

Immediately on hearing of the outbreak at Mooltan, and even before the distressing news had arrived of two English officers having been murdered by the mutinous soldiery, the Resident assumed that tone and attitude towards his colleagues in the Council of Regency, which seem to have suggested and fomented Lord Dalhousie's retrospective demands. "The Sikh Government" must act for themselves, "unaided by British troops. If it should be necessary to move a British soldier, the affair will be a serious one for the Durbar."* There was no "Sikh Government," apart from the Resident, who was at the head of the Punjaub administration with "unlimited powers." The Durbar could only "act under the control and guidance of the Resident."† The British troops were stationed, under treaty, in the Punjaub, and subsidised from its revenues, expressly to afford that aid in preserving the peace of the country which the Resident refused to afford. He did afford it at last, but only after a long delay, and then, as he avowed, from a regard to British interests,‡ and with a menace of that penalty of extinction which was ultimately inflicted, against the protected dynasty and State.

Both the delay and the menace mainly contributed to kindle the general conflagration. How fuel was added to the flame by several measures for which the British authorities were solely responsible, we have already seen.§

We have quoted the Resident's refusal to send a British force to Mooltan, "whatever may be the consequences of the state of things which will follow to the continuance of the Sikh Government."|| In the same dispatch he writes to Lord Dalhousie as follows:—

"Your Lordship will, I fear, have to consider how far it is incumbent upon us, how far it is possible for us, to maintain an engagement with a Government, which, in the persons of its Chiefs, its soldiers, and its people, repays our endeavours for its maintenance by perfidy and outrage, and is powerless to afford us redress.

"Doubtless we have reduced it to its state of weakness, but we are not responsible for its treachery and violation of trust."¶

* *Ante*, p. 139. † *Ante*, pp. 99, 100 ‡ *Papers, Punjaub*, 1849, p. 141.

§ *Ante*, pp. 102 to 130. || *Ante*, p. 139. ¶ *Papers, Punjaub*, 1849, p. 140.

At this time no "Chiefs," except the Dewan Moolraj of Mooltan, had committed any offence; no "soldiers," except those at Mooltan, had taken part in any perfidy or outrage; and "the people" had not moved in the matter at all.

Dewan Moolraj was not a Sikh: he and his father had governed Mooltan for thirty years, with almost independent sway; they had fortified the city with the scarcely disguised object of holding their own against the Sikh Government, whose power they had repeatedly defied,—once during the British occupation of Lahore, before the transfer of authority to the Resident.* In April, 1847, the Resident, Sir Henry Lawrence, sent one of his Assistants to Mooltan, and makes the following remarks on the subject in a despatch to the Governor-General:—"Lieutenant Nicholson has returned from Mooltan, and, on the whole, gives a favourable report of Dewan Moolraj. He has, evidently, been in the practice of acting as if he were the Sovereign of the country, and was, in the first instance, inclined to resent Lieutenant Nicholson's visit."†

If Moolraj, therefore, rebelled again, it was nothing to be surprised at,—nothing but what ought to have been, and must have been, contemplated and prepared for, when we assumed the administration of the Punjaub. Yet the Resident speaks of this occurrence as something prodigious and unheard of; and denounces the Sikh Government,—over which he was presiding, with unlimited powers,—as guilty of "perfidy and outrage, in the persons" of the refractory vassal, and turbulent soldiery, whom the Durbar, by imploring British assistance, had confessed themselves unable to coerce.

This inability, also, is made a charge against the Durbar by the Resident, and a pretext for no longer maintaining our engagement with it; although its inability to control the Chiefs and the army, was the main cause of that engagement being made. It is "powerless," he complains, "to afford us redress." He adds:—"Doubtless we have reduced it to its state of weakness." The Government of the Punjaub was *not* powerless; but all its power was concentrated in the hands of the British Re-

* *Papers, Punjaub*, 1849, p. 117.

† *Ibid.*, p. 5.

sident. Its power mainly consisted in the British troops, subsidised from the revenues of the country, which the Resident hesitated to employ. Without the aid of the British troops, to which it was entitled by treaty, it was, of course, in "a state of weakness," and to that state of weakness, as the Resident admits, we had depressed it. The very fact of the British occupation and transfer of power to the Resident, tended to destroy the personal influence of the Sirdars. Both the physical and moral force at the disposal of the Durbar, apart from the Resident's support, was greatly diminished.

The scheme for the reduction and reorganisation of the army seems to have been most judicious,—though, perhaps, the more sweeping measure proposed by Rajah Tej Sing would have been safer and more effectual,*—and it appears to have been carried out with great consideration, and with many countervailing advantages for the humbler and less ambitious soldiers, especially for those who were not Sikhs. But it was a most critical and delicate operation, and it was emphatically *our* work.

By the unlimited authority entrusted to the Resident, the numerical strength of the Sikh army had been lowered, until every town and village was filled with the disbanded and discontented brethren of those who were still retained in the ranks, whose disaffection was at the same time enhanced by a stricter discipline, curtailed privileges, and the downfall of their political and religious preponderance.

It could not be expected,—we have seen that it was not expected by Lord Hardinge and Sir Henry Lawrence,—that this transition stage would be passed through in perfect tranquillity. Yet the Resident declaims against "the perfidy and outrage,"—"treachery and violation of trust,"—"spoliation and crime,"†—committed at Mooltan, as unprecedented and unimaginable, and imputes it all to the Sikh Government, "in the persons" of the mutinous soldiery, who, during six years had domineered over all authority, who had murdered three Prime Ministers and several Princes, and whose subjection was the special task we had engaged to perform.

* *Ante*, p. 136.

† *Papers, Punjab*, 1849, p. 141.

We knew what we were about when we assumed the Guardianship of a Prince whose dominions had suffered from six years of anarchy. We undertook the obligations of suppressing military mutiny and civil war,—“of preserving the peace of the country,” with British troops subsidised for the purpose. Furthermore, we obtained by the Treaty unlimited military powers throughout the Punjaub,—the right of holding all the strong places and positions, the right of disbanding and enlisting troops. It may have been hoped, but it can never have been expected, that everything would go on smoothly, that our troops would never be actively employed,—that none of those scenes of violence and bloodshed, which had compelled the Durbar to entreat our aid, would recur during the British occupation. For the term of our Guardianship,—the minority of Dhuleep Sing,—we demanded full powers, we accepted full responsibility.

Lord Dalhousie admits his full responsibility, as the Guardian of British interests, for the inordinate military delays which swelled the Mooltan rebellion into a war, but does not seem to feel any responsibility at all, as the trustee and administrator of the Punjaub State, and the Guardian of its infant Maharajah. “On the one hand,” he writes, “it was impossible to doubt that, if there existed in the minds of the people of the Punjaub any inclination to rise against the British power, a delay in visiting the outrage committed at Mooltan, and the apparent impunity of the offender, would give strong encouragement to an outbreak which might spread over the whole Punjaub. On the other hand, it was equally clear that there would be serious danger to the health and to the very existence of European troops,” if they were to carry on “military operations in the hot and rainy months.”*

It might have occurred to the Governor-General and the Commander-in-Chief that the loss of life among the European and native troops of our army, and the general destruction of life and property in the Punjaub, would be much greater in the event of a general rebellion, than could possibly be caused by the march of one Brigade of

* *Papers, Punjaub*, 1849, p. 656.

British troops in the hot and rainy months. And as it might have been anticipated, so it proved. "Strange to say," writes Mr. J. C. Marshman, "it was found that General Whish's troops were more healthy during their progress to Mooltan than they had been in cantonments, and it was manifest that the unsuitableness of the season, which was urged as a ground of objection to an early and prompt movement, was a mere bugbear."*

These were Sir Henry Lawrence's reflections on the military plans of 1848:—"We cannot afford in India to shilly-shally and talk of weather and seasons. If we are not ready to take the field at all seasons, we have no business here."†

On the whole, however, Lord Dalhousie concludes that "it can never now be determined whether the immediate commencement at that time" (the hot season) "of the siege of Mooltan would or would not have averted the war. But this, at least," he adds, "is certain, that if the short delay which took place in punishing the murder of two British officers at Mooltan,"—a short delay of nine months!‡—"could produce an universal rising against us throughout all the Punjaub, the very fact itself betokens the existence of a deep and widespread feeling of hostility against us, which could not long have been repressed."§

We shall see that the "rising" was by no means "universal," and that Lord Dalhousie's denunciations of the Sirdars and the people of the Punjaub were highly exaggerated.

Lord Dalhousie continues his argument as follows:—"The worst that can be alleged, therefore, against the delay is, that it precipitated the crisis; and opened, somewhat earlier, to the Sikhs that opportunity for renewal of war, which, sooner or later, so bitter a spirit of hostility must have created for itself."

Major Edwards agrees with Lord Dalhousie on this point; he, also, thinks the struggle was inevitable, sooner

* *History of India*, vol. iii, p. 319.

† *Kaye's Indian Officers*, (Allen, 1867) vol. ii, pp. 397, 298.

‡ Mr. Vans Agnew and Lieutenant Anderson were murdered on the 20th April, 1848; the citadel of Mooltan was surrendered by the Dewan Moolraj on January 22nd, 1849.

§ *Papers, Punjaub*, 1849, p. 657.

or later. He expresses his belief, in passages already quoted, that "had the Mooltan rebellion been put down, the Sikh insurrection would never have grown out of it," and that, with very moderate assistance from Lahore, he could have taken Mooltan in June.* He indicates as plainly as is consistent with modesty, and a decent respect for seniors and official superiors, his opinion that the delay was, both in a military and political point of view, an error of judgment. But he says, in his table of Contents to the volume:—"The Author shows that it was providential." In the text he observes:—"So far as regarding this as matter for regret, I see in it only the strongest example that ever came within my own experience, of human judgment overruled by Providence for good."†

The "good," according to Major Edwardes, was that "the whole of the Punjaub was annexed to British India in March, 1849;" whereas, "if the most favourable circumstances had succeeded, and on the 4th of September, 1854," (when the Maharajah obtained his majority) "the Governor-General, in fulfilment of Treaties permitted to remain in force,"‡ had withdrawn the British troops, and handed over the Punjaub to its youthful Sovereign, "with a revenue improved by peace, an exchequer replenished by honesty and economy, and an army improved by discipline," no one can believe "that the peace of the frontier would have lasted for a year, or a second Sikh war have been avoided."§

I cannot enter into the designs of Providence, but I freely acknowledge that Major Edwardes had many precedents for his assumption. Every conquest has been hailed as providential by the conqueror. "Te Deum" is sung by the victor for every victory.

Nor do I consider myself at all bound to enter upon the point of inquiry raised by Lord Dalhousie and Major Edwardes,—whether the Sikhs in the early part of 1848, were so determined on having a second struggle with British power, that our military delays and errors in dealing with the Mooltan outrage only "precipitated the

* *Ante*, p. 141.

† *A Year on the Punjaub Frontier*, vol. ii, p. 145.

‡ A most expressive formula.

§ *A Year on the Punjaub Frontier*, vol. ii, pp. 145, 146.

crisis," which was inevitable and must have arrived "sooner or later."

A mere guess or surmise of what might have happened under different circumstances, cannot prove that a certain decision was wise, or just. If the annexation of the Punjaub was an iniquitous proceeding; if its iniquity has been made manifest, it is no reply to say either that it was Providential, or that it must have happened sooner or later.

This guess, or surmise, of the inveterate and inextinguishable hostility of the Sikhs, is by no means warranted by the history of our previous relations with them, by the progress of events during the insurrection, or by our experience of other States and other races in India. No doubt there was a turbulent spirit abroad in 1848; there were elements of political and religious fanaticism pervading large classes in the Punjaub, especially the Sikhs serving in the army, or connected with the soldiery. We knew all this when we undertook the Guardianship; our protective occupation was invited expressly to meet those perils. No doubt this turbulent and fanatical spirit became hostile to the British occupation, and to the party of Sikh Sirdars who co-operated with the Resident, when the new administration was carrying into effect the reduction and restraint of the army. But there would have been the same hostility against a purely native Government, if it had attempted to enforce, without British assistance, the same unpopular measures.

