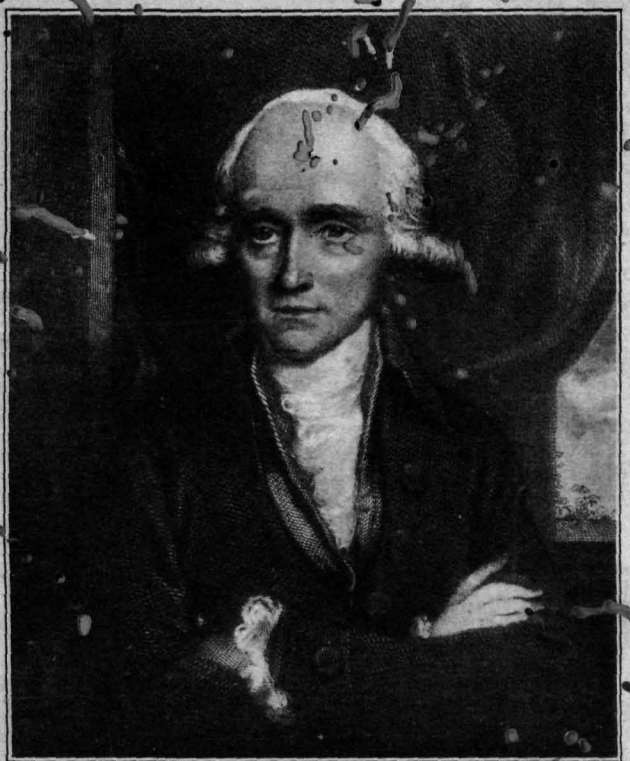

MINIATURE PORTRAIT OF WARREN HASTINGS

By Ozias Humphry. (Considered by his wife the best likeness.)

A VINDICATION OF WARREN HASTINGS

BY

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HENRY FROWDE
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PREFACE

THE simple object of this book is to exhibit as clearly as may be, and therefore without prejudice or passion, in language that may be understood of all, the proofs, contained in three volumes of *State Papers*, edited by Mr. G. E. Forrest, and published by order of the Indian Government, that Warren Hastings, the man who made our Indian Empire and preserved it for the Crown, was wholly innocent of the crimes so often and so grievously laid to his charge.

Some of these proofs have already been given to the public (notably by Sir John Strachey in his admirable volume on the Rohilla War[1]), but in disconnected form, and in some cases imperfectly. A full light has been thrown on the whole history of the case by the labours of Mr Forrest, and there is no excuse now for evading the discussion of any part of the subject.

This book, professedly founded on the volumes above referred to, deals with six principal heads of accusation made by various speakers and writers, and it is confidently submitted that in no single case can a verdict of guilty be maintained, in the face of present knowledge, against the 'Great Accused'. If this be so, it is surely time that the truth should be openly and generously acknowledged, and the injustice of past generations be done away.

[1] *Hastings and the Rohilla War*, by Sir John Strachey, G.C.S.I.

No attempt at personal biography is attempted here. There have been several efforts in that direction, but the results have not been encouraging. They have been rather beacons to warn, than lights to illumine. Gleig's *Memoirs* are valuable, but can hardly be called interesting. It is strange how little he made of a great subject; and judging by his preface he was himself conscious of the failure. He was rudely attacked by Macaulay, though it is demonstrable that as to more than one historical event Gleig was right and his supercilious critic wrong. Yet it is true that if Gleig had written in the days of the *Dunciad* he would inevitably have been enrolled among the minions of the dull goddess.

Sir Alfred Lyall, to whose pages a respectful obligation is here expressed, committed himself, or rather was misled by others, to the grotesque legend that Warren Hastings was the son of a boy of sixteen, mated to a maiden equally immature. It is hoped that the chapter on Daylesford in this book will dispose once for all of an absurdity, for which Gleig, in his *Memoirs*, is primarily responsible. It is much more a subject for regret that Sir Alfred Lyall has treated some of the historical questions in his biography in an unsatisfactory way, not so much by direct condemnation as by leaving them in critical doubt, when such writers as Sir John Strachey and Sir James Stephen do not hesitate as to a decisive acquittal.

Sir Charles Lawson has contrived to import into his somewhat mixed narrative a variety of observations, interesting in their way, which may suggest a doubt whether he saw much of Daylesford, or had any trustworthy information from the Hastings family. He has not retailed the story current among North Oxfordshire peasants that Warren Hastings bought his second wife for her exact weight in gold; but if he had done so, it

would have been quite as true as some of the facts stated. As, for instance, that Simon Hastings was buried in Daylesford church, or that the estate was sold in 1853 to a Mr. Bypass-or, that Sir James Stephen was a Judge at Calcutta. These are only samples. In fact, a demon of error seems to haunt every attempt at a Life of Warren Hastings.

Warned by the fate of others, the author of the present book has preferred to deal with proof rather than with conjecture. Perhaps he knows a little more than some who have written confidently and he believes that the best tribute to the illustrious dead is to preserve a sacred silence on some domestic matters, while vindicating, to the best of a small ability, the public fame of an historic statesman.

It is not without some claim, inherited and personal, that the author ventures to speak. His grandfather was present in Westminster Hall at the Impeachment, heard the speeches of Burke and Sheridan, and described them in his latest years to a listener who remembers still. His father stood in the Sheldonian Theatre at Oxford when Warren Hastings received the degree of D.C.L. at the hands of the University, and lived to refer to that occasion forty years after, when he himself was honoured with a similar compliment. And lastly, the author is one of the very few now living who knew Daylesford House, outside and in, as it had been when Warren Hastings was there, preserved scrupulously in the exact state by Sir Charles and Lady Imhoff, then its custodians, to whose personal kindness, after long lapse of time, he refers with not unemotional regard.

Many changes, since that epoch, have passed over Daylesford. Other times, other men. Save for a simple urn, marked with an immortal name, the place has become,

or is becoming, unhistorical. But that is local only. The fame of Warren Hastings does not moulder with his ashes. It will live while the English tongue endures; and it may be that something has been done herein to clear that fame alike from the inventions of malice and the delusions of error.

NOTICE TO READERS

The References in the Notes are —

State Papers means Selections from the Letters, Dispatches, and other State Papers preserved in the Foreign Department of the Government of India, 1772–85, edited by George W. Forrest, B.A., in Three Volumes

Lyall means *Warren Hastings*, by Sir Alfred Lyall.

Gleig means *Memoirs of Warren Hastings*, by Gleig, in Three Volumes

Stephen means *The Story of Nuncomar*, by Sir James Stephen.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

SOON after the close of the Russo-Japanese war there appeared in one of our newspapers a letter from a young Japanese, speaking of the advantages he had derived from his education in England. He dwelt with discrimination on English literature. Incidentally he mentioned the *Essays* of Macaulay, which he, like thousands of others, had read with delight, and, as he believed, with instruction. Prominently among these literary efforts he praised that on Warren Hastings, which he obviously regarded as a valuable contribution to history. In his view it was not only brilliant and interesting; it was all true. The illustrious Englishman with whom the Essay deals had committed great crimes, and had only escaped conviction because his judges, the Peers of Great Britain, had become weary of his prolonged trial. Could any other conclusion be arrived at by an educated foreigner, reading that Essay without correction or commentary? To a country beyond 'furthest Ind' has this been published the tale, as false as it is humiliating, that our Indian Empire, perhaps the most striking product of British valour and British statesmanship, was founded on oppression and iniquity.

Nor is it less lamentable that in our Colonies, and in that greatest outgrowth of our race, the United States of America, the same slander is perpetuated. Generations

have been, and are being, brought up in the belief that Warren Hastings somehow deserved the obloquy which orators and writers have heaped upon him; or if he did not deserve it all, at least, on the old principle that where there is much smoke there must be some fire, he had earned a good share of it. We hear much of imperialism in the present day, and much also of the friendly relations between Americans and ourselves, but it may be well to consider what sort of imperial honour it is in ourselves, and what sort of international friendship it is in others, which traduces, of suffers to be traduced, the memory of one of the rare and historic men who have built up the world-wide glory of the English-speaking race.

Nor less at home is the evil permitted. There is not a school, whether for boys or for girls, where anything above primary instruction is given, that does not see every year the presentation of Macaulay's *Essays*, that on Warren Hastings conspicuous among them, as prizes to the pupils; who are taught thereby, in their most susceptible years, to think ill of the statesman who preserved India to their country's flag.[1]

It may of course be urged in defence by all concerned that there was no intentional sin in the matter; that they have met with no answer to the statements made in such

[1] As a further illustration of what is said above, an *Elementary History of England*, written by Cyril Ransome, an author of repute, in speaking of Warren Hastings, and praising him for 'his noble defence of British India against Hyder Ali', adds that nevertheless he had been 'guilty of great oppressions'. This charge is evidently made in complete confidence of its truth; but it is absolutely opposed to all the facts of the case. Mr. Ransome had probably read Macaulay's Essay, and nothing else. Certainly he had not read Strachey, or Stephen, and still less the *State Papers* issued by the Indian Government. But with one sweeping accusation he brands the name of Warren Hastings, in every school where his book may be read, with the commission of the worst crime which a ruler can commit; a crime of which he was acquitted, not only by the verdict of the Peers, but by the expressed gratitude of the people whom he is said to have injured.

charming prose by Macaulay; and that, as he praises Warren Hastings for some of his deeds, they naturally supposed that the essayist was right in blaming him for others. In truth the words, 'I wot that through ignorance ye did it,' may be as applicable to his detractors at the present day as they were to some of his opponents more than a hundred years since. The only wonder is that the hollowness of the accusations has not been more generally perceived. There never was a prosecution more unmerited; there never was one which broke down more conspicuously on the facts. But the general reader knows nothing, and thinks nothing, of such questions as these.

