

# LABORIOUS DAYS.

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LEAVES FROM THE INDIAN RECORD

OF

SIR CHARLES ALFRED ELLIOTT

K.C.S.I., C.I.E., &c., &c.,

LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR OF BENGAL.

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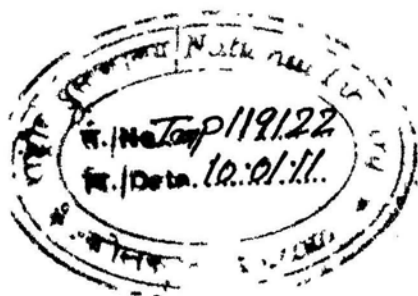
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1892.



TO  
LADY ELLIOTT.

WHOSE GENTLE INFLUENCE BRIGHTENS HER HUSBAND'S HOME  
AND LESSENS THE BURDEN OF HIS OFFICIAL CARES,  
THIS LITTLE SKETCH OF HIS BRILLIANT CAREER  
IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

BY

THE AUTHOR.

## PREFACE.

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ONE of the most promising signs of the times we live in is the preference shown by the reading public for memoirs and records of discovery and travel. The new bias is a reaction from the love of fiction which characterized the last generation. It, indeed, was fortunate in possessing such literary giants as Dickens and Thackeray, not to mention minor stars in the galaxy of genius which illustrated the early Victorian era. The taste created by the immortal Waverley Novels, and kept alive by successors not unworthy to occupy the throne of the Wizard of the North, is now catered for by authors of a very different calibre. We have been pelted with romances in thousands, until every passion has been torn to tatters and the changes rung on every possible incident of human life. Those who are familiar with the under-currents which influence public opinion have long since been aware that the reign of the novelist is hastening to decay. The fact is not to be regretted; for fiction, save of the very first quality, tends to dilute the sympathies and impair the judgment.



The rise of biography in public esteem is especially a matter for congratulation. There is no greater spur to exertion than the exploits of our fellows. What man has done, we reflect, man can do. I venture to think that the life-story told in this little book will not be without its effect on the formation of character. I claim not the skill of a Plutarch, whose enthralling pages have led many a youth to emulate the noble deeds which they embalm. Nor does my subject lend itself to such treatment. Sir Charles Elliott, at the outset of his Indian career, looked face to face at war in its direst form: but for more than a third of a century his lines have been cast, if not always in pleasant, at least in peaceful places, and his victories have been those of civil life. Had he fallen on times of civil stress, there can be little doubt that his indomitable energy and power of impressing his personality upon others would have placed him in the first rank as a man of action. But the great value of his life is the lesson it affords *nil sine labore*; freely translated by Macaulay as "Genius consists in a capacity for taking pains." This is, indeed, a truism: but it is constantly forgotten in these fevered times of ours, when men mistake notoriety for distinction and struggle to rise by self-advertisement and by picking the brains of others.

The plan of this work has precluded my adding those touches so welcome to the gentle reader which lift the veil of private life and exhibit the subject of a biography in his relations with friends, family and dependents. It has been said truly that to know a man one must see him at home. Sir Charles Elliott's character would lose nothing by such a scrutiny. In the brief intervals of relaxation from duties which would crush an ordinary man, he appears in an amiable light—a warm-hearted friend, devoted to family ties, and one whose culture has not outgrown his sense of humour. While glorying in his work and investing its driest details with a halo of enthusiasm he enjoys with equal zest the active pleasures that life affords. He is still an ardent pedestrian, oarsman and mountaineer; and, in his younger days, he was an excellent shot. The Miltonian quotation from which I have borrowed my title by no means applies to him in its entirety.

My acknowledgments are due to Babu Kally Prosonno Dey, Editor of the *National Magazine*, for permission to reprint the chapters of this little work which originally appeared in that interesting periodical.

To Rai Bahádúr Jaiprakás Lál, C.I.E., Diwan of the Dumraon Ráj, I am indebted for a subscription covering the cost of a sufficient number of copies of this book to guarantee me against pecu-

niary loss. This is a great matter in a land where the success of literary ventures is so uncertain. Profit I do not desire. I write in the interests of truth and justice; and it will suffice for me if a perusal of this little work should correct mistaken estimates of Sir Charles Elliott's public character, and lead to a wider recognition of the great services he has rendered to the Government and people of this country.

## CHAPTER I. HISTORY OF UNAO.

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*Because it is an ability not common to write a good history, as may well appear by the small number of them; yet if particularity of actions memorable were but liberally reported, the compiling of a complete history of the times, might be the better expected when a writer should arise that were fit for it: for the collection of such relations might be as a nursery garden, whereby to plant a fair and stately garden when time should serve.*

### BACON'S ADVANCEMENT OF LEARNING.

It is a staple complaint with educated Indians that Englishmen are unsympathetic. ~~Permeated~~ as many are with western culture, and conscious of moral and intellectual affinities with the ruling race, they resent the apparent want of interest in themselves and their aspirations exhibited by the Anglo-Indian community at large. They point to the giants of a past age—the generation of Sir William Jones—and the galaxy of bright visitants whose love for the land of their sojourn was only equalled by their craving desire to explore the secret recesses of her history, laws and religion. The contrast between past and present in this respect is, indeed, discouraging; and not less so the growing divergence between forces which united might revolutionize Asiatic society within the

life-time of a generation. Those, however, who are inclined to impute all the blame to English insularity and racial pride, would do well to ask themselves whether other and less obvious causes are not at work. The proximity of Europe, with its ever-widening scope for mental and physical enjoyment, renders the comparative stagnation of India more intolerable than it could have been to the eighteenth century Englishman. He was never confronted, by demands from subject races for social and political equality, and played unquestioned the grateful part of patron. Our best and brightest intellects of to-day are too often benumbed by a crushing routine and impaired by the irritation arising from a sense of injustice. Often, too, they dwindle under the atrophy encountered in our Hill-resorts with an atmosphere of officialism and soul-less frivolity. Hence the undoubted fact that, with all her material progress, Imperial India can boast of no single contribution to that which De Quincey terms the Literature of Power. Thoughtful men of every race will agree that the time has come for a united effort to remove this reproach. Good government, improved facilities for locomotion, and the interchange of ideas are but a means to an end—the elevation of humanity. Those who keep that great object in view will take the fullest advantage of the mechanism afforded by modern

science: but they will soar high above the world of the engineer, the organizer, and the soldier. They will devote their best energies to "the proper study of mankind"—not in view of gratifying an idle curiosity or adding a zest to lettered ease, but that they may be able to gauge the defects of society and suggest remedies for the countless ills against which religion and science alike have hitherto striven in vain. Now human society is incarnate history: and he who wishes to grasp its real import and tendencies must compel the past to yield its varied stores. A rich and almost untrodden field lies open to such a man. Our official records, in spite of the ravages of Philistinism,\* are a mine of wealth to the explorer. The archives of our great families teem with curious lore which is gladly placed at the disposal of the judicious enquirer. Lastly, the people still possess a vast wealth of tradition and floating legend which awaits its Grimm or its Niebuhr to yield results of priceless value to the student of sociology. So bewildering, indeed, is the mass of material at hand that the would-be historian knows not where to begin, and dreads the dissipation of his energies

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\* A collector of Murshidabad some years back, wishing to write a history of that little-known period which separates the acquisition of the Diwanny from the reforms of Cornwallis, was deterred by the discovery of a gap of fifteen years in his records! A predecessor had burned several tons of priceless papers relating to the years 1772—1787 in order to find room for current ones,

on a task which may launch him on a boundless ocean of research. But let such a one take heart of grace. He will find in any British district a compact and manageable unit: and the industry of many working in parallel channels will soon afford a vast mass of data for generalization and synthesis. The author ventures to think that, by laying before his readers the very pith and marrow of a district history which is a model of its kind, he may tempt some of them to follow his example, and perhaps to deserve equally well of posterity.