About the time of the bad news from Mooltan, however, everything indicated that the Punjaub was settling down into a state of peaceful industry. A general impression prevailed of the overwhelming and resistless power of the British Government, and of the moderation and justice of its policy. On April 6th, 1848, the Resident thus reported to the Governor-General:—

"Perfect tranquillity prevails, at present, throughout all the territories under the Lahore Government; and I have no reason to think that the apparent contentment of the people is other than real. We have now, or have had during the cold months, British officers in all parts of the country; and the impression seems general that all classes are satisfied at the present state of

things. In those villages, chiefly in the Manjha, to which numbers of the disbanded soldiery have returned, we sometimes hear of prophetic rumours being circulated, of a day coming when the Sikhs are again to be brought into collision with the British, and with a different result from the last; but, beyond this idle and infrequent talk, there is nothing to indicate that the return of the Khalsa independence is either expected or desired. The universal civility and kindness with which all Europeans, of all ranks and callings, whether officials, or travellers, or sportsmen, are treated, is very remarkable.”*

It is impossible to say exactly what permanent effect would have been produced on the habits and pursuits of the people, if this tranquillity could have been preserved during the six years and a half of the Maharajah's minority that remained, when the disturbances first broke out, or even in the five years and a half that remained, according to the Treaty—if Lord Dalhousie had not decided in favour of annexation—when the insurrection was finally quelled in March 1849. If a judicious system had been brought into play, five or six years might have accustomed the people to the advantages of peace and order, and a strong native Government might have been installed at Lahore.

Great changes for the better had certainly begun to tell in the first fifteen months of British occupation. A great advance had been made towards a state of political quietude, the best evidence of which is to be found in the slowness and reluctance with which the successive steps in the insurrection were taken.

Notwithstanding the dangerous excitement that undoubtedly prevailed throughout the lower ranks of the Sikh soldiery, both those in the service and those recently disbanded, there had been no extensive mutiny, or desertion of numerical importance, until Rajah Shere Sing went over to the enemy in September, from motives which we have already discussed. When Sirdar Chuttur Sing and his son, with the troops under their command, were openly cooperating with the Dewan Moolraj, who had now defied the British power for five months with impunity, when General Whish was obliged, as the result of Rajah Shere Sing's defection, to raise the siege of Mooltan, and wait

* *Papers, Punjab, 1849, p. 127.*

for reinforcements,* a great stimulus was given to the ambition and fanaticism of the disaffected Sikhs throughout the Punjaub. And yet up to October 4th, the Resident writes, no Sirdar had joined Chuttur Sing,† and he had failed utterly to induce any of the Regular troops, except those who had been with him in Hazara, and against whom Captain Abbott had taken the initiative, to join his banner. He had marched "towards the camp of his son, Rajah Shere Sing and the other insurgents, in despair at the refusals he had received *from the Sikh officers* at Peshawur."‡ It was not until October, that the troops at Bunnoo and Peshawur broke into mutiny,§ when Moolraj had held out for six months, and Chuttur Sing was, to all appearance, unchecked and unopposed.

Thus the main cause of an "unpremeditated and accidental"|| outbreak, according to Lord Dalhousie, growing into a formidable insurrection, was the long delay before any attempt was made to punish the Dewan Moolraj,—a delay which, by degrees, raised him from a very low grade in popular estimation to the rank of the great heroes of Hindoo lore, and dissipated almost all the advantages of the brilliant success of Major Edwardes and General Cortlandt, at the head of the Maharajah's troops. This delay, astonishing and inexplicable to the people at large, was explained by the Resident to the most influential men of the country in a sense the most alarming and exasperating possible. They were told that "they must put down the rebellion by their own resources, *as the only hope of saving their Government.*"¶ No wonder a rumour soon got abroad among the Sirdars and soldiery, as Major Edwardes tells us that "the British meditated declaring the Punjaub forfeited by the recent troubles and misconduct of the troops."** The rumour was true.

As if to add more fuel to these inflammatory rumours, to stir up against us every feeling of loyalty and chivalry at the most critical moment, the Maharanee, "the mother of all the Sikhs," was suddenly deported from the country, and imprisoned at Benares, under circumstances which, we

* *Punjab Papers*, 1849, p. 353.

† *Ibid.*, p. 381.

‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 390, 391.

§ *Ibid.*, pp. 375, and 397.

|| *Ante*, p. 131 (note). ¶ *Ante*, p. 139.

** *Ante*, p. 111.

may be sure, assumed in the telling an aspect of violence and indignity.* The effect upon the Sikh troops of this most ill-judged measure, was, as we have seen, immediate.† The Ranee's influence was almost annihilated,‡ when we made her a martyr, and it revived at once.

The rumour as to the impending annexation, the doubts as to his daughter's marriage with the Maharajah, and the facts as to the Ranee's persecution, may have already converted old Chuttur Sing into a conspirator, but it was the Mussulman insurrection of his own Province, headed by his colleague, Captain Abbott, unchecked and unproved by the Resident, that compelled him to become a rebel.

Surely it is sufficiently obvious that among a warlike race and sect like the Sikhs,—so lately dominant throughout the Punjaub in Church and State,—and after the stirring events of the previous six years, these successive temptations and provocations could not but prove irresistible, and that they form an ample explanation of the phenomena and development of the second Punjaub war, without resorting to the unwarrantable surmise that “a renewal of war” was inevitable, and that our dilatory proceedings merely “precipitated the crisis.” There is nothing to show that, without these delays and errors of judgment on our part, there would ever have been a crisis at all. Measures for which the British Resident and the Governor-General were solely responsible, made a hero out of the timid Dewan Moolraj, a martyr out of the battered Maharanee, and a formidable rebel leader out of the infirm and aged Governor, Sirdar Chuttur Sing.

Lord Dalhousie could not, or would not, see, that his full responsibility, not only for the military delays, but for every exciting and irritating incident, and for every step, good or bad, that was taken before or after the first explosion at Mooltan, effectually barred his ingenious method of separating the Durbar, as “the Government of Lahore,” from the Resident, the absolute head of that Government. During the period prescribed by the Treaty for the Maharajah's minority, no crisis, no second struggle, could absolve the British Government from the obligations of Guardian-

* *Ante*, pp. 106, 107.

† *Ante*, p. 108.

‡ *Ante*, p. 103.

ship and management, so long as it professed to fulfil those duties, and was able to do so without interruption.

Even supposing that every administrative measure before the outbreak at Mooltan, and every step taken by the Resident after it, had been the wisest possible,—supposing the rebellion had not been in the slightest degree provoked or extended by any error, excess, omission, or delay of the British Government,—Lord Dalhousie's case would not be in the least improved. Supposing that the surmise by which he attempted to justify the annexation, were demonstrably true, and that the Sikhs were really animated, from the first day of the occupation, with so deep and bitter a hostility, that they only watched their opportunity for revolt, and would never have been pacified without a second lesson, then I say that they were entitled to that second lesson without any extra charge. The State of Lahore had paid heavily in money, and in territory, for the first lesson; and we had undertaken, in consideration of an annual subsidy, secured on the public revenues administered by us, to perform the office of Teacher for a term of years. If unexpected difficulties had presented themselves in the performance of this office, we should, even then, have had no right to complain. But it was not so. We understood quite well the nature of the evils we had engaged to encounter and cure, and they were clearly aggravated by our own malpractice.

In his last instructions to the Resident, before publicly announcing the annexation of the Punjaub to the British dominions, Lord Dalhousie wrote as follows :—

*“The time has arrived at which it is necessary that the determination which the Governor-General has formed regarding the future administration of the Punjaub, should be communicated to the Government at Lahore.

“On meeting the Council of Regency, you will present to them the Note herewith transmitted, in which the determination of the Government of India, regarding our future relations with the Punjaub, is fully set forth.

“If the Government of Lahore should acquiesce in that determination, you are authorised to grant the Terms which are contained in the enclosed paper.”*

* *Papers, Punjaub*, 1849, p. 648.

Lord Dalhousie's object in thus thrusting prominently forward the Council of Regency, and investing it, in its last moments, with the character of "the Government of Lahore," is transparently obvious. He wished to fasten upon the Regency a sort of national responsibility, in which the Maharajah might be included. But the Council of Regency, apart from British control, never was "the Government of Lahore," and its maintenance up to the date of annexation, proves the very contrary of what Lord Dalhousie wished. The continued existence of this Regency, throughout the rebellion, proves that British responsibility and guardianship were never shaken off or shifted for a day. If indeed the British Guardian had been driven from his position at Lahore; if he had lost the custody of the Maharajah's person; if he had been forced to abdicate for a time the functions of government, he might have been justified in reentering the country as a conqueror, and declaring all previous engagements to be at an end. But no such interruption ever took place. The Resident's authority as chief ruler of the Punjab was never suspended. During the rebellion, which in Lord Dalhousie's opinion warranted him in dethroning his Ward, the capital city was never disturbed; and the Government of the Punjab, exactly as we had chosen to organise it,—including the Council of Regency,—was unaltered to the last. Six out of the eight Councillors remained faithful to their engagements, and signed the Terms, under compulsion.*

These six Sirdars,—Rajah Deena Nath, Bhaee Nidham Sing, (the head of the Sikh religion,) Fakeer Noor-ood-deen, Shumshere Sing Sindhanwalla, and Uttur Sing Kaleewalla,—who were perfectly blameless in their public conduct,—were told that "if they refused to accept the Terms which the Governor-General offered, the Maharajah and themselves would be entirely at his mercy," and would not be "entitled to receive any allowance whatever." If they signed the Terms, and continued "to give their advice and assistance, whenever they were called upon to do so," their jagheers (landed estates) would not be confis-

* *Papers, Punjab*, 1849, pp. 649, 653.

cated, though no promise of hereditary tenure could be made. But, "if they did not subscribe to the conditions," the Resident "could not promise that any consideration would be shown them." *

In the last crisis of the rebellion, on the 18th of November, a Proclamation had been issued, sanctioned and approved by Lord Dalhousie on the 14th of December, 1848, which contained the following announcement :—

"It is not the desire of the British Government that those who are innocent of the above offences, who have taken no part, secretly or openly, in the disturbances, and who have remained faithful in their obedience to the Government of Maharajah Dhuleep Sing,—be they Sikh or be they of any other class,—should suffer with the guilty." †

Were the six members of the Council of Regency guilty? On the contrary, they had done their best for the British Government during a season of extraordinary trial and temptation, and had faithfully co-operated with the Resident in the administration of the Punjaub. Yet they were told that unless they signed and sealed the deposition of their Sovereign, and the destruction of the State, they would be made to suffer with the guilty, that their estates would be confiscated, and that no consideration would be shown them.

Was the young Maharajah Dhuleep Sing, whose Government was professedly upheld in this wonderful Proclamation, guilty? We must suppose that the extraordinary political casuistry of the Resident was accepted at Head Quarters, and that the Governor General's Ward was considered to be guilty "in the person" of his mother, who was a prisoner at Benares, or of those "evil disposed and insurgent Sirdars," who, according to this document, had rebelled against his own Government. For he was made to suffer with the guilty. He was dethroned, despoiled, and banished.

Furthermore, this same Proclamation declares to "the loyal subjects of the Maharajah," as well as to any "who, merely through ignorance, may have been led away by the false statements of the evil-disposed," that "the army" of

* *Papers, Punjaub*, 1849, pp. 649, 650.

