's Government to inquire fully into the charges and thus I shall get the best opportunity of disclosing everything fully and, through this source, be able to bring all facts to the notice of your Excellency and have my secret enemies brought to book through Your Excellency's kind sympathy. But to my greatest pleasure, no notice was taken of these false letters and all other stupid stories were taken as nonsense by the Supreme Power. After this was over, the following communication was sent by Colonel R. P. Nisbet, Resident in Cashmere, to Raja Amar Singh, Prime Minister :—

“ No. 11 C 1889.

From—Colonel R Parry Nisbet, C. I. E.,

The Resident in Cashmere,

To—Raja Amar Singh, Prime Minister, Cashmere.

Dated 17th April, 1889.

Sir,—With reference to your No. 159, dated 8th March 1889, I beg to inform you that the letter with its enclosure was laid before His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General in Council who after full consideration of affairs in the Cashmere State for a long time past, has ordered me to inform His Highness the Maharaja that for a time at least he will be expected to refrain from all interference in the administration. He will retain his rank and dignity as chief of the State, but full powers of Government will be vested in a Council consisting of the Maharaja's brothers and three or four officials selected by the Government of India. It is not thought desirable that one of these officials should be an Englishman. Besides retaining his rank and dignity the Maharaja will receive from the revenues of the State an annual sum sufficient to maintain his household in due comfort and to defray any expenditure that may rightly devolve upon him ; but he will have no power of alienating the State revenues and the sum placed at his disposal though adequate will not be extravagantly large.

2. His Highness the Maharaja and the members of Council should thoroughly understand that although the Council will



have full powers of administration they will be expected to exercise these powers under the guidance of the British Resident. They will take no step of importance without consulting him and they will follow his advice whenever it may be offered.

3. Such are the orders of the Government of India and on my own part I beg you will assure His Highness that it will be my endeavour to assist in carrying them out in the way, I trust, that may be most conducive to the happiness and benefit of His Highness and the State.

I remain yours truly,
(Sd). R. Parry Nisbet,
Resident in Cashmere."

And now your Excellency can judge what my position at present is and how much I am slighted in the Dārbar, my enemies staring with pride and triumph into my eyes very often and showing me all possible contempt.

Now I have no other option left than to disclose fully my mind to your Excellency and relate all bare facts without any reserve:—

My chief enemy and in the present circumstances enemy of the State, who has taken a fancy to become the ruler of Cashmere and envies my position since a long time, is, I am sorry to say, my own youngest brother, Raja Amar Singh. It is now that I have found him out in his true colors and all doubts as to his ill motive have been removed. Since the very day I succeeded to the throne *he* caused to set afloat all sorts of rumours against me—about my incapacity, insanity, &c., &c.; many a time he was directly caught in conspiring against me. He encouraged pecuniarily and otherwise people connected with the Press with the only object of their writing against my person, villifying me and causing to circulate the worst rumours against me. Having convenient access to European visitors, &c., and the Residents (to which I never objected, having no suspicion regarding his doings) he filled their ears as often as possible with such black stories about me directly and indirectly; thinking very well that his doing so will indirectly set the Government of India against me and he will be proclaimed ruler of Jammoo and Cashmere territories, in



that case. To almost every Resident and especially to Colonel R. Parry Nisbet, he appeared to be the most reliable and intimately connected informant, and all should have believed in what he said: and I have every reason to believe that all rumours which reached the Government against me must have been through this and this source alone.

Being disgusted with his this unworthy conduct and having ample proofs to silence him in his face, I twice resolved to order him to remove himself to his *Jagir* and have nothing to do in the Capital. On both these occasions, being informed of my resolution against him, he entered my room, where was none except him and myself, shedding childish tears, throwing his turban on my feet, imploring for mercy, promising all good will and hearty loyalty for the future and asking for pardon as my dear son and humblest slave. After all he was my youngest brother, very dear to me, his lovely young face is still liked by me and on both of these occasions my blood was naturally warm for him and I was completely moved by his entreaties and pardoned him after all. To prove to him that my heart was quite in sympathy with him and I truly loved him as my dear son, I, at his request, bestowed upon him the rich *Jagir* of *Bhadderwah* instead of comparatively poor one, *Bisoli*—which he had got during the time of my father—and also made him my Prime Minister later on. But, as was known afterwards, he was never slow in conspiring against me. Regaining my confidence twice and knowing that I was quite confident and entirely at ease from his side, he possessed redoubled power and influence in the State, which is natural; and every State official was made to look upon him as my powerful assistant and adviser. All these advantages he brought in force against me for the gain of his one sole object in view above mentioned, and he was able enough to create a strong party of his own, among my officials against me, giving them all hopes of future success and prosperity in case they remained faithful only to him and joined with him in overthrowing me and mine. This promise he has fulfilled now in promoting those who joined him and degrading those, my sincerely faithful servants, who stood faithful to me amidst all temptations.