Unao, we learn from *Hunter's Gazetteer*, is a district of the Lucknow Division of the North-Western Provinces, embracing 1,747 square miles of the vast alluvial plain traversed by the sacred Ganges. The census population in 1881 was rather less than 900,000: all engaged in tilling the fertile loam whose crop-bearing power is enhanced by assiduous irrigation. Devoid of interesting features, with no centres of learning, industry or the arts, a more unpromising field for historical research can hardly be conceived than is afforded by this little nineteenth century Bœotia. But enthusiasm sustained by dogged resolution makes light of obstacles: and thirty years ago Unao was fortunate enough to possess a chief who was endowed with these qualities in a marked degree. In 1860 the present Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal,

then Mr. Charles Alfred Elliott, found himself Deputy Commissioner of Unao, and straightway resolved to preserve its history and tradition from unmerited oblivion. His education fitted him admirably for the self-appointed task. Born twenty-five years previously, he had enjoyed the priceless boon of a public school and University training. He was, indeed, a scholar on the great foundation of Trinity College, Cambridge, when the seductions of an Indian career proved too strong for the aspirations which he may well have cherished of acquiring academic distinction. In June 1856 he passed the second open Examination for our Civil Service, and came out to this country in the November of that year. While he was still a student at Benares, the mutiny whirlwind swept over the land and gave him opportunities of gaining experience and distinction which young civilians of these humdrum days may sigh for in vain. He embraced them with ardour, was attached to General Franks' forces on the borders of Oudh, and afterwards to those of Sir Hope Grant and General Kelly; and was twice mentioned in despatches. The restoration of the British peace found him ready and willing to exchange the sword for the pen. After spells of service as Assistant Commissioner of Faizabad and Civil Judge and Town Magistrate of Lucknow, he became Officiating Deputy Commissioner of Unao at an age when



modern civilians deem themselves fortunate if they are entrusted with the destinies of a sub-division. The spirit in which Mr. Elliott began his labours as annalist of Unao shines through the preface of his admirable little history, which was printed for private circulation in 1861. He tells us that he wished to put to a crucial test his belief that the history of an average district would be of value to local officials and residents, to the student and the general reader. He laments the absence of works of a similar scope—a fact due to ignorance of the results derivable from careful investigation and an unjustly low estimate of the value of collated tradition. His remarks on this head are singularly far-seeing in so young an author, and richly merit quotation. “Like all half-educated races,” he writes, “the Hindus place an inordinate value on their mythical and historical traditions, and are greatly pleased to find an Englishman in an official position enquiring into them; while the reputation of being acquainted with out-of-the-way facts, not ascertainable in the ordinary official routine, creates in their minds a presumption of general information as to the state of the district, and makes them more communicative on matters respecting which a private enquiry is often necessary. Thus a knowledge of the popular traditions and ballads gives to the possessor an influence over the people and the key to their hearts. Even

if this book were of no further use than as a record, to be kept in the Unao office, I should still feel a pleasure in presenting it, for the benefit of future officials, as a small return to the district for the pleasant memories with which it is associated in my mind, and as a testimony of the interest I felt in it and of the esteem and regard in which I hold some of its taluqdars and residents. The common disregard of tradition as a vehicle for historical truth springs, I think, from two causes—from our general distrust of native accuracy, and from the exposure by Niebuhr and Sir George C. Lewis of the fallacy of the traditional basis on which the history of Rome as it used to be written rested. But it is one thing to rely on a single tradition, such as Livy's, composed evidently in the interest of certain families, and dead and stereotyped long ago, and quite another thing to question a multitude of living, conflicting traditions, and after testing and trying them in every way by comparison with each other and with external landmarks, to collect from the alembic of close enquiry a precipitate of historical fact. None of the objections urged against the validity of tradition in Niebuhr's famous chapter apply to such a treatment of it as this native inaccuracy tends all in one direction—to the glorification of the subject of the story; and thus the error being constant it can be eliminated in a general enquiry.

Where a story praises A above B, and B sets B above A, the mutual self-glorification neutralizes itself."

Thus the keynote to our author's treatment of tradition is to be found in a pregnant remark of a predecessor in the same line of research, that *concurrence between isolated traditions is almost equivalent to authentic history*. He compares versions current among different clans as well as those told in different families of the same class, and reads them by the light of general history. This process of sublimation gives a residuum of fairly trustworthy narrative, illustrating events often of great importance in their bearing on the formation of a people's character and the development of their civilization. Tradition apart, a mass of documentary evidence had to be dealt with. This included sunnuds, safe guides as regards facts and dates; family records, only worthy of evidence when they concern contemporary events; and certain *obiter dicta* in a Persian school book then in great request. From these somewhat unpromising materials Mr. Elliott contrived to extract a mass of information enabling his readers to trace the history of UnaŌ from the earliest days. We see the little district in the mythical era a portion of classic Ajodhya, the realm of good king Dasarath, and the chosen abode of saints and warriors. Anon the curtain lifts and gives us a

glimpse of a land clothed with dense forests, the habitat of wild aboriginal tribes. These give way before the invasion of the fair-skinned Aryan, and take refuge in the hill region northward, whence, about the commencement of the Christian era, they swoop down on their conquerors and drive them even unto distant Guzerat. Twelve hundred years later we view an immigration of chivalrous Rajputs driven from the centres of Hindu power, and devotion by the fierce Shahabuddin Gori. A century later the followers of the Prophet pour in and establish colonies throughout the land, which pave the way for its assimilation with the Empire of Akbar. The reign of the Mogul is graphically portrayed, with its elaborate fiscal system, its centralization tempered by checks and counter checks. Then we see how, when paralysis strikes the heart of the effete organization, satraps throw off their allegiance; and one of them bribes the English successors of his master to recognize him as sovereign of Oudh. The description which follows of the *Nawabi* rule, its lawlessness and elasticity as contrasted, not altogether unfavourably, with the inexorable justice that followed the annexation, enables us to understand why the very excellences of the British regime prompted the whole population of Oudh to range themselves on the national side in the crisis of the Mutiny.

But Government is, after all, less a question of laws than of the personal character of those appointed to administer them. Our author's peroration is a passage of equal eloquence and truth, and deserves to be written in letters of gold in every Secretariat of the Empire. "The Native of India," he writes, "has no valet mind: he can worship the true hero when he knows him. And as long as the British Government can send such men as Major Henry Evans\* to govern its districts, to walk uprightly in its service, and to lead its subjects up through education and a love of law to religion and a love of God, so long will the future of Unao be bright indeed."

He who desires to be well acquainted with a people will not reject their popular stories and superstitions. These are the words of Sir John Malcolm, a past master of statecraft, for whom the oriental mind had no secrets. His dictum applies with twofold force to the historian of an Indian community: for in no part of the globe have these legends, which pitiless science terms myths, exercised a profounder influence on the formation of national character. History proverbially repeats itself: and the key to many a complex problem of life and action is afforded by a minute study of those glorious epics which are among the

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\* The first Deputy Commissioner of Unao.

most precious inheritances of the Aryan Race. Here the ancient altars stand decked with greener bays than those of Greece and Rome in colder climes. The Ramayana, Mahabharata, and Purans, with their pictures of virile bravery and womanly self-devotion, still live in the hearts of millions and insensibly influence their daily lives. Their very blots and blemishes, the blurred outlines which reveal their hoary antiquity are cherished with a loving care; and episodes, which to the matter-of-fact European are but the stuff that dreams are made of, are vivid realities in the eyes of the faithful Hindu. Sir Charles Elliott has, therefore, done wisely to devote a chapter of his history to the mythical age of Unao: albeit that most of the legends current in the district are but variants charged with local colouring of stories found in epic poesy. That of Lona Chamarin merits quotation in our author's own graphic words, if only for the proof it affords that Hindu methods of culture have remained the same for countless ages. Lona was a woman of the despised caste of leather-dressers, and lived at Unao. One day, while bathing in the Ganges, she found a caldron full of flesh which had been cast ashore near the temple of Puriar. This was the mortal spoils of Dhanattar Vaid, who had been killed by the snake, typifying in mythology the Scythian invasion of India, lest by his cunning he should save king