† *Ibid.*, p. 449.

the Commander-in-Chief, Lord Gough, "has entered the Lahore territories, not as an enemy to the constituted Government, but to restore order and obedience."* But where two recent treaties stood in the way of annexation, what was a Proclamation more or less?

And though Lord Dalhousie thus publicly proclaimed on the 18th of November, 1848, that the large army under the Commander-in-Chief was not entering the Punjaub "as an enemy to the constituted Government," he had already written secretly to the Resident, on the 3rd of October, "The Governor-General considers the State of Lahore to be, to all intents and purposes, directly at war with the British Government."†

The State of Lahore at war with the British Government, while the Sovereign of the Punjaub was at Lahore, the Ward and Pupil of the Resident! The State of Lahore at war with the British Government, while the administration of the Punjaub was carried on at Lahore by the British Resident, in the name of the infant Sovereign, by virtue of a Treaty with him, and in unaltered accordance with the arrangements of that Treaty! Where was that State of Lahore with which the British Government was at war, to be found? In the camp of Rajah Shere Sing, or in the fortress of Mooltan, which had been summoned to surrender on the 5th of September, "after the firing of a royal salute in honour of Her Majesty the Queen, and her Ally, His Highness Maharajah Dhuleep Sing"?‡ Was it personified by the Dewan Moolraj, or Chuttur Sing, or Shere Sing, who were all proclaimed as rebels "against the Government of Maharajah Dhuleep Sing"?§

Straightforward and truthful answers to these questions will prove that the British Government was not at war with the State of Lahore.

The State of Lahore in October, 1848, and up to the day of its destruction, was to be found at Lahore, embodied and represented, in the persons of the Maharajah, the Resident, who was at the head of the Government, and his colleagues, the Council of Regency, the continuity

* *Papers, Punjaub*, 1849, p. 449.

† *Ibid.*, p. 375.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 327; *Fear on the Punjaub Frontier*, vol. ii, p. 471.

§ *Papers, Punjaub*, 1849, pp. 260, 438, 449, and 562.

of whose functions was never interrupted or disturbed by war or tumult for a single day.

Lord Dalhousie avoids altogether the question of Guardianship. He makes exaggerated complaints of universal treachery and perfidy, and founds upon them his iniquitous claims to treat the Prince, who had never ceased to be his Ward, as a vanquished enemy; to repudiate all the Treaties, which had never ceased to be enforced, as null and void; and to appropriate the Punjaub, which he had never ceased to occupy and administer in trust, as a conquest.* It was impossible for the British Government to conquer the territory, which it was occupying by virtue of a Treaty of protective alliance. Far from war having ever been declared against the State of Lahore, the war was carried on, and the submission of the rebels was demanded, from first to last, in the name of our Ally, the Maharajah Dhuleep Sing.

On the 3rd of October, 1848, Lord Dalhousie secretly and confidentially "intimates" to the Resident, that he "considers the State of Lahore to be, to all intents and purposes, directly at war with the British Government." On the same day, he expresses his satisfaction, in another letter to the same official, at hearing that the fortress of Govindghur, in the city of Umritsur,—up to that time garrisoned by Sikh troops,—has been handed over to a British force, "in accordance with the terms of the Treaty of Bhyrowal."†

With a view, it may be presumed, to minimise opposition, to retain the influence of the Durbar, and the services of the local troops, and to keep the feudatory Princes and the Sikhs of our own provinces quiet, he will not openly declare war; but, with a view to ulterior demands, he "intimates" war against the Lahore Government, in a secret letter to his own agent, who is at the head of that Government!

Having conducted the administration of the Lahore State, for two years and three months, through the trials and troubles of a rebellion, by means of his own agent and his own nominees, in the name of his Ward and Ally, the Maharajah, under a Treaty which he upholds and enforces

* *Papers, Punjaub*, 1849, p. 661.

† *Ibid.* p. 374.

to the last,—he turns round, when the rebellion is over, declares the Treaty to have been violated, and therefore null and void, and explains that the successful campaign, ostensibly carried on for the suppression of a rebellion against the Government of Maharajah Dhuleep Sing, really constituted a war against the Maharajah and the State of Lahore, by which the British Government has “conquered” the Punjaub.*

In his indictment against the State of Lahore, Lord Dalhousie falls into several exaggerated misstatements. He says, “the whole body of the nation,—army and people alike,—have, deliberately and unprovoked, again made war upon us.”† In a subsequent passage of the same despatch he betrays his knowledge of the facts that “the Sikh people form comparatively a small portion of the population of the Punjaub,” and that “a large proportion of the inhabitants, especially the Mahomedans,” took no part in the hostilities, and had no sympathy with the rebellion.‡

Even if the meaning of the phrase, “the whole body of the nation,” is restricted to the dominant sect of Sikhs,—about a sixth of the population,—it is inaccurate. There is a list of thirty-four Sirdars, or leading Chieftains in the Blue Book, who, with their relatives and dependents, took no part in the rebellion. Twenty-eight of these are Sikhs, only two are Mahomedans, and four are Hindoos. Among the six faithful members of the Council of Regency, was Bhaee Nidham Sing, “the head of the Sikh religion.”§

Lord Dalhousie ventures to write as follows:—“It is a shameful fact that of the Sirdars of the State, properly so called, who signed the Treaties, the greater portion have been involved in these hostilities against us.”|| That also is an erroneous accusation. A careful analysis of the several lists and documents proves that the majority of those who signed the Treaties were *not* involved in hostilities against us. Of the sixteen Sirdars who signed the Treaties and Articles of Agreement of 1846, only five joined in the rebellion, and one, Runjore Sing Majeetia, who was in the Council of Regency, was imprisoned at Lahore, on suspicion of carrying on a treasonable corre-

* *Papers, Punjaub*, p. 661.

† *Ibid.*, p. 660.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 664.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

|| *Ibid.*, p. 660.

spondence. In the list of disaffected Sirdars, Runjore Sing Majeetia is put down as "convicted,"* but his conduct was not the subject of any judicial investigation; and in another part of the Blue Book his guilt is said to have been "proved" by an attempt to escape after his arrest, and by his having destroyed or concealed some of his papers.† There seems to have been nothing like evidence against him. Of the eight Councillors, then, six were faithful; one was suspected; one only, Rajah Shere Sing, took the field against the Government of Lahore.

To the list of Sirdars who remained faithful to their duty, who adhered to the cause of the Government of the Punjab, as constituted under Treaty by the Governor-General, must certainly be added the name of Sirdar Khan Sing Mān, the Sikh Governor appointed to supersede the Dewan Moolraj, who accompanied Mr. Vans Agnew and Lieutenant Anderson to Mooltan. So strong seems to have been the very natural prejudice against every Sikh who took part in that ill-fated expedition, that the Resident, in his first report of the treacherous destruction of the two young English officers, jumped at a hasty conclusion which was very unjust to Khan Sing Mān. He wrote to the Governor-General:—"The Sirdar made terms for himself; and the British officers were left to be cruelly butchered,"‡—an account by no means borne out by the words of the only statement before him at that time. All that his informant, Peer Ibrahim Khan, the British Agent at Bhawalpore, had written on this point, was:—"Sirdar Khan Sing Mān, by the permission of Mr. Vans Agnew, begged for quarter, upon which he was seized, and the two gentlemen killed."§

The following description of what had passed was given by an eye-witness, Kootub Shah, a Mahomedan soldier:—

"Sirdar Khan Sing offered to devote his life; but Mr. Agnew objected, saying it was useless for him to sacrifice himself; that, alone, he could do nothing; and that he had better ask for quarter. The Sirdar's people went outside the Eedgah, and demanded quarter. The troops then entered the place, and plundered everything. On their approaching the Sirdar, he said that he had

* *Papers, Punjab*, 1849, p. 489.

† *Ibid.*, p. 139.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 501.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 138.

asked for quarter, and that it would be useless to kill him, but that they might do what they pleased. He requested them to spare the wounded British officers. They, however, refused to listen to him, and seized him.

"During that day the Sirdar was kept in confinement in the Amkhas; the next day he was taken to the fort, *where he was put in irons with his son.*"*

This deposition was made in June, 1848; and is fully confirmed by the fact, for which Sir Herbert Edwardes vouches, that "he remained in confinement throughout the siege, until the ruins of the exploded magazine at once killed and buried him. After the fall of the Fort," (in January, 1849) "his body was dug out, *and was found so heavily ironed, that it must have been impossible for him to walk. His little boy had been apparently sleeping beside him on the bed.*" Major Edwardes, like the Resident, had heard conflicting accounts of Khan Sing's behaviour, but, he says, "under these circumstances, I thought it right to adopt the most charitable construction of the Sirdar's conduct, caused him to be buried with all honour, and sent the gold bangles which were on the arms of his son, to the surviving members of the family."†

Sir Herbert Edwardes likewise ascertained that Gool-deep Sing, the Sikh Commandant of the Infantry Regiment forming part of Mr. Agnew's escort, "replied alike to bribes and threats, that they might blow him away from a gun, but should never induce him to take service with the enemy." He, also, "was put in irons by Moolraj, and in despair at the shame which had been brought on Mr. Agnew's escort, threw himself into a well, as he was passing it under a guard, and was drowned."‡

In the list of "openly disaffected Sirdars of the Lahore State, ascertained to be in rebellion and insurrection," forwarded by the Resident on the 25th of December, 1848, for the information of the Governor-General, we find Golab Sing Poyindea and his son Sirdar Alla Sing included, to whose names, however, with two others, this note is appended:—"It is most probable that these Sirdars are

* *Papers, Punjab*, 1849, pp. 462, 463.

† *A Year on the Punjab Frontier*, vol. ii, p. 162.

‡ *Ibid.*, vol. ii, p. 161.

under restraint with the Peshawur troops.”* They were certainly under restraint.

Sirdar Goolab Sing Povindea was the General in command of the Division of Sikh troops at Peshawur, and also Governor of the Province, and Major George Lawrence,† the Resident’s Assistant at that place, repeatedly praises his constant exertions, and those of his son, Colonel Alla Sing, to preserve good order in the district, and keep the troops steady to their allegiance.‡ Indeed all the superior officers at this station, with one exception, appear to have been most active and zealous, and to have done their best on behalf of the Government of Lahore.§ With their assistance, Major Lawrence most gallantly remained at his post until the middle of October, 1848, when the troops broke into open mutiny. Soon after this, an intercepted letter from the rebel leader, Rajah Shere Sing, contains this passage:—“The Peshawur troops have left that place, with all the guns. The Povindea” (Sirdar Goolab Sing Povindea) “and Elahee Bukhsh” (the General of Artillery||) “are in confinement, and the Feringhees have fled to the Khyber.”¶

Thus Lord Dalhousie’s wholesale impeachment is not just, even if restricted to “the army.” Again we find General Whish, in his final despatch of the 23rd January, 1849, after the fall of Mooltan, expressing his thanks to General Cortlandt, “who commanded the Regular Regiments and Artillery of the Durbar,”**—i. e. of the Lahore Government,—and the Governor-General himself sends his thanks to General Cortlandt for the same services, “as an officer of the Maharajah of Lahore, through the Resident.”††

Notwithstanding the defection of Rajah Shere Sing, Major Edwardes had still a considerable force of Durbar troops under his command, at the end of the siege of Mooltan, and was able to detach six guns and a Regular Regiment, besides Irregular troops, to reinforce Lieutenant Taylor at Lukkee.‡‡ That officer and Lieutenant Young,

* *Papers, Punjab*, 1849, p. 490.

† Now Sir George Lawrence.

‡ *Papers, Punjab*, 1849, pp. 291, 315, 339, 397, 398.

§ *Ibid.* pp. 389, 397.

|| *Ibid.*, p. 340.

¶ *Ibid.*, p. 414.

