INDIA,

ITS

STATE AND PROSPECTS.

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BY

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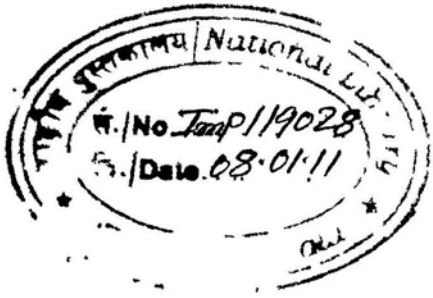

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PREFACE.

THE Act which last year passed the British Legislature, "for effecting an Arrangement with the East-India Company, and for the better Government of His Majesty's Indian Territories," has created an era in the history of those territories; and seems to afford a fitting opportunity for taking a view of their situation and resources. Such an attempt can scarcely be regarded as unnecessary when it is recollected, that the majority even of the best-informed of our countrymen are either entirely ignorant of the subject, or but superficially acquainted with it. Neither our long intercourse with India, nor the splendour of our commerce

and our conquests there—neither the intrinsic importance of the subject, nor the repeated and animated discussions which it has excited in the British Parliament; have secured for it that degree of popular attention which it deserves. Statesmen of eminent name have observed and lamented this fact, which, considering the intense interest which has been taken in matters little less remote, and certainly not of greater importance, appears both inconsistent and inexplicable. Whether the opening a large part of India to European adventure will have the effect of dispelling this apathy, remains to be seen. That it is not justified by the relative circumstances of India and England is the conviction of the author. Under this conviction, he has been desirous of drawing attention to a subject which he feels to have been unduly neglected; and he has thought that a popular view of the state and prospects of British India might afford the best means of attaining his

object. To this it has been deemed expedient to prefix a very brief Historical Sketch. It is true that histories of India, both learned and popular, are not wanting; but a very short summary of the principal facts of the progress of our extraordinary dominion seemed indispensable. The reader however who feels the importance and interest of the subject, will not be satisfied with a few pages; he will apply to works of greater extent and more strictly historical character to gratify a curiosity which it is hoped may here be excited.

Of the rest of the work the author trusts that he may speak with greater confidence. On the political relations of India—on the mode of its government—on the sources of its wealth and prosperity—on the state of society, manners, religion, and morals—on its judicial system, and the revenue which not only supports the national institutions, but remits to this country a noble tribute, little is known because the sources

of knowledge have been generally inaccessible. Much information was scattered about, but it was nowhere collected within a moderate space. The changes effected by the late Act are now first brought before the Public in a permanent form; and the work, notwithstanding its limited extent, may be regarded as containing a digest of the most important parts of the vast body of evidence submitted to Parliament previously to the passing of that Act.

Though the circumstances of the times have induced him to choose this period for publication, they have had no share in determining the course of the author's inquiries. India has long occupied the larger share of his time and attention. To promote her interests as well as those of his own country, is the object of his work, and if an exposition of her resources should tend to draw British capital to their development, he believes that both nations would be benefited. On the important sub-

ject of religion, he trusts that he has acquitted himself with charity as well as zeal; and if an author may in any way be permitted to offer an opinion on his own labour, he would say that the chapter on the Judicial System contains some original disquisitions, the subjects of which, at least, are important; and that on the Revenue presents a somewhat comprehensive view of the various systems founded on the best authorities, and fortified by the opinions of the most eminent statesmen.

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INDIA,

&c. &c.

CHAPTER I.

HISTORICAL SKETCH.

THE early history of India is involved in extreme obscurity, and fable has in consequence usurped the place of fact. The ridiculous fictions which the Hindoos dignify with the name of history are unworthy not only of belief, but even of grave consideration. Little of either pleasure or information would be afforded by a detailed account of the solar and lunar dynasties, or an investigation of the accuracy of chronicles which carry us back through countless ages. Our best information is derived from the Greeks; and until the conquests of Alexander, they were acquainted with India only through vague and meagre reports obtained from the Persians. Alexander passed the different rivers of the Punjaub, and advanced towards the Ganges, which, however, he was not destined to reach. The narratives of his followers are admitted to be, in some

 respects,

respects, discordant; and though previous to the time of Ptolemy the spirit of commercial adventure had added something to the stock of information, the knowledge of India possessed by the Greeks must be regarded as both scanty and inaccurate; but though unsatisfactory, it is sufficient to shew that the people to whom it relates are almost unchanged by the lapse of centuries. Even the minute features of the national character are at this time the same that they were two thousand years ago.

Though capable of being trained into efficient soldiers, the natives of India have not been fortunate in maintaining their independence, and they have generally afforded an easy triumph to a bold and determined invader. A large portion of their country was subject to the Persian monarchy; to Alexander they offered some resistance, but his conquests were effected in no long space of time; and at a later period they became, first tributaries, and ultimately subjects of the victorious disciples of Mahomet.