Parichit from a similar fate. Lona ate the flesh : and as she ate, the wisdom of Dhanattar passed into her. She became skilful in cures and medicines, and if any was bitten by a snake she healed him. There came a day when all the people of Unao were transplanting the young rice-plants from their seed-beds to the wider fields in which they were to grow. Every man brought the plants in a basket and threw them out in one place where Lona was standing : but when they came back with another basketful they found that she had planted out all the plants which were in the heap. When they saw this they wondered greatly, and said, " We are two hundred men bringing baskets of plants, how can one woman plant out so many all alone ? " So, at last, when the rest went away after emptying their baskets, her brother-in-law stayed behind and hid himself. He watched and saw that when all were gone Lona stripped herself naked, and took up the heap in her hands, and muttered words, and cast the plants into the air, and all the rice-plants planted themselves out in order, each in its proper line and place. Then he cried out in astonishment, and when she saw that she was watched, she was overpowered with shame, and crouching down tried to escape. Her brother-in-law followed to reassure her, but she fled the faster, and as she fled the earth opened before her, and behind her all the water from the

rice-fields, collecting in one wave, flowed down the channel which she made. At first she crouched as she ran, but when she saw she was pursued, she rose up, and the channel became deeper, and the wave behind her rose higher, and fear added wings to her flight. So she sped along, carrying destruction through the country as she ran; passing through the town of Newayan until she reached the Ganges at Dalarmau and rushed into it and hid her shame in its water. The channel which she made is called the Lona Naddi to this day. The flood destroyed the town of Newayan, and left nothing but a high mound which stands close to the bank of the stream. Sir Charles Elliott adds a foot-note to the effect that *mantras* for charming away the evil effects of snake-bite are still addressed to Lona Chamarin: but they are not popular, for any one knowing them is bound to go to the assistance of the victim who pronounces them: a necessity which might sometimes prove inconvenient to the onlooker. Those who have lived in the little island of Jersey will remember that ancient formula the *Clameur de Haro*, an appeal to a long-defunct Duke of Normandy famed for strong administration and justice, which, uttered by any one whose rights are invaded at once suspends all proceedings to his detriment.

As materials for history, however, the value of myths is nought and the annals of Unao are a



blank till its conquest by the Mahommedans in the thirteenth century of our era. At that date the Unao Pargana was tenanted by a colony of Bisseins from Gorakhpur, whose king Anwanta is supposed to have given his name to the district. Further west there was a large settlement of Chandels, driven from Chanderi in the Deccan by the Chohan victorious in that great battle which is best described in the terms of a proverb used in cases where might conquers right—*Khet Prithora, talwar Ala aur Udal ka*. "The victory was Prithi-Raj's, but the glory lay with Ala and Udal." The present pargana of Bangarmau was the seat of the Rajpuri clan, the chief of which was a tributary of the kingdom of Kanouj. Its capital was at Rajkot, where to this day vast ruins extend over an area of several miles. The streams which wash the base of mounds a hundred feet high lay bare cyclopic masonry and sometimes gold coin and jewellery stamped with quaint legends which bring disaster on their finders. A Brahmin community was found at Safipur: and a cluster of low-caste herdsmen in the central portion of the district. In the east lived the Bhars, an aboriginal race, which at one time dominated the eastern half of Oudh. Their earliest habitat was Bahraich, which is said to owe its name to them: and they have left indelible traces on the nomenclature of the upper Gangetic delta.

When we approach the Mahommedan conquest we stand on firmer ground. In the year 1193 A.D., writes Sir Charles Elliott, Shahabuddin Ghori conquered and slew the hero of Rajput chronicles, Raja Prithora of Delhi: and in the next year he overthrew his great rival, Raja Jaichand of Canouj. These important victories were followed up by vigorous attacks in all directions. The sacred Mount Abu, the impenetrable Gwalior, the holy Benares, Gya and Ajmir and Anhalwara Patan—all the great centres of Rajput power and Hindu devotion—were startled by the appearance before their walls of the uncouth barbarians. All, after a brave but vain resistance, fell before his sword. The Brahmin folded his hands and cursed the *Mleccha*, but not openly. The merchant sought to turn an honest penny by him, and was oftener paid with iron than with gold. The Sudra served the strange highlanders much as he had obeyed his Aryan master. But to the Rajput this upsetting of his received ideas was intolerable. It was part of his religion that his race should be lords of the lands; and to see his Raja bow before a barbarian was desecration and impiety. By mutual jealousies, by incapacity for combination, and by fatuous negligence, the country had been taken from him, and the lives of his great Rajas had been lost. Now at last, thoroughly roused when it was too late, he felt that it was

impossible to remain quiet under defeat. If he could not fight he could fly; some spot might be found where, though only for a little space, he might be beyond the conqueror's reach. The outcome of this great movement was the colonization of Unao by warlike Rajput clans. Another class of these settlers owe their origin to grants of land bestowed on their ancestors by Mogul emperors for services in war. Under Akbar's liberal sway Rajputs were prized as the very flower of the army. Alliances with princesses of their stock were eagerly sought for by the Mahomedan nobility—nay, by the imperial family itself. Both Jehangir and Shah Jehan were Rajputs on the mother's side. These colonies reproduced all the essential features of European feudality. The tract occupied by the settlers was held under a special grant from the king. The grantee was bound to do service in the field against rebels or disturbers of the peace when called on by the proper authorities: and sometimes it was stipulated that he should attend the Faujdar on his excursions through the country with a fixed force. Sixteen great clans of Rajputs still survive in Unao, each with its own well-defined tract of country. The royal house of Bulrampur is an offshoot of one of these,—the Junwars, found in the Bangarmau Pargana. From another branch was descended the infamous Jussa Singh who

during the Mutiny seized the English fugitives escaping by boat from Futtehgurh and delivered them to the ruthless Nana, by whose orders they were done to death on the Cawnpore parade-ground. The Dikhits are a second important Rajput class ; asserting a lineal descent from the children of the Sun who ruled Ajodhya for fifty-one generations. Though still in possession of a large and compact area in Unao, they are but a shadow of their former selves. Their downfall dates from the opposition offered by their Raja Prithimal to the assimilation of Oudh by the Emperor Akbar. When the Vizier of Mahommad Shah Adili, says Sir Charles Elliott, led his forces to oppose the return of Humayun, all Hindustan was moved to see a Hindu once more at the head of affairs and combating a Mahommedan in the field, and a vast army flocked to his standard. This feeling gave to the campaign something of the nature of a religious war ; and, as a natural result, the victory of Akbar spread over all the country the fear of a forcible conversion to Islamism. This fear was probably the immediate cause which prevented Prithimal from obeying the summons of Akbar's general, Mahommad Amin Khan, who was appointed to the government of Oudh. Though treated with the greatest courtesy, and repeatedly called on to submit, he refused to return any answer whatever to the summons, but sent his

four Ranis to their fathers' homes, and called a council of feudatories and followers to discuss the conduct of the war. . . . Some counselled him to meet the enemy in the field, and others warned him to keep within the ramparts of his fort : but not one spoke of surrender. Meanwhile the Delhi force had crossed the Ganges by a bridge of boats below Canouj, and encamped before the fort of Patheora. Then was seen the resolution which the council of war had decided on. Clad in full armour, and followed by all his captains dressed in their saffron robes, the Raja issued into the plain and drew up his forces for the battle. The Moghal yoked his guns together to withstand their impetuous charge ; but twice his staunchest battalions were driven back and twice a shameful rout was imminent, when fresh reserves came up. But the unequal contest was now all but over. Bhagiruth Singh, the Chohan, had already fallen : other chiefs were wounded, and the Rajputs were weary and dispirited. Then the Moghal cavalry were brought up fresh to the attack. Latta Singh Chandel headed one desperate charge and fell drowned, as the bard phrases it, in that sea of horsemen. The enemy swept on in one irresistible wave over Prithimal and his captains, who fell each in their places, and the power of the Dikhits was for ever broken. The Chohans formed another tide of Rajput immigra-

tion. Their advent was, according to tradition, due to an old man's uxoriousness. A Chohan Raja of Mainpuri, the hereditary chief of all Rajputs beyond Rajasthan, married again late in life, though his former wife had borne him two sons. The bride was averse to be an old man's darling, and stipulated that, if she bore a son, he should succeed to the family possessions. The Raja eagerly closed with these hard terms, but did not long survive his bliss. A posthumous son was born, and the young Rani produced her deed and claimed its execution. The injustice was patent; but there was no help for it. Rajput honour demanded that the contract should be strictly enforced. The slighted elder brother left their patrimony in disgust and settled in Unao.