** *Ibid.*, p. 556.

†† *Ibid.*, p. 586.

‡‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 551, 570.

acting under the directions of Major Edwardes, maintained themselves in different parts of the Derajat and Trans-Indus territory, and retook several forts from the insurgents, without the aid of any British troops.* Lieutenant Taylor appears to have had at one time 5,000 men with twelve guns under his command.† Some of these were the old Regular Infantry and Artillery of the Lahore Government, some were new levies, but all were in the service of the Native State, and raised from the population of the country subject to Maharajah Dhuleep Sing. One superior officer, at least, who was with Lieutenant Taylor, was a Sikh,—Futteh Sing, mentioned as “a good soldier.”‡ Some troops in the pay of two of the loyal Sirdars attached to the Lahore Government, Misr Sahib Dyal and Dewan Jowahir Mull,§ did good service to the end of the campaign.|| Dewan Jowahir Mull in person, with Sheikh Emam-ood-deen, an officer of high rank under the Lahore Government, formerly Governor of Cashmere, were present “with their men” at the action of Soorjkoond, near Mooltan, on the 7th November, 1848, and are said by Major Edwardes to have “behaved very well.”¶ Soon after this affair, Sheikh Emam-ood-deen and his force were detached by Major Edwardes, to drive the rebels out of the district of Jhung; and while General Whish was concluding the siege of Mooltan, the Sheikh was occupied in investing the stronghold of Chuniote, the rebel garrison of which, 2,000 strong, laid down their arms to General Whish on the 9th February, 1849, on his march from Mooltan to join Lord Gough’s army, and were made over as prisoners to Sheikh Emam-ood-deen.**

Misr Sahib Dyal, whose men did their duty so faithfully to the last, was selected by the Resident in November, 1848, to accompany the Head-quarters of the Commander-in-Chief, Lord Gough, “as the chief officer on the part of the Durbar,”—the Regency, with whom, according to Lord Dalhousie, we were then, “to all intents and purposes, directly at war!” He is described as “an able and highly

* *Papers, Punjab*, 1849, pp. 588, 630. † *Ibid.*, p. 585. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 633.

§ See the list, *Ibid.*, p. 547.

|| *Ibid.*, p. 631. ¶ *Ibid.*, p. 422.

** *Ibid.*, pp. 457, 584,—*Edwardes’s Year on the Punjab Frontier*, vol. ii, p. 556.

intelligent person, of considerable experience and knowledge of the country, and of approved fidelity to the interests of the young Maharajah and the British Government."*

This same Misr Sahib Dyal had, at an earlier period, brought to a successful conclusion, by means of the troops under his own command, a most important affair, which had caused much anxiety to the Resident, and occupied a large British force for more than a month,—the destruction and dispersion of a formidable band of insurgents, at one time 5,000 in number, under a noted fanatic, Bhaee Maharaj Sing, who, in communication with Dewan Moolraj, the rebel Governor of Mooltan, and well provided with funds, was scouring the country, and summoning the Sikhs to join in a religious war. The last scene in the active career of this fanatic is thus described in the Resident's despatch of the 13th June, 1848.

"Misr Sahib Dyal was as good as his word; and he and his people kept their promise faithfully. On arriving at Jhung, the Bhaee's force had diminished to about 1000 or 1200 men; the Misr's party immediately attacked them, and, though really inferior in numbers, they were fresh, while their opponents were hungry, and tired by a long and harassing retreat. A great many of the rebels were killed in the encounter, and three or four of the Misr's men, and ten or twelve wounded. The whole rebel force was driven into the Chenab, a difficult river to cross at all times, and now formidable from being much swollen by the rains and the melted snow. It is calculated that from 500 to 600, horse and foot, perished in the river,—among the rebels, Bhaee Maharaj. Three hundred of the rebels were taken by the Misr's soldiers in boats, and put into confinement in Jhung. The Bhaee's four officers, Sikhs of some note, were among the prisoners, and are now on their way to Lahore in irons."†

Lord Dalhousie writes to the Secret Committee that "the destruction of the outlaw, Bhaee Maharaj, and the utter discomfiture of his followers, is an event which has greatly tended to the support of British authority."‡

The death of Bhaee Maharaj on that occasion became afterwards a matter of doubt;§ but his fame and influence were annihilated; and Lord Dalhousie, in his final Minute

* *Papers, Punjaub*, 1849, p. 444.

† *Ibid.*, p. 187.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 213.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 625.

declaring the annexation of the Punjaub, admits that "the measures taken against Bhaee Maharaj Sing, who, with some thousand followers was raising the country in the Rechna Doab, and the flight and dispersion of his followers, combined to keep down any manifestations of disaffection in the neighbourhood of Lahore."*

Thus even his own words, extracted from the Blue Book, contradict Lord Dalhousie's complaint that "the Regency, during these troubles, gave no substantial or effective assistance to the British Government."†

It is true that the Resident at one time speaks of his Councillors as merely "acquiescing" in the plans he was pursuing,—as deficient in "zeal, energy, and judgment."‡ On the 14th July, 1848, however, he writes:—"A great change has come over the spirit of the Durbar: they have been making the most decided and very successful exertions to procure carriage of every description for the use of the British troops, and to aid in the conveyance of the siege train."§ One member of the Regency, Rajah Deena Nath, was sent from Lahore on a mission into the Hazara Province in September, 1848; and after his return the Resident writes to the Governor-General:—

"His presence in that part of the country had the effect of assuring the inhabitants, and he certainly appears to have used his influence, in every way, to defeat the machinations of Sirdar Chuttur Sing. Since his return he appears to have entered, zealously and earnestly, into the measures adopted for punishing the rebels, by the confiscation of their jaghires, and the attachment of their houses and property, and for counteracting the plots of the insurgents."||

On August 16th, 1848, the Resident writes as follows to Lord Dalhousie: "The conduct of the Durbar, collectively and individually, has been entirely satisfactory in everything connected with this outbreak, and, indeed, in all other respects for the last two months."¶

Lord Dalhousie, always overlooking the fact that the control of the finances was in the hands of the British Resident, places first and foremost among the "gross violations" of Treaties of which "the Sikhs" had been guilty, the non-payment of our military subsidy.

* *Papers, Punjaub*, 1849, p. 657.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 256.

† *Ibid.*, p. 660.

|| *Ibid.*, p. 379.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 197.

¶ *Ibid.*, p. 289.

"In return for the aid of British troops, they bound themselves to pay to us a subsidy of 22 lakhs per annum. From the day when the Treaty was signed, to the present hour, not one rupee has ever been paid. Loans advanced by the British Government to enable them to discharge the arrears of their disbanded troops have never been repaid."*

And in the Proclamation declaring the Punjaub to have become British territory, he says ;—"Of their annual tribute no portion whatever has at any time been paid ; and large loans, advanced to them by the Government of India, have never been repaid."†

The Blue Book contradicts the assertion that "not one rupee," that "no portion," had ever been paid. On February 23rd, 1848, the Resident reports as follows to the Governor-General. "The Durbar have paid into this treasury gold to the value of Rupees 13,56,837. By this payment they have reduced their debt to the British Government from upwards of forty lakhs of rupees to less than twenty-seven."‡

In this same despatch, written about six weeks before the outbreak at Mooltan, the Resident recorded his satisfaction with the financial arrangements and prospects of the Durbar.

"They have thus, by economy and care, been able to make good four months' pay of the Irregular Cavalry, to discharge the whole of the arrears of the men who have been pensioned and disbanded, to meet their current expenses, and have still, at this moment, full eight lakhs of rupees in the different treasuries to meet the public exigencies."§

If a financial equilibrium had not been restored, and if the regular payment of the tribute had not commenced, when the rebellion of 1848 once more threw everything into confusion, it was no fault of the Council of Regency. Not only had the British authorities accepted the trust with their eyes open to the disordered state of the finances, but the Resident—opposed by the Council of Regency and supported by the Governor-General,—had introduced extensive changes into the fiscal system, leading, as had been anticipated, to a very serious loss of revenue.

* *Papers, Punjaub*, 1849, p. 659.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 110, 111.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 654.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

In a letter dated July 3rd, 1847, the Resident states as follows to the Governor-General:—

"I propose only to give half salaries, until the State is clear of its debts, which I now estimate at thirty-five lakhs.

"I found the treasury empty.

"Deficiency of cash, as I said before, and entire want of public credit, have tied my hands; indeed, but for the loan of seven lakhs of rupees granted by our Government, I do not know what I could have done.

"Estimating the debt of the Durbar for last year at nine lakhs, the account will stand, at the end of the present year, leaving a balance of Rs. 13,95,265, which, I fear, cannot be paid off under a year and a half, exclusive of the twenty-two lakhs subsidy yearly."*

The financial reforms introduced by the Resident were certain, as he admitted, to entail an immediate, though perhaps only a temporary, sacrifice of revenue. These are his reports to the Governor-General on August 28th, and December 16th, 1847, and January 12th, 1848.

1. "The finances of the Lahore Durbar are certainly not in a prosperous condition. By the returns lately submitted to the Governor-General, there is a surplus of twenty-nine lakhs and upwards, but out of this sum the annual commutation, payable to the British Government, and the extra expenses consequent on the new system of paying Councillors, Adawluttees, and Nazims must be defrayed. *A reform of the Customs as well as the land-tax, all absolutely necessary, will probably not involve a sacrifice of less than from twelve to fifteen lakhs of rupees.*†

2. "The finances are still in a very unsatisfactory state; it is the one great difficulty which now remains. *The introduction of the new system of land-tax; the reform in the Customs; the loss attendant on reforming the currency, and calling in all the depreciated coinage; with the sums necessary for paying up the arrears of the Irregulars, and the civil officials, cannot but amount to a large sum. Much of this pressure, no doubt, is but temporary; still in the exhausted state of the treasury, it is with the greatest difficulty that the Durbar can meet its demands.*‡

3. "The revenue settlement is rapidly progressing.

"The difference between the real and nominal revenue will, probably, be little less than a fourth; and *from the former must again be deducted the reductions on the summary settlement.* The

* *Papers, Punjab*, 1849, pp. 22, 23, 24. † *Ibid.*, pp. 56, 57.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

savings from the decreased expenses of management will go far to meet the last noted deficiency ; but still the income will, I fear, inevitably fall short of the expenditure.”*

On January 31st, 1848, he reports some further reductions in the Customs duties.

“ In the Customs I have reduced the duties on dried fruits and other articles, from five rupees per maund to three rupees ; on silk, from forty to twenty-four rupees ; on English coarse calicoes, from thirty to twenty rupees ; and on sugar from two rupees to one rupee per maund.”†

All these measures received the Governor-General’s approval and confirmation. They were not so favourably viewed by the Council of Regency, but no opposition was attempted, or would have been permitted. The Resident makes the following remarks in a despatch to Lord Dalhousie of April 6th, 1848.

“ The settlement was, of course, most summary, and its details have yet to be filled up. Its working must be most carefully watched. The Durbar was averse to its introduction, but yielded, as they always do ; and contented themselves, with the exception of Rajah Deena Nath, with standing aloof from its execution ; leaving the whole matter to the Resident and his Assistants.

“ Rajah Deena Nath sees the financial embarrassment of the State, and feels that the more we interfere with details, especially where the revenue is concerned, the less will be the Durbar’s responsibility for financial difficulties and deficiencies.”‡

There is no reason to doubt the wisdom of these revenue settlements ; they prove, however, that the temporary failure of the Punjab State to meet its pecuniary engagements was not wilful or faithless ; they prove not merely the full knowledge and participation of the British Government, in those fiscal and administrative changes which made immediate solvency impossible, but its sole responsibility for those changes.