Previously to the invasion of the Moguls, the Mahometan history of India possesses slender interest, and is, perhaps, little to be relied on. For a considerable time after that event, it offers but a picture of those commotions and crimes which characterize a state of society in which conflicting parties are struggling for the sovereignty. The most

most remarkable person of this period was Timur, or Tamerlane; a man who, though exhibited by an English poet as a model of clemency, as well as of heroism, had little pretension to the former quality. His conquests extended from the Irtisch and Volga to the Persian Gulph, and from the Ganges to the Archipelago. He even meditated the invasion of China, and had made vast preparations for an expedition against that country, when death intercepted his career. His courage, perseverance, and military skill are indisputable; but, unfortunately, his cruelty is not less so.

The death of Timur took place about ninety years before the arrival of the Portuguese in India by the south-east passage, the discovery of which was to effect a revolution in the destinies of the country, compared with which all previous changes were unimportant. The great mass of commerce between India and Europe was carried on by the route of the Red Sea until the seventh century, when the conquest of Egypt by the Saracens transferred it by the Black Sea to Constantinople. When, however, the Mamelukes became masters of Egypt, they permitted the Venetians to resume the ancient route; and Alexandria was thenceforward the sole entrepôt of Indian trade.

The spirit of Portuguese discovery received its impulse from the genius of Prince Henry, young-

est son of John I. of Portugal. Under his countenance naval adventure became popular; but the progress of discovery was greatly impeded by the imperfect state of navigation. The first acquisition was but of small importance, consisting only of the little island of Puerto Santo. It was sufficient, however, to encourage confidence, and stimulate to further exertions, and a subsequent expedition was rewarded by the discovery of the rich and beautiful island of Madeira.

After a tedious succession of voyages continued for nearly half a century, Vasco de Gama, an active and enterprizing Portuguese admiral, doubled the Cape of Good Hope, and coasting along the eastern shore of the continent of Africa, sailed from thence across the Indian Ocean, and landed at Calicut on the coast of Malabar. At the period of his arrival the west coast of Hindostan was divided between two great sovereigns, the king of Cambay and the Zamorin, each of whom had under him numerous petty princes. The dominions of the Zamorin included the whole coast from Bombay to Cape Comorin; but the attempts of De Gama to conclude a commercial treaty with this power were frustrated by the jealousy of the Mahometan merchants, and he returned to Lisbon. His successor, Cabral, was not more fortunate, and in consequence he proceeded to Cochin and Cananore. The kings of these

these places were dependents upon the Zamorin: a dependency from which they were anxious to be emancipated. By them Cabral was very favourably received; and in an incredibly short time the Portuguese acquired a paramount influence over the whole coast. Previously, however, to the arrival of Albuquerque in 1508, they were not possessed of a good port. After a violent struggle they secured and fortified Goa, which from thenceforth became the capital of the Portuguese settlements, and the point from whence they spread their conquests and their commerce over the Eastern seas.

The Venetians and the sultan of Egypt, who were the principal sufferers by the diversion of the commerce of the east into a new channel, made some ineffectual attempts, in conjunction with the king of Cambay, to dispossess the Portuguese of their conquests; but the latter not only maintained their superiority, but succeeded in acquiring the command of the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf. The trade by those routes consequently ceased, and feeling secure from competition, the Portuguese proceeded to push their success. In the course of a few years they established a commercial empire of unprecedented extent, splendour, and opulence; they commanded the east coast of Africa, the coasts of Arabia and Persia, the two peninsulas of India, the Moluccas, Ceylon, and the

the trade to China and Japan. They levied tribute upon a hundred and fifty native princes, and claimed a right to sweep from the Indian seas every vessel that sailed without their permission. Of all this mighty dominion, a miserable remnant is all that now exists, and that remnant depressed, impoverished, and almost in a state of estrangement from the mother country.

The annexation of Portugal to the crown of Spain was fatal to the colonial dominion of the former country, and the Dutch occupy the next conspicuous place in the commercial history of India. They had originally been contented with the carrying trade between Lisbon and the north of Europe; but Philip II. having put an end to this trade, they endeavoured to repair their loss by the discovery of a passage to India by the northward. Failing in this attempt, they embraced the proposal of Hautman, a prisoner for debt at Lisbon, to reveal to them the knowledge he possessed of Indian navigation and commerce on condition of his liberation. Four ships were dispatched to India under the command of Hautman in the year 1594, and a sanguinary war with the Portuguese soon followed. Success was long doubtful; but the Dutch ultimately triumphed. The Portuguese at first lost Malacca and Ceylon; they were subsequently driven from various settlements on the coast of Malabar; and not long afterwards

afterwards the native princes permitted the Dutch to establish factories at Negapatam, Sadras, Pulicat, and Bimlipatam, on the east coast. From this period the power of Portugal in the east was rapidly approaching to extinction.

The spirit of rivalry to the Portuguese was not confined to the Dutch. The splendid results which had followed the discovery of the south-east passage could scarcely fail to excite the emulation of a maritime and enterprising nation like the English. Two attempts were made in the reign of Henry VIII. to explore a north-west passage, and one in the reign of Edward VI. to discover a passage by the north-east. Many similar attempts followed within a short space of time, but all with the same want of success. There seemed, therefore, no alternative but to renounce the glittering visions of oriental wealth, or to follow them in the same track which the Portuguese had so successfully pursued. The first attempt to proceed by the south-east was however unprosperous. After encountering some Spanish men-of-war on the coast of Brazil, the expedition was obliged to return for want of provisions. The second expedition was still more unfortunate; the ships, three in number, were driven on the coast of Spanish America, and the crews, with the exception of four men, perished.