The second great class of Rajput emigrants—those in the enjoyment of jaghirs for military service—includes the clans of Sengor and Gaur. Sir Charles Elliott gives an episode in the history of the former which places the lawlessness of Nawabi rule in a startling light. Umrao Singh, an eight-anna shareholder in the village of Kantha, was sold up in 1848 for default in paying revenue. Like other desperate men in those days he took to the road, and, joining another bandit named Baljor Singh of Parsandan, was the prime mover in many a dacoity. In 1850 this precious pair at the head of five hundred followers had the

hardihood to attack the king's Chackladar, who was encamped at Bainsora with a loyal Sengor chief named Runjit Singh, a thousand troops, and two cannon. But the royal artillery had only two rounds per gun; and after discharging their pieces they incontinently fled. Deprived of their moral support, the rest of the Chackladar's army followed suit, and the rebels looted the royal camp and dragged off the guns in triumph. It was, however, short-lived. The outraged Chackladar returned with stronger forces and abundant ammunition, and carried fire and sword into every village which had opposed him. It is only what might have been expected to find Baljor and Umrao prominent in the rebel ranks during the Mutiny; while Ranjit Singh was equally active on the English side. The Gaurs are settled in Tuppeh Bunthur, which was traditionally occupied in Akbar's reign by a race of cowherds who paid an annual tribute of ghee to government. Actuated either by insolence or knavery—two characteristics not unknown in the Goalas of our own time—the Gaddis, as they were called, filled the earthen vessels in which the tribute was sent with cowdung and covered it with a thin layer of ghee. On the discovery of their fraud at Delhi, a Gaur who held a high military command was told off to punish the insubordinate ones. He carried out the royal behest by exterminating them and annexing their

territory. Kesri Singh, a later chief of Bunthur, came into collision with a tribe of Chandels in occupation of another Tuppeh of Harha on a boundary question. The reign of law had not begun, and there was no other resource but an appeal to arms. A sanguinary encounter took place regulated by the code of Rajput chivalry. Man after man on either side came to the front and challenged a foe to single combat. Thus the whole of the forces was speedily engaged, and the slaughter was as great as that under similar conditions recorded in Walter Scott's *Fair Maid of Perth*. The Chandel leader wounded Kesri Singh so desperately that he could not stir from the spot where he fell; and as quarter was neither asked nor given in those good old times, he would infallibly have been slaughtered had not a merciful Brahmin surreptitiously dragged him unto a bed of dry rushes. Here he was sought by his blood-thirsty foes, who thought of setting the rushes on fire as the simplest method of destroying him. But the Brahmin again saved Kesri's life by swearing that the field was his, and that the sale of rush baskets was his only means of livelihood. Seeing them incredulous, he proceeded to assure them that if they fired the rushes he would cut his throat there and then, and a Brahmin's blood would be on their guilty heads. This awful threat was sufficient. The Chandels with-



drew. Kesri was carried to the Brahmin's hut where he soon recovered to take the field again and turn the tables on his enemies.

Sir Charles Elliott's chapter on the Rajput colonization of Unao ends with the story of the great Bais clan, who, though not strictly speaking settlers in that district, claimed a lordship over seven of its parganas. As is customary with Rajputs, the Bais assert a miraculous descent. Their ancestor was none other than Salavahana, the son of a mighty serpent who conquered king Vikramajit of Ujani and exercised the unique privilege of fixing his own era which begins A.D. 55. There is, however, a hiatus of twelve centuries in their annals; and we do not hear of them again till 1250, when two scions of the tribe named Abhai Chand and Nirbhai Chand won glory by rescuing the Queen of the Gautam Raja of Angul from the clutches of the Mahommedan governor of Oudh. The Raja had omitted the formality of paying tribute, and the Governor in revenge despatched a strong force to intercept the Rani while on a pilgrimage to Buxar for the purpose of bathing in the Ganges. The Rajput brothers happened to be passing when the helpless lady's palanquin was attacked; and, moved by her piteous appeals for help against the barbarians, they charged the assailants and drove them off. Nirbhai Chand fell a victim to his valour, but Abhai Chand

survived to wed the daughter and heiress of the grateful Raja, and to succeed with the title of Rao to all the Gautam possessions north of the Ganges. Tilak Chand, the seventh in descent from the hero of this romantic story, is a name still familiar to Baisés throughout Oudh. He flourished in the fifteenth century, and extended the empire of his clan over twenty-two parganas. Tilak Chand was the premier Raja of Oudh, and innumerable legends of his power and prowess are sung by local bards. Two clans are found to this day in Unao who are Rajputs by courtesy, though not by blood, because the great Rao brought them within the sacred pale. The Mahrors were originally low-born Kahars who carried Tilak Chand out of an action fought with the Pathans of Mulhiabad. It was the only defeat of his glorious career. A panic seized his troops, who deserted their chief wounded in his litter; but his faithful bearers stood by him and beat off the foe. The Rao afterwards declared that his Rajputs on that day were women and his Kahars Rajputs: and then the poor Mehras (palki-bearers) became Mahrors and gave their daughters in marriage to Rajputs of blue blood. The Rawats are another class of "Tilak Chandi Rajputs," and boast an illegitimate descent from the great eponymous hero of the Bais. Mitrajit, the seventh Rao from Tilak Chand, is second only to him in the estimation of the clansmen. Sir Charles Elliott

tells us that when Mitrajit first went to Delhi, he attended the Durbar, but stood outside the entrance expecting some one to invite him in. He waited till it was all over, and when the Rajas of Jaipur and Marwar were passing out, they noticed his uncouth country air and manners, and asked who he was. They were told "a Raja of Baiswara." One asked why he wore two swords. "To fight any two men who dare to meet me" was the proud reply. The others asked why he did not enter the Durbar but stood without the door. He replied that in his country it was customary to invite the stranger, and not leave him to push his way in uninvited. However, he said, as *they* had given their daughters and sisters to the king, they would not be looked on as strangers and had a perfect right to enter. Incensed at this insult they challenged him to single combat. Mitrajit came to the field mounted on a mare, which, at the first onset became unmanageable and bolted with him. He pulled her up with great trouble, and dismounted, pronouncing a curse on any member of his race who should in future bestride a mare. He then returned to the field on foot and discomfited both his foes. To this day no Bais of his house can be induced to mount a mare. Mitrajit's exploit took wind, and he rose to high favour in the Imperial Court. He was entrusted with the command of an army sent to Cabul, where in a dangerous

mountain pass he met and defeated the enemy. Elated by the victory, he ordered his kettledrum to sound the note of triumph, but their hoarse booming brought down an avalanche of snow which buried the greater portion of his host. Thus he fell into disgrace at Delhi and returned to his home a broken man. It is not a little curious that a tradition such as this should survive for centuries and be repeated by thousands who have never seen snow and can form no conception of its nature and appearance.