There was a formidable list of charges brought up to the Lords against Warren Hastings, and an amazing amount of rhetorical invective, not seldom rising to distortion of fact, was poured out in Westminster Hall. But the extraordinary feature of the Impeachment throughout was the absence of any real proof of guilt. There was abundant assertion, mixed frequently with abuse; evidence in support there was little or none. Let us take an instance and compare the assertion with the facts. Burke told the Lords that the government of Mr. Hastings had reduced the country under his rule to a jungle of wild beasts. Those were his words. Now if that, or anything like it, had been the case, it is certain that testimony could have been brought to prove it. What is quite certain is that no single witness deposed to anything of the kind. The native evidence on the contrary was all in favour of Warren Hastings. Burke had the courage to tell the Lords that this evidence had been extorted, that the hands which had written the testimonials were yet warm with the thumbscrews which had been applied to them. The statement, of which proof was not even pretended, was preposterous. Warren Hastings said well in reply to it before his judges: 'It is very seldom that mankind are grateful enough to do even justice to a fallen minister; and I believe there never was an instance, in the annals of human nature, of

an injured people rising up voluntarily to bear false witness in favour of a distant and persecuted oppressor.' Burke, when he uttered such words, could only have meant that the extortion of testimonials in favour of the accused had been carried out by the Indian Government, for none else would have had the power to do it; but the character of Lord Cornwallis, then Governor-General, one of the most high-minded of men, makes such an insinuation absurd.[1] The nature of these testimonials is worth considering. That from the inhabitants of Benares says: 'He laid the foundations of justice and the pillars of the law. In every shape we, the inhabitants of this country, during the time of his administration, lived in ease and peace. We are therefore greatly satisfied with and thankful to him. As the said Mr. Hastings was long acquainted with the modes of government in these regions, so the inmost purport of his heart was openly and secretly, indeed, bent upon those things which might maintain inviolate our religious persuasions, and guard us in even the minutest respect from misfortune and calamity. In every way he cherished us in honour and credit.'

The Pundits and other Brahmins of Benares also wrote: 'Whenever that man of vast reason, the Governor-General, Mr. Hastings, returned to this place, and people of all ranks were assembled, at that time he gladdened the heart of every one by his behaviour, which consisted of kind

[1] As a fact, when Lord Cornwallis was informed that the natives of India were desirous of bearing testimony to the merits of Warren Hastings, and were requesting permission that the officers of Government might have authority to transmit such testimonials to the Governor-General in Council, he caused a cautious letter to be circulated among all the Collectors and Residents which stated: 'With this request the Governor-General in Council has been pleased to comply, and I have therefore to inform you, that should any such address be tendered to you, you are at liberty to receive and forward it to me. The liberty now accorded is merely to receive and transmit testimonials when voluntarily offered; and you are not to deduce any inference from it that you are authorized to exercise any further interference in this business.'—*State Papers*, Introd., p. xcviii.

wishes and agreeable conversation, expressions of compassion for the distressed, acts of politeness, and a readiness to relieve and protect every one without distinction. To please us dull people, he caused a spacious music gallery to be built, at his own expense, over the gateway of the temple of Veesmaswar, which is esteemed the head jewel of all places of holy visitation. He never at any time, nor on any occasion, either by neglecting to promote the happiness of the people, or by looking with the eye of covetousness, displayed an inclination to distress any individual whatsoever.'

The inhabitants of Murshedabad also bore witness that 'the whole period of Mr. Hastings' residence in this country exhibited his good conduct towards the inhabitants. No oppression nor tyranny was admitted over any one. He observed the rules of respect and attention to ancient families. He did not omit the performances of the duties of politeness and civility towards all men of rank and station when an interview took place with them. In affairs concerning the government and revenues, he was not covetous of other men's money and property; he was not open to bribery. He restricted the farmers and officers in their oppressions in a manner that prevented them from exercising that tyranny which motives of self-interest and private gain might instigate them to observe towards the ryots and helpless. He used great exertions to cultivate the country, to increase the agriculture and the revenues without deceit and with perfect propriety and rectitude. He respected the learned and wise men, and in order for the propagation of learning he built a college, and endowed it with a provision for the maintenance of the students, insomuch that thousands reaping the benefits thereof offer up their prayers for the prosperity of England, and for the success of the Company.'[1]

Mr. Forrest says that quotations of a similar nature from other addresses might be multiplied to any extent.

[1] *State Papers*. Introd., p. xcix.

But he also says that these are not the only evidence of the honour and esteem in which Warren Hastings was held by the natives of India. A Brahmin pilgrim on the banks of the Nerbudda declared that 'he had lived under many different governments and travelled in many countries, but had never witnessed a general diffusion of happiness equal to that of the natives under the mild and equitable administration of Mr. Hastings'. This anecdote is to be found in Forbes', *Oriental Memoirs*, and the author adds: 'I cannot forget the words of this respectable pilgrim; we were near a banian tree in the Durbar court, when he thus concluded his discourse: "as the burr-tree, one of the noblest productions in nature, by extending its branches for the comfort and refreshment of all who seek its shelter, is emblematical of the Deity, so do the virtues of the Governor resemble the burr-tree; he extends his providence to the remotest districts, and stretches out his arms far and wide to afford protection and happiness to his people; such, Sahib, is Mr. Hastings."'

This testimony came from the country which, according to Burke, had been made a jungle of wild beasts. He attempted to discredit the testimony by saying it had been extorted by thumbscrews. But it was corroborated by Englishmen of high position and repute. Lord Cornwallis, in his evidence before the House of Lords, stated that Warren Hastings was much esteemed by the natives; and Sir John Shore (afterwards Lord Teignmouth) 'a man,' said Macaulay, 'of whose integrity, humanity and honour it is impossible to speak too highly,' deposed to the same effect. Let the reader consider this, and say at what value he is disposed to assess the statements made at the Impeachment.

But there is much more to consider. The excuses for attaching any weight to such statements, excuses which may have been plausibly urged at a former time, are sustainable no longer. Evidence, plain and irrefutable, evidence which cannot lie, evidence which it is vain to contradict, impossible

to shake, has come to light by the publication, under the orders of the Indian Government, of the State Papers in the Foreign Department of the Government of India, from 1772 to 1785.

'The object of these volumes,' says Mr. Forrest, 'is to trace, by means of the records deposited in the Foreign Department, the history of our Indian Empire from 1772, the year when Warren Hastings became Governor of Bengal, to February 1, 1785, the day on which he resigned the office of Governor-General. The story of the administration of Warren Hastings—one of the most important periods in the history of our Empire—is told by the letters and narratives, the dissents and discussions of the chief actors. These have been printed letter by letter exactly as they were entered day by day in the Secret Proceedings of the Select Committee of Council. These Proceedings contain, as Sir James Stephen[1] remarks, the most interesting, authentic, and curious collection of State Papers in the world. The government of the Company, as Burke pointed out, was a government of writing, a government of record, and they contrived that every proceeding in public council should be written—no debate merely verbal. By the study of the proposition, the argument, the dissent, the historical student is now enabled to form an independent judgment of events, and still more of the actors and their motives. In the case of Hastings and his administration, the world has not been sufficiently careful to test motives and actions, and has accepted without challenge the verdict of unscrupulous opponents and political partisans. The exaggerated charges of Burke against Hastings have left a stain not only on the character of the man who founded our Empire, but on the nation whose minister he was. To the eloquence of Burke was first due the impression that our Indian

[1] Better known as Sir James FitzJames Stephen, Member of the Legislative Council at Calcutta, and subsequently a Judge of the High Court of Justice in England.

dominion was founded by enormous crimes. This view was strengthened by the history of Mill,[1] whose "excessive dryness and severity of style", to use the words of Sir James Stephen, "produce an impression of accuracy and labour which a study of original authorities does not confirm." Macaulay unfortunately accepted the statements of Mill without examination, and by his matchless style gave them wide circulation. The time has however come when the rash and indiscriminate judgments passed on Hastings and his work should be carefully revised by history, and the present volumes contain all the authentic documents necessary for the purposes of history.'[2]

There are also to be found in these records other matters of deep interest to the English people. Mr. Forrest mentions the dispatches of Sir Eyre Coote and of Sir Edward Hughes, men whose deeds ought to live in the memory of their countrymen, who carried out in stern fight by land and sea the patriotic policy of Warren Hastings. Of hardly less interest is the fierce literary contest between the Governor-General and his bitter opponent, Philip Francis, each a master of the pen, each worthy to rank with our best writers in clearness of expression and vigour of style; though Francis was once compelled to admit, author as he almost certainly had been of the most trenchant letters ever written in our language, that 'there was no contending against the pen of Hastings'.[3] On these points, as on a multitude of others, the three volumes of *State Papers* are a treasure-house of information, personal, historical, and political, and it is on their authority that the ensuing chapters of this book have been written.

It is certainly much to be regretted that Macaulay, splendidly gifted as he was with the faculty of composition, did not take more precautions in the verifying of his authorities. The observation may or may not be applicable

[1] James Mill's *History of India*.

[2] See Preface to *State Papers*, Vol. I.

[3] See Essay.

to many of his historical writings, but it is lamentably true concerning his Essay on Warren Hastings.[1] A very little inquiry when Macaulay held office at Calcutta would have averted many errors. Nor is it unreasonable to suppose that his historical mind, peculiarly sensitive to greatness in character and action, would have delighted to clear the fame of such a man as Warren Hastings from the tales which had been invented by malignity and partisanship. How much he admired 'the illustrious accused' is proved by the letter which he wrote to Jeffery, then Editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, at the time, as we suppose, when he contributed the Essay to its pages. This letter is extant, and speaks of Warren Hastings as one of the greatest, and possibly even the greatest, Englishman of the eighteenth century.