The more fortunate expeditions of Drake and Cavendish,

Cavendish, and their flattering reports of the wealth of the countries which they had visited, kept alive the national ardour for a participation in the Indian trade, and the fact of the Dutch having resolved on contending with the Portuguese for a share of this coveted traffic, determined the English to follow their example. An association was formed and a fund subscribed for the purpose, and a memorial presented to the Government, setting forth the places with which the Spanish and Portuguese had established intercourse, and pointing out others to which the English might resort without affording ground of complaint to their predecessors. Some difficulties were interposed by the Government on account of a treaty then pending with Spain, but permission was given to make preparations for a voyage, while the patent of incorporation was under consideration. The Government of the day appears to have been not indisposed to share in the patronage created by the adventure, and recommended Sir Edward Mitchelbourne to be employed in the expedition. The answer of the Directors affords a memorable proof of their independence, and must be regarded as peculiarly honourable to them, when it is considered that they were at the time petitioners to the throne for a charter. On consultation they resolved " not to employ any *gen-*
" *tleman* in any place of charge, and requested
" that

" that they might be allowed to sorte theire " business with men of theire own qualitye, lest " the suspiceon of the employmt of gentlemen " being taken hold upon by the generalitie, do " dryve a greate number of the adventurers to " withdraw their contributions."

Greatly to the honour of the Government, the honest resistance offered to its interference was not permitted to prejudice the cause of the adventurers, and on the last day of the year 1600, they were by letters-patent from the Queen constituted a body politic and corporate, by the title of "the Governor and Company of Merchants of London trading to the East-Indies." The government of the Company was vested in a committee of twenty-four and a chairman. It was empowered to trade to all places beyond the Cape of Good Hope and the Straits of Magellan for fifteen years, with the exception of places in possession of princes in amity with the Queen, whose objection should be publicly declared; and all other the Queen's subjects were prohibited from interfering with the Company's exclusive trade, except by license granted under their common seal. From James I. a renewal of the charter was obtained, by which all preceding privileges of the Company were confirmed, and they were constituted a body corporate for ever.

The early voyages of the Company were confined

fined to the islands of the Indian Ocean; but after the confirmation and extension of their charter by James they proceeded to establish a commercial intercourse with the Asiatic continent. Their endeavours were of course opposed by the Portuguese; but the English Company finally succeeded in establishing factories on various parts of the coast. One of their earliest settlements was at Surat, and this factory with that at Bantam remained for a long period their principal stations.

In the Dutch, the English Company found enemies more formidable than the Portuguese. The Dutch were bent on securing a monopoly of the spice trade, and they enforced it in the most unscrupulous and vindictive spirit. After a long course of hostility, relieved by some weak and inefficient attempts at pacification, the spirit of the whole British people, with the exception of their pusillanimous sovereign, was roused to the highest pitch of indignation by the atrocious proceedings at Amboyna. The Dutch, having determined on obtaining the exclusive possession of the island, fabricated a plot to afford them a pretext for effecting their purpose. The plot, it was pretended, was confessed by two soldiers in the Dutch service, one a Japanese, the other a Portuguese, who had been put to the torture. Upon this evidence the English were apprehended, imprisoned, loaded with irons, and their books and

and property seized. A mock trial followed, in the course of which the prisoners were subjected to the most varied and horrible tortures, for the purpose of extorting confession. It is unnecessary to say that this mode of examination was successful. There is a point where human firmness must yield: the love of truth and the consciousness of innocence may sustain the sufferer for a time, but these motives will be overcome by protracted agony. Had the victims of the Dutch been accused of conspiring against the crown of England, the result would have been the same; they would have purchased remission of pain by the acknowledgment of guilt. Confession was of course followed by conviction—conviction by execution—and the commercial interests of the Dutch were cemented by the blood of the accused persons. A modern historian of India has chosen to take his post with the enemies of his country, and to employ much ingenuity in extenuating the guilt of the Dutch. But the atrocity admits not of palliation. The pretence of a conspiracy was too absurd to deceive even the most credulous. When the boxes of the factors were opened and their papers rifled, no traces of such conspiracy were discovered. The number of English on the island did not exceed twenty, while the Dutch had a garrison of three hundred men in the fort and several other garrisons in the island. The English

English were not only few in number, but they were unprovided with arms and ammunition. They had not a single ship, whereas the Dutch had eight lying off the town of Amboyna. A conspiracy against the Dutch authorities, under such circumstances, could have been formed only by men labouring under insanity; and those who professed to believe in its existence, had they been sincere, would have justly fallen under the same imputation. The pen of the historian should not be employed in opposition to the interests of justice and humanity: and it is no less painful than astonishing to find an able writer of the nineteenth century taxing his abilities to justify conduct so horrible as that of the Dutch in this transaction, and even to excuse the application of torture as an instrument for the investigation of truth. It would be idle to say a word in refutation of a mode of trial from which common sense and humanity alike recoil. The torture procured for the Dutch authorities that which they wanted—a legal excuse for the condemnation of their victims; but the courage of the sufferers revived as they approached a more righteous tribunal, and on the awful verge of eternity they solemnly protested their innocence.