Sir Charles Elliott repeats one more tale of Rajput prowess, which is interesting by reason of the light it throws on the rough and ready methods employed by the native government of old time in the collection of revenue. When Sa'adat Khan, the founder of the royal house of Oudh, became provincial governor in 1723, he found the revenue administration in the direst disorder: and just as Warren Hastings did half a century later, he made a progress through the country in order to see things with his own eyes. When he reached a place called Morawan in Baiswara, he summoned the canungos and ordered them to produce the *dauls* or rent-rolls of their respective parganas. They asked what daul his Highness wanted, explaining that there were two—the "coward's daul" and the "man's daul." In the first, the zemindar was charged only with the

sum fixed at the previous settlement, but in the second his rent was raised in proportion to intermediate improvements. The Subadar called for the "man's daul," and doubled the assessment of Baiswara with a stroke of his pen. Then he summoned the agents of all the Rajas to a Durbar, where he sat with a heap of *pan* leaves on one side and a heap of bullets on the other. Addressing the crowd, he bade them, if their masters accepted his terms, to take up the *pan* leaves: if not the bullets. One by one they stepped forward and humbly took up a *pan* leaf each. Sa'adat Khan turned to his courtiers and said with a sneer—"I had heard great things of the fighting men of Baiswara, but they seem readier to pay than to fight." But he was premature in his judgment. The agent of Cheitrai, an illegitimate member of the clan, stood last in Durbar by reason of his master's bar sinister. When his turn came, he said "Nawab, my master was ready to accept your terms; but if you wish to see now a Bais can fight he will not refuse to gratify you. Give him but a day to prepare himself, and then lead your forces against his fort." Sa'adat Khan agreed, and attacked Cheitrai's stronghold on the morrow. But he found it a hard nut to crack. All day long the battle raged, and the besiegers were baffled. In the evening the Nawab sent to say that he was quite satisfied with the specimen

he had afforded of Baiswara prowess, and that he would let Cheitrai off with half the assessment fixed in his case. The terms were accepted and Cheitrai rose high in the esteem of government.

The Mutiny divided Rajputs in Unao. The vast majority joined the national side,\* for the hostility to British rule throughout Oudh was indescribably bitter.\* Some, however, defied public opinion and met with a rich reward. Amongst the loyal few were the Magarwara Rajputs, who lived but five miles from Cawnpore on the Lucknow road. In spite of their proximity to the great rebel centre, these people assisted the English army with information and supplies, and accompanied Sir Henry Havelock in his ineffectual advance on Unao and Basiratganj. When he retreated to Cawnpore they left their homes and followed him; nor did they leave his standard when they saw their village in flames—destroyed

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\* The cause of this hostility was, in some measure, the national pride of the people of Oudh. Thirty years before the annexation, Bishop Heber, while on his progress up-country, met a Captain Lockitt at Lucknow, who told him that he had recently had a conversation with an old jemadar of cavalry, who spoke out like the rest of his countrymen on the weakness of the king and the wickedness of the Government. Captain Lockitt asked the old man how he would like being placed under the British Government. "Miserable as we are," he exclaimed, of all miseries "keep us from that!" "Why so?" asked Captain Lockitt. "Are not our people better governed?" Yes, was the answer: "but the name of Oudh and the honor of our nation would be at an end."

by the rebels as a warning to sympathizers with the Feringhis.

We have seen an indirect result of the Mahommedan conquest of India in the settlement of Rajput colonies throughout Oudh. It remains to consider the effect on the popular character produced by the introduction of a fresh strain of blood, and on social history by new ideas and a new administrative policy. The first wave of invasion rolled in from Ghazni, whence Masud, the fiery nephew of Sultān Mahmud, set forth in 1030 A.D. to plant the green flag of Islam in places which had never yet re-echoed praises of God the Highest, the most Merciful. He took Delhi and was welcomed at Canouj. But when he crossed the Ganges and penetrated further into Oudh, he was stoutly opposed by a confederacy of powerful Rajas who drove him into Bahraich and cut his army in pieces. Three hundred years elapsed ere any Mahommedan obtained a foot-hold in Oudh. Between the 14th and 17th centuries their colonies slowly increased, but they have long been stationary, and at the present day the Hindus are more than 93 per cent. of the population. The early conquests were the outcome of blood-feuds or other forms of private revenge; and the struggle between the creeds had none of the features of a religious war. There is, indeed, a strong tendency among the

followers of the Prophet to assimilate in all externals with their Hindu neighbours. In the matter of diet they are as scrupulous as any Brahmin. The *dhuti* is commonly worn by them, and the formula *Ram Ram* their ordinary mode of salutation. In short, the law which ordains that the greater body shall attract the less is, or was till lately, in as full operation in Unao as it was in Eastern Bengal before the great neopuritan revival which is stirring Islam to its depths had placed an impassable gulf between the professors of the rival creeds. Bangarmau, so often mentioned in these annals, was the theatre of the first Mahomedan effort at colonization. According to tradition, about the year 1300 A.D. a saint named Alauddin came from Canouj with the intention of living peaceably in the territories of Raja Nala of Newal. But the Raja would not tolerate the presence of a *mleccha*, and endeavoured to eject him. The holy man cursed his persecutor; and straightway the city of Newal turned upside down, burying its inhabitants. Utensils of archaic form are to this day exposed by the plough amongst the extensive ruins of king Newal's luckless city; and those who stand upon ancient ways see a confirmation of the legend in the fact that they are always found inverted. The catastrophe was probably due to an earthquake in prehistoric times. After



this exhibition of superhuman power Alauddin founded the town of Bangamau, which still contains a leaven of Shaikh and Sayyid families. The more important settlement at Sufipur, or Saipur, dates from 1431, when Ibrahim Shah of Jaunpur, to revenge the insult offered to another saint known as Maulana Shaha Ikram by the refusal of five Rajas to allow him to sound the *azam*, or summons to prayers, marched a strong force into their territory and defeated them with great slaughter. The victory cost one of the Musulman generals his life. His grave, which is still pointed out at Sufipur, has rare and precious virtues in a country which suffers greatly from droughts. In the event of one occurring, all that is necessary is to milk a cow and mix the milk with ten maunds of flour, and ghee, spices, &c., in proportion before the tomb. Hardly is there time to bake the resulting cakes ere the sky becomes overcast and the worshippers are drenched to the skin. The Maulana's grandson, Shah Safi, is the eponymous hero of Sufipur. Many legends survive to attest his miraculous power. On one occasion a poor widow, who had lost her all through the tyranny of the Faujdar of Khairabad, entreated him to revenge her wrongs. He took from his mouth the lump of pán which he was chewing and told her to fix it to an arrow and shoot it at the house of his oppressor. The

Faujdar, hearing of the advice, ran in great alarm, prostrated himself at the holy man's feet and craved and obtained pardon. Then, from sheer feminine curiosity the widow shot the *pán* from a bow at a mound which stood near Khairabad. The mound at once disappeared and in its place there opened a yawning gulf which is called to this day *Safi Sagar*.

The next wave of Mahommedan conquest was impelled by Sayyid Baharuddin, son of the general who was killed at the battle which led up to the foundation of Bangarmau. The Bisseins of Unao itself fell victims to a notable stratagem planned by him, full details of which will be found in Sir William Hunter's monumental *Gazetteer of India*, in the shape of a quotation from Sir Charles Elliott's history. (Vol. xiii p. 428.) But the Mahommedan colonies in Unao were not all the outcome of "blood and iron." A peaceful invasion of the district resulted from the Moghul policy of rewarding military service by grants of land. These jaghirdars have planted Shaikh or Sayyid families in nearly every town of any size: but the only house of any importance—that of the Rasulabad Sayyids—received its death-blow during the Mutiny. The chief then threw in his lot with the national side, and paid the penalty of his blunder in the confiscation of his estates.

Sir Charles's sketch of Unao under Moghul rule is instructive, as proving that the English administration owes but little to the effete organization which it superseded. Under Akbar, when the Government was as strong and highly centralized as imperfect communications admitted, Unao formed a portion of the Lucknow *Sarkar*, the largest of five divisions into which the province of Oudh was split. It contained 14 parganas with a revenue of Rs. 4,52,242, as compared with Rs. 9,63,930 just before the annexation, Rs. 10,33,640 as settled after that event, and Rs. 14,22,720 in 1883-84. Each pargana was administered by two distinct classes of officials. In the one category came the Qazi, Mufti, Qanungo and Chaudhuri,—generally natives of the pargana and paid by grants of land or fees, and holding their posts for life. The functions of the two first named were judicial. The Qazi was Civil Judge, Registrar, and Priest, with a supervision over the morals and ceremonies of his jurisdiction. The Mufti was a miniature Legal Remembrancer, whose opinion or *futwa* was a necessary basis for the decisions of the Criminal Courts. The duties of the Qanungo and Chaudhuri were connected with the revenue, and they were settlement officers of the pargana. There was no substantial difference between them : but the former appointment was always conferred on the chief zemindar of the pargana ; while the