Yet Lord Dalhousie places the regular payment of the Subsidy among “ the main provisions of the agreement,” which “ the Sikhs ” had “ either entirely evaded, or grossly violated.”§ There was neither evasion nor violation. The only cause of the subsidy having fallen into arrears, was that the Resident, in the plenitude of his powers, had thought fit to lessen the receipts of the State, and to di-

* *Papers, Punjab*, 1849, p. 99.

† *Ibid.*, p. 128.

‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 104, 105.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 659.

vert the expenditure into other channels. These financial measures were, doubtless, most judicious, but they were entirely the Resident's work, approved by the Governor-General, reluctantly accepted by the Durbar. They were of temporary effect; and ample assets remained available, at the end of the war, for the gradual liquidation of all possible demands on the part of the British Government.

Lord Dalhousie totally fails to make out any violation of the Treaty against the Lahore State,—the only specific instance he adduces, the non-payment of the subsidy, being, as we have seen, a mere matter of account, a circumstance by which the case is not in the least modified to the prejudice of the State of Lahore.* He contrives to fasten a plausible stigma of perfidy and violation of treaties upon the State of Lahore, only by ringing the changes through several paragraphs, upon the terms, "the Sikh nation," "the Sikhs," "the Sikh people," and "the Government" or "State of Lahore,"† until a thorough confusion is established. For these are not convertible terms.

What "the State of Lahore" was, and what "the Government of Lahore" was, during the British occupation and management, under the Treaty of Bhyrowal, we have just determined.

"The Sikh people," as we have already remarked,‡ is not a phrase synonymous with "the people of the Punjaub," the great majority of whom took no share in the revolt, and felt no sympathy with it; while at least 20,000 subjects of the Lahore State, enrolled in its service, fought on the side of the Government, and assisted in suppressing the rebellion.

Lord Dalhousie evidently perceived the forensic and moral difficulty in the way of annexation, created by the relation of Guardianship under the Treaty of Bhyrowal, between the two States,—between the infant Sovereign of the Punjaub and the Governor-General of British India. He saw the necessity of meeting that difficulty somehow. He could not leave it entirely unnoticed. But he did not state it fully or fairly; and the solution offered in the following passages is quite inadequate.

* *Ante*, p. 165.

† *Papers, Punjaub*, 1849, pp. 661, 662.

‡ *Ante*, p. 158.

"It has been objected that the present dynasty in the Punjab cannot with justice be subverted, since Maharajah Dhuleep Sing, being yet a minor, can hardly be held responsible for the acts of the nation. With deference to those by whom these views have been entertained, I must dissent entirely from the soundness of this doctrine."*

No such unsound doctrine lay before him. The objection was not to the subversion of a minor, but to the subversion of a Ward by his Guardian. Nor was it merely a question of "subverting a dynasty," but of subverting a State, protected and administered, under Treaty, by the British Government. I have already shown that Lord Dalhousie had no right to speak of the acts of the rebels, either as "the acts of the nation," or of "the State of Lahore."†

Lord Dalhousie went on to argue that this imaginary false doctrine,—the irresponsibility of a minor Sovereign,—had "been disregarded heretofore, in practice, and disregarded in the case of the Maharajah Dhuleep Sing himself." He continues thus:—

"When, in 1845, the Khalsa army invaded our territories, the Maharajah was not held to be free from responsibility, nor was he exempted from the consequences of his people's acts. On the contrary, the Government of India confiscated to itself the richest provinces of the Maharajah's kingdom, and was applauded for the moderation which had exacted no more.

"Furthermore, the Maharajah having been made to pay the penalty of the past offences of his people, due warning was given him that he would be held, in like manner, responsible for their future acts. The Maharajah, in reply, acknowledging this warning, says, 'If in consequence of the recurrence of misrule in my Government, the peace of the British frontier be disturbed, I should be held responsible for the same.

"If the Maharajah was not exempted from responsibility on the plea of his tender years, at the age of eight, he cannot, on that plea, be entitled to exemption from a like responsibility, now that he is three years older."‡

It is strange that Lord Dalhousie should have so completely overlooked the real difference between 1846 and 1849. The question of age was immaterial at both periods. There was no plea of exemption in 1846 when the warning

* *Papers, Punjab*, 1849, p. 663.

† *Ante*, p. 159.

‡ *Papers, Punjab*, 1849, p. 663.

was given and acknowledged, because the Maharajah was the reigning Prince of an independent State. Although he was a minor, his mother, his near relatives, and their chosen advisers, were the actual Rulers of the State. In 1849 the actual Ruler of the State was the British Resident, under the Governor-General's instructions.

Of course a minor Prince is the personal representative of the State, and must stand or fall with its fortunes. But a minor Prince under the tutelage of a powerful neighbour, cannot justly be held responsible for the acts of the nation which his Guardian has undertaken to guide and control.

In 1846 the Maharajah was a conquered enemy. In 1849 the Maharajah was a Ward; the British Government was the Guardian. His mother, his natural Guardian and late Regent, was banished from the Punjaub; several of his relatives and former ministers were in prison or exile. The Maharajah was now entirely exempt from responsibility, simply because all responsibility had been assumed by the British Government.

From the 16th of December, 1846, the date of the Treaty of Bhyrowal, down to the 29th of March, 1849, when the Proclamation annexing the Punjaub was issued, the Government of Lahore was in strict subordination to the British Government; and its subordination was never interrupted, suspended, or relaxed for a single day. If, indeed, the Government of Lahore could justly have been made responsible for any of the untoward events of 1848 and 1849, Sir Frederick Currie, the Resident, must have been the first person indicted, for he was the absolute head of that Government. This is a fair *reductio ad absurdum* of that sophistical and fallacious rhetoric, by which Lord Dalhousie confounded "the Sikhs," "the Sikh nation," "the people of the Punjaub," "the Lahore Government," and "the State of Lahore," as if they were synonymous and co-extensive terms, with the object of justifying the violation of Treaties, and the evasion of a sacred duty.

Lord Dalhousie's motives, as avowed by himself, for abandoning the office of Guardian, and the noble work of restoring order and self-government to the Punjaub State,

when so much progress had already been secured, were not of the highest order. To me they appear morally low, politically short-sighted, and altogether unworthy of a great and generous nation, claiming to play the part of Imperial Instructor and Exemplar to India and the East. He argued that if our Government continued to maintain "the Sikh nation as an independent State," and instituted a reformed administration by "a larger measure of British control," "we should have all the labour, all the anxiety, all the responsibility, which would attach to the territories if they were actually made our own; while we should not reap the corresponding benefits of increase of revenue and acknowledged possession."*

That labour, anxiety, and responsibility we had undertaken; those benefits,—imaginary enough, as we now know,—we had foregone by the Treaty of Bhyrowal. As to "a larger measure of British control," there could be no larger measure than those "unlimited powers" in every department, which we held under that Treaty, and which the Resident had never ceased to exercise.

On the other hand, Lord Dalhousie observed, "the revenues are very considerable in the aggregate. A large proportion has, hitherto, been diverted from the public treasury in jaghires to the Chiefs. A considerable amount of revenue will now be recovered from the confiscation of the jaghires of those who have been engaged in hostilities against us."† He has "no hesitation in expressing a confident belief that the Punjaub will, at no distant time, be not only a secure, but a profitable possession."‡

"At no distant time,"—before Lord Dalhousie's tour of office expired,—this "confident belief" was signally contradicted.

In addition to this delusive hope of profit, and the desire to evade a burdensome obligation, Lord Dalhousie alleges a regard for "self-defence," and "the security of our own territories," as compelling us "to relinquish the policy which would maintain the independence of the Sikh nation in the Punjaub."§

"There never will be peace in the Punjaub," he urges,

* *Papers, Punjaub*, 1849, pp. 662, 663.

† *Ibid.*, p. 665.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 664.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 661.

"so long as its people are allowed to retain the means and the opportunity of making war. There never can be now any guaranty for the tranquillity of India, until we shall have effected the entire subjection of the Sikh people, and destroyed its power as an independent nation."^{*}

The same equivocal use of the terms, "the Sikh people" or "nation," and "the people of the Punjaub," is employed here, as throughout this despatch. The people of the Punjaub in general were not hostile, as Lord Dalhousie acknowledged.[†] The Sikh army and the turbulent portion of the Sikh people, had been effectually subjected, and deprived of the means of making war. Reduced in numbers, subdued to orderly discipline, the Sikh army never could have regained its insolent pre-eminence in the State, as the embodied representative of the Sikh religion and Commonwealth,—the Khalsa Punth. And its conspicuous humiliation was sure to operate in a very wholesome manner upon the Sikh population, not only in the Punjaub, but throughout Sirhind, the Jullundhur Doab, and the feudatory States on both sides of the Sutlej.

Deprived of all supremacy and influence over many of these minor States, whose resources were now transferred to the British Government, and proved of material assistance during the campaign of 1849, weakened by the loss of Jullundhur and Cashmere,—the former in our possession, the latter placed on her flank as a jealous rival,—the Punjaub State, even if freed from the British occupation, could hardly be considered independent after the Treaties of 1846. Certainly her independence was not of such a character as to afford reasonable grounds of apprehension for "the tranquillity of India," or for "the security of our own territories." Lord Hardinge had taken good care of that.

By Articles II, III, and IV, of the Treaty of the 9th of March, 1846, the Maharajah Dhuleep Sing renounced for himself, his heirs and successors, "all claim to, or connection with the territories to the south of the Sutlej," and between the rivers Sutlej and Beas, (the Jullundhur Doab,) ceded to the British Government; and also gave up Cashmere and the Hill Countries, designed to form a

^{*} *Papers, Punjaub*, 1849, p. 662.

[†] *Ante*, p. 158.

Principality for Rajah Golab Sing. By Article VII, the "Regular Army of the Lahore State" was "henceforth limited to twenty-five Battalions of Infantry, and 12,000 Cavalry," and this force was never to be increased without the express permission of the British Government. By Article IX the control of the rivers Beas, Sutlej, and Indus, in respect to tolls and ferries, was to rest with the British Government. By article X, British troops, due notice being given, were to be allowed to pass through the Lahore territories. By Article XI, no European or American was to be taken into the service of the Punjaub State without the permission of the British Government. By Articles XII and XIII "the independent Sovereignty" of Rajah Golab Sing was recognised, and any dispute or difference between him and the Lahore State was to be referred to the British Government, whose decision was to be final. By Article XIV no territorial acquisitions were henceforth to be made "without the concurrence of the British Government."*

The "independence" stipulated in this Treaty for Rajah Golab Sing, tributary and feudatory of the British Government, signifies, of course, merely independence of Lahore. This is an instance of the looseness and want of precision with which the terms "independent" and "independence" have been used in our Indian Treaties and State papers, and by no one more frequently than Lord Dalhousie. But even if the meaning of the term "independence," which he applies to "the Sikh nation," be confined to that freedom of internal administration which was to be restored to the Punjaub at the end of the Maharajah's minority, there certainly was nothing in the prospect to alarm a British statesman.

Lord Dalhousie, in fact, could not have constructed his specious case of "self-defence" against the dangerous "independence" of the Punjaub State,—he could not even have deceived himself on the subject,—if he had not employed that misleading formula, "the independence of the Sikh nation."

The Sikh nation,—if a sect can be called a nation,—

* *Papers, the late Hostilities*, 1846, pp. 99, 101; and *Collection of Treaties*, Calcutta (London, Longman & Co.,) vol. ii, pp. 261, 263.

neither constitutes the population of the Punjaub, nor is confined to the Punjaub. It was not the Sikh religion, nor the Sikh nationality within the Punjaub, that rendered the establishment of a strong and orderly Government in that country so difficult, but the large floating population of recently disbanded soldiers, and their favourite leaders, belonging to the dominant sect, and accustomed to political supremacy. The organisation of the Sikh army was not thoroughly broken up; the defeated Khalsa had not forgotten their old habits, nor lost their old hopes. All that they wanted was that second lesson, which we had promised to administer, if necessary.