Those who will deliberately commit the graver crime of murder, will of course not hesitate at the comparatively light one of robbery. Massacre

was

was not unnaturally followed by confiscation, and the Dutch retained English property to an immense amount. Its value has been stated at £400,000. The truckling policy of James deterred him from seeking reparation of this great national wrong, and the disturbed reign of Charles allowed the Dutch a prolonged period of impunity; but the honour of the country was in some degree vindicated by Oliver Cromwell, who required and obtained payment of a large sum in satisfaction of the pecuniary injury inflicted.

At this time all the factories in the tract extending from Cape Comorin to the Persian and Arabian Gulphs were controlled by the presidency of Surat. On the coast of Coromandel the Company had established themselves in the first instance at Masulipatam. Subsequently they left that place for Armegum. Finally they settled at Madraspatam, where, by permission of the Native Government, they erected Fort St. George, now the seat of one of the British presidencies.

The connexions of the Company with Bengal were formed gradually. The first privilege which they obtained from the court of Delhi was that of free resort to the port of Pipley, a privilege afterwards much extended, through the intervention of a surgeon named Boughton, who acquired influence at the imperial court by the exercise of his professional skill. Factories were accordingly established

established at Hooghley, Cossimbazar, Balasore, Patna, and Malda. Of these Hooghley was chief, but the whole of them were subordinate to Fort St. George.

The accession of Charles II. to the throne was followed by a renewal of the charter of the Company, by which their ancient privileges were confirmed, and authority conveyed to them to make peace and war with any people, not being Christians, and to seize unlicensed persons within their limits, and send them to England. From the same prince they obtained a grant of the island of Bombay, which he had received as part of the marriage portion of Catherine of Portugal. This island, now the seat of a presidency, was on its first acquisition subordinate to Surat.

Though the British interest in India was on the whole progressive, its advance was not uninterrupted. A civil war in Bantam was the means of excluding the English from that part of India, while the factories of Surat and Bombay were disturbed by unremitting war between the Mogul and the Mahrattas. The Mogul empire was established by Baber, a descendant of Timur, already mentioned, and sultan of the Mogul Tartars. Having lost the northern part of his own dominions by the hostilities of the Usbeck Tartars, he attempted the conquest of Hindostan with such success, that putting an end to the dynasty of Lodi

Lodi at Delhi, he established an empire, which was raised to the greatest splendour and authority under Aurungzebe towards the end of the seventeenth century. The Mahrattas were a native Hindoo race little known till the middle of that century, when under a chief named Sevagee, they became successful rivals to the Moguls. The conflict between these two great powers was necessarily injurious to the English. Both the belligerents had fleets of galliots on the coast; these repeatedly skirmished in the very harbour of Bombay, and the factory was, in self-defence, occasionally driven into hostilities with each party. Surat suffered even more severely, the Mahrattas ravaging up to its very gates. In Bengal the English, thinking they had reason to be dissatisfied with the conduct of the native powers, resolved to seek redress by arms; but the attempt was unfortunate, and they were obliged to retire from Hooghley and take refuge at Chutanuttee, contiguous to Calcutta. After a succession of hostilities, in which the factories at Patna and Cossimbazar were taken and plundered, an accommodation was effected, and the English were allowed to return to Hooghley. Negociations for regaining their ancient privileges were commenced, but were interrupted by fresh hostilities. The contest between the Moguls and the Mahrattas had taken a decided turn in favour of the former; and

Aurungzebe

Aurungzebe threatened to drive the English from his dominions. But the revenue derived from the trade was too valuable to be relinquished, and a fresh negociation for peace terminated favourably. Tegnapatam, on the coast of Coromandel, had been ceded to the English by the Rajah of Gingee, while besieged in his capital by Aurungzebe; and on the defeat of the Rajah the grant was confirmed by the Mogul chief: the English fortified the station, and it has since been known as Fort St. David.

The peace was followed by an event which deserves notice, as having laid the foundation of the future capital of British India. This was the transfer of the agency to Chutanuttee, to which place the British had retired when expelled from Hooghley. It was subsequently fortified, and in 1698 a grant was obtained from Prince Azim, one of the grandsons of Aurungzebe, of the three connected villages of Chutanuttee, Govindpore, and Calcutta, with the justiciary power over the inhabitants. These new possessions were forthwith fortified, and received the name of Fort William; and about the same time Bengal was elevated to the rank of a presidency. For some years the position and relative constitution of the British presidencies had fluctuated considerably; but Bombay at last completely superseded Surat: and from the building of Fort William the established Presidencies

sidencies were those of Madras, Bombay, and Bengal.

From its commencement the Company had been occasionally exposed to the competition of rivals. In the reign of James I. Sir Edward Mitchelbourne, for whose employment the Government had vainly interceded, obtained a license to engage in the Eastern trade, which was in evident violation of the charter of the Company; he however made but one voyage, and it appears rather for plunder than for traffic or discovery. By Charles I. Sir William Courten was invested with similar privileges, and formed an association which assumed the name of the Assayda Merchants: with this body, after some years of competition, the Company coalesced. In the reign of William III. another company was formed under a charter from the King, which was termed the English Company, the old one being designated the London Company. The rivalry of these two bodies was soon found to be productive of mischievous consequences, and the expediency of an union became apparent. This was ultimately effected, and in 1708 the two Companies were consolidated by Act of Parliament, under the name of the United Company of Merchants of England trading to the East-Indies. From this period the British interests in India may be considered as steadily advancing. The amount of trade and

shipping increased, and the intercourse and influence of the Company were extended. The warmest champion of Free Trade would find a difficulty in pointing out the disadvantages which resulted from the suppression of competition.