It is also noticeable that there is a curious inconsistency in the tone of the Essay itself. If it were indeed true, as its readers are asked to believe, that Warren Hastings committed great political crimes, that he wilfully handed over an innocent people to destruction, nay more, to atrocities of the worst kind, in order to secure some half million of money for the treasury at Calcutta; that he suborned a prosecution against, and hunted to death, a man who was an inconvenient accuser of himself; that he despoiled two sovereign rulers for no other reason than that his government wanted money, and robbed two helpless ladies for the same object; why, nothing could make any intelligent person doubt that Warren Hastings was both a cruel and a wicked man. Yet while the reader is told all this, he is also asked to believe that Warren Hastings was a great and enlightened ruler, that he effected vast improvements both in legislation and finance, promoting the welfare of those he governed; and that they, whether English or native, owned his beneficence, and repaid him with affection and trust. The description contradicts itself.

[1] Or, it may be added, a more careful reading of the book (Gleig's *Memoirs*) which he was reviewing.

It may safely be asserted that no such man ever lived. If Warren Hastings had been the villain that Francis, Mill, and Burke portrayed in their speeches and writings, in statements which were largely adopted, without inquiry, by Macaulay, the Governor-General could never have been the great statesman in war and peace, the incomparable administrator and legislator, whom the Essayist, in a burst of irrepressible admiration, so eloquently describes.

It would rather seem as if Macaulay, when starting on his Essay, was filled with a prejudice engendered in his mind by hostile writers, and was quite convinced that Warren Hastings ought to be condemned, but that as he went on with his subject the real truth more and more broke in upon him, that he realized the greatness of the man, that he perceived the falsity of the more sordid charges against him, while the immense services rendered to British India dominated an imagination naturally appreciative of high deeds. Nevertheless he could not wholly clear his mind of the original impression, and must needs hark back at the end to declare of Warren Hastings that 'in the two great elements of all social virtue, in respect for the rights of others, and in sympathy for the sufferings of others, he was deficient. His principles were somewhat lax. His heart was somewhat hard.' Yet the Essay closes with a few lines of noble eulogy, expressed with rare taste.

Now there is one period in the public life of Warren Hastings which is little known even to many students, but which throws a clear light on his character and habit of thought. There is no record of it in the volumes which supply the chief material for these pages, but it may be fitting to allude to it here. We mean the short period during which he served as a Member of Council at Calcutta before his first return to England. He seems to have been appointed on the Council in recognition of the valuable services he had rendered at Patna as agent for the Company to the then Nawab, the governing prince of Bengal. Every

mention made of his conduct is in his favour, for every mention of it shows that his hands were clean in a time of exceptional corruption, and that his efforts were always directed to protect the natives from oppression, and to check abuses. In Sir Alfred Lyall's narrative of this period there is much to command attention. He tells how Warren Hastings was dispatched anew to Patna to inquire into the violent disputes that had arisen between the native government and the English factories; and speaks of the fairness of his reports, which gave an impartial account of the misconduct on both sides, showing that the Nawab's discontent and the country's troubles were largely attributable to the high-handed rapacity of persons trading or plundering under the Company's flag or uniform. In a letter which he wrote to the Governor in 1762 he protested vigorously against the abuses that he found prevailing: 'I beg leave to lay before you a grievance which calls loudly for redress. I mean the oppressions committed under sanction of the English name, and through want of spirit in the nabob's subjects to oppose them. This evil, I am well assured, is not confined to our dependants alone, but is practised all over the country by people assuming the habits of our sepoys and calling themselves gomastahs.[1] As on such occasions the great power of the English intimidates the people from resistance, so, on the other hand, the indolence of the Bengalee, or the difficulty of gaining access to those who can do them justice, prevents our having knowledge of the oppressions, and encourages their continuance, to the great, though unmerited, scandal of our government.'[2]

At that time, however, it was impossible to obtain any amendment. The Governor (Vansittart) and Warren Hastings, between them, settled with the Nawab a scheme for ending these malpractices and placing the whole inland trade upon an equal footing; but this roused a furious opposition from the majority of the Council, who passed

[1] Agents. [2] Lyall, p. 15.

resolutions upholding their factories in resistance to the Nawab's revenue officers. Warren Hastings steadily supported the Governor in opposing these resolutions; and on one occasion he voted alone against them, contending with all his strength for honest dealing and free trade. He said: 'As I have formerly lived among the country people in a very inferior station, and at a time when we were subject to the most slavish dependence on the government, and have met with the greatest indulgence, and even respect, from zemindars and officers of government, I can with the greater confidence deny the justice of this opinion; and add further, from repeated experience, that if our people, instead of erecting themselves into lords and oppressors of the country, confine themselves to an honest and fair trade, they will be everywhere courted and respected.'[1]

Commenting on his conduct at this period, which came in the earlier years of his life, Sir Alfred Lyall says: 'It must be allowed that Warren Hastings had passed with credit and integrity through the most discreditable and corrupt period in the annals of the East India Company. In the midst of a general scramble for money he never stooped to gains that were sordid or dishonest; and at a time when most of the English were either intoxicated by power or infuriated by misfortune—demoralized by the cruelty and treachery which they saw around them—Hastings preserved, so far as can be known from contemporary record, a character for equity and moderation.'[2]

Does his conduct, then, at thirty years of age, when he was first raised to the higher duties of civil administration, show a want of respect for the rights of others, or of sympathy for the sufferings of others? Was he not, junior as he must then have been to all his colleagues on the Council, foremost in defending the oppressed, zealous in denouncing abuses and in maintaining the rights of the native population? Was this the character of a man likely to turn oppressor when raised to higher office?

[1] Lyall, p. 17.

[2] Ibid., p. 19.

Nor can it be forbidden to add that the charge of want of sympathy with the suffering is strangely opposed to the witness of those who had the best opportunities of judging. The earnest testimony borne to the habitual kindness shown by Warren Hastings to all sufferers, as uttered more than sixty years ago by Lady Imhoff, then resident with her husband[1] at Daylesford, can never be forgotten by the writer. It was a sympathy, that gracious lady said, which extended to every living thing, and was remarkable in its tenderness.

A curious anecdote, corroborative of this testimony, is to be found in a book published two or three years after the death of Warren Hastings.[2] It narrates how a guest, at a country-house where Warren Hastings was also visiting, saw him one morning walking in the grounds, and observed that at a particular spot he seemed to have a difficulty in proceeding. He at last seemed to get on by standing on one foot, and taking pains to skip to the place where he planted the other. This manœuvre was executed more than once. The observer felt some curiosity as to what had happened, and shortly after Warren Hastings had passed he made his way to the spot, and found that a colony of ants had there been crossing the path. It was evident from the footmarks that Warren Hastings had taken the utmost pains to avoid setting foot on any of the ants and had succeeded in his purpose.

'Is it possible to suppose,' said the narrator, 'that a man so scrupulously careful of the lives of some insects could have been the tyrant and oppressor he has been described to the people placed under his rule?'

In considering the official career of Warren Hastings, and especially in making any estimate of its success, it should always be remembered that his position as Governor-General was very different from that of his successors. He

[1] General Sir Charles Imhoff, stepson of Warren Hastings.

[2] Chambers' *Biographical Illustrations of Worcestershire*, 1821,

was not master in his own Council. He was constantly thwarted in his policy. Some of his highest designs were blasted in their birth. As he wrote, when reviewing his past administration. 'If the same act of the legislature which confirmed me in my station of President over the Company's settlements in Bengal had invested me with a control as extensive as the new denomination I received by it indicated; if it had compelled the assistance of my associates in power instead of giving me opponents; if, instead of creating new expectations, which were to be accomplished by my dismission from office, it had imposed silence on the interested clamours of faction, and taught the servants of the Company to place their dependence upon me, where it constitutionally rested; if, when it transferred the real control over the Company's affairs from the Direction to the Ministers, instead of extending, it had limited the claims of patronage, which every man possessing influence himself, or connected with those who possessed it, thought he had a right to exert; and if it had made my continuance in office to depend on the rectitude of my intentions and the vigour with which they were exerted, instead of annexing it to a compliance with those claims—I should have had little occasion at this period to claim the public indulgence for an avowal of duties undischarged But the reverse took place in every instance'[1]

One great design of his which remained unfulfilled was that of obtaining, by diplomatic arrangement with the Emperor, a paramount and immediate influence at the Court of Delhi, and thus using the ancient suzerain power in Hindustan to bind together all Indian rulers in pacific unity. His effort for this salutary end, fully worked out and prepared for by secret negotiation, was defeated by the refusal of the Council's consent.[2]

The mental distress caused to the Governor-General by

[1] Lyall, p. 55.

[2] See Gleig, Vol. III, p. 193; *State Papers*, Introd., p. xcv.

factious opposition to his policy may be seen in a letter which he wrote to Lord North, then Prime Minister: 'I now most earnestly entreat that your Lordship—for on you, I presume, it finally rests—will free me from the state I am in, either by my immediate recall, or by the confirmation of the trust and authority of which you have hitherto thought me deserving, on such a footing as shall enable me to fulfil your expectations, and to discharge the debt which I owe to your Lordship, to my country, and my Sovereign. The meanest drudge, who owes his daily subsistence to daily labour, enjoys a condition of happiness compared to mine, while I am doomed to share the responsibility of measures which I disapprove, and to be idle spectator of the ruin which I cannot avert.'[1]

Yet he did much to carry out his plan of uniting the different States of India in a peaceful relationship to English rule; and when he concluded a friendly treaty with Scindia (the first and most statesmanlike of Mahratta Chiefs), and through him with the Mahratta Confederacy, he was able to inform the Board: 'It is in some degree foreign to the present subject, yet I cannot refrain from imparting to you the pleasing satisfaction which I myself feel in observing the great and evident change that has within these few years taken place with regard to our Government in the opinions and dispositions of the principal powers of Hindustan. We seem now to have regained our proper weight in the political system, and the neighbouring States, who formerly shrunk from our advances, are eager to participate in our views, and to connect their interests with ours.'[2]

'The great change,' says Mr. Forrest, 'that had taken place, was due to the courage and statesmanship of Hastings. Menaced by foes on all sides, ill-supported by his masters, surrounded by colleagues who thwarted, embarrassed, and intrigued against him, he contrived by his individual energies to raise the Company from being a body of merchants and adventurers into the most powerful State in the politics of

[1] Lyall, p. 72. [2] *State Papers*, Vol. III, p. 105.