Colonel R. P. Nisbet as soon as he was installed as British Resident at my court, I looked upon him as my safe friend and thought my difficulties were at an end, because I knew him to be one of the sincere friends of my father and good supporter to myself. I must also confess that for some little time in the beginning he was my sympathizer to some extent, and it is very difficult to say what made him entirely change his motives towards me and fall into the very clutches of the very same secret and powerful enemy of mine—Raja Amar Sing. This sudden change must be as astonishing to all others as it was to me and it is the most difficult task to investigate fully into the cause of his sudden change of policy.

To overcome such difficulties as I was labouring under at the hands of powerful intriguers using all sorts of influence, within and without, it was that I asked for the loan of two well-experienced officers from the Government of India to act as my councillors; and I must express my deep and heartfelt gratitude for the kindness with which the Government of India conceded to my request. But excellent men as these were they also changed their former attitude as soon as the Resident changed his—and I believe they must have done so naturally—as they are more dependent upon the good-will of the Representative of the British Government under whose employment they have spent almost all their life and whom they owe all they have got, than myself to whom they are only lent—so I was soon being made powerless.

At this juncture the brewing plot of the much-talked-of letters alleged to have been written by me was brought into force. Almost all the rumours about the source from which they are purported to have reached the Resident are false. Solely Raja Amar Singh was at the bottom of the whole thing. They are nothing but most daring forgeries; and there was none more daring than my blood-relation, the Raja. I have every reason to thank heartily your Excellency's Government for considering and treating them beneath notice and this news when reached Jammoo it gave joy to all but to my brother (!) Raja Amar Sing and his party-fellows, as for instance, Sirdar Roop Sing, the present Governor of Cashmere, Dewan



Jankipershad, his Secretary (ex-Governor), Wazir Shibsaran and Dewan Shibsaran and many others to whom it gave excessive pain. I am sure if the Government of India would have required witnesses, Raja Amar Singh had been the first to swear against me. He was even ready to accompany Colonel Nisbet to Calcutta to complete my disaster for ever. When he came to inform me of his intention to leave for Calcutta with the Resident, at his desire, I questioned him as to what opinion he expressed about the letters before the Resident. In reply he admitted to have said "only (!) that the etymological letters resemble those of the Maharaja's handwriting, but the signatures are not quite so." Being startled and heartily pained at his this reply I simply told him "All right, Rajaji, you can go to Calcutta if you like, but this was not expected from you. In your admitted deposition you have left nothing to destroy me." On the other day, he, I believe with the consultation of the Resident, decided not to go, and told me "as Your Highness is not favorable to the proposal, I won't go now to displease Your Highness!"

With the information of these letters and with the full confidence and strength of being supported by my own brother and his now strong party, Colonel R. P. Nisbet dashed into my room at a fixed time and brought such great and many-sided perssures in all solemnity and seriousness that I was obliged to write what was desired by him in order to relieve myself for the moment—having full faith that your Excellency's Government would never accept such one-sided view of the case and opportunity will be given to me of defending myself. I *never* admitted the genuineness of these letters and even an ordinary sense can find out that I could never write such nonsense as the letters are purported to contain. Do I not know the dangers of the change of Governments? Do I not understand the value of a peaceful Government presiding over us all? Do I not know what security all the Native Princes are enjoying? Do I not understand that my dominions are most safe under the benign British Government? Then what on earth can induce me to correspond with Russia? Who is in Russia to read *Dogra* vernacular? Having been in possession



of high honors and all regard from the British Government and having got everything from being loyal to it what more can I aspire to get from a Foreign power whose tyranny and despotism are well-known here? As to Dullip (God forbid!) if he ever happens to come here who is in a more dangerous position to suffer from his wrath? That I would conspire with him is to hit the axe at the very root of my own existence. About the attempt to poison Mr. T. C. Plowden, I think Mr. Plowden himself must be the best witness. My administration in those days was vested in the Council composed of Dewan Lachman Dass, President, Raja Ram Singh, Military member, and Raja Amar Singh, member of all the Civil Affairs, and let them all seriously say if they know anything about it? Raja Amar Singh, who was the chief adviser and general controller of all affairs and under whose cunning guidance Dewan Lachman Dass used to act unknowingly, may support the charge I cannot say, but none other, not even one single soul in the whole State will ever stand as witness to this charge. Moreover, who is the fool in this world to commit such conspiracies to writing? Supposing there was such a foul conspiracy on my part, would not the whole thing have been managed orally? But I assure your Excellency with all sacredness that such an idea never occurred to me in dream even.