A period of quiet prosperity affords slender materials for history; and till the breaking out of the war between England and France, in 1745, nothing occurs worthy of notice. The first appearance of the French in India was nearly a hundred and fifty years before this period, when a company which had been formed in Brittanny sent out two ships; but the voyage was attended with so little success, that on their return the company was dissolved. At later periods the French made some further attempts to trade and establish factories: their chief rendezvous was at Surat; but the Dutch and English uniting against them, they were compelled to abandon it. They next attempted to seize on Trincomalee, but in this also they were unsuccessful. They were more fortunate in an attempt upon St. Thomé, a seaport contiguous to Madras, which they carried by assault. They retained it, however, only two years; but from the wreck of this establishment was formed their celebrated settlement of Pondicherry, where a small district was ceded to them by the native prince. In 1746 Madras was besieged by a French armament, and compelled to capitulate.

capitulate. Admiral Boscawen made an attempt to retaliate upon Pondicherry, which was unsuccessful; but the peace of Aix la Chapelle restored Madras to the English.

From this time the history of India rises in interest and importance. We have no longer to detail the advantages of commercial speculation, but to record the transfer of a magnificent empire into the hands of strangers, who a short time previously were supplicants for the privilege of defending themselves.

The territory of the Carnatic was one of the subordinate principalities immediately governed by Nabobs, but subject to the Soubahdar of the Deccan, who was himself a feudatory under the Mogul Emperor. Nizam ul Mulk, Soubahdar of the Deccan, dying in 1748, the succession to the vacant province was disputed between his son Nazir and his grandson Murzafa; at the same time the Nabob of the Carnatic was opposed by a rival claimant. The pretender to the province and the pretender to the nabobship made common cause, and succeeded in attaching to their interests M. Dupleix, Governor of Pondicherry, a man of great talent, and of still greater ambition and capacity for intrigue. The combined forces of these allies were successful in a battle, in which the lawful Nabob of the Carnatic was killed and his eldest son taken prisoner. His se-

cond son, Mahomet Ali Khan, having escaped, implored and obtained the aid of the English. Such was the origin of the Carnatic war between the English and the French; and it is remarkable that these two nations should have been engaged in hostile operations against each other in India, at a time when no war existed between them in Europe. As soon as intelligence of these extraordinary events reached the courts of the two countries, orders were sent out to put an end to the contest, and a treaty was entered into by which the two nations were to possess equal dominion, military force, and advantages of commerce on the east coast of the peninsula. The breaking out of the seven years' war in 1756 prevented the execution of this treaty, and the French and English became principals instead of auxiliaries. The French at first met with some partial success; but the tide of fortune turned in favour of their rivals, who acquired, partly by conquest and partly by negociation, a considerable increase of dominion as well as of influence.

The English were at the same time obliged to have recourse to arms to defend their interests in another part of India. The Nabob of Bengal, Surajah Dowlah, attacked, and after a brief resistance, took Calcutta. The event has attained an infamous celebrity by the cruelty which accompanied it. The European inhabitants, one hundred

hundred and forty-six in number, were, in the most sultry season of the year, confined for twelve hours within a cube of eighteen feet, having no outlets except two small windows strongly barred. In this miserable den all, except twenty-three, perished. The city was in a short time retaken by Colonel Clive, afterwards Lord Clive, who had already exhibited proofs of that talent which raised him to eminence. Peace with the Nabob followed; but it was subsequently proved that he was in correspondence with the French. The English resolved to punish his faithlessness, by supporting the pretensions of a rival. This led to the famous battle of Plassy, by which Meer Jaffier obtained the nabobship, and his English allies considerable treasure and accession of territory.

Meer Jaffier, however, became unwilling to fulfil the conditions of his elevation, and he was in consequence deposed. His successor, who was raised by the same influence, was his son-in-law Meer Cossim, and it was stipulated that he should grant to the English, for the pay of their army, the districts of Burdwan, Midnapore, and Chittagong. Like his predecessor, however, he became hostile to the power which had raised him, and it was deemed expedient to restore Meer Jaffier. A war ensued with Cossim, in which the English were

were completely victorious, and Cossim escaped into the dominions of the Nabob of Oude.

The same year which witnessed the expulsion of Cossim was signalized by the conclusion of a peace between France and England. The former country was reinstated in the factories which she possessed in 1749; but the latter, in addition to her old settlements, retained the circar of Masulipatam and its dependent districts, acquired from the French, as well as the castle of Surat, the jaghire round Madras, the Calcutta zemindary, and the districts of Burdwan, Midnapore, and Chittagong.