India. Englishmen have grown so accustomed to being the masters of India that they have not sufficiently realized the difficulty of Hastings' task, or the genius of the man whose far-sight first saw and whose brave and confident patience realized this romantic idea of his country's greatness.'[1]

But at the end, after his resignation of office, Warren Hastings wrote his final lament over what might have been had adequate powers been given to his hand. There is both pathos and dignity in his words. 'Yet may I feel a regret to see that hope which I had too fondly indulged, and which I had sustained during thirteen laboured years with a perseverance against a succession of difficulties which might have overcome the constancy of an abler mind, of being in some period of time, however remote, allowed to possess and exercise the full powers of my station, of which I had hitherto held little more than the name and responsibility; and to see with it, which I had as fondly indulged, that I should become the instrument of raising the British name, and the substantial worth of its possessions in India, to a degree of prosperity proportioned to such a trust, both vanish in an instant, like the illusions of a dream; with the poor and only consolation left me of the conscious knowledge of what I could have effected, had my destiny ordained that I should attain the situation to which I aspired, and that I have left no allowable means untried, by which I might have attained it.'[2]

It is hardly possible, when reading these words, not to reflect how much more peaceful, how much happier, the history of our Indian dominion might have been if Parliament had granted to Warren Hastings full powers to act for his country. But it was an evil time with English politics. In the West thirteen loyal colonies had been driven into revolt by the folly and incompetence of Ministers. In the East the nascent greatness of a new empire was looked upon by two unscrupulous factions chiefly as a promising provision for their followers at home.

[1] *State Papers*, Introd., p. xc [2] Ibid., p. xcviii.

This book is avowedly occupied with a vindication of Warren Hastings from the charges so unsparingly brought against him; but it may be thought no more than just if some public services of his, less contentiously treated, are brought under notice. 'It was,' says Mr. Forrest, 'his capacious mind that first conceived the plan of opening friendly commercial intercourse between the people over whom he ruled and the natives of the tableland behind the snowy peaks to the north.'[1] It is instructive to observe how superior were his views, on this as on other matters of state, to those of the acrimonious triumvirate in the Council who did everything in their power to defeat his policy. It was as early as the spring of 1774 that, after a correspondence with the rulers of Thibet and Bhutan, Warren Hastings, as Governor of the Bengal Presidency, dispatched the first British Mission to Thibet, under the care of Mr. George Bogle. It was a pacific expedition, undertaken for commercial purposes, and unaccompanied by any military display. The envoy was successful in obtaining an interview with the Teshoo Lama, and on February 24, 1775, the Governor-General (as he had then become) laid before the Board a letter from Mr. Bogle, informing them of his interview with the Lama, and enclosing an interesting memorandum on the trade of Thibet.[2] He states therein that the trade of the country is 'very considerable'. He writes that the principal articles of merchandise between Bengal and Thibet are 'broadcloth, atter, skins, indigo, pearls, coral, amber, and other beads, chank, spices, tobacco, sugar, Malda striped satins and a few white cloths, chiefly coarse, the return being made in gold dust, musk, and cowtails.'

He also says: 'The trading pilgrims of India resort hither in great numbers. Their humble deportment and holy character, heightened by the merit of distant pilgrimages, their accounts of unknown countries and remote regions, and, above all, their professions of high

[1] *State Papers*, Introd., p xcvi. [2] Ibid., Vol. I, p. 251.

veneration for the Lamas, procure them not only a ready admittance, but great favour; though clad in the garb of poverty, there are many of them possessed of considerable wealth; their trade is confined chiefly to articles of great value and small bulk. It is carried on without noise or ostentation, and often by paths unfrequented by other merchants. The Calmacks, who with their wives and families annually repair in numerous tribes to pay their devotions at the Lamas' shrines, bring their camels loaded with fur and other Siberian goods.' . . .

In his letter to the Governor-General Mr. Bogle says of the Teshoo Lama: 'His character and abilities, his having discovered and placed the present Dalai Lama in the chair at Potalo, his being favoured by the Emperor of China, and his having obtained from him the appointment of the present Chief, give him great influence. The seat of government is, however, at Lahassa. The Emperor of China is paramount sovereign, and is represented by the Chinese officers, who are changed every three years. Teesho Lama has a number of villages and monasteries belonging to him, which are scattered over Thibet, and intermixed with those of the Dalai Lama.'[1]

So far, this interesting Mission promised to have good results, but when Bogle returned from Thibet he found Clavering, Monson, and Francis[2] in power, bent on thwarting every project of the Governor-General, and prejudiced against all persons whom he had employed. Bogle was superseded in his former employment, and it was only with difficulty that Warren Hastings obtained for him a moderate remuneration for his remarkable services. Of course, the effort to open up commercial intercourse to the north of the Himalayas was set aside at once.

But when the opportune death of Monson restored to the Governor-General the control of his Council he resumed

[1] *State Papers*, Vol. II, p. 254.

[2] The three new Members of Council, appointed by the Crown under the Regulating Act.

his former project, and in April, 1779, George Bogle was commissioned to proceed again to Bhutan and Thibet 'for the purpose of cultivating and improving the good understanding subsisting between the Chiefs of those countries and the Government, and to endeavour to establish a free and lasting intercourse of trade with the kingdom of Thibet and the other States to the northward of Bengal.'[1] The Lama, whose respect and confidence Bogle had won, was then on a visit to Pekin, and he desired Bogle to go round by sea to Canton, promising to obtain the Emperor's pass for him to proceed and join him in the capital. But unhappily, the death of both the Lama and Bogle caused the intention of sending a mission to be for a time abandoned.

Subsequently, when Warren Hastings received letters from Thibet informing him that the soul of the late Lama had entered and animated the body of an infant, he proposed to send a second deputation to that country. The Board consented, and Mr. Charles Turner was appointed to proceed on the mission. When Warren Hastings was on his journey to Lucknow, he met Turner returning from Thibet, who handed to him a report on the results of his mission and also a narrative of his interview with the young Lama.

This narrative is so curious and interesting that some extracts from it may be acceptable: 'On December 3, 1783, I arrived at Terpaling, situated on the summit of a high hill, and it was about noon when I entered the gates of the monastery which was not long since erected for the reception and education of Teesho Lama. He resides in a palace in the centre of the monastery, which occupies about a mile of ground in circumference, and the whole is encompassed by a wall. On the 4th, in the morning, I was allowed to visit Teesho Lama, and found him placed in great form upon his musnud. On the left side stood his father and mother, on the other the officer particularly appointed to wait upon his person. The musnud is a fabric of silk cushions piled one upon the

[1] *State Papers*, Introd., p. xcvi.

other until the seat is elevated to the height of four feet from the floor; embroidered silk covered the top, and the sides were decorated with pieces of silk of various colours suspended from the upper edge and hanging down. I advanced and, as is the custom, presented the white Pelong handkerchief, and delivered also into the Lama's hands the Governor's present of a string of pearls and coral, while the other things were set down before him. Having performed the ceremony of the exchange of handkerchiefs with his father and mother, we took our seats on the right of Teesho Lama. During the time we were in the room I observed the Lama's eyes were scarce ever turned away from us, and when our cups were empty of tea he appeared uneasy, and throwing back his head and contracting the skin of his brow he kept making a noise, for he could not speak, until they were filled again. He took out of a golden cup containing confects some burnt sugar, and stretching out his arm made a motion to his attendant to give them to me.

'I found myself, though visiting an infant, under the necessity of saying something, for it was intimated to me that, notwithstanding he is unable to reply, it is not to be inferred he cannot understand. I briefly said that the Governor-General, on receiving news of his decease in China, was overwhelmed with grief and sorrow, and continued to lament his absence from the world until the cloud that had overcast the happiness of this nation, by his re-appearance was dispelled, and then, if possible, a greater degree of joy had taken place than he had experienced of grief on receiving the first mournful news. The Governor wished he might long continue to illumine the world with his presence, and was hopeful that the friendship which had formerly subsisted between them would not be diminished, but rather that it might become still greater than before. The little creature turned, looking steadfastly towards me, with the appearance of much attention while I spoke, and nodded with repeated but slow

movements of the head as though he understood and approved every word, but could not utter a reply. The parents who stood by all the time eyed their son with a look of affection, and a smile expressive of heartfelt joy at the propriety of the young Lama's conduct. His whole regard was turned to us, he was silent and sedate, never once looking towards his parents, as if under their influence at the time, and with whatever pains his manners may have been formed so correct, I must own his behaviour on this occasion appeared perfectly natural and spontaneous, and not directed by any action or sign of authority.

'Teesho Lama is at this time about eighteen months of age. He did not speak a word, but made most expressive signs, and conducted himself with astonishing dignity and decorum. His complexion is of that hue which in England we should term rather brown, but not without colour. His features good, small black eyes, an animated expression of countenance, and altogether I thought him one of the handsomest children I had ever seen. On the following morning I again waited on him to present some curiosities I had brought for him from Bengal. He was very much struck with a small clock, and had it held to him, watching for a long time the revolution of the minute hand. He admired it, but with gravity, and without any childish emotion.

'According to appointment I went in the afternoon to make my last visit to the Teesho Lama. I received his dispatches for the Governor-General, and from his parents two pieces of satin for the Governor with many compliments. They presented me with a vest lined with lamb-skins, making me many assurances of a long remembrance, and observing that at this time Teesho Lama is an infant and incapable of conversing, but they hoped to see me again when he shall have become of age. I replied that by favour of the Lama I might again visit this country.'

[1] *State Papers*, Vol. III, p. 1079.