Although your Excellency's Government treated the letters as *beneath* notice, but my enemies have got the fullest advantage that they expected. They are now full conquerors over me and trample me under their foot. What is my position now?—simply that of a dead body;—even worse than that, for I am taunted every moment by some sort of disgrace and disregard or other; those inferiors and traitors who only yesterday showed me every respect and bowed down before me, pass me now with contemptuous smile and I constantly bear the destruction and degradation of all these my faithful and old servants who stood by me—of course a dead body is unconscious of all these troubles of which I am unfortunately not.

In his communication No. II-C., dated 17 April (above-quoted in full) to Raja Amar Singh the Resident says:—

“ * * * * His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General



in Council after full consideration of the circumstances and the general condition of affairs in the Cashmere State for a long time past has ordered me to inform H. H. the Maharaja that for a time at least he will be expected to refrain from all interference in the administration. He will retain his rank and dignity as chief of the State, &c. &c. &c." Now, to put it very plainly, I have never up to this time enjoyed complete independence of action in State affairs—some sort of pressure or other has always been put upon me since my accession to the throne and I have never been free to administer the State according to my internal satisfaction. Under such circumstances it has been very cruel indeed to hold me *personally* responsible for any mal-administration and punish me severely as a criminal. By the above order of your Excellency it is plain enough to understand that matters have been so represented as to prove that only *my* interference has brought about this state of affairs for which the Government of India has been obliged to pass such strictures—whereas the case is quite the contrary. The man whose disloyal interference is the chief cause of all mismanagement and who should have been severely punished has got not only scotfree, but has been placed over my head, enjoying perfect satisfaction of having been successful in his wicked design. Had there been any other loyal and faithful Prime Minister of mine than Raja Amar Singh he would have been expected to send in a suitable reply to the Resident's communication and to save me from the deadly disgrace which I have been put to: but my brother, the present Prime Minister, quietly submitted to it and was extremely satisfied to see me thus disgraced—as it was really his own hearty intention to see me so.

What "rank and dignity" I can retain under such circumstances? My condition is worse than a deposed ruler inasmuch as he is taken out to some other place where he does not witness the most insulting scenes. And as regards the stipend that I am allowed at the mercy of the Council or Resident, such is given even to the treacherous enemies of the British who massacred their Regiments and are now imprisoned or kept safe as Political prisoners on the hills! Certainly, if the



alleged letters had been proved genuine no worse fate would have befallen me. The present Council, not content with reducing me to such a state of distress, have now fallen upon all those who have been faithful to me. Not to go into full details I only say that Pandit Mahanandju, Governor of Jammoo, Pandit Zanakak, Assistant Governor of Cashmere, Pandit Shevakak, Officer of the Timber Department, Dassaundhi Ram, an honest Chief Judge of Jammoo and Pandit Pearilal, officer of deciding the old balance accounts and many others have all been dismissed with exception of Dassaundhi Ram, with one stroke of pen, on one plea and pretence or other, but really simply because they were sore in the eyes of Raja Amar Singh and did not hear to his illegal recommendation and stood on my side. Their places are now being filled with such men who are notorious for their show of contempt towards me.

If your Excellency really wants to make me responsible for the administration of the State (and I am very glad and ready to take such responsibility on my head) I would ask to be made a responsible ruler. In spite of what has been represented against me about my incapacity, &c., &c., I would ask your Excellency to give me a fair trial in order to see what I do for the furtherance of the Supreme Government and prosperity of my State. From 3 to 5 years' time is quite sufficient for me to put everything into order from the date of holding responsibility; provided I am allowed full strength and independence to choose my own Councillors and Ministers; and the British Resident, instead of throwing obstacles in my way, like Colonel R. Parry Nisbet, supports and strengthens my hands. This just Resident should be chosen by the Government of India. I shall always be glad and ready to seek his advice and sympathy, but in all matters concerning the State, &c., the Resident will have to consult me solely.

For the present, I would like to take Raja Ram Singh, Pandit Suraj Kaul and Pandit Bhag Ram as my Councillors (and remove Raja Amar Singh to his *Jagir*) with full powers to add or diminish any one.

If after a fair trial being given to me, I do not set everything right excepting the Settlement Department, which is under the



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guidance of Mr. Lawrence and which will not be settled within five years and am found not to rule to the satisfaction of the Supreme Government and my people within the prescribed time, your Excellency's Government is at liberty to do anything that may be considered advisable.

In case this liberty is not allowed to me by the Supreme Government and I have to remain in my present most miserable condition I would most humbly ask your Excellency to summon me before you (and I will be most happy to obey such summons) and shoot me through the heart with your hands and thus at once relieve an unfortunate Prince from unbearable misery, contempt and disgrace for ever.

With sincere respects and best compliments and awaiting commands,

I remain,
Your Excellency's most obedient
servant and faithful friend,
PRATAP SINGH.

Cashmere, 14th May, 1889.