The Nabob of Oude, Suja Dowlah, with whom Cossim had taken refuge, encouraged by some discontents which existed in the British army, decided on hostilities, and being joined by the Rajah of Benares, war commenced. The discipline of the British army having been restored, Suja Dowlah was twice defeated; first by Major Carnac, secondly by Major Munro, and was compelled to throw himself upon the generosity of the victors. Terms were made by which the entire territory of Oude, with the exception of certain districts reserved to the Mogul Emperor, was restored to him, and in return he conferred upon the British the dewannee of the three provinces of Bengal, Bahar, and Orissa.

The

The word dewannee is derived from dewan, which was the appellation of the officers appointed by the Mogul government for the collection and disbursement of the provincial revenues, and for the administration of civil justice. These officers held their stations during pleasure, and were only stewards for the Emperor; but the grant to the Company was in perpetuity, and assigned to them the whole provincial revenue, subject only to the payment of certain specific sums. In addition to this, the Emperor granted to the English the maritime districts known by the name of the Northern Circars, though over them his authority was but nominal. They fell within the government of the Soubahdar of the Deccan; but having been the seat of hostilities between the English and French, the Soubahdar's authority was not well established. By negociation with him the Company obtained possession of this disputed territory, with the exception of a small part which became theirs in reversion. This cession, however, involved the British in new wars. It was a condition of their treaty with the Soubahdar that they should assist him with troops when he might stand in need of them; and in 1760 he applied for this assistance against Hyder Ali Khan, the sovereign of Mysore. The required aid was granted; but Hyder Ali, not less skilful as a diplomatist than as a warrior, succeeded

succeeded in detaching the Soubahdar from his English connexion, and prevailed upon him not only to conclude a separate peace, but even to enter into an alliance offensive and defensive, for the purpose of extinguishing the British power in the Deccan. Their combined operations were frustrated, and the Soubahdar deserting Hyder as he had done his former ally, made peace with the British, and retired to his own dominions. Hyder Ali then prosecuted the war alone, and entering the Carnatic committed dreadful ravages. Having diverted the British forces to a distance from Madras, he suddenly appeared before that place with 6,000 cavalry, having accomplished a march of 120 miles in three days. His further progress was arrested by negociation, and a treaty was concluded on the principle of a mutual restitution of conquests.

Our arms were next directed against the Mahrattas, who had invaded the Rohilla country. The British, acting as the allies of Suja Dowlah, drove them beyond the Ganges. For this service the Rohilla chiefs had agreed to pay Suja Dowlah forty lacs of rupees; but failing in the performance of their contract, the Rohilla country was added to the British conquests. A considerable tract of land was also conquered from the Jauts and other adventurers, by which the boundaries of the province of Oude were considerably advanced.

advanced. On the death of Suja Dowlah, which took place soon afterwards, the province of Benares was ceded to the Company.

A subsequent war with the Mahrattas was distinguished by some movements of uncommon brilliancy. A body of native troops, commanded by British officers, but whose number did not exceed seven thousand, traversed with success almost the entire Mahratta territory. Several fine provinces were subdued, and important fortresses taken; but war breaking out with Hyder Ali, peace was made with the Mahrattas, and all the acquisitions given up, except Salsette and the small islands situate within the gulf formed by Bombay, Salsette, and the continent. The war with Hyder Ali raged until his death, and was continued by his son Tippoo Saib; but the conclusion of a peace between the English and French depriving Tippoo of the hope of assistance from the latter power, hostilities were terminated by a treaty, which left the affairs of both the belligerents nearly in the same condition as before the commencement of the war.

The important changes which about this time were effected with regard to the authority of the Company would here demand attention, but as the due consideration of them would interrupt the narrative of the progress of British conquest in India, it will be sufficient thus briefly to advert to

to them, and to reserve a more copious notice for the third chapter, which will be devoted to the constitution and authority of the Indian Government.

Tippoo Saib's restless character would not suffer him to remain at peace, and his invasion of the possessions of the Rajah of Travancore, who was under the protection of the English, involved that power in a fresh quarrel with this turbulent prince. The result to him was humiliating. After two years war he was compelled by Lord Cornwallis to purchase peace by the payment of a large sum of money, the sacrifice of half his dominions, and the delivery of two of his sons as hostages for the due performance of the conditions of the treaty.

The memorable campaign, which terminated in the discomfiture of Tippoo Saib, was succeeded by seven years of tranquillity. The enemies of British interests were not, however, inactive, but were employed in sowing the seeds of future wars. Among the most insidious and dangerous of these enemies may be reckoned the French, ever on the watch for an opportunity of diminishing the power of the English, and now intoxicated with the doctrines of liberty and equality which they had undertaken to disseminate throughout the earth. Even regions which for ages had patiently submitted to despotic power, were

were not exempt from the intrusion of these opinions. The French ventured to establish a society in Mysore for the diffusion of the knowledge of the rights of man, and met with very different success to that which awaited the unfortunate Jean Bon St. André in the kindred region of Africa. They received from the sovereign patronage and protection. He even condescended to become an honorary member of the society, and was enrolled among its associates by the incongruous name of *Citizen Tippoo*. The result of these machinations was another war, which terminated with the storming of Seringapatam, the death of Tippoo, and the partition of his dominions. In the division the English retained the districts of Canara, including all the sea coast of the Mysore, the provinces immediately adjoining the possessions of the British on the coast of Malabar, and the Carnatic; the forts and posts of the passes into the Mysore, and the island and fortress of Seringapatam. Certain districts were given to the Nizam, which, however, were afterwards surrendered by that power to the English, together with other territories which had been acquired by a former treaty. A third portion was reserved to be given to the Peishwa upon certain conditions; but he having refused to accede, the reserved territory was divided between the British and the Nizam. The

Peishwa

Peishwa, however, was forced ultimately to claim the assistance of the British to deliver him from the state of anarchy by which he was surrounded. A treaty was in consequence concluded, by which the British consented to furnish the Peishwa with a certain number of troops, and he to assign a portion of territory for their payment.