That might probably have happened if Warren Hastings had remained at Calcutta, but the time soon arrived for him to leave, and with his departure all interest in the policy of opening up commercial intercourse between India and the Trans-Himalayan regions seems to have been abandoned. Mr. Forrest says that the very history of the Hastings negotiations was forgotten, and most of the valuable records of the Thibet and Bhutan missions have been lost.[1] It is only a few years since that a military expedition to Lhassa once more opened Thibet to European eyes; but it may perhaps be doubted whether the prospects of any extended trade have been improved by an armed intervention.

The great merit of Warren Hastings' effort, which was entirely his own, lay in its pacific and unostentatious nature. It roused no fears and offended no susceptibilities. It sprang from his inquiring mind, and was characteristic of his constant policy, that of spreading British influence through the East by diplomacy rather than by war.

The missions of Bogle and Turner were not the only expeditions of discovery organized by the Governor-General.[2] He caused the harbours and rivers of Cochin China to be surveyed, and directed the explorer to penetrate as far as he could into the interior. He also had the shores of the Red Sea examined, with the view of opening, by that line, a more direct and rapid communication between England and India. In the chapter on Daylesford there is given an anecdote showing his perception of the vital importance of the Persian Gulf as a political position. In truth, nothing is more striking in Warren Hastings than his rare gift of prescience.[3] He seemed to look into the future and to divine its fruits.

[1] *State Papers*, Introd., p. xcvii.

[2] See *State Papers*, Introd., Vol. I, p. xcvii.

[3] A striking example of this prescience is to be found in his perception of the danger that might arise from a growth of the Sikh power. In 1784 he wrote to the Council: 'A new source of serious

He had probably a faculty for acquiring languages. As a boy at Westminster School he showed a marked proficiency in the classical tongues, which he did not altogether lose during his strenuous public life, as his imitation of one of Horace's *Odes*, written during his voyage home, sufficiently proves. In the East he acquired an intimate knowledge both of Persian and Arabic literature, and a conversational acquaintance with Hindustani which stood him in good stead on more than one critical occasion, and undoubtedly increased his influence with the natives. In one of his minutes concerning his negotiation with Sujah-ul-Dowla at Benares, he mentioned the advantage he had felt from conversing with the Vizier of Oude in his own tongue. He was not personally acquainted with Sanscrit, but he fully estimated the literary and philological importance of that ancient language, he encouraged its study, and extended his aid and protection to its native professors. The Hindu Pundits were conciliated by his just rule, which secured to them their immemorial laws and usages; while the adherents of the faith of Islam were equally complimented by his foundation of a Mahomedan College at Calcutta. The Asiatic Society remains another

contemplation has arisen from a nearer quarter, namely, that of the Sikhs, a people who, from a mean sect of religious schismatics, have rapidly grown into the members of a dominion extending from the most western branch of the Attock to the walls of Delhi. They are by their bodily frame and habits of life eminently suited to the military profession, but this propensity is qualified by a spirit of independence which is a great check to its exertion. Every village has its separate and distinct ruler, acknowledging no control but that of the people of his own immediate community, who in their turn yield him little more than nominal submission.' He thought, however, that the rise of some man of superior capacity might weld them into a nation. He looked 'to time, and that not far distant, for verifying my prediction, if this people shall be permitted to grow into maturity without interruption'. Time and Runjeet Sing verified this prediction: the Sikhs were consolidated into a nation, and we had, more than sixty years since, a desperate struggle to hold our own against them. *State Papers*, Introd., p. xcv.

splendid monument of his zeal for the advancement of Oriental learning. Macaulay, who does Warren Hastings justice for these things, observes, however, that he did nothing to give to the Bengalees a knowledge of English literature. That is true; he may have thought it wiser to train them in their own languages and philosophies than to give them an alien graft of Western thought. It is possible that the experience of the present day may serve to justify that conclusion.[1]

[1] These words were written before Lord Morley of Blackburn, Secretary of State for India, spoke at the Indian Civil Service Club on June 11, 1908, when he referred to the prophecy made by Macaulay in 1836: 'It is my firm belief that if our plans of education are followed up, there will not be an idolator among the respectable classes in Bengal thirty years hence. And this will be effected merely by the natural operation of knowledge and reflection.' The observation of Lord Morley was: 'Ah, gentlemen, the natural operation of knowledge and reflection carries men of a different structure of mind, of different beliefs, of different habits and customs of life—it carries them into strange and unexpected paths.'

Was Warren Hastings wrong when he limited his educational efforts to the improvement of the natives of Bengal in their own language, philosophies, and beliefs?

CHAPTER II

THE ROHILLA WAR

THE Rohilla War was the earliest subject of accusation against Warren Hastings. The circumstances that led to the war originated not long after his assumption of the Governorship of Bengal, and it actually took place shortly before Francis, Clavering, and Monson landed at Calcutta as new members of the Council, prepared to range themselves at once against him. He was fiercely denounced for having destroyed an independent nation, and that for sordid, pecuniary ends. The Rohillas were described as an industrious, peaceful people who had been cruelly driven from their country of Rohilcund. The baselessness of this charge is best exhibited by a plain statement of the facts, which will be found, supported by authorities, in the following pages. But it is also desired, as a necessary prelude, to make a few remarks on the political condition of India at the time when Warren Hastings became Governor of Bengal.

The Delhi Emperor, representative of the great line of Timour, Lords of Hindustan, had fallen into such a helpless state, that he had to leave his throne at Delhi, and Clive had assigned to him the districts of Korah and Allahabad (situated south-west of Oude) to afford him the means of sustenance. The whole country was in a state of disorganization; what government there was existed only in scattered principalities and chiefships, usually under Mahomedan rulers; while Hindu races, such as Sikhs and Mahrattas, continually threatened their neighbours with invasion and plunder. The Mahrattas especially, whose capital was

Poonah, were at every convenient season pushing up to the north to aggrandize their territory and were a standing terror to the inhabitants of the north-east. They had been defeated at the great battle of Paniput, when Ahmed Shah, an Afghan commander, had united and led the Mahomedan forces, and for a time the Mahrattas had been decisively driven back. But Ahmed Shah was now no more, the Mahrattas had returned, and the Emperor had weakly yielded to them Korah and Allahabad as the price for their replacing him on the throne at Delhi. To this arrangement, which brought the Mahrattas in perilous contiguity to the provinces of Behar and Bengal, of which (together with Orissa) Clive had obtained a grant from the Emperor, Warren Hastings, on behalf of the Government at Calcutta, refused to submit. He moved a military force northwards to Allahabad, and occupied that district and Korah. The occupation was memorable, being the first advance which the Company made beyond their recognized territory.

This state of things is the key to the story of the Rohilla War.[1] Macaulay's hasty and superficial conception was that the war was a device on the part of Warren Hastings to raise money. It was in reality, divested of personal incidents, the outcome of a far-reaching policy, designed to meet the grave and persistent dangers of that disturbed time. As Sir Alfred Lyall clearly puts it. 'It was the policy of the English, when Warren Hastings took charge of the Bengal Presidency, to maintain and strengthen the group of Mahomedan chiefships along their border, as a barrier against invasion from beyond, and especially against the depredations of the restless, treacherous, and far-roving Mahratta hordes. The most considerable among these potentates, whose possessions, by their extent and situation, could best serve our purposes, was undoubtedly

[1] Sir John Strachey's exhaustive treatment of the subject completely bears out this opinion.

the Vizier of Oude.'[1] It was because the Vizier occupied this position that the Bengal Government lent him disciplined troops, the expense of which he gladly undertook to defray; it was for this that they entered into treaty arrangements with him for mutual defence; and it was for this that Warren Hastings felt himself, it cannot be said willing, for he was most reluctant, but compelled by policy, to assist, as against the shifty Rohillas, the one ally who could furnish a barrier sufficiently strong to check the ever-present danger on the north-west.

It must also be remembered that the territory of Rohilcund is situated to the north of Oude, and that its destinies were inevitably bound up with that province. 'It lies,' said Warren Hastings, 'open to the south. It is bounded on the west by the Ganges and on the north and east by the mountains of Tartary. It is to the province of Oude, in respect both to geographical and political relation, exactly what Scotland was to England before the reign of Queen Elizabeth.'[2] And, in a Minute to the Secret Committee of the Council, he pointed out the real position of the Rohillas: 'They are not the people of the country, but a military tribe who conquered it, and quartered themselves upon the people without following any profession but that of arms, or mixing in any relation with the native inhabitants.' Those inhabitants were Hindu cultivators of the soil, rooted thereon for centuries. The Rohillas were Afghan soldiers of fortune, who had not been settled there more than sixty years.

This Rohilla country, which was then known as Kather, had been subjected in 1290 to the Mogul rule. In 1673 two Afghan adventurers, Shah Alum and Hussein Khan, settled there for a time, it is believed in some inferior offices under the Mogul. When they left, a slave of Hussein, one Daud Khan, was permitted to remain, and he gathered round him a band of Afghan followers. He obtained the grant of a district from the Emperor, and then betrayed him

[1] Lyall, p. 32. [2] Gleig, Vol. I, p. 358.

by taking service with a rebel Rajah, by whom Daud was afterwards put to death. Daud had an adopted son, of the Jat caste, whom he made a Mussulman and named Ali Muhammed.[1] Boy as he was at the time of his (adoptive) father's death, Ali Muhammed took possession of the estates and placed himself at the head of the troops. In the confusion into which the Empire had fallen at this time he established his dominion over the whole of Kather, which then took the name of Rohilcund. On his death he committed the care of his son to Hafiz Rahmat Khan, the son of Shah Alum, who swore on the Koran to be faithful to his trust. This oath he broke, sacrificed the interests of Ali's family, and made himself the head of the Rohilla confederacy.