APPENDIX I.

B.

*Lord Lansdowne's Reply to the Letter of the
Maharaja of Cashmere.*

My Honoured and Valued Friend,—I have received your Highness's letter of the 14th May. It is satisfactory to me to learn from your Highness that you are loyally disposed towards the Paramount Power, and it is your desire to be guided by my advice. I shall give it to you frankly, and without any attempt to conceal my thoughts.

Your Highness has stated in your letter that your conduct has lately been completely misrepresented by your secret enemies ; that Colonel Parry Nisbet, the British Resident in Cashmere, has dealt unjustly with you, and that your chief enemy has been your youngest brother, Raja Amar Singh. You suggest that the letter to Raja Amar Singh, signed and sealed by your Highness on the 8th March of this year, was written without due consideration, and in consequence of pressure put upon you by the Resident ; you urge that you have never enjoyed sufficient independence of action in regard to the affairs of your State to enable you to give satisfactory evidence of your ability as a ruler ; you beg that you may now be given a further trial, and, with this object, you virtually recede from the proposals contained in the letter to Raja Amar Singh, of which I have just spoken ; and, in conclusion, you express, in the strongest language, your inability to submit patiently to the position in which you now find yourself.

I must point out to your Highness that the decision of the Government of India to relieve you of an active share in the Government of your State was arrived at not only in consequence of recent events, but of circumstances which must be within your Highness's recollection, and which occurred some



time before my arrival in this country. During the last years of the administration of my predecessor, the Marquess of Dufferin and Ava, extremely unfavourable reports had been received by the Government of India of the manner in which the affairs of Cashmere were administered by your Highness. The finances of the State were in disorder, a disorder which, there could be little doubt, was increased by your own extravagance, while your Highness had surrounded yourself by persons of the worst reputation, whose influence over you had produced the most unfortunate results. These complaints, which were made not only by the then Resident, but also by certain of the Princes and Sirdars of the Cashmere State, were borne out by papers which were placed in the hands of the Government of India. These contained, amongst other matters, ample evidence to show that you were squandering the resources of your State in a most reckless and improvident manner and in the encouragement of the most unworthy persons.

At this time the Government of India anxiously considered the course which it should adopt in reference to your Highness, and its decision was conveyed to you in the Kharita of the Marquess of Dufferin and Ava, dated the 25th July of last year. In this letter, Lord Dufferin pointed out to you the impropriety of your dismissal of your Prime Minister, Dewan Luchman Das, who had been appointed after consultation with the Government of India, without reference to that Government. He strongly urged upon your Highness the necessity of a careful investigation of the condition of the finances of Cashmere, and of the Executive and Judicial Services, and he intimated to you that he was prepared to accept, with certain modifications, a scheme which had been proposed on behalf of your Highness for the formation of the reformed Council, of which you were to be the President. The constitution of this Council appeared to Lord Dufferin to be open to certain objections, but, in deference to your Highness's wishes, he determined not to press these. He, moreover, expressed his readiness to supply you with a certain number of trained native officials who might be of assistance to you in strengthening your administration.



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About this time, in order to meet your Highness's wishes, advantage was taken of the appointment of Mr. Plowden to another post in order to appoint, as Resident in Cashmere, a gentleman well known to you and regarded by you with feelings of friendship and confidence.

Looking back at these events, it is surely not too much to say that the result of the action of the Government of India in 1888 was to give your Highness, in the fullest sense of the term, a fair trial, such as that for which you now so earnestly ask. I am, however, constrained to tell your Highness distinctly that the result of that trial appears to have been of a most unsatisfactory kind. In the spring of this year my attention was called to the documents referred to in your Highness's letter : many of these had every appearance of being genuine, and they have, moreover, a striking resemblance to those other papers of which I have already spoken, and which came into the possession of the Government of India at a previous time. Your Highness is correct in expressing your belief that the action subsequently taken by my Government was not justified merely by the disclosures contained in these letters. Even if the whole of these had been unquestionably genuine, I could not bring myself to believe that they had been written deliberately or with a full appreciation of their meaning. There were, however, other circumstances which the Government of India could not do otherwise than take into consideration. The reports from the new Resident of the manner in which your Highness had administered the State had been not less unfavourable than those submitted, from time to time, by Mr. Plowden. Notwithstanding the ample resources of your State, your Treasury was empty, corruption and disorder prevailed in every department and every office ; your Highness was still surrounded by low and unworthy favourites, and the continued misgovernment of your State was becoming, everyday, a more serious source of anxiety.