latter fell to a writer of the Kaiesth caste. The second class of officials included the Amil, Krori and Tehsildar. They were seldom residents of the pargana, were often transferred, and were paid either by salary or a percentage on the collections. The Amil was magistrate-collector—the district chief in both revenue and judicial affairs. The Krori and Chaudhuri were subordinate revenue officers; the first taking his name from an obsolete division of the empire into tracts, each paying a crore of *dams*, i.e., two-and-a-half lakhs of rupees. Their duties were identical, and in process of time both merged in the Tehsildar. Above the local officials came the Faujdar, who was military commandant and responsible for the preservation of peace; and the Dewan, whose work was that of general supervision in revenue matters. Higher still there were the officers of the Suba, or province—the Nazim or Governor, the Dewan, or chief Minister, and the Amin, who was responsible for the land settlements. This duality was intended to provide a system of checks and counter-checks, and it survives to this day in many zemindari offices. In practice it worked but indifferently. The history of Unao during the period when the arm of the Emperor of Delhi was longest is a record of rebellion, robbery, murder, and illegal exactions. When the sceptre of Aurungzib fell into impotent hands, the anarchy became intoler-

able : and no semblance of order was effected till Sa'adat Khan, the Nazim of Oudh, threw off his allegiance and founded the royal house whose last crowned representative must be fresh in the memory of Calcutta residents. Sa'adat Khan was a lineal descendant of Imam Muza Kassim, of the best blood of Persia. During a civil war which desolated his native province, Khorassan, he migrated to Lahore and exchanged his name, Mir Muhammad Amin, for that which he was destined to render famous. In 1723 the Emperor Mahammad Shah created him Subadar of Oudh with the titles Pillar of the Empire, Confident Support of the State, Glory of War. Sa'adat Khan's administration was characterised by a minute care for his subjects' welfare, which is still remembered with gratitude. On his death in 1756 he was succeeded by a nephew, Sujaudaula, who dropped the title of Subadar and assumed the loftier one of Nawab Vizier of Oudh. His grandson, Ghaziuddin Haidar, took a still bolder flight ; and with the purchased consent of the East India Company became King of Oudh. During the greater portion of the Nawabi era, Unao was subject to Faujdars whose government included the southern portion of Oudh and the lower Doab. The best of these functionaries was Ilmas Ali, who flourished at the end of the last century. He built for himself a town

called Miyanganj, which Sir Charles Elliott styles one of the few places in Unao worth visiting. It is a square, with four wide streets meeting in a central point, surrounded by lofty crenelated walls, crowned by forty-four towers. Colonel Sleeman, of Thuggi fame, pays a well-deserved tribute of admiration to Ijmas Ali, whom he regards as "one of the best and greatest men of any note that Oudh had produced." "During all this time," he writes, "Miyān Almas kept the people secure in life and property, and as happy as people in such a state of society can be; and the whole country under his charge was during his lifetime a garden." What modern Indian ruler could desire a nobler encomium? The standard of prosperity was equally high under King Sa'adat Ali. This vigorous ruler had difficulties in his path which would have taxed the utmost resources of a Frederic the Great. His mighty neighbour, the honourable Company, was in sore straits for money to carry on a series of wars, great and little; and its demands on the Garden of India were insatiable. The annual subsidy exacted rose from £500,000 in 1787 to £760,000 six years later. In 1801 another turn of the screw brought up the total to £1,350,000, and the distracted Sa'adat Ali was fain to purchase immunity from further demands by ceding half his dominions. He then set himself to the

task of reorganising the administration of the remainder. It was divided into chacklas, of which modern Unao included three entire ones and portion of two more. In every chackla he stationed a strong force of regulars and police to preserve tranquillity and lend the strong arm to the Collectors of revenue at need. The regular troops were paid at the rate of Rs. 4 per mensem, not much more than half the guerdon demanded by the Company's sepoys; and the pay of the police was a rupee less. Thus were life and property in Unao rendered as secure as in the best governed British districts—securer far than in contemporary Bengal. The golden age of the little district was the years between 1740 and 1814, when master-minds such as Ilmas's and Sa'adat Ali's made themselves felt in every branch of the administration. But the native revenue system had inherent defects which brought about its downfall. Sa'adat Ali was a splendid man of business; but he was hard and remarkably close-fisted. Under the Mogul government, and to a less extent that of his immediate predecessors, supervision was lax and local officials made the collection of revenue an excuse for plunder. Sa'adat Ali sought a remedy for this evil in the introduction of the contract system, under which the collections were farmed out yearly to the highest bidders. While he remained

at the helm of affairs, abuses were sternly checked and the mechanism worked smoothly. But he left behind him no successor capable of comprehending his policy in its higher aims, or trained to seek its continuity. His reforms fell into abeyance, and the tide of disorder and oppression rose higher than ever. The farmers, who were generally mere speculators, were bound to render the uttermost fraction secured by their bond, and they could not, and they would not, show mercy to defaulting proprietors. One class, and one alone, batten on the general misery. This was the taluqdars. They were fostered by the revenue authorities; for the fewer and larger the estates, the easier it was to realize government dues. Hence the speedy elevation of the taluqdars on the ruins of countless smaller proprietors. The cry of the people rose to heaven; and if it did not render annexation inevitable, it at least afforded a reasonable excuse for the active interference of the British Government. On that much-vexed question our chronicle is judiciously reticent. The event was too recent when he wrote to be viewed with the dispassionate judgment which history demands; and as an official of the new province, he probably felt that it would be indecorous to discuss the question. We of the present day are on a different stand-point: and this chapter may fairly conclude with a few words on the annexa-



tion. In weighing the pros and cons we find it clear too that neither the British nor the national party were wholly right or altogether wrong. The Nawabi rule was by no means so unspeakably bad as writers in the interest of the East India Company alleged. The balance of power between parties was, in fact, nicely adjusted. Revenue must be punctually forthcoming at Lucknow to gratify the taste for extravagance or miserly hoarding, in which the kings of Oudh indulged. Hence the local representatives of Government were bound, at all hazards, to prevent combination on the part of taluqdars, and to maintain a conciliatory attitude towards them. Nor could the latter afford to quarrel with subordinate holders, for there were no courts to administer a rigid system of law without regard for persons. Hence differences were generally adjusted by mutual accommodation. The Nawabi principle, writes Sir Charles Elliott, was to drive no one to desperation: the English to mete out to every one the same inexorable justice. No one who knows India can doubt which would be most popular in the country. The same principle underlay the collection of revenue. The Government's, and therefore the zemindars' demands were adjusted to the produce of the harvests. The accession of the English was the signal for a screwing up of revenue to the highest amount ever obtained in

Nawabi times, while payment was rigorously insisted on whatever were the fluctuations of agricultural prosperity. It is hardly necessary to ask which method is best adapted to the easy-going oriental character. The one feature of the modern administration which the most inveterate encomiast of ancient times admits it to excel is the degree of security afforded to person and property. But candid native opinion would prefer that exaction and robbery should be rife, rather than an unbending law should forbid the indulgence in sacred blood-feuds, and should reduce great families to ruin in order that money-lenders might flourish. In the essentials of life and colouring Oudh has undoubtedly lost by the annexation. Lucknow, while the seat of a Royal court, retained no small share of the glories associated with oriental rule. Modern India still reeks of the counting-house, and the sternly-utilitarian spirit in which government is administered is in itself enough to account for our failure to win the people's hearts. Of the political relations between the Company and the Court of Oudh which led up to the annexation the less said the better. All honest Englishmen must look back with humiliation and abhorrence at the duplicity and greed which marked the intercourse between the Supreme Government and its old allies, the 'Subadars of the Deccan, Bengal, and Oudh. But better times

have dawned. The conscience of England is more acute than it was so lately as 23 years back, when India was saddled with the cost of an official ball given in London to the Sultan of Turkey. Who can doubt that if the Marquis of Lansdowne had been confronted with a situation in Oudh such as that which vexed Lord Dalhousie's soul,\* the cradle of Indian Monarchy would have been suffered to remain beneath the sway of a native race?