He was sufficiently formidable to find his aid invoked by the Vizier of Oude, Sujah-ul-Dowla, on the occasion of his contest with the English, and Rahmat's son was present, with 6,000 Rohillas, at the battle of Patna, and again at Buxar, where he shared the defeat of the Vizier. Six years after this the Mahrattas invaded Rohilcund, plundering and destroying all before them; and the Rohilla chiefs had to retire into the Terai, a strip of wild country which runs at the bottom of the Himalayas, where they entrenched themselves for several months. The Vizier, fearing an invasion of Oude by the Mahratta marauders, obtained the assistance of Sir Robert Barker, Commander-in-Chief in Bengal, and advanced with his own forces and some English troops to the border. Negotiations were opened with the Rohilla troops, and Hafiz Rahmat on their behalf visited the Vizier's camp, and entered into a treaty which was sworn to in the presence of the English commander and countersigned by him. The agreement arrived at was simple and explicit; the Vizier undertook to rid Rohilcund of the Mahrattas 'either by peace or war', and the Rohillas

[1] There are different opinions on this point; but the account given above seems the most probable.

undertook to pay him in return forty lacs of rupees. The Mahrattas then withdrew.

In the autumn of this year (1773) the Mahrattas again advanced to invade Rohilcund. It had been made manifest by the events just narrated that the Rohillas could not defend it; the Vizier was well aware that the real objective of the marauders was his own territory, and he obtained the aid of an English brigade for its defence. This brigade, with the Oude troops, surprised the Mahrattas just as they were crossing the Ganges and drove them back. The English commander in his turn crossed the river, and pursued for some distance, but fruitlessly. When he returned he found Rahmat Khan in the camp of the Vizier. Rahmat had been secretly negotiating with the Mahrattas, offering them a sum of money if they would assist him to evade payment of the forty lacs he had agreed on; but finding that his treachery had failed, he joined Sujah-ul-Dowla, and Rohilcund was cleared of its invaders.

The Vizier now demanded payment of the forty lacs. The Rohillas shuffled and procrastinated; as a fact they never paid a single rupee. It was then that Sujah-ul-Dowla resolved, in retribution, to take possession of their country. This was the proximate cause of the war for which so much blame was ignorantly showered on the Governor.

The above is a short narrative of the Rohilla business up to the time when Warren Hastings actively intervened therein. The Vizier had already moved in it; Sir Robert Barker was anxious to second him; but hitherto the question had been confined to discussion among the members of the Government, and Warren Hastings had shown himself averse to action.

It was on June 24, 1773, that the Governor, with the concurrence of his Council, left Calcutta for Benares, where it was arranged that he should have an interview with the Vizier of Oude. It was well understood that the negotiations to be carried on were of high importance, and three other members of the Government had been delegated to

accompany and advise their chief. The treaty then arrived at did not directly affect the Rohillas, but as it arose out of the disturbing circumstances in which the Empire was then involved it bore in effect on the destinies of those unstable adventurers, and may therefore be conveniently mentioned here.

The Delhi Emperor, as already stated, had thought fit to hand over the provinces of Korah and Allahabad, which he had received from Clive, to the Mahrattas as the price for replacing him on the throne at Delhi; and he was now a mere tool in their hands, actually heading one of their expeditions for the plunder of Rohilcund. This conduct of his was the more dangerous because it had been carried out in the teeth of remonstrance and advice from Calcutta. The Governor saw that the presence of marauding hordes at our gate was a grave and menacing danger.[1] It was intolerable that they should be supported by funds supplied from Bengal. Peace and prosperity in our own territory were impossible under such circumstances. He acted with promptitude and courage. He determined to pay no more tribute to a sovereign who was incapable of affording protection to our frontier, and whose intrigues threatened the tranquillity of all India. His reasons for taking this step were well expressed in the Report of his proceedings at Benares.[2] Speaking of the Emperor he says: 'Whatever policy suggested the first idea of the tribute, and whatever title he may be conceived to have had to the payment of it while he remained under our protection and united his fortune with ours, his late conduct has forfeited every claim to it, and made it even dangerous to allow it, even if the resources of Bengal and the exigencies of the Company would any longer admit of it. Our conduct to him has certainly afforded matter of admiration to the whole people of Hindoostan, whether they construe it as the effect of a mistaken principle of duty, the just return

[1] *State Papers*, Introd., p. xii. [2] Ibid., Vol. I, p. 51.

of benefits received, or attribute it to some hidden cause. We have persevered with a fidelity unknown to them in an unshaken alliance to a pageant of our own creation, and lavished on him the wealth of this country, which is its blood, although not one of his own natural subjects has ever afforded him the least pledge of voluntary obedience, although our constituents have been compelled to withhold the legal claims of our own sovereign, although we have loaded them with an accumulated debt of a crore and a half of rupees, almost the exact amount of the sums remitted for the use of a man who in return has ungratefully deserted and has since headed armies against us. It is unjust to argue, in support of his pretensions on the Company, that the tribute is no more than a reasonable acknowledgement for the favour which they received from him in the grant of the Dewannee. They gave him all. They received nothing from him but a presumptuous gift of what was not his to give, but what they had already acquired by their own power, the same power to which he was indebted for his crown, and even for his existence.'

Warren Hastings also determined to restore the provinces of Korah and Allahabad to the Vizier of Oude. He said in the same Report relating to his negotiations with Sujah-ul-Dowla: 'Had we restored these districts to the King, who so lately abandoned them, and who is confessedly unable by his own strength to maintain them, we should still have been burdened with the care of their defence, or we should have given them only nominally to the King, but in reality to the Mahrattas, the evil consequences of which it is needless to enumerate.' The danger from the Mahrattas was evident enough. They had already once made an alliance with the Rohillas, and other intrigues were known to be on foot. The one object with the Governor was to make the relations between the Company and the Vizier as stable as possible; and with that view he wrote: 'By ceding them to the Vizier we strengthen our alliance with him, we make him more dependent upon

us as he is more exposed to the hostilities of the Mahrattas; we render a junction between him and them, which has been sometimes apprehended, morally impossible, since their pretensions to Korah will be a constant source of animosity between them; we free ourselves from the expense and all the dangers attending either a remote property or a remote connexion; we adhere literally to the limited system laid down by the Court of Directors; we are no longer under the necessity of exhausting the wealth of our own provinces in the pay and disbursements of our brigades employed at a distance beyond them; but by fixing the sum to be paid by the Vizier for their services at their whole expense, and by removing every possible cause for their passing but at his requisition and for his defence, we provide effectually for the protection of our frontier, and reduce the expenses of our army even in employing it; and lastly we acquire a net sum of 50 lacks of rupees most seasonably obtained for the relief of the Company's necessities, and the deficient circulation of the currency of the provinces.'[1]

The conclusions at which the Governor had arrived, as expressed in the foregoing passages of his Report, were communicated by him to the Emperor in a letter as remarkable for its studied courtesy and moderation as it is for its clearness and directness of expression.[2]

It may be mentioned in passing that one of the stipulations made by Warren Hastings with the Vizier, when at Benares, was for the grant to Rajah Cheit Sing of an Agreement guaranteeing to him all the rights and privileges enjoyed by his late father, Bulwunt Sing; an act of personal kindness which was ungratefully requited.

Before passing to more direct dealing with the Rohilla War, it may be pointed out that Macaulay, in his remarks on the stopping of the payment to the Emperor and the transfer of Korah and Allahabad to the Vizier, both of

[1] *State Papers*. Vol. 1, p. 56. [2] Ibid., p. 58.

which proceedings he strongly condemns, never mentions the fact that the Emperor had, against the remonstrance of the Calcutta Government, ceded those two provinces to the Mahrattas. He speaks of them as 'torn from the Mogul'. But the Mogul had voluntarily parted with them, and they were taken by the English, not from him, but from the Mahrattas. It is a curious sample of the carelessness, or prejudice, or both, with which the Essay was written.

The question of the Rohillas, as already stated, formed no part of the actual treaty; but during the negotiations the fickle and intriguing conduct of their chiefs was the subject of conversation (as it had indeed been of correspondence before the Governor left Calcutta), and Sujah-ul-Dowla made a proposal which was noticed at length in the formal Report to the Secret Committee. The passage therein is as follows: 'The Vizier was at first very desirous of the assistance of an English force to put him in possession of the Rohilla country lying north of his dominion and east of the Ganges. This has long been a favourite object of his wishes, and you will recollect that the first occasion of my late visit was furnished by a proposal of this kind He had certainly just grounds for resentment against the chiefs of this nation, who had not only failed in their engagement to pay him 40 lacks of rupees for his protection against the Mahrattas, but had actually supplied them with money when they appeared in arms against him. He offered to make the Company a consideration for this service of 40 lacks of rupees, besides the stipulated sum for the expenses of our troops; but he afterwards laid aside this design, fearing that it would disable him from fulfilling his engagements for Korah and Allahabad. . . . The measures to be pursued for his security in that quarter must therefore be determined by future occurrences. I was pleased that he urged the scheme of this expedition no further, as it would have led our troops to a distance from our own borders, which I would wish

ever to avoid, although there are powerful arguments to recommend it.'[1]

It is thus clear that when Warren Hastings returned to Calcutta he believed that the scheme proposed by the Vizier had been abandoned. Yet any reader of the Essay would suppose that the proposal had been at once accepted and the scheme carried out accordingly! But the truth of the matter is made evident by the answer given by the Governor-General, when Philip Francis accused him of withholding from his colleagues any account of his negotiations with the Vizier, and of having kept out of the treaty the agreement he had (as Francis alleged) privately made with Sujah-ul-Dowla. This allegation, like others made by Francis, was false. Three members of the Government, deputed for that purpose, accompanied the Governor-General to Benares, and were kept fully informed of the negotiations as these went on. This is clearly stated in the Minute[2]: 'I have already observed that I informed Messrs. Lawrell, Vansittart, and Lambert, who were deputed with me by the Board, of every circumstance which passed during the whole course of the negotiations, but it was unnecessary that these circumstances should be recorded, when they had become entirely foreign to the purposes of the treaty. The Rohilla expedition *was laid aside*, or more properly, it had not been adopted, for the Vizier's proposal on this subject had never been ratified. It is true an option remained with the Vizier to renew this subject, but an option also remained with the administration either to reject or to assent to it. It so happened that he did renew the subject; but at the time of concluding the Benares treaty it appeared probable to me that he would not renew it; and where was the occasion for loading our records with the particulars of transactions which had been voluntarily laid aside by the Vizier who was the interested party in them, especially as they had been unreservedly communicated by myself

[1] *State Papers*, Vol. I, p. 51. [2] Ibid., p. 178.

and the members who had been with me to the other members of the administration in private intercourse? If he had renewed the proposal, it was then time enough to enter upon a public discussion of this matter, when it became a measure of administration and was decided upon by them. This is precisely the case with the measure in question. . . . I certainly thought it possible, and this is the plain meaning of the words used in my Report upon the subject, *viz.* "that the measures to be pursued for his security in that quarter must be determined by future occurrences". That is, if the Rohillas would pay the forty lacks due from them, and join in a scheme of defensive alliance with the Vizier, the measure to be pursued for his security in that quarter would be to afford the Rohillas protection. If, on the contrary, they gave encouragement to the enemy or refused to pay the forty lacks, the measures to be pursued for his security in that quarter would be to drive out the Rohillas and reduce the country occupied by them within the line of his dominion.'