This, however, was not all. A meeting had taken place between your Highness and Colonel Nisbet at Jummoo on the 7th March, and upon that occasion your Highness had distinctly stated that it was your wish to have no more to do with



public affairs, and had asked the Resident whether he was prepared to assume, in conjunction with a Council, the management of the State. You repeated several times to the Resident that you were tired of the trouble which had been occasioned to you by official affairs, and that you would prefer to go away and to live in peace privately. At the termination of the interview, you stated that you would send your brother, the Prime Minister, Raja Amar Singh, to discuss the matter the further with Colonel Parry Nisbet; and Raja Amar Singh on the following morning assured the Resident that you had made up your mind to give up interference with the public affairs, during the next few years. A further conference between yourself and the Resident took place on the following day. You still adhered to the language which you had used on the previous day, only stipulating that the Council was not to interfere with your private affairs. In the afternoon the Prime Minister brought to Colonel Parry Nisbet your edict constituting a Council of State which was to include an English member, and which was to have full and sole powers in all the public Departments of State for a period of five years, during which it was provided that the Maharaja will not interfere and will have no voice in the administration of the public affairs of the State, but he will continue to enjoy the honorary rights and position of Maharaja. This proposal, emanating directly from your Highness, could not be treated by my Government otherwise than as embodying your deliberate intentions and wishes; nor can I admit that you are now justified in describing the edict, to which I have referred, as having been hurriedly written under pressure from Colonel Parry Nisbet, who, your Highness will remember, throughout these conversations, expressly pointed out to you that it would not be practicable for him to undertake the management of the State in the manner which you had suggested.

When your letter to Raja Amar Singh was laid before the Government of India, I felt that, in view of the circumstances which I have recapitulated, no other course was open to me than to accept in substance the proposal which you had made. In so doing, however, some important modifications were made



in the original scheme. Amongst these I may mention my refusal to take advantage of your suggestion that an Englishman should be appointed to serve upon the new Council; such a step seemed to me to be unnecessary, and I determined not to take it. Again, instead of requiring that the new arrangement should last for at least five years, it was stipulated that it should continue for a time of which the length was not specified. I may also remind you of the consideration shown to your Highness by the stipulation that your Highness should receive a suitable income from the State revenues, and that your rank and dignity should be reserved to you. That this has been done has been amply proved by the respect shown to you by His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief on the occasion of his recent visit to your State.

What I have written will show to your Highness how it has come to pass that the Government of India felt itself obliged to introduce these changes for a time into the Government of Cashmere. The arrangement was arrived at after careful consideration, and with a full knowledge of facts of which your Highness is well aware. I may add that by last week's mail from England I have received a letter from the Secretary of State for India informing me that Her Majesty's Government fully approve the measures taken by the Government of India in April last, and share their conviction that in the interests of the people of Cashmere, and of the ruling family itself, it has become impossible to leave the control of affairs in your Highness's hands.

It is idle to contend that all this has been the result of a conspiracy against you, in which the Resident, your brother, and the officials of the State, have all had a part. In your letter to me you admit that you knew the Resident to be "one of the sincere friends of my father and a good supporter of myself." You had yourself designated your brother, Raja Amar Singh, towards whom you felt the greatest affection, for the office of Prime Minister. The officers lent to you by the Government of India were, you tell me, excellent men, and they were supplied to you at your own request. If, however, I am to accept the statement now made by your Highness, it

would be necessary for me to believe that Colonel Parry Nisbet, Raja Amar Singh, and the officers referred to must all of them have changed their nature as well as their disposition towards your Highness within a few months. All these men were, I believe, ready to be friends, but they have found that your conduct in public and private life was such as to render it impossible for them to co-operate cordially with you.

What I have said has reference to the past. For the future, let me earnestly entreat your Highness to show to the people of Cashmere, as well as to the Government of India, by bearing in a dignified manner the loss of power which you have sustained, and, above all, by not associating yourself with local intrigues and conspiracies, or attempts to obstruct the Government, that you have not entirely lost the qualities of a wise and prudent ruler. The settlement announced in Colonel Parry Nisbet's letter of the 17th April to the Prime Minister is, as I have already pointed out to you, not necessarily a permanent one. Time will, however, be necessary, if the finances of the State are to be restored to order, and the results of past mal-administration effectually removed. Until this has been done, the present arrangement must certainly remain in force. When these good results have been achieved, it may be possible to give your Highness a larger share in the control of the public affairs of Cashmere. Much would, in such a case, depend upon your own conduct in the meanwhile. You cannot therefore govern yourself too cautiously or be too careful in selecting your associates and confidants.

I would also ask you to inform Raja Ram Singh, who has, I understand, accompanied your Highness to Jummoo, that the Government of India cannot regard with indifference his continued absence from the Council of State. He holds the important post of Commander-in-Chief in charge of the Military Department, and his failure to attend to the business of this cannot do otherwise than produce the most serious results. Unless, therefore, he returns shortly to Srinagar and resumes the discharge of his duties, it will be necessary to make some arrangement for the transfer of these duties to other hands.