The pacification of the Punjaub after 1849, is not in the least explained by its becoming a British Province, but by the simple fact that the Sikhs had been well beaten, and that they knew it. Whatever doubt may have been left on their minds after the campaign of 1846, was now effectually dispelled. They could not contend against the British Government. They had been made to lay down their arms; they had lost all their guns; their proudest and most trusted Chieftains were all discomfited; their saints and prophets were all discredited; their union was dissolved. They had been defeated without disgrace; a great deal of fanatical nonsense had probably been knocked out of them; and, by all accounts, they bore no particular grudge against us for the lesson we had taught them.

There is, in fact, no reason to doubt that the Punjaub would have been as peaceful and friendly under a Native Prince during the last nineteen years, as the States of Nepaul and Gwalior have been, the former for fifty years since its last defeat, the latter for twenty-four years since its final subjection to the British Government.

The Nepaulese, animated by a long career of conquest, and with an overweening confidence in their own power and resources, made war upon us in 1814. Their successes against our troops in the first campaign, induced them to protract the contest for nearly two years; but they were taught the error of trusting in the inaccessibility of their mountain fastnesses, and their Envoy was compelled to present on his knees at the British General's Durbar,* the

* *Prinsep's Marquis of Hastings' Administration*, (Allen, 1825), vol. i, p. 205.

Treaty of peace ratified by the Maharajah, giving up all the points in dispute, and ceding a large tract of territory. Since this humiliation in March, 1816, a British Resident has been constantly at the capital of Nepaul; that Government has maintained the most amicable relations with us; and in 1857-8 a force of 20,000 Goorkhas, commanded by the Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief, Maharajah Jung Bahadoor, cooperated with Lord Clyde's army in suppressing the rebellion in Oude.

The military operations of 1843 in the territories of Maharajah Scindia of Gwalior, had for their pretext and object the coercion of a turbulent and unmanageable army, unnecessarily large for the purposes of the Native State, and massed so as to threaten our frontier near the important city of Agra. Two battles were fought; the defeated army was disbanded, and reorganised on a limited scale under a new and more stringent Treaty. Since that time the State of Gwalior has given no ground of complaint; and in the crisis of 1857, Maharajah Scindia and his ministers, though placed in the vortex of insurrection, surrounded by mutinous and clamorous troops, "raised, paid, disciplined, and" (recently) "commanded by British officers," in the style which, in Lord Dalhousie's opinion, could alone make native troops safe;*—contrived to render most valuable services to the British Government.

Every historical analogy, every contemporaneous event, all the probabilities of the case, indicate that the Sikhs, under the reformed Government of Maharajah Dhuleep Sing, would have been as proud and as eager to cooperate with British troops in 1857, as were the Sikhs under the Sikh Rajahs of Puttiala, Jheend, Nabha, and Kupperthulla, as were the troops of the Rajah of Cashmere, or the Nepaulese under Jung Bahadoor. Delhi was the accursed city of the Mogul, the centre of Mussulman arrogance, the place of martyrdom of the great Sikh prophets, and devoted by their predictions to the vengeance of their disciples. Animated by these traditional animosities, with the hope of plunder, and "the old scorn for the Poorbeah Sepoy,"† the Sikhs rallied to our banner in the newly raised

* *Papers, Punjaub*, 1849, p. 662.

† *Trotter's History of India from 1844 to 1862*, vol. ii, p. 70.

Punjaabee Regiments, and pressed towards Delhi with confidence and good will. But these notorious inducements would have operated with double force under the rule of their own Rajah. As it is, the extensive re-employment of the Punjaubees in 1857, their share in the glory and plunder of Delhi and Lucknow, unquestionably revived much of their soldierly self-respect, but with it, by all accounts, somewhat of a bitter sense of their inadequate military rewards, and of their degradation as a race,—feelings that are by no means conducive to abject and contented submission.

Lord Dalhousie argued, that “warlike in character, and long accustomed to conquest, the Sikhs must, of necessity, detest the British as their conquerors.”* But if the administration of the Punjab during the Rajah’s minority, had been continued, there would have been no “conquerors” to detest. It was Lord Dalhousie who, by a violation of the Treaty, converted our protective occupation into a so-called conquest. If the Treaty had not been violated, the defeated insurgents would have been simply a vanquished party in the State, and, as I believe, finally vanquished. No humiliation would have fallen on the Maharajah, upon the Board of Regency, or upon the Sardars, their followers, and the troops, who had supported the constituted authorities. And even for the vanquished party,—the fanatical lower class of Sikhs,—if the Punjab State had been maintained, the participation of its army in the military exploits of the British Government, would have taken out all the sting of defeat in the pride of a common victory.

The fact is that the Government of the Punjab, so long as there was a regular Government, never had the least inclination to go to war with us. The State of Lahore, throughout the time of its greatest pride and prosperity, under Runjeet Sing, had remained on the best terms with the British Government. Even after the great Maharajah’s death, amidst the excitement of our disasters in Affghanistan, and the operations to retrieve them and withdraw our troops, amicable relations were preserved for several years, until what Lord Hardinge correctly described as

* *Papers, Punjab*, 1849, p. 662.

“a democratic revolution”;* threw all the power of the State into the hands of the army. The military Panchayuts used their power in a manner that was most offensive and alarming to all adherents of Runjeet Sing’s dynasty. They “issued their orders, under the designation belonging to the Sikh sect, before Runjeet Sing became a monarch, viz. :—the Khalsa Punth, (Khalsajee-ka Punth)”—the Company of the Elect. “They formally assumed the Government, and sent letters bearing their seal, inscribed merely with the name of God, to all local officers, military leaders, and members of the Durbar, requiring their presence and obedience.”† The Princes, the ministers, the nobles, even the superior officers of the army, all who had anything to lose, were on the side of peace with us, and good order within their own frontier. It was so in 1845, and equally, or more so, in 1849.

We have seen how long, and how stoutly, Rajah Shere Sing resisted the growing impulse,—with what reluctance, under what an imperative summons, amid what confusion and despair, he at last yielded. And, after all, he alone, out of the eight leading Sirdars of the Punjaub, selected to form the Council of Regency, took part in the insurrection,—and then, not as a voluntary participator in the common cause, but closely touched by special motives of personal honour, and the Oriental sense of implicit filial obedience.

Many of the Sirdars withstood for a long time every incentive to rebellion, and were at last dragged or forced into it by the soldiery who surrounded them. The army was, in fact, the sole obstacle to be overcome before a reformed and self-sustaining Government could be established in the Punjaub. Under our protective management,—with or without a second struggle,—that obstacle would have been overcome. The reorganisation of the army, and pacification of the Sikhs and other warlike tribes, were merely matters of time. The intervals of the Rajah’s minority would probably have been sufficiently long. The negotiators of the Treaty of Bhyrowal certainly contemplated the possibility of a second struggle. Lord Hardinge and Sir Henry Lawrence were prepared for it.

* *Papers, the Late Hostilities*, 1846, p. 6.

† *Ibid.*, p. 8.

though they did not expect it ; and but for a strange succession of mishaps and errors of judgment, I firmly believe the second struggle would have been avoided. In either case, whether the second struggle was unavoidable, whether it was provoked or aggravated by our shortcomings or faults, we ought to have borne the brunt of it without complaining.

The spirit, the habits, the traditional pride of the old Khalsa troops, in the ranks of the local army, and in the districts chiefly inhabited by the Sikhs, were the unruly elements we had undertaken to curb and coerce. It was our duty to conquer those unruly elements ; but having done so, we had no right to say, as Lord Dalhousie did, that we had "conquered" the territories under our tutelage. That was not a conquest,—it was a breach of trust. We availed ourselves to the utmost, and to the last moment, of our advantageous position as the civil and military administrators of the Punjaub ; we held its strongholds, and disposed of all its resources, including 20,000 soldiers recruited from its population ; we disarmed many wavering and doubtful opponents by appealing to their conservative interests and loyal sentiments, and disavowing hostility to their Sovereign and institutions ;—all this we were authorised and bound to do, with the object of quelling the insurrection, but not with the object of violating the Treaties, as soon as the crisis was over, by turning our occupation into possession.

The results of that ill-advised acquisition up to the present time, seem to me to have been of a mixed character,—absolutely injurious and exhausting to the British Empire, relatively beneficial in some respects, prejudicial in others, to the people of the Punjaub,—but I can perceive no advantage, material or moral, that has been gained by any person or class, that could not have been more fully and effectually conferred and secured, without annexation than with it.

Lord Dalhousie objected, that "hesitation on our part would be attributed, not to forbearance, but to fear ; it would be regarded, not as the result of a magnanimous policy, but as the evidence of a pusillanimous spirit."*

* *Papers, Punjaub*, 1849, p. 664.

This is a most frivolous and unstatesmanlike objection. Magnanimity after success never presents the appearance of fear, and is not in the least liable to be mistaken for it. All India was thoroughly impressed with the complete subjection of the Sikh army. There were manifold means available for making that subjection, and the submission of the entire people, a visible object to the whole Peninsula, and for turning it to the honour and credit of the Imperial Power. According to the Oriental ideas the greatest Sovereign is he who can make Princes, and who has the largest number of Princes under his command and protection. Lord Dalhousie might have gained the hearts of Princes and people by a plain statement of what had been done, and what it was intended to do in the Punjaub. Instead of doing so, he violated Treaties, abused a sacred trust, threw away the grandest opportunity ever offered to the British Government, of planting solid and vital reform up to the northern limits of India, and by an acquisition as unjust as it was imprudent, entailed a heavy burden upon the Empire. That, I believe, will be the verdict of posterity and history, upon the transactions which have just passed under our review.

CHAPTER VII.

ANNEXATION, ITS AUTHORS AND APOLOGISTS.

BOTH the Duke of Argyll and Sir Charles Jackson seem desirous of impressing two somewhat ill-assorted notions upon their readers,—firstly, that a deliberate policy of gradually absorbing all the Native States has always been the wisest policy for the British Government of India, and will continue to be so for the future; secondly, that Lord Dalhousie did not form any such deliberate policy. They tell us that “he did not originate the doctrine of ‘lapse;’ that he did not extend it;” that some of the annexed States simply “lapsed by operation of law;” and that the Governor-General could not throw away “a golden opportunity;”^{*} while in the most notable instance of all, that of Oude, he “deprecatcd annexation,” and “is not responsible” for it.[†]

With the alleged scruples and misgivings of the chief agent in these territorial acquisitions, and their legal and accidental character,—I have already dealt.[‡] I shall only add here that it is quite true that Lord Dalhousie did not “originate the doctrine of lapse;” but by his eager and unquestioning adhesion to that doctrine with its visionary array of precedents, which a fair and candid inquiry would have immediately dispelled, he made it his own, and gave it practical efficacy. “The doctrine of lapse” was originated by some Bengal and Bombay Civilians, and first applied to a Sovereign State with which a Treaty of perpetual alliance existed, by the late Sir J. P. Willoughby, then a Member of Council at Bombay, in the matter of the Sattara succession. Some years ago I remarked, “Mr. J. P. Willoughby was the real parent of Annexation; Lord Dalhousie was only its nursing father.”§ But that cannot

^{*} *A Vindication*, pp. 41, 42.

[†] *Ante*, p. 46.

[‡] *Ante*, pp. 50, 51, 72, 74; and pp. 10 to 20.

§ *The Empire in India*, chapter on “Sattara.”

diminish his responsibility in the least. The "doctrine of lapse" was a cruelly effective process, but without a policy of annexation accepted by the Supreme Government it would never have been applied.