The above extract shows conclusively that the real object of Warren Hastings was to secure the north-western frontier of the provinces he was bound to guard against Mahratta inroads; if that could be effected by an alliance between the Rohillas and the Vizier, well and good. If not, then he was ready to consider, and with reluctance to accept, the scheme for annexation by the Vizier. But so far from being, as Macaulay would have us believe, a sordid plot to obtain money by the sale of a brave people, it was a move of statesmanship, rendered necessary in the interest of an ally by the treachery inherent and persistent in the Rohilla tribes. Nor was the proposal for invasion and annexation ever made by Warren Hastings. It was made by the Vizier for his own ends, prompted by a resentment which must be admitted to have been just; and it was seconded by Sir Robert Barker, Commander-in-chief in Bengal, who considered the annexation necessary for military reasons.

To revert to the events which immediately led to the Rohilla War, it appears that shortly after the Governor returned to Calcutta he received a letter from the Vizier stating his determination to attack the Rohillas, and saying: 'Should I therefore have occasion for the assistance of the English forces to carry on my operations in that country, I desire to know what is your pleasure, whether you will let me have those forces when I shall call for them, or you will not.' This letter does not seem to have been answered. Mr. Forrest says that Warren Hastings was 'both surprised and mortified' to receive it. Certainly he was in no hurry to accede to the proposal.

A month later another letter arrived, saying that Rahmat Khan was about to take possession of country belonging to the Mahrattas, an act to which the Vizier would never consent; that the Rohillas had not paid a single 'daam' of the 40 lacs of rupees due to him according to agreement, and that he would without doubt undertake an expedition against them. He went on: 'During our interview at Benares we had some conversation on the subject, and it was then agreed that I should pay to the Company 40 lacks of rupees after the expulsion of the Rohillas, and 210,000 rupees monthly on account of the English brigade during my operations in the Rohilla country; and that I should with the assistance of the English forces endeavour to punish and exterminate[1] the Rohillas out of their country. If therefore these terms are agreeable to you, I desire to know whether you will assist me with the English forces, or you will not.'[2]

It cannot be doubted that the Rohillas, by their refusal to pay the sum covenanted to be paid by them in a solemn

[1] Warren Hastings explained to the Secret Committee that the word which is here translated 'extirpate' means to expel or remove; and he added, 'In this sense I did most certainly agree to assist the Vizier, and so did the Council, nor can I conceive how the war could have been undertaken with any other object.'

[2] *State Papers*, Vol. I, p. 76.

treaty, a sum for which they had received solid value in the expulsion of the Mahrattas from their territory, as well as by their treachery in afterwards negotiating with the Mahrattas in order to evade payment, had given just cause for war. There is no European government which would not consider such conduct as furnishing a *casus belli*. The Secret Committee accordingly, when the Vizier's letter was submitted to them and had been considered, resolved—'That should the Vizier persist in his intentions with respect to the Rohilla country, and determine to prosecute the enterprise with steadiness to a conclusion, this Government, considering the strict alliance and engagements which subsist between the Company and Sujah Dowla, and particularly what passed between the President and the Vizier at the Conference at Benares, cannot on this occasion refuse him support and assistance; that the terms proposed by the Vizier appear highly advantageous to the Company, not only on account of the sum which is ultimately stipulated as a consideration for this service, but by immediately relieving them from the heavy expense of a large part of their army. Provided, therefore, full assurance and security can be obtained of the Vizier's intention and ability to make good the many payments which will in this event be due to the Company; Resolved that the 2nd Brigade now stationed at Dinapore be ordered to march on the Vizier's requisition.'[1]

The Committee also agreed that the President be requested to prepare an answer to the Vizier's letters. This he did; and his language was distinct: 'Concerning the country of the Rohillas, whatever was formerly proposed at Benares, that I am now equally ready to agree to; that is, the brigade which is now at Dinapore shall march whenever you require it, to join you, and proceed with you into the country of the Rohillas, which lies north of your dominions, to assist you in the entire reduction of it; and your Excellency, on your part, will supply them

[1] *State Papers*, Vol. I, p. 77

monthly with the stipulated sum of Rs 210,000 for their expenses, and whenever the country shall be so far conquered that you shall remain in possession of it, although the enemy may lurk in the hills and jungles, or a few refractory zemindars, as is usual, may withhold their allegiance, and your Excellency shall dismiss the brigade, you will, on its departure, pay forty lacks of rupees to the Company as a consideration for that service. To prevent future misunderstanding I have been thus explicit. I must beg leave further to add that if the expedition be once undertaken it will be absolutely necessary to persevere in it, until it shall be accomplished; you will therefore reflect whether it will be in your power to make the above payments punctually with others which are already due, and whether you can resolve on going through with the undertaking. If you are not certain of accomplishing these necessary points, I must request that you will suspend the execution of your undertaking till a more favourable time'[1]

Some doubts having arisen as to the power of the Secret Committee to order a movement of the troops on its own authority, it was determined to lay the whole matter, with the President's letter, before a meeting of the Council. Warren Hastings took the opportunity to explain, in a long, clear Minute, his own views on the situation, and his real policy. That policy, as already pointed out, was directed to assuring the safety of the frontier, his great object through the whole business, and one as different from that imputed to him by his detractors as can well be imagined.

After stating that he had long considered the power of the Rohillas as dangerous to the Vizier, 'the only useful ally of the Company,' and as such had wished to see it annihilated, and pointing out the inability of the Rohillas to oppose the Mahrattas, he goes on to say: 'On the other hand, the Subadar of Oude must always be an object of

[1] *State Papers*, Vol. I, p. 78.

jealousy and enmity to the Rohillas. His power is to be dreaded by them, and the situation of their country contiguous to his, and in a manner enclosed within the same natural boundaries, must make the possession of it always a desirable object with him, both for security and advantage. These are sources of enmity between them, which from the nature of things cannot fail of producing suitable effects, and it is more probable that we should soon see the Mahrattas and Rohillas join in hostilities against the Vizier than that they should continue in war with one another.

'But let us next view the advantages which would result to the Vizier, the ally of the Company, and to the Company itself from his possession of that part of the Rohilla country which is the object of the expedition now proposed. Our ally would obtain by this acquisition a complete compact state shut in effectually from foreign invasions by the Ganges, all the way from the frontiers of Behar to the mountains of Thibet, while he would remain equally accessible to our forces from the above provinces either for hostilities or protection. It would give him wealth, of which we should partake, and give him security without any dangerous increase of power. It would undoubtedly, by bringing his frontier nearer to the Mahrattas, for whom singly he would be no match, render him more dependent on us and cement the union more firmly between us. I must further declare that I regard as none of the most inconsiderable benefits to the Company from this measure, besides the 40 lacks held out to us, the easing them immediately of the burden of one-third of their whole army, while at the same time it is employed usefully for their interests and conveniently for keeping up its own discipline and practice in war.'[1]

He went on to express his doubts, notwithstanding the reasons for the expedition on general principles, whether it was advisable at that moment. He commended it to careful consideration; but at the same time felt it his duty

[1] *State Papers*, Vol. I, p. 80.

to declare that he found himself embarrassed in his decision on account of what had passed between the Vizier and himself at Benares.

'This is the predicament in which I now stand with the Vizier; and although, from a fear of his not being able to fulfil his part of the agreement, I wish to avoid engaging in the project at present, yet it appears to me that a direct refusal, after what passed, would have an unfriendly aspect, and might admit of the construction of artifice and insincerity in our dealings with him.