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\* In a letter to his father written during the throes of the mutiny, Mr. Elliott gave good reason for his belief that the annexation was not distasteful to one class at least whose interests have till lately been deemed beneath the attention of Indian rulers. "Clark and I have ridden out this morning some six miles towards the rebels with a small body of cavalry. As we returned home we crossed a small river, and came over the high ground of its bank. The instant we were seen from the first village, coming from the direction of the rebels, we heard shrieks and cries; every one put his plough to his shoulder and drove his oxen before him—women rushed off into the nearest wood, the whole village was deserted. As we got closer to it, we saw a man lurking about and called to him. He uttered a shout, rushed inside and brought out the zemindar, who came running towards us half laughing. "Oh Sahab!" said he, "We thought you were the rebels!" "What!" I said, laughing, "do I look like a badmash?" "No, saheb," was the reply, "but we could not distinguish, and we took you for Bismam Singh." "The moment they found out we were English the whole village returned at once; and in half an hour twenty ploughs were going merrily again. The same happened with the next village; and returning home we overtook its two zemindars who were on their way to our camp at Burree to tell us that Bismam Singh (a rebel leader of note) had come. I do not hesitate to say the popular feeling is intense desire for our rule among the ryots." (Letter from Mr. C. A. Elliott to the Rev. H. V. Elliott quoted, at pp. 80-81 Gubbins's *Mutinies in Oudh*).

## CHAPTER II.

### HOSHANGABAD SETTLEMENT.

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The Settlement Officer is an evolution of British rule. The Great Mogul had an elaborate and not inefficient mechanism for gathering in the tribute from the land which supported the pomp and majesty of his court, but this useful functionary found no place therein. From times long antecedent to the Mahomedan conquest the State had enjoyed an unquestioned right to a share in the produce of the soil. This was ordinarily three-fifths: but the zemindar and village officers claimed their quota. The first was, in later days at least, something more than a mere tax-collector. Offices of all kinds have in India a strong tendency to become hereditary, and, as we shall see presently, the zemindar had by custom, if not of right, a first option of re-engaging at the periodical settlements. He was allowed to recoup himself for his risk and trouble by retaining one-tenth of the Government share, or three-fiftieths of the gross produce. The village organization had not yet been crushed beneath the heel of ignorance. The headman, generally styled *mokaddam*, the watchman, and the *patwari*, or village accountant,

all took a fixed portion of the collections. The interests of Government were safeguarded, in theory at least, by the *canungo*, a representative of the supreme power, who was in charge of a group of villages, and submitted reports to the higher revenue authorities as to the extent and profits of cultivation, derived from inspection of the patwaris' accounts.\* The Provincial head of the Department, styled *Dewan*, used to summon the zemindars to a great annual assembly, termed *Punya*, at the capital, and offer them a settlement of the land for the year on terms based on the *canungo*'s reports. In Bengal these gatherings were held with much pomp and ceremony at a fine country seat of the Nawabs Nazim called Motijhil.\* A tradition still lingers in Murshidabad of the glories of Lord Clive's first *Punya* after the cession by the titular Emperor of Delhi of control over the provincial resources.

This sketch of the old revenue system renders it clear that the Settlement Officer was but

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\* "Another point of interest at Murshidabad is the still beautiful Motijhil, whose deep-blue waters once reflected a stately palace built by Serajuddaula, which, after the rout of Plassey, became the chosen residence of Lord Clive. The lake of the pearl has a special interest in the eyes of Englishmen; for here in 1765 the cession of the financial control of Bengal, Behar, and Orissa was solemnly ratified. Thus were the sinews of war provided for the career of conquest on which our ancestors entered: and thus, like Runnymede, Motijhil is the cradle of a world-shadowing empire." F. H. S., in *S. E. Journal*.

faintly foreshadowed in his prototype the canungo of the Moghul era. As the roots of British Empire struck more deeply into the soil, the necessity became clear of employing scientific methods in dealing with the complex problems offered by the administration of land revenue. The work of assessment was no longer left in unskilled and venal hands, but entrusted to the fine flower of the civil and military services. The field of selection was necessarily limited. A Settlement Officer must, in fact, be born one; for the most untiring industry will not compensate for the absence of natural gifts. He must have a minute acquaintance with the farmer's lore—the methods of cultivation, qualities of soil, and cost and value of crops. He should be able to unravel the tangled web of tenure and custom. He must be something of a chemist, botanist, and mathematician. He must have a passion for accuracy and detail, an absorbing love of duties which to the uninitiated seem almost repulsive. If, in addition to these qualities, he has a talent for picturesque description, an eye for the beauties of nature and a warm sympathy with the toiling peasant, we have in him a man fit for a more conspicuous, though not a more useful, rôle than that of assessor to land revenue. It was a small feather in Mr. C. Elliott's cap that the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces should have

chosen him at the age of 28 as Settlement Officer of his richest and most important district. .

Hoshangabad is a valley 150 miles in length between the Nerbudda and the Satpura Hills. Its area is 4,437 square miles, considerably larger than that of the English counties of Somerset and Devon combined. Its vast expanse of rolling upland is, for the most part, clothed in due season with golden corn: for Hoshangabad has a deep, black soil of inexhaustible fertility and has long enjoyed the title of 'the garden of India. If the land that has no history is blessed, then Hoshangabad is fortunate indeed. Until the beginning of the past century, its annals are well-nigh a blank. It then became a bone of contention between the reigning family of Bhopal and the Mahrattas, with the result which war always brings to the unhappy peasantry. Their cup of misery filled to the brim when the leader of one of the contending factions called in the ruthless Pindaris to his help. In 1818, when the greater portion of the district was taken over by the British Government under treaty with the Peshwa at Nagpore, Hoshangabad was a howling desert, dotted with ruined villages and fields fast relapsing to jungle. The process of recuperation which settled government brings with it was retarded by the incredible fatuity exhibited in the first settlement of land revenue made in 1824. Its author, who

held the title of Political Officer, was one of those sanguine men who believe that peace and security attract capital and increased population as if by magic. Under this impression he raised the revenue of Hoshangabad proper by seventy-three per cent. in the first year, and so *owescendo* till the demand for the fifth year was fifty per cent. above that exorbitant total. The case of Seoni, immortalized by Mr. Sterndale's facile pen, was even worse. The demand there was screwed up from Rs. 60,000 to Rs. 1,39,000 in five years! The unhappy zemindars were, of course, unable to satisfy these claims, and the exactions and cruelties which followed must have made the people look back on the Pindari raids with something like regret. The history of the next forty years is a record of the efforts made to repair this gigantic blunder. Major Ousley, who reigned supreme as Principal Assistant Agent to the Governor-General from 1826 to 1839, brought down the revenue by 25 per cent, and after 38 years of profound peace it was still 21 per cent. below that which was exacted in 1825. Major Ousley appears to have been a remarkable man: albeit cursed with that passion for meddling which betrays the administrator of the second order. He was the finished type of the patriarchal ruler, and his *regime* had all the excellencies and a large share of the defects inseparable from arbitrary govern-



ment. He lived, says Mr. Elliott, among the people, entertained them in large parties, was a guest at their festivals, and shared in some of their ceremonies. Justice was administered in a simple, untechnical manner, and even the Jail prisoners obtained leave of absence for two or three months together; and, being put on their honor, always came back. But the idyll had the seamy side. Major Ousley's constant interference with the course of business in the supposed interest of the ryot destroyed all confidence and drove capital from the district.\* His era left behind it a long train of ills which it needed the reign of law to remove. In 1854 Hoshangabad was placed under a Deputy Commissioner and the North-Western revenue system was introduced in its integrity. From that epoch dates the growth of prosperity which the district has since maintained. The population which, in Major Ousley's time, was only slightly in excess of 200,000, grew to 450,000 in 1871 and 488,000 ten years later.

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\* In his eagerness to put down oppression on the part of zemindars and money-lenders he forgot the illustrious Turgot's maxim, which should be written in letters of gold in every court-house of the land. "We are sure to go wrong," he used to say, when pressed to confer some benefit on the poor at the expense of the rich, "the moment we forget that justice alone can keep the balance true between all rights and all interests. The key-note to my policy is not pity or benevolence, but justice."