The Duke of Argyll denies that there ever was "a policy of annexation" at all;* and Sir Charles Jackson declares that, if there ever was such a policy, by the time Lord Dalhousie left India, no reigning Prince remained who had any reason to dread it, except the Rajah of Mysore.

"Then it is suggested that all the Princes of India were alarmed by these annexations, and feared the application of the doctrine of 'lapse' to their own successions;" but the truth is that the doctrine was capable of a very limited application among Princes. Lord Dalhousie repeatedly declared that it was applicable to dependent States only.

"I do not believe that one independent Sovereign was alarmed by these lapses of territory, but if there was such a Sovereign, his fear was most unreasonable, and might have been removed by ten minutes' conversation with the Resident at his Court, or a reference to Calcutta. But the range of this supposed dread was still more limited, for the doctrine, requiring the consent of the British Government to adoptions by dependent Sovereigns, is inapplicable to those of the Mahomedan faith, and it was Lord Dalhousie's fate to gather in nearly the whole crop of dependent Hindoo territories. I believe that Mysore was the only one remaining at the close of his administration."†

I shall take the last two sentences first,—both because, if they held good, they would, indeed, confine within very narrow bounds the alarm and anxiety among native Princes at the special process of rejecting adopted heirs, and because they present a strange example of the incompetence, and want of preparation for the business he has taken in hand, betrayed by Sir Charles Jackson, as soon as he wanders from the particular Blue Books, on which he and the Duke of Argyll would have every one pin their faith. Yet there are Blue Books in existence,—not to say school-books,—that might have saved Sir Charles Jackson from the error in question. He says that Lord Dalhousie "gathered in nearly the whole crop of dependent *Hindoo* territories," and believes that "Mysore was the only one remaining at the close of his administration." There are

* *India under Dalhousie and Canning*, pp. 4, 5, 16.

† *A Vindication*, p. 33.

literally more than a *hundred* dependent Hindoo States left. I exclude from consideration those Princes or Chiefs who only possess what is called "second class jurisdiction,"—of whom there are at least another hundred,—and refer to those who maintain a military force, and have the power of life and death within their own dominions.

Though I cannot admit that there is any "*independent*" Hindoo Prince within the geographical limits of India, except the Maharajah of Nepaul, I shall exclude, for the present; the greater Princes of Rajpootana, the Rajahs Scindia of Gwalior, Holkar of Indore, and others, the extent of whose territories, and their internal autonomy, may have led Sir Charles Jackson to suppose that they did not come under the head of "dependent Sovereigns."

Mr. J. C. Marshman, mentioned several times in Sir William Sleeman's letters as the writer of "rabid articles" in the *Friend of India*, in favour of the absorption of native States,* has recently published a History of India, in which he naturally takes up the defence of Lord Dalhousie's administration. He, likewise, tries to deprecate censure on the unjust restrictions of the Hindoo law of inheritance, by contracting their sphere, but he is less vague than Sir Charles Jackson, and deviates into a decided misrepresentation.

"It appears to be forgotten that the application of this law of succession was confined to extremely narrow limits. It did not affect any of the Mahomedan Princes of India; and the Court of Directors and Lord Dalhousie explicitly declared that it was applicable exclusively to those subordinate and dependent Principalities which had been created by the 'spontaneous generosity' of the British Government, and not to any of the independent Sovereigns. It was, in fact, restricted to the States of Mysore, Sattara, Nagpore, and Jhansi, and possibly to one or two others of minor account."†

This statement is utterly inaccurate. Neither the Court of Directors nor Lord Dalhousie ever made any such declaration. The pretended prerogative of rejecting adopted heirs was extended by Lord Dalhousie, in a passage which I shall quote at full length a little further on, to the

* *Sleeman's Oude*, vol. ii, pp. 390, 395.

† *History of India*, (Longman and Co.) vol. iii, p. 400.

“States which recognise formally the supremacy of the British Government,”* a formula which would include every Native State in India, with the exception of three or four.

Sir Charles Jackson, who has “been in India,” does “not believe that one independent Sovereign was alarmed by these lapses of territory.” Let us hear the opinions of some persons whom he would himself allow to have had better opportunities than himself of judging.

General Sir John Low,—the last surviving pupil and Assistant of Sir John Malcolm, who passed more than thirty of the most active years of his life among Native Princes and their subjects,—tells us that “the confidence of our native allies was a good deal shaken by the annexation of Sattara,” and that it roused feelings of discontent and alarm throughout Malwa and Rajpootana, where he was at that time Agent to the Governor-General.† And Sir Frederick Currie, Resident and Councillor under Lord Dalhousie’s Government, and now in the Council of India, in his Dissent from the despatch of 1864 on the Mysore question, remarks:—“The decision in the Sattara case, whatever its merits may be, undoubtedly caused surprise and alarm throughout the length and breadth of India.”‡

The Duke of Argyll is strangely unwilling to give Lord Dalhousie the full credit of the policy which he defends and upholds.

“It is indeed true that the annexation of the Punjaub proved to be the first§ of a series of annexations. What is not true is precisely that which is most commonly believed, viz., that this was the result of a policy preconceived and deliberately pursued. No policy was, or could be formed, applicable to the very different circumstances which, in these various cases, terminated in a like result.”||

If for “policy,” the Duke of Argyll would substitute the word, “process,” in the last sentence, his statement would be quite correct. The policy was the same throughout; the process was varied according to the different circumstances of each case. We have just seen Sir Charles Jack-

* *Kerowlee Papers*, 1855.

† *Paper, Rajah of Berar*, 1854, p. 43.

‡ *Mysore Papers*, 1866, p. 46.

§ This is a mistake; the annexation of Sattara was the first of the series.

|| *India under Dalhousie and Canning*, p. 4.

son, after assuming that Lord Dalhousie had cleared off all the "dependent" Princes, except Mysore, and satisfying himself that no "independent" Sovereign could have been alarmed at the clearance, observing that "the range of the supposed dread was still more limited, for the doctrine," of lapse, "is inapplicable to those of the Mahomedan faith." Mr. Marshman makes the same observation. It is quite true that the custom of adoption, though recognised in their law, is not a binding duty upon Mahomedans, does not form the essence of their inheritance, does not exclude collaterals, and thus did not offer the convenient handle for Lord Dalhousie's operations among Mussulman, that it did among Hindoo families. But he surely extended "the range of the supposed dread" quite sufficiently by his treatment of the Mussulman King of Oude, the Nizam, Ameer Ali Morad, and the Nawab of the Carnatic. He showed that the doctrine of "lapse" was not the only weapon in his armoury, and that he could vary his process according to circumstances. The policy was avowedly the same in every case; the pretext alone varied.

The policy was "preconceived and deliberately pursued," and is clearly enough announced in Lord Dalhousie's own words, penned within six months of his arrival in India, and quoted by the Duke of Argyll.

"It was in the discussion of the Sattara question that Lord Dalhousie recorded his dissent from the doctrine—apparently implied though not directly asserted by Sir George Clerk—that the maintenance of native Governments in the midst of our own dominions was in itself politic and advantageous:—

"There may be conflict of opinion (he says) as to the advantage or propriety of extending our already vast possessions beyond their present limits. No man can deprecate more than I do any extension of the frontiers of our territory which can be avoided, or which may not become indispensably necessary for considerations of our own safety and of the maintenance of the tranquillity of our own Provinces. But I cannot conceive it possible for any one to dispute the policy of taking advantage of every just opportunity which presents itself for consolidating the territories which already belong to us, by taking possession of States which may lapse in the midst of them; for thus getting rid of those petty intervening Principalities which may be made a means of annoyance, but which can never, I venture to think, be a source of strength; for adding to the resources of the public treasury; and

for extending the uniform application of our system of government to those whose best interests, we sincerely believe, will be promoted thereby.*

"This," the Duke adds, "is *the nearest approach* in any of Lord Dalhousie's writings to the advocacy of 'a policy of annexation.'" In a subsequent part of the Essay he says that this passage was quoted, "as containing *the broadest assertion* of his principle."†

The Duke is quite wrong in supposing this to be either "the nearest approach," or "the broadest assertion," to be found in Lord Dalhousie's writings, though it is near enough and broad enough to prove a deliberate policy of "getting rid of intervening Principalities," and is by no means limited in the manner Mr. Marshman pretends, to those of our own creation. "The nearest approach" and "the broadest assertion" will be found in two short paragraphs (28 and 30) immediately preceding and following that one (29) which the Duke has extracted. Here they are :—

"28. In like manner, while I would not seek to lay down any inflexible rule with respect to adoption, I hold that *on all occasions where heirs natural shall fail, the territory shall be made to lapse,† and adoption should not be permitted*, excepting in those cases in which some strong political reason may render it expedient to depart from *this general rule*.

"30. Such is *the general principle*, that, in my humble opinion, ought to guide the conduct of the British Government in its disposal of independent States, where there has been total failure of all heirs whatsoever, or where permission is asked to continue, by adoption, a succession which fails in the natural line."§

In these two paragraphs Lord Dalhousie advises that the doctrine of "lapse," in default of a lineal male descendant, shall be considered as "*a general principle*," to be applied "*on all occasions*," "*in the disposal of independent States*."

Sir Charles Jackson thinks it unfortunate, that "in one of the most important passages" (of this Minute) "the word 'independent' appears instead of 'dependent,'" and declares

* *India under Dalhousie and Canning*, p. 27.

† *Ibid.*, p. 39.

‡ "*Made to lapse*,"—the quintessence of arbitrary confiscation lies in that phrase.—E. B.

§ *Sattara Papers*, 1849, p. 83. As for the meaning in Lord Dalhousie's mouth of "natural heirs," "the natural line," etc., see *ante* p. 42.

that "the whole argument of the Minute requires that it should be 'dependent.'"^{*} The word "independent" appears in important passages of that paper, not *once* only, but *three times*.[†] In one of these (para. 32) the word could not be altered into "dependent" without destroying the argument, such as it is. The Governor-General argues that "the territories" (of Sattara) "are interposed between the two principal military stations in the Presidency of Bombay; and are at least calculated, in the hands of an *independent Sovereign*, to form an obstacle to safe communication and combined military movement."[‡] The argument is worthless, as was immediately pointed out by General Sir John Littler, one of the Supreme Councillors, but if the proper word, "dependent," had been used, the absurdity of supposing the little subordinate State of Sattara to be a military "obstacle," would have been transparently obvious. "Independent" sounded like something formidable, and, therefore, it suited Lord Dalhousie's rhetorical purpose to employ it. In the other passages of this Minute, and elsewhere, however, he seems to use the word as if it were synonymous with "separate." His phraseology is frequently vague and equivocal.[§]

But Sir Charles Jackson, who believes that "the whole crop" of dependent States, except Mysore, was gathered in by Lord Dalhousie, does "not believe that one independent Sovereign was alarmed" at the harvest. He uses the terms "dependent" and "independent," as loosely and indeterminately as Lord Dalhousie did; and I can only guess that he would designate as "independent," those Hindoo Princes who have the largest territories and revenues. If so, it will be easy to show, firstly, that Scindia and Holkar, the two most important Hindoo Princes out of Rajpootana, were directly threatened by the "doctrine of lapse;" secondly, that they were intensely alarmed by its practical results during Lord Dalhousie's reign.

In his Minute on the Sattara Succession, Mr. (afterwards

^{*} *A Vindication*, p. 33.

[†] Paragraphs 1, 30, and 32, *Sattara Papers*, 1849, pp. 80, 82.

[‡] Paragraph 32, *ibid.*, p. 83.

[§] This requires no alteration, but I must admit that I have found numerous instances scattered through Indian state-papers, in which others, besides Lord Dalhousie, use the word "independent" as if it meant "separate."