'Moved by the doubts which I have exposed to the Board, and thus hampered by my situation with the Vizier, no better method occurred to me for freeing us from this dilemma than the letter which is now in reference before the Board. I have there expressed my consent to the expedition in terms which, if he agrees to them, are most likely to secure the advantages hoped from it, but which are more likely to make him relinquish the design. I trust the Board will find it so guarded, both in the substance and expression, that the Vizier must necessarily feel himself engaged to perform every condition required of him with the most rigid punctuality at the hazard of forfeiting the Company's friendship or revolt against the terms imposed on him and drop all thoughts of prosecuting the design, and that I verily believe will be the issue of his correspondence.'[1]

The Board concurred heartily with the President 'in wishing to avoid the expedition proposed; without entering into a discussion of the propriety of such an enterprise on general principles, the Board see in their full force all the circumstances of doubt as to its present expediency which the President has so clearly set forth, and they are also sensible of the embarrassment which he lies under from what passed on the subject between him and the Vizier at Benares. 'They are equally solicitous to save the honour of the Company and watch over its interests,

[1] *State Papers*, Vol. I, p. 80.

and for that reason they approve of the letter now before them, which seems equally calculated to save both. The conditions, if accepted, would undoubtedly secure the greatest possible advantages from such an enterprise, but they appear to them more calculated to drive the Vizier into a refusal, which is what they trust in, as its most probable and almost infallible consequence, and which they wish for as the proper result of this proposition in the present circumstances of affairs'.[1]

But the letter of the Governor, from which so much was expected, failed to impress the Vizier. He called for the assistance of the brigade at Dinapore, and on the 17th of April, some ten months, be it observed, after the interview at Benares, he invaded, with its aid, the Rohilla territory. The brave and hardy warriors who had dominated the Hindu population therein for sixty years did not shrink from the encounter. Colonel Champion, in command of the British troops, bears witness in his dispatch to the desperate valour of their onset, and to the military skill shown by Hafiz Rahmat Khan. But all was fruitless against the steady courage of the English infantry and the deadly fire of the English artillery. Two thousand of the Rohillas were slain, and among them fell Rahmat Khan in the act of bravely rallying his troops. One of his sons was also killed, one made prisoner, and a third came into the Vizier's camp on the following day. Numbers of standards and more than fifty pieces of cannon were taken, and the power of the Rohillas was completely broken. Hafiz Rahmat, perjured from the outset of his career, and apparently callous to any obligation, civil or religious, deserved the fate that befell him. Nor did his tribesmen possess any quality, save that of courage, to command our respect. So far from being, as described by Macaulay, 'skilled in the arts of peace,' they had no occupation but the sword, and lived on the rent paid by

[1] *State Papers*, Vol. I, p. 81.

the Hindu cultivators of Rohilcund, and on the casual plunder of adjacent territories. So far from being honourable and chivalrous, in any reasonable sense of the words, they were treacherous and faithless, as their race is only too wont to be, and their expulsion from Rohilcund and consequent dispersion were of unquestionable benefit to the peaceful inhabitants of surrounding communities.

The British troops maintained strict discipline, but on the part of the Vizier's forces there was some plundering, chiefly of the Rohilla camp. A few villages were burned during the operations, as is too often the case in all wars, some of them being set on fire by the Rohillas, some by their opponents. But there is no reason to believe in any further excesses. Tales of outrage on women were no doubt circulated, but no evidence to support them was ever produced, and when a specific charge of this nature was made against the Vizier himself it was proved to be untrue by a British officer, Major Hannay, who stated[1] that the Vizier was never in the place alleged, and never inside a zenana but once, and then, its inhabitants having left, to see whether it could be fitted up for his own family. Mr. Middleton, the British Resident at the Court of Oude, wrote, in reference to these slanders: 'The unhappy victims, who could not survive their shame, but had put a violent end to their own lives, are still living, and the Vizier has never seen them.'[2] Yet these fictions were adopted by Macaulay, and form a part of his indictment against Warren Hastings. Now it is certain that the letters of the Governor, written at the time, afford conclusive evidence in his favour. When Colonel Champion, who seems to have been out of temper because his troops had secured neither plunder nor prize-money, accused the Vizier of oppression and cruelty, and intimated that he, Champion, had no power to protect the inhabitants, Warren Hastings wrote to him indignantly: 'It could never have been

[1] *State Papers*, Vol. I, p. 168.

[2] Ibid., p. 181.

suspected by the Board that their orders to you would have tied up your hands from protecting the miserable, stopped your ears to the cries of the widow and fatherless, or shut your eyes against the wanton display of oppression and cruelty. I am totally at a loss to distinguish wherein their orders have laid you under any greater restraint than your predecessors.'[1] And in a letter to Mr. Middleton he wrote: 'Colonel Champion complains of the conduct of the Vizier in suffering and even ordering his troops to ravage the country, and in his cruel treatment of the family of Hafiz Rahmat. . . . I desire that you will take an immediate occasion to remonstrate with him against every act of cruelty or wanton violence. The country is his, and the people his subjects. They claim by that relation his tenderest regard and unremitted protection. The family of Hafiz have never injured him, but have a claim to his protection in default of that of which he has deprived them. Tell him that the English manners are abhorrent of every species of inhumanity and oppression, and enjoin the gentlest treatment of a vanquished enemy. Require and entreat his observance of this principle towards the family of Hafiz.'[2]

This was written by the man who is said by Macaulay to have folded his arms and left the Vizier and his soldiery to work their will on the Rohilla country. Of the same character was the refusal of Warren Hastings to allow Champion and his brigade to claim the great treasure belonging to Fyzoollah Khan, the only Rohilla chief who had not surrendered, and who offered a large sum to the Company if they would befriend him. But the Governor, who has been accused of lending the Company's troops for money, refused the offer, and wrote to Champion: 'The very idea of prize-money suggests to my remembrance the former disorders which arose in our army from this service, and had almost proved fatal to it. Of this circumstance you must be sufficiently apprised, and of the neces-

[1] Gleig, Vol. I, p. 425. [2] Ibid., p. 438.

sity for discouraging every expectation of this kind among the troops. It is to be avoided like poison.'[1]

Macaulay declared that in aiding the Vizier with troops, and agreeing to accept from him a payment of forty lacs, 'England descended far below the level even of those petty German princes who about the same time sold us troops to fight the Americans.' But the comparison is not apposite. The German princes had no interest, direct or indirect, in the American War; they simply sold the use of their troops for money. The English Government at Calcutta did something very different, they lent their troops to an ally to punish certain chiefs for breach of a treaty to which the English Commander-in-chief had affixed his signature, and to annex a territory which those chiefs had gained possession of by the sword, and could no longer defend against a foe whose ambition menaced the safety of our own dominions. Macaulay does not seem to have perceived that in aiding the Vizier we were in truth aiding ourselves; his safety was our safety; not only were we bound to him by the ties of treaty and honour, but by the first law known to human policy, that of self-preservation.

Regarding the charge first brought by Francis, and repeated and embellished by Macaulay, that Warren Hastings took no guarantee from the Vizier that the war should be conducted in conformity with the humane rules of civilized warfare, the Governor-General wrote: 'It is a perversion of facts to say that "the British arms and honour were absolutely at the Vizier's disposal", that "an absolute surrender has been made of the honour and interest of the Company". We agreed to assist him in subduing the Rohillas. It was necessary to draw the line between the authority of the Vizier and our Commanding Officer. The service to be performed was entirely the Vizier's; it was therefore consistent and unavoidable that he should direct the objects of it; but the execution of military operations was expressly vested in our Commanding Officer;

[1] *State Papers*, Vol. II, p. 274.

of course the safety of our army and the honour of the British name and arms were entirely confided to his conduct and discretion.'[1] And hence it was that Warren Hastings, when Champion complained of cruelty and oppression being practised, without any power of prevention on his part, replied with indignation that there was nothing in his (Champion's) instructions to fetter him in protecting the oppressed.

But the statements concerning cruelty and oppression to the inhabitants of Rohilcund, by whomsoever made and wheresoever repeated, were gross exaggerations, if not to say wilful perversions of the truth. The stories concerning the plunder and depopulation of the country were contradicted by unimpeachable witnesses. Major Hannay said: 'To the best of my knowledge I saw no signs of oppression to the inhabitants of the newly conquered country, but from particular inquiries which I had an opportunity of making of the country people they said they had met with no treatment that they could complain of.'[2] These were the people of whom Macaulay writes that their villages were burned, their children butchered, and their women violated! And to quote Hannay's evidence again: 'At the time that I went upon an expedition from Bissowly to Sumbul, Meradabad, and Rampore, the country appeared to be in good cultivation, the inhabitants were employed in tilling it. It is in general one of the best cultivated countries I have seen in Hindustan, and very well inhabited, and the people appeared to be busy at this time as if there had been a profound peace, and under no kind of apprehension from the conquerors.'[3] This was the country, according to Macaulay, which had been reduced to a desert; a hundred thousand people flying to the jungles! The same witness testified to the evil character of the Rohillas, their faithlessness and bloodthirsty doings; 'it is a proverb in Hindustan that they pray with one hand

[1] *State Papers*, Vol. I, p. 182.
[2] Ibid., Introd., p. xxviii.
[3] Ibid., p. xxviii.

and rob with the other.'[1] Colonel Leslie, again, dismissed the stories of outrage on women as not to be credited; and Colonel Champion said they were only rumours he had heard; and as to the treatment of the prisoners, especially the family of Hafiz Rahmat, Colonel Leslie stated: 'The prisoners who fell into the hands of the Vizier, whom I believe to be very few, are now entertained in his service, there are some of the sons of Hafiz Rahmat, two particularly whom I know and have often seen riding in his suite. He generally took one of these out with him all the time he was at Bissowly; their appearance was good, and I think the same of the rest of his cavalry, and they appeared contented.'[2] The evidence quoted above was given, it must be remembered, by three of the leading officers who had been engaged in the war, and given before the committee appointed by Warren Hastings' enemies to inquire against him. It absolutely contradicts the reckless statement of Macaulay that 'The whole country was in a blaze. More than a hundred thousand people fled from their homes to pestilential jungles, preferring famine and fever and the haunts of tigers to the tyranny of him to whom an English and a Christian Government had for shameful lucre sold their substance, and their blood, and the honour of their wives and daughters'. This rhetorical invective is the more inexcusable because the evidence contradicting it has always been on record in the proceedings of the Secret Committee of the Indian Council, and Macaulay, when for five years a member of that Council, had ample opportunity to consult the authorities, and ascertain the truth for himself. He chose instead to rely on the mistakes or malignities of Francis, Burke, and Mill, without verification, and to indite thereupon, with all the wealth of his vocabulary, a hideous slander on the great founder of British India, on the Council, tried and experienced, who approved the policy, and, incidentally, on the fair fame before the world of his own country. Surely, the denouncement of the

[1] *State Papers*, Introd., p. xxix. [2] Ibid., p. xxvii.