I will add only one word to what I have said above. Should



your Highness at any time desire to address me in connection with this, or other matters, it will always be agreeable to me to learn your wishes, your opinions, and should you, at the present time, seek an opportunity of hearing from my own lips my views in regard to these questions, I shall at any convenient time be ready to receive you and to converse with you in a friendly and confidential spirit.



APPENDIX I.

C.

The Despatch from India on the Deposition.

No. 50.

Dated Simla, 3rd April 1889.

To Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India,

London.

My Lord,—With our despatch No. 142 of 18th August 1888, we forwarded for your Lordship's information certain papers regarding the Cashmere State.

2. The condition of Cashmere was then by no means satisfactory ; and the Resident Mr. Plowden had come to the conclusion that so long as the present Maharaja was maintained in power, there could be no hope of better things. He, therefore, urged the Government of India to interfere and exclude His Highness from all concerns with the administration. There was much to support Mr. Plowden's view, and we were by no means confident as to the result of any further abstention from interference, but, on the whole, we decided that the Maharaja should have another opportunity of shewing under favorable circumstances, whether he was capable of ruling the State. He was accordingly continued in power ; and Mr. Plowden, who soon after left Cashmere on promotion, was succeeded by Colonel R. P. Nisbet, C. I. E., a personal friend of the Maharaja and an officer of large administrative experience. It was hoped that Colonel Nisbet might succeed in establishing a strong influence over his Highness's mind, in freeing him from the domination of certain unprincipled persons about him, who took advantage of his timidity and superstition, and in gradually bringing him to a proper sense of his position and responsibility.



3. The papers now enclosed will show your Lordship that this hope was disappointed, and that after four months in the Cashmere Residency Colonel Nisbet has come to the same conclusion as his predecessor. The immediate cause which led him to resubmit the matter for our orders was the discovery of some letters, said to have been written by the Maharaja, which were of such a nature as to present his character and conduct in a very unfavorable light. We were not disposed to attach any excessive importance to those letters, because we had received a number of very similar documents a year before, and were not ignorant of the Maharaja's failings. But in this instance, the discovery of the letters was immediately followed by a voluntary resignation of power on the part of the Maharaja; and taking into consideration this and all the other circumstances of the case, he felt that the time had come when some measure of interference could be no longer deferred. We have, therefore, determined that the Maharaja's resignation should be accepted, and that we should avail ourselves of the opportunity in order to effect a thorough reorganisation of the Cashmere Government.

4. The form in which our interference is to be exercised will be seen from the terms of our instructions to Colonel Nisbet. To sum these up in a few words, the administration of the State will be handed over to the Council, consisting of the Maharaja's brother and certain selected officials in the British service. This Council will have full powers, subject to the condition that they will take no important step without consulting the Resident and that they will act upon the Resident's advice whenever it may be offered. This is the arrangement established in Gwalior where it is working well. The Maharaja will be excluded from all interference with public affairs, but will retain his rank and dignity as Chief of the State, and will receive from the State revenues an adequate but not extravagant allowance for the maintenance of his household and any other necessary expenditure.

5. These arrangements will not be exclusively based upon the Maharaja's edict of resignation which was an attempt to save his dignity and secure better terms than he could otherwise



expect. This edict contains some inconvenient stipulations, and it would be embarrassing to agree to it as it stands. We prefer to treat it as a confession of incapacity for the rule of the State, and to base our further proceedings upon general grounds.

Your Lordship will observe that our instructions to Colonel Nisbet deprecate any interference at all. But we are now convinced that in the interests of the people of Cashmere, and the ruling family itself, it is no longer right or possible to leave the control of affairs in the hands of the Maharaja ; and we trust that Her Majesty's Government will concur in this opinion.

We are, &c.,

(Sd.) LANSDOWNE.

(Sd.) E. C. ELLIOT.

(Sd.) D. BARBOUR.



APPENDIX II.

*Translation from the Original Persian of a few Documents shewing the abolition of some very vexatious and burdensome Imposts and Cesses, that exercised a baneful influence on Trade and oppressed the people in a variety of ways, and the introduction of other Reforms, by Maharaja Pratap Singh, for the better administration of the territories of Jummoo and Cashmere.**

A.

PROCLAMATION FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE
PUBLIC.

Whereas we have been installed Maharaja of the territories of Jummoo and Cashmere, &c., and confirmed in that dignity, and His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General of India has addressed us a congratulatory letter on our accession to the *guddee*, we do hereby proclaim for general information a few of the things we have in view (for the better administration of our State).

First.—A cess of four annas per *Kharwar* or two annas per rupee is at present levied on all edibles imported into the city of Srinagar, but for the good of our subjects, we reduce the cess to only half anna per rupee for the future.