The war which ensued for the protection of the Peishwa was distinguished by the brilliant services of Lord Lake and of another commander, who in the East commenced that illustrious career which he terminated by the liberation of Europe. The splendour of his Indian campaigns is indeed obscured by the surpassing glory that encircles the head of the conqueror of Napoleon; but no one who adverts to this period of the history of India, however briefly, can be excused if he pass by the name of Wellington without bestowing the tribute of admiration. Space will not permit a detailed recital of the achievements of the British army in these wars: it must suffice to record the results. In a comparatively short space of time a formidable confederation of French and Mahratta power was broken, and an immense accession of territory gained.

From this period the history of India presents little of importance until 1814, when the British became involved in a war with the Nepaulese, a people of predatory habits, inhabiting a mountain country.

country. The nature of the country, the imperfect knowledge which the British possessed of it, the courage of the enemy, and the fortifications by which they were defended, were obstacles to the success of the British, and continued for some time to impede it. Military skill ultimately overcame these difficulties, and the Nepaulese being subdued, agreed to a treaty by which the British became possessed of certain districts deemed necessary to the security of their frontier; but endeavouring, in the true spirit of Indian policy, to evade ratification of the treaty, a renewal of hostilities became unavoidable. A war of very brief duration was sufficient to accomplish its object.

The constant wars and commotions prevailing among the native powers of India produced in great numbers men trained in habits of rapine and disorder. Gathering strength by degrees, these lawless ruffians became at length associated in bands under recognized leaders, and on the arrival of the Marquis of Hastings in India they mustered a force of not less than 40,000 cavalry. They were termed Pindarries, and in their predatory excursions committed the most shocking excesses. The irruptions of these bandits into the Company's territories compelled the Government to take up arms, and they were preparing to take vigorous measures for their expulsion, when

when the Peishwa, an ally and dependent of the British, revolted against their authority. The Rajah of Nagpore, who stood in the same relation to the British, pursued a similar course. Both these powers were subdued, while the war with the Pindarries was prosecuted with success. In the mean time the British Government became involved in disputes with Scindia and Holkar, two independent chiefs. With the former they made terms, but the treaty forced upon him was executed with extreme reluctance. Holkar resolved to have recourse to war. It ended in his entire defeat; his power was completely broken, and he was compelled to sue for peace. The army being now at liberty to act against the Pindarries, the dispersion of that lawless body was at length effected.

It now only remains to notice the war with the Burmese. This war, like most of those in which the English have been engaged, was occasioned by the aggression of the power with whom it was waged. During the Pindarrie war the Burmese were in communication with several of the belligerent native chiefs, and were even prepared for an invasion of the frontier of Bengal. This was averted by a stratagem. The Marquis of Hastings had received a rescript from the Burmese monarch, requiring the surrender of all provinces east of the Baugrutty. The projected hostility was evidently a measure

a measure concerted with the Mahrattas. Lord Hastings sent back the envoy with an intimation that the answer should be conveyed through another channel. It declared that the Governor-general was too well acquainted with his Majesty's wisdom to be the dupe of the gross forgery attempted to be palmed upon him, and he therefore transmitted to the king the document fabricated in his august name, and trusted that he would submit to condign punishment the persons who had endeavoured to sow dissention between two powers, whose reciprocal interest it was to cultivate relations of amity. By this proceeding the necessity of noticing the insolent step of the Burmese monarch was evaded, and that sovereign on hearing of the defeat of his Mahratta allies was content to remain at peace.

But though the expression of hostile feeling was for awhile suppressed, the feeling itself was not removed, and the Burmese monarch now gained courage to attack where before he had been satisfied to threaten. War commenced, and the successes of the British led to the conclusion of an armistice which was employed in negociations. These negociations being unsuccessful, hostilities were resumed. The march of the English, as in Nepaul, was in some degree retarded by the nature of the country, but this obstacle being overcome, the Burmese sustained a complete defeat,

feat, and the British advanced towards the capital, when negociations were recommenced and a treaty concluded, by which the Burmese secured their existence as a nation, and the English obtained an extension of territory, valuable as affording a secure frontier. The treaty contained a stipulation for the payment of a sum of money by the Burmese, falling very far short of the expenses of the war, and of which a part only was paid.

The extent of British dominion and influence in India will be sketched in the next chapter. After all the declamation that has been expended upon the means by which they have been acquired, probably no conquests were ever made more righteously. Strangers were forced to become conquerors in self-defence. During a considerable part of the last century the question was, whether India should be subjugated by France or by England? To this question but one answer could be given. The perfidy of the native princes was another source of war and of British aggrandizement. But the crimes of these rulers have in this respect been beneficial to their subjects, by transferring them to the care of a better and a milder government. No friend to mankind can wish that the natives had remained under their old masters, and none but the most prejudiced can believe that their lot would have been improved by transferring them to the French.