Sir) J. P. Willoughby dwells upon "the social evils resulting from adoptions," and especially the bad effects of a long minority,—never giving the least thought to the perfect opportunity thereby afforded for the effectual reform of a Native State by British agency and influence. The following ominous passage occurs here :—

"A more striking exemplification of the evils above referred to is afforded by the dissensions in the family of Dowlut Rao Scindia. On the death of this Chief, his widow, her Highness the Baiza Bae, adopted a son, and continued to exercise regal powers for some years, until at last a struggle for the supremacy occurred between them, terminating in 1833 in the adopted son being proclaimed Sovereign, his mother being obliged to seek an asylum in British territory. This Chief dying on February 7th, 1843, *another adoption was allowed*,* and the political evils resulting therefrom, and a violent collision with the British Government, terminating in war and bloodshed, are of too recent an occurrence to require to be dwelt upon. These are strong facts in support of those who are of opinion that the annoyance by adoptions of sovereign and territorial rights, ought in the present state of India to be discouraged as much as possible, and that all fair lapses should be annexed to the British Empire, when no absolute right will thereby be violated. The existence of so many Sovereignities and Chiefships, interspersed with our own territory, is in many ways inimical to good government, and to the welfare and prosperity of the people ; and if this is admitted, it follows that, on every fair occasion, their number ought to be diminished."†

I commend this decisive and summary avowal of a general policy of annexation to the attention of Mr. Marshman, who has very recently, in reply to strictures on his History, declared once more that the doctrine of "lapse" "referred to the 'subordinate States' of Mysore, created by Lord Wellesley, to Sattara, Nagpore, and Jhansie, which owed their existence or restoration to Lord Hastings, and to Sumbulpore ; and to no others," and that the late Sir John Willoughby was "the great patron of Native Princes," and "one of the most strenuous advocates of their rights."‡ I particularly commend to his attention the fact that in Mr. Willoughby's Minute the great Principality of Gwalior, in the possession of the Scindia family,

* That of the reigning Maharajah, Jyajee Rao Scindia.—E. B.

† *Sattara Papers*, 1849, pp. 70, 71.

‡ Letter in the *Homeward Mail*, February 6th, 1868.

is declared to be one of those Hindoo States in which an adoption must be "allowed" by the British Government, before it becomes valid for a succession; and regret is expressed that an adoption was so "allowed" in 1843. It is recommended that this "annoyance" should be discouraged for the future, and that "all fair lapses should be annexed."

Thus the State of Gwalior, and the dynasty of Scindia, are menaced with extinction on the first favourable opportunity. Mr. Willoughby's Minute was called by Lord Dalhousie "a text-book on adoptions," and Sir Charles Jackson informs us that "he was in the habit of referring to it, when similar questions subsequently arose."*

And other people, there can be no doubt, were in the habit of referring to it. Hear Lord Canning on that point.

"It must not be supposed that because these documents are published in Blue Books and in English, they are beyond the knowledge of Native Courts. They are, on the contrary, sought for and studied by those whose dearest prospects they so closely affect. It is not many months since I was informed, by the Governor-General's Agent in Central India, that a Native Court had received from England the Parliamentary Papers on Dhar before they had reached my own hand."†

In the Sattara, Jhansi, and Nagpore Blue Books, Scindia, Holkar, and other Hindoo Princes, would have found abundance of matter more alarming than anything we have yet quoted. Mr. Willoughby was less cautious in his language than Lord Dalhousie, but the Bengal Civilians in the Supreme Council were more outspoken than either of them. The following extract is from a Minute on the Sattara question by Mr. F. Millett:—

"The intersection of our territories by many native States, interferes with measures of general improvement. I believe it to be for the best interests of the people that *our direct administration should gradually extend itself over the whole country comprised within the bounds of British India.*"‡

And this is the opinion of Mr. J. A. Dorin on the occasion of Nagpore being annexed:—

* *A Vindication*, p. 12.

† Paragraph 7 of the *Adoption Despatch* of April 30th, 1860.

‡ *Sattara Papers*, 1849, p. 85.

"So far as we can foresee the ultimate destiny of this great Empire, its entire possession must infallibly be consolidated in the hands of Great Britain. Thoroughly believing in this dispensation of Providence, I cannot coincide in any view which shall have for its object the maintenance of native rule against the progress of events which throws indisputed power into our possession."*

In addition to the testimony of Sir John Low and Sir Frederick Currie, as to the discontent and alarm among our allies, "throughout the length and breadth of India,"—besides the obvious certainty that the successive "lapses" of Sattara, Jhansi, and Nagpore, the contents of the Blue Books, and the rumours about Rajpootana, must have terrified Scindia, and *à fortiori* his weaker neighbour, Holkar,—we have the positive evidence of Lord Canning, the Governor-General, and of Colonel Macpherson, the Resident at Gwalior in 1857, that Maharajah Scindia, in common with other Hindoo Princes, was in a state of great anxiety on the subject of the succession in his family.

In the well-known *Adoption Despatch*, of the 30th of April, 1860, Lord Canning, after alluding to the "haze of doubt and mistrust in the mind of each Chief as to the policy which the Government will apply to his own State in the event of his leaving no natural heir to the throne," says :—

"It is to this alone that I can attribute the extraordinary satisfaction with which my assurance to Scindia that the Government would see with pleasure his adoption of a successor if lineal heirs should fail, and that it was the desire of the Paramount Power that his House should be perpetuated and flourish, was accepted by those attached to his Court, to the extent that at Gwalior the news was received with rejoicings very like that which would have marked the birth of an heir.

"To the same cause I ascribe the manifest pleasure of the Maharajah of Rewah, when a like assurance was given to him. He said to me that his family had been in Rewah for eleven hundred years, and that my words had dispelled an ill-wind that had long been blowing upon him."

Can any one doubt what that "ill-wind" was? Sir Frederick Currie,† when a member of Lord Dalhousie's

* *Papers, Rajah of Berar*, 1854, p. 38.

† Now a Member of the Secretary of State's Council of India.

Government in 1852, opposed his Lordship's desire of annexing the little Rajpoot Principality of Kerowlee, by refusing to recognise an adoption, which the Governor-General's Agent, a few days before the Rajah's death, had been desired to discountenance,* but which, nevertheless, took place. The adopted son, as usual, was "a distant relative of the late Maharaja, and a lineal descendant from the founder of the Kerowlee Raj."† Had Lord Dalhousie been permitted to begin nibbling at the States of Rajpootana,—had the decree of confiscation gone forth,—feelings of despair and hatred would have been roused, which might have incalculably enhanced our difficulties in 1857. Fortunately Sir John Low and Sir Henry Lawrence were successively Agents to the Governor-General in Rajpootana during the two years of suspense. Their powerful representations gave great weight to Sir Frederick Currie's opposition; and these efforts were supplemented at home by the India Reform Association, recently established and actively at work, under the guidance of Mr. John Dickinson, Mr. Henry Seymour, M.P., and the lamented Mr. J. F. B. Blackett, then M.P. for Newcastle. A threatened motion in the House of Commons turned the scale,‡ and secured a majority of the Court of Directors against the proposed inroad on the ancient States of Rajpootana.

Mr. Kaye justly remarks that "Sir Frederick Currie's Minute on the Kerowlee question is an admirable state-paper—accurate in its facts, clear in its logic, and unexceptionable in its political morality."§ It is all that, and much more. If carefully examined, it will be found to go to the very root of "the doctrine of lapse," and to mark an epoch after which Lord Dalhousie can have no longer remained under any delusion on that subject.

The Kerowlee discussion took place in 1852: it followed the annexation of Sattara, but preceded those of Jhansi and Nagpore. Sir Frederick Currie had left for the time his seat in Council, to act as Resident in the Punjaub, when the Sattara Raj was annexed, and, therefore, took no part in that debate. Considering, as we may presume, the

* *Kerowlee Papers*, 1855, p. 7.

† *Ibid.*, p. 11.

‡ *Quarterly Review*, 1858, p. 269.

§ *History of the Sepoy War*, vol. i, p. 93, (note).

annexation of Sattara to be a settled case, approved and confirmed by the Court of Directors, he touches it somewhat cautiously, but in paragraph 10 of his Minute he implicitly attacks the pretended prerogative by which that measure was justified.

*"I will admit that the general law and custom of India do, usually, require the recognition of the Paramount Power to the adoption of an heir to a dependent or protected Principality; but so do the law and custom require the same recognition to the succession of a natural heir; and I am not prepared to admit that the Supreme Power is more competent to withhold its recognition of the one than of the other."**

The "recognition usually required," in Sir Frederick Currie's opinion, is merely that regulative recognition, "for the purpose of averting dissensions and bloodshed,"† which Sir George Clerk admitted in the Sattara question, and which both of these eminent men declare cannot be withheld. Both of them also pronounce "an adopted heir to stand in exactly the same relation as a natural heir."‡

No one can doubt that Sir Frederick Currie, having said so much in his recorded Minute, must have spoken much more clearly and fully to Lord Dalhousie in verbal consultation. He must have shown the Governor-General the nonentity of the imaginary "law and custom of India," with its pretended list of precedents, upon which the extinction of the Sattara State was founded. He cannot have attacked the supposed law and precedents in any other way than that in which I have attacked them, by denying their existence.§ Their existence is a matter of fact, not of opinion. Challenged to produce those precedents, Lord Dalhousie must have fallen back upon Mr. Willoughby's Minute, the "text-book on adoptions," and it must have been brought home to him that its confident assertions, upon which he had relied,—in good faith, but with culpable carelessness,—were utterly unfounded.

And we find that the Governor-General does not base his proposal to annex Kerowlee on "the ordinary and invariable practice" of the "Sovereign State," as he had done

* *Kerowlee Papers*, 1855, p. 11.

† *Sattara Papers*, 1849, pp. 63, 64.

‡ *Ante*, p. 18.

§ *Ante*, pp. 9 to 20.

in the Sattara case.* He no longer ventures, in the face of Sir Frederick Currie, to cite "the immemorial law and custom of India." Even in a second Minute, written in reply to that of his colleague, he says:—

"After considering the arguments of Sir Frederick Currie, I still think that the right is clear of withholding confirmation, *founded upon the decision of the Honourable Court in 1849.*"†

The conclusion seems hardly avoidable that after the 31st of August, 1852, the date of Sir Frederick Currie's Minute, Lord Dalhousie must have been well aware that "the doctrine of lapse" did not rest on any ordinary practice or immemorial law, but solely on that verdict of the Honourable Court in the Sattara case, which had been drawn forth by his own hasty misdirection. The Kerowlee case fixes the time, after which, if Lord Dalhousie enforced against any Hindoo State the sham prerogative of rejecting an adopted heir, he sinned against knowledge. And he did so. Sir Frederick Currie's opposition terminated by his return to England, and the doctrine of "lapse" was applied to the friendly and faithful States of Jhansi and Nagpore in 1854.

"But," observes Mr. Kaye, referring to the narrow escape of Kerowlee, "it is not to be supposed that because no wrong was done at last, no injury was done by the delay. Public rumour recognises no Secret Department. It was well-known at every native Court, in every native bazar, that the British Government were discussing the policy of annexing or not annexing Kerowlee."

"The Rajpoot Princes lost their confidence in the good faith of the British Government. Kerowlee had been spared, they scarcely knew how; some were fain to attribute it to the well-known justice and liberality of Henry Lawrence. But the same moderation might not be displayed again; there were childless men among them; and from that time a restless uneasy feeling took possession of them, and no man felt sure that his House would not perish with him. It was not strange indeed that a year or two afterwards there should have been in circulation all over the country ominous reports to the effect that the policy of Lord Dalhousie had eventually triumphed, and that the gradual absorption of all the Rajpoot States had been sanctioned by the Home Government."‡

* *Sattara Papers*, 1849, p. 82. † *Kerowlee Papers*, 1855, p. 13.

‡ *The Sepoy War*, vol. i, pp. 96, 97.