Second.—Whoever manufactures bricks at Srinagar and Jummoo will have in future to pay only Rs. 70 per *lakh* (or about annas eleven only per thousand).†

Third.—The tax on the sale of horses that existed at Srinagar is hereby remitted.

* These are only a few documents that accidentally came into my possession out of many more of a similar nature and character. Being in the possession of the party adverse to the Maharaja, copies of the rest could not be procured.

† This means a considerable reduction. It was not considered desirable on several grounds to remit the impost all at once.



Fourth.—State cultivation and State speculations for agricultural improvements in the territory of Jummoo are hereby stopped. In Srinagar, however, the production of wines from grapes, and the cultivation of hops and silk operations will continue.*

Fifth.—In the province of Jummoo, such sepoy of the *Nizamut* department as have accepted *lahree* (or remission of land revenue in part remuneration for services) will continue as heretofore, but the new arrangement of taking one per a set of 10 houses is hereby discontinued.

Sixth.—Deserters from the military service will themselves only be liable to be (seized and) brought back—others will not in future be liable to arrest in their place.

Seventh.—We have remitted the “Hurkarabashi” cess which had been farmed out at Rs. 60,000 in Srinagar. The “Hurkarabashis” will not in future be able to levy more than the old rate from the people. They will have to submit reports of all events as heretofore. Any of them who will be found guilty of omitting to report the commission of any offence, or of concealing such commission, or of taking bribes, or of oppressing the people, will be liable to punishment according to law.†

Eighth.—The tax on vegetables in Jummoo, usually farmed out, is hereby remitted (and in future) only the tax known as “permit” (customs’ duty) will be charged.

Ninth.—The toll at the bridge on the Bhadarwah road is remitted.

Dated the 11th Asoj, 1942 (end of September 1885).‡

* The State by this means usurped the functions of the subject and encroached upon private enterprise. It also suffered a loss. Hence the system was abandoned save in a few exceptional cases.

†The “Hurkarabashis” were a kind of *quasi* police officers, whose duties consisted of reporting the commission of offences and looking into other matters affecting the peace and tranquility of the country. The fees allowed them were small at first, being only Rs. 4,000 (about Rs. 2,500 British coin) for the whole of Cashmere. These fees used to be levied from the people, but latterly it had become customary to farm out the fees for Rs. 60,000, allowing the farmer to control and realize the fees.

‡Maharaja Pratap Singh ascended the throne only a few days previously.



APPENDIX II.

B.

ISSUED FROM THE PRESENCE OF HIS HIGHNESS THE
MAHARAJA OF JUMMOO AND CASHMERE, &C.

ORDER BY PROCLAMATION.

With the view to improve the trade and augment the happiness of our subjects, the following Order is passed and promulgated for general information.

1. A tax called "ravangi of pushmina" is levied at the rate of 20 per cent. on the price of *pushmina* (goat-wool) goods which go out of the town of Srinagar. The estimated amount from this source on the value of *pushmina* goods exported comes to about two lakhs per year. We remit this tax altogether from this day.

2. Hitherto in the Provinces of Jummoo and Cashmere, the manufacture of paper was allowed only under a monopoly, that is, its manufacture and sale were not allowed save under the conditions laid down by the State. We have resolved to remove this restrictive monopoly from this date. Every one who wishes shall from this day forward be able to manufacture and sell paper as he pleases on his own account.

Dated the 15th Asoj, Sambat 1942 (about 1st October 1885.)

(Sd.) ANANT RAM,
Prime Minister, Jummoo and Cashmere.



APPENDIX II.

C.

ISSUED FROM THE PRESENCE OF HIS HIGHNESS THE
MAHARAJA OF JUMMOO AND CASHMERE, &c.

ORDER BY PROCLAMATION.

Hitherto, whenever any sum consisting of full rupees and fractions of a rupee is found due to any person from the State, it has been the practice to pay him the rupees in full and only one-half of the fractions, crediting the other half to the State. But we do hereby order that in future the fractions shall be paid in full to the party entitled, so that he may not lose any portion of his just dues. No portion of such dues shall in future be credited to the State.

Also, it should be known to all cashiers and cashiers' writers that by taking anything as a bribe from the holders of payment-orders or such persons to whom money is otherwise paid, they shall render themselves liable to the punishment prescribed by law and shall be punished accordingly.

Whoever gives information as to bribe-taking and establishes it against the culprit shall receive a reward of Rs. 50.

Dated the 15th Asoj, Sambat 1942 (about 1st October 1885.)

(Sd.) DEWAN ANANT RAM,

Prime Minister.



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APPENDIX II.

D.

ISSUED FROM THE PRESENCE OF HIS HIGHNESS THE
MAHARAJA BAHADUR OF JUMMOO AND CASHMERE, &c.

ORDER BY PROCLAMATION.