CHAPTER II.

POLITICAL SKETCH.

A discussion of the merits of the various geographical divisions of India which have been adopted either in ancient or modern times would here be out of place, nor perhaps would much benefit be gained by following any of them. In a work, the professed object of which is not geographical, an enumeration of the principal districts is all that can be admitted, and the notice even of these must of necessity be brief and popular.

The most eastern part of the British dominions in India is Arracan, recently severed from the Burmese empire, which it adjoins. The contiguous district of Chittagong, with Midnapore and Burdwan, were among our earliest acquisitions in India, having come into our possession from the Nabob of Bengal in 1760. These were followed five years afterwards by the provinces of Bengal, forming in themselves a powerful kingdom, and giving the British an influence and authority which has gradually led to their supremacy in India. At the north-eastern extremity of this territory is Assam, which with Arracan was ceded by the Burmese at the termination of the war with that

power. A part only of this district is immediately subject to the British Government, Upper Assam having been lately assigned to a native prince. At the northern boundary of these provinces we arrive at the dominions of Bhotan and Nepaul. Goruckpoor, Benares, the Upper and Lower Dooab, Bareilly, and Kumaon (the latter newly-acquired from the Nepaulese), are the principal divisions of the British territory in this northern part of India. South of the Lower Dooab and the zemindarry of Benares, lie the districts ceded by the Rajah of Berar in 1826.

In the west, the British dominions extend from Ahmedabad to Cambay, and from thence along a line of coast extending, with little interruption, several hundred miles, through Konkan, Canara, and Malabar, to Cochin. The island of Bombay is upon this coast. More inland, Candeish, the Poonah territory, and the Southern Mahratta country, are incorporated with the British dominions. Coimbatoor and Salem connect Malabar on the west with the Carnatic on the east, which, with Tanjore, the jaghire of Madras, and nearly the whole of the coast of Coromandel, belong to the same mighty empire. The Northern Circars and Kuttack complete the line of maritime districts to Midnapore.

The influence of British authority is not confined to the dominions immediately subjected to

it; it is exerted over nearly the whole of India by virtue of protective treaties with the native princes. In the states thus situated, the prince exercises the functions of sovereignty under the control of the British power, which is represented by a resident agent. The presumed advantages of this arrangement are mutual—the prince and his successors are guaranteed in the possession of their dominions; and, in return, he renounces all external connexions, except with the British, through whom alone negotiations are conducted, and by whose decision he is bound in all matters of dispute with other states. In some cases the prince consents to receive a subsidiary force; in others, this provision is dispensed with. But the great principles which pervade them all, are the supremacy of the British and the dependency of the native government. Subsidiary treaties exist with Holcar, the Nizam, the sovereigns of Oude, Nagpoor, Mysore, Travancore, Cochin, the Guicowar, and Cutch. The states under British protection, without subsidiary treaties, are too many to be enumerated. These two classes of protected states occupy a vast extent of territory.

It is to be lamented that the benefits that might have been anticipated from this indirect exercise of British authority have not been realised. Most of the protected states are wretchedly misgoverned, and there cannot be the slightest doubt that

the people would be far happier as British subjects than they are now. The British provinces have been steadily advancing in prosperity; the progress of the protected states has been from bad to worse. In some cases, the reliance on British support encourages the sovereign to abandon himself to a course of personal gratification, regardless of the interests of his subjects. In all, the supremacy of a foreign power deprives him of that importance, which is necessary to command either the respect of his subjects or his own. Feeling that he is regarded as a cipher, he will not be unlikely to take the same view of his situation, and, divesting himself of all responsibility, to consider his elevated rank only as bestowing a title to unlimited indulgence—an exemption from every species of care, and a license to sink into irreclaimable apathy and sensuality.

The policy of the British Government in India has always been opposed to conquest. But though it is impossible not to respect their motives; it is equally impossible not to perceive that, had they been actuated by a less scrupulous spirit, the condition of a large portion of the people of India would have been far better than it is. Could the whole of the protected states be annexed at once to the British dominions, humanity would have cause to rejoice. Unfortunately this cannot take place without a violation of that good faith

faith which, in all parts of the world, it has been the pride of England to maintain. Occasionally, the accumulation of abuses in these protected states becomes so enormous, that the supreme power is compelled to carry its interference beyond mere remonstrance. It is not improbable that some change will be made in the relation at present existing between Oude and the protecting power. A long course of misgovernment having reduced that kingdom to a state of anarchy, the British may perhaps find it necessary to take the administration into their own hands.

It will be evident from this view, that the British authority in India is paramount. That of the French is almost annihilated. They still occupy Pondicherry, and one or two other places of small importance, but they no longer dispute with the English the dominion of the East. The Portuguese linger in a few spots, the scenes of their former commercial grandeur. The Danes have possession of a few settlements, neither extensive nor important. The Dutch retain Sumatra, Java, Borneo, and some other islands; but from none of these has Britain at this time any thing to fear. Her rivals have fallen before her, and left her in possession of the most gigantic dominion that ever was appended to a foreign state.