Mr. Elliott's settlement operations commenced in 1863, and his report, a volume of 288 pages with elaborate maps and figured statements, was submitted in 1865 to the Provincial Settlement Commissioner. It richly merits the encomium passed on it by that officer and the Chief Commissioner, and, indeed, stands unrivalled after a quarter of a century of reports and *nukshas*. In general plan it is not unlike the author's earlier effort, the *History of Unao*. The physical features of the district are picturesquely described: and then follows a brief historical sketch. The general condition of the people is surveyed with a minuteness which proves that Mr. Elliott has that fellow-feeling for toiling humanity in the absence of which the ablest administrator will leave no lasting impression behind him. Finally, the story of the settlement itself is told in three chapters teeming with information as to tenures, occupancy-rights, waste lands, and a thousand other topics. This portion of the work, though extremely valuable as a record of district administration and a model for future Settlement Officers, is too technical for the great bulk of my readers. The chapter on the condition of the people is, however, of general interest, and might furnish out not one but half a dozen chapters. Mr. Elliott's information as to castes is of special value at a time when the bonds of that system are tightening

in the Hindu community. Ninety-five per cent of the population of Hoshangabad are, it appears, Hindu emigrants from Bandelkhand, Marwar, and Khandesh. The Gujars are one of the largest agricultural castes. Prosperity has altered their nature, and the thieving, lawless scum of Upper India has settled down into a community of peaceful farmers, shrewd, vigorous and comparatively enlightened. Still more remarkable is the change which plenty has wrought in the aboriginal Gonds. According to a contemporary chronicle, they were sixty years ago "savage and intractable," but now they are the mildest and most timid of mortals. One section into which they are divided, the Raj-Gonds, have become completely Hinduised. It is with the Central Provinces as with our North-Eastern frontier. The Hindu religion exercises a wonderful fascination for aboriginal tribes. The glittering bait of caste-recognition induces the Raj-Gond who has waxed wealthy to don the *jane* and boast of his Rajput ancestors. The case of the Rajbanshis is very similar. They are the most numerous agricultural caste of Hoshangabad, and also claim a Rajput origin. But on cross-examination they are fain to admit that they tarried long on the way. Strange to say the Rajbanshis of Northern Bengal are at this moment agitating for recognition as Khetris, *i.e.*, Rajputs. Like their far-away cousins

they are strongly suspected of an aboriginal taint.

The land-owning classes are mostly descendants of officers in the employ of the old lords of the country—the Mussalmans of Bhopal and the Mahrattas of Nagpur. The history of their connection with the soil throws some light on the genesis of zemindars throughout India. If, as was often the case, a cultivating clan is unable to maintain itself till the crops ripened it, or the weaker members at least, must have recourse to some capitalist for a loan. The lender, for his own security, interposes between his debtors and the Government, becomes responsible for the revenue and, armed with the forces of the law, recoups himself by levying rent. Whoever, writes Mr. Elliott, having money by him, came forward at the right time when cultivators were ready to break up the jungle if fed or clothed, that man became the *Malguzar*. The Mahrattas muster strong in this class: and at the time of our report, they owned 29 per cent. of the Hoshangabad villages. They are observant of ritual and but slightly infected with the Marwari shylockism which impairs the dignity of Brahmin immigrants from Hindustan, Rajputana and Bundelkhand. The Mahratta Brahmins differ from their compeers of other provinces in that they marry into any *gotra* but their own: and are sub-divided, not into *kuls*

but tribes.\* The Peshwas belonged to one, and not the highest of their tribes, the Chithans, so called because Parasuram employed their ancestor to perform his father's *Sraddh* which carried with it *Chit*—defilement. A certain proportion of the land, especially in the Seoni pargana, is in the hands of Bunnias; and it is pleasant to find Mr. Elliott saying a good word for a class which is generally held up to execration as blood-suckers. He had not been able to see, he writes, that they were in any respect worse landlords than the rest of the world, less popular or more given to rack-renting.

Our author turns from ethnology to agriculture and adds more to our knowledge of the art as practised in India than all the Agricultural Departments combined have done. The rich black soil will only yield its treasures to assiduous tilling. In May, before the rains set in, it is turned over by a hoe-plough peculiar to these parts, called the *bukhar*, whose iron share weighs three or four seers (7lbs), is 18" to 21" by 4", fixed to a heavy horizontal beam not in line with the furrow, as in the case of the common plough, but at right angles to it. By setting it at a more or less obtuse angle it can be made to pare the weeds at the surface or penetrate the soil to its full depth. This process is repeated at frequent intervals during the rainy months; to *bukhar* in Sraban

(July—August) being imperative. As the soil softens under the annual deluge, the *bukhar* penetrates more and more deeply, till the field is purged of weeds, and brought into a condition which would gladden a Midlothian farmer's heart. Its aspect is, however, changed by the invasion of the drill-plough, *nari*, which gets a couple of inches lower down than the *bukhar* and covers the surface of the field with great clods, turned up from a nether stratum. Hence the results obtained in these heavy soils without irrigation. The seed falls into a moist medium and the young shoots spring up through a soft, loosened crest while their roots strike into a sub-soil which has not been caked by exposure to the sun's fierce rays. The system thus described would probably give excellent results in the rich loams so common in Eastern Bengal.

The time of sowing corn depends on the temperature; for the tender plants would perish if exposed to too great a degree of heat. The ryot has a home-made thermometer, in the shape of a wisp of cotton soaked in *ghee*. This is placed out of doors overnight; and if the cold has been sufficient to solidify the *ghee*, sowings may be attempted. But astrology and magic are made handmaids to rule of thumb. A lucky day must be fixed upon by the aid of the village priest. In his valuable glossary attached to the report,\* Mr.

Elliott gives a proverb embodying the folk-lore on the great sowing question,—

“Who ploughs on Sunday shall be rich,  
Who ploughs on Monday shall get the fruit of his labour,  
Wednesday and Thursday are both good. Friday fills the granary.  
Who sows on Saturday or Tuesday no seed shall come to his door.”

The end of October and beginning of November are considered *the* season of sowing: and the longer it is deferred the drier and less productive the land. The Hoshangabad farmer is seen at his best at sowing time. He then works for ten or twelve days almost without intermission, and day or night if the moon serves. He never returns home or sleeps more than two or three hours at a stretch. His meals are brought to him in the field by his wife,—wheat chupattis and porridge in abundance. Thus toiling he can plough and sow four-fifths of an acre during day-light and two-fifths on moon-lit nights. More can be accomplished if four or five ploughs work together. Bullocks, like men, are sociable, and it has been remarked that those in the rear of the first pair hardly feel the labour. Would that the wretched, slovenly, dawdling North-Bengal peasant could see his distant brothers at work, for his latent sense of shame might stir him to emulation! Seed is used in the proportion of a maund of 80 lbs to the acre. When it is down, the field must be fenced, especially if jungle or high roads be near. The fences are always temporary, mere dry branch-

es of some thorny tree stuck in the ground in line. To make assurance doubly sure, a watchman is engaged by four or five cultivators who club together to pay him 4 maunds of wheat, 320 lbs, per ten acres. He builds a little hut and keeps a bright fire burning. At night he is supposed to walk four times round the field with a blazing branch to scare wild beasts. For royal game he has what is called the "tiger's terror," a drum consisting of an earthen pot covered with a goat's skin well stretched. A peacock's feather is inserted through a hole in the skin and secured with a knot. The watchman holds the pot between his feet and draws his fingers along the feather, eliciting thereby, as Mr. Elliott says, a most unearthly and diabolical sound, which ought to be enough to keep any intelligent beast away.

Wheat ripens towards the end of February, and is cut by Gond and Kurkee immigrants from the hill-country, just as the hay crops of old England were got in twenty years ago by hordes of wild Irishmen from Tipperary and Galway. They usually receive one sheaf in twenty, or if they work in gangs by contract, three maunds (240 lbs.) of wheat per ten acres reaped. The produce averages sixfold,—six maunds, or eight and a half bushels per acre. Threshing and reaping proceed together. The Hoshangabad threshing-floor is not the mere plot cleared of