With the view to better the condition and increase the happiness of our subjects, we do hereby proclaim—

1. We remit the tax of Rs. 2 per 2,000 of *kacha* (unburnt) bricks hitherto levied in the province of Jummoo and authorize all and every one to make and use his own-made bricks.

2. A royalty of Rs. 5 per every one hundred rupees' worth of stone bricks used to be levied in the province of Jummoo. From this day we reduce the royalty to Rs. 3 per each hundred rupees worth of the said bricks.

3. In the province of Jummoo lime was hitherto burnt and made under a monopoly system which we remove from this day. All and every one are authorized to burn, make and sell lime on his own account, paying to Government as royalty for the stone used Rs. 5 for every 100 maunds *kacha* of lime turned out.

4. In the towns of the province of Jummoo, vegetables were liable to a charge which used to be farmed out. From this day the charge is remitted and people can purchase and sell as they think fit.

5. In the province of Cashmere, a tax was being levied on unburnt bricks. We remit it from this day. All and every one are authorized to make and use unburnt bricks.

6. In the province of Cashmere *surkhi* (brick-dust) used to be made and manufactured under a monopoly system. We remove it from this day and authorize all our subjects to make *surkhi*. The State will not charge anything from them.



7. The manufacture of lime in the province of Cashmere was under a monopoly, which we abolish from this day. All and every one are authorized to make lime subject to the payment of a royalty of Rs. 3 per per 100 *Kharwars* of lime for the stone used.

8. A tax of annas ten used to be levied on each cart running between Jummoo and Akhnur. We remit it from this day. We have also remitted the tax of half anna in a rupee hitherto levied on bullocks employed on hire for carrying loads.

Dated the 10th Asoj, Sambat 1942, (about the end of September 1885).

(Sd.) DEWAN ANANT RAM,
Prime Minister.



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APPENDIX II.

E.

PROCLAMATION FOR THE INFORMATION OF OUR SUBJECTS
OF THE PROVINCE OF JUMMOO.

Issued from the Presence of His Highness the Maharaja of
Jummoo and Cashmere, &c.

Whereas to increase the happiness of our subjects, it is our desire that the land revenue be collected without sepoy being told off for the purpose—a practice which imposes an extra burden upon the people in the shape of payment of *rasad* (food) to sepoy and *Talabana* (process fee,) it behoves the people to pay in the instalments of revenue on due dates spontaneously to obviate the necessity of sepoy being quartered to recover the amounts due.

Dated the 9th Katick, Sambat 1942 (end of October 1885.)

(Sd.) DEWAN ANANT RAM,
Prime Minister.



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APPENDIX II.

F.

PROCLAMATION ISSUED FROM THE PRESENCE OF HIS HIGH-
NESS THE MAHARAJA BAHADUR OF JUMMOO AND
CASHMERE, &C.

FOR THE INFORMATION OF MUKADDAMS (VILLAGE
HEAD-MEN.)

Whereas the items of *Darotra* and *Panchotra* (village head-
men's fees) had been allowed to the people from very old times,
but since the last two years it has been resumed—we do hereby
as a favour withdraw the resumption order as regards the past,
and ordain that it shall be allowed in future as used to be done
before.

Dated 13th Katick, Sambat 1942 (end of October 1885).

(Sd). DEWAN ANANT RAM,
Prime Minister.



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APPENDIX II.

G.

ISSUED FROM THE PRESENCE OF HIS HIGHNESS THE MAHARAJA BAHADUR OF JUMMOO AND CASHMERE, &C.

PROCLAMATION.

Be it known to the public, high and low, that with the object of bettering the condition and augmenting the happiness of our people, we do hereby remit from 1st Baisakh 1942 the two items on *Panj nazrat* and *Thanapati*. These two items used to be hitherto levied in the province of Jummoo—*Panj nazrat* on village headmen's fee and *malikana* at the rate of two annas in the rupee, and *Thanapati* as a marriage due (or tax on marriages).

Dated the 10th Phagun, Sambat 1942 (end of February 1886).

(Sd). DEWAN GOBIND SAHAI,
Prime Minister.

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APPENDIX II.

H.

ISSUED FROM THE PRESENCE OF HIS HIGHNESS THE
MAHARAJA BAHADUR OF JUMMOO AND
CASHMERE, &C.

ORDER BY PROCLAMATION.

To better the condition and improve the welfare of our people, we do hereby remit all those cesses which were levied in the province of Cashmere, over and above the land revenue, in Sambat 1941, from the commencement of 1942 forward till such time as a regular settlement fund is made. Only the *patwari*, *ziladari* and village expense cesses being realized over and above the land revenue, no other cesses will be levied.

Dated the 22nd Phagun, Sambat 1942, (beginning of March 1886).

(Sd.) DEWAN GOBIND SAHAI,
Prime Minister.

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